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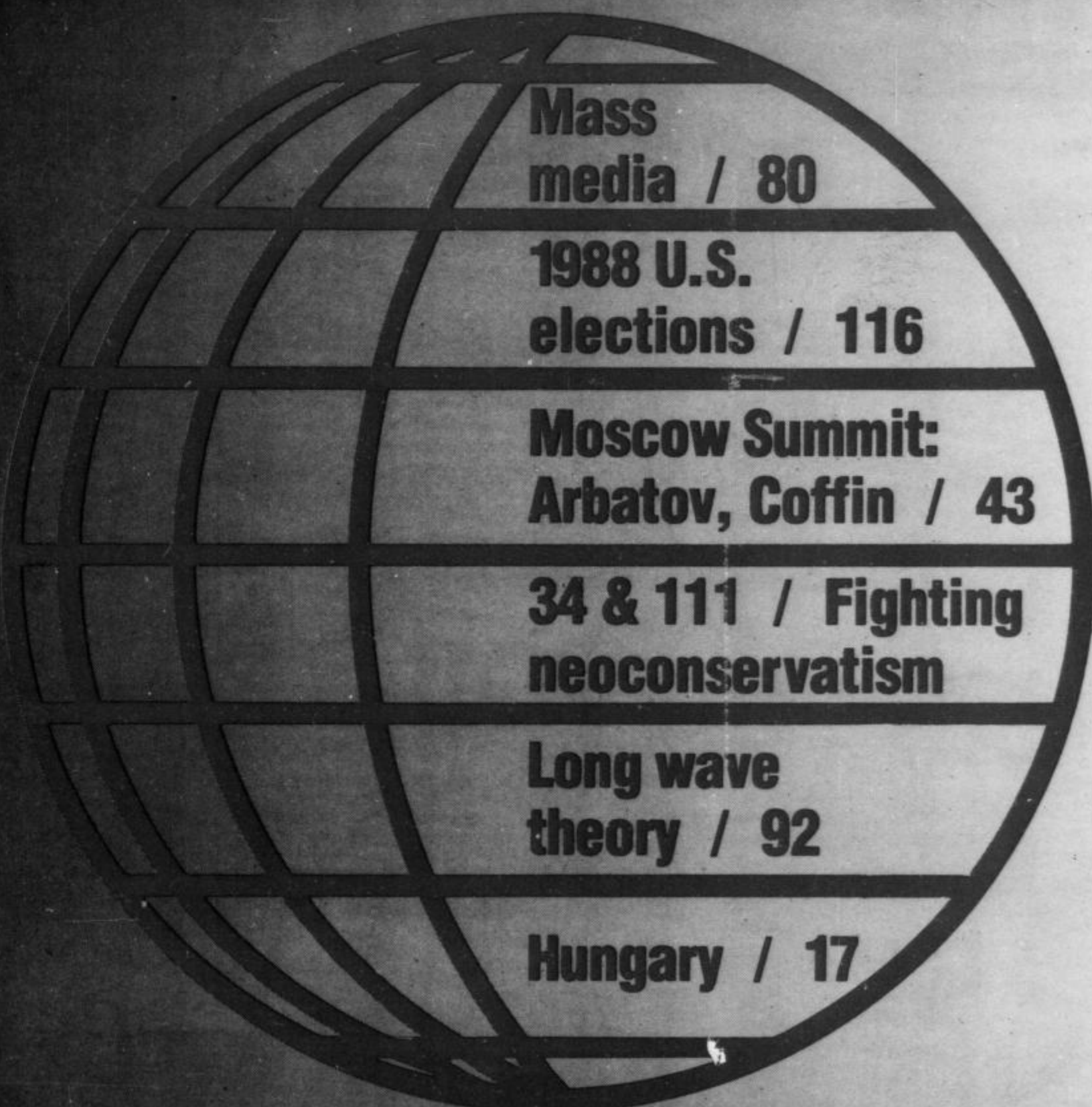
Problems of

MARXIST

Peace and Socialism

REVIEW

August 1988 Vol. 31, No. 8
\$2.50 ISSN 0043-8642



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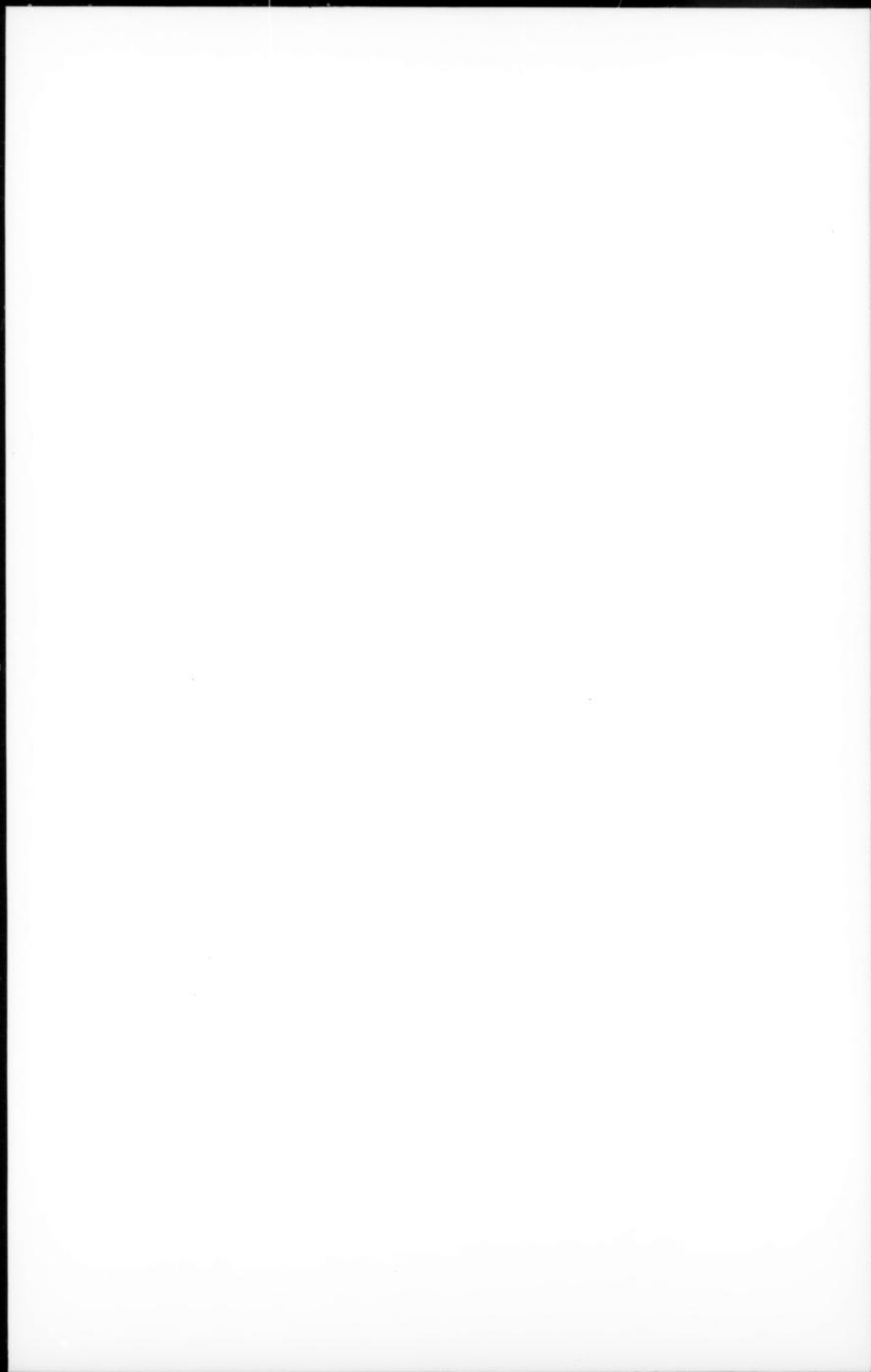
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world marxist review

VOLUME 31 NUMBER 8 AUGUST 1988

PROBLEMS OF PEACE AND SOCIALISM

*Theoretical and Information Journal of Communist
& Workers Parties Throughout the World*

WORKERS OF ALL LANDS UNITE

PROBLEMS OF PEACE AND SOCIALISM

is also published in Arabic, Amharic, Baluchi, Bengali, Bulgarian, Czech, Danish, Dari, Farsi, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Gujarati, Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian, Indonesian, Kurdish, Lao, Malayalam, Maltese, Manipuri, Mongolian, Norwegian, Oriya, Pashtu, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Romanian, Russian, Singhalese, Spanish, Tagalog, Tamil, Telugu, Turkish, Vietnamese.

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The International Communist Movement

How Can We Retain The Vanguard Role?

Two Views of the Problem

Mohammed Harmel

General Secretary, Tunisian Communist Party (TCP)

Jean Spielmann

General Secretary, Swiss Party of Labour (SPL)

Communists are, "practically, the most advanced and resolute section of the working-class parties of every country, that section which pushes forward all others; . . . theoretically, they have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement",¹ as Marx and Engels succinctly defined the role of the ideological and political movement that was emerging at that time. Almost a century and a half has passed since the publication of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. Many tasks of the revolutionary forces are posed in a new way and the conditions in which they are waging their struggles have changed. How has the Communists' performance of their role been affected? Are they still the vanguard of the working class and all the other working people? The leaders of two fraternal parties from different parts of the non-socialist world discussed these issues in a dialogue in Prague.

Tardiness, Yes, But in What Areas?

Mohammed Harmel. Before we begin, I would like to make two points. First, ours are two very different countries, and the reader should not perceive Tunisia as the 'Arab Switzerland'. Second, I do not claim the right

to judge the activities of fraternal parties or of the communist movement as a whole. I can proceed only from the experience of the Tunisian Communist Party and from my own assessments, from an analysis of the processes which we are witnessing and from the struggles waged by Tunisian Communists.

Jean Spielmann. I could not agree more. It is difficult to draw parallels between the struggles of the working people and other progressive forces in Switzerland and Tunisia. But, perhaps, different approaches to issues of concern to the whole of the communist movement will transpire in our discussion precisely because of the dissimilarities you have just noted. I, too, will draw first and foremost on the experience of my party.

So, are Communists still the vanguard?

Talking about theory and the general perspective of social progress that we offer, I would say yes. At the same time, I think, we tarry considerably in analysing new realities and for this reason come up against sizeable difficulties in our practical work.

The SPL, for example, for a long time confined itself to the struggle for the material demands of the working people without paying adequate attention to new phenomena caused by changes in society. Outdated attitudes have become a chief cause of the party's markedly declined influence. But when we conduct debates with representatives of other forces, be they Social Democrats, ecologists or pacifists, let alone bourgeois politicians, Marxism-Leninism helps us find answers to complex questions. Equipped with such a theory, Communists are called upon to play the vanguard role — yet practical politics alone can show to what extent they succeed in doing so. What we have witnessed in the recent period, however, has been the weakening of the positions of a number of communist parties and their electoral setbacks.

M.H. While Marx and Engels revolutionised theory with an immense effect on practical politics, their following was a minority both in the German and in the international working class movement. Similarly, communist parties in quite a few countries sometimes influence developments very substantially, although they do not have majority support. We therefore should take a balanced approach to the assertion that many parties have failed to adapt themselves to the new realities; rather, some have adapted themselves and others have not, some have been successful at one time, others at another.

The past few years, moreover, have been very difficult for a number of parties in this respect. By and large, however, the international communist and working class movement has played and continues to play an important role in the political battles of our time in spite of all the vacillations, retreats and mistakes, sometimes very bad ones. Every party is responsible to its people, and therefore should itself analyse why its positions have weakened.

J.S. I would like to make myself clear. Communists undoubtedly are the ideological and theoretical vanguard of the working-class movement — but it is not enough just to have a scientific programme. It is likewise important constantly to match theoretical postulates against practice and changes in

society, and it is here that Communists seem to come up against most of their difficulties.

M.H. But the reverse seems true as well: in some countries Communists have been waging day-to-day struggles and have adapted themselves to specific circumstances — but clearly have been limping theoretically. We are undoubtedly slow, I think, in our understanding of the new realities of the Third World. For instance, our analysis of many processes in the Arab liberation movement is weak and often old-fashioned — when we don't react to those processes merely at the level of slogans, that is.

By our theoretical inaptitude I mean the inability to translate into practice a scientific programme you speak about. Marxism is not a dogma or a set of ready-to-use theoretical prescriptions, but a guide to action. The ability to adapt it to the specific circumstances of every country and to develop it in accordance with those specifics is very important.

I quite agree with you that theory should be matched against practice. Moreover, they interact: clearly pragmatic actions detract from theory, while theory that clashes with realities can become a drag on practical struggles and deny it any hope. There is another aspect to this problem. We have been the only political force in Tunisia creatively to advance theory in our search for answers to pressing practical questions that face the national and democratic movement, such as the question of the specific characteristics, content and forms of the nation state that emerges as a result of the liberation struggle; the problem of alliances, which is altogether shunned both by the arch-leftists and by the Destour party ideologists; the role of pluralism and democracy; new approaches to the tasks before the national democratic movement; the place of religion and its use in politics, and others. The communist party led the struggle for the rights of the working people and for the autonomy of the trade union movement. These vanguard positions eventually won us the support of the public and the mass of people. The Communists, however, have failed to capitalise on the results of their sometimes heroic efforts and to strengthen the party's influence accordingly.

J.S. Our position of the political vanguard does not, of course, relieve us of the need constantly to evolve theory on the assumption that there is more than one contradiction in the world. In my country, for instance, most of the workers are quite happy with their present life. But they live well under capitalism in large measure because they enjoy the spoils of the plunder of Third World countries. It is also an important point of ethics: can one be happy and enjoy material boons to the hilt when one sees in TV newscasts from day to day people living in abysmal poverty and starving to death in the Third World?

Today, the country's forces of change, primarily young people, are fighting not so much for better living conditions as for the assertion of new cultural, moral and ethical values. They focus on the long-term goals of social development. Does this situation make it necessary for Communists to revise substantially their activities? Undoubtedly so, although a great deal is yet to be done in Switzerland in the areas which have been the traditional battlefronts of the working class movement: the country does not yet have a national social security system, guaranteed sick benefits, etc.

Or take a different example, one from the practice of the socialist countries. Some of them have long belittled and others denied altogether the importance of material incentives in building socialism. It was nothing short of wishful thinking, however. Now they have to turn back to the reality that those factors can play a substantial role.

Similarly, now that perestroika is afoot in the Soviet Union, it has become clear to everyone that the democratisation of social life is a major aspect of the development of socialism, an aspect which at one time was given a back seat. Unarguably, more socialism means more democracy. Advance towards self-governance will in practice involve every member of society in the solution of day-to-day problems. The task here is not to revise our theory, because it has always stressed the importance of democracy under socialism, but to translate that principle into reality.

But we should not fear, of course, to shed those theoretical postulates which have not proved correct. One of the biggest mistakes made by Communists, in my view, is their underestimation of the ability of capitalism to develop and overcome its crises and contradictions. Moreover, the concepts which we were too quick to make into slogans — those which said that capitalism was nearing its end while socialism was steadily gaining ground and carried the future — won few supporters, at least in the West. It is the conservative rather than the left forces that have gained in strength there in the past few years, and the larger part of the younger generation supports them. In short, the direct opposite of what we were expecting on the strength of our doctrine is taking place.

M.H. The historical process is not straightforward and neither is the development of the communist parties. We are carrying on our day-to-day struggles for the interests of the working people, seeking the best possible solutions to the country's problems and trying to improve our work in every respect, but we are far from always a success. Perhaps, we should not be discouraged, however, that our progress is slow in the usual circumstances. Possibilities for such progress increase immensely at turning points or in critical periods in national life, at the sharp turns of history. If the communist party adopts a correct policy at such a moment, it can dramatically increase its role. Otherwise the party retreats and its influence slumps. It is a duty of a revolutionary party to assert its vanguard role and to find ways of bringing about qualitative change at decisive moments, when social contradictions have reached the boiling point. The fate of such parties depends on their policies, on the struggles they are waging, on their initiatives, and also on the objective circumstances and the correlation of forces in the social and ideological fields. One can never be certain of victory in advance.

J.S. But generally speaking, have you had a slump in the past few years?

M.H. I wouldn't say so, although we've had — and still have — many difficulties. The party developed by leaps and bounds after legalisation in 1981, but then practice set limits to our possibilities because we came up against repression in various forms. That spurt, moreover, was made at a time of the weakening of the national democratic movement and other far-reaching changes in the Arab countries and in the Third World as a whole.

The results we achieved seemed to match the realities; but there was no retreat.

More Questions than Answers

J.S. Communists' difficulties today are explained in no small measure by the complexity of the problems facing us.

Is it possible, for example, to play the vanguard role in today's society while being the vanguard of only the working class? What is the nature of the working class movement nowadays in such a country as Switzerland, where in some cantons around 70 per cent of the population are employed in the services and the industrial workforce constitutes at best one-third of the population and consists for the most part of immigrants who are denied social and political rights? What is the potential of that movement in the present circumstances?

Swiss workers have throughout the post-war period been pressing for better living conditions and higher wages. Now they have achieved them. A worker thinks not of what he will eat but of what colour car to buy. He has no doubts that he lives much better than his counterparts in socialist countries. How can he be involved in the struggle for socialism?

M.H. Incidentally, the Swiss working people are better off than workers even in other industrialised capitalist countries . . .

J.S. I agree, but the phenomena I have just mentioned are likely to reach Tunisia, too, with time. Today most of the Swiss workers live on credit, buying household durables, cars and homes in this way and thus using up part of their earnings even before they actually receive them. That is why going on strike often is out of the question for them. The workers are restrained by chains of a new kind, not as visible but, perhaps, even stronger than the old ones because they have in fact no desire to try to shake them off. Is it true of Tunisia?

M.H. It is, in a sense. But the situation in Tunisia is more complex than that and calls for a more thorough analysis of the new ideological and social circumstances.

J.S. Reality has become generally more complex and controversial. What should our attitude be to religion, for example, now that the SPL is conducting a broad dialogue with religious circles? Communists have always had a theoretical answer to this question, but shouldn't we look for new approaches now? We have no right today to stick to dogmas and ready-made solutions but need continuously to reassess practical experience and question our own conclusions, moreover, against the background of accelerated social development.

M.H. Communists have not been right in every instance, sometimes even when they were convinced of their being right. But it would be downright simplification to believe that progressive ideas ought to win automatically the support of the majority. The reverse is true as well: is Khomeini right just because he has on his side most of the Iranian people? Or, for that matter, was Hitler right because he had such a large following in Germany? These are the extremes.

J.S. What we are witnessing today is the rise of not so much progressive ideas as of various dogmatic trends and fundamentalism, and even of

religious sectarianism. Quite a few people in some capitalist countries support far-right parties and movements in the belief that they offer clear-cut and sound goals. This is true primarily of youth. The trend is represented in Switzerland in racism and xenophobia with regard to coloured immigrants.

M.H. A dramatic growth of fundamentalism is in evidence in the Islamic countries. I would relate it to the global crisis of the capitalist system and Third World countries to the economic plight of millions of people, and to low cultural standards. Facing unemployment and seeing no clear prospects in life, young people often turn to fundamentalism in search of confidence only to find an illusion of moral security.

The formulation of a correct stand is just an essential precondition of successful efforts; as for the rest, it is decided in struggle as history winds its controversial course. It is the duty of the socialist countries, the vanguard parties and the forces of national liberation at every stage to seek solutions to concrete problems that would be as optimum as possible from the point of view of progress, and to react correctly to controversial realities and the general trends in social and political battles. When all is said and done, that tendency should lead naturally, although in different ways, to the triumph of socialism in more and more countries.

Socialism and Democracy

J.S. Now that you have raised the problem of ways of transition to socialism, I would like to pose the following question: what should our attitude be today to the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat? The term has never figured in SPL documents but some parties have used it extensively, while others, such as the French Communist Party, dropped it a few years ago. Is there any point in keeping the term now that the proletariat is becoming an absolute minority?

M.H. We don't hold up the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The TCP stands for a progressive, national and democratic alternative that would pave the way to socialism.

J.S. The question of power, of course, is the central question of any revolution. In order to fight for the transition of their countries to socialism, Communists have to substantiate theoretically ways of that transition: the ability of our parties to perform their vanguard role depends to a large extent on theory.

The SPL has never used the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat. But neither are we quite happy with the theoretical postulate that Communists can come to power merely by winning the majority of votes at the polls. Such a vote is tantamount to delegating to others the right of making a revolution you yourselves ought to make. The strong point of representative democracy is that it makes it possible to bring out the will of the majority — yet in that case people do not feel personally involved in the struggle for change. That is why our party stands for socialist self-governance based on the central principle of everyone's personal participation in social change.

Needless to say, it is not at all easy to work out a concept of self-governance. It is essential, however, because it provides for the

broadening of democracy, for a possibility to conduct debates, and for the ability to accept criticism and plurality of views. We are well aware of the difficulties which arise when the party identifies itself with the state. When all is said and done, the question is posed in this way: are democracy and development possible under the one-party system? Or do criticism, the possibility to criticise and conflicting ideas depend on diversity, which we have somewhat forgotten at the level of theory? It is contradictions that breed divergent viewpoints and therefore new ideas and personal responsibilities. I would add here that discussions and mutual criticism have been shunned all too long in the international communist movement.

M.H. No progressive socialist state, we think, can emerge as a result of a coup d'état, a putsch, even a leftist one, or a revolution made from 'on-high'. I fully subscribe to the point you made as regards democracy, the true will of the majority and respect for the choice made by the people. We know what the consequences of palace revolutions have been for some countries. They have had their progressive aspects but nevertheless have come up against insurmountable difficulties and done much harm to the movement as a whole. In today's world socialism, as we see it, should mean everywhere majority rule — and it should be not an opportunistic majority, which may take shape in some circumstances, but a stable majority as a reflection of a definite historical trend.

Tunisian Communists stand for pluralism, although they are working in a developing country with the prevalence of the ideas of authoritarian rule and centralism. I think that the national democratic process and, eventually, the struggle for socialism call for the involvement of broad revolutionary and progressive forces, with the Communists being a part of them.

One can conceive, too, of a regrouping and unification of such forces in different forms. However, those processes should not be mechanistic, as was the case in some countries, with outward unity achieved through the suppression of very real differences, which later erupted in a sharp crisis. Is there any need, for instance, hastily to reorganise an efficient national front into a sort of vanguard Marxist party, in which Marxists and non-Marxists find themselves side by side and in which problems that crop up between them are settled by feudal methods, even by force?

The Fresh Impetus of the October Revolution

J.S. The hard lot of socialism in the USSR has long been one of the chief causes of the weakening of the communist movement. I think it was Enrique Berlinguer who once said that the socialist countries had lost their appeal.

M.H. He said so of the October Revolution . . .

J.S. What followed the period when the number of people inspired by the ideals of the Revolution kept growing rapidly all over the world was what I'd call the boomerang effect: the exposures made at the 20th CPSU Congress came as a strong blow for the members of our party, for all those who sympathised with existing socialism. The anti-communist campaigns of the Cold War period also detracted considerably from its image.

The situation was further aggravated by the misconceptions of the socialist countries that were shaped in the West under the influence of the bourgeois mass media, first and foremost, television. When there had been no television, our comrades used to label as anti-Soviet propaganda the stories that there were long lines in front of shops in the Soviet Union and Poland and that there was nothing to buy. But when those lines appeared on TV screens, there was nothing to say. To be absolutely frank, the well-known events in Czechoslovakia and Poland and the sending of Soviet troops into Afghanistan ultimately repelled many Westerners from socialism.

I want to add here that what I have just said is not all the explanation of our party's retreat. The party itself shares responsibility for it. In the Cold War years, for instance, we were countering anti-Soviet campaigns more efficiently and retained public trust in those cantons where Communists continued their mass activities in spite of all difficulties. But the party sustained heavy losses (to the point of the dissolution of party organisations in some of the cantons in the German-speaking part of the country) where its influence depended primarily on the international prestige of existing socialism and the communist movement.

What I mean is that we should recognise our own mistakes and failings, just as we should be aware of the responsibility of the whole of the communist movement both on an international scale and at the level of individual countries.

M.H. No one should shirk responsibility and blame every misfortune on external factors. But no party is free from their impact, as you have rightly noted, due to the international character of our movement and also to the image of existing socialism. The situation in the socialist countries and their policies are most important among those factors. There were periods when existing socialism had an immense positive effect on the national, social and democratic struggles in various countries.

J.S. When did it end?

M.H. It's hard to say. Existing socialism has always stimulated the development of our struggle — but at some points the negative aspects you have mentioned prevailed and produced a braking effect, sometimes quite strong. We have now recognised that the leading socialist country, the Soviet Union, was stagnant for over 15 years.

I agree, too, with your characteristic of the role of the Western mass media, which did not take long to produce a simplistic and distorted image of socialism. Anti-Soviet propaganda cleverly exploited the difficulties and mistakes of socialism to drive home its chief point: socialism means stagnation and low living standards and everything is better in the West. That view gained ground even in the underdeveloped countries and even among people who were sympathetic towards Communists.

People did not understand that what they witnessed was not the essence of socialism but a certain phase of limited duration, when the new system had not yet proved all of its advantages or achieved its goals. In spite of all our efforts to set the record straight (some of those efforts, however, were rather ham-fisted), the signs of stagnation, played up by the Western mass

media, were undermining the belief in the communist ideal and in the perspective we were advocating.

For instance, we are asked questions about Poland. The countries which made socialist revolutions have achieved great progress, of course, we explain, but their society is far from ideal and they have their own problems, contradictions, and mistakes.

We also say: why should we be held responsible for what is taking place thousands of kilometres away? No one is going to blame our Polish comrades for the mistakes Communists may make in Tunisia. But it is a fact that people judge us by what is taking place in the socialist world.

Such is the controversial reality and this is what makes the 27th CPSU Congress and perestroika historical landmarks, to my mind. They inspire the hope for the progress of the socialist countries and restore the appeal of the new system. The international liberation, democratic and revolutionary movement is thus being given a fresh impetus.

J.S. The capitalist system is afflicted with a far deeper crisis than the socialist world, and uses methods of coping with it that can only worsen the situation. Since the US launched a neoliberal policy under the slogans of deregulation and unrestrained free enterprise, poverty has been growing unprecedentedly — and that in the world's richest land! The US federal budget deficit has reached astronomic proportions. Similar examples are offered by other West European countries.

The nature of socialism was distorted at some point, which caused a serious crisis and in some instances even veritable tragedies. We think that those were the growing pains of the new socio-economic and political organism. But it does not need capitalist recipes to resolve its problems. The cure has now been found for the ailment which was for years sapping the strength of existing socialism and the entire communist movement. This cure is democracy and glasnost.

M.H. The right track has now been taken, I think. It confirms the truth of those who criticised us constructively, but not of our class foes, who keep claiming that socialism is bad and capitalism is good. Having dropped the utopian view of socialism and 'automatic' solidarity with it, we should now disabuse ourselves, too, of the apocalyptic vision of capitalism as a society afflicted with perennial stagnation and absolute recession. Capitalism has adapted itself to change and even scored some impressive achievements in the development of its productive forces. The price is, naturally, acute contradictions, unemployment, plant closures and especially the exploitation of countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Tunisia's experience shows that capitalism is hardly capable of resolving the Third World's problems. Capitalism is to blame for the prevalent poverty there, for the dirty war in Vietnam, for famine in Africa and for fascism in Chile.

As for socialism, you are quite right that it is a historically young system. For a long time we idealised it and excused all the socialist countries' actions out of solidarity with the new system, which we thought we should defend at all times. Today, too, it is a part of the Communists' common cause. But since the 20th CPSU Congress our vision of socialism has become more realistic and therefore more Marxist.

Those who would like to make people believe that socialism has gone bankrupt are wrong. Conversely, it has been able to assert itself in spite of all its mistakes, weaknesses and set-backs, even in those countries which were not highly developed and had no democratic tradition. Socialism has proved viable in spite of the initially unfavourable circumstances and countless difficulties.

No Need to Feel Isolated

J.S. Generally speaking, I think that the international communist movement is already past the low ebb of its influence and is again on the rise. World developments are shifting in the direction that is favourable to us. How fast that rise will be depends to a large extent on whether we are able adequately to react to new issues that are coming to the fore not just in international politics but also in the social life of individual countries.

What I mean is the problems of disarmament, environmental protection, the right to live, the fight against famine in the Third World, etc. It is those issues rather than the physical or economic aspects of development that are in the focus of attention of Swiss progressives today. This seems natural at a time when the working people do not have to fight for having their basic needs met and when the socialist perspective has not yet inspired much enthusiasm.

The SPL formulated its answers to those questions in the concept of the peace-oriented economy that was put forward by the latest party congress (1987). It provides primarily for an end to the arms race and the reconversion of all the resources and scientific achievements to meeting human needs. Another demand is the restructuring of economic relations with developing countries to facilitate their progress and eventually to improve economic prospects for the industrialised Western countries themselves. The third aspect of our concept is the achievement of harmony with Nature and the subordination of all human activity, including economic activity, to the needs of environmental protection and the rational use of natural resources. The fourth point is the establishment of relations of peaceful coexistence between states belonging to different social systems and the development of ties and contacts between all the peoples.

Today there are far broader possibilities for advance towards all those goals. The 1980s have seen strong movements for peace, nuclear disarmament and environmental protection unfolding in Switzerland, just as in other West European countries, and ever new actions of solidarity with the peoples of the Third World are launched. And the view of the army has changed dramatically! It was long considered an inexorable force, but precious little of that notion has survived over the past 20 years. We saw a strong US force get bogged down and take a licking in Vietnam. Israel's actions in the occupied lands also demonstrate the limitations of armed force even in actions against people armed only with stones. There are other facts which have made most people today, at least in the West, take an absolutely negative view of the army. Communists should give thought to that phenomenon, I think. Our party, for instance, poses the

question of whether Switzerland needs the army, what its role is and whether it meets any social needs.

M.H. It is indeed characteristic of the world today that most of its problems are international, even global. You cannot withdraw into a shell. The Palestinians' uprising, the Israeli repression, airline hijackings, Chernobyl, disarmament problems, foreign debts, famine in Africa and the fratricidal Iran-Iraq war — all make up the world we live in. It is totally interdependent. Take the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. We welcome the Soviet Union's decision not just because it is good in itself but also because it has had a beneficial effect on the situation in our region and in the world as a whole. I see, moreover, that even the Swiss, who have resolved many of their own problems, do not stay aloof of the contradictions which threaten the world with global upheavals.

J.S. It takes a broad alliance of the forces of progress and reason both on the international and on the national level to find solutions to those contradictions. True, the historical split of the left forces into the Communists, the Socialists and the Trotskyites still is a determinant of the situation in the working class movement. Fundamental theoretical differences persist between the Communists and the Social Democrats, for instance. But it would be interesting to discuss them today in the light of the new concept which is gaining ground in the socialist countries.

By and large, there are now far better possibilities to form alliances and broad fronts. I ask myself the question, for example, which Mikhail Gorbachov has posed on more than one occasion: is today's capitalism able to overcome its crises without recourse to war? If it is, then in what way, and how should the left forces respond? We have here an area for discussion and rapprochement between the Communists, the Social Democrats, the ecologists, other progressive organisations and the peace and national liberation movements.

M.H. As we noted at the beginning of our discussion, the revolutionary movement has become far broader. The Communists are no longer alone in fighting for the cause of the working people and for national interests. They do not have a monopoly of truth — which no one has, incidentally — but they are not the only vehicle of the ideas of social progress either. And it is a good thing that we are no longer alone, as we were over the years, in our struggle, although the emergence of other forces with their own ideologies and forms of action onto the political scene naturally poses new problems and creates a new ideological situation, which cannot be considered in terms of outdated dogmas.

J.S. Our practice indicates that the possibilities inherent in the policy of alliances depend primarily on the actual correlation of forces. When the SPL has an influence on the mass of people and when other parties need its support, they readily enter into electoral and political alliances with Communists.

The success of the policy of alliances depends also on our ability to reach out to different sections of the population. We are now attaching priority attention to youth. There are quite a few difficulties. For instance, young Swiss progressives are willing to work for a specific cause, such as support for revolutionary Nicaragua or the movement for peace and nuclear

disarmament, but not for the sake of supporting some abstract ideology. That is why we try to be together with young people in their efforts to get their problems resolved without asking them to support the SPL on other issues. When we find common ground with young men and women and succeed in involving them in our actions, even on a one-off basis, they often change their view of the Communists for the better.

As we establish and develop contacts with other forces, we should learn to be equanimous about their representatives holding views that differ from ours, not to overemphasise differences and not to try to impose our way of thinking on one and all. What the Communists and those forces have in common is far more important. The SPL has been following this line for some time now and it is beginning to pay back.

M.H. The public view of the Communists has changed for the better in Tunisia in the past few years, I think. Our 9th Congress explicitly stated in 1987 that we did not have a monopoly of truth. We stressed that the country's problems could be resolved through the broadest possible alliance of forces willing to stand for the interests of the nation, of the working people and for the progressive way of development.

Then we launched our efforts in that direction — and they were anything but easy. The very idea of alliances was a stranger to Tunisian politics for a long time. The ruling Destour party believed that it could cope with all the problems singlehanded and banned all other political forces. But the party was hit by a deep crisis as a result and had to recognise the principle of pluralism.

When new political associations had emerged in the country, we raised the question of joint actions. The first reaction was close to shock. "How is it possible to work together if there are ideological differences?" an opposition leader asked in a conversation with me. To him cooperation seemed unthinkable — but we have clearly understood that the greater the differences between potential allies, the more important it is to find points of contact, a common denominator, so to speak.

We initiated a search for common ground, first and foremost in the struggle for the assertion of democratic freedoms. The newly-established political associations eventually realised that they would not cope with their avowed tasks singlehanded and needed contacts with other forces, including the Communists. Our party also needs such contacts. That was how a new political trend has emerged and become reality in Tunisia. People of differing views meet regularly to discuss their common problems and achieve unity in action. We no longer feel isolated in our country.

J.S. I would like to stress in conclusion that we may have a well-thought-out policy line and brilliant ideas — but all will be in vain if we fail to bring them home to the working people, to the entire population. Communists are to revise entirely their publishing, journalistic and propaganda work and to be more active on the cultural scene. We will win over to our side more supporters only when people get a correct idea of the way of life we are trying to achieve.

It is a common mistake of communist parties, I think, that they have failed promptly to realise how drastically the very means of propagation of ideas have changed in today's society and how much faster they are

circulating. Until recently we were reluctant to comment on many developments in the world, especially on those related to socialist countries, and were slow to answer 'unpleasant' questions. Now the situation is changing for the better. Our foes, however, have immense resources. Aware that it is no longer possible to destroy socialism by force, it is trying to kill the hope for socialism and has mobilised all its mass media for the purpose. But we are just at the start of the road in terms of the skilful use of the media and the efficient methods of popularising our views. It would be very good if *World Marxist Review* could help us here more vigorously because the task in hand concerns not just individual parties but the communist movement as a whole.

M.H. The more initiative we display in our theoretical and practical quests and the more vigorous our efforts for broad alliances, the less the danger of the weakening and marginalisation of communist parties in their struggle for the interests of workers and the people as a whole.

In the present circumstances of far-reaching change we are to shed dogmatism and passivity and to pursue a policy of openness towards all the progressive left forces, while preserving our image and special role. It is self-isolation and errors, both of a rightist and of a leftist nature, that along with the inability to understand the true character of objective difficulties pose the gravest danger to the Communists, to all revolutionaries.

Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol.6, p. 497.

Socialism: New Developments in Theory and Practice

The Hungarian Lessons of Four Decades

Rezső Nyers — Political Committee
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FOR the Hungarian Communists the year 1988 is of great significance. It marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of Hungary. Besides that, four decades ago the Communists of the country

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The Hungarian Party Conference in May elected him a member of the Political Committee of the CC HSWP. He has been a member of the Party since 1940.

united with the Social Democratic Party. This year is also significant for being the year of the holding of the Hungarian Party Conference. This was an event of great basic importance. The decisions adopted at it, in all probability, will exert a profound influence on the development of the party and on its policy in the near future.

The conference took a decision on a fundamental shift in the direction of comprehensive reforms in all the spheres of social life; prerequisites were created for a renovation of the party and the streamlining of the political system; the course was reaffirmed for a continuation and — at the same time — renovation of the policy of establishing alliances, and the tasks were defined which serve to implement the programme of stabilisation of the subsequent economic and social development of the country.

That is why this year enables us to analyse in detail the chief moments in the life of the party, which, from our point of view, can be very instructive in the formation of a policy of the future.

At a Historic Turning Point

The political map of today's Europe (as that of the Far East) was basically determined in 1947-1948. It was in those years that the continent's western and eastern parts chose a perspective. However, they did not act independently but rather reacting to each other as they tried to work out different answers to the question of the way forward, which the political forces of that period regarded as 'cardinal'. Much has since changed in both parts of Europe, but the principles then enunciated for solving basic problems are valid to this day.

The East European countries chose the road of socialism in the late 1940s. Three factors appear to have been behind this truly historic turn: the arrest of the process of bourgeois development and necessity of speedier modernisation; a negative attitude to the possibility of integration with Western Europe and fears associated with their own low competitiveness and possible economic crises; and the attractiveness of the experience of socialist construction in the USSR, which offered a model of rapid and comprehensive development.

Most Western political scientists hold that the rise and development of socialism in Europe was conditioned by its division into blocs and by the influence of the Soviet Union. Some even attribute exceptional significance to the latter. Of course, the impact of the USSR after the Second World War was great, without an understanding of which we can hardly ascertain the meaning of those events in any profound manner. However, the post-war development of Eastern Europe was in greater measure the result of deep historical processes. The striving of the workers' parties for unity and socialism was an *independent* phenomenon which by then already had a 60 to 70-years-old past. It was brought on by the entire course of history. The increased influence of the Soviet Union after the Second World War only developed and consolidated these historical tendencies.

After the passage of decades, one can formulate the dramatic question that then faced the socialist countries as follows: Could the East European states take the path of building a new society through the evolution of the

political systems that existed there or was there the need for radical political shifts? Could they retain parliamentarism, a multi-party system, a pluralism of social interests and a constitutionality interpreted in the spirit of the early post-war years? Or was all this no good and subject to abolition? The answer did not come overnight, nor was it simple. Practice decided it all: political systems, essentially like the Soviet, emerged in the countries of the region in the early 1950s.

A large part of these states did not arrive at the socialist political system in an organic way, through deepening the process of the formation of people's democracy started in 1944-1945 — for example in Hungary — but by interrupting their development under the impact of the Cold War, and also on the basis of quick improvisations and still rather inchoate concepts.

The first symptom of a shift towards socialism, the first harbinger of social changes was the unification of their communist and social democratic parties. Initially that occurred in East Germany in 1946, but it did not receive any direct continuation in the rest of these countries. Then followed the 'wave' of 1948: the parties merged in Romania, then in Bulgaria and Hungary, and at the end of the year in Czechoslovakia and Poland.

Beyond all doubt, the merger of the workers' parties led to an enormous concentration of forces, to changes on the political scene and enabled them to assume the initiative. This produced great hopes in the ranks of the movement.

But let us ask ourselves: Did this unification really bring a new quality to the policy of the Communists? As to the ideological, spiritual growth of the workers' parties in the period from the late 1940s to 1956, I think that the answer will be negative. Having united, the parties made no effort at any new political synthesis which would have helped to generalise, at a higher level, the advantages and experience of the communist and social democratic movements. In fact, the communist parties, having absorbed the partners' strength, were still pursuing their invariable course. Moreover, they soon abandoned it too, as exemplified by Hungary, and moved on to the track of Stalin's policy, which declared the end of the Popular Front era in Europe, suggesting not a quest for a new line but a return to the pre-war times.

However, after 1956 the need for a new political synthesis became strongly manifest in the international communist movement; initially not as a whole and not very consistently, but rather in waves. Moreover, the striving for renewal did not flow from the idea of unity between the Communists and the Social Democrats, although it too exerted an influence.

