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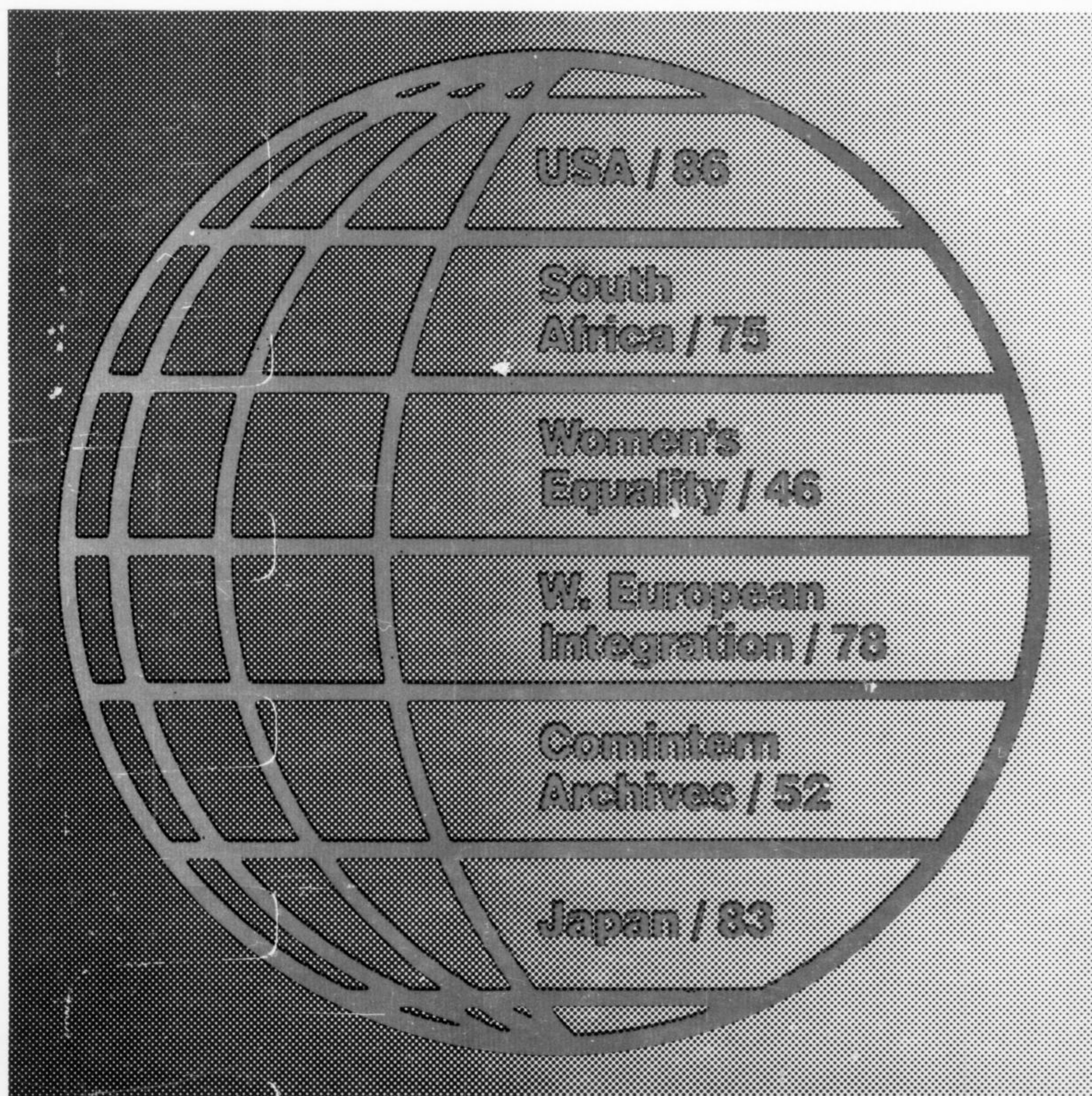
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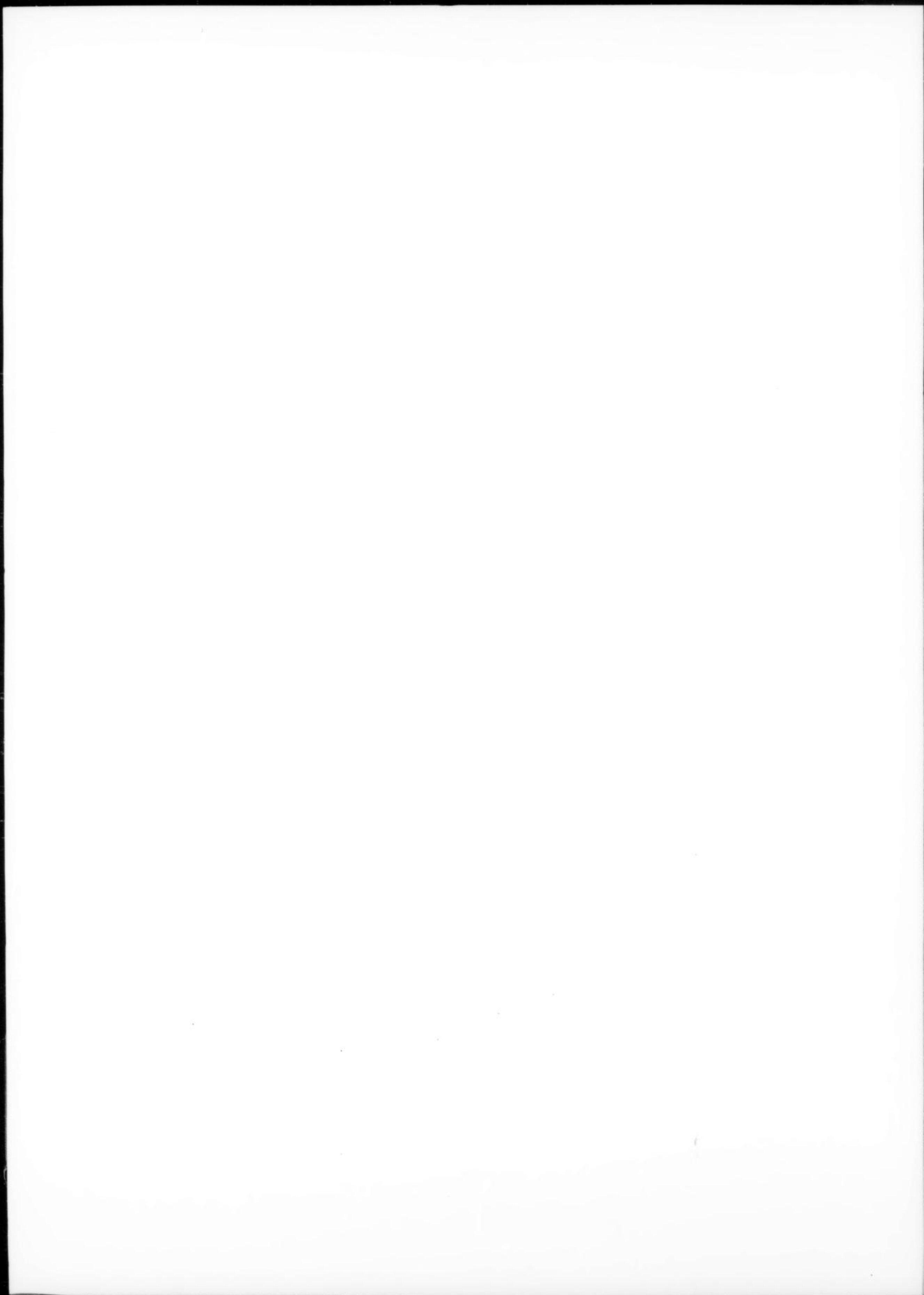
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THE SOCIALIST WAY

Andrei LUKANOV (Bulgaria). A New Stage of CMEA Cooperation to Come

SOCIALIST IDEALS: A PERSONAL VIEW. *Nikolai TRAVKIN*. The Time History Has Allotted Us. *Sergei ZALYGIN*. Telling the Truth. *Mikhail VAGHIN*. The Working Man Coming Into His Own

YONG HYONG MUK (DPRK). Political Methods for Economic Management

RONG JINGBEN (PRC). Reform and Society

FOR UNIVERSAL SECURITY

Oswald SÖDERQVIST (Sweden). Yesterday's Utopias Become Reality

PROBLEMS IN EAST-WEST TRADE. Frank Discussion With an American Businessman

THE PARTY

K. P. SILVA (Sri Lanka). In the Spirit of Openness, Glasnost and Realism

Janet JAGAN (Guyana). In the Name of Revolutionary Change

HA QUANG DU (Vietnam). Shedding the Old Stereotypes

ARE FACTORIES ALONE OUR STRONGHOLDS? Review of an International Symposium in West Germany

INFORMATION. In Brief

FORUM

Damian PRETEL (Spain). Marx's Philosophy: From a Dogmatic Interpretation to Creative Development

FOLLOWING UP THE POINT: WOMEN'S ISSUE. *Gerry van HOUTEN* (Canada). On the Nature and Equality of Women. *Jose HOHNE-SPARBORTH* (Netherlands). Feminism Is Necessary!

HISTORY OF THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT: FACTS, PEOPLE, IDEAS

Fridrikh FIRSOV (USSR). What the Comintern's Archives Will Reveal

Giuseppe VACCA (Italy). Concern for the Future (Antonio Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*)

3 *Hector MUJICA*. Antonio Buero Vallejo Recalls... 62

COUNTRIES, EVENTS, ANALYSIS

8 *Volodya TEITELBOIM* (Chile). Communists, Culture and Revolution 64

11 *Krishna RAO Y. V.* (India). The Indian Agrarian Scenario 70

Chris HANI (South Africa). End Apartheid Violence as Soon as Possible 75

17 **WEST EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AND THE WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT.** *Bernard MARX* (France). What 1992 Has in Store for Europe 78

21 **LABOUR IN THE COMPUTER AGE.** An Economic Miracle for the Japanese? 83

George KRIKORIAN (USA). Does the US Worker Live Better? 86

26 **AGAINST REPRESSION AND PERSECUTION.** *Efraim NOTZRI* (Israel). Justice Without a Blindfold 88

THE BOOK SCENE

35 *Antonio DIAZ RUIZ*. Cuba: The Revolution Continues 89

32 **AN AUTHOR'S VIEW.** Politics Is Present in Everything 90

Mohammed Magdi CAMAL. Each Issue Has Its Own Theme 91

SURVEYS, LETTERS, DIARY

MEMORABLE DATES IN 1989 93

46 *Siamend KHALIL, Salah AMIN*. The Situation in Kurdistan 94

FROM OUR MAILBAG 95

Jorge BERGSTEIN. Readers as Coauthors 96

52 **WMR TIES** 96

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THE SOCIALIST WAY

A NEW STAGE OF CMEA COOPERATION TO COME

Andrei LUKANOV

*alternate member, Political Bureau, Central Committee,
Bulgarian Communist Party;
chairman, CMEA Executive Committee*

To mark the 40th anniversary of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, we present a discussion of its current concerns and plans.

THE ANNIVERSARY is a good occasion for an objective analysis of the CMEA's accomplishments and failures. As recently as 10 or even 5 years ago, economic cooperation within the CMEA framework was usually described in glowing terms. Today, scholars and political figures in different countries of the community voice dissimilar opinions of the processes under way within it. How fully has economic integration, launched four decades ago, met the expectations of the founding nations?

I think a balanced and sober appraisal of all our objective achievements is in order. At the same time, we cannot remain silent about things we no longer regard as adequate. As far as an overall assessment is concerned, I believe we have reason to be satisfied: nowadays, the CMEA is an integral part of all socioeconomic affairs in our member countries, particularly European.

During the initial period, the CMEA no doubt helped assert the spirit of socialist solidarity and interna-

tionalism, of mutual assistance against the grim background of the Cold War and imperialist economic pressure. This spirit contributed tangibly to the consolidation of our community. Furthermore, the pooling of our efforts enabled the socialist countries to make faster progress in overcoming underdevelopment and the dislocation caused by World War II, promoting coproduction and, on that basis, increasing the volume of trade within the CMEA. Incidentally, it now accounts for two-thirds of our nations' foreign trade turnover. We have implemented projects that are indeed large-scale—for example, in fuels and raw materials. One might recall at this point that from 1950 to 1987, the national income of the CMEA countries increased almost 900%¹ and industrial output, 1,500%.

The list of our achievements could, of course, go on. Recently, however, serious questions have arisen in the CMEA activities. How ready is it to become a unifying center of the socialist countries as they improve their social system and comprehensively restructure their economies on a fundamentally new basis? Like all our countries, the CMEA is to attain a development stage adequate to the level and prospects of the revolution in science and technology and to the global changes in the economic, production and trade structures.

Factors Hampering Integration

Evidently, the CMEA itself is to undergo a restructuring. What do you think stands in the way?

The potential of the model of cooperation we have used for several five-year periods has been exhausted. Specifically, this model underestimates commodity-money relations, treats economic, scientific and technological ties in an administrative manner and confines itself mostly to government agencies, ministries and departments.

I blame these shortcomings above all for the drop in the expansion of international cooperation. They are also hampering our efforts to bring about a radical restructuring of the existing mechanism. It

¹ In developed capitalist countries, the national income grew 277% over this period.—Ed.

is particularly important to look for new forms of bringing into concert, balancing and pooling the interests of the CMEA countries with due regard for the differences in the concepts, ways and means of attaining common objectives.

It would be useful at this point to recall the collective concept of the international socialist division of labour for 1991 to 2005, approved at the 44th CMEA session in 1988. How does it differ from the instruments adopted earlier?

The foremost difference is that it is an integrated concept. It covers all branches of the economy and all types of economic activity, instead of being confined to important but separate aspects, as was often the case in the past.

The comprehensive programme of socialist economic integration approved in 1971 was not so specific. It was an interesting attempt at restructuring the mechanism of integration, and it contained a number of topical ideas. I regret that work on that programme was not completed, because at the time of its adoption it was a very progressive instrument. Still, it dealt primarily with the mechanics of integration, while the collective concept is an effort to create a new pattern of the international socialist division of labour, above all in specific terms. Naturally, today's approach also covers cooperation in planning, science, technology and social programmes. But the most valuable thing about it is that it is aimed at defining the order of specific priorities and, on this basis, enhancing the coordination of economic, structural and technological policies and improving the methods of joint action.

What serves to assure the implementation of this collective concept?

I think we have defined the order of priorities properly. We have drawn up a strategic instrument to guide us in concentrating our efforts and strength on the main avenues of socioeconomic development, in working in concert to renew our existing potential and to reinvigorate the relations established between our economic and research organisations. However, if there is no real and radical restructuring of the mechanics of cooperation, one can hardly expect to achieve the desired result. Let me discuss the specific aspects of this issue.

Bulgaria and some other countries believe that the formation of an integrated market of the socialist countries is, today, the foremost objective. This notion covers a wide range of factors essential to the restructuring of the relations of production at the international level. These include the removal of obstacles to the free flow of goods, services, experts and citizens across national borders within the CMEA, as well as the creation of a new monetary and financial mechanism and the gradual transformation of national currencies into a convertible medium of

exchange (at first partially and then fully convertible) and of the transferrable rouble into a truly collective currency. There is also the task of drastically upgrading the role of credit in our relations—not only with regard to balanced payments but also in terms of investment, various projects and joint ventures.

A consistent effort to make economic ties more democratic is a major objective. We are to turn economic organisations into genuine subjects of integration, endowing them, in the first place, with rights and duties in the development of business relations and in decision-making along the lines of mutual interest and benefit.

The record of integration-oriented groups in the West indicates that we are in for a lengthy process of mutual adaptation, opening of borders and creation of a standard base and infrastructure necessary for cooperation. The formation of an integrated market is likely to take at least 10 to 15 years. Concrete circumstances will influence the rate of this process and prompt us to take specific steps, but this does not at all mean that we should simply sit back and watch such a market take shape. On the contrary, this prolonged duration makes it imperative for us to act immediately.

I am convinced that we should not wait for everyone to grasp the practical necessity of this or that step. This kind of attitude would impede integration in addition to the objective difficulties we will have to surmount. That is why agreement has already been reached at the CMEA level on interested countries beginning to forge elements of an integrated market in relations between them as they get ready for it.

On the Way to an Integrated Market

How will Bulgaria participate in this effort?

We have already achieved certain results in Bulgarian-Soviet relations over the past 2 to 3 years. For example, we have signed an agreement on the mutual convertibility of the national currencies and of the transferrable rouble in a range of transactions. A bilateral financial company—a kind of investment bank—is being set up. A Bulgarian-Soviet chamber of commerce has been established as a forum of the socialist business community. It operates in collaboration with the governments, but offers its services above all to its own members and all those interested. Opportunities are growing for contacts between economic agencies and territorial units, and ties are developing rapidly between amalgamations, factories, constituent republics and regions. The difference of these ties from previously existing contacts is that they are dictated by actual economic interests. It is not simply exchange of experience and not so much reciprocal visits as direct economic exchange that is coming to the forefront.

Apparently, this is the path to be followed in re-

lations with other countries within the CMEA framework. Specifically, we are about to launch similar Bulgarian-Polish initiatives, and we have signed a number of agreements with Hungary and Czechoslovakia. In other words, the first outlines of an integrated market are appearing, so far on a bilateral basis. But unless monetary, financial, economic and legal issues are tackled boldly and unless economic agencies increase their contribution to the effort, we will make little headway.

Obviously, nor can we do without the creation of a full-fledged market within each country: distribution of material resources is largely centralised in most CMEA nations, and the producers still have a monopolist status.

Yes, the question of national markets is very important. We should promote commodity-money relations and wholesale trade, contract the sphere of administrative intervention in economic ties between factories, and consolidate the truly socialist market within each economy.

The maturity of a national market is nowadays judged by the given country's readiness for active involvement in the creation of a CMEA market. But this cause-and-effect relationship works both ways: participation in the new kind of trade is sure to stimulate the development of national markets, facilitate the attainment of economic balance and accelerate economic growth—that is, help enhance the operation of commodity-money relations both nationally and internationally.

Experts believe that the level of cooperation with regard to the CMEA Integrated Programme for Scientific and Technological Progress up to the year 2000 is not all that high so far. How can one impart dynamism to work in this field?

The backbone of the programme which was adopted a mere 3 years ago is made up of long-term projects, and one can hardly expect them to yield returns promptly. It is clearly a mature instrument. An analysis of the plans adopted by other countries and groups of countries—for example, of the EEC's EUREKA programme—confirms the validity of our assessment of the main priorities advanced by today's revolution in science and technology.

However, critical voices have been raised recently, complaining about an excessively formalistic attitude and delays in finalising individual stages of cooperation on each of the projects mentioned in the programme. We are yet to ensure the necessary concentration of effort on those aspects of scientific and technological progress which will shape the technological future of the socialist countries against the background of global developments.

The biggest flaw lies, in my view, in our failure to activate the economic interest of relevant agencies as the main motive force of cooperation within the framework of the Integrated Programme. We should

really introduce the "science-production-marketing" cycle. It is therefore important for the participants in the projects to get a clear picture of their role in the specialisation and cooperative relations that can be established with other partners, of the sources from which most resources and equipment are to come and of the share of the profits due them if their plans materialise.

The role of the governments is, of course, important too, but not only in terms of control, coordination and sometimes administrative influence. First and foremost, there is the question of financial and material support because some of the projects are so ambitious that economic agencies simply cannot undertake them on their own. The best way is to set up joint funds.

As for R&D, I would note the development of fourth-generation supercomputers and of new technologies and materials. Good results have been achieved in nuclear power production and in the manufacture of equipment for nuclear power plants. One can also mention our advances in automation, robotisation and the production of flexible manufacturing systems and modules and of transfer lines. Positive changes have occurred in biotechnology and genetic engineering.

The Priority of Social Development

How do we promote the social thrust of our efforts and strengthen cooperation aimed at meeting the requirements of the public more fully?

The human factor is of paramount importance at the present stage. The priority we attach to it is due to the radical changes occurring in socioeconomic policy. The recently held congresses of the socialist countries' fraternal parties and the plenary meetings of their central committees stress the need for social policies to ensure a much better quality of life. The objective is to meet people's material requirements and give them access to the achievements of the world's culture and an opportunity to engage in creative work and comprehensively develop their intellectual and physical potential.

In this respect the CMEA is evidently "in arrears". Our cooperation has been mostly in economic production, the needs of the public being often neglected. Suffice it to say that the share of consumer goods in the volume of our trade is very modest and much smaller than within the economic groups of capitalist countries.

Nor can we be satisfied with the development of tourism and with the arrangements for our citizens' movement across the national borders within the CMEA. There is still a multitude of currency, balance-related and administrative restrictions in this sphere. It is time we firmly rejected this anachronism.

At the 1988 session of the CMEA, Bulgaria submitted a proposal of enhancing the social thrust of our cooperation. That is not only an economic ques-

tion. It is, largely, a political and ideological issue too. In the final analysis, it is precisely through vigorous cooperation in all types of economic activity related to the social sphere that we can assert the sense of belonging to our community and the awareness that man's prosperity under socialism is closely linked with the intensity of international cooperation and with the involvement of each country in integration processes. Greater attention to man will also reinforce the sociopolitical prestige of the CMEA and the confidence of our people that by taking part in the integration drive they are working to benefit themselves, their nations, their families and their collectives.

Do you regard as satisfactory the present rate at which multilateral specialisation and coproduction is developing?

One can say that this rate should be increased, but I think the crux of the matter lies elsewhere. The important thing is to orient specialisation and coproduction on the priority issues of socioeconomic development and, consequently, to improve the structure of each of the CMEA economies. We should open the way to the kind of specialisation that would not only stem from a given country's historical traditions and be geared to its environment and climate but also provide each nation with access to high technology via the system of multilateral cooperation. That is the only way of tackling mutually beneficial tasks within the framework of specialisation and coproduction and helping gradually bring the development of different countries to a common level.

Direct Ties

The CMEA countries have begun to coordinate their national economic plans for 1991-1995. Have there been any changes in this sphere?

We continue to attach great importance to the coordination of plans. We have agreed to pursue it at three interconnected levels—between countries, between similar and related industries and between economic units. However, relapses into administrative methods and attempts to decide everything "from on high" are still frequent. We must learn to effect coordination in a new way, with due regard for the role played by the entities directly participating in integration. In principle, coordination should be based on preliminary agreements between economic organisations—agreements reflecting their common interests and mutual benefit. That is the only way of ensuring the best possible combination of the planned principles of cooperation with the demands and criteria of the socialist market.

We should also keep promoting direct ties, and here several difficulties are involved. The spontaneous manner in which such ties are established

clashes with the numerous instructions and standards that are in force, and sometimes with arbitrarily imposed demands and restrictions. But bureaucratic holdovers are one thing. There is also the absence of a smoothly functioning mechanism for cooperation in monetary and financial matters, in price formation and in the tackling of legal problems.

I think that at the present stage, this is inevitable. The new mechanism should be shaped and improved in the course of practical actions. For example, the complex issue of price formation cannot be resolved overnight. It will be difficult to cope with these problems until we attain greater uniformity in the structure and level of prices within the fraternal countries. So far, the only solution is to apply the CMEA principles of price formation and to adapt them to the specific circumstances arising in the course of our work on this or that joint project—until a better system is devised.

We are planning to bring the CMEA price levels and principles of price formation closer to world prices. But it is a long way to the implementation of these plans. Naturally, this does not mean that we should remain idle in the meantime. For example, in its contacts with Soviet partners, Bulgaria uses contractual prices, but on two important conditions—cost effectiveness and mutual benefit in the operation of joint organisations. If this is ensured, we believe it is, in principle, possible to form prices that could, temporarily and in some cases permanently, be higher or lower than the prices set according to the generally accepted CMEA rules. That, of course, is a specific case. But it confirms the need for an extensive practical quest, for experiments and for testing new and diverse approaches and solutions.

Joint ventures and international amalgamations are yet to produce the expected returns. How do you think their operation can be improved?

Drawing on the Bulgarian-Soviet experience, I would say that such ventures are already playing a noticeable role. Economic integration is emerging as a basis for the effort to implement the programme of scientific and technological progress. Joint ventures are proving their mettle as catalysts of trade.

I think the next two years will be a watershed in the development of the new form of cooperation. If we incorporate joint ventures into a wider system used to shape an integrated market, virtually boundless opportunities will open up before them.

However, one sometimes comes across an ambivalent attitude to a joint venture. On the one hand, it is treated as a juristic person of the country in question and, on the other, as an international juristic person which is to purchase raw materials and other resources at foreign trade prices. I hold that this is not always justified. The recently negotiated Bulgarian-Soviet recommendations on joint ventures provide for different options. Specifically,

there are provisions for the supply of resources at the prices of the partner nation, for the latter's participation in decision-making on these problems, for purchases through the national wholesale system (if it exists), etc. Our approach is flexible, and that, I think, is how we should act. I would repeat, however, that it is important to ensure mutual beneficial operation. Any attempt to dodge this issue results in difficulties.

Assistance as a Mutually Beneficial Undertaking

The 1988 session of the Council approved integrated programmes for the European member countries' multilateral cooperation with Cuba, Mongolia and Vietnam. What is the salient feature of this cooperation at the present stage?

I would begin by noting that we have critically analysed and assessed the prospects for enhancing these countries' participation in socialist integration. Their home priorities were brought into concert in terms of the more developed partners' interest in and readiness for the allocation of a certain amount of resources so that the overall objectives of cooperation could be achieved. This is the first time such a project has been undertaken within the CMEA. It is in fact aimed at increasing the rates of socio-economic growth and bringing the development of different fraternal countries up to a common level with the help of a concerted economic policy.

I would also emphasise the principle of preferences² which we have agreed to build into our programmes and which largely determine their implementation. Obviously, this does not run counter to the principle of mutual benefit. Rather, the two are complementary because only mutual benefit can ensure a large-scale contribution by the European socialist countries to the development of Cuba, Mongolia and Vietnam.

How effectively does the CMEA cooperate with other developing countries outside the community?

One must admit that our agreements with them are not effective enough. As an organisation, the CMEA is poorly geared to such cooperation: we lack both special mechanisms for organising it on a multilateral basis and collective sources of financing. Considerable assistance to these countries is being provided on a bilateral basis.

I see the main drawback of promoting cooperation with Third World nations within the CMEA framework in the fact that we tried to follow the administrative path in isolation from the actual interests of economic organisations and firms. This is where we should develop direct ties too. Our results will

remain modest if we fail to generate interest in such ties and, on that basis, arrive at collective decisions, including decisions to establish consortiums and joint ventures. Conversely, direct ties create quite favourable prospects for multilateral cooperation.

The socialist community can offer really attractive options that can go a long way toward meeting the developing countries' requirements: we provide integrated assistance which includes financial aid, deliveries of equipment, technical assistance and the training of personnel. Besides, we take care of the marketing, including opportunities for selling the products to pay off credits or to buy out the shares of our economic agencies in the joint ventures that have been established. This enables the developing countries to ensure real growth of their productive forces, improve their export resources and improve supply on their domestic markets. I hold that this approach, which contains tangible elements of a new economic order, deserves attention.

In the Context of the All-European Process

With regard to the establishment of official relations between the CMEA and the EEC, what prospects for cooperation do you see in the first place?

The very fact that integration is gaining ground in Europe—I am referring to the creation of a single market in Western Europe and of the socialist countries' integrated market—flows from the objective requirements of social progress. There you have the effects produced by the operation of the objective laws governing the development of productive forces and relations of production in today's world. But the important thing is to prevent these processes from erecting higher discriminatory barriers or hampering the construction of a common European home. That is why it is advisable for the CMEA and the EEC to proceed in their decision-making from an "open" philosophy stimulating integration within each community, but not at the expense of relations with other countries.

I would say we should proceed from the prospects of a gradual merger of different multinational markets into a truly all-European market. We should pay attention to the global thrust of the current trends in the development of the world economy and the opportunities for cooperation with non-European countries and groups of countries.

To sum up, integration in Europe should be shaped with due regard not only for the all-European scope of cooperation but also for worldwide economic ties. That, I think, is the only way for Europe to preserve and add to its chances of making a large-scale contribution to the progress of civilisation as a whole, a contribution commensurate with its historical traditions and its vast material, intellectual and cultural potential.

² This refers to the preferential terms of trade extended to Cuba, Mongolia and Vietnam by the other CMEA countries.—Ed.

SOCIALIST IDEALS: A PERSONAL VIEW

WMR QUESTIONNAIRE

Internationally, socialism has entered a period of improvement and renewal, tackling problems that never arose before. A restructuring drive is on in several socialist countries. With growing confidence, people are translating the socialist ideal—the free development of each is essential to the free development of all—into practical actions. In order to gain an insight into the way this process is being reflected in the consciousness of socialist countries' citizens, WMR is distributing an international questionnaire. In this issue, we present the replies we have received—from the Soviet Union—to the following questions:

What do you regard as the supreme value in the life of your nation and what do you object to?

What topical issues do you think should be tackled in your country in the near future?

What does the socialist status of your country mean to you personally? Do you have an opportunity for direct involvement in the assertion of common objectives and interests? What are your proposals and forecasts with regard to closer cooperation among the socialist countries?

THE TIME HISTORY HAS ALLOTTED US

Nikolai TRAVKIN

deputy manager of a construction trust

COMPREHENSIVE personal freedom—from the right to voice one's views to the right to take part in decision-making and to monitor implementation—is, to me, the supreme value genuine socialism is to produce. Personal freedom is a basic socialist value. But one cannot discuss freedom, including personal freedom, in isolation from the issue of ownership. Therefore, ownership of all means of production by the working people is another paramount value of socialism.

The fact that we distorted this value when we deviated from Leninist principles is another matter. Essentially though, the socialist system means that everything should be handed over to the people so that they can themselves distribute the benefits they produce.

I object to the distortions of the socialist principles, the distortions we have allowed. We have socialised property so much that it has begun to be treated as ownerless. But in fact, nothing can be ownerless. If something is not claimed by its rightful owner, it is appropriated by someone else. Who, then, appropriated our "ownerless" property? It was managed by the centralised system of command-style administration over which society exercised absolutely no control.

When people debate whether this or that person is a bureaucrat or not, or whether this or that sys-

tem is bureaucratic or not, I think the answer is easy. All it takes is to review the hierarchy in question and spot the level at which responsibility is "reversed". Let me illustrate this by citing an example from the construction industry. At the work-team level, everything is clear. The team leader depends on the team. The team can vote him out of office at any time. Keep tracing the chain, and you come to the state enterprise. In the construction industry, it is the trust, a powerful production unit. But the manager of a trust is elected by the conference which can remove him from office if, say, he proves incompetent or starts to put on airs. Salarywise, he is also dependent on those working under him: the more money they make, the higher his pay.

Take the next link. In the construction industry it is, as a rule, the central board, now called the amalgamation. Then comes the ministry. My point is that from the central board level on, responsibility is "reversed". Who does the chief of an amalgamation depend on? On his higher-ups. He is appointed or replaced by his superiors, and he reports to them too. His salary is not earned, it is "disbursed"—by analogy with the "emolument" officials were paid in prerevolutionary Russia. At this level, the executive does not depend on those working under him. This means that the structure in question is bureaucratic.

We have been combating bureaucrats and red tape since Lenin's time. Lenin said that this was Public Enemy Number One. But their numbers are not decreasing, and offices are proliferating. We calmly accept the fact that under complete *khozraschet* some enterprises may soon go bankrupt: we have no unemployment, the workers will find new jobs.

But the moment the bureaucratic machine was affected and personnel cuts began, a hue and cry was raised about humaneness and compassion.

Why did bureaucrats remain untouchable for so long? Because the party bodies did not uproot bureaucrats or red tape. Because they developed a symbiosis by working hand-in-hand every day. That is a terrible price the party paid for its practice of managing the economy by fiat.

The situation can be changed. Change is possible due to the feasibility of the decisions taken at the April 1985 Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee and at the 27th Party Congress. The first thing to do is to effect a radical economic reform after which no one will issue orders to economic producers and everything will rest on an economic basis.

The other aspect relates to ideological and political restructuring. Incidentally, this is a field where tangible progress has been made. I would even say that intellectual and cultural developments have advanced drastically and left the economic reform behind. That, by the way, has produced some adverse effects in the sense that defeatist attitudes now crop up, some people saying that "all this is nothing but empty talk". We cannot allow such a gap to open: *khovraschet* and economic production must underpin the ideological process. At the 19th Party Conference it was confirmed that a restructuring of the political system was particularly important during the present phase of perestroika. The economy will remain stifled until we destroy the overcentralised system of command-style administration.

As to what we expect from socialism, that is something one can discuss at length but not definitively. You cannot draw a complete picture of our future society, although its general outlines are visible. Naturally, it would be pointless to debate the exact day society becomes purified and begins to live better. We know where the economic reform will take us. Everything is to be based on economic relations. The political aspect is also clear. It will be a dynamic, democratic and self-governing society—not a mass but a community of free individuals. Besides, as we have proclaimed, we need a restructuring of the Communist Party fabric.

The CPSU conference was a turning point, a major factor of change.

I am glad that the working class is entering politics. That is something one can notice easily, particularly on the shop floor. It's just that I have little faith in rallies or demonstrations. There's a lot of dross in them. But when a worker begins to assert himself at his factory and to put forward demands instead of mere requests, then it's a different matter. There may be a trace of bitterness in such demands: after all, we are fed up with incompetence and red tape.

I think that after the conference, the next two years will be crucial. Science tells us that perestroika will take almost a decade, but history will allot

us a shorter period. Changes will be made within a couple of years. I am sure that within a year, we will achieve results if the party succeeds in abandoning its current economic management functions and in dealing in earnest with political leadership, ideology and political education.

Nor can we drag our feet in the economic reform. We already lost 1988: the Law on Enterprises was not enforced, and we were passive onlookers. I believe that our plans should concern priority issues only. First and foremost, we've got to solve the food problem. All relevant targets must be met. Housing is another priority issue. Then there is engineering where we need overall guidelines, the way it is stipulated in the Law on Enterprises—something to orient our industry on, but by no means rigidly set targets. Otherwise we will lose 1989 too. And then morale will suffer more than anything else: worker collectives will no longer think that the Law on Enterprises can really work.