The first shift in policy occurred after the 20th CPSU Congress when Communists spoke out against the sectarian, dogmatic way of thinking and broke with the Stalinist perceptions of a political map of the world. A second tide began with the policy of reforms of the 1960s in the socialist countries, and also with the search for its own path in the communist movement of the Western states in the 1970s. The third, and probably the largest, wave of transformations is mounting in our days. Here most of the socialist countries and a significant part of the parties of the non-socialist

world are actively participating in the quest along with the Soviet Union and China. This time the desire for a new ideological and political synthesis stands out more clearly. Together with economic changes, political reforms are now being put on the agenda in many states.

Today, as we mark the 40th anniversary of the merger of the parties in a number of countries, we can without bias, in a Marxist spirit, look back on the path traversed, consider the opportunities unused, ponder over the lessons of the past and more confidently get down to elaborating a new concept of the communist policy of alliances. In our view, the *contemporary epoch demands a broader-based unification of forces than the United Front of the communist and social democratic movements*, though it continues to be important and in many countries can determine the character of Left policy.

Party Mergers and the Turn Towards Socialism

In Hungary, the Communist and Social Democratic parties united twice: in 1919 and 1948, both mergers taking place after the full capture of political power in the country. The specific external and internal conditions played a role here. Seven decades ago the union was short-lived, just as the existence of the Soviet Republic itself. The 1948 endeavour proved more enduring, which confirmed that there had been a strong base for a united socialist workers' party in the country and objective conditions for a choice of the road to socialism.

Not only are the two mergers separated from each other by 29 years, they are also distinguished by a host of attendant phenomena in the two parties' political struggle waged against the common enemy now within an organised, now within a spontaneous united front, in the process quite often revealing internal contradictions and certain peculiarities in approach. The watershed in the 1920s and the first half of the 1930s was that the Communists fought directly for a socialist revolution, whilst the Social Democrats concentrated on democratic change. The experience and lessons of Soviet government in Hungary were also assessed differently.

The Hungarian Soviet Republic emerged and was directed by the Communists and Social Democrats within the framework of a united party. Later they too considered the revolution as their own, but their views on substantive issues differed. The identity of evaluations was observable with regard to the heavy economic legacy, the role of external armed intervention and the resistance of the ruling classes, but the approach would become highly contradictory when it concerned the policy of Soviet power. The supporters of Bela Kun¹ in the Communist Party blamed the working class for failing to uphold the Soviet Republic. Later they put forward a thesis about a betrayal by Social Democracy and called the unification of the parties a mistake because it had prevented the Communists from acting more resolutely in the struggle for Soviet power. The Social Democrats, for their part, recognised the historical necessity of the Soviet Republic, but considered it to have been premature. From their point of view, the task of continuing the democratic revolution was more pertinent then. They subjected to criticism the policy of Red terror, the

lack of political tolerance among the Communists and their hastiness in socialising the means of production.

The two workers' parties came to the liberation of the country in 1945 with different assessments of the experience of their first union. However, this provoked no conflict between them, nor any political strife, because they saw the post-war period as a new situation. The Communist Party leaders who returned to Hungary from Moscow and the Social Democrats both held that the policy adhered to by the Hungarian Soviet Republic should not be pursued because it had lost its relevance. The joint anti-fascist struggle was of enormous importance instead, and so were later the defence of common interests in the confrontation with internal reaction and the similarity in appraisal of the international processes.

The 1948 unification of our two parties occurred under more favourable external and internal conditions. They both showed the intention to create a united front without emphasising the tendency for further isolation. The period between the First and Second World Wars and the bitter experience of the Horthy regime when the Communists and Social Democrats alike faced cruel persecution had brought them closer together, and this manifested itself in their foreign and domestic policy assessments. The shaping of a common ideological platform was very important.

Let us take note of the circumstances under which closer links between the two Hungarian workers' parties were now being forged. First and foremost, they saw their ultimate aim in a *revolutionary transformation of society and the construction of socialism*. Both parties took Marxism as a basis for working out their perception of society and their theory of its development. And, finally, both parties in their ideological and political activity associated the struggle for national progress with international solidarity.

Even 40 years after, it is worth recalling how the uniting parties in a policy statement of 1948 characterised their preceding practice. The chief mistake of the Social Democratic Party, notes this document, was that it had not taken a course for a democratic popular revolution where the working class in alliance with the peasantry is the leading force, but had placed its bets on reforms and an alliance with the bourgeoisie. As to the mistakes of the Communist Party in the past, the most important one was that it had not fought with sectarianism in its own ranks and for a long time failed to recognise the significance of bourgeois-democratic transformations in Hungary. For precision's sake it should be noted: the given mistakes are on the conscience of the reformist wing of Social Democracy and the 'Left' dogmatic current inside the Communist Party, but by no means of the entire movement, although there were periods when the mistakes of individual groups exerted a decisive influence on the movement as a whole.

The document on unification, however, did not point to an important distinction, notably that so long as the Communist International existed, no independent elaboration of their own strategy was possible for the parties that constituted it, whereas the Socialist International had no such restriction. In the communist movement, accordingly, a one-sided and rigid alignment to the policy of the USSR became characteristic; the

touchstone of internationalism was one's attitude to the Soviet Union, one's fullest and unquestioning acceptance of the policy of the CPSU. The deforming influence of such an approach lingers on to this day. It explains why no communist party or leader in our movement raised their voice against the reprisals of 1936-1938, which shocked the progressive forces of the entire world and inflicted serious damage on the international working-class movement. Not only the reformist wing, but also the revolutionary current in Social Democracy could not accept these processes, they declared protests which led to new antagonisms, this weakening the anti-fascist united front.

Was there an alternative to the unification in 1948 of the two workers' parties in Hungary? Was a shift towards socialism possible which would have permitted them to create a united front? From the theoretical point of view, this cannot be denied. However, in reality, under the conditions then prevailing, such a course, in our opinion, was ruled out.

The situation did not make predominant and acceptable the reality of existence of the two separate parties at least because the uncertainty in the correlation of forces between them would have been a constant source of friction; and political rivalry would have increased rather than decreased, containing a danger of subsequent conflicts. Such a situation arose repeatedly, for example, in the autumn of 1947 when differences between Hungary's two workers' parties were more acute than between the exponents of socialist and bourgeois views.

Through their better organisation and by an effective daily policy, the Communists succeeded in making considerable inroads into the positions of the Social Democrats, whose number in the early post-war years was still great. But by 1947 the Communists had overtaken them in the degree of impact on the masses, and moreover, surpassed them by increasing their influence on post allocation in the field of government.

This led to a despondency among the Social Democrats, who sought the reasons for these failures outside the movement. Their pessimism was used for anti-communist purposes by the right wing of Social Democracy. However this did not rectify the situation, and the party found itself in a state of crisis, which could have negatively affected the formation of a young Hungarian democracy that had not yet consolidated its positions in the internal political arena.

Having said this, it becomes clear that at the beginning of 1948, the creation of a lasting united front of the two workers' parties was only possible by way of a *full organisational merger*. Among the Communists only small groups opposed this, there were more opponents among Social Democracy. Isolating its right wing was therefore the basis for success. At the same time the left wing had to win over the majority of party members. For the aim would not have been achieved had the Communists striven for an alliance with the left-wing Social Democrats only. Participation in the united party of all who stood for the common cause was welcomed. This was achieved with comparative rapidity, in an energetic drive, though, regrettably, a number of mistakes were committed. Fortunately, it was not only the left groups of Social Democracy that joined the Communist Party as scattered forces, but there merged together large organisations each

incorporating 800,000 people and representing the 'two great political currents'.

The policy statement on unification contained a number of theses which have not stood the test of time, but the overall thrust of the document remains positive to this day. The party of the working people embarked on the right track. Soon, however, retreating from the programme, it swerved to the wrong line, which brought it to the impasse of 1956. However, that happened not because of the union, but precisely in consequence of the loss of its orientation towards this idea.

In the Trap of Stalinism

In the second half of June 1948 a meeting of the Information Bureau of Communist Parties took place in Bucharest where the Communist Party of Yugoslavia was subjected to criticism. Having negatively assessed its activity, the Bureau obliged the Communists to renounce the policy of the Popular Front. Thus began a conformist period in the life of the East European parties, the conception of which was some sort of fusion of the Stalinist course for international security, the transformation of the world revolution into a struggle between military blocs and a dogmatico-scholastic understanding of social development. The Marxist-Leninist interpretation of socialism was oversimplified and distorted with the help of theoretical manipulations.

The well-known Hungarian Communist philosopher Gyorgy Lucacs in a series of articles written after 1956, for example 'The Present and Future of Democratisation', analysed Stalin's interpretation of socialism in theory and in practice, which differed substantially from the ideas of Marx and Lenin; moreover, it could not be called the creative legacy of Marxism. One of the main features of Stalinism, Lucacs found, was the liquidation of democratic forms and creation of a pyramid of power at each point of which there sat the local political chief, a 'little Stalin' so to speak. A second feature was the subordination of theory to the requirements of tactics. That destroyed the very-essence of the Marxist method: a critical approach to social relations. If we add that Stalin's economic model tore away the socialist economy from the international economic processes, making it effectively autarchic and replacing the objective market laws with a subjective state will and artificially constructed value indicators, then a comprehensive picture of Stalinism emerges before our eyes.

We mention this not because the united workers' party in Hungary was a product of Stalinism, but because it started its activity precisely in those circumstances and precisely then did it acquire its political face.

Soon after the unification of the two parties, Mátyás Rákosi² and his entourage began a campaign against Social Democracy and indeed against any Left currents (be it communist or bourgeois) which tried independently and critically to react to individual steps of the country's ruling party. This found expression in the persecution of concrete individuals. Prisons and newly-built correctional labour camps were soon packed with detainees most of whom consisted of thinking people of Left orientation.

With regard to the former Social Democrats the Rákosi group applied

the policy of establishing alliances that had operated till the Seventh Congress of the Comintern: to win the masses and isolate the leaders. In the 1950s in the headquarters of the Working People's Party there functioned only a few ex-Social Democrats, whereas in the party itself they constituted a half. Such an 'alliances' line had not brought the desired results in the times of the Comintern, too. In the 1950s in Hungary, with full power in the hands of just one group, this course produced tragic effects. The leadership of the party gradually became isolated from the masses, while in society there shrunk the number of its allies who backed, encouraged and criticised it. At first glance, socialist power appeared to be solid. There was no open criticism being levelled at it, but in actual fact the strength and influence of the party steadily declined. Dramatic, although absolutely not fortuitous under the circumstances, was the bankruptcy of this policy in 1956.

The historical lessons of the development of socialism in Eastern Europe have a significance not only for the Communists of this region. They are of theoretical and political value for the whole of the international communist movement. But they can only be properly applied in an atmosphere of publicity and openness.

Crisis situations and upheavals merit special attention. Their number has increased over the last few decades: among them, we believe, are the Berlin events of 1953, the political crisis in Hungary and Poland in 1956, the internal difficulties of the CPSU in 1957 and 1964, the political crises of 1968 (Czechoslovakia), 1970 and 1978 (Poland). Those were only the conflicts within the system that manifested themselves and are well known (but not yet fully investigated). Besides that, there were (and still are) innumerable hidden conflicts, discussions, confrontations of viewpoints leading up to a shift in economics, in assessment of cultural processes and in ideological and foreign-policy questions. The only effective antidote for the Stalinist method of concealing problems from the public is the Gorbachov practice: an *absolute glasnost in the communist movement*. If the history of our development is revealed (together with mistakes), then the future will undoubtedly belong to us.

In Hungary, the united workers' party was in the trap of Stalinism for almost a decade. It was with great difficulty that we freed ourselves from the shackles, but the remnants of those practices lingered on in us and we are yet to part definitively with them.

Towards a New Political Synthesis

"A full break with Stalinism", to use Lucacs phrase, is unachievable only as a result of sharp criticism on a *theoretical* plane. Though this, of course, is a premise too, on the whole it's rather the necessity of the new practice. Back in 1956, the Hungarian party took a decision to break with Stalinism, but it was not then all-embracing and explicit. There existed an opinion that the phenomenon should be treated more narrowly. Alternative was the point of view calling for a broad critique of Stalinism. The narrow view demanded only a renunciation of the personality cult and of lawlessness and that we show more concern for the growth of the living standards of the masses through a better income distribution. By contrast, the broad

critical approach was directed at both replacing the economic model and transforming the political superstructure. The parallel existence of these two views explains much of what happened in the subsequent years.

Commencing in 1957, the paramount task in Hungary was how to effectively interest the peasantry in a policy of reforms (by way of giving up the compulsory supplies and introducing incentive purchasing prices), while tangibly improving the provision of our cities with food. Those steps were in close interrelationship. Later, in 1961-1965, the question of the peasantry re-emerged, this time in connection with the choice of a 'cooperative model'. The followers of the traditional doctrine (champions of Soviet-type kolkhozes) clashed with the protagonists of real self-management. In this political duel the opinion of the reforms gradually prevailed, and during the economic reform it definitively gained ground.

The Hungarian experience, just as the Yugoslav and later the Chinese, testifies that agriculture is a good enough starting-point for carrying out a successful *comprehensive reform*. First, in centralised economies the system of management remains alien to the peasant, it does not become an integral part of his way of life. Secondly, it is easier to get the mechanism of market prices to work in the countryside. Thirdly, there is the possibility of a rapid growth in the supply of farm products.

The viability of reforms in a socialist country depends on the extent in which society as a whole assists or, on the contrary, obstructs their implementation. In the latter case, because of a multitude of 'red lights' they all but lose their positive influence and the work in reorganised agencies and institutions slips back into the old groove as a result of small and large 'corrections' and turns on as it did, again giving rise to the discontent of people. In our case the policy of reforms pursues the aim of achieving a truly revolutionary transformation of the system as a whole. Right is Comrade Gorbachov when he says that it is a continuation of the socialist revolution in present-day conditions.

Our reforms are about a socialist modernisation of society. In a sense this means that in most of the fraternal countries, the modernisation of the backward economy and socialism being built and marching along the path of further development must exist as a single, integral process. In our case modernisation presupposes the attainment of a level of technology comparable with the world's best standards, a reasonable adaptation and, finally, the use of their own intellectual potential for specific reorganisation in different fields. The socialist character of this process is determined by the fact that it is not based on the advantages of individual classes or strata, but involves a kind of social balance which reflects the differentiation of society, limited by a fair framework: the material well-being of citizens depends on the labour productivity of each. But economic or political power is not concentrated in the hands of individual people or groups. The ultimate goal of the reforms is higher material prosperity and a richer cultural life for the broad masses. In sum, it can be said that the *essence of our policy of reforms is a new content of modernisation, greater democracy and modern socialism*.

These tasks engender their own priorities and solutions in different countries. The content of reforms and the tactics of their implementation

also differ substantially. At the same time the general requirements stand out which demonstrate an identical course of socialist development in the interests of the entire society. These requirements, we believe, are as follows:

— a complete renewal of the system of functioning of the economy and its institutions, this leading to swift technological progress, productivity growth by leaps and bounds and a more efficient utilisation of the social material base. Such a shift can occur if the centre of gravity of economic management is transferred from state agencies to the direct participants of economic life — enterprises, cooperatives, trade unions, associations of consumers. That is, the initiative of the working people and production organisers, and the organs of representatives of their interests become the driving force of society. The role of the state, in contrast (apart from its administrative functions), will be to ensure an unimpeded realisation of the social processes and to determine the general direction of advance. All this requires of us, the Communists, that we should enter into an 'historical agreement' with market relations and accept the tendency towards market equilibrium as a social requirement so as to use and improve both central and local planning;

— place the state apparatus under greater and more stringent democratic control than at present. This will require many innovations: an increased role for self-governing representative and state bodies in the passage of decisions and supervision over their fulfilment; a reform of the electoral system, which will grant the right of political decision to citizens when they can realistically prefer some or other candidates or suggestions of a political nature; an expansion of the activity of representative and subsidiary systems that represent the interests of the various sections or the intellectual currents recognised by society; the openness of the press and the accessibility of any kind of information for the masses;

— substantially ensuring the leading political role of the party and the abolition of its administrative functions. This is badly needed, for experience shows that the expansion of the party's administrative role, its conversion into a 'superstar organ', lowers the real influence of the Communists on society, weakening their direct links with the masses. In our opinion, it is necessary to break with Stalin's concept of the party. Let the government administer, but the party should form it; let the government be responsible for state policy, and Parliament ensure systematic control. It is essential to maintain equilibrium between democracy and centralism within the party;

— by tying in more closely to international cultural, economic, political and ideological currents, to work for the common good. This is to be ensured by free scientific research, by a recognition of the diversity of cultures and the need to expand international political contacts. It is essential, in our view, to do away with the economic isolation brought on by Stalinist times. In the process, foreign trade will cease to be a political activity, and imports will not be looked upon as disrespect for nationally-manufactured goods. Within the CMEA framework and in regard to all socialist states we consider it imperative to decisively give up economic nationalism (which necessarily combines with cultural). However, we think

that here the recipe for a solution does not lie in supranational authorities. May there be a free exchange of material and spiritual values. Thus, it is important to turn face to the world, and not to close the exits and entrances in all directions.

The essence of the current policy of reforms is not 'minor repairs' of society, but the creation of a new political synthesis in the socialist countries.

Communists and the World

World problems and international politics now penetrate into the internal life of any country more strongly and deeper than was the case previously. The activeness of the communist movement is invariable in questions of war and peace, in the condemnation of the arms race and the policy of establishing military blocs, and in solidarity with the peoples seeking liberation or trying to uphold their progressive gains. These are the principal knots of world politics on which the communist parties consistently adhere to their elaborated strategic guidelines. But new political and tactical questions arise in the international sphere: for example, which alliances are permissible and on what basis can they be concluded in the interests of the common cause?

A number of global problems have arisen or aggravated during the past twenty-five years. They include, for example, the protection of the environment; more broadly, ecological balance, the use of sources of energy in the common interest, the economic and cultural backwardness of considerable groups of states, the obstacles in the path of expanding trade, the instability of the international financial system, the spontaneous redistribution of capital and credits, the possibility of serious involvement in regional and international integratory processes, a just settlement of national relations and a humane solution of the problem of small peoples.

Obviously there is no such movement in the world as would be capable of single-handedly working out at least a theoretical conception for the solution of all these problems, aside from any practical measures. Even though most steadfast politically, the international communist movement is in no position to independently cope with such a colossal task. That is why it is essential to deepen and make systematic the *dialogue with other trends and movements and to look for a possible voluntary formation of a new international united Left front.*

This will demand that the communist, socialist and social democratic movements should search for meeting grounds. Our party has already taken such steps by acting unitedly with the Finnish and Italian Socialists, and the Communists in Czechoslovakia and the GDR have established contacts with the Social Democrats of the FRG. There functions the economico-political group set up by representatives of the HSWP and the Social Democratic Party of Germany, and other possibilities are also emerging.

In the search of new initiatives for a political alliance, one should, obviously, proceed from the premise that internationally the stage is already past when communist and social democratic parties vied for

hegemony in the working class. One should not forget: even if we act together, we may not possess enough resources for the solution of world problems. That is why the *link between the Communists and Social Democrats should be firm*. Let us search for and explore — each separately and all together — what can be done for this.

¹ Bela Kun — the leader of the Hungarian Soviet Republic (1919), founder of the Communist Party of Hungary. — *Ed.*

² Mátyás Rákosi was the leader of the Hungarian Communists from the 1930s up to the start of the crisis of 1956. — *Ed.*

Poverty: Cause And Cure

Cheddi Jagan — General Secretary,
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THE gap in living standards between the industrialised capitalist states and the imperialist-dominated countries is ever widening. For the latter, the situation has become intolerable and explosive.

More than a billion people in the Third World suffer from hunger, malnutrition or inferior nourishment and hunger-related diseases. The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation noted: in the early 1970s the total number of people hit by hunger¹ was 400 million while in 1980 their number climbed to half a billion. In the middle of the current decade their number fluctuates between 600 million and 700 million. Every week a quarter of a million children are dying in what UNICEF calls "the quiet carnage of undernutrition and frequent infection".

The situation has become critical in Africa to which the epicentre of the food crisis has shifted from South Asia. In 1980, 60 per cent of Africa's population lived below the poverty line of \$135 per year, and this was expected to increase to 80 per cent by 1995 if Africa's decline continued.

For the Latin American peoples, life means, on the one hand, extreme wealth for a small minority, and on the other — grinding poverty for the vast majority. The prospects are bleak; the 130 million living in conditions of total poverty or critical poverty in 1980 will rise to 170 million by the year 2000; the 80 million unemployed and under-employed in 1980 will reach 112 million in 1995.

Hunger and poverty in the Asian, African, Latin American and Caribbean countries, whether stark and overt resulting from natural disasters, wars and harvest failures, or chronic — social — and covert, has its roots in external and internal factors. The aggravated situation in the Third World is largely due to its dependent status with the capitalist states, which suffered from a prolonged downturn and cyclical declines in

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production in 1974-75 and 1980-82. This dependency leads to underdevelopment, backwardness, poverty and instability which in turn in a vicious circle strengthen their dependence. It was reinforced by the machinations of the imperialist states and the transnational corporations.

The 'development strategies' of imperialism strengthened the position of foreign capital. Even the ECLAC model, based on import substitution and import-substituting industrialisation and designed to counter the adverse effects of unequal international trade in order to break out of dependency, emphasised reliance on foreign capital for development.

Industrialisation in the Third World greatly expanded, especially in Latin America and the Caribbean. But instead of becoming a liberating force for the Latin American countries, it further subjugated and integrated their economies into the imperialist system. The traditional colonial form of dependency gave way to a neodependency with a deformed type of industrialisation under a new international division of labour, whereby the most advanced and capital-consuming industrial branches requiring high-skilled workforces were reserved for the 'centre' while the 'periphery' Third World countries became the 'intermediate products shops' of world capitalist production. Consequently, external dependence grew and became more complex.

The domination by the transnational monopolies and banks led to a vast financial tribute from the Third World to the developed capitalist countries. The net outflow increased from about \$120 billion to \$200 billion annually during the past five years.

The sum total of profits obtained in Latin America by American monopolies alone from 1945 to 1980 was more than \$120 billion. Through this period the entire flow of American capital (both private and state) to Latin America amounted to only a quarter of this sum. In the 1980's, Latin America became a net exporter of capital. In the 1982-1985 period, according to ECLAC, the net transfer of profits, principal and interest was US\$106 billion.

Imperialism constantly manoeuvres to solve its own crisis by exporting it to the Third World by such measures as high interest rates and protectionism. Especially since 1980, the United States bowed to pressures from its steel, copper, sugar and footwear interests on grounds of 'domestic injury'. The industrialised nations, said the ILO, are blocking world trade and severely limiting growth in developing nations by their increasing protectionism.

Due to the high interest rates in the United States, coupled with recession, IMF-imposed devaluation of developing countries' currencies and declining incomes from exports, there was also a flight of capital. Latin American deposits in US banks total between \$110 and \$170 billion.

Unequal international trade, the 'price scissors', is adding to the financial drain from the Third World countries. In 1981 and 1982, according to UNCTAD, "the prices of basic products — that constitute 40 per cent of Latin American exports and 80 per cent if energy sources are included — dropped almost 31 per cent, the largest decline in the last twenty years."² In 1985 alone, they lost \$65 billion from a fall in prices: food — 10 per cent; metals — 15 per cent; oil — 5.5 per cent. The steep fall

in the price of oil in 1986 also caused the loss of billions of dollars.

Thus, in Latin America, the injection of large amounts of foreign capital and modernisation under the control of Western powers led to growth and finally to crisis, as became evident from 1981.

The debt crisis is simultaneously the cause and effect, or a concentrated expression, of the international crisis.

The total external debt of Third World countries was estimated at around \$1,000 billion at the end of 1986, of which 60 per cent was owed to private sources, including commercial banks. It increased as follows: from \$75 billion in 1970 to \$970 billion in 1985. Africa's aggregate debt stood at \$200 billion at the end of 1987. This was \$400 per head, more than the income of most Africans. Africa's debt service payments rose to more than \$20 billion in 1985. The foreign debt of the ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations) countries is nearly \$100 billion. The Latin American foreign debt increased rapidly from \$10 billion in 1966 to \$410 billion today. According to UNESCO, each child in Latin America and the Caribbean is born with a US\$30,000 debt.

The loans were issued on a 'floating interest rate' basis. This was in keeping with the high interest rate policy pursued by the United States to attract foreign financial resources for the purpose of sustaining increased internal borrowing to cushion huge budget deficits caused by the fuelling of a growing arms expenditure. Every 1 per cent rise of the interest rate caused Third World and Latin American countries' debts to grow annually by \$3.5 billion and \$2.5 billion respectively. Consequently, Latin American debt service payments alone were in excess of \$400 billion in the period from 1978 to 1985.

The 'debt service ratio' — interest and principal payments as a share of export earnings — should not exceed 20 per cent if development and welfare are not to be seriously affected. But it increased from approximately 32 per cent in 1977 to about 59 per cent in 1982.

So huge is the burden of debt payments that many of the big debtor countries are forced to borrow, not for development and amortisation but simply to meet part of their interest payments!

Consequently, development has been seriously affected. The goals and objectives of the UN International Development Strategy (IDS) were not attained. For example, the Regional Programme of Action of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean fell far short of targets. Instead of a GDP growth rate of 7 per cent per year, there was an average growth in the 1981-1985 period of less than 1 per cent per year. To attain the goals of the IDS, the annual growth rate for the rest of the decade would have to be around 14 per cent. Based on past experience and present realities, this will be an impossibility.

Other countries which pursued an independent course have made economic and social progress. Cuba under a different socio-economic system, socialism, is solving the grave problems inherited from the past, in spite of perpetual imperialist harassment and blockade. In the 1981-1985 period, the gross national product there grew by an average rate of 7.3 per cent, well above the 5 per cent forecast, and industrial production increased by 8.8 per cent. Average monthly wages and salaries increased

by 26.4 per cent over the five years. Cuba has the best education and health systems in Latin America and the Caribbean, indeed in the Third World.

In 1982, fearing default on debt payments, particularly by the biggest debtors, and a consequent collapse of the international capitalist banking system and the major US banks, President Reagan reversed his position and agreed to an increase of IMF funding by the US to \$8.4 billion. But the debt problem became more acute. In the next decade, the Third World debt will amount to \$2 trillion. According to ECLAC, the Latin American foreign debt will increase from \$360 billion in 1985 to \$475 billion in 1990 and to \$692 billion in 1995.

The imperialist states have consistently refused to heed the demand of the Third World for *a New International Economic Order and a reform of the international monetary system*. They want to shift the responsibility for the crisis to the Asian, African, Latin American and Caribbean countries, and call for a 'reordering', 'adjustment' and better management.

The focus of the 'adjustment' programmes of the IMF and World Bank on inflation and balance of payments, and not on the totality of factors causing the economic and social malaise, led to the very opposite of what had been intended. The very people, the poor who were to be helped, were further penalised with wage freeze and wage restraint, increased prices and cuts in social services. IMF credits were given supposedly to cope with the negative balance of payments and foreign exchange situation, but in reality they were used to meet debt payments. The IMF's own figures show that the seven leading debtors are currently transferring some \$30 billion a year more than either 'aid' or new loans flowing in. As grinding poverty and riots, as in Brazil, the Dominican Republic and Jamaica in the 1980s, became more prevalent and the countries were caught in a 'debt trap', IMF 'conditionality' became more stringent: reaching out from the traditionally economic to the political spheres. Consequently, more and more states are becoming increasingly critical of imperialism and the imperialist-controlled IMF.

The solution to the crisis of the Third World and the eradication of poverty and hunger require *a revolutionary approach*. Central to this approach must be a recognition that foreign monopoly capital and the transnational corporations and banks are the source of the problem.

The IMF way must be rejected. No country which has followed that way has achieved development and the satisfaction of basic human needs. The free flow of foreign monopoly capital leads to neocolonialism, capitalist dependence, underdevelopment, poverty, the violation of civil and political rights and ultimately the death of democracy.

In Guyana, IMF prescriptions led to a decline in real wages, per capita income and national savings. Real wages declined by about 50 per cent compared with 1977, a year before the first agreement with the IMF was signed. Per capita income is close to 40 or 45 per cent of what prevailed in 1975. Financial dependency also increased. Whereas foreign savings represented about 30 per cent of total savings in 1978, they increased to between 85 and 90 per cent in 1986. This situation has led to further anti-democratic methods of rule and massively rigged elections.

It is necessary for Third World countries to pursue *an independent*

course, both in domestic and foreign policies. Internal adjustment and change are required, but not under the aegis of imperialism and its controlled monetary and financial institutions. A genuinely non-aligned policy with the fundamental principles of opposition to colonialism, neocolonialism, imperialism, racism; support for peaceful coexistence; disarmament and world peace; a New International Economic Order and a New International Information Order should be pursued.

In particular, the January 1986 proposal of the Soviet Union to the UN, which states, inter alia: "Ending the arms race, liquidating nuclear and chemical weapons, and substantially reducing the military expenditure of states are the most realistic and effective sources of funds that are so necessary for the economic and social needs of the less developed countries, and for a solution of such global problems facing mankind as the surmounting of economic backwardness, and the elimination of vast areas of hunger, poverty, epidemic diseases, illiteracy," must be vigorously fought for.

Development is not simply a question of finance and economy. The economic base is integrally related to the superstructure — politics, ideology, institutions and culture. Between them, there is an interconnection, interaction and reciprocal influence. Success will depend on the extent to which there is a harmonious interconnection of all public spheres, a world view and political will.

An integrated revolutionary-democratic, socialist-oriented programme must be elaborated. The anti-imperialist and anti-feudal democratic revolution must be brought to completion. The dominance of foreign monopoly capital must be broken. The 'commanding heights' of the economy must be nationalised. If in certain circumstances, private foreign capital is deemed necessary for development of the economy, strict control must be placed on it to protect the interest of the nation and the local entrepreneurs. Experience in many undeveloped countries shows that unrestricted private foreign monopoly capital not only strangled and subjugated local private enterprise, but also deepened the status of dependent and distorted capitalist development.

In a tri-sectoral economy — state, cooperative and private — the private sector, in the interest of economic growth, can and should grow but to ensure social progress and to bring about growth with real development, equity and the satisfaction of basic human needs; *the state and cooperative sectors must also grow and must at all times be dominant*. And while the entrepreneurs greatly assist economic growth, they must not be put in political command, lest the countries take a capitalist, and given today's realities, a dependent capitalist, course.

Scientific principles in economic planning and planned proportional development of the economy with emphasis on industry and agriculture must be instituted.

Land reform is vital for agricultural and industrial development and for social progress. It is necessary to produce more agricultural goods for self-sufficiency in food; to provide the raw materials for industry; to raise the income of peasants to enable them to buy the locally-manufactured, import-substituting goods; and to prevent the internal migration from the

rural to the urban areas. However, it must not degenerate into minifundia and latifundia; agriculture must be organised on a large-scale, preferably cooperative, and on a scientific basis.

At the centre of the Third World crisis is the debt problem. Tinkering with it will only aggravate the problem later. The neocolonialist debt-for-equity scheme and other imperialist manoeuvres are mere palliatives. The foreign debt must be written off or cancelled. As President Fidel Castro said, it is "not only unpayable but also uncollectable".

The solution of the debt problem must be linked also to a *radical reform of international trade, financial and monetary relations*. The IMF and the World Bank must be reformed to break the imperialist monopoly of these institutions. Aid must not be tied to political conditions. It should be channelled through independent auspices like the UN Relief and Reconstruction Administration (UNRRA), which was set up in 1943 to help the countries that had been ravaged by World War II. If there is a moral justification for the payment of the legitimate debt, there is none for the illegitimate portion, which resulted from the deterioration in the terms of trade, flight of capital, high interest rates and overvaluation of the US dollar. The payments on the legitimate portion of the debt should be *deferred for a period of 10 to 15 years*.

To cope with the intrigues and attacks of imperialism, unity and solidarity must be strengthened. Internally, cooperation between revolutionary democrats and Communists must be forged and strengthened, and the broadest front of all left and democratic forces must be created. Internationally, Third World links with the socialist world must be strengthened. At the economic level, self-reliance and collective self-reliance must be given an anti-imperialist content like the Andean Pact and the Latin American Economic System (SELA). At the political level, Third World cooperation must be expanded to incorporate the world's three revolutionary streams — the socialist community, the national liberation movements of the Third World and the working class and peace forces in the capitalist world. *Worldwide militant solidarity* is necessary to stop rampaging imperialism. Only in this way the revolutionary democratic states like Nicaragua, Syria, Angola, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Kampuchea, etc., which are in the firing line of imperialism, directly or indirectly, can be defended and the revolutionary gains preserved and strengthened.

Development cannot be attained and unemployment, poverty, misery and backwardness cannot be removed without the active and *decisive participation of the people's forces*. Democracy is essential for mass mobilisation in defence of independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity and for building the foundations of socialism. As V. I. Lenin pointed out: "Whoever wants to reach socialism by any other path than that of political democracy, will inevitably arrive at conclusions that are absurd and reactionary both in the economic and the political sense."³

Bureaucratic/administrative and police/military methods of rule, racial and political discrimination, political patronage, corruption and extravagance, which directly and indirectly fetter the productive forces, must be ended.

A state of people's revolutionary democracy must be established which

will transcend bourgeois democracy and its degeneration into a disguised one-party authoritarian dictatorship, where the aim of the state becomes private gain, and effective working people's control is minimal or non-existent. It is essential not merely to transfer ownership of the means of production (factories, land, machines, tools, etc.) from foreign-private to state, but also to change the relations of production. Economic growth and nationalisation alone will not achieve social progress. It is necessary to establish the rule of the working people. Only such a revolutionary, anti-imperialist and anti-feudal state of the working people, aimed at the transfer of the revolution by several stages to socialist revolution, can bring an end to poverty and hunger.

¹ Here hunger of the extreme type based on the individual's energy requirements sufficient only for life on the verge of death. — *Ed.*

² See: M. A. Aguilar, *Crisis and Development Strategies in Latin America*, Budapest, 1985, Vol. 2, p. 20.

³ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, p. 29.

Can The Right Be Pushed Back?

Prof. Bernard Jeune — member of the CC Executive Committee, Communist Party of Denmark

ALL the peace forces view the current relaxation of tensions as a victory. It is all the more inspiring since it has been achieved during the presidency which many people consider the most militaristic government in US history. That victory shows that with the present alignment of world forces it is possible in principle to restrict the more aggressive and dangerous manifestations of imperialism, although its nature has not changed.

Militarism and international reaction, however, are still capable of disrupting the incipient disarmament process and blocking advance towards détente. The conservative and far-right forces still formulate government policies in the United States, Britain, West Germany, Japan and some other capitalist countries, including Denmark where after the May 1988 elections the cabinet was again formed by the Conservative leader Poul Schlüter.

That is why it is still pertinent to ask: *to what extent can the Right be pushed back while it is in power* and be made to respect the demands of the progressive forces and to give up the more reactionary and undemocratic aspects of their policies?

Bernard Jeune was born in Lyons, France, in 1943. His father, a Resistance fighter, perished in a Nazi concentration camp. When a small boy, he moved with his mother to Denmark, where he received medical training. At present he heads a research institute of Odense University. Jeune joined the Communist Party in 1972. For six years he was a senior official of the medical workers' union and now heads a union branch. In 1980 he was elected to the Central Committee and in 1983 to the CC Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Denmark. He also heads the party organisation of Fyn Island.

Answering this question, we should bear in mind that there are far-reaching causes behind the shift of monopoly strategy to the right.

The reaction of imperialism to progressive change in the world has proved sharper than one would expect. The militaristic capitalist groupings are not going to retreat today either. They clamour for a replacement of the American medium-range missiles with 'alternative nuclear systems' and for a 'compensatory' build-up of conventional weapons. They also try to edge West European countries towards participation in Reagan's 'star wars' programme. Economically, they rely on industrial and arms corporations whose interests are becoming intertwined more and more closely with those of US transnationals, especially the ones contributing to the arms race (which, however, does not rule out competition between them).

Neoconservatism is closely linked to the approach of the ruling class to the technological revolution and its *striving to modernise the capitalist economy at the expense of the working people*. The monopoly bourgeoisie also hopes to overcome the long drawn-out economic crisis by drastically revising the conventional concepts and methods of running the socio-economic sphere. The rightist parties try to camouflage this policy with the slogans of 'a return to the free market' and 'deregulation of the economy'. In fact, however, what we have in a number of areas is quite the reverse, namely, larger state interference. In foreign trade, for instance, the state promotes corporate exports in every way by means of domestic financial levers and, more and more often, by promotion on the international markets.

The machinery of state regulation is therefore being adapted to the changed interests and needs of Big Capital. The process involves lower taxes on monopolies, cuts in social spending and, in some countries, denationalisation of whole economic sectors and the abolition of a series of gains achieved by the working class. In Denmark, for example, automatic compensation for price rises with appropriate pay rises that has been in effect for over 30 years has been scrapped in the past five years. Workers now have to make larger instalments to the unemployment insurance fund (with the contributions of the proprietors and the state reduced accordingly). Unemployment benefits have been frozen and are no longer pegged to price rises (they have dropped by 20 per cent in real terms since 1982). The same policy is applied to social security as a whole. More and more people are pensioned off before the retirement age.

The invigoration of the right-wing parties and movements has one more reason: the forces of monopoly capital are seriously worried by the emergence in Western Europe of strong extra-parliamentary, unconventional public movements, primarily the peace movement. They act outside the existing parties, including the bourgeois ones, and often at cross-purposes with them; in several countries they give rise to new political organisations, such as the Greens. Mass movements influence social democracy by radicalising its foreign policy stand (which is especially noticeable in Britain, Denmark and West Germany).

The weakening of the Social Democratic positions has facilitated the shift to the right in the politics of many West European countries: it is a result of the disillusionment of part of the population with the economic and

financial policies which proved inefficient at a time of crisis.

The Social Democratic Party of Denmark, the ruling party throughout the 1970s, never dared to move against corporate profits, although it did try to improve the situation of the working class. It secured the money needed to pursue its policies, including its social policy, primarily through continuously raising taxes on the population. Growing public discontent with this practice was only natural at a time when the economic situation continued to worsen. It was directed, moreover, not only against Social Democratic rule but also against the concept of a 'social', reformist state that was associated with it.

Non-acceptance of the Social Democratic policies, especially by the middle strata, helped the right-wing parties score points. They promised to reduce taxes, to trim down the government bureaucracy, swollen under the Social Democratic governments, and to make the economy more dynamic.

A right-wing populist movement against growing taxes arose in the country in the early 1970s. Most of the capitalist countries are now witnessing this phenomenon, often referred to as the 'new right'. But Denmark was the first West European state in which it emerged as a political organisation: in 1972 the Progress Party was established which advocates the abolition of direct taxation, cuts in government spending and encouragement of private enterprise. Despite its political extremism, it enjoys popular support and counts former Social Democrats among its followers. The Progress Party, which campaigned in the May 1988 elections on the platform of opposition to taxation and immigration from Third World countries, nearly doubled its vote from 1987 (9 against 4.8 per cent).

The Social Democrats were unable to suggest a way out of the crisis except for an 'incomes policy', which was just another name for 'austerity'. Many trade unions, usually supportive of the Social Democrats, took exception to that policy and contradictions between the party's left and right-wings came to a head. Facing working class opposition and feeling impotent to cope with the problems that had piled up, the Social Democrats *voluntarily surrendered power* to the right-wing conservative coalition of Poul Schlüter in 1982.

Neoconservative policies are being pursued in their most consummate form by the Thatcher government in Britain and by the Kohl government in West Germany. To blunt resistance to their social policies, they drastically restrict democratic and trade union rights, promulgate anti-labour legislation and broaden the powers of the repressive agencies. In Britain the public movements not to the liking of the authorities are being watched ever more closely and peace activists and trade unionists are coming under attack. The West German authorities continue to practice the *Berufsverbot* ban (on employing progressives). The monopoly bourgeoisie of those countries makes no secret of its intention to restructure political relations in society to achieve a situation in which the role of the left parties, progressive trade unions, the peace forces and the social protest movements would be minimised. The neoconservatives' purpose is to *govern within the traditional political structures not by bourgeois democratic but predominantly by authoritarian methods*.

Now that they are governing Denmark, the right-wing parties have restricted the trade unions' possibilities to resort to strikes, and if the unions overstep the line drawn by the government, they are heavily fined. The police have broad powers to deal with strikes. The rightist forces have also launched a campaign against the trade unions' right to finance political parties (first and foremost, the Social Democrats) although they themselves, naturally, receive huge donations from industrial and banking circles.

NATO and the EEC with their 'allied and integration mechanisms' also pursue undemocratic policies. In the 1980s they have begun to be used and more often to restrict the attempts of the left-wing parties and the progressive public to influence the formulation of foreign policies through the representative bodies of government and to neutralise those forces in a number of West European countries which call for disassociation from the military doctrine of the USA and NATO and frown upon the politicisation of the Common Market.

The referendum called by the Schlüter government on a draft programme for expanding integration in the EEC in early 1986 is one example; the draft had been rejected by the Folketing as a danger to national sovereignty.¹ The cabinet went out of its way to bring the population round to approve the document — and achieved its purpose. As a result, Denmark lost its right to veto decisions of the Commission of the European Communities, which perfectly suited those who would like to make the EEC institutions supranational.

What was the democratic forces' reaction to the conservative offensive? Resistance to it was mounted all over Western Europe. In the past few years, moreover, there have arisen far broader objective possibilities for countering the right. Denmark is a good example in this respect.

The working class and trade union movement of the country are even more unhappy about the consequences of the socio-economic policy of the Schlüter government. Unemployment has grown to more than 10 per cent of the active population. The 'new poor' are growing in numbers. Denmark has never had so many people who have to rely on social benefits for their livelihood: some 20 per cent of the adult population depend on them today.

The most massive strike of the post-war period began in the spring of 1985: more than 300,000 workers joined in. The immediate pretext for that action was the government's violation of the principle of free collective bargaining: the authorities intervened in that process by putting a two per cent ceiling on pay rises, which outraged the working people. Although the strikers failed to get the government to repeal its antilabour decree, the action demonstrated the strength of the trade unions and made the ruling coalition modify its policy.

Marked shifts in the Folketing (Parliament) were produced by the growth of the peace movement: an 'anti-missile majority' was formed in 1983. The deputies of that caucus urged the Schlüter government to demand an end to the deployment of US nuclear missiles in Europe and called for a nuclear-free Denmark not only in peacetime but also during crises and even in wartime. The Folketing took virtually all its decisions

towards stronger international security *against the will of the ruling coalition*: it found itself in a minority 23 times when those issues were put to the vote between 1982 and May 1988. On the last such occasion the Schlüter cabinet called early parliamentary elections a mere eight months after the September 1987 elections. It was the government's reaction to the Folketing resolution obliging it to notify foreign naval vessels calling at Danish ports that Denmark was opposed in principle to their having nuclear weapons aboard. The ruling coalition acted under NATO pressure and wanted the elections to become a referendum on the country's membership of the alliance, which would duplicate the political operation carried out in 1986 with regard to participation in the EEC. That goal was not achieved in full because the Folketing 'anti-nuclear majority' survived (although if parliamentary consensus on foreign policy is achieved, its activities will be effectively blocked).

The government's policy on the EEC also comes up against strong opposition. Many Danes are worried by the danger to the sovereignty and independence of the country, in particular, in the economic field (for instance, some 40 per cent of the largest Danish enterprises already are under foreign control). The mass movement known as the Popular Front for Withdrawal from the EEC polled 25 per cent of the vote and received more seats than any single political party in the 1984 elections to the European Parliament (4 out of 16). Under the movement's pressure the Folketing set up a special parliamentary commission, without precedent in any EEC country, to monitor the government's performance in the Community.

The Front, however, failed to score a victory in the referendum. The false promise of the ruling coalition that Denmark would not lose its right of veto in the EEC anyway duped the voters. But in this way the Right exposed its own deceitful methods.

Although the movement went into a kind of decline after the referendum, it continues to play a significant role in public life. The Popular Front's activities draw a response from very broad sections of the public beyond the left-wing and trade union movements. Although it was the Social Democrats who had taken Denmark into the EEC, almost half their voters supported the Front in the latest elections to the Europarlament. The stable social base of the Front is a reflection of the Danes' striving for national independence that is rooted in their well-established democratic and cultural traditions.

The Soviet peace initiatives have had a very beneficial effect on the political climate in the country. There has been a marked shift in the peace movement. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, both anti-American and anti-Soviet sentiments were strong in the movement, the latter caused, among other things, by the crisis in Poland and by the Afghan problem. The dominant view was that of 'the equal responsibility of the superpowers', the USSR and the USA, for the aggravation of the international situation. The odds were stacked against the Communists at the time. Today, however, the movement as a whole and the forces participating in it, including the Social Democrats and even the Radicals, point out that it is the Soviet Union that is generating initiatives for peace and disarmament.

Ever since the USSR formulated its programme for the abolition of nuclear weapons by the year 2000, people have been pondering over ways of building a nuclear-free world. Mass anti-imperialist sentiments were undoubtedly stronger at the time of the Vietnam war than they are today. But no one seriously believed either at that time or later, all the way to the mid-1980s, that security could be guaranteed with strategic nuclear parity. *Today people have realised that there is a real possibility to rid the world of nuclear weapons.*

The Danish Social Democrats have changed considerably. In 1979 they supported the decision to deploy American medium-range missiles in Western Europe, but by 1982 totally revised their attitude. In the late 1970s they were just paying lip service to the idea of establishing a nuclear weapons-free zone in Nordic Europe — but today they are taking practical steps towards that goal. Like their counterparts in West Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands, the Danish Social Democrats hold regular talks with the ruling Communist parties of the European socialist countries.

The Socialist People's Party has grown into an important factor of politics in the 1980s. Its rising popularity is explained largely by the fact that it is opposed to the expansion of the EEC functions and is very critical of NATO.

The latest, 28th Congress of the Communist Party of Denmark, held in April 1987, drew the conclusion that actions and discussions at the workplace, during the struggle for pay rises and activities for peace and environmental protection and against integration in the Common Market were *leading to the formation of a democratic majority whose interests were at odds with those of the ruling coalition.* Moreover, it is prepared to go much farther than the Folketing on security.

The social and political actions of the democratic forces and the entire atmosphere in the country have blocked a number of plans laid by the right-wing coalition.

Since the 1985 strike the government has changed its tactic, become more cautious, displayed some readiness for 'social partnership' and stopped interfering in collective bargaining. In 1986 and 1987 the trade unions secured some concessions and could have achieved far more if their leaders had not pursued opportunistic policies.

Now, after the May elections, the cabinet seeks to avoid another crisis over foreign policy. The Right has toned down its attacks on the Social Democrats and is now seeking their cooperation, in particular, to work out a common stand on military policy.

The plans of the conservative forces to reduce the public sector and to launch denationalisation programmes have been blocked.

The ruling coalition took a battering in the September 1987 elections. Neither did the coalition parties win the parliamentary majority in the May elections, although the far Right increased its vote. Moreover, the Conservatives lost a few seats in the Folketing. Schlüter's new cabinet is rather shaky. But the Right avoided a defeat. The main factor of its survival seemed to be *the failure of the leading opposition parties to capitalise on the potential of democratic struggle that had been built up in*

society. They did not advance a clear-cut programme of measures that would offer an alternative to the conservative policies.

As a consequence, the Social Democrats failed to top the 30 per cent mark either in the September or in the May elections, although they remained the largest single parliamentary group. Their chief problem is that they still do not have an alternative economic programme for overcoming the crisis. Most of the Danes have doubts about their ability to form a government today. Moreover, there are forces within the party which tend to cooperate with the Right. Also, in December 1987, the Social Democrats made a deal with the ruling coalition on the budget.

As for the Socialist People's Party, it was gaining ground all the way in the 1980s up until the last elections. This is explained in part by the drift of some of the working people away from the traditional working class parties that is in evidence in all the West European countries. Many people, especially the younger generation, think that they are slow on the uptake and overbureaucratised. The Socialist People's Party, a relatively young organisation (it was established in 1959), appeals to those leftists who are sceptical of the Social Democrats and suspicious of the Communists. As regards its programme and actions, it has borrowed piecemeal from the peace movement, the ecologists and various progressive currents. Its positions on efforts for disarmament and European security and on Denmark's membership of the EEC are on the whole close to those of the Communists.

Since 1985, however, the Socialist People's Party has been wavering, apparently in a bid to become a more acceptable partner for the Social Democrats in a possible government coalition. As a result, instead of exerting pressure on the Social Democrats from the left so that they should take a more progressive stand, the SPP itself drifted to the right and began to make unforced concessions to the Social Democrats. The Party leadership, moreover, often concentrates on vote hunting rather than on the promotion of democratic struggles. That policy was one of the causes of its setback in the May elections (it polled 13 per cent of the votes as compared with 14.6 per cent in 1987).

The political initiatives and organisational efforts of the Communist Party have enabled it to make *a substantial contribution to the development of broad popular movements* and to secure sound positions in them. Even the forces which disapprove of what they consider the Communists' 'excessive' activity in those movements seek our cooperation whenever it comes to preparations for practical political actions. However, we failed to capitalise on our achievements to secure success at the parliamentary and local elections. The party somewhat increased its vote in the 1987 elections, for the first time in a decade, but neither in September nor in May did it clear the two-per-cent barrier and gain seats in the Folketing, where it had been represented until 1979. The party's electoral showing, though stable, is not yet an adequate reflection of its influence in various spheres of public life.

Actions of the popular movements and the working class remain the decisive factor of pressure on the Right. It is they that are compelling the government always to reckon with the demands of the working people both

in its social policy and with regard to peace actions.

The struggle for peace is entering a new stage. The Communists point out that the time has come to advance towards actual arms reductions, towards practical disarmament. The government, meanwhile, is doing nothing to back with action the relevant resolutions passed by the Folketing. Neither does it give up its plans to increase Denmark's military contribution to NATO. The foreign minister has already rejected the proposals put forward by Mikhail Gorbachov in Murmansk, although the Danes broadly support the ideal of a nuclear weapons-free zone in Northern Europe. Complacency must not be allowed to set in in the peace movement now that the long-awaited breakthrough towards disarmament seems round the corner. What is especially needed today is another upsurge of that movement to give new vigour to the Folketing majority on matters of security.

The task of countering the conservative forces *demands greater unity among the left-wing forces*. The 1980s have seen quite a few developments in relations among them. Traditionally, contacts between the Communists and the Social Democrats were confined to trade union struggles. A new area of cooperation today is the struggle for peace. A mere ten years ago the Social Democrats used to shun any Communist-sponsored demonstration or conference on security and disarmament, but today they take part in our activities and are willing to cooperate and to discuss various issues. There has been a changing of the guard in the Social Democratic Party and the new generation recognises the role of the peace movement and the ecological organisations and is aware that any claim to a monopoly leadership of the trade unions is unrealistic.

The Communists are working for stronger left unity everywhere, including the trade unions, other mass organisations of the working people, and the progressive public movements. The Communist Party and its youth organisation regularly cooperate with the Socialist People's Party. We have an especially close relationship with it in the peace and environmentalist movements. However, the SPP often benefits by that cooperation more than we do (their chairman once told us: "You do all the work and we get the votes"). It is a consequence of anti-Soviet and anti-Communist propaganda. We are not happy with this situation, of course, but we take it dialectically, and view the growth of the number of votes cast for the SPP as a result of our efforts as well.

By and large, today there are far broader possibilities for alliances between the left-wing forces; yet they still are largely untapped, and the situation has even worsened since the elections.

The realities of Denmark show that the rightist forces can be stopped and even rolled back in the new conditions, when anti-war struggles are gaining momentum along with the struggle of the working people for their rights. Neoconservative policy is a reaction of the monopoly bourgeoisie to the international and domestic political processes that are going against its interests. But that policy has also provoked *the backlash of popular actions* which prevent the right-wing parties from following their course unimpeded. The political atmosphere created in Denmark under the influence of the new international climate and the movement for peace and

national independence is interfering with the implementation of undemocratic plans in the socio-economic sphere and in the field of security. *The Right has to manoeuvre, to make compromises and continuously to exert itself to retain power.*

The counterweight to the neoconservatives has grown considerably in the past few years, which is illustrated by political developments not only in Denmark but also in other West European countries. The Belgian rightist parties suffered a bad defeat in the December 1987 elections, for example. *All this bears out the truth of Lenin's conclusion that the antagonism between imperialism's denial of democracy and the mass striving for democracy is bound to aggravate.*² That this factor has not yet had a decisive impact on the alignment of forces in Denmark is explained by the weakness of the opposition parties, first and foremost the Social Democrats, who have demonstrated their inability (or unwillingness) drastically to revise their policy. The continued erosion of the Social Democratic positions is a reflection of the acute crisis of reformism under conditions of capitalist society today.

The need to carry on our struggles demands, among other things, cooperation of a much higher level than has so far been achieved. It should rely on a programme that would offer a real alternative to the policy of the bourgeois coalition. Such a programme will give the emergent popular majority the necessary base in its struggle for a policy that meets the interests of the working class and all the working people.

¹ 'Draft reforms' in the Common Market were approved by EEC ministers in Luxembourg in December 1985 and came to be known as the 'Luxembourg package'. It envisioned, for example, the substitution of the two-thirds majority for consensus in decision-making in the EEC Council of Ministers, more extensive coordination of the member countries' foreign policies and broader powers for the European Parliament. — *Ed.*

² See: V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 25.

for human survival

The Impetus of The Moscow Summit

The Cold War Is Ending

Georgi Arbatov — member, CPSU
Central Committee; member, USSR
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NOT too long ago, one hardly believed that within three years, four Soviet-American summits would be arranged and that the fourth one, held in Moscow, would perhaps start the clock of an era of genuine disarmament ticking. What made this possible?

I think that serious changes have occurred in the attitudes and policies of both sides — although the Americans had to make bigger changes to normalise relations with us and to curb the arms race.

The erosion of the views about the exclusive nature of American capitalism has long been in progress — a phased process going on by fits and starts — in the United States. At the same time, the reluctance to part with the illusions about America's special role has taken firmer hold there. These views used to have a certain rationale in the past, and they gained particular currency in the wake of World War II, when the United States acquired a monopoly on nuclear weapons and overwhelming economic superiority over other nations. It was widely believed that a Pax Americana had dawned.

Later it became obvious that it had been a transient situation and that it was now a thing of the past. America was vulnerable. There were other powerful nations and the US economic role was not what it used to be. To the United States, the détente of the 1970s was a period of adjustment to new realities. But the Americans — at least many Americans — kept thinking that perhaps old realities could be restored and new ones changed. Ronald Reagan became President riding on the crest of this wistful wave. In foreign policy, this meant attempts to revive the Cold War, restore America's worldwide diktat and secure military superiority over the USSR. But did all this work?

Ronald Reagan ran into difficulties during the first years of his presidency. The resentment shown by the allies and the upsurge of the mass peace movement sent out warning signals too. The million-strong demonstrations in New York City in 1981-1982 forced the administration to return to the negotiating table for talks with the USSR. True, those were

tactical, not strategic concessions to the actual realities. But later, things really changed.

There has been virtually no increase in the US military budget for some time now, especially since the October 1987 stock market crash, and several militaristic programmes have ground to a halt — first and foremost, out of economic necessity. Under President Reagan, the Pentagon has spend \$2.5 trillion to attain military superiority over the USSR, but to no avail. Instead, the United States has turned from the world's biggest creditor into the biggest debtor. Social problems have been seriously neglected. Today, during the election campaign, Jesse Jackson is expressing the discontent not only of black Americans but also of all those who object to the growing social polarisation between the rich and the poor.

Much has changed in the Americans' attitudes. In New York recently, I was invited to see *Les Misérables*, a Broadway theatre hit based on Victor Hugo's novel. I was amazed at the enthusiastic response of the audience to the scene in which a red flag was raised on the barricade and the actors struck up the Marseillaise. A world-wise American sitting next to me said, "You wouldn't have seen this here two or three years ago."

Returning to the subject of America's swing to the right in the early 1980s and, to a certain extent, even before, let me say that I think this was connected with the noticeable difficulties the Soviet Union was experiencing. They nurtured Washington's hope to put an end to socialism by simply applying crude power pressure. Our foreign policy flaws also played their part: in our thinking, we were lagging behind new realities and overestimated the military ways of ensuring security while underrating political ones. It is not that we were building up offensive forces: our objectives remained defensive during that period too. But for some time, the Soviet Union had accepted the American rules of the game and tried to copy each new US weapon system. It was only later that the concepts of reasonable sufficiency and asymmetrical response matured.

Besides, we were reconciled too long to fruitless and drawn-out negotiations. In some ways they may have been even harmful because they were used by the other side to try and camouflage the arms race. Take the Vienna talks on reductions of conventional forces and armaments in Central Europe. Launched back in 1973, they have yielded nothing to this day. They opened against a peculiar background, with the US Senate taking an increasingly favourable view of the Mansfield Amendment under which a large part of the US troops was to be withdrawn from Europe. To bind the Senate hand and foot, the US administration agreed to start these talks. Naturally, we could not reject them. But we shouldn't have allowed them to degenerate into years of empty talk either. And when Mikhail Gorbachov spoke in Reykjavik about the mothballs and junk covering the negotiating table, we must admit that we, too, permitted it to pile up.

The world is witness to the way political thinking has been changing in the Soviet Union in recent years and to the much greater flexibility of its foreign policy. The impact of these changes is shaking the Cold War foundations of *the entire edifice of international relations*. This edifice was built on the conviction that there existed a 'Soviet threat', on the image of

the USSR as an implacable and terrible enemy. The Moscow summit opened the eyes of many to a completely different nature of Soviet society — dynamic, searching, effecting far-reaching and progressive domestic transformations, and prepared to adopt completely new attitudes to the solution of military and foreign policy problems.

The summit was also a moment of truth. It put the spotlight on many things that had gone undetected by world public opinion. For instance, the new look at the issues of reducing conventional weapons and forces is important to Europeans. Western Europe was long taught to believe that Soviet superiority in conventional armaments and the stubborn refusal of the USSR to agree to any compromise or accommodation were the chief obstacle to security. Information was suppressed about a broad range of constructive proposals opening up an opportunity for radical changes in Europe — proposals submitted by the USSR and its allies over the past two or three years.

The Moscow summit destroyed this conspiracy of silence. True, the Americans refused to have the relevant accord included into the communique, but Mikhail Gorbachov spoke about it. It became clear that the Soviet Union was suggesting a solution which cancelled the fears and the alarm of the West European countries and which obviously appealed to them. Under this option there would be an exchange of data on conventional forces and armaments; their exhaustive verification, including on-site inspection; identification and elimination of imbalances; first-phase reduction of the armed forces by 500,000 men on each side; as well as changes in the military doctrine and in the structure and deployment of troops making them suitable for defence only, not for offensive operations.

The talks in Moscow have clearly advanced the cause of *demilitarising and improving Soviet-American relations*. The exchange of the instruments of ratification of the INF Treaty and the signing of several other new and useful accords on cooperation are not the only confirmation of this point. Still more important has been the deepening of the political dialogue on the more acute international issues, above all on issues of disarmament. They were central to the Soviet-American talks. It proved possible to bring the positions of the sides closer together in these matters, although the main obstacles to new agreements were not removed.

What prevented the conclusion of an accord on halving strategic offensive armaments? Of course, SDI and the sea-based Cruise missiles are important obstacles. But I think both have a deeper motive — the fear of the ruling quarters that disarmament has gone too far.

Indeed, the disarmament process has got off the ground for the first time, and changes are under way on the international scene which are really eroding the foundations underlying the post-war world order, the system of Soviet-American relations. That is something not only the far right or the military-industrial complex but also the traditional establishment fears. Two generations of politicians have been weaned on stereotypes of the past, and now they are asking, "Can we really do without an enemy? Without armed force that cements everything?"

As for SDI, at the Moscow summit we moderated our stance somewhat

and expressed our readiness to discuss certain issues of testing. I do not think that SDI — as originally presented by Ronald Reagan — is viable. Apparently, it will produce several dangerous and costly weapon programmes. But no one except the President believes in the fantastic notion that it will provide the United States with a shield reliably protecting the nation against nuclear missiles.

One often hears it asked whether we are witnessing a transition from a second 'cold war' to a new *détente*. I don't know what the coming period will be called. But what is happening before our very eyes means that *the second 'cold war' is ending*. What will come to replace it? I hope it will be an extensive dialogue and cooperation: it has already begun. An impressive step has been taken in the field of disarmament. In Afghanistan, ways of settling regional conflicts are emerging.

Naturally, the question of Afghanistan was discussed at the Moscow summit. Results in this sphere are obvious: the pull-out of Soviet troops has begun, and agreements have been concluded in Geneva between Pakistan and Afghanistan, as well as between the USSR and the United States. But we also spoke about Pakistan's failure to comply with its obligations and about the reports that the United States was arguing Iran into allowing the transit of weapons for the Afghan counterrevolutionaries through Iranian territory. It was confirmed that both sides remained committed to the accords signed in Geneva. Still, major and positive shifts are occurring in this matter and we hope that *a political settlement of the problem will soon be fully ensured*.

The summit was not an unqualified success, of course. But had I been asked on the eve of that meeting whether more could be expected, I would have said 'no'. By the time the summit began it was clear that we would have to consider the impact of the American political calendar. The election campaign, the forthcoming change of administration prompt Washington to slow down the negotiating process and to try and impose this 'lame duck' pace on others — 'lame duck' being the American way of describing an administration on its way out. Hence the great importance of *maintaining and even speeding up the rate of the political process* — a major challenge to the world's anti-war movement, to public opinion and also to Soviet foreign policy.

The paradox of the current situation is that, for the first time ever, new nuclear weapons are being scrapped while the arms race is continuing. There is now virtually no numerical build-up of strategic nuclear weapons, but improvements of performance characteristics are in evidence.

Regrettably, no radical step has yet been taken towards *ending nuclear tests* either. Besides, the issue of testing has been set somewhat aside, as it were — but not for long, I am sure. In order to neutralise all the trump cards of those who object to a ban on nuclear tests, we have agreed to specify the joint verification procedure, to begin cooperating in this sphere and to ratify the two treaties drawn up in 1974 and 1976 but still remaining unsigned — on the yield threshold and on limiting the number of the tests. After that, we plan to begin lowering the threshold and eventually to cease testing altogether. This will also mean that nuclear weapons will no longer be improved.

What, then, are the current prospects of disarmament, of Soviet-American relations, and of world affairs in general?

The disarmament process is and will be advancing amid a struggle. This struggle remains complicated. I do not doubt that those who oppose the arms race will become stronger. Economic factors, political education and improvements in the international situation are favourable for them. At the same time, we must not forget that a great deal is at stake and that those who seek to perpetuate this militaristic race are resisting change with increasing stubbornness.

I think that Soviet-American relations will develop positively. But the Soviet Union does not view the world from the angle of these relations only. Relations with other countries, with whole continents are also very important. We are well aware that the combined population of the USSR and the United States makes up only ten per cent of the human race, and that there can be no security for us if the situation throughout the world is not normal or favourable. We also understand that military might does not make right but imposes an enormous responsibility on us. We have advanced the concept of a comprehensive, all-embracing system of international security and, in the final analysis, we will not accept anything less.

Our Goal Is A Non-Violent World

William Coffin — President, Sane-Freeze Peace Coalition (USA)

FIRST of all, obviously, a summit is many things: an atmosphere, a process, a continuing dialogue and, hopefully, it is also something very substantive because the great danger of summit meetings is that they would become what so many other meetings have become, namely, tranquillisers, or sand thrown into the eyes of peace movements around the world.

I think the Moscow summit meeting scores very highly on account of its atmosphere. I thought it warm, and one feels that the Cold War is basically coming to an end. But as an American, I'm very disappointed that the substantive aspect of the summit was inadequate, and I think that it is mainly the fault of the United States. As long as the arms race continued, it was the Soviet Union which had to catch up with the United States. Now it seems to be the other way round when it comes to disarmament: the Soviet Union is ahead and the Americans have to catch up. Basically, Moscow says that tomorrow it will be willing to stop all nuclear tests. The United States still wants to test SDI, Star Wars, so we have not agreed to that. The

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Sane was founded 30 years ago. It is the oldest peace movement. Freeze is a relatively new movement; they joined forces last year and the new coalition, Sane-Freeze, now has something short of 200,000 members. It is the largest US peace organisation. — *Ed.*

Soviet leaders have said they want a fifty per cent reduction in ICBM's but the United States does not have enough agreement between the State Department and the Pentagon in order to effect such a reduction. Then, the Soviet Union has proposed that conventional weapons and soldiers, too, be reduced in Europe, and the United States is yet, as I understand it, to respond to these overtures.

But what is important in international affairs is the direction rather than the size of the step. Certainly, the INF is a step — but we have to understand that it has done nothing to slow down the modernisation of nuclear weapons.

It is too bad that President Reagan spent as much time as he did on alleged violations of human rights. All the time he had meetings in Spaso House I was picturing Mikhail Gorbachov opening a soup kitchen outside the Soviet Embassy in Washington, and I thought: "How many Americans would understand what Gorbachov was trying to do if he came to the United States to discuss disarmament and started to feed the hungry and the homeless of Washington, DC?"

I think that Ronald Reagan used 'human rights violations' to deflect attention from the poverty of America's offerings when it comes to disarmament.

When it comes to human rights, we have to understand that there are basically two kinds: one is those all-important civil liberties — the freedom of speech, press, religion — and then there are social rights, the right to minimum health care, to housing, to education, to food, to jobs. The Soviet Union is much stronger on the socio-economic rights and the United States on the civil rights. And I think it is very important that both can be joined together. But perhaps, it is even more important to show the connection between them and the right to peace — and disarmament, first and foremost nuclear disarmament, is essential here.

No agreement has so far been reached on halving the strategic arms arsenals, and I think the main problem is Star Wars. You cannot ask the other side to shorten its nuclear sword as you tighten your nuclear shield.

Twenty years ago, when Soviet Prime Minister Kosygin said to the Americans, "We are going to put a small defense around Moscow", MacNamara and Johnson, the then Defense Secretary and President, said "That's not a defense, that's offense! You are undermining deterrence!" And the Americans were right and the Soviets were wrong. Twenty years later, the Soviets are right and the Americans are absolutely wrong. It's the same argument — twenty years later — on the other side. You cannot have both arms reductions and Star Wars.

It is amazing that Reagan has sold SDI in a 'defensive' packaging; thank God, Star Wars are coming up against ever greater difficulties now.

I hope that the 50 per cent reductions will take place before Reagan leaves office because if a right-wing American president can conclude arms reductions treaties with the Soviets and have those treaties verified by a Democrat-controlled Senate, then you have a bi-partisan foreign policy. And it will be much easier for either Bush or Dukakis to continue the process if the second treaty is signed before Reagan leaves office.

The withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan is a very encouraging

event of the recent period. I know that the Soviets were invited into Afghanistan. But I also know that one is always invited by a government to do what that government cannot do for itself. My basic position is that no country — neither the Soviet Union nor the United States — has the right to decide who lives, dies, and rules in other countries. What has impressed me is that the Soviet Union has turned to the United Nations — which the United States has never done — in order to bring this conflict to an end. And that is a very important step because the time has come for internationalism in the world which is getting more and more interdependent and indivisible.

I was in the Soviet Union eight years ago, when it was really very boring. Now there are just all the windows and all the doors open. Life is entirely new and it is a wonderful feeling. I think that perestroika will lead to joint ventures and economic interdependence. It's a wonderful form of deterrence and one of the main results of perestroika from the economic point of view and also from the political and the military points of view.

I think and hope that relations between the United States and the Soviet Union can change as quickly and as dramatically as in the last decade did our relations with China. In the overall situation, it's clear why it has to be so. The survival unit in our time is no longer a single nation — it is the entire human race. And we are all in the same boat. It makes no sense to try to bore a hole in the other fellow's side. We'll all get to sink, or we'll get to float together.

Helping us enormously — both the Soviets and the Americans — I think, are economic reasons. The Soviet Union cannot go on with the arms race economically and neither can we. Your economy is stagnant and as for our economy, we are the chief debtor nation in the world. And I think it is clear to more and more Americans that *geo-economics has replaced geopolitics*. One example is Japan, which since World War II has never tested a bomb, never bared a bayonet, never landed its paratroopers on some small third world island, put only two per cent of research and development into the military, and is today the chief creditor nation of the world. So economic reasons will help both the United States and the Soviet Union. I would say that the ideal foreign policy today for both the United States and the Soviet Union would be a policy that maximises conditions for the successful solution of all internal problems.

Our clear goal must be a warless world. Humanity has outlived war — but does not know it. But it is a distant goal, and the steps to get there are obviously what we have to concentrate on. I think it is possible to get a world without nuclear weapons by the year 2000 — it's only a question of political will. Conventional weapons will have to be whittled down by then. I think we'll need a small standing army at the service of the United Nations to take care of the injustices in the world, which produce so many local wars, if not wars between the great powers.

Already there is creative thinking in terms of what a defence-oriented defence would look like. The Swiss have a kind of model of security because they don't threaten anyone else: the Swiss have no tanks — just anti-tank weapons; they have no bombers — just fighters. The United States and the Soviet Union could move very fast in that direction, and it is

a good thing that the American and Soviet defence ministers talked the matter over. And we can start talking about common security. What do we mean by 'common' as opposed to national security? National security says, "I can only defend my security by threatening yours": common security recognises that until everyone is safe, no one is safe in the nuclear age.

My greatest worry is that the knowledge of how to make nuclear weapons will forever be a part of the storehouse of human knowledge. If you start a conventional war and you know how to make a nuclear bomb, then you can start to make nuclear weapons again. So I think that, even if that sounds idealistic today, our goal must be a warless world, and we must be optimistic and persistent about it. That's what I think we need more than anything else now, persistence and a political will. It is not enough to wish for peace: we've got to will it, we've got to work for it, we've got to struggle for it.

Eisenhower understood the dynamic when he said: "I like the fact that people want peace more than governments." In fact, they want it so badly that one day governments had better get out of their way and let them have it. And that was why I joined Sane-Freeze: I thought that it was one of those critically important historical moments. And I look to Washington only to ratify what it can no longer resist, and I think that people have to keep pressure on the governments to do that. And I have no trouble putting my confidence in the people in the sense that, I think, those farthest from the seat of power are usually nearer to the heart of things. And the more the peace movement can be internationalised, the more effective its actions are going to be. I hope that we can work in an international fashion and see if the peace movement can be ahead of governments and demand from them more than the governments are at that time ready to give.

Six Aspects Of Universal Security

Jan Tinbergen — Professor
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(Netherlands); Nobel Prize winner

This contribution is by a prominent Western economist. Many readers are likely to disagree with some of the points he makes, specifically about convergence in its technological (but essentially, political, economic and ideological) sense, about easily solving many problems by restructuring the UN system, etc. However, his views and attitudes are of interest because they represent the positions of certain quarters which uphold the cause of peace and are motivated by concern for the world's future.

THE main tasks of economists are to find policies to raise welfare, the central concept of economic science. War reduces human welfare

considerably. But nuclear war reduces welfare to the absolute zero level. The situation created by the arms race after Nagasaki and Hiroshima requires a new way of thinking about all aspects of security, as already expressed by Albert Einstein, the greatest scientist of all time. It is an illusion to think that a nuclear conflict can be kept within limits. Escalation is unavoidable, and this is what makes a new way of thinking a necessity.

Economists, too, in their responsibility, are in need of some new ways of thinking. For clarity's sake we shall list the following aspects:

1. Security is part of welfare in the widest sense ('generalised welfare'). Security has several components. One of them is *political* security, i.e., nations' sovereignty in deciding on their own national order. Another is *economic* security: a sufficient level of food (food security), housing (habitat security), etc. Still another component is *social* security (full employment, equitable income distribution, etc.). Economic science can show how to use the world's resources so as to maximise welfare.

2. Preferences of numerous individuals, and the politicians representing them, are in need of corrections, for example to avoid short-sightedness or to avoid the effects of bad or incomplete information. Among the preferences to be corrected are nationalist or patriotic preferences, because they are irrational. Nationalism, as expressed in 'my country, right or wrong', is the belief that one's own nation is better, in whatever sense, than other nations. This cannot be true simultaneously for all nations; it is pure, unscientific propaganda. Nationalism unnecessarily leads to emphasising an enemy image among countries. Socialists of all shades have been *internationalists* and recommended the workers of all countries to unite (Karl Marx).

3. Sovereignty is mostly overvalued. A well-known misunderstanding about sovereignty is that the nation's welfare can be raised by sovereign decisions. It is then overlooked that other nations' sovereign decisions may reduce one's own nation's welfare, a reduction that might have been less if decisions had been made *jointly*.

4. Welfare includes the category of security because of its economic cost. The cost of a weapon is defined, among other things, by the amount of security it gives. A weapon cheap in the restricted economic sense (low production costs) may prove expensive if it reduces security and produces instability which has to be overcome.

5. Maximum welfare is often not obtained by *extreme social orders, such as an order of complete freedom or an order of completely central planning*. In most cases optimum welfare is obtained in a 'mixed' order. Planning is applied to the main industrial branches and indicates the main features of the future economy. Decisions on details are made on the spot. Small enterprises may be private, and public enterprises may be those of a capital-intensive character or of importance to a very large number of other sectors. In the course of the last decades we have observed converging changes in the socio-economic orders of East and West. In a theory I formulated in 1961, called the theory of convergence, I tried to explain that in the search of how to obtain maximum welfare, leaders of countries with different social orders will look at the result obtained by other countries and have a tendency to introduce features of successful

systems. I think the restructuring now applied in the Soviet Union constitutes a new example of convergence, especially the idea of joint ventures with enterprises of Western countries.

6. The enormous overkill capacity of the arsenals built up by the superpowers constitutes a tremendous waste of resources. *Reduction of armament* therefore offers an economically advantageous policy. Important reductions will not reduce security. In 1981 George Kennan proposed a 50 per cent reduction in American armament. At that time this was considered by some Western die-hards as a surrender to the Warsaw Pact alliance. A similar proposal was made in 1983 by Robert McNamara when he suggested 18 initiatives the United States could propose. It is characteristic of the mental disequilibria that go with an arms race that at present, as a consequence of the quiet logic of General Secretary Gorbachov, the 50 per cent reduction in strategic missiles as the next step is taken seriously by most commentators. Such a reduction would make available more resources for development, especially of underdeveloped countries. Disarmament can help create a better world, with less inequality between the levels of living. One instrument to be used is conversion, the switching from arms production to the production of capital goods.

Let us now discuss some aspects of the main aims of a world security policy. One way of formulating the main aims is to introduce the concept of common security, drawn up by the Palme Commission in 1982. Common security essentially presupposes an intimate form of cooperation between the two sides. It is common in the strict sense only if both sides conduct joint research, meaning that both have access to all data available about their military, scientific and technological potential.

Naturally, it would have been much better if, from the start, defensive weapons would have been developed. The idea that defensive weapons are much better in terms of security has only come up relatively recently. A search for defensive weapons is to be welcomed provided that it is done in *strict cooperation*. But it will be dangerous for the two parties to do their research independently, because from the moment one of them finds an effective defensive weapon, that party has a first-strike capability. In other words, it can launch an attack on the other side without risking its own security. For this reason the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) of the present American government is unacceptable to the Soviet Union.

An attempt to create a world structure without war cannot be made by economists alone. It is a multi-disciplinary problem. I see two main roads to this structure.

One road is the *development of integration*. The process of integration is continued at present in Western Europe, and already a war between France and Germany is now considered to be highly unlikely. What we should aim at is a continuation of this process of integration until the whole world is one republic. This will take much time, and we don't have much time.

A temporary surrogate may be the *conclusion of treaties aiming at the reduction of arsenals*. After some attempts to conclude such treaties as SALT I and SALT II, the superpowers became suspicious and the chances of continuation seemed dim. From 1985 on progress has been made again,

largely due to the new thinking of General Secretary Gorbachov. The entry of the INF treaty into force marks a clear change of trend. The next step is the reduction by 50 per cent of strategic missiles,¹ and it is taken seriously. The year 1988 is showing that normalisation of relations between the two superpowers is possible. However, it may be unacceptable to the rest of the world that world policy would be a matter for the two superpowers. Here, a second road must be found using the already existing superstructure, the *United Nations family of institutions*. Important thoughts about its future have been formulated in various reports, such as the reports of the Brandt Commission (on the North-South relationship), the Palme Commission (on the East-West relationship), the Brundtland Commission (especially on environmental policies), and the UN Association of the USA (on the future of the United Nations).

I venture to submit a different approach, also aimed at finding a restructuring of the family of United Nations institutions. This approach is based on a comparison with the structure of well-governed nations; the objective is to create a desirable structure 'one level higher'. FAO is comparable to the Ministry of Agriculture, UNIDO to the Ministry of Manufacturing Industry, GATT and UNCTAD to the Ministry of Foreign Trade, ILO to the Ministry of Social Affairs, and so on.² A World Treasury might be a useful new institution: in the UN there is no such central financial agency. Another institution of a well-governed nation is its police, whose task is to maintain law and order. I think we need a Permanent Police of the UN.

Apparently, the most desirable structure of the United Nations system requires a number of crucial reforms. Since there are many alternatives to what was set out before, a discussion of such alternatives is necessary. The best arrangement seems to be the creation of another 'independent international commission' of the type of those I mentioned, where various disciplines, various social and various geographical aspects are represented. This commission's report could serve as a starting point of the official procedure to change the UN Charter required by that Charter. With regard to the disciplines represented, clearly such medical, sociological, political scientists and such economists would be the most appropriate representatives as have already shown their interest for the problem of banning war as a means of settlement of conflicts among nations.

¹ What is meant here is the sum total of strategic offensive armaments. — *Ed.*

² FAO is the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, UNIDO is the UN Industrial Development Organisation, UNCTAD is the UN Conference on Trade and Development, and ILO is the International Labour Organisation. — *Ed.*

'We Shall Not Repeat The Evil'

THE clock of Hiroshima stopped at 8.15 a.m. on August 6, 1945, when an atomic bomb exploded in the sky over the city. In that single flash, a way of life that had been painstakingly built up over 350 years of human endeavour was utterly destroyed.

I was 29 when the bomb was dropped, and at that moment I was 3.5 kilometres from ground zero. I survived, but lost both my sisters, other relations, friends and acquaintances. I will never forget that nuclear nightmare. I have been Mayor of Hiroshima for 13 years, and I have been working hard to keep the memory of that disaster alive, for the moment humankind forgets Hiroshima, the moment the evil is repeated, human history will cease.

Having overcome the pain and the sorrow, Hiroshima has risen from the rubble and become a modern urban centre. With a population of 1,050,000, we are developing into a city of international peace and culture. This was made possible by the tireless efforts and the ardent commitment to peace and justice of people in Japan and abroad. Hiroshima has been given a new life, to serve as a symbol of mankind's inalienable right to live in peace.

The moment the clock of Hiroshima stopped, the clock of history showed the onset of a new, nuclear age. With the signing of the US-USSR INF Treaty the human race took the first step towards nuclear disarmament.

The City of Hiroshima fully supports and highly values the initiatives of the Delhi Six for a freeze on nuclear testing and the results of US-USSR talks. We would welcome the conclusion of an international treaty against the use of nuclear weapons.

As the UN forum on disarmament met in June, a 'peace wave' swept the world. In Japan, it began with a drive to sign the Hiroshima and Nagasaki appeal for the complete prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons. I hope to make my own modest contribution to stimulating public opinion: I reiterate my request that all national leaders visit Hiroshima. I am also working to promote the Inter-City Solidarity Project and calling for an immediate and total ban on nuclear testing and for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

On the cenotaph in Hiroshima's Peace Memorial Park are engraved the words "Let All the Souls Here Rest in Peace, for We Shall Not Repeat the Evil". This is the prayer offered to the victims of the atomic bombing. It is the Spirit of Hiroshima. Hiroshima calls for the creation of a world without nuclear weapons.

Takeshi Araki
Mayor of Hiroshima

the socialist way

The Time-Tested Policy of Alliances

Werner Kirchhoff — CC Candidate
Member, SED; Vice-President, National
Council of the GDR National Front

THE National Front, a practical manifestation of our democracy, is an embodiment of close cooperation of the people of our country in building socialist society. The Front works in accordance with the GDR constitutional provision that every citizen shares responsibility for the common cause.