As to our ties with our friends, I have had only few occasions to see for myself how people live in other socialist countries—once I was included in a CPSU delegation that visited Czechoslovakia, and once the Soviet trade unions sent me as a delegate on a trip to the GDR and Bulgaria. Our conclusion was that in many spheres, our friends were ahead of us. There's no question that this is so as far as the development of rural areas is concerned: they are ahead in everything, from farming to rural living standards, particularly in Czechoslovakia and the GDR. I would say that we are, perhaps, also behind in the construction industry. On the other hand, we are ahead in fundamental research, especially in space- and military-related fields. All the more reason, then, that we stay together and help one another. And learn from one another too.

TELLING THE TRUTH

Sergei ZALYGIN

editor-in-chief, Novy Mir magazine

I would like to begin by noting the capacity of the socialist system for regeneration. It has gone through numerous difficulties and crises. But, emerging from the Civil War, from the years of economic dislocation, from the Stalin years and from other trials, Soviet society each time proved its ability to restore its values and ideals.

With regard to socialist ideals, I would say that a better life and freedom is, in fact, what everyone wants. I think there is a common human ideal which can be sought along different paths, above all along socialist ones. There is, for instance, the comparatively old slogan of liberty, equality and brotherhood, an objective yet to be achieved.

How can socialism have any other ideals? Concern for man is its essence. Meanwhile, nations choose different ways to reach their goals. I think that

capitalism has already proved that it can accomplish a great deal. However, this supreme ideal is, to capitalism, unattainable in principle, whereas our potential is still great, and we simply must try.

On the question about the topical issues the Soviet Union should tackle without delay, I would say that, pragmatically, the food problem is our foremost priority. Besides, if we look at the situation in global terms, we must really get down to environmental protection because we have not even realised the gravity of the crisis mankind has encountered. I have been following these matters quite closely, and I can feel the worldwide urgency of the problem. Even a local environmental disaster—which, unfortunately, cannot be ruled out—will not be confined to one or several countries: the situation is more or less the same everywhere. Acid rain does not recognise national borders. All this is very serious.

I would also like to emphasise the vital importance of intellectual freedom for every human being. Even if we have not solved this problem, we are about to. This is borne out by the 19th All-Union Conference of the CPSU and, generally, by the way we now live. Still, the granting of intellectual freedom is not enough. Freedom must be effective. I want not only to feel that I am free but also to understand that my actions bring results. After all, a hermit enjoys intellectual freedom, but he is isolated from the outside world. The ability to think freely and to speak one's mind is not everything. A person should apply his or her intellectual freedom to some task he or she regards as important. As a rule, this is a socially significant and necessary task.

In the course of perestroika, many Soviet writers have switched to civic activities, and that is quite natural. This has often been the case in Russia. Chernyshevsky, Korolenko, Tolstoy and Chekhov were all involved in major civic activities. I cannot really judge how much we Soviet writers have actually accomplished, but my feeling is that without our writers' contribution, the environmental situation would have been worse, and that is not an insignificant result.

I think that all of us in the socialist world are constantly working to translate our common international goals and interests into reality. That is precisely what I personally am doing as I edit *Novy Mir*, a literary, artistic and sociopolitical monthly, or, say, advocate solutions to environmental problems as chairman of the Ecology and Peace section of the Soviet Peace Committee.

In this capacity, I do maintain ties with my friends in other socialist countries, particularly in Hungary. It so happens that I have written extensively about Hungarian literature and often visited Hungary, even taking part in the solution of some environmental problems there. In fact, my contacts with other socialist countries are not sporadic. They are now part of my life.

Naturally, my forecasts about the future of our

friendship are optimistic. However, one must not forget that all the relations existing within the socialist community took shape when the social situation there was quite different. Obviously, glasnost and democratisation are to change our relations—hopefully, for the better.

Besides, we are yet to remove the obstacles that still hamper the development of these relations within the socialist world. One of such factors which is perhaps objective and clearly important is that all of us are terribly pressed for time. We are so absorbed in perestroika, in our own affairs that one often does not have the time to take a look at how one's neighbours are faring. That is true of many of our friends too. On the whole though, our relations have become more open, more natural and more honest. We are telling each other the truth, and I don't think the interpretation of national interests could be described as overly narrow.

THE WORKING MAN COMING INTO HIS OWN

Mikhail VAGHIN

*chairman, Lenin Collective Farm, Kovernino District,
Gorky Region*

In my view, freedom of labour and of creative work, and a rich diversity of ways for the assertion of the individual's potential are the supreme values in our socialist country. The humanism of the socialist system brings out the best in human nature and enables people to improve themselves and the society they live in. It is equally important for everyone to work creatively. Conscious, purposeful action makes people wiser and kinder. There is the fine human urge to work for the good of others. Selflessness overcomes envy and egoism and rallies us closer together. There is no limit to this progress. It is the only way man can improve himself—when he lives to make others happy, he can respect himself and feel gratified that he has not lived in vain, that he has left a mark in the endless sequence of generations.

I personally am not content with the fact that for various reasons (negative holdovers in human thinking, the influence of the capitalist world and other things), this process is slow. Apparently, many obstacles still stand in the way of mastering and effectively applying humanity's finest achievements in science, technology, culture and ethics. We are to add to the store of our material values, to promote and enhance our moral qualities and create a free and fully democratic way of life.

In practical terms, I would suggest that, having raised the self-awareness of all our citizens to a higher level, we assess all developments objectively and encourage a responsible attitude to moral and material values. A careless attitude to them is im-

moral and socially harmful. Therefore, we need a reappraisal of our values to finally enable the working man to come into his own. Only then will we eliminate incompetence and unjustified losses. Aside from that, we must improve our discipline and, generally, put our house in order. The perestroika drive launched by the CPSU and Mikhail Gorbachov, its General Secretary, is our only chance to solve these and other problems. "More socialism" is our slogan which sums up the principles of the nation's future development.

I see the food problem as a particularly urgent issue. We must solve it as quickly as possible and, having solved it, we will make perestroika irreversible in other spheres too. For this solution, a close alliance of the working class and the peasants is imperative. Nothing will come of our efforts until we view the cities and the countryside as a single whole in all aspects.

We should enable people to feel that they are masters of their land, so that the working man—say, the one who has taken out a lease—could grow roots, and so that his children and grandchildren could follow in his footsteps.

I am also worried about the progress of the school reform. The CPSU Central Committee has discussed it at two plenary meetings, but the desired result is yet to be achieved. It is not for me to say how long the reform will take, but it seems to me that we must speed things up.

The fact that our country is part of the socialist world is a great boon to the Soviet people and to me personally. The desire to participate vigorously and directly in the pursuit of the socialist nations' common objectives and interests is great. Unfortunately, the opportunities are limited in my case. I hold that it is my duty as a Communist to contribute to the common effort, and I am thinking hard about how I can do it. One thing is clear: the development of our collective farm will make our country—and socialism—stronger, and this will help preserve world peace.

The socialist countries' cooperation and friendship will develop above all on a practical basis, so that we could study and apply our best achievements effectively. For example, it would be useful to set up joint ventures and exchange experience with regard to the cooperative movement. We also need joint efforts in the intellectual field.

I would also welcome closer direct contacts—between districts, regions, collective farms and cooperatives in different countries. We could arrange reciprocal visits, learn from each other and help each other in everything.

To me, strengthening the socialist camp calls for the choice of rational and sure ways and for enhancing the dignity and prestige of each fraternal country. Again we must prove to the world that the socialist system has many advantages over others because the working man, his interests and his well-being are our foremost concern.

POLITICAL METHODS FOR ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT

YONG HYONG MUK

CC Political Bureau member, CC Secretary,
Workers' Party of Korea (WPK)

THE WPK is devoting much of its attention to the efficient administration of the national economy. Kim Yong Il, member of the CC Political Bureau Presidium and CC secretary, said in this context: "The working-class party is an organisation exercising political direction. The party's leadership of the revolution and construction should, therefore, be political leadership resting on party policy."¹

This fully applies to the party's activity in the economic sphere, where it conducts its line, with the relevant methods, as society's highest political institution. In other words, it seeks to attain its objectives not by administrative command, but exclusively by political work with the people, work which we believe to be the only reliable pledge of successful economic development. This is because it is human beings who operate machines, develop and improve hardware, and formulate and fulfil the plans for the country's industrialisation. Our objective is that working people manage this as masters of production, consciously, and with enthusiasm, since growth rates and efficiency in production are mainly determined by the way they do their duty.

The party does not, of course, engage in this work merely for the sake of high indicators. *Its supreme purpose is the well-being and happiness of the Korean people*, whose vital interests are met by the economy's rapid, balanced and proportional development. But success here depends on the direct and active participation of the entire population. The Communists believe that their task is to explain this connection and to develop a conscious awareness of it among the people. Instructions and orders alone will not do. Persuasion, education, and examples set by party members, are required to stimulate working people's creative economic initiative and channel it along the right lines.

In the early 1960s, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea saw a new stage of revolution and con-

¹ Kim Yong Il, *Raising Higher the Banner of Marxism-Leninism and the Ideas of Juche*, Pyongyang, 1986, p. 24 (in Russian).

struction, and its characteristic feature was the *consolidation of the socialist system*. In the new conditions, priority was given to improving social relations, including property relations, and building up the material and technical base of socialism through industrialisation and the all-round scientific and technical modernisation of production. For this drive to be a success, we had to have the right strategy for directing the economy. The party, led by Kim Il Sung, WPK CC General Secretary and President of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, scientifically analysed the characteristic features of the situation and created a system for managing the economy on the basis of the so-called *Tae'an method of work*, a method which was proposed and tried out by the work collective of the Electrical Engineering Works in the town of Tae'an. In essence it means that it is the party committee which directs all the managerial and production activity at the enterprise. The record shows that this method is completely in accord with the realities and the specific features of socialist construction in our country, and best meets the challenge facing society at this stage.

It has now become the basic method for industrial enterprise operations. Their party committees act as *vehicles for the party's economic policy* and are fully responsible for its implementation. We have given up the principle of one-man management in order to make the activity of the party committees as effective as possible. The result is that the party committees have assumed the functions of the highest collective managerial bodies in production, and this has helped to point the national economy in the right direction as it expands and as its intersectoral ties grow more complex, and to blend political leadership with managerial and organisational work.

"The socialist economy," Kim Il Sung points out, "is a highly socialised large-scale economy, with the popular masses acting as its masters. That is why we can manage the socialist economy scientifically and rationally in accordance with the people's interests only when the principle of collective management is applied in practice, and when the broad masses are actively involved in economic administration."²

In the light of this basic principle, party committees at enterprises no longer rely on the talents and capabilities of individuals—that would mean a greater role for the subjective factor—but on the will and thinking of those who are directly involved in the production process. There are no obstacles to doing so, because these committees not only consist of party functionaries and managerial personnel, but also include engineers and technicians from the various managerial and ancillary services, middle-echelon specialists, and workers, that is, those who work in the key sectors and therefore know what

they are about and so can convey the will and views of the masses correctly and without distortions.

Members of the party committee meet to discuss all current problems. They put forward numerous creative proposals aimed at improving the work of the collective. Here the views of all the participants in the meeting are taken into account, with special attention paid to the views of those who have the best knowledge of the situation at the grassroots. As a result, the committee takes decisions which meet the requirements of the party's economic policy, while at the same time corresponding to the state of production. On the strength of these decisions, the party committee gives target instructions and allocates permanent duties among members of the collective management body. The director is assigned the management of the economic activity of the works, the chief engineer, that of the actual process of production and various technical problems, while the political work is led by the secretary of the party committee.

Everyone who has received an assignment is responsible to the party committee as a whole and regularly reports on his activity. The party committee sees to it that the managerial personnel and the mass of producers act in concert, in the spirit of the mutually approved line. Workers are required to abide by work discipline, to take good care of the means of production, to be active in identifying and using anything that can help boost labour productivity, and to take part in the managerial routine. As far as heads of services and sections are concerned, they should see to it that the plan targets be implemented, draw up competent production schedules, and rationalise technological processes.

The party committee does not merely demand that those responsible fulfil their duties, but also helps to identify mistakes and correct them in due time, and offers constructive advice.

The secretary of the party committee has an important role in organising its work, but he cannot represent the collective management organ on his own, and he is not entitled to take any decisions of his own accord. The party secretary is akin to the chairman of a meeting. Like the director, the chief engineer and other members of the party committee, he is a person working to fulfil collective decisions, and bears equal responsibility with the rest for the state of affairs at the enterprise. This is a correct reflection of the party's principle of collective management of the economy, the requirements of inner-party democracy, and the party's urge to act in accordance with the will of the masses.

For all that, the Tae'an system does not deny the right of managerial and technical personnel to act as heads of their departments. On the contrary, its advantages are fully brought out only when there is a correct blend of the *principle of collective management and the principle of one-man management*. This corresponds to the economic laws of

² Kim Il Sung, *Works*, Vol. 32, Pyongyang, 1988, p. 615 (in Russian).

socialism. As I have already said, it is the party committee that bears responsibility for production as a whole, but it is the heads of the various services and departments that are in charge of their units. The director sees to the coherent interaction of the entire system. Unless they have definite powers, none of them will be able to cope with their tasks or to induce the personnel to work hard. It is impossible to formulate plans or maintain their disciplined fulfilment without the help and direction of those who have specialist knowledge and the requisite experience. Those who run production know how to prevent the waste of labour-power and raw materials, and how to make efficient use of them.

The party is well aware of this fact and works through the collective management system, which is a blend of democracy and centralism, to enhance the role of managerial and other personnel and to make the best use of their knowledge and experience. The WPK CC says that these people should be rewarded for their good work, and that favourable conditions should be created for their activity.

We believe that the collective economic management system has yet another merit: it successfully helps to apply *moral, political and material incentives* for boosting industrial output and improving product quality. Our socialist society is in the transition period on the way to communism, and there are still strong manifestations within it of the mentality we have inherited from the past. But there are also evident signs of the features of the communist formation. This two-fold character of the economic and social system which has taken shape in our country implies that both groups of incentives need to be used for its further development and improvement.

WPK is aware that the moral and political requirements that the people have been putting forward for some time will soon be paramount. But we must seek to meet them now, which would enable us to work with consistency and purpose in order to instil in the employees a sense of civic consciousness and responsibility and the desire to do their utmost for the common good.

Material incentives for good workmanship, a feature of the transition period, can be used for the attainment of noble aims, and here especial significance attaches to the principle of distribution according to the work done, which allows the working person to see clearly the connection between quality, labour productivity and the extent to which one's wants in clothing, housing and foodstuffs are satisfied. Whenever the working people are aware of this connection and act in their own interests, they display enthusiasm and creative initiative in fulfilling production plans and strive for efficient economic management.

Socialist construction can be advanced successfully through the skilful application of both types of incentives, but we must take into account that one set

of incentives is more in accord with a given stage of social development than another. In the present conditions, says Kim Il Sung, since political life for the social man dominates physiological life, it is necessary to give priority to political and moral incentives in the management of the socialist economy.³ The system of collective management in industry allows us to do this, and it also creates the prerequisites for the effective application of material incentives.

In contrast to capitalism, socialism gives the popular masses a real right to take part in economic management, and here every working person is directly responsible for his activity to society. This helps to concentrate efforts for the single-minded attainment of our objectives. One could say that collective management is no less than the activity of the mass of producers in their own interests and in the interests of society as a whole. Through this activity they implement a policy based on the ideas of *Juche*: "Man is the master of all, and everything depends on man." That is what the Workers' Party of Korea is always guided by in its work, and the problems arising as the society advances are solved by it in the only correct way, that is by enhancing the role of the popular masses in socialist construction, and by relying on their help.

The basic features of the party's economic policy are: to combine correctly political leadership with economic administration and management; centralised state administration and one-man management, with collective management; and political and moral incentives, with material incentives. There is also the revolutionary Tae'an system which enables the party committees at industrial enterprises to work successfully on a scientific basis.

Collective economic management is rooted in the *very nature of the socialist system*, thereby creating the conditions for the efficient use of the intellectual and physical potential, creative capabilities and talents of the working people. The Tae'an system rules out subjectivism and leaves no loopholes for arbitrariness and voluntarism. One could safely say that the WPK has developed and applied in practice a form of economic administration and management which successfully helps to solve the problem of the party's role and place in the administration of the national economy, and to continue building socialism consistently and unwaveringly.

The WPK will go on with its consistent guidance of industry, operating through the system of collective management and thereby helping to bring out and enhance the advantages and vitality of socialism. The party is making vigorous efforts to build socialism and communism in the DPRK.

³ See Kim Il Sung, "Let Us Complete the Building of Socialism and Communism Holding High the Revolutionary Banner of *Juche*." Report at the Ceremonial Meeting to Mark the 40th Anniversary of the Formation of the People's Democratic Republic of Korea on September 8, 1988.—Ed.

REFORM AND SOCIETY*

Rong JINGBEN

Editor-in-Chief,

Jingji shehui tizhi bijiao¹ (PRC)

THE REFORMS in China have been going on for ten years. They have given a great boost to the national economy, while helping the socioeconomic development of society and raising people's living standards. No less importantly, they have enabled us to renew our concept of socialism, thus opening a new period of historical development.

Engels used to say that a definitive model of socialism did not exist. After the victory of the revolution in 1949, China adopted an administrative-command system similar to that in the Soviet Union, and while, in the past, we alternated between greater centralisation on the one hand, and greater activity in the localities on the other, we did not, on the whole, go beyond that model. For a fairly long time, a leftist line was pursued, and that in the continued presence of feudal traditions. This led to the tragedy of the "cultural revolution", which brought China to a state of isolation and stagnation.

A New Model

Following the 3rd Plenary Meeting of the 11th CPC Central Committee in 1978, we summed up our own experience, learnt the lessons, and analysed the record of reform in other socialist countries, and the state of economic development in various other countries. *Gradually we reached the conclusion that socialism means a planned commodity economy. In other words, we saw the need for a radical transformation of the old system and the creation of a new model under which the state regulates the market, and the market orients the enterprises.* This entails a radical change in the traditional concepts of the model of socialism.

China has been vigorously working to build up the new model, thereby assimilating the legacy of Marxism and developing its theory. Marx said that the need to distribute social labour proportionately could not be abolished by any definite form of social production, while Engels held that the "...balancing of useful effects and expenditure of labour on making decisions concerning productions was all that

would be left, in a communist society, of the politico-economic concept of value".² This proposition was scientifically argued in Marx's *Capital*. Engels said that it was a work showing the outlines of future society, but Marx did not try to produce any abstract models of future socialism. In the closing years of his life, Engels concentrated on the editing and publication of Volume 3 of *Capital*, in which Marx analyses such categories as price, wages, profit, and interest, and shows the concrete forms in which the law of value operates. Early this century, the Italian economist Erico Barone remarked that, under a collectivist system without price, wages, profit, interest and rents, society's resources would not be distributed either rationally or efficiently, making the supreme goal of social well-being unattainable.

Almost 40 years of economic practice in China testify that, *without a market, there can be no real system of prices, wages, profit and interest, the law of value cannot function effectively, social labour cannot be distributed proportionately, and resources cannot be used rationally.* Instead of substituting itself for the market and administering enterprises directly, the socialist state must remove the imperfections of market competition produced by monopoly, together with the unfair social distribution arising from differing amounts of fixed capital. It is up to the state to establish order and the conditions favouring market competition, to build up an infrastructure, and to enhance social well-being, something that cannot be done through market competition.

The market orientation of enterprises leads to greater efficiency, the application of new technology and the increased satisfaction of consumer requirements. The state regulation of the market will help avoid the anarchy that is characteristic of the capitalist commodity economy, and the social injustice of man's exploitation by man, and will also raise living standards. The new model will help reveal the advantages of socialism.

Three Elements of Reform

In order to install this model, a three-fold set of reforms is required. Firstly, the administrative allocation of material resources, funds and workforce has to be replaced by a coherent and developed market system. Secondly, industrial and commercial enterprises, mainly those subordinate to state agencies in the sphere of production and distribution, and given orders from above, have to go over to self-financing and self-sufficiency, while keeping an eye on the market. Thirdly, the administrative agencies which used to hand down economic indicators to the enterprises must be transformed into bodies charged with overall regulation and control:

* Editorial Note. Title and subtitles are supplied by the WMR.

¹ *Comparative Analysis of Economic and Social Systems* is a journal published in Beijing since 1985 by the Institute for the Translation of the Works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin.—Ed.

² Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 295.

they will have to switch from economic functions to adjusting the market.

The reform of price-formation is the key element in developing the market system. It will make price a true reflection of prime costs, and of supply and demand on the market, and so set in motion such instruments of the law of value as wages, profit, interest and others that are to play a full role in regulating economic development. As we reform the price system and help the emergence of free-market prices for some types of products, it is important to limit the money supply, and to contain the issue of paper money in order to avert inflation. This is also promoted by the measures taken in the fields of finance, taxation and banking, and by the encouragement of personal saving, the setting of rational limits on consumption, and the accumulation of funds. This will bring out the regulatory role of the market and alter the irrational structure of production, thus promoting economic growth and giving people tangible material benefits. We think that the development of production is the most reliable way of effecting the reform in wages, labour and other spheres bearing on social well-being.

On Contract Principles

The restructuring of enterprises will evidently proceed towards a share-holding system. Contracts are being introduced in many parts of China, which involve a commitment to pay a certain amount in taxes and build up a development fund, while wages and bonuses are determined according to economic efficiency. A definite proportion of resources and development funds is left to the enterprises, and "floating" wages and various types of bonuses for industrial and office workers are being introduced. This practice has had a positive effect in boosting production, but the enterprise continues to be dependent on the administrative apparatus, and there is the flaw. It often happens that a contractor is liable for profits, but not for the losses. Control is lost over investments, leading to consumption outstripping output and causing manufacturers to revert to extensive methods. At the same time whenever prices change considerably, contract indicators cannot remain unchanged, this forcing enterprises to resume negotiations with higher administrative bodies, and putting them on an unequal footing.

The advantage of the joint-stock system is that it concentrates capital and makes it possible to put funds into the manufacture of products required by the market, to stand the risk arising from competition, and fully practise self-sufficiency. In the sphere of management, the share-holder (the owner), the board (the controller) and the director (the entrepreneur) exert a restraining influence on each other that removes such defects as the "feudal right of inheritance", corruption among employees, loss

of control over investments, and consumption that tends to outrun output.

Following socialisation of capital in developed Western countries, various joint-stock companies are set up (foundations, banks, financial institutions, etc.) in which the stock is held by a juristic person and not by private persons. These could also fit well into the public ownership scheme. One variant of the reform would be to auction small state enterprises to private persons, or to private or collective joint-stock companies. At large state enterprises the shareholder may be a juristic person, which ensures the predominance of socialist public ownership.

Demarcation of Functions

The state's managerial functions must be altered. A severe distinction should be drawn between departments with national assets at their disposal, and departments exercising overall control and regulation. In the past, state administrative institutions often fulfilled the managerial functions of enterprises, and took decisions on matters of supply, production and marketing, while the director and the managers of plants (including heads of party committees) frequently did the work of state administrative agencies, and saw to the everyday needs of the working people, such as births and funerals, and provision for the elderly and the sick. That naturally had a negative effect on enterprise efficiency, at the same time preventing any proper solution to social problems.

In the new conditions, enterprises, and industrial and office workers, undertake to pay a tax, while the function of overall guidance and social welfare rests with the state administrative organs. At the same time, when introducing the share-holding form on the basis of public ownership, ministries in charge of national assets should be set apart from state administration. Through the medium of banks and other financial agencies their task is to see that state property is multiplied, thereby ensuring the steady increase in prosperity, advances in the social infrastructure and growth in welfare.

That is the way to avert an undesirable situation, in which government agencies vested with administrative powers engage in commercial and industrial activity, establish a monopoly and undermine normal market competition. This makes it clear that the reform of the economic system in China is not confined to the economy, but also affects politics and society.

Our country is now in a state of transition from the old system to the new, and these are its main features: the government has handed over some powers to the enterprises, but they are not yet completely independent; the market has begun to play its part, but the market system has yet to take complete shape; administrative control from government agencies has been reduced to some extent, but

the new and indirect control system is not yet wholly in place.

A look at prices and interest rates reveals a dual system: the product price and the interest rate set by the state, and the market price. The enterprises find themselves doubly dependent: on the market and, to a greater extent, on the state agencies. They look to the higher bodies for funds and materials, and seek concessions in investments, foreign exchange and taxation. With no separation yet between government agencies and enterprises, and with the market mechanism already partially in operation, administrative-type companies are being set up under some state agencies which function both as economic managers and administrators. Making use of their powers, they demand that enterprises subordinate to them should provide funds and materials for various purposes, thereby reaping the profits.

It's as well to note that the *operation of the market mechanism has already revitalised our economy*. There is a wide range of goods on the market, economic growth rates are higher, individuals are displaying more energy and creative initiative, a large group of energetic entrepreneurs has emerged and is gaining experience, and the administrative capabilities of the cadres of party and state bodies have increased noticeably. On the other hand, the existing dichotomy *has led to economic growth rates that are too high, and control being lost over investment and consumption. The result is incipient inflation*. There is a tendency to look for quick profits, or in other words, to seek monopoly income through the abuse of some powers (such as the use of export quotas, import-export licences, supervision of market prices, intervention in enterprise affairs by local administrative agencies, etc.). This results directly in non-productive expenditure of resources, embezzlement and corruption among some cadres, and unfair social distribution.

In this context, the Communist Party of China and the government decided to work vigorously over the next two years to bring order to the economic sphere, to reduce aggregate demand, and to contain infla-

tion. They intend to use political, economic, legal, administrative and educational measures *to organise the economy and create suitable conditions for regulating the reform*. This meets the needs of our further advance, but it does not signify any retreat in the process of reform.

Studying Experience, Taking Advice

There are, of course, numerous debates among economists and other scientists, on how best to move from the old system to the new. We have no tried and tested experience to rely on, so we have to keep on examining and investigating. That is why we are willing to learn from the fraternal socialist countries which have gained much experience from longer periods of reform. We are willing to take advice from scientists and specialists from developed and developing countries.

It is our view that *comparative studies* in the light of Marxist methodology are especially important. Marxism enriches itself with the knowledge of mankind as a whole, makes comparative analyses of the past and the present, and studies the patterns of economic and social development as the basis for the right theoretical leadership in the revolution. We do not expect to find concrete answers relating to our reform in the classical works. We follow the example of Marx and Engels in systematically comparing the experience and lessons of economic, political, social and cultural transformations so as to determine the pattern of transformation in the country's economic and social system. We intend to establish, through the medium of our journal, broad ties with foreign countries in order to deepen our study of economic and social systems. Lenin says: "You can become a Communist only when you enrich your mind with a knowledge of all the treasures created by mankind."³ We seem to be gaining an ever deeper insight into the meaning of these words, and we are trying to comprehend their full import.

³ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 287.

FOR UNIVERSAL SECURITY

YESTERDAY'S UTOPIAS BECOME REALITY

Oswald SÖDERQVIST

*alternate Board member,
Left Party—Communists of Sweden,
and party representative on W M R*

THE SWEDISH peace movement, born at the end of the last century, has now grown, figuratively speaking, into a huge tree with a complex root system that reaches out into every sphere of society. The movement does not have a common, rigid structure but relies on a network of contacts between numerous and diverse organisations and groups of peace campaigners.

Among them are: the *Swedish UN Association*, comprising trade unions, the church, the students' union, etc., with some 140 branches throughout the country; the *Swedish Peace Council*, established to promote cooperation among various peace forces, which is an umbrella organisation for virtually all the peace campaigners' associations and groups, including the *Swedish Peace Committee*; one of the newer organisations, the *Popular Campaign Against Nuclear Power and Nuclear Weapons*, which emerged in 1978 to protest against the building of atomic power stations in Sweden and the possible utilisation of their fuel to build nuclear weapons; and the country's oldest and still very active peace organisation, the *Swedish Peace and Arbitration Committee* (founded in 1883).

New peace groups and associations have been cropping up in recent years, predominantly along professional and occupational lines (physicians, jour-

nalists, engineers, writers and artists, office personnel, service workers, etc.).

The latter process is, perhaps, the most noteworthy change in the peace movement. New groups tend to be formed mostly by members of the working-class parties, that is, Social Democrats and Communists, and also by Liberals, with their long-standing policy of peace. They are increasingly assuming leadership roles while traditional participants in the movement, including workers, have to step aside. That process in the result of structural changes in Swedish society, specifically the decreasing numerical strength of the traditional working class and the emergence of new professional and occupational strata.

In the past few years women and young people have become much more active in the movement and established their own organisations within it. They tend to operate outside political parties in their actions for peace and environmental protection, which often go hand in hand.

The working-class movement stood at the sources of the struggle for peace, whereas the party of the Swedish Communists was formed (in 1917) as that struggle unfolded. We are doing our utmost in the antiwar effort, particularly with regard to the proclamation of a nuclear-free zone in Nordic Europe, which would include a ban on the transit of cruise missiles through Swedish territory and on calls by foreign nuclear-armed warships at Swedish ports. We are closely following processes within the peace movement and trying to respond promptly to the needs of new professional and social groups and to work in close contact with them. Communists have to provide new solutions to many problems those groups are raising. The old dogmas have outlived their usefulness. Greater self-criticism and more efficiency in everyday work are the order of the day.

Main Avenues of Struggle

It would be wrong to draw any divides between various organisations. Over the past few decades, a salient feature of our movement, along with its scope,

has been the desire to cooperate and take joint action for the common goal of peace and disarmament. In the 1950s, the various peace organisations together resisted Sweden's acquisition of nuclear weapons. After that objective had been achieved in the early 1960s, the peace movement slumped somewhat. It then switched its emphasis to solidarity with the national liberation struggles in the Third World, exemplified by the support given to the just cause of the Vietnamese people. This campaign assumed national proportions, with young people being especially active. Solidarity with the peoples of South Africa and Latin America also grew stronger, with whole movements, as well as organisations, joining the drive. Even the renewed antagonism between pacifists and the advocates of armed liberation struggles did not impede these collective efforts.

A short digression is in order here. That antagonism began way back in the last century. The idea that Sweden should be neutral had already been mooted and pacifism appealed to us. It was supported by the peasants, a major political force in those days, and by the growing working-class movement. Antimilitarist sentiments became widespread. Left-wing bourgeois liberals and Socialists set the tenor of discussions on efforts for peace and neutrality. But substantial differences transpired at the very beginning: Marxists in the working-class movement did not share pacifist ideas but believed that genuine peace could be attained only when the working class had carried out a revolution and taken power. The idea was that peace without freedom was worthless, and that one should be willing to take up arms for freedom.

However, the overwhelming part of the growing Swedish antiwar movement was pacifist-minded: people thought that international conflicts could be settled through cooperation, peace talks and arbitration. Marxists believed, meanwhile, that when socialist society was built, wars would never be waged, and considered the war machine to be the principal tool of suppression in the arsenal of the bourgeois state. Most of those differences and contradictions have survived in the peace and working-class movements, among the Left and in society as a whole.

Unarguably, advocates of the peoples' armed struggle for freedom prevailed in debates in the 1960s, but the majority in the Swedish peace movement believed that the oppressed peoples should themselves decide which road to follow, while the solidarity campaigners should respect that choice.

The 1970s saw a resurgence of the peace movement and cooperation among various organisations and groups rose to a higher level. Peace and disarmament gained unprecedented importance for many people because it was at that time that the United States "delighted" the world with the news that the neutron bomb was in production, and NATO did the same with its notorious "two-track decision" on in-

termediate-range missiles. Another round of the arms race was beginning and the reactionaries were gathering strength again in Europe, including Sweden. A real threat to peace arose, and energetic steps were needed to counter it.

In Western Europe our country was among the more active champions of that vital cause. There was a powerful wave of public protest, with rallies, demonstrations, peace marches, conferences and discussions continuously gathering momentum. Many people, especially young men and women, joined peace organisations. The one desire was to prevent war. It was then that the idea of establishing a Nordic nuclear-free zone won broad support.

New Form of Public Action

In 1978, the first People's Parliament for Disarmament in Swedish history played an important mobilising and unifying role in the run-up to those tumultuous events. That forum, crucial to the progress of the peace movement, had been objectively prepared by preceding developments and gave a logical organisational expression to the aspirations and ideas of cooperation that are characteristic of our movement.

The People's Parliament considered the burning issues of disarmament and the prevention of war. The forum, and the subsequent peace campaigns in the late 1970s and early 1980s, made a strong impact on Swedish politics. Every party had to define its position on the problems raised by the Parliament, and the government, regardless of its composition, had continuously to reaffirm its commitment to a policy of peace and disarmament, study the issues involved, and even allocate funds to antiwar organisations.

As we know, the US decision to produce the neutron bomb was cancelled. But efforts to prevent the deployment of American intermediate-range missiles in Europe failed, a fact that bitterly disappointed many people, including Swedish peace campaigners. The battle against deployment was, however, very important in preventing the Right from gaining even more ground in Western Europe. European antiwar movements also managed to make new contacts. The organised women's movement for peace came to play a vital role, and a strong impetus was imparted to cooperation within the European Nuclear Disarmament. By and large, the European efforts for peace picked up powerful momentum.

The impact of those developments on Sweden, for example, included the convocation of two more public forums for disarmament, on a far larger scale than the first one. Their sponsors were the same, the Swedish Peace Council and the Swedish UN Associa-

tion. As before, they were timed to coincide with Special Sessions of the UN General Assembly on Disarmament (1982 and 1988), and prepared some ground for them. The entire national peace movement, with rare exceptions, was represented in the People's Parliaments. Both forums confirmed the tremendous influence and authority they have in Sweden today.

Are the decisions of the People's Parliament a reflection of the will of all Swedes? They are not binding on the government—but then the forum does not set itself in opposition to the Riksdag. Deputies to it are appointed by participating organisations and movements rather than elected, and represent diverse interests, ideas and social values. The political parties having seats in the Riksdag have only the observer status in the People's Parliament, whose decisions are another important indicator of Swedish public opinion on the major problem of our time.