This article should begin, I think, with a brief outline of the genesis of the countrywide socialist movement that the National Front has become today.

Marx and Engels drew the conclusion in the 1883 Preface to the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* and other works that "the exploited and oppressed class (the proletariat) can no longer emancipate itself from the class which exploits and oppresses it (the bourgeoisie), without at the same time forever freeing the whole of society from exploitation, oppression and class struggles . . .".¹ Since its very foundation in 1946, the Socialist Unity Party of Germany has been pursuing the two-fold goal of building socialism and forging a firm alliance between the working class and all the other working people. That goal has always met the vital interests of the people of the GDR and the working class party has learned the lesson of German history: no socialist revolution would have been possible in our country without a policy of alliances, which have really deep roots.

The alliance, which was eventually realised through the National Front, had been made in the struggle for the implementation of the principles of the Potsdam agreements that were aimed at building a peaceable and democratic Germany. But the sinister forces of the past again reared their heads. They were backed by the Western occupation powers, which set out to divide our country. That was how the avowed goal of the progressive public — the establishment of a single German state whose territory would never be a source of war but only of a striving for peace — was frustrated. Ever since October 7, 1949, when the German Democratic Republic was proclaimed as the culmination of the struggles of the progressive forces of our people over the centuries, the National Front has been working to consolidate in every way the first state of workers and peasants on German soil.

The National Front, led by the revolutionary working class and its party, has become a broad-based movement which unites people regardless of

their social background, world outlook or faith, and works for peace, freedom, democracy and human dignity. It has made a substantial contribution to the assertion of these ideals.

The road travelled by the National Front has been anything but smooth and easy. Cooperation within it has been fostered over the decades as objective contradictions rooted in the country's specific historical circumstances and subjective difficulties have been cleared away. Imperialism has been trying to thwart the Front but has never succeeded in dividing the working class and its allies. We cherish and defend as our greatest asset and a token of fresh success the *moral and political unity of our people* that we have forged together.

To sum up, the alliance of classes and social strata is manifested politically in the close cooperation of parties and mass organisations in the National Front. Its core is made up of the Socialist Unity Party (SED), the Democratic Farmers' Party, the Christian Democratic Union, the Liberal Democratic Party and the National Democratic Party.

The SED, the party of the working class and the entire people of the republic, has a membership of 2.3 million. It seems pertinent to supply at least brief characteristics of the other parties each with a membership of over 100,000, which cooperate with the SED in the National Front in the name of socialism and peace. The Democratic Farmers' Party unites, as its name indicates, the toiling peasantry. The Christian Democratic Union is the party of those who contribute to the building of a new society in the spirit of their religious traditions and morality. The Liberal Democratic Party is the political association of artisans, small proprietors, craftsmen and some intellectuals. It is carrying on the tradition of the progressive bourgeois democrats. The National Democratic Party, which has done a great deal to uproot nationalist ideas and sentiments, stands for the interests of individual and cooperated craftsmen and artisans, intellectuals and workers in culture.

There are other important public organisations, such as the Confederation of Free German Trade Unions, the Free German Youth League, the Kulturbund (the German League of Culture), and the Farmers' Mutual Assistance League. Each of them nominates candidates for election to the people's bodies of government at all levels, who are included in the joint National Front voting lists. They form ten parliamentary groups in the People's Chamber, the highest body of people's representation in the GDR.

The National Front now unites more than 80 professional and occupational organisations, unions and associations. Every community and every urban residential area has a Front committee; there are more than 19,000 of them across the country, and more than 400,000 people work in them (40 per cent of those are SED members, another 20 per cent are members of one of the four allied parties and the rest are non-affiliated). Some 30 per cent of the committee activists are women and 10 per cent young people. Those committees are a great *political force*: they represent the entire broad political and social spectrum of the population and it is through them that the citizenry participates democratically in the affairs of the country in accordance with the principle 'Contribute to production!'

Contribute to planning! Contribute to management!

The most important goal of the National Front committees is to promote frank discussions of domestic and foreign policies, to keep the people informed of the situation throughout the country, to back useful proposals and initiatives and to respond to criticism. They are seeking to provide conditions for people to realise their willingness creatively to assist in the further improvement of the living and working conditions and in raising cultural and intellectual standards.

A mass movement to beautify towns and communities has been going on for years now. Volunteer work for society after the regular hours is making a substantial contribution to the economic and social development of the republic. The objectives of that civic initiative have been summarised in the National Front's long-term programme of action which has been dovetailed with the Republic's five-year development plans. On that basis the Front's current programmes are drawn up in towns and communities with an eye to the local circumstances and needs, democratically discussed and carried through by joint effort.

Housing construction is the core of our social policy and the housing question in the Republic will be resolved as a social problem by 1990. A housing construction programme is central to the Front's entire activities and millions of people are contributing towards its implementation. Emphasis is laid here on effective assistance in the maintenance of blocks of flats in urban areas and on improving amenities in them. Tenants do a good deal on their own: they do small repairs of window-frames and doors, give them a fresh coat of paint, keep staircases and balconies clean, redecorate them to their liking, look after greenery around their houses and take care to improve their backyards. A network of housing maintenance centres offers specialist advice and tools and materials (free or for a token sum). In this way residents themselves do around one-fourth of the annual volume of small repairs.

It is an essential humane duty of society to care for the aged, and a constant aspect of the civic initiative programmes from year to year is repairs of old people's flats with neighbourly aid.

Quite a few volunteers help look after, maintain and repair the premises of educational, health care and social institutions, cultural and recreational centres, cafeterias and restaurants in urban and rural communities. Civic-minded men and women readily give a hand in schools, crèches and kindergartens, at children's playgrounds and in sports, rest and recreational complexes.

National Front activists closely cooperate with the local people's councils and their deputies, and also with the public and the state-run secondary resources amalgamation in collecting on a regular basis scrap metal, waste paper, plastics and jars and bottles and in expanding the network of collecting centres so as to facilitate this work. Our efforts are bearing fruit: about half the Republic's paper needs, for instance, are met from that source. Were it not for waste paper, woods and forests would have to be cut, which would be utter irresponsibility in terms of both production and ecology.

One more important civic initiative is realised in cooperation with the

local people's councils, farming cooperatives and people's farms to raise efficiency in farm production. We take care to improve rural communities and to upgrade working and living conditions in the countryside. National Front committees make sure that the population gets adequate food supply and give every support to the wise and efficient use of vegetable gardens and fruit orchards in private use. More than 20 per cent of the Republic's households sell eggs, meat, honey, milk and wool to the state, and still more supply vegetables and fruit to retailers.

If need be, the National Front helps recruit additional rural labour for crop cultivation and harvesting.

We are keen on improving the quality of life and protecting the environment. National Front committees carry out programmes to improve water supply and sewage systems, land irrigation and forest sanitation programmes, and look after natural water reservoirs.

Young people are active in communal development programmes. They are led in this work by their socialist organisation, the Free German Youth. Much credit goes to young men and women for their practical contribution to the improvement of housing and living conditions and environmental protection. The interests of the younger generation are never neglected, of course. For instance, the League has come up with the initiative to have 45,000 flats for newly-wed couples and 146 youth centres built by October 7, 1989, the 40th anniversary of the Republic.

The promotion of intellectual and cultural activities and mass sport at places of residence is part and parcel of the Front committees' mass political work. They seek to relate them to local traditions, history, anniversaries and holidays, and in this way to foster historical self-awareness and socialist patriotism.

The progress made in the past two years is ample proof of the people's industry and love for their homeland: they did 20 billion marks' worth of housing maintenance work and repairs. Altogether 346,000 flats of elderly people were repaired by helpful neighbours. More than 360,000 rooms and halls in public buildings were repaired and redecorated by volunteers, and nearly 300,000 neighbourhood maintenance contracts were concluded.

The National Front would hardly have achieved much had it tackled communal problems singlehanded. The key to success is the cooperation of the local National Front committees with government bodies, enterprises and cooperatives, whose intellectual, cultural and potential and material base is becoming involved to an ever larger degree in programmes to improve working and living conditions. That cooperation rests on the 1985 Law on the Local Bodies of People's Representation.

The civic drive to improve cities and communities is the National Front's specific effective contribution to the building of a developed socialist society. Words have been matched by deeds in that movement in support of a correct political course, which is aimed at peace and well-being for all people. By improving the living conditions and upgrading the cultural standards of the people and together with the people, the civic initiative shows that socialist democracy is a democracy of millions. All this adds to the people's sense of security and forges their closer links with the socialist homeland.

The SED's time-tested policy of alliances is fertile soil on which crafts and trades thrive in our country. The artisans, for instance, were allowed to keep their private property thanks to specific forms of cooperation and commission trade and they can effectively contribute to the building of socialism. In fact, they provide two-thirds of all the repair services needed by the population; private craftsmen account for up to 8.5 per cent of the gross retail trade turnover; and private owners operate around 40 per cent of all the public catering outlets and provide services to 16 per cent of all the customers. Artisans working in cooperatives and individually, private retailers and owners of public catering outlets thus are an organic component of our social fabric.

The socialist state encourages the trades and crafts and helps them with rationalisation, the introduction of small-scale mechanisation and scientific and technological achievements, and the training of specialists. It also reduces taxes, offers easy credit terms and provides production premises. The current five-year plan period will see further consistent progress in that important sector of the national economy with an expected annual production growth rate of 5 per cent.

People engaged in crafts and trades have a firm footing in society and sound prospects. More than 16,000 of them are members of the National Front committees and over 6,000 participate in craftsmen's and artisans' work groups. By keeping in touch with that segment of the working people, we together with occupational organisations and government agencies help to ensure that people fully realise the correctness of our policy and offer better services to the population.

From the outset the National Front sought to involve believers of all denominations in democratic change and in the building of socialism in accordance with the constitutional principle of equality and equal respect for all faiths. Millions of Christians of our country are working hard to add to the prosperity of their homeland. Many of them are members of the National Front committees, and more than 5,000 clergymen take part in the National Front's Christian Circles groups. They do so with a clear conscience because our course of promoting peace and social progress is in accord with Christian ethics.

The National Front committees and the Christian Circles groups are always willing to conduct a dialogue with clergymen, theologians and other church leaders in the spirit of constructive interaction between Marxists and believers with a view to sharing humanistic responsibility before the people and history.

Socialism in the GDR offers everyone an opportunity to contribute to the common cause. Everything in the country is being done together with the people, by the people and for the people.

Deputies' close links with the electorate have a substantial effect on the consolidation of socialist democracy, which makes the 525,000 deputies, candidates to elected bodies, committee members and council activists major partners of the National Front Committees.

Today one out of every three citizens of the Republic performs on a volunteer basis one function or another in political parties, mass organisations, trade unions, interest groups, housing and neighbourhood

committees and arbitration committees; they serve also as people's assessors or are members of PTA committees or of consumers' control committees at shops.

The results of all those efforts have a beneficial effect on the life of every family, and all of the partners in our time-tested alliance are contributing to the common cause.

The political parties, mass organisations and other public forces involved in the National Front are working with a sense of responsibility to consolidate the alliance. The importance of cooperation in the National Front keeps growing in view of the ongoing large-scale struggle for peace and disarmament and also of the new stage of building a developed socialist society, ushered in by the resolutions of the 11th SED Congress (1986). Overall tasks projected into the next millennium have already been outlined as the Republic is advancing towards its 40th anniversary.

Erich Honecker, General Secretary of the SED Central Committee, said: "We will have to make decisions and introduce changes over and over again to live up to the demands made by people on socialism. The touchstone still is man and his needs. As we tackle these tasks, it is necessary to strengthen both the role of the working class party and the alliance with the parties and mass organisations united in the National Front."²

We have not yet accomplished our goals in full, nor have we exhausted the possibilities latent in the alliance of classes and parties. The paramount goal of the GDR National Front will continue to be the struggle for socialism and peace against imperialism and war. The forces united in the Front will do everything they can to give the citizens of the Republic a happy future.

¹ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, in three volumes, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1969, Vol. 1, p. 101.

² Erich Honecker, *Referat auf der Beratung des Sekretariats des ZK der SED mit den 1. Sekretären der Kreisleitungen der SED am 12. Februar 1988*, Berlin, 1988, p.80.

Reflecting On Perestroika

Victor Lyakhovchuk — worker,
CPSU member, USSR

The author's life-story is quite unusual. He was born in 1933 into a poor man's family in the Western Ukraine, at that time part of bourgeois Poland. In the 1930's his close relatives emigrated to Argentina where he lived for many years. At the age of thirteen he began working at a factory. He was an activist of the Argentinian metallurgical workers' union. In 1958 he returned to his homeland and several years later joined the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. At present he is a lathe operator at the 50th Anniversary of

the October Revolution Production Association in Lvov and a member of the workshop party bureau. He has written two books and a number of articles which evoked a big response.

We asked him to tell our readers what he thought of perestroika in the USSR and the role of the working man in the two different social systems.

I ONCE happened to accompany a group of Spanish tourists visiting Lvov. They were industrialists. We strolled around the city and at first I could not understand what they were doing. Our guests were buying the cheapest goods they could find — 8-kopeck soap and razor blades at 25 kopecks which were, incidentally, of poor quality and had no demand. I could not make head or tail of what they needed those things for. Later on a Spaniard let me into their motives: when striking workers had a meeting at a Peugeot plant outside Madrid, one of our former guests climbed up onto the platform with the words: "You want socialism? Then first try shaving with Russian blades to see what awaits you under socialism!" he added, throwing a handful of those cheap razor blades to the workers.

I wonder if the managers and the workers of the factory producing those razor blades understand what they are doing. They are in fact insulting the Soviet people by producing shoddy articles. It is not only a matter of razor blades and other such trifles, after all. It is a matter of far more serious things — it is our pride and self-esteem that are at stake.

Time to Act

I am often asked why I support perestroika. There are more than enough reasons for that. I have seen the working class and its struggle in other countries and know that the Soviet Union has been an example for the working people throughout the world. It pains me to see that we ourselves at times forget all about it. We now badly need a new perception of the world, an emphasis on the quality of work and a broad outlet to the world market. I daresay, socialism has far too long been merely an ideal, an attractive dream embodying the millennia-old aspirations of mankind. The time has come to translate the ideal into reality. From my point of view, this is an important part of the new thinking.

Needless to say, one has to be brave to speak openly of our shortcomings but no progress will be possible otherwise. It is a shame to go on working like that. When I talk to fellow workers I sometimes ask them: "As a worker, who of you want to look inferior to, say, a Japanese worker?" Nobody does. Therefore slackness, irresponsibility and wastefulness — all things that prevent us from competing with what the Japanese, Americans or Germans do — should be eradicated resolutely.

This is approximately what I thought even before perestroika began. When I faced a bureaucratic manager I would tell him without mincing words: "You are a bad manager. You can't go on working like that." I was barely tolerated in the past. No, I was not persecuted but merely ignored. Of course, I was not the only one to sound the alarm. Many other people also tried to struggle in the past, though they rather did it to relieve their conscience, without hoping much for success.

After the April 1985 Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee and the 27th Party Congress these people were sanctioned to act. We have become a force which, whether the bureaucrats like it or not, has been recognised by the party as a real factor of perestroika. They can no longer brush us aside because we stand for the line pursued by the Central Committee and the entire party. We have been given a chance to call a spade a spade and are being listened to.

We are now entering the second stage of perestroika in which all fields of life are to go through a renewal. Emotions ran high during the first stage when the concept of changes was evolved. I can cite a similar example, from Argentine history, though this comparison may seem a bit far-fetched. During relatively democratic periods, say, under Arturo Frondizi,¹ there was at times so much freedom that people were downright at a loss. Something similar happened in our country after the April 1985 Plenary Meeting. People were virtually overwhelmed by the possibility to speak up and tended to talk too much without caring whether it had any practical result or not. But time is flying and we need actions and concrete changes.

Conscientious workers supporting perestroika are in a fix: on the one hand, they should bring pressure to bear on all sorts of conservatives and, on the other, contain their fellow workers calling for extreme measures. I mean here calls of the type "Out with them!" and "Give them the sack!" Going for a party meeting, some people are looking forward to seeing 'heads roll'. Let's first of all think whose heads they will be. We are all Soviet people after all. Perestroika has no use for victims. If a person is mistaken, explain it to him so that he sees he is wrong. And if somebody is not coping with his task, let him be replaced by somebody else elected to be a leader. Everything can be done calmly. Why should 'heads roll'? What is it — a reminiscence of our sad past?

Our working class is for the most part a very healthy force. It is capable of heroic deeds and self-sacrifice. If you think that the majority goes only for a fast rouble you are mistaken. The money-grubbers would be conspicuous because they are obtrusive. When necessary, people work Saturdays and overtime but many are now wondering whether this practice should exist forever. Aren't good workers covering up in this way those who are slack and wasteful? Indeed, this makes life easier for a bureaucrat who would otherwise have to introduce new technology into production or organise it in a better way.

The party has for decades been educating the working class with fairly good results. At least, relying on my personal experience, I think that we have the most educated and conscientious working class capable of great accomplishments. But it seems to me that there is sometimes a gap between production managers and workers. Herein lies the crux of the matter, as far as I am a judge.

Under capitalism production functions faultlessly due to many factors, including man's fear, above all fear to lose his job. If this happens, one is thrown out to the sidelines of life and that's the end. We have long eradicated such a situation in the Soviet Union. During the revolution, the war and the rehabilitation period, much was done in this country through

heroism and self-abnegation. But we have been living in peace, saved from those extreme conditions, for more than forty years now. Perhaps it is time to rely on something else.

There are objective laws. According to one of them, an apple can only fall downwards. I believe that in production a similarly unshakeable law should be that a worker should use every invested rouble, dollar or pound sterling to make a threefold profit. Otherwise he is of no use to production. We have come here, perhaps, to the most sacred thing under socialism. When I say these things to workers I sometimes hear: "What do you have against our humanism?" This is dangerous demagoguery.

Humanism should be understood correctly. It will be human of me to be a good master and give three roubles in profit per rouble invested in production because this money will be spent on health care, education, social insurance and housing for the people. When worthless people are kept employed we show humanism to two, three or a dozen people but have no money for social programmes. Do you call this humanism? It is humanism inside out.

Managers and Work Collectives

It is very important to have a broad democratic dialogue now in society as a whole, among the working people and between the work collectives and the managers of factories and plants. It is already taking place. I consider it important because when, for example, the production association director-general talks to his workers he is bound to discuss the problems facing the association. Production managers can be rebuked that for years on end they tried to cope with the difficulties of running their plants on their own, without sharing them with their work collectives. That was a mistake. Did they think that the workers would not understand? We are educated people after all and we will understand everything, if only we are told the truth. The workers will always come to help.

For instance, we've learned that our association badly needs additional space for housing construction work. It was a real problem. Knowing the truth now, we think that, had we been told about it by our managers earlier, the workers would have helped them through their people's deputies, the district and the city party committee.

Here is another example. When the workshop party bureau was reporting to its party organisation on guiding perestroika, a Communist worker asked where the millions we made went to. An interesting question, isn't it? In a capitalist country the answer would have been: "That's none of your business." With us the situation is different. As nobody could tell exactly, the question was minuted. Already at the association conference the director-general took the floor and told the conferees what our millions were used on. A million and a half had to be given to expand a brick-yard so that we could get bricks for our needs afterwards. Wasn't that reasonable? Of course it was. Another one million and a half went on the building of hothouses: everybody wanted to have tomatoes in wintertime. Another million and fifty thousand was appropriated on our sanatorium at Morshino.

It is important for every worker to feel that he or she is a master and takes part in managing that money. This has a stimulating effect. When it is a matter of millions and you see how they are channelled, you begin to keep an eye on them. After all, it is our common money.

Now the work collective council has a say in distributing the money earned. When its twenty members are elected by a general vote I can vouchsafe that there will be no dunderheads among them. The council will be made up of people who will set things right. For example, they know only too well what the workers had to queue for. And when the workers themselves began saying what was to be done, shops appeared on the territory of our production association. As a result now both efforts and time for leisure are saved.

What else have we accomplished? Last year the *Sotsialisticheskaya industriya* newspaper carried two articles, one written by me and the other by a milling-machine operator from Uzhgorod. Both focused on raising the quality of our goods. Our attitude was similar, though we used different arguments and our plants also differed. One was an ordinary enterprise, while the other formed part of an excellent and very strong association. A year later the editors returned to the topic in order to see what had changed at the two enterprises. Nothing had changed in Uzhgorod, whereas we in Lvov had impressive changes. Why so?

We were after the same thing but used different methods. My Uzhgorod colleague failed to live up to the situation, began acting on his own and encountered tremendous difficulties. Whereas I relied on my work-mates, perhaps because I had gone through the school of struggle under capitalism.

To begin with, you need to be understood by the people, who would then give you their support. At first, when my critical articles on the organisation of production appeared in the press, I was hard put to defend my stand at open party meetings and party committee sessions. The people finally realised that I was not after personal gain nor settling my own accounts but was against the phenomenon of low-quality production.

My entire workshop succeeded in making the managers count the expenses. Workers showed how as a result of the designers' mistakes alone, which everybody pretended not to notice, thousands of roubles had been lost. Concrete products and names of the culprits were cited. When the designers' office was put under control the situation changed for the better.

After accomplishing one thing, we would set ourselves another task. At present we want to prove that we can work without a rate setter. We also want our wage bill to be managed by our foreman whom we have elected ourselves and whom we trust.

The workers should be in the know of all things because they are the workers of a socialist society. Under capitalism I used to get my twenty dollars or so, leave the plant and, frankly speaking, couldn't care less about it. Whereas here I want my plant to look beautiful and up-to-date, operating tomorrow and the day after tomorrow, and I want the people to live better. Such is the mentality of a Soviet worker.

It gives me pleasure to talk about my production association not because

we already have everything in perfect order. Many problems still exist. Yet we are optimistic if only for the simple reason that we have got down to business together. It all started when the managers established a dialogue with the workers. Now it is easier both for them and for us. That is why I call upon everybody to have a dialogue. The important thing, however, is that the workers adopt a correct partisan and patriotic stand. We have a tremendous potential. Soviet society is potentially very dynamic and it is of paramount importance that this potential be used to a fuller extent.

I once pondered on why the Russians fought so fiercely in the Battle of Borodino against the French during the Patriotic War of 1812. According to the great Russian writer Leo Tolstoy, the main thing was that the people did not want to cede Moscow, that was behind them and the army no longer wanted to retreat. To my mind, there is something similar in the present-day situation though there is a great difference, too. First, we can't afford to be a third-rate power, further yielding our economic positions. Second, we do not want injustice. Precisely these feelings of the people should be addressed and the Communists are called upon to do these things in the first place.

Not so long ago first secretary of the Lvov Regional Party Committee Ya. Pogrebnyak visited our association, showed interest in the situation at different sectors and talked to workers. I would like to emphasise once again how much our social system differs from capitalism. In the conditions of socialism and equality there is still a big distance between workers and the regional party committee secretary. But when these meet, both sides belonging to the same party, they have a calm, businesslike talk of people who share a common concern. The first secretary listened to the workers and vice versa. He spoke of his problems and we of ours. This is what I call a dialogue which we, regrettably, have not had for so long. Mutual understanding is based on our common personal responsibility to the Communist Party.

The secretary asked me if some disgruntled workers bearing grudges wanted to have me as their leader after my articles and TV appearance. Some people may have entertained such a thought but personally I am against anything like that. I happened to take part in the working-class movement in a capitalist country and I know only too well that nothing good ever comes out of groupings in the midst of the working class.

We deem it our duty to give our support to the party policy and to our Central Committee because the party reflects the attitude of all honest people, even more so in the conditions of glasnost and democracy when every person can freely voice his or her opinion. I am convinced, and will defend my stand wherever necessary, that we should now steadily implement the party line towards perestroika.

Recalling and Comparing Things

I am sometimes asked how it feels to be shown on TV and to have my articles published in the press. For me the main thing is never and under no pretext to separate myself from my fellow workers. Wherever I go to, be it Moscow, Kiev or at meetings with foreign delegations, I tell everything

about them to my fellows and always consult them. And when preparing a pointed article for a newspaper, I usually discuss my plans at the party bureau. That is why I have never had any frictions in my work collective.

I recall an incident from my life in Argentina. In late 1956 I read an article in the *Que* magazine, an unofficial organ of the Partido Intransigente (Irreconcilable Radical Party), whose author attacked Argentina's workers in connection with a metallurgical workers' strike suppressed shortly before. Naturally, nothing was said about the ruthlessness of the police. Instead, the author was very hard on the workers who had taken to the streets to defend their right to work and their human dignity. The article read, among other things:

"Those traitors found nothing better than to strike at the time when real patriots were looking for a way out of the existing crisis through drawing closer together all strata of the Argentinian nation and establishing harmony among them."

When I read that I wrote to the magazine. As we were called traitors, I asked the author to give the name of at least one Argentine worker who lined his pocket at the expense of the state treasury. Strange as it may seem, my letter was published and it became the first publication in my life. The next day I was summoned by the owner of the plant where I worked at that time and given the sack together with advice to stay away from politics in the future.

Incidentally, I happened to go through difficult periods in my homeland, too. My parents were gravely ill and I was unable to work properly for weeks. But far from being fired, as would have happened under capitalism, I was, on the contrary, paid in full. Furthermore, I would hardly have withstood it all without the moral support from our director-general and my comrades.

When perestroika began and the party called for action, I faced in this connection the problem of what to do. Should I shut my eyes to the drawbacks in gratitude to the director or fight them, hoping that the man would be clever and decent enough to understand? I chose the latter and feel happy that I was not mistaken.

In December 1985, the regional newspaper *Lvovskaya pravda* published an article unexpectedly sharply critical of our managers who had never been criticised until then. The article was discussed at an open party meeting of the workshop and recognised to be correct almost unanimously. All those present — there were about 300 of them — voted in favour of that article. That meeting was a good lesson of democracy and a correct understanding of perestroika both by the workers and the association managers. Life showed that the decision to discuss extensively the criticism voiced in the newspaper was quite correct. The drawbacks were remedied. A strong work collective has nothing to fear or hide. And it is strong when every person within it bears responsibility for what he or she does. As a matter of fact, this is precisely one of the requirements of the current perestroika, as I see it.

Speaking about the present-day processes in the country, I cannot but dwell again on the line pursued by the Soviet leadership. It is supported by the people, first and foremost, by the more conscientious and high-skilled

workers. We perfectly understand our leaders and know what they want. The actions of the CPSU Central Committee dovetail exactly with the aspirations of the people. We read in party documents what people said in their work collectives barely a month or so earlier. The latest example is *The Theses of the CPSU Central Committee* for the 19th National Party Conference and the decisions of that party forum. The Central Committee works, having exact and reliable information from the entire land, from the entire people. And its work reveals a profound understanding of the needs of the people.

Learning to be Masters

In conclusion, I would like to compare once again the place of the working man under capitalism with that under socialism. The difference is enormous and its essence lies in the difference between the two systems. As I saw it, in the capitalist countries the workers have a limited aim, above all, of having a job and decent working and living conditions. There, every man cares for himself. They hardly think of developing personality or any harmony of interests.

We have an altogether different aim. We have had both ups and downs in the seventy years of our history but, despite the tragic periods in it, the task has always been the development of man and a better life for the people. This is the supreme goal of socialism. Consequently, the very world outlook of a working man in the Soviet society is entirely different. He has broad demands, and not only material, for that matter. We just as vitally need things spiritual, including a good library, tickets to a stimulating concert and a good deal more. You will rarely find anything of that sort at a capitalist enterprise. Struggle there is social in nature and turns into a political one when it comes to confrontation. Herein lies the major difference.

Of course, we can be asked: "Having these aims, how come you Soviet people slid into stagnation?" It is a profound question and the answer isn't easy. There are many reasons for what we have and one of them, though perhaps not the chief one, is that, after all, in a short historical period we made a sharp transition from poverty and lawlessness to a certain degree of well-being. We grew satisfied with the material well-being we had obtained and forgot that society should further progress and that we must work more and better. Needless to say, there were people who cautioned us, and it is clear now that they were right.

What were my difficulties, say, twenty years ago? I criticised our poor work and was not understood. Artful demagogues said what was apparently said in Stalin's times: "Lyakhovchuk is an enemy. He thinks that capitalism is better." I have never said that but I do believe that we can learn much from business people. That's a fact. Much of what I learned when I worked for capitalists will come in useful in my native land. First and foremost, the value of every penny. There, all and sundry count everything, whereas we at times don't. If a worker does not think about the expenses, this shows that he is indifferent to his own enterprise. Such an attitude is justified under capitalism where a worker sells his labour, works

the required eight hours and has no concern for anything else — let the employer think about other things. With us it should be different.

Take, for instance, two different cutters. One costs eight roubles, is factory-made and of poor quality: it can't be used in high-revolution regimes because it isn't tough enough. The other was made by ourselves and costs a mere 63 kopecks. The difference is impressive. Self-financing has not yet been introduced at our association but people are already counting. If some credit for that goes to me, I am happy.

Our might is, above all, in the conscientious attitude of our people, the justness of our system and the sense of comradeship and collectivism. What is then our chief shortcoming, in my opinion? It is poor organisation, unwillingness to count money and hence big losses. It seems to me that a key task of perestroika is to achieve efficiency characteristic of capitalist production (this is something we cannot do without) and to combine the new quality of labour with the advantages of socialism.

¹ The Argentinian President from 1958 to 1962 who, soon after coming to power, renounced the progressive programme which had won him the support of the democratic forces during the elections. — *Ed.*

To Spot The Chief Link of Contradictions

Prof. Gombyn Miyeegombo —
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Revolutionary Party (MPRP), rector of
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MARX and Engels pointed out that "... all collisions in history have their origin, according to our view, in the contradiction between the productive forces and the form of intercourse".¹ The correct understanding of this makes it possible to chart a scientific economic policy and effectively to implement it.

The concept of the productive forces and relations of production and of their dialectical interaction is part and parcel of Marxist-Leninist theory. The relationship between the productive forces and the relations of production is a multifaceted problem. The development level of the productive forces and their nature are determinants of an appropriate mode of production. Lenin observed that "on the development of the productive forces depend the relations into which men enter with one another in the production of the things required for the satisfaction of human needs".²

The entire practice of building socialism in our country has borne out this premise. The progress of industrialisation in the 1960s and 1970s led to the growth of the productive forces. Mongolia's economic potential had increased considerably by the mid-1980s: from 1961 to 1985 the fixed assets

expanded more than ten-fold. That growth called for progressive change in the relations of production and, accordingly, for new forms of economic management.

This interdependence is a continuous process. In other words, dialectics manifests itself not only in the resolution of contradictions through a socialist revolution, with one mode of production being supplanted by another, but also within a system of basically the same relations of production. The interdependence of the productive forces and relations of production sometimes seems to be interpreted simplistically, as if one were trying to catch up with the other. In fact, as the latter are improved, they are not merely brought into harmony with the former. Another aspect of the interdependence of the two is that relations of production always strongly influence the productive forces. That is why efforts are being made to use every advantage of the socialist relations of production in full as a new society is being built in our country.

Economists usually divide contradictions into two groups. First, there are contradictions rooted in subjective factors, such as disregard for the principles of socialist economic management and for the objective economic laws of socialism, the prevalence of narrow departmental and parochial interests over those of society as a whole and violations of the principle of distribution according to the work done; they have a negative effect on the end results of production. Then there are contradictions between accumulation and consumption, between specialisation and concentration of production and its decentralisation, between the need for more efficient planning of the national economy and that for the development of democratic principles and the autonomy of enterprises: they stem objectively from economic growth per se.

Naturally, such contradictions are not resolved automatically but demand consistent and purposeful efforts. It is important, first and foremost, that the managerial system, including the forms and methods of the administration of the national economy, should apply economic laws cleverly, flexibly and efficiently with due regard for the contradictions inherent in both the productive forces and relations of production; their manifestations should be identified and ways of harmonising them worked out. There are the contradictions between modernised work implements and workers with their human abilities; the contradictions between relations to the means of production and relations between people in the process of production; and the contradiction between the development of relations of ownership and distribution.

The productive forces are in the focus of attention of the MPRP. They incorporate, as everyone knows, the means of production and the workforce, but it is not a mechanical mix of material and subjective factors. The productive forces are systems with their own forms of organisation, which closely interact within the given mode of production.

Lenin noted: "*The primary productive force of human society as a whole, is the workers, the working people*" because they ensure with their labour the interaction of all the components of the productive forces. Labour power represents the unity of man's physical and spiritual abilities and *that is why our party believes that the comprehensive and harmonious*

development of citizens in socialist society is the main goal of the party's social policy.

Mongolia's labour resources are growing from year to year. At present around 70 per cent of the workforce are under 35, and most of them have a secondary education. Some 80 per cent are graduates of vocational training schools. The system of vocational training needs to be improved, however. We think that it is very important rationally to place the growing labour resources primarily in the key sectors of material production and to upgrade the cultural and technical standards and skills of the workforce. It is therefore not just an economic but also a serious social problem better to utilise labour resources and to raise the social productivity of labour. In 1987, for instance, labour productivity in industry rose by 4 per cent and in construction by 5.4 per cent. It seems a good performance — but 29 per cent of all enterprises have registered a drop in that figure.

There are different ways of determining the development level of the productive forces; use is often made of diverse indicators, such as gross output, fixed assets, the numerical strength and composition of the workforce, etc. But today, I think, other criteria are gaining priority over the quantitative indicators, among them advances in technology and production processes, the structure of production, etc. Anyway, the development level of the productive forces is determined not by any one or several indicators but by their interdependent and interacting totality.

The structure of the productive forces is a pressing issue on the agenda in Mongolia today. The 19th MPRP Congress outlined measures to be taken to shape the optimum sectoral and territorial structure of the national economy. In the current five-year plan period, for instance, a number of industrial plants will be built in the western part of the country, the fuel, power and mining industries will be further developed and problems in the metalworking industry and in the repair and maintenance services will be tackled. *The task was formulated to sustain the optimum correlation of the physical factors and the workforce and promptly to identify contradictions and bottlenecks in their development.*

We make special efforts to reconcile different ways of augmenting the productive forces, such as the construction of new plants and the modernisation of the existing industries. Here we come across a manifestation of the contradictions inherent in the productive forces themselves: some of their components may lag behind others and thus impede overall progress. We had such a situation in our economy when neither new industrial projects nor modernisation programmes were backed up with a well-thought-out plan for personnel training and retraining.

The practice of the USSR and other socialist countries indicates that today priority attaches to the renovation of production on the basis of new achievements of science and technology. *Accordingly, we revised our investment policy with a view to improving its sectoral, reproductive and technological patterns.*

Today we find differences not just in the development levels of the productive forces and in the socialisation of production between various sectors of the national economy but even in the working conditions and

technological equipment between industrial plants reporting to the same ministry. In other words, we still have a 'technologically mixed economy'. A thorough analysis of these contradictions and practical conclusions from it are in order.

Public property, according to Marxism-Leninism, is the basis of the socialist relations of production. But scientists, not only in Mongolia but also in other fraternal countries, used to address themselves just to its physical aspects. Today, I think, it is necessary to delve into dialectical changes in the subject under consideration, namely, into the structure and composition of property and various factors related to it. Such an approach embraces those actual relations which stem from the interests of every worker or work collective and arise between sectors and local organisations in the context of the use of the means of production and the results of production activity. *A way of resolving the contradictions here seems to be the optimum reconciliation of production and distribution with those interests, the fostering of a thrifty attitude to property, economic growth and greater profitability.*

Our task is to make the best and fullest possible use of the potentialities latent in the very nature of socialist property. As it is consolidated, practical conditions are provided for the participation of every member of society not just in the process of production but also in management and in the distribution of social wealth. That goal will be promoted by the consistent implementation of the resolutions of the 19th MPRP Congress on the all-round consolidation and enlargement of public and cooperative property as the foundations of our system and by the assertion of the principle of social justice and the socialist way of life.

Frankly, there still are those who seek to violate the principle of socialist distribution 'From each according to his abilities, to each according to his work', to take more from society but to give it less, those who shamelessly embezzle public and cooperative property, engage in black-marketeering and derive unearned income. The main reason for these malpractices is slack control over the safety of property in some sectors of the economy. At the same time the scope of production and the quality of consumer goods fall short of the public needs, and the organisation of labour leaves much to be desired. We will have to analyse and remedy these drawbacks.

Improvements in the national economic management are the chief means of resolving contradictions arising between the productive forces and relations of production in Mongolia. In the 1970s the country began to introduce a new planning and economic incentive system that provided for a combination of centralised planning and promotion of the initiative of industrial plants. The reform brought about some progress towards the reconciliation of the interests of society, the work collective and the individual. However, at that time it failed to achieve a consistent across-the-board improvement in managerial methods.

Effective steps to streamline the economic management system have been taken in the country since the early 1980s. A series of experiments have been launched at more than 200 plants and other economic units in the light, food, fuel, power, and communications industries. Comprehensive measures have been worked out to broaden autonomy, to

improve incentives to the work collectives to achieve high end results and to raise their responsibility for their production performance.

The 19th MPRP Congress formulated the task of the consistent and more efficient development of socialised production and of further raising the people's well-being on this basis. The major ways and means of accomplishing that task that were outlined by the Congress are a *transition to the cost-benefit methods of management and the improvement and consolidation of centralised planning*. We take theoretical and methodological guidance from Lenin's words that "... centralism, understood in a truly democratic sense, presupposes the possibility, created for the first time in history, of a full and unhampered development not only of specific local features, but also of local inventiveness, local initiative, of diverse ways, methods and means of progress to the common goal".⁴

The 3rd Plenary Meeting of the MPRP Central Committee (1987) laid down principles for the development of a new system of planning and economic management, with emphasis on the provision of practical economic conditions for the autonomy of basic production units and for the correct dovetailing and harmonisation of long-term and current plans (with the former given priority). Economic levers and incentives are being applied on an ever larger scale. We concentrate also on improving the financial and crediting system. Territorial administration bodies are being given far broader powers and responsibilities.

The experience of Soviet perestroika and of improvements in the economic mechanisms of other socialist countries has been taken into account in the development of a new system of economic management to be introduced in 1988-1990.

The MPRP is therefore trying creatively to apply in its day-to-day work the Marxist-Leninist concept of the dialectics of the productive forces and relations of production, proceeding from the assumption that the contradictions constantly emerging between them are the motive force of social development.

¹ Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 74.

² V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, pp. 21-22.

³ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 364.

⁴ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 208.

the party

The Communists and Youth

Restoring Trust

Angel Negri — CC and National
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THE future of every nation depends on the road the young people take. In Argentina young boys and girls from 15 to 24 constitute an important productive and intellectual force: the country, inhabited by about 30 million, has 4.5 million young people, of whom 1,180,000 are hired workers and over 2,300,000 are students of secondary and higher educational establishments. *They are the more dynamic participants in social and anti-imperialist battles.* The younger generation, as a rule, tends to be willing selflessly to take up arms and to be impatient, which accounts for every party's attempts to win it over to its side.

The present-day political process in Argentina is developing in the new circumstances and yet bears the heavy burden of the past.

To this day the popular forces are in a state of disillusionment after the 1976 defeat, which resulted in the establishment of the military dictatorship. That happened against the backdrop of the mounting mass anti-imperialist movement — the most significant in this century. It was precisely the young people who were then in the front ranks of the fighters for democracy and socialism. Nevertheless a fascist-military coup took place for several reasons, the main one being the lack of unity of action by revolutionary and anti-imperialist forces.

Upon assuming power, the dictatorship dealt cruel blows at all its potential opponents, first and foremost, the younger generation, taking a toll of thousands missing, murdered and tortured¹ and thousands upon thousands becoming sceptical about being able to carry through positive changes in Argentinian society. Dictatorship had sown despondency and decadence among a considerable section of the young people. But new champions came to replace those disillusioned, killed or missing under repression.

Young boys and girls who entered political life already in the years of the dictatorship differ from the earlier generations by their desire to analyse today's problems in depth and critically and by their revolutionary enthusiasm. Their self-expression was often manifested in forms of opposition that differed from those of the past. Their songs, folk and even folk rock music were full of social protest. We are today to make use of the potential of that section of the young people, too, involving them in social and political struggles.

How well the Communists will be able to cope with this task largely depends on the make-up of our party, the correctness of its chosen course

and on whether its ideas and slogans attract young Argentines who feel the pressure of the crisis experienced by the country.

Today the Communist Party of Argentina is analysing the past in the spirit of criticism and self-criticism, as has been reflected in the work of its latest, 16th Congress (November 1986). The party charted out ways of attaining national liberation and the victory of socialism, raised anew the problem of power, tying it to the idea of the effectiveness of the vanguard. After all, it is an open secret that in the preceding period the Communists were not firm enough on the issue of uniting the popular masses. Calling for a 'broad unity', we for the most part preferred alliances with bourgeois political groupings, ignoring the role of other left-wing organisations.

That lowered to a certain extent the trust in the Communists, among a considerable section of the younger generation too. Many young boys and girls said at that period that they saw no difference between the policy pursued by bourgeois organisations and that of our party. It should be admitted that their conclusions were not groundless. And today *nothing is more important to us than to restore the trust of the young people and all the Argentines in the Communists and other left-wing forces within the broad liberation front.*

The future of the liberation process in this country depends on the working class, the rest of the working people and on the strengthening of left, revolutionary tendencies among the Peronists, the radicals, the supporters of the Partido Intransigente (Irreconcilability Party) and other political organisations. Conditions are taking shape for forming a national and social emancipation front involving broad popular, anti-imperialist and democratic forces. The struggle for economic demands is also on the upswing. It takes different forms — strikes, marches, demonstrations and the takeover of plants. On the basis of their own political experience the masses are becoming aware of the need for joint actions. The people, and especially the younger generation, are becoming increasingly convinced of the effectiveness of the road proposed by the left. Young boys and girls are coming to the fore of the social struggle, first and foremost of the working class movement, producing new dynamic leaders.

That is why we are paying *special attention to young workers*. They are called upon to play a significant role in efforts to promote class unity and in stimulating party activity among the industrial workers and those employed in the services and trade. Young boys and girls are playing a greater part in social movements and mass organisations, in interest groups and residential communities, engaged in organising 'townships of the poor'. Many of these are setting up youth commissions.

We have no doubt that eventually the slogan 'Liberation and Socialism' will win to its side the youth movement as a whole and above all the young workers. In this way we will be able to overcome the negative experience of the past and mistrust of the party. We believe that we will be able to cope with this task effectively only when we get a clear idea of the young people's interests and demands and start working to promote their concrete aims linking this with the national and social liberation movement.

What do the young workers show concern for today? In the economic

field, the government, representing the interests of dependent capitalism, proclaimed the course towards the 'modernisation' of the system, adjustment to the international division of labour, privatisation of state enterprises and granting privileges to big local and foreign capital. The ruling élite continue paying interest on the country's immoral and unlawful external debt. All this leads to growing unemployment. The number of jobless reaches 1.5 million, with the problem being especially acute among the young people, who are often unable to find their first jobs. The younger generation is especially hard hit by the sharply falling living standards among the working people. Lack of housing is another acute problem. Young boys and girls take an active part in seizing vacant lands in the zone of Greater Buenos Aires, building temporary dwellings there and organising self-defence against the encroachments by the authorities.

The students and the intelligentsia form a dynamic section of Argentina's youth movement. Students' centres, regional federations and the national university federation itself are active in the political struggle, opposing on an ever expanding scale conciliatory and rightist attitudes. Students are working to bring the educational process closer to the needs of the country's development, to democratise the secondary and higher education systems and to take an active part in university and vocational school self-management so as to make them serve national and social liberation. *Unitary tendencies are fairly strong in this milieu.* The Broad Students' Front named after Santiago Pampillion, a student who fell victim to General Onganía's tyranny in 1966, has left its mark through the joint efforts of the Communists and other democratic circles within it.

A grave situation exists in Argentina's farming world. The merger of part of the landowners with the big bourgeoisie, local and foreign monopolies, resulted in the further stratification of the peasantry and the growth of the stratum of peasants with little land, who have practically lost all chances of earning their living. Young peasants have already abandoned hope of retaining their plots of land. Marginalisation lies in store for them in towns. Under the circumstances we bitterly admit that *work in the countryside is the weakest point in the activity of both the Young Communist Federation (YCF) and the party.* It is important for the Communists to identify with the concerns of farm workers, to set forth concrete tasks of struggle and to help them regain hope. The Communist Party of Argentina believes that land should primarily be given to the poorest peasants, including the young ones. This is one of the points of the agrarian reform proposed by the party with the major aim of putting the country's agriculture on a cooperative basis.

On the whole the young people vigorously respond to social injustice. That is why they are broadly involved in *upholding human rights.* Young boys and girls support the demands made by the Plaza de Mayo Mothers, the organisation uniting the mothers of those who are missing (numbering more than 30,000). Young people are giving them all sorts of help. No undertaking of this organisation, as well as of the Human Rights League or Argentina's Human Rights Assembly takes place without the participation of young people with most diverse political and social backgrounds. Efforts are being stepped up to ensure the release of political prisoners kept

behind bars since the time of the dictatorship and also of the victims of the present government. Young Communists actively oppose attempts to clear the military guilty of repressions of the responsibility for the crimes they perpetrated.

Foreign debt and growing dependence are another problem concerning the younger generation. The sense of national dignity and national self-awareness are deeply rooted in its midst. At their age young people feel most acutely the injustice of the situation in which Argentina, a rich country with a hard-working population, is becoming with every passing day more and more dependent on international banks as a result of the Alfonsín government's blind obedience to the IMF diktat. That is why *the young people actively support the Communist demand to refuse paying interest on foreign debt and the debt itself, aware that this would make it possible to resolve many economic and social problems.*

Young Argentinians empathise with the troubles of other nations. For seven years now supporters of the Young Communist Federation have regularly been forming units for coffee beans harvesting in Nicaragua, which have become a tradition and a brilliant school of internationalist education. Special mention should be made of the fact that in January 1988 volunteer units were formed, this time of representatives of various youth organisations, rather than those of the Young Communist Federation alone. It was called the Malvinas to Argentina and Agustin Tosco (named after a major trade union leader who died in 1975) United Brigades.

Together with the entire nation young people come out in favour of restoring Argentina's national sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands within the framework of general actions to turn the South Atlantic into a demilitarised nuclear-free zone. Waging peace also means for our young boys and girls organising campaigns of solidarity with the peoples of Central America, Chile and Paraguay languishing under the yoke of bloody dictatorships and also protest actions against pressure by the US and its interference in regional affairs.

Internationalism, readiness to respond to appeals for help from fraternal peoples, and the sense of national self-consciousness displayed by the young people make the Communists confident that the younger generation of Argentina will fight for democracy and genuine national and social liberation with even greater success.

¹ According to the official data of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, people from 16 to 30 predominate in the list of victims of the 1973-1983 military regimes and account for nearly 70 per cent of the total number. — *Ed.*

International Contacts

Understanding Is A Must

LAST May Milos Jakes, General Secretary of the CPCz Central Committee, paid official visits of friendship to the People's Republic of China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Mongolian People's Republic.

In talks with the leaders of the Communist Party of China, both sides stressed the great importance they attached to the development of contacts and to broader cooperation between the two parties. Zhao Ziyang, General Secretary of the CPC Central Committee, noted that mutual understanding and exchanges were a must nowadays, while the leader of the Czechoslovak Communists drew attention to the close and in many respects even identical approaches of the CPCz and the CPC to key international issues. The sides agreed as a result that the time had come to upgrade drastically their bilateral relations and to exchange experience on a more systematic basis.

A joint communique issued on the results of Milos Jakes's visit to the DPRK speaks highly of the socialist countries' efforts to achieve a comprehensive system of international security and a nuclear-free and non-violent world and emphasises the importance of improving the political climate in the Far East and in the Asia-Pacific region. The leaders of the two parties called for the settlement of all regional problems through dialogue and negotiations without outside interference.

In talks with the Mongolian leadership Milos Jakes stated Czechoslovakia's support for Mongolia's proposal for building machinery to preclude the use of force against the states of the region. The sides voiced their desire to develop the relations between the CPCz and the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party on the basis of the principles of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism.

Visits of Friendship

Last May-June a delegation of the CPC led by Li Ximing, a CC CPC Political Bureau member, paid visits to Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Iraq and Syria, and had talks with the leaders of the Bulgarian Communist Party, the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and the BAATH parties of Iraq and Syria.

A delegation of the Social Democratic Party of Germany led by Egon Bahr and Horst Ehmke paid a visit of friendship to China last May. A CPC goodwill delegation visited Japan at the invitation of the Socialist Party of Japan.

In the middle of May, Zhao Ziyang, General Secretary of the CPC Central Committee, received a delegation of the DPRK on a visit to China. He noted that the relations between the two parties and the peoples of the

two countries were good and close. The visitors thanked the CPC and the government of the republic for their support for the Korean people in building socialism and in their efforts for the peaceful reunification of the homeland.

Greens Visit Cuba

Official talks were held in Havana between Jorge Risquet, a member of the Political Bureau and the Secretariat of the CPC Central Committee, and a delegation of the Greens Party of West Germany, led by its co-chairperson Jutta Dittfurth, who were visiting Cuba at Fidel Castro's invitation. The sides reviewed the international situation and exchanged experience of environmental protection. In the course of the talks the visitors stated the Green's solidarity with the developing nations' struggle for freedom and socio-economic progress.

For Broader Inter-Party Contacts

The Sandinist National Liberation Front and the Yemen Socialist Party concluded an agreement in Managua on broadening their inter-party contacts. Speaking at the signing ceremony, the Nicaraguan leader Daniel Ortega stressed the importance of more extensive cooperation between the two friendly countries and the need for the unification of all the progressive and revolutionary forces of the world in a single front of struggle against imperialism and for revolutionary change and the self-determination and sovereignty of nations.

In Brief

COSTA RICA

The leadership of the People's Vanguard Party took the decision to convene the 16th Party Congress on September 15-18. A campaign to recruit new members has got under way as part of the preparations for the Congress and efforts are being made to increase the circulation of the party's newspaper *Adelante* and to bring its print run up to 15,000 copies a month.

FRANCE

The Communist Party polled 11.3 per cent of the votes but secured a mere 27 out of the 577 National Assembly seats in the June parliamentary elections. The FCP explains this result primarily by the undemocratic reform of the electoral system effected by the previous right-wing government.

GDR

The festival of *Neues Deutschland*, the newspaper of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, was held in the Friedrichsheim Park, the Berliners'

favourite recreational haunt. Visitors to the festival saw numerous exhibitions and met scientists, journalists and art workers. Delegations of 23 fraternal parties attended.

ITALY

Elections to the local government bodies were held in three provinces and 1,200 urban and rural communities late last May. Some 86 per cent of the registered 7 million voters cast their ballots. The Italian Communist Party polled 36.1 per cent of the votes in the provinces, almost 9 per cent more than the runners-up, the Christian Democrats, but lost more than 3 per cent of the votes in the municipal elections.

SAN MARINO

The Christian Democrats and the Communists, who in 1986 formed San Marino's coalition government, won the parliamentary elections last May with 44 and 28 per cent of the votes, respectively. The Communists gained three more seats in the Grand General Council and now have 18 out of the 60 seats.

SPAIN

The Communist Party of Spain unconditionally supports the United Left coalition as a socio-political movement which aims at changing society within the framework of the Spanish Constitution, the Plenary Meeting of the CPS, held in Madrid in May 1988, stated. A document approved by the Plenary Meeting suggests that the coalition and its leading bodies be reorganised on the principles of collegiality.

WMR Introduces

GEORGE HEWISON

General Secretary, Communist Party of Canada

THE 27th Convention of the Communist Party of Canada (May 1988) unanimously elected George Hewison as General Secretary. He was born in British Columbia in 1945 into a working class family. At 17, he began working as a fisherman and soon became very active in his union, the United Fishermen and Allied Workers' Union. In 1965, this union elected him as Organiser. He subsequently filled the posts of Secretary-Treasurer and Vice-President. His manifold activities there and in the struggles of the British Columbia Federation of Labour and other mass democratic organisations made him a very well-known figure. For many years a member of the CC CP Canada, in 1985 he was elected a member of the party's Central Executive Committee and secretary for trade union affairs and moved from Vancouver to Toronto.

JARMO WAHLSTRÖM
Chairman, Communist Party of Finland

The plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Finland held at the end of May examined the question of a resignation by the CC Political Bureau of its powers over the involvement of CPF leaders in financial operations which had tarnished the image of the party. It then elected a new Political Bureau. Jarmo Wahlström became Chair of the CPF.

He was born in Vaasa on December 2, 1938, into a working class family. He is a school teacher by training. In 1960 he joined the CPF. In 1975 he was elected an alternate member, and three years later a full member of the CC of the party. At its 21st Congress (1987) he became a member of the CC Political Bureau.

A member of Parliament in 1975-1984 and since 1987; in 1987-1988 (until his election as Party Chair) he headed the parliamentary group of the Finnish People's Democratic League, of which the Communist Party of Finland is the leading force. In 1982-1983 Wahlström was the minister of transport in a coalition government.

HELJÄ-MARJA TAMMISOLA
General Secretary, Communist Party of Finland

Heljä-Marja Tammissola was elected General Secretary of the Party at the May Plenary Meeting of the CC CPF. She was born in 1946, and is a programmer by training. In 1971 she joined the CPF. In 1980-1985 she was the chair of the CPF Helsinki Region Branch. A member of the CC of the party since 1981 and of the CC Political Bureau since 1982. In 1984-1988 she was Vice-Chair of the CPF.

exchange of views, discussion

Round Table By Correspondence

The Demands Of The Communication Age

There is now television broadcasting in more than 130 countries, and almost 2.5 billion people watch programmes on over 600 million TV sets; there are 1.3 billion radio receivers in the world; 75 per cent of

the production and dissemination of news on the globe is controlled by 81 transnational corporations; each of the four major Western news agencies daily files several million words of news. The Associated Press, for instance, supplies its product to over 1,300 newspapers and 56,000 radio and TV stations, which then goes out to up to one billion people daily; the video and cable TV boom continues, and round-the-clock satellite TV programmes are in the offing.

Those are the realities of the communication age.

In the capitalist countries, monopoly capital controls the most modern facilities for influencing the minds of men and women, extracting huge profits, while intensifying its ideological influence on the masses.

The progressive forces, notably the Communists, refuse to accept the diktat of the communication monopolies, and have been steadily working to have the achievements of the scientific and technological revolution benefit the peoples and serve the aims of humanism, social progress and democracy.

The journal asked several communist parties to describe their experience in this struggle, and the state of the mass media in their countries.

Below are the views of the communist parties of Greece, France, Spain, Venezuela and Lebanon.

Democratisation: The Only Way

Kostas Papanicolaou — mass
media department head, CC,
Communist Party of Greece (CPG)

THE ecological problem often comes up when there is a discussion of mankind's global problems which can be solved only in a common effort by the peoples and states. Indeed, environmental pollution has now assumed disastrous proportions: in Athens, for instance, more than 2,000 people were killed by poisonous smog last year. But there is another kind of poison abroad in the world, and it is the poison of lies, which erodes human souls instead of bodies; it is daily poured out from the pages of bourgeois printed media, TV screens and radio speakers.

The poisonous fog of disinformation is designed to cloud from the peoples the truth about the aims and activity of the Communists and other left-wing forces. The continued monopolisation of the media, the infiltration of US capital into the press, and the attempts by the rightist forces to set up control over national radio and television are among the alarming developments in Greece today. All these are paralleled by mounting discrimination against the progressive left-wing press and a stepped-up anti-communist propaganda campaign.

The 'Koskotas phenomenon' has been much discussed in Greece in the recent period. It refers to a Greek millionaire who started his 'career' in the United States and who has become the country's major press baron: he owns one-half of all the popular magazines, and the conservative newspaper *Kathimerini*. Late last February he launched another newspaper called *Ikositesseris Ores (24 Hours)*: it has several daily editions, which is something of a revolution in the press. Koskotas is now preparing to set up his own TV station and several radio stations in the provinces.

As was to have been expected, the major papers are mouthpieces for the dominant bourgeois ideology. They often take different approaches to the Communists, the left-forces coalition and the peace movement, and alter their tactics depending on the political situation. But at critical moments they shed their leftist mask and resume their anti-communist stand.

In Greece there is no formal ban on the issue and circulation of communist publications, but there are various overt and covert ways of discriminating against the party press. As a result, many progressive-minded readers still have to look over their shoulder before buying our newspapers and journals. Party organisations at large enterprises have been campaigning for the free distribution on the shopfloor of *Rizospastis*, the party's central organ. And while the conditions for the circulation of our newspapers and journals have somewhat improved since 1981, when the rightists lost their majority in parliament, employers still try to erect various barriers to the spread of the communist press on the plea of there being a need for 'labour peace'.

There are also serious problems in the army, where the spread of any newspapers, especially party papers, is prohibited. Progressive-minded soldiers are often penalised for reading *Rizospastis* when off duty. That is done through an arbitrary reading of army regulations. We believe that soldiers have a constitutional right to read the papers of their choice.

The state mass media tend to hush up the facts about the activity of the progressive forces. In 1986 and 1987, for instance, the official radio and television carried virtually no reports on the mass action by workers and peasants against the government's austerity policy, which was started on the initiative of the CP Greece and the left-wing trade unions. The working people of Athens then staged a rally at the TV centre and demanded truthful reporting of the events. K. Kerasunlis, the then chair of the Builders' Union, and an organiser of the protest action, told the TV management: "Unless you give a fitting report on our rally, and unless you report the working people's demands, the next time this building will be surrounded by thousands of people and you will hardly be able to make your recordings in peace."

Under pressure from public opinion, the state radio and TV were forced to widen their reporting of popular action, although such 'undesirable' news items are still being presented most briefly and usually at the tail-end before sports items and weather reports.

The Communist Party has made important headway in the media over the last few years. Thanks to economic support from the working people, we now have our own printing works, equipped with the most modern

photosetting and printing facilities. In view of the video boom — one Greek family in four now has a video-player — and the CP Greece has been making a wide use of video-cassettes produced in its own studio for the purposes of its propaganda work.

But we cannot yet, of course, vie with the big media monopolies which enjoy constant support from the bourgeois state. Nor do we have to this day any access to the state media, notably radio and television, which are still under the total control of the PASOK government, just as they were under the control of earlier right-wing regimes.

Parliament recently enacted a new law on the electronic media, which entitles local authorities and private persons to set up their own radio stations. Several municipal radio stations are already on the air, and within a short time they have won the sympathies of large audiences because of their open and democratic broadcasts: these stations often put on the air those for whom access to the state media is closed.

As I have said, Greece is on the eve of an invasion of the airwaves by private enterprise. Behind a screen of 'freedom' of information, PASOK and the New Democracy party have met the demands of big capital, and the country will soon have both private radio broadcasting and television. The monopolies will spread their activity to other spheres of information as well, which is why the Communist Party should mount a serious counter-attack.

A special conference was held by the CPG in Athens in March 1986, which it called 'For Democratising Radio and TV', and which was attended by media men, journalists, and political leaders of various trends. Mimis Androulakis, alternate member of the CPG Political Bureau, told the conference: "The struggle to democratise the flow of information now tends to acquire central and primary significance. The high technology and mass media boom sets new tasks before the Communists and all the other left-wing forces."

The struggle to democratise the media must certainly be carried on with an eye to the international state of high technology, informatics in the first place. We believe, for instance, that TV satellite broadcasting should be received from Western and socialist countries alike.

The CPG has demanded the repeal of the radio and TV law, insisting on the establishment of stations under public control within the framework of a national state system. This will promote healthy competition between the stations, and so improve the quality of programmes. In the press we want a moral code for journalists and an end to the absolute control by publishers.

If the mass media are to be democratised, the social fabric as a whole must also be democratised, and that is why the CPG has urged the need for deep-going democratic transformations and for truly democratic change in society on its way to socialism.

For Genuinely Pluralist Opinion

Roland Leroy — FCP Political Bureau
member, Director of *l'Humanité*

IN France, capital has a tight grip on the mass media and this is an obstacle to the exercise of one of the basic rights of our contemporaries: the right to information and to communication.

Placed at the service of man, the new means of communication could be invaluable instruments of information, education, exchanges and openness, but they are used by the monopoly groups only to make profit, the sacrosanct rule of common sense finance.

Capital has further tightened its grip on what is now known as the 'French audio-visual scene'. The state has flung the door wide open to the capitalists, so letting the wolf into the sheepfold. The public sector has been put up for plunder by the private sector. Since the creation of the first private TV network in 1985, four of the six channels in France have been privatised.

One will no longer find quality or pluralism, but, on the contrary, uniformity and conformism, suppression of the creative approach and the spawning of low-grade, tasteless TV programmes purchased in the United States. This faster degradation of our audio-visual system has caused discontent among the French, and there are signs of anxiety and resistance among professionals and creative people.

The political power — the government and the president of the republic — have intensified their pressure. The mass media laws provide a veritable arsenal for fighting pluralism and independence.

In order to force acceptance of their policy of austerity, arms race and integration of Western Europe under US leadership, the authorities must silence, censor and slander those who resist all this, the Communists in the first place, because they are the only political force fighting for another perspective. They are the most hard pressed by the censorship. But the General Confederation of Labour (CGT) and all those who reject conformism in any form, be they pacifists, ecologists or just progressive-minded people — are also subjected to discrimination.

In order to stamp out pluralism, the authorities have put in place a string of legislative, administrative and economic measures. They have set up a special institution, the National Commission for Communication and Liberty (CNCL), which has further intensified the tutelage of mass media. In the printed media, every possible mechanism is being used to concentrate capitalist groups and strangle periodicals expressing their own opinions. Discrimination in advertising has dealt the communist press a heavy blow, and has favoured the commercial press.

Under the heel of the moneybags and the authorities the right-wing mass media in our country have beaten all the records of anti-communism and anti-Sovietism. When Mikhail Gorbachov met a French public delegation in Moscow in September 1987, he was quite right in drawing attention to the fact that the French media have the distinction of being more anti-Soviet than those in other Western countries.

We, Communists, have long been aware of the fact, and we have an idea of the reasons. These are determined by our country's specific conditions, the concrete possibilities for revolutionary change, and the existence of a massive class-oriented trade union movement and a powerful communist party. Another reason is France's noxious foreign policy orientation, which is opposed to disarmament, and which gravitates towards a return to the bosom of NATO.

We do not, of course, expect the people who run the mass media to come out in support of our policy, but we do not accept the anti-communist censorship and insist on truthful and honest information for all citizens.

In April 1987, we set up a Committee for Pluralism and the Truth in the audio-visual field, and its activity, supported by the Communists and many other democrats, has helped it to score some important successes. We have succeeded, for instance, in having Andre Lajoine, the communist candidate for the 1988 presidential election, invited to take part in The Hour of Truth, a TV programme from which he was initially barred. The broadcast was a veritable happening, which enabled Andre Lajoine to present the Communists' militant, open and unifying image.

We shall certainly carry on our persevering struggle for renewed, modern and pluralist media, and hope that we shall score further successes with the backing of public opinion. But we have no illusions. For basic reasons arising from the class nature of anti-communism, we shall never be able to have in the bourgeois media the rightful place we deserve, and that is why we have given special attention to the spread and development of the party press, whose role in the struggle for pluralism can hardly be exaggerated.

The FCP has done a great deal to renew its newspapers to enable them to keep in step with the times and to meet more fully the demands of our political battles. *L'Humanité* and *l'Humanité-Dimanche* are ever more open to the various realities of our world and of our time, and are, at the same time, ever more revolutionary, conveying the communist view, militant newspapers carrying the truth and totally committed to the struggle for the transformation of society and for peace.

Opposing Alien Values

Juan B. Berga — CC Secretary,
Communist Party of Spain (CPS);
Director of *Mundo Obrero*

I SHOULD like, first of all, to welcome, on behalf of our party, the WMR's initiative in having a debate on such an important matter. This is most necessary for two reasons. First, the unprecedented changes on the peace issue (mainly due to Mikhail Gorbachov's initiatives, and largely to the efforts of the anti-war movement, in which the CPS is involved) have created favourable conditions for peaceful competition between the social

systems, which the Spanish Communists also advocate. On the basis of high technology, the capitalist system has produced media models which do much to expand the potentialities for exerting an influence on public opinion. The left-wing forces as a whole, and the Communists, in particular, must, for their part, discuss the development of a progressive media model.

Second, one should not forget that at the present stage in the development of capitalism, the role and functions of the media go beyond the traditional framework of ideological influence and are determined by the need to control both individuals and social processes, depending on the economic development model.

It is perfectly evident that the economic and political decisions being taken in the capitalist countries rely on all-round support from the transnational media corporations. Progress in high technologies, as a factor on which capital has put its stake in its efforts to pull out of the crisis, increasingly depends on the 'culture industries', on human education. But it would be a grave error to ignore the mercantile considerations behind such innovations.

That is why it is not enough to demand a democratisation of the media. The CP Spain supports the traditional action programme of the left-wing forces in this field, but believes that it falls short of encompassing the entire range of issues. It is centred on winning the right to express one's views, a goal which has not, of course, lost any of its significance, but only as a component of the overall policy with respect to the media.

When analysing the present state of the media, the Spanish Communists believe that there is an ever wider transnationalisation of the private media parallel with the clear-cut trend towards privatisation of their national structures. This has an immediate impact on the development of the North-South conflict (blocking the less developed countries' information capacity) and threatens the young states with a loss of sovereignty. The new systems of processing and transmitting information are designed to homogenise society's ideological thinking, and to create new forms of social control and orientation.

That is the kind of situation we now find in Spain, where the media are being subordinated to the interests of the oligopolies. Virtually every type of printed or broadcast information is controlled by four monopoly business groups. Television, the most powerful medium, is in a similar state. In our country, public television caters for private interests, whose influence is bound to grow with the development of private television accessible only to the major media groups controlling the information market.

The CPS increasingly finds itself the object of information aggression, which is no longer based on the old anti-communist ideology, but on two new types of aggression: the hushing-up of the Communists' proposals, and the spread of the idea that they are socially bankrupt, on the one hand, and the most subtle speculations over the Communists' inner-party life, on the other.

In these conditions, the party has worked out a concrete political media action platform, and here are some of its international and internal aspects.

On the world level, any activity in this field must be based on UNESCO decisions on communication problems in present-day society.¹ It also proposes that the European countries should initiate East-West cooperation in this field and promote a European presence in the world media systems.

On the national level, it proposes a set of measures, among them regulation of the use of TV channels during election campaigns, with state funding and guarantees of the right of municipal councils and political and public bodies to set up their own mass media of every type. It also demands equal working conditions and equal pay for those employed in private and state mass media, with journalists being enabled freely to perform their professional duties.

When considering the party press, notably the weekly *Mundo obrero*, the documents of the 12th Congress of the CP Spain in February 1988 said that the structural changes in the communications map of Spain, especially in the press, were paralleled by a powerful concentration of capital and control of the media, which has reduced the readership and facilities of the left-wing press. This process has run against the background of a mass invasion of left-wing ideology by alien values implanted by papers and journals whose publication is controlled by a handful of 'general communication' centres.

It was said at the congress: "In this situation, many had assumed that the time was past when the communist press could compete in the shaping of public opinion. One should evidently recognise that in a sense the message of the communist press has lost its erstwhile propaganda and agitation significance. However, as a party, we cannot but promote the establishment of an alternative press giving its own interpretation of the reality, and the working out of a high-value cultural programme in the broadest sense of the word; nor can we abandon the well-argued and purposeful conduct of our political line."²

¹ See Final Report of the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems (MacBride Commission — Many Voices, One World), Paris, July 1980.

² *Mundo obrero*, February 18, 1988.

A Factor of Social Change

Hector Mujica — CC member,
Communist Party of Venezuela, Founder
and First Chair of the National College of
Journalists

WE find, on the whole, the same state of the media in Venezuela as it is throughout the Western Hemisphere (naturally, with the exception of Cuba and Nicaragua). There is the same oppressive ideological influence from the United States in the press, on radio and television, in the screening of films, which has gone hand in hand economically with greater

penetration by US capital, and spiritually with the offensive by US-type culture. Apart from printed information and radio and TV broadcasts from the United States, Venezuela is supplied with various comic strips, illustrated magazines, video-cassettes, posters, discs, and films, including pornographic ones.

One should bear in mind that almost 85 per cent of the computer facilities is now turned out by a dozen transnational corporations, with one-half of the output controlled by IBM of the United States. Of the appropriations in the early 1980s for the development of informatics, less than 5 per cent was earmarked for the Third World countries.

The state of the information market in Venezuela was somewhat improved with the emergence of new news agencies and the establishment of ties with the International Press Service, Prensa Latina, and Novosti Press Agency. Nevertheless, up until recently, more than 70 per cent of international reports coming into the country were filed by the US agencies and also by the British Reuter's, and the French AFP.

But while there is still evidence of positive changes in the press as a result of the rising political consciousness of the masses and the sustained active struggle by professional journalists against the 'masters of the press' under every regime, that cannot be said about television and radio, which have become the preserves of the monopolies. This applies especially to television, where major economic groups (Phelps and Cisneros) control two of the most influential private channels, which exert not only ideological influence, but also political pressure in the course of elections because they are the mouthpieces of the establishment parties and candidates.

Under the telecommunications and radio-broadcasting laws the authorities are entitled to give private persons concessions for transmission solely for educational and sanitation purposes. But the very opposite has happened in fact: the state owns only three radio channels in the long-wave band and a third of the medium-wave band (for broadcasting abroad), while there are over 150 private radio stations in the country. In television, the state owns two channels of a purely commercial character: Venezolana de Television, whose programmes include perhaps even more items labelled 'Made in USA' than do private TV companies, and Channel 5, which specialises in cultural programmes.

Representatives of the progressive forces have no access at all to radio and television. Neither the Communist Party, nor the Electoral Movement of the People, nor even the moderate Movement Towards Socialism, have ever been able to appear on radio or television.

As I have said, there is a more favourable situation in the press, especially in the provinces, where 50 newspapers with the broadest political range are being published on a fairly modern basis. The same is also characteristic of provincial radio: its transmissions are much more pluralistic than those of radio broadcasting in the capital.

The communist and other progressive press now keeps going mainly through the street sale of its copies. Thus, the party's newspaper, *Tribuna Popular* no more than rarely receives advertisements from the municipal councils (on which the Communists are represented), and also items from

the legislative assemblies and the congress of the republic. Virtually all the 6 billion bolivars¹ of income from the 'advertising industry' are swallowed up by the 'big press' and the most influential radio and TV stations.

The Venezuelan Communists began their struggle to democratise the media long ago. Today, they are not alone in this struggle. Journalists of varying affiliations — Socialists, Social Democrats, Christian Democrats, independents and, of course, Communists — have united in a solid bloc for democratising the press, radio and TV (i.e., for making them accessible and open for the whole people) and for improving working conditions and greater freedom of expression for themselves and for their colleagues. Special attention is here given to the activity of the National Union of Press Workers and the National College of Journalists, the schools of public communication at universities in the country, groups like Liberation Theology and the Gumilla Centre and the Jesus Maria Pellin Centre.

We believe that one of the main tasks is the possible establishment of an autonomous and independent national communication system in accordance with UNESCO recommendations set forth in the well-known report by the McBride Commission. If that is to be done, all the available technological variants should be mastered and a selection made of those that would make us less dependent on imperialist influence.

It was quite rightly said in the documents of the non-aligned movement that the activity of imperialism is not confined to the political and economic spheres: it also ranges over the social and cultural spheres, imposing foreign ideological domination on the peoples of the less developed countries. That is why it is necessary to continue the struggle to democratise the media, to put them at the service of development, and to get them to play their original purpose: to be a factor of social transformations.

¹ 30 bolivars is roughly equal to US\$1. — *Ed.*

Resisting Ideological Subversions

Rafic Samhoun — CC Political
Bureau member, Lebanese CP

THE entire Arab world and Lebanon, in particular, have long since become an object of fierce psychological warfare aimed to paralyse the will of the peoples of the Middle East, to make it easier to fight the Palestinian resistance and the Lebanese Patriotic Movement, to fan religious, intercommunal and regional conflicts, and to present the Soviet Union and communism as the enemies of the Arabs, despite the fact that these are the ruling circles of the United States and Israel and local reaction.

Among others, the following media have been put in the forefront of this war: Radio Monte Carlo, which is financed by France, the United States

and Saudi Arabia, and which is 'monitored' by Israel; Radio Free Lebanon, equipped under an order from Israel by a US corporation, and put at the disposal of Israel's South Lebanese puppet Antoine Lahad; the propaganda media of the Kata'eb Party, and in particular, the Voice of Lebanon and Lebanon TV; state-controlled television, radio and official and semi-official news agencies. All of these, especially those which belong to the state and the Kata'eb Party, have acted together and covertly concerted their actions in politics, exchange of information, advertising, finance, etc.

In order to weaken and undermine the press and other information media of the Lebanese patriotic forces, reaction has resorted to various forms of pressure: an advertising boycott, falsifications and blackmail, and downright terrorism, such as explosions and acts of vandalism in the editorial offices and printing works of progressive publications.

The obscurantists have tried to drive the patriotic press into a corner, offering it a choice of three ways: to fall silent altogether, to be destroyed, or to desert to the camp of fascism and reaction. That is what happened to the newspaper *Al-Mouharrir*, which was forced to cease publication, and the newspaper *Al-Anwar*, which finally moved to new premises in the area controlled by the Phalangists.

Even before the outbreak of the Civil War in Lebanon, powerful information trusts began to take shape, financed by various US institutions, petrodollar holders and transnational corporations. One of these trusts provided the impetus for the establishment of the Triple Alliance in 1968 between the right-wing Christian parties, which paved the way for the start of suicidal battles between the communities and the dealing of a blow at the Palestinian resistance and the Lebanese patriotic movement.

In the conspiracy against the progressive press, some secret service departments of the United States and reactionary Arab regimes have actively collaborated with their counterparts in Lebanon. Their purpose is to drown the local media in a flood of dubious news items, reports and statements daily hurled at them by several news agencies linked to these subversive agencies. Millions of dollars are being spent in order to present the state of affairs in accordance with reaction's social order for which purpose there is a brainwashing of deputies, ministers, ambassadors, preachers, lawyers, and others.

Among the media specialising in such brainwashing and putting pressure on the public mind, pride of place certainly goes to television, followed by radio, films, video and audio-cassettes, newspapers, and books. The attention and leisure of most people, regardless of their convictions, or class, social and party affiliation are being taken over by audio-visual gadgets. Without asking permission, they follow a person everywhere: to work, car, street, and home. The owners of the audio-visual media effectively dominate the mood of the masses, rule their mentality and largely determine their attitudes, because they are able to feed through every hour, and in fact every minute, anything they want in form and content.

In view of present-day realities, in the face of information imperialism

and the almost 13-year civil war, the Lebanese Communist Party set itself this important task: to set up a radio station to combat the reactionary 'voices' which distort the facts, twist the reality and dupe the people. This task was fulfilled in early 1987, when Radio Saut Al-Shaab (Voice of the People) first went on the air. Its broadcasts go out 18 hours a day and can be heard not only in every part of the country, but also beyond its borders. Today, thanks to its diverse programmes addressed to every stratum of the population and with the participation of many popular journalists, artists and other workers in the arts, and to the analytical commentaries and objective news bulletins, Saut Al-Shaab has become Lebanon's second most popular radio station. That is, of course, a great aid in the propaganda work carried on by the traditional party press and the communist publishing houses.

However, that fills only a part of the vast information deficit which is felt by our party and all the other patriots of Lebanon. Today and in the future, we are faced with this other task: to secure for the Communists and all the other progressive forces the equal right to use television for the free expression of their views and standpoints on various problems agitating the minds of the working people and the country as a whole. This struggle will be an organic part of the general democratic struggle.

Action for democratising the mass media on a national scale must, we believe, be a part of the wide movement for a new international communication order which has been proceeding both on the regional and the world level. To this day, four Western news agencies supply the Arab countries with 80 per cent of their information. The United States alone controls 75 per cent of the TV programmes, 50 per cent of the films, and the bulk of the commercial information going to the less developed countries.

The problem now is to build a nuclear-free world, to introduce the new political thinking, and to strengthen mutual understanding and cooperation. In these conditions, it is more important than ever before to combat the lies, frauds and ideological subversions of imperialism.

This discussion is most important because it gives an idea of the actual state of the mass media in the various countries, and provides an exchange of experience in the communist parties' struggle in the actual concrete national conditions to curb the reaction's control of the instruments of influencing the masses in the interests of the people. But while this is important, it is merely the first step, and I hope it is not the last one.

On the eve of the 21st century, in this age of space satellites and informatics, when events in this world take only minutes to reach millions of people of various classes, with their differing political and other convictions, we have to be prepared for much greater effort to do away with the monopoly of brainwashing, to democratise the press, television and radio, and to establish a new international information order. As one of my colleagues said, it would perhaps be easier to put an end to the diktat of the oil monopolies than to the sway of the information monopolies. Let us join together in meeting the challenge of this epoch.

The Long Wave Theory and The Fortunes of Capitalism

Professor Stanislav Menshikov
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SCHOLARS began to notice back in the mid-19th century an alteration of 'bad' and 'good' periods in the capitalist economy, with succeeding faster and slower rates of growth. In addition to the ordinary crises of overproduction, which occurred in 7 to 11 years cycles, protracted recessions tended to occur every 40 to 50 years. In the early 20th century, Marxists in Germany, the Netherlands and Russia began to speak of the existence of long waves in the economy, but it was only in the 1920s that the Soviet economist Nikolai Kondratieff formulated a full-scale concept of 'long cycles in economic life', known as the 'Kondratieff cycles'.

The Man and His Theory

His was a very hard life. He came from a simple peasant family, graduated from the university, and when still a young man, after the February 1917 Revolution, became deputy minister for foodstuffs (from the Socialist-Revolutionary Party) in the Provisional Government. After the October 1917 Revolution, Kondratieff withdrew from political activity and concentrated on science. He was a professor at the Agricultural Academy, director of a research institute, and the author of numerous works on the economics of agriculture, socialist planning and the world economy. The 1920s were a period of heated and acute discussions among scientists and many of these centred on Kondratieff himself and his theories.

His scientific activity ended abruptly and tragically: in 1930, this outstanding economist was arrested and falsely accused of forming a non-existent Peasant Labour Party. He died in prison in 1938 at the age of 46. In the 1960s, he was rehabilitated 'in the absence of a criminal act', but his works and his very name were still not mentioned in the USSR. Only in 1984, the journal *Kommunist*, a theoretical organ of the CPSU, first put in a good word for him.¹ Following the rehabilitation in 1987 of Alexander Chayonov² and other associates of Kondratieff at the Agricultural Academy, his name has been fully reinstated in the Soviet press.

Had Kondratieff lived to this day, he could have marked the 60th anniversary of his worldwide fame, not as an agricultural economist, but as the discoverer of 'long waves', which he vigorously studied in the economy of the United States, Great Britain, Germany and France, among other countries. His works were hotly discussed by Soviet economists; they were then translated into foreign languages, and widely read by foreign specialists. 'Kondratieff cycles' became a classic and were written into textbooks on economics, but at home his ideas, from 1930 until recently, were automatically regarded as 'harmful' and his long waves a 'bourgeois invention'. Indeed, for decades there was a virtual ban on any analysis of

this phenomenon, and the vacuum was filled by scientists of other schools, which were not Marxist in any sense; they accepted the long cycle idea and put their own interpretation on it. Thus, an important field of research was given up by Marxist scientists virtually without a fight.

Only in the late 1960s, the French Communist and scholar Paul Boccara resumed the study of long waves;³ in the 1970s he was joined by Thomas Kuczynski⁴ from the GDR; and in the 1980s by Soviet economists (including the author), Marxist researchers in the FRG and in Great Britain.⁵ They have met regularly in recent years to discuss the relevant scientific problems, among themselves and with non-Marxist specialists.⁶ The revival of Kondratieff's ideas does not and cannot run a painless path because, as it has turned out, it affects many highly acute problems of political struggle in the capitalist countries and the question of the future of capitalism. Scholars have also wondered whether long waves also exist in the socialist economy. There is as yet no consensus on these issues among Marxists. As someone who has taken part in these discussions I should like to recount some of the controversy these have produced.