While the central issue before the People's Parliament six years ago was opposition to apartheid in South Africa (the African National Congress proclaimed 1982 the year of people's war against oppression by the white minority regime), the agenda for the February 1988 forum was far more extensive. However, the discussions at both forums were keyed by the issue of correlation between armed and peaceful methods of liberation struggle, which was not new to our movement.

The participants in the first Parliament unanimously supported opposition to apartheid, but some of the pacifist groupings had reservations about the slogans of the African National Congress. In 1988, the proposal of the Swedish Red Cross on the subject evoked much interest among the participants: it urged support for the premise that peace should not just mean the absence of war but also incorporate the concept of freedom. The proposal was endorsed unanimously, which is evidence of the evolution of views in the Swedish peace movement since the 1950s.

Last year five commissions of the People's Parliament considered and approved numerous proposals on the more urgent problems of our time, and all of them concentrated on disarmament as the key problem. The subjects under consideration included such major issues as ways of achieving international security and removing the nuclear threat, the relationship between disarmament and detente, and the education of public opinion on those problems.

Needless to say, the participants greatly appreciated the Soviet-American INF Treaty as a landmark event in international affairs, and also spoke highly of the steps towards a peaceful settlement in Afghanistan. Speakers noted a heartening change in the world political climate, with yesterday's utopias becoming reality, even though the overall thaw was occasionally interrupted by bouts of frost. *The importance of the mass peace movement as a guarantee*

against a recurrence of the Cold War is growing considerably in this situation.

The substantive final document of the People's Parliament was addressed to the Swedish government, urging it to contribute effectively to the elaboration of a treaty on a total ban on nuclear testing and the use of nuclear weapons, and also to submit to the UN a draft convention on the non-militarisation of space. The participants in the forum proposed a UN-sponsored study on "non-provocative defence" and called upon the government to advance the idea of restructuring of any armed forces in order to make them exclusively defensive. They warned against the risk of existing disarmament treaties being derailed by the increasingly intensive quantitative and qualitative buildup of military efforts in other directions and demanded that the Swedish Cabinet carry through its initiatives on the limitation of the arms race. There were other proposals along those lines.

The decisions taken by the People's Parliament were handed to the government (the pressure exerted on it substantially influenced its position), to international non-governmental organisations advocating disarmament, and to the UN Secretary General. In May and June last year an official Swedish delegation, including some participants in the Parliament, submitted an appropriate document to the Third Special Session of the UN General Assembly on Disarmament.

Achievements and Prospects

Having effectively influenced world politics (which can justifiably be called a strengthening of people's diplomacy for peace and disarmament) our People's Parliament achieved another important objective in contributing to the further consolidation of Swedish peace organisations and movements on the basis of the jointly elaborated constructive document. People's growing activity and willingness to cooperate in actions for disarmament, stronger security and effective justice was demonstrated by the number of participants in the forum, the broad press coverage given to it, its packed programme and the desire to put across the Swedes' most urgent demands. All that was a tangible result of the great effort that had been put into the preparation and conduct of all the three people's parliaments, in which our party played a significant part.

The new mass campaign "From a Nuclear-Free Community to a Nuclear-Free World", launched last spring on the initiative of the Swedish Peace and Arbitration Committee, is proof of changes for the better. It aims primarily at advancing the cause of the People's Parliament, i.e., involving the mass of working people in practical people's diplomacy.

All these efforts and concerns may seem a little strange since Sweden is a neutral state with no nu-

clear weapons or foreign military bases on its territory. But the spirited Swedish public with its deep-rooted commitment to peace could not stay aloof from world affairs. Moreover, there are problems which directly affect Sweden and Northern Europe. They can be resolved more speedily and effectively if pressure is applied not only "horizontally" but also "vertically", that is, from the grassroots, from the communes, rank-and-file workers, farmers and employees.

One of the chief aims of our struggle today is to *avert any escalation of the nuclear arms race in the North Atlantic and the Baltic Sea*. Much importance is attached, I repeat, to a ban on calls of nuclear-armed ships at Swedish ports. We insist that the authorities in every port demand from the commanding officers firm guarantees that their ships have no nuclear weapons aboard. Communes should forbid the transit through their territory of components which can be used in nuclear systems—and transports bound for Norway do occasionally carry them. Devices for activating nuclear weapons should on no account be produced in Sweden, but that was just what a Swedish company did by signing a contract to supply deck cranes to the USA for the transfer and placement of cruise missiles into launching positions.

Peace campaigners at the grassroots have a great role to play in finding solutions to these and other practical questions. Although the new campaign is aimed primarily at mobilising Swedish public opinion at the commune level against the nuclear arms race, in the final analysis it is a part of the international effort for peace and disarmament.

With the "missile issue" settled, which gave inspiration to all of us, the Swedish peace campaigners are increasingly worried by the *race in conventional*

as well as nuclear weapons. NATO seems about to launch a new round of that race, while the Swedish war industry, keen to use the favourable world market situation, has been secretly selling weapons to foreign parties in violation of the laws. Public exposure of such deals has deeply worried the peace-loving forces and thrust the problem centre stage. *Neutral Sweden must not participate in the arms race or world arms trade* is the unanimous cry from the country's peace campaigners. The present situation shows that we must remain vigilant and persevere in our efforts in every area of the struggle.

The widespread belief that peace is a natural condition for humanity is a positive tendency that inspires great hope. As a result of the spread of new political thinking few governments dare argue publicly that force may be used to resolve conflicts. Its increasingly rapid introduction and assimilation into political philosophy and the practice of international relations—with help from the peace-loving public—is of fundamental importance. In this context it is hard to overestimate the efforts and initiatives of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries.

The peace forces still have a lot to do, now and in the future, to attain their ultimate objective, that is, a world without weapons, wars or violence. This requires *joint actions and every kind of cooperation among all peace movements* in whichever country and under whatever socioeconomic system. It also requires interaction between non-aligned countries and those states which are members of political and military alliances. Today's problems, especially those involved in disarmament, are global and can be resolved only through *global cooperation*. The Swedish peace campaigners are ready to cooperate and to undertake the struggle, no matter how long and arduous, for a secure and happy future.

PROBLEMS IN EAST - WEST TRADE

FRANK DISCUSSION WITH AN AMERICAN BUSINESSMAN

James GIFFEN, head of the Mercator Corporation and President of the American-Soviet Trade and Economic Council and the American Trade Consortium, has been doing business with socialist countries for almost a quarter century now and has interesting observations of obstacles to it and ways of surmounting them. James Giffen talked to Prof. Stanislav MENSHIKOV of WMR.

S. Menshikov. The socialist and the capitalist world did not have any intensive economic ties for a long time. I consider this abnormal. Do you agree?

J. Giffen. Totally abnormal in the light of the fact that we have two largest economies in the world.

S.M. It is believed in the West that it is difficult to trade with the socialist countries which, by nature of their planning system, are mostly internally oriented. In your practice, do you feel that is a correct statement?

J.G. That is part of the problem. There are several constraints on the expansion of trade between these countries. The point that you have raised about the differences between the planned and market economies is just one of them.

Differences Between the Systems and Socialist Reforms

S.M. For a certain period the Soviet Union and other socialist countries have been concentrating in their relations with capitalist countries on importing some of the major things that they need, including machinery and equipment not produced within the socialist world. We wanted to be self-sufficient and independent from the capitalist world in most products we were discriminated against by the West. Socialist countries have integrated their economies to a large extent for that purpose and the greater part of their foreign trade is between themselves.

Now, supposedly, that is changing. But we have a problem here. There are very different systems: one is based largely on government enterprises, the other on private business. The attempt to decentralise in socialist countries does not change this basic difference, and some see here a basic conflict which does not make it possible to expand trade in a normal way.

J.G. If the political atmosphere continues to improve, US legislative restrictions are either modified or removed. In a stable political environment we can concentrate on the issue of the differences between the two economies. The Soviet system has to become more market-oriented. Certainly, the market economies have to adapt to the planned socialist economies to some degree.

S.M. We know how socialist economies are trying to adapt to market relations. It is going slowly, with constraints, and there is a lot of conservative feeling towards developing market-oriented socialist economies.

J.C. I am not so sure the point is so much developing market relations as it is bringing forth market economy factors into the socialist economy to the extent that is possible.

S.M. This is what Soviet reforms are aiming at. They should help develop economic relations with capitalist countries. Developments in Hungary, China and Yugoslavia seem to prove that too.

J.G. Certainly in one respect they do. I think there has to be a change in the minds of the bureaucrats, officials in the Soviet ministries and production associations. They have to understand the relatively new, to them, market forces of the West. If they are able to learn those forces they may well be able to adapt some aspects of their planned economy to them.

S.M. Now that the Ministry of Foreign Trade in the Soviet Union no longer exists in its previous form, and that our enterprises have been turning to more direct ties with foreign companies, has this brought any appreciable changes?

J.G. Yes. American companies currently discussing joint ventures with the Soviet Union have been conducting most of their discussions and negotiations directly with individual industrial ministries.

S.M. So you are now directly concerned with the industries rather than with individual plants?

J.G. That is correct. The problem is that you cannot legislate social change, changes in attitudes. Certain problems are built into the current system of management which your reforms have to cope with. For example, individual ministries are told that they are not to control production associations, but at the same time they are responsible for the results of those associations. That creates a direct conflict.

S.M. There is also conscious bureaucratic sabotage of the reforms and disregard for the legislation which specifically forbids that kind of direct control over production of those enterprises. Many are in favour of discontinuing the ministries in their current form and retaining them in a servicing capacity with regard to plants and production associations rather than commanding them.

J.G. Again, the problem is that you need to expand economic relations between the market and the planned economies now and you have to ask yourselves if some type of mechanism is needed during this transitional period.

S.M. Then what is the interest of capitalist corporations in developing relations with socialist countries? Surely it is not any idealistic perspective, is it?

J.G. You are absolutely correct. The profit motive is what drives American corporations. The question they have in their minds is whether the Soviet market can be profitable taking into account all factors that

make a market profitable, political relations included. For example, one is the ease in negotiating transactions with socialist organisations. The efficiency of the negotiation process can impact on the profitability of transactions.

S.M. In the past the West has been shutting itself out of big markets by not developing extensive ties with the socialist world.

J.G. Common trade between the industrialised capitalist countries is much larger than any realistic estimate of what the potential market in the socialist world can be. Nevertheless, the Soviet market could be a potentially large and important market to US companies. But a large market is only relevant if you can make a profit. And what worries the management of most American companies is whether they really can make a profit in the Soviet market, whether the combined management of a Soviet-American joint venture can work together in a businesslike way, whether or not raw materials will be delivered on a quality and timely basis, whether or not relations with other Soviet organisations within the country can be businesslike and whether or not the labour force in the Soviet Union will respond to the new management methods. The answers are not simple but they largely determine whether business will be profitable or not.

The Goal: An Export-Oriented Economy

S.M. We hope that our reforms will help speed up economic growth in the socialist world and do away with elements of stagnation. Is this prospect attractive to Western companies?

J.G. It certainly is. But the basic problem that faces the Soviet Union is whether or not it truly wants to become export-oriented. If it does, the Soviet Union must spend time and money to develop markets and it will have to provide the resources either from its own reserves or go to the credit markets.

S.M. Some of them have already piled up foreign debts and have to sell on the world market more than to buy from it in order to meet their obligations.

J.G. If you look over a 10 or 20-year horizon, in my view, the Soviet Union should think in terms of three phases: phase one, where imports are financed from exports of energy, energy-related products or primary materials; phase two, where you begin to produce revenues from semi-finished productions; and phase three, where you begin producing value-added exports, i.e. of manufactured products that are world class quality and world class competitive.

S.M. Some of the socialist countries, such as the GDR, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, already export manufactures, including engineering goods. In future they, like the Soviet Union, will have to set up special export-oriented industries.

J.G. But it should not be just export-oriented industries. The Soviet Union must begin producing

world class quality services and goods not only for export, but for internal consumption.

S.M. You mean it has to be competitive on its own market in order to be competitive on the world market? I agree that no country can be really competitive if it considers its exports as something isolated from the whole economy.

J.G. There can be only one standard in the country and it has to be world class quality, world class competitiveness.

S.M. But there are also dangers involved. For example, Poland and Romania in the past invested large resources into developing competitive industries but later on there were no markets for them due to stagnation or the crisis of the capitalist markets they hoped for. So we should think of the markets of the year 2000 or thereabouts, of what we are going to sell in the future because that is when the investment projects that we start now are going to bear fruit.

Deal Killers

J.G. In my opinion, one of the key problems has surfaced in the initial months of perestroika is that there seems to be an understanding of democracy in the sense of the rights but there seems to be no understanding that there is an accompanying concept of responsibility.

S.M. Give me an example of what you mean. I have heard talk of responsibility in my country since I was a young man.

J.G. When a minister, deputy minister, plant manager or any other responsible official is given the responsibility to accomplish a job he should go forward and do whatever is necessary to get the job done without any fear of reprisals in the event he fails. If he feels that he may lose his job or worse if he makes a mistake, he will never take action on his own. And this is not just a characteristic of socialist bureaucracy. This is a characteristic of bureaucracies anywhere, whether in the US government, US corporations or any other institutions. Bureaucracy tends to breed "do-nothing" attitudes.

S.M. At what level do you encounter these bureaucratic tendencies especially often when you deal with Soviet organisations?

J.G. I think I find it most at the middle management level, somewhere between deputy ministers and plant managers. It is the small things that are the deal killers. Lack of communications. Lack of information. The fear to follow through.

S.M. Do people at the middle management level lack the authority to resolve issues that you bring up with them, or what is it?

J.G. It is my understanding that most of these people do have the authority to take action but choose not to do so for whatever reason.

S.M. Perhaps, it is basically a psychological reason because most of these people have been accustomed to working under the old overcentralised system. There has to be a period of adaptation, of learning

new ways, and also new people able to shoulder responsibility have to be brought in.

J.G. I would send hordes of managers to the US, Western Europe and Japan to learn modern up-to-date management techniques in both the business schools and corporations. I would combine a practical programme with theoretical class-oriented programmes. During the period, to accelerate matters, I would pick out the best and the brightest of the current Soviet managers and give them absolute responsibility to get the job done.

Bureaucracy Makes Trouble

S.M. We have dealt with future exports. But we should try also to reduce unnecessary imports. Several socialist countries have adopted such a policy.

J.G. I agree. For example, the Soviet Union has spent billions of dollars per year on average to buy agricultural products over the past ten years. That absolutely makes no sense whatsoever. The Soviet Union could cut its agricultural purchases down to perhaps a third if it merely instituted modern food processing techniques. The Chinese went from a net importer to a net exporter of agricultural products in 3 years when they attacked the problem. Why can't the Soviet Union do the same?

S.M. I think the basic reason for that is that the party bureaucracy and the local, regional bureaucracies, and also the Agroprom bureaucracy have been continuously interfering in the affairs of the farms, though Mikhail Gorbachov is urging an end to this practice. By interfering in a very incompetent way they keep alienating the farmers from the land. The conservative forces are dead set against the introduction of small cooperatives, family contracts and leases, which boost productivity in agriculture. The development of processing industries and the infrastructure, including roads and storage facilities, is being held back as well.

J.G. I agree with your analysis. The fact of the matter is that there are problems that can be solved and there are problems which the bureaucracy is making to contribute to the difficulties. Let me give one example. There are currently negotiations going on for a food plant in the Soviet Union. The plant will require ovens which are rather long. The Soviet entity which is concerned with the project offered a site for the plant in a 4-story building which was not big enough. When the Americans suggested that they could build a pre-engineered steel building new at any site in the Soviet Union in less than a year the Soviet side responded that they didn't have any land available for such a plant on its enormous territory. You are building inefficiency into the system when managers who are responsible for these projects take the short view of what they are trying to accomplish.

S.M. I think this is an example of the strong inter-ministerial barriers we have in our system. The people in the ministry you were talking about do not have the authority to choose the land they want for

the plant in question. It is much easier to keep holding on to an old site even if it is sensible and profitable to build a new plant.

J.G. I would say that there is a lack of communications internally within the Soviet Union. It absolutely amazes me that one ministry does not know what the next ministry is doing. And furthermore, within a given ministry, that one bureaucrat does not know what another bureaucrat is doing. This will kill business relations with Western companies.

S.M. But in order to coordinate they would have to do the coordination themselves but not look to somebody else upstairs.

J.G. Ultimately, that is correct. But you have to find a mechanism right now. One mechanism that we think makes some sense is the consortium concept. It allows for groupings of American companies and groupings of Soviet organisations in specific industries to work together in a coordinated and orderly way. The concept was born out of the need to find a way of bridging the differences between the planned and market economies. One consortium that was recently formed is the American Trade Consortium. It currently consists of 7 companies: Eastman Kodak, R. J. R. Nabisco, Johnson and Johnson, Archer-Daniels Midland, Ford Motor Company, Chevron Corporation, Mercator Corporation. What we intend to do is to have the American Trade Consortium enter into a general agreement with its Soviet counterpart, the Soviet Foreign Economic consortium which is a group of Soviet ministries and production associations: the ministries of the petroleum industry, of automobile production, of the medical and biological industry, Gosagroprom, the petrochemical industry, the chemical industry and a variety of others. For a start we intend to negotiate the creation of 10 to 20 joint ventures.

Megaventures Are No Panacea

S.M. Recently the news came of a \$6 billion petrochemical complex to be set up in Western Siberia jointly between a group of Western companies, including Combustion Engineering, and the Ministry of the Petrochemical Industry. What would be the share of the exported products?

J.G. At this stage I do not know that even the parties to that agreement know what the share is to be. What they are doing at the present time is conducting a feasibility study.

S.M. I'm wary of giant projects that are being sped up by our central agencies. On many an occasion in the past such projects were accomplished at the expense of other enterprises and industries. When the Kama Autoplant was set up it brought much havoc, the same was true of the Togliatti plant. If we are moving towards a kind of market economy in which the central authorities have a consultative rather than the command function why proceed with joint ventures in the same old administrative and command way?

J. G. At some levels in the Soviet leadership I believe there is a feeling that projects such as the West Siberian petrochemical complex are a panacea for all problems, and they may not be. When one large project uses the resources that perhaps could be used better in other, smaller projects, what does that tell you? For a planned economy country there is sometimes an appalling lack of business planning and execution.

S. M. Your views agree with those of our specialists. Don't you think that overemphasis on joint ventures is, perhaps, holding back our relations in certain other areas? There could be, perhaps, other forms of good relations between firms and our production associations, like technology licensing, which would prepare a better basis for joint ventures in the future. After all, firms in the West do not necessarily start cooperating by launching joint ventures. They build up working relationships first, they get to know each other first, what they are doing, what their markets are, the possibility of using each others' resources and only after that they build up joint ventures. Shouldn't that experience be used in relations between the two systems?

J. G. Joint ventures are one way, and a good way, of doing business. But I think some in the Soviet government are enamoured with the concept of joint ventures right now because they believe they will get capital investment from them, they believe they will be able to control them, and if they do try to control them that is going to be the death of them.

S. M. What do you mean by control? Our side is having 51 per cent and your side 49 per cent of capital—almost equal shares.

J. G. I am talking about control of foreign economic policy.

S. M. You cannot blame the Soviet Union for trying to remain in control of its foreign economic policy. When one is dealing with transnational corporations one has to make certain not to get under foreign control.

J. G. I have something else in mind. Take a specific example, the hard currency issue. The reluctance to use more foreign credit resources is holding up important transactions of primary interest to the Soviet Union. For example, the Chernobyl accident has shown that you need equipment to monitor the presence of hydrogen in atomic energy plants. Western firms are ready to sell the equipment. It is not a big deal (\$100 million for 50 Soviet atomic energy plants). But the equipment has not been purchased due to inadequate reserves of hard currency.

Fiscal Conservatism

S. M. The socialist countries feel that their debts are large and try to reduce them.

J. G. For whatever reason they are fiscally conservative. You have to spend money before you start making profit. The Soviet current net debt is some-

where around \$25 billion. By comparison, the US borrows \$25 billion every month. But the point is that you could easily borrow more and be responsible. The question is what you do with those funds once you borrow them. You should put them into projects that will make profit.

S. M. That is elementary economics, why raise the issue at all?

J. G. Because the average Soviet manager does not understand the concept of relative profitability. It makes no sense, for example, to develop the production of oil which may cost \$18 a barrel to produce at a time when world market oil prices are in the 15 minus range. The question is what major Western oil company is going to invest a billion or two billion dollars in a project which is losing money at current prices?

S. M. Evidently, there is the hope that the price of oil will go up. Such forecasts are made in the West as well.

J. G. Those who support such projects probably believe that they can produce oil quickly and therefore earn revenues in hard currency. They are revenue-oriented and think in terms of rouble cost against dollar revenue.

S. M. The ministry wants the state to earn hard currency while the corporation wants to make profit. Their interests do differ.

J. G. Let me give you another example. In the US most companies have a hurdle rate, an objective in profitability terms. It may be 12% or 15% net return on capital investments. When they sit down to have a meeting and there are 20 projects under consideration they allocate resources according to their judgement as to which of the projects will meet that hurdle rate. In my entire 25 years of dealing with the Soviet Union I have never sat down in a meeting when multiple projects were put on the table and discussed in terms of which produced the greatest return on investment.

S. M. But the pricing in our country is very different from prices in the world markets and the rouble exchange rate to the dollar and other hard currencies is unrealistic. There is no sense in making those comparisons of profitability unless they are based on a realistic exchange rate.

J. G. Some economists in the US who are Soviet specialists have argued that price reform should have come first and management concepts, the enterprise concepts second.

S. M. The price problem in the Soviet Union is a politically sensitive issue. For example, is it necessary to raise prices to the world level, as Mr Shmelyev suggests? Would it not be better to establish a more realistic exchange rate which could help resolve the issue?

J. G. That is certainly one thing that would help. In fact, in the whole issue of exchange rates, convertibility of the rouble lies right at the heart of the question of a real expansion of trade.

S. M. In order to make the rouble convertible we would have first to develop our export competitiveness, to reach a reasonable balance of payments situation and to develop an ability to earn all the necessary hard currency to pay for our imports. Before we get to that point I do not feel that currency convertibility could be realistically maintained.

J. G. If you could achieve convertibility immediately that would solve many of your problems, and would in fact create an immediate credit for the Soviet Union. But if, for a variety of different reasons, you believe that you cannot do it immediately there are mechanisms which could be used in a transitional period. You could grant some sort of rights of convertibility within certain groups of companies. You could have some joint ventures that would not be export-oriented and some that were. As long as the group realised a hard currency balance over a given period of time, there could be a sort of convertibility within the group.

S. M. Then you would have to introduce a realistic exchange rate for that particular group. But what would that give to the Soviet Union?

J. G. Soviet organisations would have in effect a financial control mechanism. Foreign companies convert their rouble profits into dollars that could be repatriated or returned as investment. This is just one possible mechanism. The joint ventures that have been entered into between the West and the Soviet Union today are not significant. There is not, to my knowledge, any substantial joint venture established to date for the manufacture of a product in the Soviet Union which will be of world class quality and will be sold on the world market.

S. M. That would involve planning far ahead, for 10 or 15 years. Would it not be better if at some point a set of planners from both sides would come together and try to work out the range of products that the Soviet Union and other socialist countries could export for a bona fide future world market need. We have to think of building not ghost factories, but factories with a real and profitable future.

But let me turn to another issue. In the US I have been told about some other practices which hold up trade between the two systems. For example, in San Francisco Levi Strauss were interested in selling blue jeans in the Soviet Union or, perhaps, creating a joint venture. But then they were asked what kind of product Levi Strauss would develop to be exported from the Soviet Union. Very much like Pepsico, which started exporting vodka (and at a hefty profit for itself). Levi Strauss said: we are not interested because we are not in that business.

J. G. And who won?

S. M. Nobody. The Soviet Union did not get the jeans and Levi did not get the business. Our insistence on this pseudo-barter kind of arrangement often is a brake on trade.

J. G. But on the other hand look what happened. If there was a foreign economic planner who was in control of this, he would say: O. K., Levi Strauss, you go and do that transaction and we will make sure you get the dollars from other projects.

S. M. Now socialist countries also have had experience with other forms. One is the open trade areas in China. What is your view of the possibility of using this experience?

J. G. Not all American companies have had a good experience in China. Some rushed in wishing to get quick results. But many of them were disappointed. This affected the Soviet Union, as well: now when those same companies take a look at the Soviet market and the new reforms they say to themselves: I think I will just hold back awhile. And, of course, their experience with the Soviet Union back in the days of detente did nothing to help things. Because with all the publicity about detente and the expansion of trade, there was in fact no expansion of trade during that period which was meaningful, other than in agricultural exports to the Soviet Union.

Political Barriers Must Be Removed

S. M. Are you putting the blame on the Soviet side? That was mainly because of the political barriers which the US itself created.

J. G. Of course not. But, as I said, there are several constraints on the expansion of trade and most of them have to do with the interrelation between the political and economic spheres. Even if you have progress on all of these I would argue with you that there still would be no substantial expansion of trade because of the prob-

lems in communications and coordination between the two systems. Small things like sending a letter to the Soviet Union and getting no response whatsoever. Sending a proposal to the Soviet Union and getting no response. Showing up at a ministry and being told at the last minute after you have flown 8,000 miles that the minister has been called out of town unexpectedly. If you cannot do business in a businesslike manner don't do it.

S. M. Small things are a bother. But you must agree that your latest restrictions on high technology transfers are no help to stable relations either. Just remember the US reaction to the Soviet deals with Japan's Toshiba.¹ The difference between the economic systems does not come into the picture at all here: what we have is the resolve to prevent the Soviet Union from getting goods it would like to get.

J. G. Yes, one has to be concerned with the US restrictive legislation, particularly with the Export Administration Amendments Act of 1985 and the Jackson-Vanick Amendment to the Trade Reform Act of 1974. Export controls are undoubtedly related to political issues. As the political relationship improves with arms-control agreements, geopolitical agreements, even human rights understandings, the licensing policy in the US (and in COCOM) tends to change. As things get better, export licenses are granted.

S. M. I have also heard statements by some American politicians that the US should not be involved in giving aid to or doing business with communist governments. How important is the effect of such feelings on business with socialist countries? Is the "evil empire" argument still a substantial factor in spite of the four summits that have taken place?

J. G. You must understand that there is not an American alive today over the age of 25 or 30 that still does not have in the back of his mind Khrushchev banging the table with his shoe and saying: "We will bury you." People are beginning to read Gorbachov's book *Perestroika* and very slowly changing, but it will take some time to undo the harm that was done. While most Americans want our two countries to be partners, some would just as soon forget about the Soviet Union. Those who feel that way say: "Let them do whatever they want to do and we will do our own business and have nothing to do with them." I think it is not a reality that should, stay that way, and there has to be an integration; it would help promote economic growth and raise living standards.

S. M. Sometimes one gets the impression that some of your politicians and ideologues want to transform our system into capitalism?

J. G. I think the average American would agree with many of the concepts and principles of socialism if he or she understood them. What scares them is aggressive political attitudes which put us in a confrontational situation. If, as the General Secretary is doing, you resign as our enemy...

S. M. That is right. Let us do exactly that. The US in the eyes of the Soviet people has been a kind of enemy for a long time. But now there is a good basis for settling the principal political issues which separate us, including first and foremost nuclear disarmament, and for advancing towards real and constructive mutual cooperation.

J. G. With that I fully agree. We do not have to change each others' social and political systems to be business partners and, hopefully, friends.

¹ The US imposed sanctions on that Japanese company, among others, for selling high-tech equipment to the Soviet Union.—Ed.

THE PARTY

IN THE SPIRIT OF OPENNESS, GLASNOST AND REALISM

K. P. SILVA

General Secretary, CC, Communist Party of Sri Lanka

What can you say of the present stage in the development of the international communist movement?

The laws of Marxist-Leninist philosophy, under which we operate, such as the material nature of the world, the objective character of its development, and the motive forces and basic laws of the historical process, have not been disproved. Marxism is the ideological basis of the international communist movement and it carries the future.

People of various persuasions are being led to Marxism by realities. They understand our concepts, although some of them argue that they are not Marxists. But understanding is not the point: the important thing is that Marxism is spreading and gaining ground among the people.

Every country and every communist or workers' party is developing in specific circumstances and the differences between them are rooted in a complex of natural historical, economic and cultural factors and processes. In the past, when our movement was "centralised", there were constraints which prevented making a serious analysis of the situation in one

country or another, or the specific conditions under which parties had to work. If we are honest about it, that was a dogmatic approach and it had a serious effect on the Communists' unity.

Political problems and issues of social development are now being posed in a new way, and human mentality is being influenced by immense changes in the economy, science and technology. Therefore the development of the communist movement should be analysed in the context of dialectical changes in reality.

There is talk of the need to revise Marxism. To my mind, it should be developed and enriched, not revised. There is no proof, either in theory or in practice, that Marxism has outlived its usefulness. Perestroika, glasnost, democratisation and new thinking are all subject to criticism from bourgeois ideologists. They claim that communism has been defeated and interpret our public recognition of our mistakes as the demise of Marxist-Leninist philosophy and the decline of the international communist movement. This is nothing new, essentially just a continuing advocacy of the capitalist road of development.

The Communists have to develop Marxist-Leninist theory without fear of the new and rely on their profound knowledge of contemporary social processes. At the same time, they should creatively apply Leninist principles on a larger scale as a basis for their day-to-day work and communication.

What can you say about the significance of new political thinking?

The concept of new political thinking, though formulated by the CPSU, has been brought to life by the objective need of mankind as a whole. It is the dialectical development of the world that demands such an approach, and it should become the basis for the development of relations between states, socialist or capitalist. Humanity now has a possibility and a chance to resolve problems in international affairs by political rather than military means. The practical results already include a reduction in the number of missiles and the continuing search for

K. P. Silva, b. 1923, joined the CP of Sri Lanka in 1955. Became CC Secretary and Deputy General Secretary. In 1979 elected CC General Secretary. Suffered persecution in the 1980s.

solutions to regional conflicts and ways of curbing the arms race, all of which are bound to influence socioeconomic affairs. Even the ruling bourgeois party of Sri Lanka supports this course.

Recently, especially since the 27th CPSU Congress, new political thinking has created opportunities for a rapprochement between communist and workers' parties on contentious issues, as evidenced by the improvement in relations between the CPI and the CPI(M) in India, between the CPSU and the Workers' Party of Korea and the Communist Party of China, etc. We believe that new political thinking must become a reality, and not just in international relations.

Why are bourgeois parties more popular in Asian countries—at least according to the electoral returns, while the Communists have lost seats in a number of parliaments?

I think there are several reasons for this. There were splits in a number of communist parties in the 1960s, for example, in India, Nepal, Pakistan and our country. It was a difficult situation, compounded by subjective factors which influenced the course of events.

Bourgeois ideologists exploited these differences. The compradore bourgeoisie was very active in Asian countries during the struggle for independence and after it had been won. The national bourgeoisie, which wanted independent development, was growing stronger. Seeking freedom of action, it put forward popular slogans and opposed colonialism and neo-colonialism. But in virtually every country in our region capitalism was underdeveloped at the time. It made considerable progress only in India, while in Sri Lanka, for instance, capitalism was weak due to the low level of the development of productive forces.

Since the production structures were underdeveloped, the consciousness of the working people was also at a very low level. The national bourgeoisie won them over to its side and imposed its ideology on them. One often hears workers saying that communism is good but it will take too long to achieve... Going to the polls, they reason thus: "We know that you Communists are honest people and are doing the right thing, but all the same we'll vote for the ruling party now and for you later..."

A significant number of our working people supported the course taken by the national bourgeoisie and its slogans against imperialism and in favour of nationalisation and the development of a public sector. Working people assumed that it was the force capable of defeating the compradore bourgeoisie, which is why, together with segments of the working class, they often sided with the national bourgeoisie. That explains in part, I think, why our membership has at times declined or grown too slowly—and why we have not made many gains at elections.

It must also be admitted that we are too dogmatic

and sometimes fail to apply Marxism-Leninism creatively to specific circumstances. Occasionally we engage in demagoguery but the working people realise this and then say, with good reason, that promises are many but deeds are few. A party may have combative slogans but they do not work because they have no basis in reality and are not easily understood by the working people. The dynamic process of social development with its inherent difficulties and the fierce ideological struggle demand *concrete, absolutely concrete practical actions*.

Explaining the concept of peaceful coexistence will be effective only if state-to-state and cultural relations and personal contacts are actively promoted in practice. By doing this we prove that Marxist ideology and the communist movement have something to offer the world. But there are still sceptics in our ranks who argue that such an approach is at odds with the tasks of the class struggle and amounts almost to a betrayal of anti-imperialist action.

In view of the practical considerations you have just put forward, are we to assume that the party has been wrong on some issues and made mistakes?

That's precisely what I mean. In the 1960s, for instance, we were wrong about the ethnic question and three years later admitted our mistake. Initially we vacillated on the events in Czechoslovakia, and then had to take corrective actions. All that was kept within the party at the time but now we criticise our mistakes openly.

Many fraternal parties are conducting an indepth analysis of history, and this is also a sign of new thinking. The very practice of instructing parties from the centre during the period of Stalin's leadership was wrong. I have already said that everything was centralised and the specific circumstances of individual parties were ignored. We seemed to have forgotten Lenin's observation that every party works in the specific circumstances of its own country. Today I ask myself, too: why did we fail to abide by what Lenin had taught?

I must say that the Sri Lanka Communists have recognised and genuinely appreciate the CPSU's policy, and our attitude to Stalin's decisions is the same. In those difficult times our vision was even more blurred by the existence of a strong Trotskyist party in Sri Lanka.

There is more and more talk now of the need for a pluralism of opinions in the communist movement. What is your view of the problem?

Fraternal parties do indeed differ on many issues, and such differences of opinion should neither be feared nor concealed. If a party is alive and working, this is only natural. But differences should be discussed in a comradely atmosphere. In the past the existence of different trends of thinking was regarded as a sign of weakness and problems were swept under the carpet. Differences of opinion are

no obstacle to unity, joint efforts and progress towards common goals. Discussions and a search for correct solutions are useful and help foster ideas that bring members closer together. These principles, I think, are applicable also to relations between parties. Debate, and even argument, will help us develop the theory of Marxism more successfully, relate it to practice and do this openly and publicly. Most importantly, it will help strengthen communist unity in the face of the imperialist threat.