The Hypothesis and Its Confirmation

Kondratieff had some very scant data on which to go when he formulated his hypothesis, but he managed to discern the main thing: the recurrence of periods of 'big crises' in the capitalist economy. At that time, there was certain knowledge of one such period: the 1870s and 1880s. If his compatriots had not been in such a hurry to stigmatise Kondratieff they would have had at their disposal a highly necessary scientific hypothesis providing an explanation — however partial and incomplete — of the emerging second such period: the 1920s and 1930s. But Kondratieff disappeared from the scene only a few months after the gravest crisis in the history of capitalism (1929-1933) broke out, and most of his critics at that time were unaware that ahead lay yet another decade of mass unemployment and recession.

The third such period — the 1970s and 1980s — is now a certainty, and there is a run of roughly 50 years between the start of each of these three periods, i.e., exactly the length of the long waves that Kondratieff discovered through his analysis. So, for the time being, his hypothesis has been borne out. Had it not been rejected out of hand in the first place, but had instead been elaborated thoroughly and in depth, the international working class movement could surely have been better prepared, as early as the 1960s, for the inevitable sharpening of the class battles and for the new and more complicated conditions of the economic struggle, and could have anticipated the deep crisis of the existing methods of state-monopoly regulation and the adoption by the monopolies of the new weapon for attacking the working class: neoconservatism in its various national forms.

Kondratieff believed that the recurrence of big crises was due to the period renewal of fixed capital in long-term production infrastructure. From this he concluded that there should be a regular succession of protracted periods of a relative shortage of capital and similarly protracted periods of a relative surplus of capital. The mechanism of over-accumulation is examined in detail by Karl Marx in Volume Three of his

Capital, but at the time Marx did not conclude that it was periodic: the first big crisis of the 1870s-1890s was then just in the making.

The inner logic of long waves has been studied much more fully in our day. Boccara has aptly called these big crises 'structural crises', explaining that he had in mind periods of the painful transformation of the capitalist relations of production as they adapted to the new stage in the development of the productive forces.⁷ Therein lies, one would assume, the secret of the periodic recurrence of such crises.

The Logic of Structural Crises

Indeed, structural crises are protracted periods of development covering about two decades, when some of the major sectors of the economy are in a state of crisis of stagnation. While new and fast-growing industries may originate in that period, their scale is still too small to determine the general rate of economic growth. Stagnation and crisis in the traditional industries determine the low growth rate of social production as a whole. The over-accumulation of capital in most of the old industries leads to a decline in the general rate of profit. There is a massive rejection of the old, established machinery and technology.

A structural crisis is also a period in which old organisational forms of capitalism are replaced by new ones, with substantial adjustments in the mechanism of economic regulation. The crisis of the 1870s-1890s, for instance, promoted the transition from the free competition system to monopolies, and the crisis of the 1920s-1930s the creation of developed state-monopoly regulation. In the course of the current structural crisis of the 1970s-1980s, there is also a search for new forms — a combination of neoconservative policy on the national level and global regulation in the transnational corporations and banks.

Consequently, *a long wave is an economic mechanism by means of which capitalism adapts itself to the current revolution in the technical mode of production and modifies the forms of its existence.* Professor Jorg Huffschtmidt, a West German Communist, says that "long waves must be regarded not as a process in which capitalism regularly returns to some earlier state, but as a process of its development from one stage to another."⁸

In order to understand the inner logic of big crises, one should see the unity and interconnection of all its elements: the crises of the old economic structure, technology, forms of organisation, mode of regulation, and the system of production relations. Capitalism can overcome a structural crisis only by replacing all these old forms by new ones.

Like ordinary cyclical crises, structural ones are a form in which the basic contradiction of capitalism is partially resolved. Each new stage of technical development leads to a higher degree of socialisation of production and mandates the modification of the private capitalist form of appropriation and the methods by means of which the capitalist class rules.

In any unity of contradictions one must see its main element, and in this case it is the development of the productive forces and the radical changes in technology. These are radical changes of entire technological directions, marking new phases of the scientific and technological revolution.

Structural crises tend to originate at the interface between one phase of it and the next. They also provide the economic basis for the deepening of the general crisis of capitalism.

But the interconnections here are neither simple nor unidirectional. New technology makes headway through the intricate mechanism of alternating periods of growth and lowering of the organic composition of capital, and the rise and fall of the general rate of profit in the economy. Recent research shows that the change in these key categories of the Marxist political economy is not unilinear, but tends to fluctuate with the same periodicity as the long wave in the economy.⁹ On the one hand, technological changes lead to changes in the organic composition of capital and the rate of profit, while fluctuations in the rate of profit, for their part, now stimulate revolutionary leaps in technology, now result in its less revolutionary development. Periods of intensive and extensive growth follow upon one another, says Marx. The life cycle of basic technologies, going through the successive phases of take-off, prime state and relative decline, constitutes the material basis of the long waves, the 'Kondratieff cycles'.

Could One Expect Another Boom?

At the beginning of this year, I was invited by the Frankfurt Institute for Marxist Studies to take part in a series of long wave debates at several universities in the FRG: Bremen, Marburg and Bonn, and at the higher trade union school in Hamburg. The interest in the subject was wide. Back in 1985, the Institute had published a collection of works by its researchers which recognised the existence of big crises in the capitalist economy, but cast doubt on their periodicity.¹⁰ A scientific conference was held in the spring of 1986 on the same set of problems, and it was attended not only by scholars close to the German Communist Party, but also by members of other left-wing movements and the Social Democratic Party. The proceedings of the conference were published in a collection entitled *The Crisis Theory Controversy*.¹¹ On that occasion, the participants took different sides: some were inclined to support the long wave theory, while others continued to object to it. I met the same kind of differing opinions when addressing university audiences.

The discussions made it perfectly clear, first of all, why there was such an interest in the 'Kondratieff cycle'. The current structural crisis in the FRG has turned out to be fairly long and has dealt a painful blow at the working class. The number of unemployed now officially comes to 9 per cent of the labour force, but in some industrial centres, like Hamburg, it is as high as 15 per cent. Enterprises and capacities in some of the traditional industries, notably iron-and-steel and shipbuilding, are being wound up, and there is also an absolute drop in the number of jobs in other branches, for instance, the automobile industry.

Therefore, big crises have ceased to be an academic question and *have become an acute economic, social and political problem*. The ruling CDU/FDP coalition has refused to do anything to save the foundering industries, and has accepted the mass unemployment on the plea that there is a need

to make industry more competitive. The profits of many major concerns remain high, especially in the new industries. The capitalist class as a whole is not all that alarmed over the structural crisis, and has been making use of this period of economic hardship to weaken the working class, the trade unions, the left-wing forces and the social-democratic opposition.

The left-wing forces in the FRG, including the Communist Party, have put forward an alternative programme designed to minimise the negative effects of the big crisis for the working people, including means to safeguard existing and to create new jobs, to redistribute and retrain the labour force with an eye to the development of new industries, measures to provide employment for young people, reduce military spending and use the funds thus saved to develop civilian industries, and to enact legislation restricting the right of the concerns to shut down enterprises. It is perfectly clear that one cannot expect any solution to the problems agitating the working class without serious intervention by the state and the public: there is a need for relevant-political measures.

There were serious doubts in the lecture halls where our debates took place about the idea that there is an internal mechanism capable of surmounting the present structural crisis and of spontaneously bringing about a new and long upswing.

The answer lay in the fact that such a mechanism does exist, as will be seen from the earlier record of capitalist development. The concerns have used the crisis to tighten up the screws and to install new plant which helps to save labour, raw and other materials, and outlays on equipment. This helps to raise the rate of profit and to revive the economy as a whole. The making of fundamentally new equipment requires the establishment of new enterprises and entire industries, so producing the conditions for a general increase in capital investment. Technical innovations lead to the emergence of new types of goods, including consumer goods, and this helps to expand the internal market. The historical record indicates that the introduction of basically new technological approaches to production occurs precisely at the closing stages of a big crisis.¹²

If things are left to the spontaneous mechanism, it could lead to a working out of the structural crisis some time in the future, but this will be a long and painful process fraught with great calamities for the working masses. There must be a struggle for an alternative democratic programme to surmount the present crisis — in favour of the working class and not to its detriment.

The existence of a capitalist, spontaneous way out of the crisis does not deny but, in fact, implies the possibility and need for democratic solution.

One of the criticisms of Kondratieff's theory in the 1920s was that it recognised capitalism's potentiality for surviving a big crisis, but only because these crises are inevitable. The working class is not at all doomed to taking a passive stand and refusing to seek a better way out, even within the framework of the capitalist system.

Leon Trotsky was one of the first to criticise the 'big cycle' hypothesis. He rejected the idea that these crises were periodic, an idea which implied that not only the crises, but their surmounting were realistic. Trotsky subscribed to the concept that capitalism would collapse automatically,

i.e., that it could not spontaneously pull out of the crisis. Nowadays, a similar view is taken by Ernest Mandel (Belgium), who believes that there is only an 'upper turning-point' in the long wave, i.e., one from boom to bust, but that there is no 'lower turning-point', i.e., one from crisis to boom.¹³ But if one is to take that view, the whole growth of production in the capitalist countries in the 1950s and 1960s will have to be ascribed to the after-effects of war, the militarisation of the economy, or some kind of other 'external' causes, and to regard as unrealistic that capitalism could pull out of the present crisis otherwise than on the basis of these specific, external, including military, factors. But the fact is that it is the inordinate spending on the arms race that now impedes another economic boom.

How Many Years to Go

At Marburg University, where we had a meeting with young Marxists, I was asked: "You do allow a new boom for capitalism. How long has it got to live then? Could it be yet another long wave, another 50 years?" Explaining this question, a professor remarked: "We have here an audience of young people, and they are most impatient."

When Marx and Engels wrote their *Communist Manifesto*, they were slightly older than those students. In the 1920s, Communists used wrathfully to attack anyone who 'gave' capitalism more than ten or twenty years to go. However, the reality has proved to be much more complicated. Socialism has scored some major historical victories, but capitalism has displayed a flexibility and a capacity to adapt.

Why capitalism has such vitality is a topic in its own right which goes beyond the framework of any discussion of the Kondratieff cycles. It also includes the question of the subjective political prerequisites for the revolutionary transformation of society, and the problem of the competition between the two systems.

Our German colleagues asked: "Can the pre-crisis state of the Soviet Union's economy in the early 1980s perhaps also be explained by the Kondratieff wave? Could it be some kind of more general law-governed uniformity, which spares neither capitalism nor socialism? After all, does not the wave-like development of technical progress also apply to socialist society?"

It would be wrong, in my view, to regard the Kondratieff cycle as some kind of technological determinism operating outside the general economic and social mechanism of the given formation. Long waves take shape under capitalism not because technology naturally inclines to develop unevenly, but because technological progress is mediated by the laws of production and the appropriation of surplus value. There is a big boom once new machinery and technology help to raise the rate of profit on a social scale, and a big crisis breaks out when the predominant technology no longer yields the same profits.

The dynamic of technological progress under socialism is not always necessarily and far from always immediately connected with the movement of profit. In more concrete terms, the present difficulties in the Soviet economy and its pre-crisis state originated mainly because the predominant administrative-command system of management contradicted the

requirements of modernising the enterprises, far from always ensuring even a simple replacement of worn-out equipment, and acted as a brake on scientific and technological progress. In other words, the causes here are altogether different, and do not fit into the long wave theory. Indeed, the explanation of these causes must be in terms of political economy and not in technological terms.

Every formation must, from time to time, change the technical mode of production and to modify its economic, social and organisational forms. The whole point is how painlessly this kind of conversion proceeds. Can capitalism, oriented as it is towards profits and the almighty market, ensure a crisis-free transition from one of its stages to another? History shows that it cannot, and that every fifty years it is confronted with another big crisis. It is Nikolai Kondratieff who has to be credited with discovering this important law-governed uniformity.

The socialist planned economy has been in existence for only 70 years. Scientific planning is capable, in principle, of guaranteeing a relatively painless and crisis-free transition from one technological base and stage to another. But in practice, the Soviet economy has found itself in a period of structural stagnation, and there was a need for sharply changing its sectoral structure and technological base, and replacing the administrative-command system with a new one based on democratic socialist self-governance. The fact that comprehension of this need, and especially its implementation, have been delayed has had a negative effect on our economy and society as a whole. This situation is now being set right in the course of perestroika, and this is also a real component of the competition between the two systems, whose outcome is being decided by history.

¹ See *Kommunist*, No. 4, 1984 (English translation in *Political Affairs*, May 1984).

² Alexander Chayanov (1888-1939), an outstanding Soviet scientist in the economics of agriculture, who was arrested on a false charge of belonging to the Peasant Labour Party. He was executed in 1939.

³ Paul Boccara, *Etudes sur le capitalisme monopoliste d'etat, sa crise et son issue*, Paris, 1973; 'Cycles longs, mutations technologiques et originalite de la crise de structure actuelle', *Issues*, No. 16, 1983.

⁴ Thomas Kuczynski, *Spectral Analysis and Cluster Analysis as Mathematical Methods for the Periodisation of Historical Processes*, Edinburgh, 1978; 'Erfolgen Basisinnovationen schubweise?' *Jahrbuch fur Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, No. 2, 1986.

⁵ R. Clarke, 'High Technology: Workers' Enemy or Ally?', *WMR*, No. 3, 1983.

⁶ Such meetings were held in Siena (Italy) in 1983, in Weimar (GDR) in 1985, in Montpellier (France) in 1987, and in Novosibirsk (USSR) in March 1988. A report on the Weimar symposium was published in *The Long Wave Debate*, (ed. by Tibor Vasco), West Berlin, 1987.

⁷ P. Boccara, *Originalite de la longue phase en cours dans une analyse systemique et historique des cycles longs: accumulations, populations et finance*, Colloque international de Montpellier, 1987.

⁸ See Jorg Hufschmidt, 'Entwicklungsstadien des Kapitalismus', in: *Kontroversen zur Krisentheorie*, Hamburg, 1986, p. 76.

⁹ On fluctuations in the organic composition of capital see Paul Boccara, 'Cycles long . . .'; L. Fontvieille, 'Contribution l'etude des fluctuations longues', *Cahiers Recherches et travaux*, Universite de Paris I, 1985; S. M. Menshikov, L. A. Klimenko, *Long Waves in the Economy*, Collection of Transactions, All-Union Research Institute for Systems Analysis, Moscow, No. 3, 1984.

¹⁰ *Grosse Krisen des Kapitalismus — Lange Wellen der Konjunktur?*, Frankfurt-am-Main, 1985.

¹¹ *Kontroversen zur Kriesentheorie*, Hamburg, 1986.

¹² See Alfred Kleinknecht, *Innovation Patterns in Crisis and Prosperity*, London, 1987; Th. Kuczynski, 'Erfolgen Basisinnovationen schubweise?' (see Footnote 4).

¹³ 'The Economic Crisis: The Communist Response', *WMR*, No. 6, 1987; *Imperialism in the 1980s: The Economic Crisis and the Struggle of the Communists*, Peace and Socialism International Publishers, Prague, 1987.

¹⁴ Ernest Mandel, *Long Waves of Capitalist Development. The Marxist Explanation*, Cambridge and Paris, 1980.

viewpoints

Prospects For The Unitary Process In Bolivia

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THE municipal elections held in Bolivia last December revealed a considerable weakening of the influence of the right-wing forces. The Nationalist Revolutionary Movement (NRM) led by the Republic's President Victor Paz Estenssoro suffered a crushing defeat.¹ Compared to other political parties within the local bodies of authority, the ruling party became almost totally excluded from the latter, despite its rigging of the election results. Disagreement and discontent within the NRM exacerbate the process of its isolation and deterioration triggered by the election results.

The present-day situation in the country is characterised by the existence of an oligarchic and pro-imperialist regime. It rests on the basis of a political pact on the division of power between left-wing bloc forces concluded after the early 1985 elections, which brought Paz Estenssoro to power. This happened as a result of the fiasco brought upon the Democratic Popular Unity government² by the worsening economic crisis, the reactionary conspiracy and the contradictions within the democratic coalition.

The popular and trade union movement was for a while on the ebb. Different social strata became distrustful of the front's policy and understandably enough reflected on the risks of another frustration. Nevertheless, the constructive attitude adopted by the political groupings identified with popular aspirations and the firmness of the Communists made it possible to overcome gradually the adverse phenomena.

In the two years or so, despite the widely publicised promises to contain inflation, the right-wing regime proved incapable of solving problems

connected with the aggravating economic crisis or of meeting the vital requirements of the mass of the people. What is more, it is consistently pursuing the New Economic Policy, a neoliberal model dictated by the IMF. It was evolved by North American advisers, among them Jeffrey Sachs notorious for his services to the fascist dictatorship in Chile. The global plan of the oligarchy and imperialism is to continue pillaging the country, to exploit the Bolivian people and to urge the payment of the unjust external debt incurred by the dictatorial regimes.

The present government intends to use more than half this year's national export revenues to pay the debt at the cost of greater misery of the working people. At the same time the state economic sector is being destroyed through the privatisation of its enterprises, including the social security system which was designed to protect the working people's interests. Expenditures on the public health service are also being cut and plans are afoot to replace it with private health care. Privatisation plans are also threatening, compulsorily, free public education, as guaranteed by the Constitution. Universities have suffered considerable damage as a result of their budget reductions.

The adverse consequences of neoliberalism for the Bolivian economy are acquiring alarming proportions and even hurting the interests of the middle industrial and agricultural bourgeoisie. Many enterprises are being closed as foreign goods flood the country, national production needs are neglected, domestic consumption is falling and high customs duties (34 per cent) are paid to import plant equipment. Under the circumstances it is impossible to expect any economic recovery. These and other catastrophic consequences of the governmental policy reach the dimensions of genocide, taking into account the fact that by today unemployment has mounted to 25 per cent of the economically active population, wages have been frozen, the mass of the working people are undernourished and the infant mortality rate is in some places as high as 250 per 1,000 of newborn babies. With the aim of imposing the New Economic Policy the government ever more frequently resorts to repressive and authoritarian methods, contravening constitutional freedoms and rights.

Popular resistance is growing: a major action against the IMF diktat became the March for Life held by the miners and their families from Oruro to La Paz in August 1986. Even though it was stopped by the military, it nevertheless demonstrated a high level of resistance and the unshakeable resolve of the working people to defend the public sector of the economy and their natural right to work. Despite the punitive measures, which took the toll of two people killed, the peasants mobilised themselves and blocked the roads to refute the actions by imperialism and the government. The latter attempted to eliminate coca plantations without ensuring the diversification of agriculture, which would enable the farmers to earn a little more than the subsistence level.

The dramatic mass hunger strikes and other actions by more than 23,000 fired miners, their wives and children, were a graphic demonstration of the anxiety and self-sacrifice of the workers, who had been thrown out into the street by the present regime. Most of the La Paz journalists called them the Men of 1987.

Educational workers in town and the countryside held a 45-day strike against the policy of privatising secondary schools and in demand of higher wages (like representatives of some other professions, the teachers get meagre wages of \$25 a month). No less important were strikes and demonstrations held by oilmen, factory workers, university professors and students and members of professional associations in defence of their rights and against the neoliberal policy. Those actions met with solidarity and support and enriched the mass of the people with experience needed for the coming battles. The working people's resistance forced the government to sit down to the negotiating table and to try and work out a compromise. Nevertheless, it does not intend to renounce its policy in general.

The 7th Congress of the Bolivian Workers' Centre (BWC) was held against the backdrop of recuperation and mounting mass struggle. Reflecting the new level of consciousness attained by the trade union movement, it removed its opportunistic leadership and elected tested leaders of the proletariat and of other sections of the urban and rural working people, attesting to the growing unity of the class trade unions. The election of the new BWC Executive Committee headed by Simon Reyes was by rights perceived as an historic turning point. The highest trade union authorities showed firmness in coping with the complicated problems that emerged in 1987 and launched a powerful nationwide mobilisation for diverse mass actions to draw the government's attention to the demands made by the BWC in October 1987.

The left-wing progressive movements opposing the oligarchic, pro-imperialist regime drew on the experience accumulated in struggling for democracy and unity, worked out common positions and formed the Patriotic Alliance (PA). It comprised the Communist Party of Bolivia, the Patriotic Convergence Axis, the Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP), part of the Left Nationalist Revolutionary Movement (LNRN) and also independent personalities, like Emma Obleas, the widow of former President Juan Jose Torres. The Founding Manifesto of the Patriotic Alliance, made public on September 21, 1987, stressed that it was "the answer of the workers, peasants, intellectuals, professionals, women, patriotically minded army-men and believers tired of witnessing the destruction and humiliation of their country . . ."³

The Patriotic Alliance set forth the immediate task of *confronting the right-wing and reactionary forces* at the 1987 municipal elections. With this aim in view it formulated a realistic programme of coping with social problems aggravated by the policy pursued by the NRM-NDA regime. Proceeding from the pressing needs of the people, such as drinking water and electricity supply and transportation, the Alliance elaborated its general policy line in the interests of society and on its basis launched a vigorous election campaign in close contact with the mass of the people. Despite numerous difficulties, it managed to win more than 70,000 votes at the municipal elections.

Following these, the left-wing bloc began looking for a political alternative on the threshold of the elections of the president, senators and deputies scheduled for 1989. The Alliance has to develop its strategy and governmental programme, which will be instrumental in mobilising the

mass of the people for the overthrow of the present regime. The activity of the PA and other democratic and left-wing organisations reveals an objective *tendency towards developing and strengthening unity*. We Communists believe that new possibilities are emerging for the expansion of the progressive alliance. This was confirmed, among other things, by the support given by different political groups to the Patriotic Alliance candidates.

At the same time the Communist Party of Bolivia is aware of the need to overcome certain obstacles, such as sectarianism and anti-communist attitudes which play into the hands of the right-wing forces. It is also important to eliminate other factors of disunity among the left, democratic and progressive forces. It seems to us that the formation of the Alliance in itself has offered an incentive for the unity of action and for forming an alliance with other political movements supporting the people's daily struggle against the oligarchy and imperialism, for higher wages, new jobs, the preservation of the public health system and public education, against the unjustly high taxes and in defence of national sovereignty and the natural resources.

Adhering to the positions of principle and respecting the other parties' right to have their own concepts, the Bolivian Communists continue working to unite the popular forces in order to achieve these goals.

The CPB evolves its strategy taking into account the capitalist, dependent and backward character of the country.⁴ As never before, we need a *unitary political bloc* relying on the mass of the people and capable of formulating and implementing a programme of democratic, anti-oligarchic and anti-imperialist transformations. It is not easy to attain this goal: obstacles have to be surmounted and concurrent opinions should be sought persistently. Only by following this course will the alliance of forces reflecting the interests of the working class and the entire people be able to defeat the oligarchy and come to power. The unitary process is maturing and manifesting itself in distinct forms of organised participation of the people and rests on the concept of mass struggle and democracy. Only through joint efforts can the economic crisis be resisted, the working people saved from shouldering the heavy burden of its consequences, effective means found to meet the material and spiritual needs of the overwhelming majority of the people suffering from exploitation, hunger and misery and the great task of sovereign economic and social development positively resolved.

Our people are struggling against the oligarchy and imperialism to rid themselves of dependence and backwardness in a complicated international situation. The global problems of today's world increasingly lay bare its interdependences and in this context our aspirations towards peace, the right to work, well-being and genuine sovereignty are linked with the struggle against nuclear weapons, interventionist imperialist policy, for disarmament for the sake of development and respect for the right of the people to self-determination. Life itself makes it imperative to solve the problem of the unjust and unpayable external debt of the developing countries and of the establishment of a new world economic

order, which would save the peoples from the agony of unemployment, hunger, epidemics, ignorance and illiteracy.

Like all people on Earth, the Bolivians reject the nuclear menace, support the cause of peace and defend the right to life in a world rescued from the grave consequences of the undermined ecological equilibrium. The Bolivian Communists think highly of the Soviet-US agreement to eliminate medium- and shorter-range missiles, which was signed in December 1987 and which became an important step towards the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and a tangible contribution to ensuring human existence on our planet.

¹ The number of votes received by the NRM fell from 27 per cent in the 1985 general elections to 12 per cent in 1987 and that won by the Nationalist Democratic Action (NDA) from 28 per cent to 26 per cent. As is seen, the right-wing bloc of NRM-NDA only received 450,000 out of the 900,000 votes it had in 1985.

² See David Moraes, 'Guidelines for Mass Struggles', *WMR*, No. 10, 1985.

³ *Unidad*, September 26-October 2, 1987, La Paz.

⁴ See David Moraes, 'A Realistic and Constructive Line' *WMR*, No. 12, 1986.

The Price Of Disavowing Progressive Ideals

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OUR party emerged in the middle of the 1970s, soon after the coming to power of President Anwar Sadat who abruptly changed Egypt's course of development. Under Gamal Abdel Nasser the country had followed the road of progressive transformations, with a socialist perspective. Its economic potential had grown steadily, and its relations with the countries of the socialist community had been actively developed. Its defence capability had been strengthened: it was precisely then that the foundations were laid for the successful actions of the Egyptian armed forces in the October War of 1973. The country had enjoyed high prestige on the international scene. Of course, there had been difficulties, mistakes, setbacks and retreats, but, on the whole, the Egyptian people had looked to the future with optimism.

Sadat put an end to this. In the 1970s he introduced a number of laws granting significant privileges and advantages to national and foreign capital. The policy of *Infitah* or 'open doors' began. Having sharply turned off from the course of the July revolution,¹ Sadat placed his bets on the 'fat cats' — representatives of parasitic capital. The Arab Socialist Union fell apart. The socio-economic position of the masses worsened considerably. The external debt sharply increased, and foreign economic ties were reoriented towards the capitalist countries. There appeared new realities in

the country's political life. The rich became richer, the poor poorer — this was the logical upshot of Sadat's course.

In the field of foreign policy a rapprochement took place with the USA, which imposed on Egypt a separate treaty with Israel as a result of which Cairo was subjected to ostracism in the Arab world and the international isolation of our country deepened. Such was the price of disavowing progressive ideals.

This provoked the strong resistance of different circles, the culminating point of which was the events of 1981 when the leaders of almost every political party and organisation of Egypt, from extreme right-wing to left, were imprisoned and Sadat himself was assassinated. His removal led to certain changes in the development of right-wing capitalist parasitic tendencies and in the character of relations with Washington. Hosni Mubarak, a different personality in comparison with Sadat, came to power. But the situation in the country essentially remained as it had been. Only the methods and forms of conducting the same old policy had changed.

True, new opportunities appeared before the progressive democratic forces who desired change; this was partly due to the fact that Mubarak began to pursue a different course vis-à-vis the Arab world. He does not want a weakening of the alliance with Washington, but he is simultaneously trying to broaden international ties, especially with Egypt's neighbours. And he acts very prudently, as became apparent, for example, in the decisions of the Arab summit meeting (Amman, November 1987), whereby members of the Arab League have re-established relations with Egypt.

This turn of events is determined by two factors. The first is the *position on the Iran-Iraq war*. Though Sadat also assisted Iraq in this conflict, the new President has given the support a new content by drawing into Egypt's orbit of influence the Arab Gulf states concerned about the developments in the region. Thereby Cairo has demonstrated that, in spite of the restrictions imposed by the Egyptian-Israeli agreements, it is capable of implementing the treaty on joint Arab defence with regard to Iraq and the Arab Gulf states.

The second factor is the *backing of the cause of the Palestinians*, because the Palestinian problem has a direct relationship to the security of Egypt. All Egyptian diplomatic and military leaders were brought up on this axiom while still at school. Therefore Egyptian-Palestinian relations have always been good, with the exception of the period when Sadat was in power. But even then the state apparatus did not fully accept his anti-Arab and anti-Palestinian policy, as is testified, for example, by the resignation of three heads of the ARE foreign policy department under Sadat's administration.

Mubarak's attitude has its own peculiarities. It is extremely inconsistent, and wavers between the Camp David course and support for the PLO. Nevertheless, even such Egyptian policy was appreciated by the Palestinian leadership, especially considering that the PLO up until recently was in a difficult position because of the marked coolness, if not to say the actual breach, of its relations with Amman and Damascus.

Mubarak took advantage of this to devise his tactics of returning to the Arab ranks. On the other hand, we shall note that the waverings on a Middle Eastern settlement did not prevent Cairo from officially coming out recently in support of the idea of convening an international conference under the UN aegis, to be attended by the permanent members of the Security Council and all the parties concerned, including the PLO — the lawful representative of the Palestinian people.

It appears that the reason for that long uncertainty on this issue was fear of a possible negative reaction from the USA, since at the present moment Egypt cannot do without US economic and military aid, though there are also signs of a different kind. In the spring of 1988 a press item quoted the Defence Minister as telling a commission of the People's Assembly of the ARE: "Egypt's main enemy is Israel, whilst Soviet arms supplies to Syria and Libya, despite our great differences with them, ultimately benefit the Arab cause." This issue of the newspaper *Al-Ahali*, which published this item, was at once confiscated by the authorities.

The Egyptian leadership is aware that progressive forces in the region will actually judge its policy by its attitude to Arab solidarity and to the Palestinian problem. But it cannot afford a confrontation with Washington, either. Therefore Cairo engages in manoeuvring, in particular on the form of the Palestinian representation at the international conference.

The position of Egypt's government and its relations with other Arab countries are compounded by the Palestinian popular uprising in the occupied territories, which has stirred the whole Arab world and forces many to review their stereotyped perceptions of the Palestinian issue. A leading Egyptian journalist, Muhammed Hassanein Heikal, referring to the words of high-ranking US officials, has said of the uprising that some Arab regimes are perturbed by the Palestinian revolt more than by Israel.

The internal situation affects the foreign policy of Egypt. Because of the effects of Sadat's Infitah, the economic situation in the 1980s has deteriorated to the extreme. Now the government has returned to the idea of planning and is beginning to implement the Second Five-Year-Plan. However, foreign indebtedness continues to grow. The economy stands still. No fewer than 60 per cent of the people go undernourished. The country has found itself in an economic deadlock. There is no way to break it but by changing the *political course*. But dependence on the USA and Western creditors impedes this effort.

Because of the persistent lack of a single national leadership of all Left forces, of an authoritative party able to accomplish a decisive turn in politics, required mass pressure is also absent. This is understood by the leaders of the left-wing parties and organisations, which not only operate among the masses, but also exert a definite influence on political decision-making.

The Left circles, including our party, are trying to strengthen their positions, but they meet with strong counteraction from the government and religious fundamentalists. After the 1976 parliamentary elections the NPP got four out of the People's Assembly's 360 seats, but the authorities decided that 'that's too many'. And the results of the subsequent elections,

held in April 1987, were falsified.² The Egyptian bourgeoisie has considerable experience in such matters. Political freedoms in the country exist mainly on paper. Though formally not banned, NPP faces hundreds of restrictions. For example, a court of law repeatedly banned our newspaper. But when we got the ban lifted, the government-owned printing house refused to print it. There are examples galore. Some comrades can't endure the constant harassment from security bodies, the police or official agencies and leave the ranks of the party. But we have held out in the struggle and, on the whole, our positions are not bad at all now.

The party is conducting a good deal of work to win over public opinion. In this effort it relies on the forces that formed way back in Nasser's days. They are workers of the public and private sectors; intellectuals who came from the labouring sections thanks to the then introduced free education, and peasants who received land as a result of the agrarian reforms implemented at that time. It is essential that many of our supporters occupy middle-link administrative positions.

At the last trade union elections in October 1987, the party put forward over 1,000 candidates, 750 of whom were elected to trade union committees at different levels. This is thrice as many as during the previous elections. Members of the NPP and other opposition parties constitute a majority in the leadership of the lawyers' and veterinary surgeons' unions.

We realise that it is hard for the party to oppose the policy of the authorities single-handed. Therefore we have striven for the establishment of a Front of Struggle for Wider Democracy. This broad alliance of Left forces — the National Progressive Unionist Party, the Egyptian Communist Party, and the Arab Socialist Nasserite Party — is now on the threshold of taking organisational shape. These main patriotic organisations champion the national interests of Egypt and try to mobilise the working people's support for the public sector of the economy and for the Palestinian uprising. We are also beginning to cooperate quite well with the Socialist Labour Party, the New Wafd Party and religious currents. Our programme attracts many representatives of the middle classes.

The situation in Egypt now is such that the country is not ready for a turn towards socialism. This is the direct result of a disavowal of the progressive course, the disavowal by Sadat and his successors. Therefore the top priorities of our struggle are to overcome Egypt's dependence on the USA and other capitalist states, to stabilise the national economy and to promote social transformations in the interest of the working masses.

¹ The author means the anti-monarchic coup of July 23, 1952, when the Free Officers led by Gamal Abdel Nasser deposed King Farouk. — *Ed.*

² See Rifaat el-Said, 'Has Khaled Mohieddin Become a Member of Parliament or Not?' *WMR*, No. 8, 1987. — *Ed.*

The Echo Of A Strike

The Lessons Which Progressive Forces in Lesotho Learned From The 1987 Strike by Black Mineworkers in South Africa

Jeremiah Mosotho — Communist Party of Lesotho

DEVELOPMENTS in South Africa, engulfed in the flames of the people's struggle against the apartheid regime, are reverberating strongly through Lesotho, a small country with a population of a million and a half that is surrounded by South African territory on all sides.

Lesotho with its fertile land and rich deposits of coal and diamonds is the poorest English-speaking country in the south of the continent and economically depends entirely on South Africa.

Lesotho's mining industry makes no progress because of the regional dominance of South African and transnational companies, which consider it 'unprofitable'. The country's main sources of hard currency revenue are firmly controlled by South Africa and almost two-thirds of its budget appropriations are provided through the Southern African Customs Union. Pretoria uses its pre-eminence in that regional organisation to perpetuate the other member countries of the Union (Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland) as its economic appendages.

Lesotho has a good potential for developing a tourist industry — its beautiful mountain lands have made it famous as the 'African Switzerland' — but virtually all foreign travel is controlled by Pretoria. As much as 97 per cent of Lesotho's imports are transported through South Africa, which also supplies all the country's electric power, fuel, coal and gas. Lesotho has no national television (and relies on South African broadcasts) and the national monetary unit, the maloti, equals the South African rand, which is the country's other legitimate currency.

The fact that most of Lesotho's workforce is employed by the South African mining industry is the most crucial factor of the country's economic dependence. Around 120,000 Basotho workers toil in South Africa's coal, gold and diamond mines and another 30,000 hire themselves out to South African farms. Manpower exports are a chief source of our government's revenue because 60 per cent of the mineworkers' wages are channelled by the South African mining companies through the Lesotho State Bank. The Basotho mineworkers can withdraw their money plus some interest on their return home. Meanwhile, the Bank invests the money and thus gains through the mechanism of banking.

All that makes it clear why conflicts between labour and capital in South Africa, primarily in the mining industry (which employs most of the Black workforce, including immigrants) have an immediate impact on the situation in Lesotho. They affect not only the Basotho immigrants working

in South Africa or their families back home but the entire national economy, which depends to a large extent on money remittances from the South African mining companies.

The past three years or more have seen the fast growth of *industrial unrest in the apartheid state of South Africa*. This unrest can be broadly ascribed to the intensification of the national liberation struggle, which is spearheaded by the working class, and to the consolidation of trade unionism among Black workers.

A National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) of South Africa was set up five years ago; it grew by leaps and bounds so much that within a short period of two years it achieved a remarkable acceptance among the Black mineworkers. In August 1987 the Union organised the biggest nationwide strike in the mining industry since the Black mineworkers' strike of 1946. Sceptics believed that the union was biting off more than it could chew and that the strike would not succeed. They asserted that the strike was called at a time when unemployment was very high, which would make it easy for the companies affected to find strike-breakers! Secondly, they warned that the evil practice of provoking conflicts between various national groups was going to be used by both the management of the mines and the state security forces to break the strike. (And there had indeed been ethnic clashes at the mines in the past, provoked by agents of apartheid.) The Chamber of Mines hoped that the strike would be a failure because of different national groupings which would not equally see the need for strike action, especially at a time when there was mass unemployment in South Africa and in the independent neighbouring countries, the homes of immigrant workers.

However, the National Union of Mineworkers of South Africa managed to lead the biggest successful strike by Black mineworkers.

The strike that began on Sunday, August 9, 1987, involved more than 340,000 Black mineworkers employed in 52 gold mines and collieries. It was the result of the failure of negotiations between the NUM and employers on wage increases and working conditions. The union's demands for wage increases were based on the living-wage campaign initiated by the Congress of South African Trades Unions (COSATU), the trades unions' federation to which the NUM is affiliated. The union pressed for a 30 per cent pay rise, a 30-day annual leave, and danger pay or risk allowance because Black mineworkers had never been guaranteed safety while they were working in the most dangerous places underground, and the accident and death rates were very high. Another demand was for higher death benefits (equivalent to five years' pay) to the surviving families and to the repeal of the 'compound system', i.e., the practice whereby Black mineworkers are forced to live in hostels which are isolated from normal community life, and the apartheid apparatus prevents their wives or relatives from staying with them. The demand that June 16 be declared a paid holiday was clearly political: the revolutionary and progressive organisations of South Africa observe it as National Youth Day in commemoration of the police shooting of the mass demonstration in Soweto in 1976. The apartheid regime and its supporters are adamant in ignoring national days commemorated by the oppressed Black people. So

the efforts to declare this day a paid holiday are gathering momentum continuously.

The demand for an across-the-board 30 per cent increase in wages was entirely justified in the concrete situation of South Africa. In fact, it would merely enable the Black mineworkers to rise above the poverty datum line. It should be mentioned that the worst-paid sections of the Black working class in racist South Africa are found among domestic workers, workers engaged on roads and railways construction, as well as in the agricultural sector and the mining industry. The Black miner gets just one-tenth of his white counterpart's pay. Demanding higher pay, the NUM rejected the arguments of the ideologues of apartheid, who used to compare the nominal wage levels existing in South Africa with the nominal wage levels found in the sovereign independent African states in order to claim that the existing wage levels for Black workers employed in South Africa are sufficiently high. This is a misleading argument because it evades the important issue concerning the rate of surplus value and the immense cost of living for the Black workers employed in South Africa.

From the outset the strike brought about a serious crisis in the South African mining industry, the key sector of that country's economy. At the beginning the South African racist government pretended that it was not going to have anything to do with the strike, possibly for fear of international repercussions. The other reason for the feigned indifference may have been the expectation that the strikers would be divided by quarrels and the action would be short-lived: it was claimed that in fact the NUM had never, since its foundation, sustained a strike for more than two days.

The strike survived the first week, the second and the third without any indications of divisions within the ranks of Black mineworkers. But the 'non-intervention' of the racist government in the labour conflict proved a myth: as the strike entered its third day there were already allegations of the involvement of the apartheid police disguised as mine security police. Eventually the state, through the Ministry of Manpower, started insinuating, and then actually instructing, the Chamber of Mines that the strike cannot be allowed to halt production indefinitely. The minister made the announcement that the mining houses should start thinking of bringing in alternative labour (i.e., scabs) so that production could continue. There were several unprovoked arrests facilitated by the state of emergency regulations. Harsh repression was unleashed against the strikers.

The workers who were returning to Lesotho during the strike were instructed by the South African police at the posts to go back to work or risk cancellation of their work contracts. This was nothing short of blackmail, blacklisting, denial of employment, intimidation and the vengeance of the apartheid authorities for involvement in the strike.

The strike in the South African mining industry, in which Basotho workers became involved, drew different reactions from our country. The immediate cause of concern to the Lesotho government, for instance, was that the Basotho workers would not receive any wages while they were on strike, and the revenue of the Lesotho Bank would suffer a shortfall. Thus, with an estimated 120,000 Basotho workers employed in the mines in

South Africa and earning each an average monthly wage of 300 South African rands, the Lesotho government was going to lose more than 700,000 rands per day of the strike. At the same time it was clearly understood that wage increases, improvements in the working and living conditions, and the introduction of social benefits (e.g., education allowances for children) to Black mineworkers employed in South Africa would have a tremendous positive effect on the social and economic development of Lesotho and other politically independent countries which export labour to South Africa.