To my mind, better use should be made of regional consultations and conferences in order to examine the more important problems or one single major issue. The 1987 Ulan Bator consultative meeting of Asian and Pacific fraternal parties was an important event for the Communists of the region. If the Communist Parties of China and Japan and the Workers' Party of Korea had attended this meeting its achievements would have been greater. In 1988, South American communist parties met in Montevideo to discuss problems of anti-imperialist and anticolonialist struggle and ways of building relations with other democratic and revolutionary forces in the region. They achieved broader solidarity as a result. I think that such conferences are very useful because they will help invigorate our movement.

It has been some time since we have had any frank and open discussions which might have broadened democracy in the party. We have only just begun to promote criticism and to put forward bold ideas and proposals publicly. But the psychological atmosphere, as it were, was very different during and after Stalin. I was present at the 22nd CPSU Congress, when Nikita Khrushchev outlined a programme for building communism. Almost all the delegates from the fraternal parties thought it was a new Communist Manifesto. Experienced leaders and talented Marxist-Leninists accepted it readily. Now we admit that the programme could not have been implemented and that it overstepped the bounds of reality. If open discussions had been held at that time, many mistakes could have been avoided, I think...

What can you say of the ways of socialist development today?

According to Marxism, socialism can be built using different forms and methods in different countries but, of course, on the basis of its general laws.

Today the socialist countries are looking for the best ways forward. Socialism needs revolutionary change, not structural improvement: it has reached a certain stage of development. Democratisation, glasnost and perestroika will undoubtedly put socialism into a new orbit; this is not just an experiment but practice.

I don't think that there can be "different kinds"

of socialism, simply different ways of building it. There was a time in Sri Lanka when our goal was an immediate transition to socialism, whereas today we talk of socialist orientation. By this we mean that power should be in the hands of the working class, the working people and other democratic forces, with the working class playing the decisive role. The key economic sectors will be nationalised by the state but the private sector will to some extent be preserved. Rather than bringing all farmland under state control, we think, agrarian reform could help create cooperatives in different forms. That, in outline, is our programme of socialist orientation.

A look at today's working class is in order here. As the scientific and technological revolution goes on, serious structural changes are taking place within the working class. The number of manual jobs is decreasing, the skilled labour army is growing fast and the conditions of production are changing. Exploitation, however, is a constant factor, and the working class continues to persevere in its fight for its social emancipation, albeit in new historical circumstances.

What is the young people's attitude to all that?

The new generations are different from us and lead their own lives. They are looking for ways which would correspond to the spirit of the time. I think that we are not sufficiently sensitive to young people, and sometimes fail to understand them. Young people today are more open, they aspire to everything new and want to be noticed and appreciated. But we are somewhat conservative. All these psychological factors should be borne in mind.

Regrettably, few young people accept our arguments. They hope for success under capitalism. Consumerism is very strong: young people want to start a business, to secure a prestigious post, etc. Sri Lanka's "open doors" policy is encouraging young businessmen.

Naturally, some young people are following in our footsteps. I'm happy that my son is one of them. There are also many young people having only a vague notion of communist ideas and the tasks of our struggle who are rejecting capitalism and, perhaps instinctively, advancing towards Marxism. We have taken many decisions and adopted many resolutions but achieved little. Our experience is that it is hard to win people over to our side simply by ideological methods. We have to offer something practical, something related to the struggle for a better life and to an involvement in the affairs of society and in cultural and sporting activities. In short, we have to fight to wrench young people from the grip of bourgeois influence and win them over to our side. I think that the processes of cleansing, and openness or glasnost, which new thinking is introducing into the communist movement, will help reinvigorate our movement.

COMMUNIST CONGRESSES

IN THE NAME OF REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE

Janet JAGAN

*Executive Committee member
and Central Committee secretary,
People's Progressive Party (PPP) of Guyana*

THE 23rd CONGRESS of the People's Progressive Party of Guyana, which took place from July 30 to August 1, 1988, was held under the theme "United Action for Democracy and Revolutionary Change". The congress was held in a cinema in Georgetown, the site of the first congress held in 1951.

In a traditional meeting held before the 23rd Congress, fraternal delegations from the region discussed the topic "The Struggle for Democracy in the Caribbean and the Way Forward". In a statement issued after the two-day conference it was agreed that a viable left alternative is possible to replace the right-wing forces which keep alternating in power without changing the conditions of the people.

According to the statement, the struggle for real democracy in the region and the creation of broad fronts to include diverse classes is a necessary political and organisational instrument. Such fronts must have a solid working-class base. Fronts, the statement noted, could be organised around many issues which could assist in raising anti-imperialist consciousness and promote the objectives of independence and national liberation.

There can be no democracy in the Caribbean so long as there are colonial and neocolonial forces of economic, social, cultural and political penetration and domination. Specific reference was made in the statement to Guadeloupe, Martinique, Puerto Rico and Cayenne. Also, demands for the democratisation of the mass media were expressed, in order to give democratic forces access to the media to counteract right-wing and reactionary propaganda.

Reference was made to the successful work of the

Janet Jagan, b. 1920, a professional journalist and one of the founders of the People's Progressive Party of Guyana, was General Secretary of the PPP in 1950-1970 and, since 1970, has been on the party's Executive Committee and served as its Central Committee secretary for international relations. She was Labour, Health and Housing Minister in 1957-1961 and Interior Minister in 1963-1964, and has been a member of the National Assembly since 1976.

anti-imperialist organisations of the region. Concern was expressed over the actions of the US administration against the peace forces in Central America and demands made that the Guatemala Accords be implemented and for a renewal of dialogue in El Salvador and Nicaragua.

The opening session of the congress was public. It was highlighted by the arrival of youths, carrying flaming torches, who had run by relay teams covering 270 miles from the two ends of the coastal belt. This was followed by the traditional garlanding of the fraternal delegates who represented 17 Asian, African, European, Latin American and Caribbean countries and of PPP leaders by the Pioneers. A special paper marking the historical significance of three national events of 1988, the 150th anniversary of the arrival of Indian indentured immigrants, the 150th anniversary of the abolition of slavery and the 40th anniversary of the Enmore Martyrs, sugar workers who had been killed in struggle, was presented.

After the closure of the public session, congress delegates listened to the condensed version of the Report of the Central Committee, presented by General Secretary Cheddi Jagan. Many hours of the congress were devoted to delegates' responses and comments on this document embracing reports on the international situation, economic and social conditions, the political situation and on the party's organisation, finance, education, parliamentary and its youth and women's arms.

The Central Committee Report noted that this was one of the most trying and complex periods in world history, fraught with grave dangers, on the one hand, but pregnant with good prospects, on the other. "Already 1988 has proven itself a watershed year," stated the Report. "Certain political events which took place over the past months of the current year have injected new feelings of hope and optimism about mankind's future. The spirit of hope and optimism is crucial for carrying forward the struggle to win a secure and prosperous world for ourselves and future generations."¹

As a party of the working people, the Report noted, one of the priorities is to prevent a thermo-nuclear holocaust from breaking out. "Life itself has demonstrated how formidable the task is, though there is one compensatory factor that is of singular and unequalled importance: the existence of the Soviet Union and the socialist community of states."

The section dealing with the international situation was devoted to a full analysis of Central America and the Caribbean, a matter of close and deep concern to the PPP. Expressing this concern, the Report noted that "Central America continues to be one of the cornerstones of our party's international activity and foreign policy. The volatile situation obtaining in the region is a direct result of US imperialism's

¹ Here and throughout, the quotations are from the Report of the Central Committee to the 23rd Congress of the People's Progressive Party, Georgetown, 1988.

efforts to regain lost ground and to block the national liberation process in the region."

The Report stated proudly that the PPP is the only political force in Guyana to lend consistent and active support to and solidarity with the FFMLN/FDR of El Salvador, observing that this is consistent with the internationalist traditions of the PPP. Strong support was expressed for the Haitian people now engaged in a life-and-death struggle for democracy, peace and social progress. "As we continue to wage our own struggle for free and fair elections here in Guyana, we shall always remember our Haitian comrades. We wish them every success in the class and political battles that lie ahead."

The Central Committee Report rejected the USA's Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI), declaring that it could not save the region from the economic and structural crises now gripping the majority of Caribbean countries. The solution lies in effecting revolutionary social, political and economic transformations that would realise the hopes and aspirations of the region's working people. For this to be achieved, the ruling neocolonial regimes of the region would have to be replaced by revolutionary democratic governments. The exigencies of the present situation impell the Marxist-Leninist, revolutionary-democratic organisations and left Social Democrats to act together in the struggle against imperialist domination, for the demilitarisation of the region, for the recognition of the Caribbean as a zone of peace, for genuine independence, respect for human rights and the principle of ideological pluralism, for the deepening of democracy both at the representation and participatory level and for the defence of the region's sovereignty and independence.

The analysis of the economic situation showed negative economic growth. Even the government admitted to a "sluggish" economy. The performance of the three main sectors of the economy—sugar, bauxite and rice—showed lowered production. Sugar production dropped from 370,000 tonnes in 1971 to 224,500 tonnes in 1986. Rice production dropped from 171,700 tonnes in 1986 to 146,000 tonnes in 1987. Bauxite production showed a similar trend.

A study of the national debt showed the picture of bankruptcy brought on by the People's National Congress (PNC) regime which was installed in late 1964 when the CIA assisted in propelling that party into office after destabilising the PPP government. In 1964, debt payment was G\$10 million. By 1984, the PNC government, by wild borrowing and irresponsible spending, caused debt payments to reach G\$699 million. By 1987, debt payments rose to G\$1 billion and in 1988, to G\$1.6 billion, or G\$800 million more than the capital revenue received and more than half of the current expenditure.

The Central Committee Report observed that the PPP had for years advocated a radical approach to the debt problem. As late as the 1988 budget discussion in April 1988, it had called on the regime to cut

payments to 10% and use the funds released for development purposes and to satisfy some of the immediate needs of the people. If this had been done, some G\$1 billion could be released for development that year alone.

The majority of Guyanese are experiencing a rapid deterioration of their living standards. The wide gap between take-home pay and skyrocketing prices of basic consumer items has widened over the past three years. The biggest single negative effect on wage levels and the cost of living was the massive 1987 devaluation—177% at the Bank of Guyana rate and 483% at the commercial bank rate. Today, the minimum daily wage of around G\$25 is less than US\$1 on the currency black market, which is the main factor controlling prices. The present minimum wage is only half of the G\$52 demanded by the labour movement in 1986. It has been estimated that a worker's wage in 1987 could buy only half of what the 1986 wage bought.

As to education, health and other social services, the 1988 budget reduced allocations, providing only 5.5% for education, 4.5% for health and 0.1% for housing, a total reduction of 4.5% in three years. Social services have gone steadily downhill and the results are being seen in the quality of education, increasing malnutrition in children and a rise in infant mortality and diseases. For example, malaria has increased from 3,184 confirmed cases in 1980 to 34,142 in 1987.

The Report, examining the implications of an impending deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), observed that it would not solve the economic crisis but would only increase burdens on the working people. It seemed certain that a new devaluation was imminent, and like the last one, would further reduce living standards. The PPP would continue to campaign against any IMF deal.

The political situation, the Report said, has changed significantly during the past three years. The first major shift took place soon after the 22nd Congress with the death of L. F. S. Burnham.² The PPP/PNC dialogue was discontinued by the new PNC leadership headed by President Desmond Hoyte. The PNC went ahead with elections in December 1985, rigged as were all the previous elections held under the PNC government. These elections were even worse than those of 1980, with polling agents of opposition political parties being forcibly ejected from polling stations. The electoral fraud elicited a tremendous outcry in Guyana and the Caribbean.

New shifts have been made in the ruling party's recent pronouncements on privatisation and denationalisation and its "open door" policy to foreign private capital, in accord with demands of the IMF, the World Bank and the Caribbean Basin Initiative. Even in the contentious matter of industrial waste, the government has entered a deal with a US com-

² L. F. S. Burnham (1923-1985), one of the founders and leaders of the PNC, was President of Guyana from 1980 and died in office.—Ed.

pany to use Guyana as a garbage dump. There has been strong opposition to this. "We have had enough American 'garbage'," declared the Report.

Corruption has become a way of life under the system of bureaucratic-state, parasitic and cooperative capitalism. An Integrity Commission, established after the PPP and other groups had called for an independent body to examine corruption and other ills of the society, confirmed that bribery and corruption had reached almost epidemic proportions, noting that a number of public officers seemed to think that public funds were there for the taking. Hitting out against racial and political discrimination, the Commission observed that selection and promotion on merit were sacrificed on the altar of political partisanship, party loyalty, nepotism and personal friendship.

The Report to Congress criticised the inaction of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) in the face of mounting abuses against the working class whose standard of living has deteriorated, and urged that necessary action be taken to get the TUC to fight for the workers and to democratise its archaic rules. The leadership of the emasculated PNC-controlled TUC has assumed the role of "labour aristocrats" who are prepared to pass resolutions at annual conference rituals but will not take any action to mobilise workers into struggle.³

The 23rd Congress endorsed the party's involvement with the Patriotic Coalition for Democracy (PCD)⁴ which was formed after the rigged 1985 elections and had issued a call for a broad-based representative government in Guyana based on free and fair elections. This campaign for free and fair elections, said the Report, must be intensified at home and abroad. The 5-party coalition must continue to agitate for a meeting between the President and the PCD to insist on electoral reform. "Our party," stated the CC Report, "is working strenuously to strengthen the unity, organisation and effectiveness of the PCD."

The rapid changes inside the country and those taking shape externally necessitated an objective appraisal of the internal workings of the party itself. This the congress did in view of the fact that the previous congress three years ago adopted a landmark decision attesting to the reality that the party had in fact, after several years of hard work, transformed itself into a full-fledged communist organisation. In accordance with that decision top priority was given to party organisation which will assist in the on-going process of strengthening and democratising itself in such a way as to be prepared to fulfill the major tasks ahead. This involves, for instance, the shifting of emphasis from residential

groups to groups at work places. Already in train are new plans which place individual responsibilities on leading members. For instance, Central Committee members are given specific assignments, apart from their normal functions which go with that position, to, say, be in charge of a group or groups of cadres who are potential leaders, or a district or regional committee.

To make groups and/or other structures in a particular area more visible, instead of having purely party meetings, it has been found very valuable to organise more community activities known as "bottom house" meetings. And instead of having the party structure working separately from the women's, youth and other mass organisations, their work is now coordinated.

Of special importance is the training of cadres. The existing facilities are inadequate to meet present demands, and the party is now building a new centre of cadre development which will open up opportunities for courses which are of a longer duration than the present two weeks' agenda. In this work more emphasis is being placed on the development of cadres from the working class to raise the quality of party membership.

An intensification of the class struggle of the ideological front was urged. "Imperialism's ideological warfare must be countered. On this there can be no compromise, especially in the context of growing petty-bourgeois and bourgeois class formation and cultural imperialism."

The party stated its commitment to the defence of the working masses and declared that it would continue to fight for the return of their fundamental right to choose a government of their will. Only then can a genuine effort be made to end the present chaos and suffering and to mould a nation with a secure economic, political and social future. The Report ended on a high note: "The future is bright and it belongs to us." Delegates were urged to combat apathy and defeatism. "To those who in despair ask: how long, our answer in the spirit of Martin Luther King Jr. is: as long as is necessary. The main thing is commitment and the willingness to make the necessary sacrifices for complete emancipation. Time is on our side ... whatever the form of struggle, an essential ingredient is heightened political and ideological consciousness and mass political mobilisation... We must lead the masses towards the removal of the PNC regime and the establishment of a broad-based, popular, representative government... The time for action is now. Enough is enough!"

There was also an evaluation of the fulfilment of decisions of the 22nd Congress. Certain amendments to update the Party Programme adopted in August 1979 were approved. Throughout the five sessions of the Congress, addresses were heard from all fraternal delegates, each received with great enthusiasm.

³ The TNC was split in October 1988, with 7 militant unions forming a new organisation. *

⁴ The PCD comprises 5 opposition parties: the PPP, the Working People's Alliance, the Democratic Labour Movement, the National Democratic Front and the People's Democratic Movement.—Ed.

Making his "charge" to Congress at the conclusion of the three-day meeting, General Secretary Cheddi Jagan declared: "We are working in unity to chart our course ahead. Our task is to work unitedly and untiringly for revolutionary and democratic change. We have been inspired by our friends who have come

here from afar. As long as we have friends, representatives of the most progressive and revolutionary forces, we can be confident of solidarity... We are in a struggle to be free. We are fighting a new type of slavery."

IN BRIEF

ARGENTINA

An election coalition called the United Left has been set up in the country. It comprises the Broad Liberation Front, including the Communist Party of Argentina, and the Movement Towards Socialism. In some provinces the coalition may also take in factions which have split off from the Justicialist Party, the Radical Party-UCR, and the Intransigent Party.

AUSTRIA

An international "Communists in Local Government" symposium, organised by the Communist Party of Austria's Central Committee in conjunction with the *World Marxist Review*, has taken place in Vienna. It was attended by the representatives of the Communist Party of Austria, the Communist Party of Canada, the Colombian Communist Party, the Communist Party of Ecuador, the German Communist Party, the Communist Party of Greece, the People's Progressive Party of Guyana, and a WMR delegation.