Another important factor was that the participants in the strike — Black workers from different countries — went through an invaluable political school of struggle both against capitalist corporations and against the apartheid regime. During the 1987 Black mineworkers' strike there were no ethnically motivated incidents or conflicts in spite of the unrelenting efforts exerted by the agents of apartheid to instigate such clashes, specifically between Basotho and Xhosa mineworkers. Black mineworkers *do realise the necessity of unity in the ranks of the working class in response to the current aggressiveness of apartheid and the brutal repressions* unleashed by it along with capitalist corporations against the Black people in South Africa. Hundreds of the strikers and their leaders were arrested during that industrial action and some 300 miners were injured through police brutalities.

The strike had a powerful impact on all countries of Southern Africa, especially on those which export labour to South Africa. The strike impact was felt throughout Lesotho and brought many organisations, including the trades unions, the church, and youth and students, into active involvement. Rallies and demonstrations were held in support of the strike in various parts of the country. The country was plunged into a political crisis for three weeks. On the one hand, the military government was opposed to the strike and used collaborators from the Lesotho Federation of Trades Unions in its bid to prevent mineworkers from joining the NUM and participating in the strike (which agents of the Botha security service were also doing). On the other, almost every family was involved and participated in discussions about the fate of the strike. People supported the strike and urged the unemployed to refuse to be used as strike-breakers.

All that has brought together different social groups and proved that there is a possibility for future cooperation on important national issues.

The organisations which were involved in the activities supporting the mineworkers' strike have already started a serious debate on the possibility of forming a *solidarity committee* whose main task would be to give people correct information about the struggle going on against apartheid in South Africa and, in particular, about matters which concern the rapidly growing activities of the trades unions. This is very important because it is the area where the overwhelming majority of the Basotho migrant workers are directly affected. The involvement of Lesotho workers in trades unions' struggle in South Africa has helped raise their political consciousness and, moreover, promoted their better understanding of the problems of the region.

According To Neoconservative Recipes

Michael Graber — Political Bureau
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THE grand coalition of the Socialist and Austrian People's Parties set up in early 1987 proclaimed in its government programme and is realising in practice the aims which the leading circles of Austrian employers wrote down in a memorandum¹ adopted back in April 1983. What was at issue then?

The memorandum demanded a cut in the portion of funds redistributed by the state through the budget, as well as in social spending, and the bringing up of the outlay on wages and the related costs to a size capable of improving the competitiveness of export-oriented industries. Besides that, the state-owned sector's share of the economy was to be reduced and the projects being carried out with state money to be wound down. The memorandum also proposed changes to social legislation with the aim of increasing labour mobility and the regime of work, influencing the housing market, narrowing the system of social insurance and carrying out changes in the sphere of training, including tertiary education, that suit capital.

Who Prescribes the Recipes?

After the publication of a coalition pact and the government programme, the newspaper *Die Industrie*, organ of the Association of Industrialists, wrote that employers had received with satisfaction this pact where "much of the wording, fortunately, almost word for word repeats their statements".

Thus, although Socialist Federal Chancellors have been governing Austria since 1970, it has been 'prescribed' *neoconservative economic recipes*.

The coalition government has focused its activity in three main directions which flow from the guidelines of big capital: cuts in social spending to reduce the budget deficit; the liquidation or a partial hive-off of nationalised industries, which are large by Austrian standards; and the tying of Austria to the EEC, not excepting even entry into the community regardless of its neutrality.

The need to cut the budget deficit causes no doubts. In 1987 it constituted over 5 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product. The government intends to bring this figure down to 2.5 per cent by 1992. The illusions which in the 1970s were associated with an Austro-Keynesian budgetary and taxation policy have proved to be destroyed. But the question arises: who will pay the expenses involved in making the budget healthier?

The deficit has formed primarily because virtually *no taxes have been imposed* on big capital. Thus, over two-thirds of joint-stock companies do not have to pay the corporate tax. Back in 1968 tax receipts from wages

and salaries and from the earning of 'independent proprietors' were equal. About twenty years later the former increased by 11 times, and the latter by only four times. Meanwhile the share of national income the hired workers receive, beginning with the 1970s, went down steadily and that of persons who own property and engage in entrepreneurship constantly increased. If today the ratio between the taxes on wages and on capital were the same as in the early 1970s, then about 80 billion Schillings would have to be collected from the capital owners in excess of the present sum. This roughly equals the real annual budget deficit.

The first budget of the grand coalition — for 1988 — shows that despite all the anti-social measures, austerity and the shifting of the burden of taxes onto the shoulders of the working people, a genuine strengthening of the finances of the state will be practically impossible. By the end of the year its debt will have increased from 698 billion (1987) to 768 billion Schillings.

Justifying such a policy, the government and the bourgeois mass media assert that only by paring down the size of pensions and the other social expenses is it possible to foot the bill. But it is debt repayments rather than social allocations that 'eat up' the budget. Whereas in 1980 interest payments and the reimbursement of state debts took 36 billion Schillings, last year's figure was already 85 billion, and now they will increase to 95 billion. This means that over a fifth of all tax receipts passes into the hands of the representatives of financial capital and, moreover, the volume of such payments keeps on rising. This is the largest item of budget expenditures.

Austro-Keynesianism has accelerated the formation of *financial capital*, which is making a profit out of state debt interest. The net deposits in Austria (savings deposits and the deposit of securities) have increased from approximately 260 billion Schillings to 1,600 billion. Two-thirds of the sum of savings deposits falls to only 7 per cent of accounts. Just 5 per cent of the economically active population owns the securities. Dividends on these investments are the fastest-growing type of income.

Under the pressure of financial capital, the ruling circles have changed their attitude to the state-owned sector in industry, which is of great significance for Austria. Earlier, acting in the spirit of 'social partnership', the authorities used to agree that the country needed a system of so-called mixed economy. Now the coalition government reckons that profitable spheres of production in the nationalised industries should be open to private capital investments. Moreover, it envisages the possibility for individuals to acquire both a smaller and greater portion of the shares of fully or partially nationalised enterprises.

The privatisation of the state-owned oil company OMV is a case in point. A large part of Austria's oil and gas resources belongs to it. It conducts production and possesses a considerable distribution network and the only oil refinery of the country. The company receives sizeable profits, which until recently went exclusively for the needs of state-run industry and replenished the social funds. It is no coincidence that the OMV has become one of the first state-owned concerns to be hived off. For this is a highly profitable application of capital. Apart from the purely economic

aspects of the matter, there is also a political one to it: the State Treaty of 1955 prohibited German monopoly capital from acquiring former German property in Austria. And now shares of the OMV company were being offered on the Frankfurt Stock Exchange!

In October 1987, the idea was approved of *transforming the structure of nationalised industry*, which includes ferrous metals, steel casting, chemicals, machine-building and electrical engineering. The traditional concerns VOEST-Alpine and VEW, an association of high-grade steel manufacturing plants, were fragmented into smaller units. The chief objective is to separate loss-making enterprises from profitable ones and to hand over the latter to private persons. Even in the period between 1985 and 1987 the number of jobs shrunk from 102,000 to 88,000. Over the next several years the workforce is to be reduced to 60,000. The curtailment of Austria's 'basic materials' industry² entails a diminution of production in the conventional branches that manufacture end products. Both these processes are leading to a desolation of old industrial regions and working-class centres. Even in Austria's third largest city, Linz, where the main facility of VOEST is located, the loss of thousands of jobs has made itself felt. This process also affects other areas. Life refutes the illusions that private firms compensate for the jobs destroyed.

A principal reason for the comparatively low rate of unemployment in Austria (5.6 per cent of the able-bodied population in 1987) was that nationalised industries served as an instrument of providing employment and exerted pressure on the private sector in this field. Now, according to forecasts of the Institute of Economic Studies, *unemployment in Austria will increase* and at the beginning of the 1990s it will constitute over 8 per cent of the active population. At the same time the curtailment of nationalised industry and its privatisation call in question the most important basis of economic and political sovereignty, independence and neutrality of the country.

Neutrality and the EEC

The pivotal aspect of the neoconservative economic policy of Austria is its further rapprochement with the EEC. Its supporters demagogically claim that Austria with its neutrality 'will die of hunger' unless it joins the Single European Market to be established within the EEC by 1992. To dispel doubts whether neutrality will be breached in this case, the union is being depicted as only an economic, and not a political entity closely tied to NATO. In actual fact the entry of Austria into the Common Market is incompatible with its neutrality, and Article 4 of the State Treaty explicitly prohibits it from "any direct or indirect unification with Germany".

Leading capitalist circles demand an early entry into the EEC, ignoring the costs, yet neither the government, nor anybody else know for sure what economic advantages or disadvantages this step will entail. The official line of the government is to achieve as great a rapprochement with the EEC as possible. 1989 has been set as the dateline for a decision on whether to ask the Common Market for Austria's admission to it. Austria would become the only neutral country in Europe to have chosen such a mode of action.

The European Free Trade Association, to which it belongs, would thus be weakened.

The problem of rapprochement with the EEC provokes disputes in the ruling circles themselves as well. Fears are being expressed primarily by the representatives of agriculture, the construction industry and the other home market-oriented branches of industry and services. But in the final analysis the associations of employers pursue a line here that is hostile to the interests of the working class and other sections of the working people. Despite increased rivalry from the Common Market monopolies, Austrian capital generally strives, by relying on the EEC, to more firmly counteract the working class. A commentary in a rag newspaper, which is the mouthpiece of a group of industrialists, reveals the true designs of the bosses: "Entry into the EEC will change the possibilities for social partnership. Such decisions as the work schedule for shops, the introduction of flexitime and work on Saturdays and Sundays and demonopolisation (that is, the privatisation of enterprises — *M. G.*) will depend not so much on the correlation of forces inside the system of social partnership as on the market demands."³

The employees of state institutions and enterprises are being subjected to special pressure from the neoconservatives. Every other of the jobs released in these establishments remains vacant. In spite of the growth of unemployment among school-teachers, the number of children in the classrooms has again been increased.

In 1988 state-sector employees will have no salary hikes, and the annual compensation for inflation will be paid with a six-month delay. The municipal services will pass into private hands.

Austria is thus *returning to the capitalist 'norm'*. The economic and social conditions thanks to which it has for decades held a special position among capitalist states (including those outside the EEC) are being gradually removed.

Forming Alliances of Action

The formation of the grand coalition was conceived as a means to ensure political stability in a situation where the powerful road-roller of capital is crushing the social gains. In other words, to stop the loss of electors' trust in the two major parties which render each other mutual support, while at the same time continuing to hinder access to Parliament for the opposition parties, which primarily affects the Communists.

Under 'social partnership', a feature of neoconservatism in Austria is that the correlation of forces between the socialists and conservatives essentially remains the same and, moreover, the former have succeeded in retaining their leadership. Of decisive importance in the long run will be the processes of differentiation within the two parties. Austrian Communists drew this conclusion at their last congress (March 1987), taking into account the existence of the government coalition and its long-term plans, and the growth of discontent among the ever broader sections of the working class, the rest of the working people, and the youth.

The autumn of 1987 saw the first large-scale mass protests against the

neoconservative government policy. In October over 40,000 people, representing a broad socio-political alliance which includes various political organisations, committees for the defence of state-owned industry and social project committees, demonstrated on the Ballhausplatz, in front of the Federal Chancellor's residence. State sector workers, school teachers, students and pensioners were among them.

A student movement, the largest in all of the Second Republic's history, has simultaneously emerged. For almost two weeks the students boycotted lectures. A part of the faculty also joined them. At the same time there has been a livening-up of right and extreme-right populism, the representatives of which are resorting to social demagoguery. The Freedom Party of Austria with its new leader Jorg Haider personifies this danger. The representatives of right populism speak in a pointedly opposition vein with respect to the grand coalition. But their real course is nothing else than simply a caricature of its policy, leading Austrian writer Peter Turrini said.

The Communist Party of Austria is striving for the reinforcement of alliances with the new social movements which so actively participated in the mass demonstration on October 24, 1987. This involves the innumerable committees and forms of civic initiative that are directed against some or other measures of social dismantling. These forces of social protest can be enlisted in a long-term anti-monopoly alliance, even if they perceive the sources of the diverse crisis phenomena not in the onslaught of capital, but in 'technology' and 'erroneous thinking'.

A feature of the upcoming period is to put up resistance to the policy of joining the EEC. Last spring the CPA published a memorandum setting forth the main arguments against EEC membership. This political platform has been received with understanding in a number of organisations which form different social alliances.

In the autumn, the government intends to load the population with a heavy new burden — the tax reform which will benefit the rich in the first place. The holding of protest actions is being planned for this period; alternatives to the government policy will be advanced. It can be said that a front of social resistance is beginning to emerge.

The chairman of the youth section of the private employee's union, Harald Gerstbauer, declared after its recent congress: "The time has come for action. It is solidarity, not individualistic militancy, that will solve our problems . . . In Austria we have our own 'economic health promoters' engaged in the work on denationalisation, primarily in industry. They are selling profit-making enterprises and dismantling the rest of them. They're economising on those who are less provided for, and at the same time lowering the tax on high incomes. We as progressive trade union leaders just cannot sit and watch idly such a course of events. It is our duty to offer resistance!"⁴

In this situation Austrian Communists orient themselves towards forming alliances of action to defend the working people's immediate vital interests, coming out for the preservation of jobs and upholding the state-owned sector in industry and our national independence.

¹ A Memorandum of the Association of Austrian Industrialists on Economic and Industrial Policy, Vienna, 1983.

² It includes the power, mining, iron and steel, chemical and building materials industries. — Ed.

³ *Kurier*, December 15, 1987.

⁴ *Die Volksstimme*, May 6, 1988.

Challenge Of The 1988 US Presidential Elections

Jarvis Tyner — Political Bureau
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ALL politics presently in the US are being influenced by the gravitational pull of the 1988 presidential elections. The full force of the right wing with the backing of the most powerful sector of the ruling class is being mobilised to see to it that Reaganism continues after November 1988. The Reagan policy of aggression and counter-revolution will not just fade away. More than any other administration in US history, the Reaganites are manipulating and manoeuvring now to guarantee that their policies will be continued in the next administration, no matter who wins. For example, the military-industrial pipeline is stuffed with hundreds of billions in contracts for the production of military supplies and weapons that will go on for many years to come. The appointments of ultra-right judges to the federal bench, especially the Supreme Court, will also be with us for tens of years. The \$3 trillion national government will also remain intact after Reagan rides back to his California ranch.

George Bush, the current Vice-President and the Republican candidate, has launched a well-financed and highly organised election campaign. He is the ruling class's hope for the next four years.

On the other hand, the mass sentiment among millions of working people, the racially oppressed and progressive forces is strongly for a turn away from Reaganism. Eight years of reactionary ultra-right rule is enough, many are saying. Many feel strongly that Reaganism has made a mess of the country and it's time to get the ultra-right out of the White House.

The facts speak for themselves. The interests of the transnationals have come first and foremost, under Reagan, to the great detriment of the people. The administration has obviously operated on the premise that what is good for the transnational corporations is good for the country. In

Jarvis Tyner (b. 1941) joined the Communist Party in 1961. A trade union activist, he chaired democratic youth organisations and headed the CC Youth Commission since 1972. He was elected to the Central Committee in 1966 and was a member of the CC Political Committee from 1972 to 1975. He has been a CC Political Bureau member and chair of the New York State Communist Party organisation since 1975. The Communist Party twice nominated him as its candidate for vice-presidency in presidential elections.

1980, US corporations paid 25 per cent of all taxes paid; today they pay only 8.5 per cent of total taxes collected. Similarly, the rich paid 70 per cent of all personal income tax in 1980, now they only pay 34 per cent, that is half the amount. The working class has come under severe attack. The Reagan legacy includes a continued series of attacks against labour rights. Strike breaking and union busting have become typical government policy, starting with the federal government breaking the air traffic controllers union soon after Reagan was inaugurated. They are now trying to actually take over the Teamsters Union, with more than one million members, obviously aiming at creating what they call a 'union-free environment'. Labour law and health and safety regulations, never adequate, have been virtually gutted during the Reagan administration. Let me add here that the so-called support for trade union rights in Poland must be seen as pure hypocrisy in the light of their continued attacks against the rights of US and other countries' trade unionists. The blatant racism is seen in the Reaganites' attempts to dismantle the legal structure of Civil Rights and give implicit encouragement to increased acts of racist violence.

The massive arms build-up and drive for first strike nuclear superiority, though proven impossible, have nevertheless pushed our planet dangerously close to nuclear holocaust and diverted billions of needed funds for human needs down the Pentagon military-industrial rat-hole.

Of course Reagan in his last months in office remains optimistic. Corporate profits remain high and there is an increase in employment. This so-called economic upswing is partially due to a release of Federal money and contracts, the manipulation of the dollar to improve the economic picture and therefore the Republicans' chances at the polls. It is important to note that most of the new jobs that Reagan has been bragging about are low paid and in many cases part-time with no benefits.

In the meantime *the structural crisis is deepening*. Fourteen million workers lost their jobs due to plant closures under Reagan. Afro-Americans have lost 27 per cent of their manufacturing jobs and white workers 19 per cent of theirs. Twenty million US workers can only find part-time jobs with no paid vacations, no pensions and no health insurance. In the past eight years an average US worker lost \$2,700 per year in real wages.

The real standard of living of the US working class has basically declined. Most US households can no longer survive without more than one wage earner. Impoverishment has become the plight of millions: 35-40 million Americans are living in poverty. It is now estimated that most working class children will no longer do as well as their parents. There are presently over six million homeless in the US and millions more are without adequate food. The cities are in crisis. The infrastructure — bridges, water supply and sewage systems and highways — is in a serious state of deterioration. Many economists are describing the present economic situation as 'America's quiet depression'.

This is, so to speak, the price the people have had to pay for eight years of Reaganism.

Clearly, the situation must change. The people in their majority desire economic relief, an end to the arms race and the contras' wars of

aggression, and an end to support for fascist regimes like in Chile and South Africa. *The people want a new direction.* Small wonder even Reagan had to take measures to reduce nuclear armaments and improve relations with the Soviet Union.

The Democrat Jesse Jackson's campaign has really been sensitive to feelings for change among masses of working people and farmers. His phenomenal success, with only a fraction of the money of other candidates and with the capitalist mass media generally against him, is historic in itself. With large parts of the labour movement, almost the entire Afro-American electorate, a high percentage of the Latinos, and most of the peace fighters backing him, his campaign represents a new kind of independent electoral coalition. An independent coalition that is physically confined within the Democratic Party but is politically in advance of the main purpose and principles of the nation's largest political party. Jackson has called for taxing the rich to restore and expand the social security system. He is for putting restrictions on the transnationals and limiting their power to close plants in the US and for international labour solidarity against the transnationals. He is advancing popular concepts like US workers' wages should not be lowered in order to compete with South Korean workers but rather South Korean workers' wages should be raised to a liveable standard.

Another Democratic Party candidate, Massachusetts governor Michael Dukakis, has been getting more votes in the primaries. It is largely due to the feeling that he is not 'as good' as Jackson on the issues but he is 'electable'. The more Dukakis adopts Jackson ideas and style the better he has done. All of the right-of-centre Democrats and the most right-wing Republicans have early in the primaries gone down to defeat. This shows *the country is moving to the left* and away from Reaganism.

The Communist Party USA is not endorsing any candidate for President. We, however, are running many candidates locally and for Congress throughout the country. This year we decided to concentrate on this approach rather than face the almost impossible task, due to the undemocratic nature of our election system, for a minority Party to get its presidential candidate on the ballot in enough states. We are also taking part in the debate around the vital issues at stake in the elections through our party press, other media and mass meetings.

The problem the Communists face is how to have a visible, distinct presence in the whole election struggle and debate, while avoiding a sectarian approach and finding the correct ways to relate to and help the broad independent electoral upsurge. We feel that the growing unity of blacks and whites developing around the Jackson Challenge is *a positive factor moving the progressive force forward*. Let it be recalled that in 1984 it was the Afro-American and the labour vote that was the strongest block of votes against Reagan.

George Bush, the Republican runner for presidency, is the continuation of the Reagan legacy. As Vice-President he was a full part of the Reagan policy all along. His connection with the Irangate scandal makes him vulnerable, though. One should not ignore the divisions in the ranks of the ultra-right either. The evangelical right which produced five million votes

for Reagan in 1984 is now to some extent demoralised.

To defeat the Republican candidate on election day will not be easy, however. It will take many people's unity and much hard work. Dukakis and Jackson need maximum cooperation and unity if the Democrats are going to defeat the Reaganite Bush. Many think the strongest ticket is a combination of the two Democrats. There is, however, a big pressure from the Right elements in the Democratic Party for Dukakis to pick a right-of-centre running mate to head the ticket with him. But many are saying there is a potential danger if the Democrats look only like slightly moderate Republicans. There is a good chance that the democratic voters will feel there will be no change and will not show up at the polls on election day, which will play into the hands of the Republicans.

The results of the primaries show a definite edge of Dukakis over Bush. It is therefore quite realistic to hope that the Reaganites would be defeated in November. Whether they will or not depends on many factors but mostly on the unity of action of the US working class and its allies and their determination to bring about a positive change. Once that is made and the ultra-right is out of the White House, the struggle must continue offensively versus defensively on a high level and with higher goals reflecting the aspirations for economic justice, equality, an end to the arms race and stronger peace.

They Fought For The Cause Of The People

Salvador Allende, Revolutionary And Patriot

Orlando Millas — Political
Commission member, Central
Committee, Communist Party of Chile
(CPC)

ON June 26, 1988, it was 80 years since the birth of Salvador Allende and on September 11 it will be 15 years since his death. His name is linked inextricably with the struggle to uphold universal human values, a fact borne out by the heritage of his practical and theoretical work and by the heroic death he suffered while fighting the enemies of his country. The indomitable courage of the stand he took in the hour of trial, when the commanders of the Armed Forces betrayed Chile and sold out to US imperialism is a logical culmination of his work as a political figure and president. The moral commitment he displayed on the day of his martyrdom reflected the everlasting significance of the noble goals to which he was fully dedicated. Allende's contribution to promoting the self-awareness and the organisation of the Chilean people and his

accomplishments as head of government are a fine monument to him as a selfless fighter who did not hesitate to sacrifice his life in the struggle for freedom.

As Fidel Castro said, paying homage to Salvador Allende, "it is not simply that the President acted firmly and courageously and kept his promise to die for the cause of the people. At the decisive hour of trial we saw him as the noble man he was. The spirit, the resolve, the energy, the leadership and the heroism he demonstrated were admirable. Never had a Latin American president risen to such dramatic heights. Many times ideas were defenseless before brute force. But now one can say that never had brute force encountered such resistance in an armed confrontation with a thinking man whose spoken word and pen were his only weapons. Salvador Allende displayed more dignity, honour, and courage than all that fascist brass could ever hope to lay claim to. His death, a reflection of his greatness, plunged Pinochet and his accomplices forever into ignominy. Verily, behold the man! Behold the revolutionary! This is how a real fighter, a defender of his people, a champion of socialism dies!"¹

Indeed, Allende's life and work prove that he was a genuine revolutionary, a knight without fear and without reproach, a defender of the working people and of socialism. He rightfully belongs to the Pleiad of the men and women of the twentieth century who offer a shining example of commitment to the cause of social emancipation.

To understand what he was, we should turn to his work, his loyalties, his emotions and ideas. Luis Corvalan says that taking the plight of the people to heart was his dominant quality: "his heart was overflowing with compassion". On the subject of Allende's prime concerns as a statesman, the CPC General Secretary wrote: "He was, undoubtedly, well aware that solving the problems of working-class and peasant families, of all sections of the people, called for the most resolute measures — eliminating imperialist domination, abolishing private banking monopolies and latifundia, and pursuing an independent foreign policy. Hence, the convincing forcefulness of his slogans urging nationalisation of the copper-mining industry and banks, agrarian reform and establishment of relations with all socialist countries. Allende often said that he did not see himself as a leader or a Messiah, and that he became what he was thanks to his party and to the people. Despite the bitter defeats he suffered, he always had great faith in the masses, in their organised strength, militancy and growing consciousness. That is why he became a great propagator and champion of social change in Chile, a firm and consistent advocate of trade union unity, of unity of the working people, of cooperation between the Socialists and the Communists, of Left unity. Both before and after the presidential elections of 1970, Allende sought to consolidate the coalition of the Left parties and to expand popular unity. His dream was a broader movement which he wanted to call the Motherland Front."²

Allende was active in the dramatic events of Chilean history which started the difficult turn towards democracy. In 1930-1931, a vice-president of the Chilean Student Federation and the country's track-and-field champion, he led the movement of university students which fought to overthrow the pro-imperialist military dictatorship of General Carlos

Ibanez. A young M.D., he was among the founders of the Socialist Party of Chile in 1933. Soon he became the party's regional secretary in Valparaiso, and the Quillota and Valparaiso constituencies elected him to parliament on the SPC ticket. He rose to be the party's under-secretary general in 1939 and emerged as a leader of the 'Popular Front generation' — the political and civic activists and cultural workers whose views were shaped while this coalition was in power.

In September 1939 Allende was appointed Health and Social Security Minister in the administration of Pedro Aguirre Cerda,³ remaining in that post until early 1942. His work as a member of the cabinet produced tangible results. He wrote an amazingly bold and honest book in which he analysed in detail the sorry state of health care in Chile and, with revolutionary fervour, he got down to practical work. The young cabinet minister did not wait passively for social change to occur. He refused to view it as something that should precede efforts to meet the urgent needs of the people. On the contrary, he regarded reform as part of the mass struggle for national liberation and social emancipation. He was aware of the need for concerted action in parliament and in the streets, for thorough preparation of draft legislation and for the mobilisation of the trade unions, the working class and the entire people.

Legislation aimed at raising living standards was enacted during Allende's cabinet term. The National Beneficent League, established back in colonial times, was reorganised into a modern National Health Service with a ramified network of polyclinics, hospitals and specialised treatment centres operating according to the principles of social medicine. This development anticipated the changes several advanced capitalist countries introduced into their health care systems after World War II.

A social security service of a new type replaced mandatory workers' insurance deductions. Steps were taken to alleviate the plight of thousands of unmarried mothers and destitute families, and pre-natal benefits were granted to all pregnant women. It took a lot of effort to promulgate the law on day care centres which offered pre-school education to all children. Here one must note that throughout his subsequent political career, Allende devoted a large part of his time to these issues which he considered to be of fundamental importance. Even after becoming a senator, he served several terms as president of the National Medical College (the medical workers' trade union).

The 1940s proved to be a period of crisis for the Chilean Left. In 1941 Oscar Schnake,⁴ Secretary General of the Socialist Party, broke with the Popular Front and began to champion the country's integration in the inter-American system of imperialist domination. Fragmented and losing influence, the Socialists themselves were the first victims of this reorientation. Allende tried to rebuild the party on the basis of democracy, anti-imperialism and unity. Although elected SPC Secretary General in 1943, he soon resigned this post because he did not feel he was supported adequately within the party.

There were other bitter disappointments in store for him. In 1946 the Socialist cabinet ministers of the so-called Third Front government declared themselves to be equally anti-communist and anti-capitalist and

unleashed repression. The Cold War came to Chile. Then the Socialist ministers joined the 'national unity' cabinet of the traitor-president Gabriel Gonzalez Videla. That was when the Pisagua concentration camp was established and the law on the 'permanent defense of democracy' was promulgated which the people nicknamed the 'accursed law'.

During that difficult period Allende stood firm on his principles, working tirelessly against opportunism, for joint action by the genuinely democratic forces and for a revolutionary path. That was a great and historic contribution on his part. At the height of the Cold War, when the wounds inflicted during the pitched battles between Socialists and Communists were still bleeding, he displayed admirable dedication and attention to the needs of the masses and called forcefully for unity.

He was working above all to restore the unity of the Socialist Party, to help revive it as an influential popular organisation. That made it necessary to develop democracy within the party and to promote a policy of commitment to anti-imperialist goals, of alliance between the Socialists and the Communists, of Left unity. The task was to overcome ingrained attitudes, to challenge the overall policy of the world's socialist and social democratic parties, to prevent lapses into opportunism and 'Caudillism'. In this Allende succeeded because he was motivated by his confidence in the ability of the Chilean people to tackle the most formidable problems.

Let us also note another factor to which Allende referred many times. A profound examination of the country's past and present, of the alignment of forces and of the issues with which the country was concerned led him to conclude that a powerful Socialist Party with its own image should maintain firm ties with the masses and friendly relations with the Communists and other revolutionaries and democrats. Nor must one forget that, a highly emotional person, Allende had great affection for the party which actually raised him, and he wanted it to score new victories and gain prestige.

However, all that did not prevent him from making high demands on the SPC. He was intransigent to sectarianism, to blunders, complacency, dogmatic narrow-mindedness and ideological immaturity. He boldly engaged in polemics, fighting unswervingly against these ills and radiating unshakeable faith in the ability of the Socialist Party to rid itself of its shortcomings.

Anti-imperialism was central to Allende's politics. He took a firm stand on matters of principle because he always had a clear view of the antagonistic contradictions between Chile and imperialism. What motivated him was not the naive faith of a Carbonaro but a conscious and rational confidence that the interests of our people and of imperialism were incompatible. As a patriot, Allende was very proud of Chile and, with his head held high, he rejected the claims of the imperialist centre, of the transnationals, of the financial oligarchy, of the Pentagon, the CIA and other agents of the dollar empire.

Allende's commitment to the creation of a big and strong Socialist Party had nothing in common with games politicians play or with petty intrigue. He held that this objective could be achieved through dedicated service to the higher national and revolutionary objectives, to the ideals of delivering

his country from imperialist exploitation.

In Allende's view, unity of Socialists and Communists was essential to the success of progressive change. When he was told that such unity was absent in several countries, he replied that there was all the more reason to seek it in Chile. He maintained that this alliance could arise as a result of frank debate conducted in a spirit of mutual respect and goodwill, of joint work among the people, of a tireless search for common ground. He rejected all diktat, never tried to impose his own views on others, and advocated understanding on a principled basis. The Communists disagreed with him many times on many issues. But neither he nor we saw these differences as insurmountable, and each time both sides tried to understand each other and to act openly, as revolutionaries should.

That was how both sides developed a political friendship which grew and gained strength during the Popular Unity years. At that time, the practice of holding regular meetings of an analytical group became established. Allende referred to the group jokingly as a 'three-legged table' because taking part in its work were representatives of the Socialist Party, of the Communist Party and the President of the Republic. He closely saw to the observance of the two rules he himself had introduced for this advisory body: first, not to discuss matters that were constitutionally the prerogative of the Armed Forces Command and second, never to neglect consultations with the other parties of the ruling coalition. In other words, close cooperation without any privileges made the SPC and the CPC work with a higher sense of responsibility.

From 1945 to 1970, the year he moved into the Presidential Palace, Allende was invariably elected to the Senate, each time representing different provinces (a unique case in Chilean history). This testifies to the nationwide recognition of his work. He considered it a matter of honour to be a very active and indefatigable senator, and he worked without let-up on the floor and on Senate commissions. He helped draft and supported many useful legislative initiatives. He often repeated a favourite phrase of his: "My constituents did not send me here to relax. I have been given an excellent opportunity to represent the people, and I must live up to their trust." Allende was never guilty of cobbling up factions to further any opportunist objective. He became Vice-President and then President of the Senate thanks to his universally acclaimed experience, thoroughness and integrity. As he accepted one important post after another, he always promised that this would in no way affect the conduct of Allende the revolutionary. And he always kept his word.

Let me cite just one example. Soon after Che Guevara's death in Bolivia, several persecuted comrades-in-arms of the famed guerrilla leader arrived in Chile. Allende took them under his personal protection, accompanied them to Tahiti and in this way saved their lives. He did not like to be chained to his senatorial desk and kept travelling about the country promoting the struggle of the masses. He ran four times for President (in 1952, 1958, 1964 and 1970), and each time it was a memorable campaign of many months, with the candidate speaking in virtually every corner of the country.

Allende's speeches were to the point, full of ideas, permeated with an

anti-imperialist spirit and invariably urging revolutionary social change. His style as a speaker was polemical and displayed an in-depth analysis of current developments. Purposeful and sincerely concerned about the plight of the poor, he also never evaded international topics and the problems born of imperialist domination. He kept explaining the importance of the struggle for peace and, as a vice-chairman of the World Peace Council, he was an ardent fighter against the arms race and against the policy of aggression.

Intellectually and emotionally, Allende was a friend of the USSR: after each visit to the Soviet Union he spoke enthusiastically about the accomplishments of the country of Lenin, and he openly supported Soviet peace initiatives. Equally, he showed great affection for the People's Republic of China, the German Democratic Republic and other socialist countries. He was greatly impressed by the victory of the Cuban Revolution which brought socialism to Latin America. Each visit to Cuba redoubled his strength. Allende was well aware of the distinctive historical conditions of different countries, and he ridiculed those who tried to copy blindly Soviet, Chinese, Vietnamese, German, or Cuban experience. His feet were firmly on the Chilean ground. At the same time, he set great store by the October Revolution, understood the lofty emancipatory mission of the working class, was an internationalist, a Latin American patriot and a friend of Fidel and Raul Castro, of Che Guevara and other Cuban leaders.

Very little has so far been written about Allende's presidential term — one thousand days of genuine democracy with their notable achievements as well as their errors and shortcomings. These achievements were made possible largely thanks to the President's personal qualities as an indefatigable fighter, visionary and optimist even at the most difficult moments. He kept forging ahead, never losing his presence of mind and his sense of humour, defusing heated debate with a good-natured joke. But this did not detract from his profound patriotic and revolutionary dedication to Chile and her future.

After becoming President on November 3, 1970, Allende immediately focused his attention on the scrupulous implementation of the Basic Programme of the Popular Unity Government, the document which won him his relative majority at the polls and the endorsement of his presidency at the plenary session of the Chilean Congress. Like the Communists, he believed that it is best to begin with the more important (even though more difficult) things and to move boldly against the main enemies.

Under an amendment to the Constitution (approved in strict compliance with the legal standards in force), Allende nationalised the copper mines, the source of Chile's foremost natural resource, and expropriated the enclaves of US consortiums. Making wide use of the agrarian reform legislation he inherited,⁵ he promptly abolished the latifundia and handed over the best land to peasant cooperatives. The Popular Unity government dealt a mortal blow to the financial oligarchy by assuming control of the banks, the actual centres of economic power.

Under several emergency decrees Allende created a public sector comprising most of the nationalised monopolistic enterprises in industry,

mining and trade. As a result, Chile's economic output began to grow at an unheard-of rate.

The country was forced to face a US blockade, the cessation of international credits, as well as economic sabotage, rampant speculation and smuggling orchestrated by the CIA and other imperialist agencies. Nevertheless, order was gradually being restored thanks to financial self-management, workers' control and mobilisation of the masses. Chile adopted an independent foreign policy: joined the non-aligned movement, strengthened cooperation with other Latin American countries, established ties with the socialist nations and fought for peace.

The living standards of the working class and of the people rose perceptibly. A high level of per capita calorie and protein intake was achieved; children and expectant mothers received a free half-litre of milk a day. Housing construction expanded. All children could go to school, secondary and higher education was broadened, and culture was developing. Never before had so much been done in South America so thoroughly and so quickly to benefit the people.

It is a lie that the Popular Unity government failed in its efforts. It was advancing successfully in all major directions. To overthrow it, the rightists had to resort to armed force and to non-economic and anti-democratic means. They had to declare war on the people. It took a fascist putsch to topple the government.

It was a major mistake on the part of Comrade President to believe that everyone else was as patriotic as he was. Salvador Allende entrusted the Armed Forces Command to people who sold out easily to Chile's enemies. One of the best records of the events of 1970-1973 is contained in a book by the Polish journalist Zdzislaw Antos entitled *1000 days of Salvador Allende*.⁶ The author highlights many details of the reactionary conspiracy — confirmed, incidentally, by Henry Kissinger who masterminded the coup and by several documents published in the United States, including the report of the Church Committee.⁷

Shortly before his death, in his last words broadcast by Radio Magallanes, Allende declared: "I am confident that the seeds of dignity we have planted in the minds of thousands upon thousands of Chileans will prove impossible to destroy. Our enemies have armed force on their side, and they can enslave us, but neither crimes nor force can stop social development. History is ours, and the people are its makers."⁸

Fighting against fascist tyranny, continuing its heroic resistance which is supported by progressives and democrats throughout the world, the cream of the Chilean nation has demonstrated that Allende's heritage lives. The Communist party of Chile regards it as its foremost task to unite the people, to help secure their legitimate right to an uprising against fascism. That is the objective the Chilean Communists are working for.

¹ Jorge Timossi, *Grandes Alamedas. El Combate del Presidente Allende*, Havana, 1974, pp. 183-184.

² Luis Corvalan, *Santiago-Moscu-Santiago. Apuntes del Exilio*, Madrid, 1983, pp. 67-68.

³ Pedro Aguirre Cerda (1879-1941), a prominent leader of the Radical Party which joined the Popular Front, was President of Chile in 1938-1941. — *Ed.*

⁴ The Public Works Minister in the Popular Front government. — *Ed.*

⁵ The law, enacted by the Christian Democratic President Eduardo Frey in 1967, was carried out at a very slow rate: by 1970 only 28,000 out of 740,000 peasant households with no or very little land were granted plots. — *Ed.*

⁶ Zdzislaw Antos, *1000 dni Salvadora Allende*, Warsaw, 1976.

⁷ The Senate Committee which investigated the role of the CIA and US monopolies in the overthrow of the Popular Unity government. — *Ed.*

⁸ Jorge Timossi, *op. cit.*, p. 231.

Notes From Afghanistan

A Time To Live And Build

THOUSANDS of barefoot children in tattered clothes daily walk many kilometers to school. There are not enough schools, and they work in three or four shifts. Small kids strain against the weight of big schoolbags, but they plod on with purpose and determination. The analogy is obvious: this is how the entire country is moving along its arduous path towards progress.

Those children were my most vivid impression during my stay in Afghanistan where I attended an AAPSO¹ conference on 'The Role of Public Opinion in the Peaceful Settlement of Regional Conflicts'. Its participants saw terrible photos of schoolchildren murdered by the 'liberators of Islam'. The enemies of national reconciliation understand that the biggest threat to them comes from knowledge, education, and the people's desire to live and work in peace. That is why they refuse to embrace the spirit of the Geneva accords and scream hysterically that they will keep fighting their 'war of liberation' until all the 'Reds' are destroyed.

We saw this 'war' with our own eyes in Kabul: hospitals and schools firebombed, mines exploded in children's playgrounds, water reservoirs poisoned, Stinger missiles used against passenger aircraft, and people assassinated in the bazaars and on the streets.

Throughout the years of conflict, the hatred of the counter-revolutionaries has focused on the Soviet soldier-internationalists. Many of them will never return home. Others return gravely wounded. Grief lies heavy on the hearts of thousands of mothers in the Soviet Union. How much longer can the Soviet people sacrifice the lives of their sons to the freedom of their friends? Common sense and elementary justice prompt the only answer: yes, nine years is enough. People in the Soviet Union are waiting eagerly to welcome the soldiers home. There are so many things they can accomplish there working as civilians.

That was the opinion of 20-year-old Vladimir Grishin. We talked to him at his sentry post by the Kabul Polytechnic building. "Our mission is over," he said. "We have discharged our internationalist duty of helping the Afghan people repel foreign intervention. I am confident that after our withdrawal the Afghans will be able to stand their ground."

It is indeed time the Afghan Revolution demonstrated its true strength to both friends and enemies.

The Alignment of Forces

What will happen after all Soviet troops are withdrawn from Afghanistan? Will national reconciliation become a reality or will the reactionaries be able to drown the revolutionary, democratic, progressive movement in blood?

These are the questions worrying all friends of the April Revolution in other countries. I put it to many people I met in Kabul, and I asked them to answer it frankly. The many replies I heard from Afghan comrades enabled me to draw the following picture of the alignment of forces.

The *People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan* (PDPA) is now the country's strongest party, with a membership of more than 200,000. Objectively, the onus of the struggle to defend revolutionary gains is now on the PDPA. The situation has changed, and the party is enhancing its vigilance and unity. Many of its activists have recently volunteered to join the Afghan Army so as to defend the gains of the April Revolution. The PDPA has abandoned its monopoly on power and succeeded in rising above narrow partisan interests for the sake of the good of the country. As Afghan comrades assured me, under a coalition government, the party will not only preserve but also raise its political and moral prestige. It is no accident that after the policy of national reconciliation was announced, more than 30,000 new members joined the PDPA.

On PDPA initiative, a new system of government is taking shape. President Najibullah told journalists that "we keep the doors to the coalition cabinet open". Again, he called on the opposition to return home, launch their newspapers, organise their parties and try to win over a majority of the people by peaceful means.

Under the new constitutional freedoms ensured by the policy of national reconciliation, other parties and coalitions are already active — the People's Islamic Party, the Peasant Justice Party, a coalition of three Left parties, etc.

The *Afghan Army* numbers 500,000 servicemen today. Over the decade that has elapsed since April 1978 it has changed radically and gone through the crucible of battles. Naturally, despite the great progress it has made in training specialists and in military organisation, its fighting efficiency cannot compare with that of the Soviet Army. But the commanders of the Afghan armed forces are working hard to make the troops better prepared and more able in military and political terms.

"Do you think that the army is ready to defend the country after the Soviet soldier-internationalists pull out?" I asked General Akram, head of the military academy.

"Generally, yes," he replied. "A great deal is being done. Of course, much will depend on the termination of foreign interference. But our friends may be sure that the defence of the country is in good hands."

The academy was opened in November 1987. General Akram introduced me to the cadets. In three years, they will be the first army officers in the country's history to have been trained at home by Afghan instructors. The entire faculty of the academy is Afghan with the exception of the woman who teaches Russian. The future officers come from all

sections of Afghan society, 70 per cent of them from the families of peasants or industrial workers.

The *people's militia* is the country's second armed force. It is effectively guarding Kabul and other cities, and it cooperates closely with the *people's detachments of Defenders of the Revolution*. The latter, too, are a reliable support of the armed forces of the new Afghanistan. Serving with the Defenders of the Revolution are children, women and old people: the age bracket is from 15 to 70. The unremitting vigilance of these units is what helps prevent many dastardly terrorist acts.

The *counter-revolutionary alliance* is made up of seven Pakistani-based organisations. There is considerable infighting within the Seven over the tactics to be adopted in the war against the people. These differences used to escalate into frequent armed clashes between rival factions.

After the policy of national reconciliation was announced, some of the leaders of the Seven have been thinking about new political forms of struggle, designed to increase their influence among the population. They seek to use the concessions of the Kabul government to their own advantage. Political observers believe that these 'peace-loving' sections of the counter-revolutionary alliance pin their hopes on the Trojan horse tactic and on undermining the republic from within.

But most of the chieftains of the Seven maintain that no political experiments are necessary and that continued bandit raids and terrorism is the only way.

Military experts estimate the strength of the counter-revolutionary army at some 200,000 well-armed men. Their leaders threaten to conduct operations virtually throughout Afghanistan using the country's mountainous terrain.

It's Hard to Return Home

Since the policy of national reconciliation was proclaimed, tens of thousands of former terrorists have laid down their arms and returned home. Some of them voted in the elections of April 5. This means that many rank-and-file counter-revolutionaries are tired of the long years of war and prefer peace. This feeling of dejection and despair is particularly noticeable among the three million refugees now living in Pakistan. Before the Geneva accords were signed more than 120,000 returned from across the border. I asked one of them why he had left his country and then came back. We met him in the village of Charasyab, not far from the Pakistani border. The former refugee Abdul Subur, a man with two wives and six children, spoke agitatedly and swore he was telling the truth.

"They (terrorists — *Auth.*) came to our village, and threatened to kill me and my children if I refused to go with them. What could I do? I had just seen 22 people die, I had to go with them. After the policy of national reconciliation was declared, some of my friends returned home. Later I learned that nothing bad had happened to them, that they were welcomed cordially. Then I and some of my friends decided to return too. Please don't think it was easy. All the roads leading back are blocked by the terrorists. They track down and kill many people who decide to go back home, even children and women."

"Why does the Pakistani military, supported by the US, continue to assist the counter-revolutionaries and to foment the regional conflict contrary to the spirit of Geneva?" This was my question to Hajman Handak, chairman of the People's Parliament of the Free Pashtu Tribes. (Pashtu tribes live on both sides of the Afghan-Pakistani border, right where the fighting is particularly intensive.)

"The United States, Pakistan and the counter-revolutionary organisations directed by foreign advisers," he said, "are really against ending the war, mostly because they profit from it hugely. That's a very big business. All those involved in this dirty enterprise, including the top brass in Pakistan, are making millions out of it. But there is, of course, the political aspect too.

"If the war ends, many Pakistani generals will be left with nothing to do, and it will be more difficult for them to interfere in politics. A serious threat to the Pakistani military regime itself will arise in this case. So I think those at the top have no stake in an early end to the conflict. They will try to prolong it at all costs. Naturally, the Pakistani people and the Afghan people are against the fratricidal war. Sooner or later all the fanatics, Pakistani militarists and CIA agents will be cornered. Events will bear out the correctness of the policy of national reconciliation. Those who deal in our blood will soon lose their dirty business."

The enemies of reconciliation claim that they are fighting to 'liberate Islam'. In actual fact, they foment religious fanaticism.

"Do you believe that Islam is really in danger?" I asked the Imam Wuazir Akbahar.

"Those who profess to champion Islam while resisting the policy of national reconciliation violate the Koran," he replied. "No one persecutes or threatens us. On the contrary, we have built new mosques over the past few years. This means that Islam is not in danger, and any 'war to liberate it' is not only senseless but also anti-Islamic because ours is a religion of peace. No one has the right to kill innocent people in the name of Islam, to plunge the country into war and suffering. A curse on those who go against the holy Koran. As it says, 'Satan has possessed them and made them forget God. They are Satan's party.'"

Education as a Weapon

While in Afghanistan, I often heard a bitter joke, 'Comrade, don't forget that by the Muslim calendar, it's the year 1367'. Indeed, when one becomes aware of the age-old legacy of backwardness, mass illiteracy, poverty, widespread prejudice, religious fanaticism, corruption, and the strength of the vestiges of feudalism still current among a majority of the population, one feels that in 1978, the Afghan revolutionaries indeed 'challenged and stormed the sky'. That is why some hold that the mission of the April Revolution was obviously premature, that the country and the people were not ready to absorb such a large dosage of social progress.

But when you learn about the great accomplishments scored during the first decade of the new life (scored in conditions of war), when you meet young people who combine studies, work and military service, when you

find out that the illiteracy rate among women has dropped from 98 to 75 per cent and that thousands of them have abandoned the yashmak, joined the workforce and even serve as armed Defenders of the Revolution, when you see the housing developments, modern industrial projects, hospitals and schools that have been built — then you grow confident that the cause of the revolution is just and valid.

The great losses suffered by the Afghan revolutionaries and the Soviet internationalists, the efforts undertaken by the peoples of Afghanistan and the USSR have not been in vain — if only there is peace.

Despite the incessant forays of the extremists who are hostile to reconciliation, the Afghan people are working stubbornly and dreaming of a new and happy life without war or poverty. After the Geneva accords, these dreams are beginning to come true, and they are mobilising the constructive energies of vast sections of society. Education, a 'cultural war of liberation' from ignorance and age-old backwardness has been proclaimed as a priority task. The future of Afghanistan will largely depend on the outcome of this 'war'.

I met Hussein Hilali, rector of the Kabul Polytechnic, as he was working on the campus together with his students during a voluntary work-for-the-nation day.

"As you can see, we are doing a peaceful job," he smiled. "I hope peace will prevail and nothing will prevent us from building a new Afghanistan. The country badly needs specialists and experts. We'll have to create a new, people's intelligentsia by training teachers, industrial engineers, economists, agronomists and physicians. It's not enough to have specialists trained abroad, in the socialist countries. We are working to produce our own at Afghan institutions of higher learning. True, it's hard to transform uneducated youths into skilled experts. But there is no other way."

I also had an interesting meeting with Safik Razmiha, deputy chair of the Democratic Women's Union.

"Without securing equality for women in our society," she said, "we cannot achieve social progress. Many thousands of Afghan women are still locked up in harems, millions hide behind the yashmak, and three-quarters of them are illiterate. The Afghan revolutionaries are doing a great deal to emancipate women. But the balance of forces so far favours vestiges of feudalism.

"Besides, men too must mend their ways," she remarked. "Grown up in a backward environment, they often merely pay lip service to women's equality. The PDPA Secretariat has decided that all party members guilty of polygamy are to be expelled from the party. For the Afghan women's movement, that is a decision of principle and of exceptional importance."

The women of Afghanistan indeed have to fight against great odds. But we could see for ourselves that young people quickly overcame age-old prejudice. Time itself is on the side of progress in the field of women's rights.

The accords on settling the situation relating to Afghanistan were an event of global significance. That was the unanimous opinion of the delegates to the AAPSO conference. Many noted with conviction that the

spirit of Geneva paved the way to the peaceful settlement of other regional conflicts too.

"We will withdraw our troops from Kampuchea by 1992. But if an agreement is reached in Paris, we will do it without delay," said Tchin Ngoc Thai, president of the AAPSO's Vietnamese Commission.

"We want our talks with the contras to succeed. We are ready to recognise the political activities of any new party provided it conducts its struggle peacefully," said Sebastian Castro, secretary general of the Nicaraguan Peace Council.

It follows that Afghanistan offers a useful example for peacefully tackling other regional and local conflicts no matter how different their essence or specific circumstances. The important thing is for the accords on Afghanistan to be translated into practice. Then the Afghan example will be even more effective internationally.

Aris Papantimos

member of the Communist Party of Greece, *WMR* staff member

¹ Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organisation.

surveys, letters, and diary

Our Interviews

East-West: Forces Of Mutual Economic Attraction

East-West economic interdependence keeps growing stronger. Here is **Gerald Hinteregger**, Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), discussing the developments and problems involved in this process.

Today, politicians in both socialist and capitalist countries agree that the contemporary world is interdependent. Many economists and businessmen, particularly in Europe, arrived at this conclusion much

earlier. For example, Soviet scholars said a few years ago that cyclical recessions in the West adversely affected the socialist economies, too. This view is now shared by a majority of experts. What is your opinion?

EARLIER, when I worked in Moscow, a different view was prevalent there. It was often said that recessions — crises, as you call them — in the capitalist world would in no way affect the planned economy countries. But facts testify to the contrary. The slump which occurred in the capitalist countries in 1974-1975 and in 1980-1982 had a negative impact on East-West relations. Exports from the socialist countries encounter certain difficulties to this day. These exports have diminished abruptly, and the exporter countries' trade deficit has increased. This is additional proof that we are all interdependent, and we must accept it.

High technology calls for the establishment of new economic relations, for a free exchange of information supplied by the world economy's 'integrated data bank'. But the view is still current that some countries can exist outside the data exchange system.

Theoretically, maybe, but not practically. Self-isolation may exact a stiff price in terms of technological progress and eventually in overall economic development. Nowadays, no nation can fully use its potential without extensive cooperation because new forms of economic organisation imply above all a constant flow of information. As far as I know, most scholars in the socialist countries share this view.

The question you have raised has been discussed broadly enough both in the academic community and in the press. But I would like to touch on an important subject yet to be examined adequately. I am talking about standardisation. Experts maintain that East-West differences in standards are as dangerous as political differences. But while, given goodwill and a reasonable approach, disagreement on political matters can be overcome within a relatively short time, the unification of standards takes many years even if both sides have a stake in it. The longer the situation remains unchanged, the more the two systems will be confined to their own technological structures. Standards that are not recognised elsewhere are a very serious obstacle to trade. I think that work on this problem will emerge as a major aspect of our commission's activities.

In Europe this will be made possible only if the effort involves both the CMEA and the EEC, for each has developed its own system of standards. Cooperation in this field is all the more necessary because opportunities for joint work have improved now. In May 1988 the Council of Ministers of the European Communities, meeting at a session at foreign ministers' level, approved the provisions of a draft joint declaration on the establishment of official relations between the European Economic Community and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. Its final version was initialled in June. This major step forward in internationalising world economic ties is only a

beginning: the long years during which the two biggest economic groupings refused to recognise each other, as well as the integration processes within them still pose many obstacles to mutually beneficial East-West cooperation. How can one prevent integration processes from adversely affecting trade and economic relations between the two systems?

Our commission is studying this aspect in depth. On the one hand, we are aware of the fact that the process under way within the EEC is irreversible: its member countries have decided to create, by 1992, a so-called single internal market of the 12 participating countries in which there will be free movement of goods, capital, services and persons. On the other hand, we realise, of course, that this market will be less accessible for countries unaffiliated to the EEC. I hope that with mutual recognition a fact now, it will be much easier to devise compromise solutions.

A few years ago East European countries began to set up foreign-based joint ventures with their West European and US partners. More than 420 such companies now operate in the West, with East European capital estimated at \$1 billion. But somehow this did not receive broad coverage in the press. On the other hand, the establishment of joint ventures in Hungary, Poland and the USSR has aroused great interest. Would you care to comment on that?

The Economic Commission for Europe has been closely following the reform under way in the socialist countries and its impact on the cooperation you are referring to. According to our information, there are now more than one thousand contracts between East European and Western partners. The CMEA countries already number more than 150 new joint ventures, over 100 of them located in Hungary.

Naturally, the development of these enterprises is a complex and involved process. Frankly, the socialist countries' policy towards them is not yet flexible enough. The important thing is to think about the competitiveness of the industrial goods produced by joint ventures, to find out how one can induce Western countries to open up more of their markets for an increased exchange of goods.

Generally, one must recognise that despite the favourable overall situation, there is still a considerable number of problems. We in the ECE keep a special list of various obstacles arising in the course of East-West economic cooperation. The mechanism is simple: individual countries notify the ECE Secretariat about obstacles to trade and steps taken to overcome them. Today, the list comprises 300 entries — a very great number. But I hope that as our commission proceeds in its work with the interested parties, the list will grow shorter.

We are, of course, powerless to do anything unless the initiative comes from each interested country. Take the Soviet Union. There are the bold steps taken by the new Soviet leadership in the field of foreign trade. I would call them an example of an effort to accommodate a partner. The restructuring of the apparatus dealing with external economic relations and

of its operation, the authority Soviet enterprises now have to deal directly with foreign partners — these things certainly exert a positive influence on the expansion of economic contacts.

According to data published in the Soviet Union, a total of 37 joint ventures with an ownership capital of \$470 million appeared in the USSR from January 1987 to April 1988. Of these, 31 have been established together with West European and US partners, including nine with the FRG, four each with Italy and Finland and three with the United States. If the political barometer starts falling again, will this scare businessmen away?

In purely commercial terms, businessmen are interested in making profit and expanding the exchange of goods. Of course, the political situation does have an effect on economic cooperation, but it does not change the objectives of businessmen as such. I believe that not too long ago, when East-West relations were more complicated, mutual economic interest also played an important role. Industrial trade was one of the few channels that still linked the two systems and preserved the character of the world as an integral whole. But the improvement of East-West relations, particularly of US-Soviet relations, gave a powerful impetus to more active business contacts. This improvement of the overall climate is largely the result of the changes that have occurred in the Soviet Union. The new leadership in Moscow is working vigorously to revise not only domestic but also foreign policy. After a series of summit meetings, the negotiating process at last yielded a tangible result — the INF Treaty. This first ever agreement on a reduction of nuclear arsenals shows that there is indeed greater mutual trust, and that is something each and every one of us should do all we can to promote.

Do you believe that the United Nations should add its weight to these efforts?

Of course, the UN is a very important tool of the international community, and as such it should be more active in the drive to overcome suspicion and prejudice. Unfortunately, the UN is now passing through a difficult phase, not only financially but also politically and constitutionally. But I think recent developments indicate a turn for the better. First, the UN itself is working very seriously to reform and to become more efficient. Second, the US approach to our organisation is beginning to change too, and you can see that from the reports that appear in the American media. The Soviet Union, for its part, has always clearly expressed its support for the UN. This was reflected in Mikhail Gorbachov's *Pravda* article.¹ He spoke about the growing role of the United Nations, particularly in the sphere of security and peace-keeping. I am positive that all this, taken together, will have a positive influence on the activities of the United Nations and of its organisations among which the Economic Commission for Europe features prominently.

¹ *Pravda*, September 17, 1987. — Ed.

Taming The Energy Of The Atom

Scientists On The ITER Conceptual Design Study

ITER stands for the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor. To work on this project an international team of scientists has now gathered at the Max Planck Institute for Plasma Physics near Munich in the Federal Republic of Germany. *WMR* asked Professor **Klaus Pinkau**, the institute's scientific director, **Ken Tomabechi**, director of Japan's Nuclear Fusion Research Agency, **Evgeniy Velikhov**, vice-president of the USSR Academy of Sciences, and **John F. Clarke**, associate director of the Office of Energy Research of the US Department of Energy — all senior ITER officials — to answer a few questions.

What has gathered you all here, at the Planck Institute?

J. F. Clarke. An International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor Council has been set up this spring. At its first official meeting held in Vienna under the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), with delegations from the European Atomic Energy Community (Eurotom), Japan, the Soviet Union and the USA attending, it was decided to start work on a conceptual design of the ITER. And so we are here, at this institute, on the basis of which the international research team will work.

E. Velikhov. This unprecedented cooperation was initiated by Mikhail Gorbachov's meetings with Francois Mitterand and Ronald Reagan, which both took place in 1985. But we can say that we had been moving towards it since 1956 — it was precisely then that on behalf of the Soviet government Academician Igor Kurchatov, visiting the Harwell research centre in Britain, first told his foreign colleagues about our investigations in controlled thermonuclear fusion.

It is not only journalists, with their penchant for a sensation-making story, but even scientists themselves who often call this project 'unique' and 'fantastic'. Are they right?

K. Tomabechi. I would also say, without fear of exaggeration, that the project is a breakthrough — a truly historic event. Though we earlier cooperated, too — it was both on a bilateral and multilateral basis — the scale which this project envisages, that is something we certainly haven't had before. And the results promise to be equally great. All humanity is interested in them.

K. Pinkau. Though I am dedicated to the Tokamak,¹ I would not, however, deny the potential of other conventional and unconventional ways of obtaining energy. However promising the area of our quest may

This continues our series of materials devoted to international cooperation of the peaceful uses of atomic energy and begun with the joint interview 'Sharing Benefits Together'. — See *WMR*, No. 2, 1988.

look, only the overall sum of technologies can satisfy human requirements. I think, in fact, that all the methods will in the end be used. Now we have nuclear sources of energy, as well as the conventional ones — oil and gas — but even today we are burning wood.

Since there are so very few energy sources available, we must develop all of them so that we have the knowledge to decide which of them we will employ in which situation. And there will be different situations for which you need energy — for example, even today, if you are living on an isolated island, solar energy, tidal energy is probably the best form of energy that you could have. But if you live in areas which are highly densely populated, you need some kind of central electricity generation and for that you need central power stations and for these one of the possible solutions is fusion. So my point is: I do not think that there is a competition between different forms of energy generation; in fact, I think we need all of them.

J. F. Clarke. I think magnetic fusion is a promising area. I certainly think that we ought to support the development of magnetic fusion, but I wouldn't want to go so far as to say that this is the only energy source that we would support. If you look at the growth of the human population worldwide there are going to be so many people in the future that we need every energy source that we can develop. Now, the reason why people are so dedicated to magnetic fusion is that we recognise that with the increased population and crowding in the world we really need to try to develop the most safe and environmentally benign sources of energy, and since its very beginning fusion has been recognised as that kind of energy source. If we can develop it, and overcome all the technical problems that are there, we should be able to get an essentially inexhaustible energy source that has the smallest environmental impact of anything that people have been talking about using. So in that sense fusion is special but it is certainly not unique.

K. Tomabechi. Well, sure, the view has been expressed by Dr Clarke . . . There can be a number of ways to generate energy, but we have to think about the environmental impact that this causes. Apart from this factor, there would be such considerations as the safety aspect and those of how right the cost by which you can produce energy, and there are also some other factors.

If you take into account all these factors and compare them with other energy sources — solar or the energy of decay, or any other alternative source — I think that fusion is certainly the most attractive source of energy as a whole. So I personally am very much interested to develop this source of energy, though it is difficult to solve the problem at the present moment. But I think that — I hope that — people will be wise enough to solve their own problems in the 10 to 20 years to come.

While participating in this transnational project, you at the same time remain citizens of your respective countries, and in this case it means countries with different social and economic systems. Is this not a hurdle on the road to achieving your common goal and results?

K. Pinkau. Oh, there are many obstacles to coming to the common aim, but they are surmountable. In one of the speeches here (at the inauguration of the ITER study) Professor Velikhov mentioned that fusion is interesting for international cooperation perhaps for three reasons. One is that energy is a global problem. The second is that fusion (and I mean only magnetic fusion on which we are working) cannot be used for military purposes and therefore the various political systems can work together easily. And the third one is that fusion is not yet in a situation where the economic use of fusion is not immediately apparent and therefore the nations can still work together.

E. Velikhov. Undoubtedly, the project will benefit all and each of its participants and humanity as a whole. And though the Pentagon did interfere with it, and some people are still trying to, our project is already taking on flesh and blood. Common sense is on its side.

Certainly each of the ITER parties has independently made considerable progress. As a representative of the Soviet scientists I shall note that we have succeeded in obtaining thermonuclear plasma, heating it up to $100\text{m}^\circ\text{C}$ and using a real fuel. The technology of superconductive fields was a great achievement; we have created a superconductive Tokamak, though so far as a laboratory unit only. The time has come to start designing the reactor. That's a task one country can't easily cope with. Let me cite a few figures. Thermonuclear reactor research will cost about \$200 million, and a commercial plant itself no less than \$4 billion. The conclusion is obvious: you need international cooperation for this.

J. F. Clarke. Well, there are several motivations for this cooperation. One of them is the fact that it is such a difficult technological problem that we really have to utilise the best human talents and by getting together and joining the talents of the Soviet Union, Japan, Europe and the United States we can move much more rapidly in this field, much more successfully — so that's an obvious motivation.

But there's another motivation as well and that is that fusion, like some other scientific endeavours, is becoming very expensive and it's very difficult for individual nations to provide the resources: the money, the material to carry out the necessary development work, and by joining together and sharing some of these tasks we are able to again move more rapidly and make sure that these essential experiments are completed on time.

K. Tomabechi. Whatever they say about Japan being rich — I don't know that it is so rich as to afford the fusion research, but if you look at the statistics I think that the four parties which decided to join the ITER, the resources being put into the research of fusion — the goal of the four parties is more or less comparable, in terms of money and manpower resources. So Japan has been trying to develop the fusion idea, of course, for the sake of its own nation, but at the same time Japanese scientists have been working very closely with all other scientists in the USSR, the USA and Europe. Here at Garching, with the ITER project I think that the mutual benefit of our cooperation will be still greater.

K. Pinkau. And now why is international cooperation desirable? I think that if you develop a technology of large uncertainty — uncertainty of

success — it is simply better to spread the risks and financial burden of this research over as many parties as possible.

The second point is that one of the most important problems of our day is the scarcity of human resources or, I would rather say, the scarcity of talent. You need very good engineers and physicists to do this and it is therefore very important to have our resources in good engineers and physicists pooled so that they can do this kind of research.

And the third reason is that, as we know, electricity generation by thermal power plants leads to so much pollution of the atmosphere. Its results are also international and therefore it is very good if one combats them internationally.

The issue of safety is of particular concern to everybody. How do matters stand here? Is a Chernobyl possible on controlled thermonuclear reactors?

J. F. Clarke. We have just concluded a major study of fusion safety in the United States. It shows that in principle it's possible to build fusion reactors that are so safe that no matter what happens it's not possible to injure anybody off-site, out of the plant boundaries. And consequently that's the degree of safety at which we are aiming — whether we'll be able to attain that degree of safety remains to be seen from the product of our research — but if we can realise the ultimate promise of fusion that will not be a problem.

Is there any danger of radiation in the case of this type of reactor?

E. Velikhov. The initial fuel — deuterium and lithium — is not radioactive. An active component, tritium, appears as they are used, but it soon burns. But the main guarantee is the absence of a chain reaction.

J. F. Clarke. I would add that tritium is the least harmful and least toxic fuel, as compared with any other radioactive materials. Besides that, the bulk of radioactivity in a fusion reactor is in the structure of the reactor, itself, and depending on the materials that we use in building this reactor we can minimise the amount of this radioactivity. So we have taken into account all of these characteristics of fusion in making the kind of statements that I just gave you about the ultimate safety that we are aiming at in the fusion reactor.

Ten people from each party annually participate in the joint work of US, Soviet, Japanese scientists and the representatives of Western Europe's Euratom. Several phases of the joint research are ahead. First will be what you call a definition phase to work out basic design principles for the ITER, scheduled to last until the end of 1990. Then the work will go into the design phase and then you will have to erect and operate a pilot reactor. But this is not an end in itself. What if we look further and do a little forecasting? Will the collaborating parties all go apart after the end of the project?

K. Pinkau. I believe the project will be successful for it could be successful if you look for the purely technical part of it. I think that the engineering and industrial standards in the cooperating parties are sufficiently high so that such a machine could be built. But there are two or three areas where I see difficulties which, I believe, will have to be solved even before one can embark on such a venture and the first one is: How do we protect what we call intellectual property rights, that is, what happens actually if a Japanese makes a very important invention during this construction? Will this be to the benefit of Japan? Will it be to the benefit of all the parties? In which way do we take out patents? So far we do not know how to answer these questions, and this is surely one of the big difficulties in this common venture.

Further, the priorities. International cooperation both engenders these problems and then requires that sooner or later they should be solved.

Another problem that we will have is: if we construct such a machine, the managers who will build it must have a method, must have the power to ensure that the various parts are delivered according to a time schedule and according to quality control. Now, we have very different economic systems cooperating in this venture and it is not easy to employ the methods that have been used for quality control and for time, for data, for scheduling control in various parts of the world, plus the finance business.

Does this imply that economic rivalry will arise as soon as the commercial use of fusion becomes a practicality?

E. Velikhov. To be sure, new problems will keep appearing as time goes by. Even our success, in which I have an absolute faith, will bring us a lot of new 'cares'. I hope these will mainly stem from joint venture electricity generating schemes based on nuclear fusion.

K. Pinkau. I support the idea of creating joint ventures especially because they will help provide people with jobs in countries where many are deprived of the opportunity to work. But I also see two or three forces, long-term political forces which have to be taken into account in discussing this. The first one is that the densely populated areas of Northern Europe need the energy — they live in a cold climate — they need a lot of energy, not only for their industries but also for the heating of their houses. But we do have the largest amount of energy required probably in the Third World not only because there we do have the most massive birth-rates and increase in population, but also these areas want to have an increased standard of living, so their energy consumption per head of the population will go up.

The third point is — we observe that it is dangerous to be dependent on other nations for your energy supply. The world has been dependent on oil in a large measure only since the early 1960s, and so it is only 25 years. Yet we have had an oil crisis and we have a war in the Gulf now. So in only 25 years has this very massive dependence on a very small area of the world created enormous political tensions.

Unfortunately, the large increase in the world population multiplied by the desire to have a larger per-capita energy consumption happens also in

those areas that are least capable — for the time being — of employing and making use of highly sophisticated, high-technology energy generation. In any case, let me say if we do not manage to bring orderliness into population growth, to have it level off at some definite point, no solar energy, no fission energy and no fusion energy will be enough to supply these people with energy.

There is a very dramatic sentence that was brought to my notice — the German thermodynamic physicist Rudolf Clausius in about, I think, 1860 or so was reported to have said that “now we know how to make use of this new energy source (coal at that time). And we know that the coal reserves of the world are limited. It is very important that we make very careful use of this energy source . . .” Now you know that the world population exploded in number after 1860, at which time, I don't know, we had perhaps between one and two billion people; now we have five billion. So you know that the world population did not listen to Clausius, did not follow his advice and they grew and made use of the new easy living, the healthier living, and multiplied.

Do you think these two problems — the search for new energy sources and demographic control — should be solved in parallel and in interrelationship?

K. Pinkau. All research will be futile unless it is connected to planned population growth.

US Congressman Joseph Wright has observed that Americans have wearied of having to spend about \$300 billion a year on military expenditures and that it is foolish for them to run into debts, to borrow money from their grandchildren and great-grandchildren on the arms they will no longer need.

The ITER is certainly opposed to the baneful process of militarisation.

E. Velikhov. Yes, our so far only international project is an antithesis to the wasting of financial, material and intellectual resources. By the way, the idea expressed by Mikhail Gorbachov of international cooperation in controlled thermonuclear fusion coincided with the formula ‘Disarmament for Development’, also advanced by the USSR, the productiveness of which is indisputable.

¹ The concept of the Tokamak installation was suggested, developed and first practically realised in laboratory conditions by Soviet scientists. — *Ed.*

the book scene

A Truly Revolutionary Force

Gus Hall, *Working Class USA: The Power and the Movement*, International Publishers, New York, 1987, 392 pp.

GUS HALL's new book is, perhaps, the most important and most profound in the latest writings of the Communist Party USA General Secretary. To help understand its importance, it is worthwhile to consider the period to which it is devoted.

The mid-1960s were marked in the United States and elsewhere in the capitalist world by the dramatic emergence of vital new social movements. Those years witnessed the spontaneous flowering of mass protests and movements of a motley character which defiantly drove nails into the coffin of McCarthyism. It also witnessed the emergence of a variety of ideological currents on the left.

The social upheaval captivated the attention of the entire world. Although never receiving the recognition for it that was deserved, the CPUSA was an important element in the political upsurge. From it the party drew new cadre, particularly from the younger generation. However, some inside and outside the country viewed the ideological struggle waged by the party at the time, its refusal to give assent to various left 'theories' in vogue, as sectarian.

Aside from the merits of any other question debated, the central question was the heart of Marxism: the role of the working class. It was a battle against empiricism. Hall steadfastly defended the proposition of Marx and Engels which he quoted: "It is not a question of what this or that proletariat, or even the whole proletariat, at the moment *regards* as its aim. It is a question of *what the proletariat is*, and what, in accordance with this *being*, it will historically be compelled to do."¹

In many writings and speeches, Gus Hall defended Marxism from the "insidious and indirect as well as direct and open" attacks that were widespread in the 1960s and 1970s. "The indirect and insidious, especially the attack with a 'radical' or 'socialist' cover, is geared to confuse, to divert those who are already influenced by Marxist concepts," he wrote (p. 192).

"One of the basic theoretical concepts that has of late come under question and suspicion, and is in fact being openly challenged, is the Marxist concept that the working class is the only consistent progressive and revolutionary class in our society — that all social progress must of necessity, and increasingly so, lean and depend on this class as the basis of advancement," Hall wrote (p. 192).

Hall effectively demolished the two main arguments of the 'liquidators':

that the working class is in fact disappearing; and that it has ceased to be a political factor of any consequence.

"In total numbers and in relation to the rest of the population, our class continues to grow," the US Communist leader wrote. "The number of people who make a living by working for someone else, and therefore are the victims of exploitation, has now reached the figure of 75 million" (p. 195).² The key word here is 'exploitation', for by denying this central defining tenet of Marxism, the liquidators were free to define the class by criteria of their own choosing and calculate accordingly.

To the notion that the working class is not an important political factor, Hall responds, "This conclusion would be wrong even if its proponents limited its application to the past and present. But to compound the error, they rule out any possibility of the working class ever playing any kind of a progressive or revolutionary role" (p. 197).

Later Hall's comments sharpen, noting that some 'seat-warming philosophers' had accused the working class of being in bed with the class enemy. "To view the US working class as a partner of monopoly capital in its imperialist exploitation is a slander and a falsehood," he wrote. "The US working class is a victim of the same monopoly capital as are the workers of the US-owned plants in other lands . . . The people on the left who spread this slander are only placing additional obstacles in the path of giving leadership to the working class" (p. 201).

When Hall wrote these words he was not taking an ostrich stance toward the then top leadership of the organized labor movement. "They have become partners in the policies of US imperialism . . . This service is in the interest of imperialism and runs counter to the interests of the workers in our country as well as of the workers in all other countries" (p. 117). *Working Class USA* includes chapters on the history of US trade unionism, the struggle for black-white unity, transnational corporations, women workers, party policy, past and present and personal reminiscences. It is permeated with faith in and responsibility toward the working men and women of the country. It is marked by a kind of admirable ideological stubbornness, fidelity to the core of Marxism-Leninism.

This takes on a special relevance today because of the confidence expressed in the progressive role of the working class. Today dramatic and inexorable changes are underway in the US trade union movement, a fight-back spirit is developing, a break is underway with the Cold War-inspired policies of the past, the idea of international cooperation is gaining strength and new forms of struggle are being forged.

It is important to note that while the changes in US trade unionism flow directly from the logic of the contemporary economic, social and political situation in the country, it is not an entirely spontaneous development. New thinking has emerged from the conscious efforts of the advanced forces in the class; it is aided by those radical cadres within it who never stooped to slander workers or unionism or lost confidence in their ability to move along new paths.

The subject of the book is also important because, once again, a new stage marks the political upsurge in the country. Once again, new (in fact, old and hackneyed) 'theories' abound. Once again, the central question is

the character and role of the working class. At a moment when, despite logical divergences and differences, the trade unions are finding a new level of unity, agitation arises which favors splits and divisions. Notions are propagated that the correct line of march for the labor movement is misstating, exaggerating and exacerbating contradictions — real and imagined — within the working class. Once again, some progressive forces, inside and outside the country, are having difficulties comprehending the nature, importance and potential consequences of the ideological conflict.

Hall's defense of fundamental Marxist views on the role of the working class and of class struggle as the motive force of contemporary social development goes beyond trade union tactics. It also has relevance for methodology. It is unacceptable for a Marxist to shackle scientific investigation with political preconceptions. However, the angle from which a given social, economic or political phenomenon is viewed helps shape the vision derived. That includes the class angle.

For instance, much is made these days of the fact that over the past couple of decades capitalism has been able to stave off a catastrophic cyclical crisis by virtue of the scientific and technological revolution. The boom cycle, it is said correctly, has been maintained by substantive increases in labor productivity. On the other hand, viewed from the vantage point of the working class, two other conclusions are unavoidable: unemployment increases and takes on a permanent character and the rate of exploitation increases.

Observing the immediate past period, Hall observes: "The increase in output from each worker-hour and each capital dollar spent means the time a worker spends on producing the equivalent of his or her wages get shorter, and the unpaid period of the workday spent producing for the exploiter gets longer" (pp. 206-207).

The basic laws of capitalism continue to operate and engender the seeds of crisis. "As the machine replaces people in production it reduces wages and consequently purchasing power," writes Hall. "This creates a dilemma of too much capacity and not enough consumption . . . capitalism is developing increasingly . . . toward an ever greater polarization of poverty and affluence . . . When the 70 million Americans who do not have the means to buy even the minimum of subsistence read about surpluses of food and clothing, for them the contradictions of capitalism are a stark reality," Hall writes (p. 291). The productivity of the system is a moot point and for the Marxist the germination of the seeds of crisis has begun.

True, the recent precipitous fall of stock prices is related largely to monetary complications and trade imbalances, and the US appears to be consuming more than it produces. However, the level of consumer buying power has been largely sustained by a massive amount of personal credit indebtedness which has become one of the chickens that came home to roost in the fall of 1987.

"The most striking feature of the present moment is that the capitalist world has lapsed into an era of crises, of stagnation and decline," Hall wrote in 1986. "Most of the tremors are centered in the United States. The backdrop for the myriad of crises is, of course, the general crisis of decaying world capitalism, which continues to gnaw at the foundations of

the corporate system . . . In the US the last economic cycle never fully reached its boom phase and the economy is now in the first stages of a new cyclical crisis" (pp. 306-307).

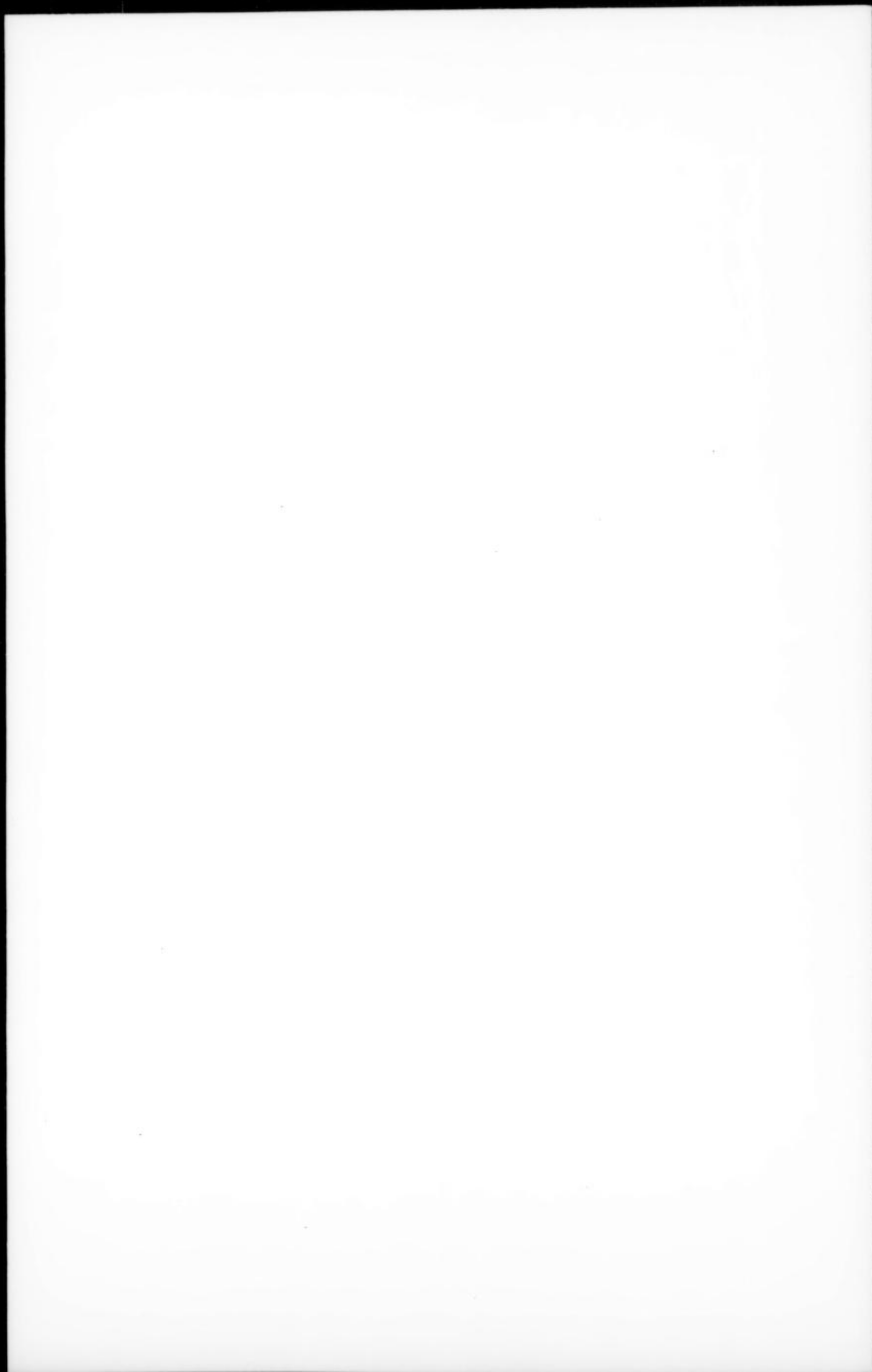
The current situation facing the US working class, Hall maintains, presents 'new challenges' which 'give rise to new modes of thinking'. The class struggle increasingly becomes involved in more than the struggles over economic issues or the production process. In the era of crises the monopoly capitalist drive for maximum profits comes more and more into conflict with national interests and gives the class struggle a new dimension (see p. 313).

"The truth," Gus Hall concludes, "is that the new objective developments, including the necessity to preserve the human race and nature from a nuclear end, have greatly enhanced the role and responsibility of the working class as the only true revolutionary force. It is more evident today than ever before that in order to emancipate itself, the working class must emancipate all of humanity."

Carl Bloice
Central Committee member, Communist Party USA

¹ Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 37.

² This is a 1966 census figure. As of 1985, 115.5 million people were employed in the civilian sector alone in the US economy. — *Ed.*



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**World Marxist Review is published by Progress Books,
71 Bathurst Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5V 2P6.
Second class mail registration number 2352.
Printed in Canada.
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