BELGIUM

A national communist press festival, sponsored by *De Rode Vaan*, the Flemish Communists' newspaper, has been held in the ancient town of Aalst. A feature of the festival was the exhibition of the local organisations of the Communist Party of Belgium devoted to their struggle for working people's rights. Delegations from fraternal communist newspapers took part in the festival.

A plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Belgium has decided to hold the regular, 26th Congress of the PCB on March 18-19, 1989.

CHILE

The Communist Party of

Chile has taken a decision to start legal sales of its central organ, the newspaper *El Siglo*. This was announced at a press conference in Santiago by the party's spokesman Jaime Insunza and former editor-in-chief of the newspaper Jose Miguel Varas, who has returned to the country after years of forced exile.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

A Committee on Party Work in the Czech Socialist Republic has been set up in the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia by decision of a plenary meeting of its Central Committee. The aim: to improve the guidance of party work in solving the tasks of a national and regional character, and to strengthen political work in the lower units of the party structure. This decision does not mean a federalisation of the party but involves the creation of a hitherto absent territorial organ of the single organisation. Leadership of the work of the regional, city and district committees remains within the purview of the CC CPCz.

FRG

The German Communist Party Board's regular plenum in Dusseldorf, focusing on how to improve the activity of the party's leading bodies, stressed the need to alter the structure of the Presidium and Secretariat of the Board, to renovate the forms and methods of their activity, and to strengthen their role in work with the masses. A pluralism of opinions to find optimal decisions should be developed, the plenum pointed out. It recommended that the number of Presidium members be reduced from 24 to 18 and that women's share in the DKP Board be brought up to 40%.

GREECE

Harilaos Florakis, General

Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Greece (KKE), met in Athens with the leader of the Greek Left Party (EAR), Leonidas Kyrkos. In a joint statement the two men declare that they have arrived at an understanding of the need for a rapprochement between the KKE and the EAR in order to unite the Left forces. They noted that the Left should concentrate on a struggle against the dominance in political life of two major parties—the ruling PASOK (Panhellenic Socialist Movement) and the opposition New Democracy party—and for the creation of conditions for democratic change in the country.

INDIA

The National Council of the Communist Party of India has announced its decision to hold a regular congress of the CPI in Calcutta from March 6 to 12, 1989. Two documents will be submitted for consideration by the congress—a Political Resolution and a Draft Party Programme.

ITALY

Under the heading "The New PCI Is for a New Political Line", the newspaper *L'Unita* has published a draft of a pre-congress document of the CC PCI. In particular, the draft says that one of the primary tasks of the party is to make an independent and original contribution to uniting the Left forces of Europe regardless of national boundaries and to overcoming their historical division which is no longer justified. The identity of the Italian Communists, believes the PCI, not only does not contradict this important task, but is an essential prerequisite for its solution.

The situation in Europe, and East-West and North-South relations, were analysed at a

Rome meeting between PCI General Secretary Achille Occhetto and visiting chairman of the Social Democratic Party of Germany Hans-Jochen Vogel. The sides stated an identity of views on many questions and initiatives to be put forward in the international arena.

NEW ZEALAND

Membership growth and an influx of young recruits were noted during the 8th National Conference (Congress) of the Socialist Unity Party of New Zealand. The conference passed a decision on running SUPNZ candidates in various elections in the country—either independently, or in coalition with other left-wing organisations.

PRC

The joint communique adopted at the end of Nicolae Ceaucescu's visit to the PRC and his talks with Zhao Ziyang and other Chinese leaders expresses satisfaction with the development of the traditional relations of friendship, co-operation and solidarity between the PCR and the CPC, between the SRR and the PRC and between the peoples of the two countries. The sides consider that cooperation between communist and workers' parties should be based on the principles of independence, equality, mutual respect and non-interference in internal affairs.

An all-China conference of heads of propaganda organs discussed the preparations for, and the holding from spring 1989 of, a Movement for the Education of Party Members and Especially Communist Leaders in the Spirit of a Correct Understanding of the Situation. Special attention will be devoted in this campaign to ensuring the unity of views and actions, to a resolute overcoming of the difficulties, and to moving forward.

SHEDDING THE OLD STEREOTYPES

HA QUANG DU

*CC First Secretary,
Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union (CYU)*

SOCIALISM in Vietnam is now going through a difficult period which could be crucial to its further development. We are still saddled with the burdens of the recent past, when there was evidence of stagnation in the economic and social sphere, with mistakes and failings arising from backward administrative mechanisms, and an underestimation of the importance of democracy and the human factor in building the new society.

Vietnamese young people trust the party and want socialism, but they want "more socialism and more democracy", as the well-known formula puts it. This means, first of all, the need for genuine popular power, higher labour productivity, and a sounder way of life. Those were the problems the 5th Congress of the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union, held in November 1987, considered in the spirit of the new thinking. It was a congress of renewal aimed at more efficient action. It summed up the available experience and drew some valuable lessons from the past, including the need to make correct use of the new period's socioeconomic patterns in every sector of the CYU's work.

It is, evidently, time to apply the new thinking in depth so as to understand the multi-faceted and ever more complicated socialist reality, and to see the many faces of the young builders of the new society, and not to regard them as mere passive performers. This means gaining a better understanding of their mentality, combining the fulfilment of social obligations with a satisfaction of young people's own interests, and giving more attention to their day-to-day concerns.

One has to admit that the CYU, with a membership amounting to roughly 30% of Vietnamese young people, still has a limited influence in the country. In many areas of life, it has yet to act as a catalyst in the activity of the rising generation. But it is the CYU, says CPV CC General Secretary Nguyen Van Linh, that is the vanguard of the young, and the party makes very great demands on it. Hence the need to do more to improve the style and methods of our political, organisational and educational work.

Some young people feel a spiritual emptiness and easily adopt outdated ideas. That is why it is so important to know the mood of young men and women, and, instead of addressing them with loud speeches, to join them in finding ways out of difficult situations in sincere dialogues, friendly contacts and an atmosphere of trust. Up to now we have not done enough in this respect.

CYU members and other young people sent in 150,000 proposals and remarks to the 5th Congress. Apart from suggestions to improve the party's youth policy, there were numerous and often well-founded complaints about the CYU and the level and quality of its activity. We are worried about the moral fibre of some CYU members who try to use it as a springboard for personal ambition: enrolment at higher schools or training abroad. One of our constant concerns is the qualitative composition of the youth vanguard, from its grassroots organisations to the leadership.

Since the 5th Congress, the CYU has sought ways to implement the fundamental line for its renewal. It set the task of promoting everything that is new and positive, and overcoming the survivals of the old thinking, and the antisocial behaviour, apathy and passiveness of the young. Organisationally, this means, above all, greater effectiveness and more initiative on the part of its grassroots cells, for that is where a young person may develop fully as an active member of society. The primary organisation represents and protects young people's legitimate interests, and acts as the link between the CYU and the party.

The changes under way in our grassroots organisations are aimed at restoring their inherent vitality some of which has been vitiated by bureaucracy, formalism and superficiality. We have been trying to act in the Leninist spirit to make young people independent, and to turn the CYU into a self-governing body in the true sense of the word.

The new thinking makes high demands on CYU cadres. In many places they still engage in condemned bureaucratic practices and the issuing of orders, and are out of touch with the masses. For that reason they still have drab and boring functions, meetings and conferences, with meaningless speeches, and empty slogans and incantations. In his speech at the 20th Congress of the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League, Mikhail Gorbachov aptly remarked that YCL functionaries and rank-and-file YCL members are, as it were, like two separate groups of people who seem to be approaching each other, but on different sides of the street. This is also true, I think, of our own conditions.

Various measures need, of course, to be taken to change this unacceptable situation, but the main thing, I believe, is to allow CYU members, and young people in general, to elect their own leaders. In other words, without democracy and openness there can be

no renewal of CYU activity generally, and of cadre work, in particular. At the CYU's 5th Congress Nguyen Van Linh roundly condemned party functionaries who fail to display due respect for the young and distrust their organisational capabilities and creative initiative. In the past, moreover, there was petty tutelage of the CYU, meddling in its purely internal affairs, and attempts to turn an active political organisation into a passive one. Conclusions are now being drawn from this criticism.

The CYU believes that one of its primary tasks is to help the party in educating the rising generation. It is only fair to say that the CYU has not yet quite coped with this task. Why not?

I think, we have yet to understand fully what Lenin said about the young following socialism in different ways, which are not the same as those of their fathers and brothers. Second, we have failed to see the diversity of the young at the new stage of history. Third, we have been overly accustomed to issuing orders in defiance of democratic norms. All of that did much harm to the CYU for years.

The CYU CC attaches special significance to renewing its ideological and educational work, taking into account the specific conditions of the country, with its multisectoral economy, the grave aftermath of the 30-year war, the ceaseless and cunning subversive activity of hostile forces, the ever more formidable problems and the results of mistakes and miscalculations in the social sphere and the economy. That is why our 5th Congress said that it was necessary to strengthen the young people's faith in socialism and to increase their knowledge of the new system, without, however, repeating the old textbook truths, as we have done in the past. We must give priority to young people's ideas and to the pressing problems which concern young men and women: work, defence of the homeland, and preservation of world peace.

Socialist patriotism continues to be the ideological banner for rallying the young. During the war against the imperialist intervention, young Vietnamese were guided by President Ho Chi Minh's slogan: "Nothing is more precious than freedom and independence". The 6th CPV Congress in December 1988 proclaimed our motto today: "For socialism, for the people's happiness."

We want an education that stems from life itself and is in accord with the new stage of the revolution and its concrete requirements. Whatever the forms and methods of this work, the gist of it is democracy and openness in the activity of youth organisations, and help to promote the rising generation's initiative and creative endeavour. Young people's ideological problems can only be solved through joint discussion and debate, through the discovery of what is right or wrong in a free democratic atmosphere, and by informing young men and women about all the affairs of society. We must learn to live with democracy. Nothing must be concealed or

falsified. We are fully resolved to practice this principle: "The young know, the young discuss, the young act, the young verify."

Efforts to renew organisational and educational work are aimed to stimulate the revolutionary enthusiasm of the rising generation as a motor for renewing the country and fulfilling the tasks set by the 6th CPV Congress and the 5th CYU Congress. In more concrete terms this means that young people should:

- be the vanguard force in economic construction, and the increased production of food, consumer goods and export goods;

- strengthen national defence, public order and the country's security;

- take an active part in innovation, research and development;

- implement the party's social policy and work for social justice.

It is no easy task to find new ways and means of making the CYU's work in economic management more efficient, and to get rid of bombast and mendacity. Here are just two examples delegates made known to our 5th Congress.

At the end of 1987, there were 6,000 prize-winning youth collectives, and 100,000 young workers were involved in the movement for raising skill standards in light industry and in handicrafts. But the quality of the goods made for internal consumption and for export was deplorable. If a core of alert young people in each collective were to take it upon themselves to tighten up discipline and the observance of technological rules, to start a drive against defective products and fake reports, poor workmanship would not be so widespread.

There were 2 million young machine-operators in the countryside, and 5 million overfulfilled their output norms. But the CYU failed to induce them to take an active part in the management of cooperatives, fight corruption, or insist on a fair distribution of incomes and a civilised lifestyle in the villages.

Some changes are already in evidence. Young men and women have been increasingly keen to join the drive to emulate the master craftsmen, to display initiative and to join amateur associations of "future masters". The CYU has been working harder in the countryside and is helping to improve the technical services provided to farming, and to intensify it. Enthusiastic youth teams and enterprises operating on the basis of cost-effectiveness are helping to produce goods and articles required by society. Young people's producer cooperatives are being set up in the localities.

Many new and livelier elements have appeared in the activity of the Vietnamese CYU in the year since its 5th Congress, but that is only the beginning. There is still much work ahead.

ARE FACTORIES ALONE OUR STRONGHOLDS?

REVIEW OF AN INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM IN WEST GERMANY

The WMR Commission on the International Communist Movement and Exchanges of Party Experience and the Board of the German Communist Party held an international symposium on new aspects of Communists' activities in the community and at the workplace in European capitalist countries. The symposium, held in West Germany, was attended by Manfred GROSS, member of the secretariat of the Communist Party of Austria (KPÖ); Ludo LOOSE, member of the Political Bureau of the CC of the Communist Party of Belgium (PCB); Christoforos IOANNIDES, member of the CC of the Progressive Party of the Working People of Cyprus (AKEL); Aulis LEPPANEN, functionary of the CC of the Communist Party of Finland (SKP); Uwe EICHHOLZ, member of the Board of the German Communist Party (DKP); Constantin VOLGARPOULOS, member of the Secretariat of the CC of the Communist Party of Greece (KKE); Jeronimo de SOUSA, member of the CC of the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP); Marion CABBALLERO, secretary of the Valencia regional organisation of the Communist Party of Spain (PCE); Alain BRINGOLF, member of the CC of the Swiss Party of Labour (PST); and Ziya GULER, representing the Turkish Communists (TKP).

The following account of the meeting, based on the views voiced by the participants, was prepared on the Commission's instructions by Georg Kwiatowski, WMR Editorial Board member and representative of the German Communist Party on WMR, and the Commission's secretary, WMR staff member Vladimir Shelepin.

THE SYMPOSIUM took place in the Ruhr, Western Europe's biggest coalmining and steelmaking centre. However, workshops and even whole factories, along with coalpits and allied production units, have been closing down there since the corporations launched their modernisation and concentration programmes in 1968. Up to 200,000 jobs will be lost. The unemployment rate in the Ruhr has reached 15-18% and is likely to soar to 23 to 30% in the next few years if the present trend holds.

A Belgian telephone-making factory, which 5 years ago employed 17,000, has expanded production manyfold while whittling its workforce down to about 5,000. Another Belgian high-tech plant, belonging to the transnational Nestle, produces many tons of milk powder a day. The entire production process, from the loading of raw materials to the packing and stocking of the finished product, is run by just six operators with display monitors.

These two examples graphically illustrate the current changes in the socioeconomic life of European capitalist countries.

Increasingly, blue-collar workers are being replaced by robots, and white-collar workers by computers as a result of the technological revolution and the related economic restructuring taking place in the

more advanced capitalist countries. Whole industries are dying and so are the working-class communities. The line between research and production is disappearing in the high-tech areas, such as biotechnology, and consequently the entire world of labour is changing drastically. Just as Marx predicted: "Labour no longer appears so much as included in the production process, but rather man relates himself to that process as its overseer and regulator."¹

Economic restructuring within the Common Market has affected also its less developed member countries. In Portugal entire businesses and manufacturing companies have been closing down over the past few years in shipbuilding, heavy engineering, steel-making, mining, electrical engineering and the automotive industry. Spanish industrialists, ploughing ahead with readjustment since the late 1970s, have been trying to offset their failure to introduce sufficient new technology by intensifying labour and shedding jobs.

Industrialisation in less developed countries has brought to life legions of small and medium-sized businesses. Roughly 60% of the Greek workforce are employed by plants, workshops, retailers and services with a workforce of under 100 each. Small

¹ Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 91.

businesses prevail on Cyprus, a former British colony, which industrialised only after independence in 1960. Businesses employing 10 to 20 people each are mushrooming in Portugal, especially in the service, textile and shoe-making industries. Economic decentralisation—with large manufacturers and service companies farming out subsidiary operations to subcontractors—is taking place in the more developed as well as in the less developed countries.

Changes in production and economic structures have profound social and psychological effects on working people. The intensity and quality of work are changing, often requiring better skills and greater mental effort. At the same time labour is becoming increasingly specialised, with the worker alienated from the end product. Work collectives are growing smaller and direct contacts between members fewer.

In spite of the different development levels of the countries represented at the symposium, a *common tendency exists in the movement of workers away* from the primary sector (agriculture) to the secondary (industry), and from both to the tertiary economic sector (services). The proportion of office workers, middle-level technical personnel and intellectuals is growing, and women are becoming more involved as wage-earners; in Finland, for example, they constitute roughly 60% of the workforce.

In Austria wage workers constitute almost 90% of all the working people. However, the number of workers employed in goods production dropped by 11%, while in service industries it increased by 14% in the ten years between 1976 and 1986. The number of office workers in service industries is also proliferating while in industry it has levelled out. In 1986, Spain had 52% of its workforce employed in the service sector as compared with 38% ten years previously. More than half the Finnish wage-earners are not workers in the textbook sense of the word.

The make-up of the working class is becoming increasingly diversified not only in the more developed countries but also—for different reasons—in Europe's economic backwaters, like Turkey, where new technologies have yet to make an impact. The workforce there is growing numerically but more than half come from the strata created by the demise of the traditional rural structures, or are ruined artisans. Another new development is the influx into industry of job-trained youth who, unlike cadre workers, have no experience of the class struggle. The militancy and organisation of the working class are decreasing as a result.

People's everyday life is changing as well. In the past few decades most people's living standards have improved considerably in the more industrialised countries and in countries with a more favourable market situation, such as Cyprus. Working people still have many problems and worry about

tomorrow but there is no longer abject poverty, hunger or absolute social vulnerability.

Another recent development is the virtual disappearance of working-class districts from West European cities. New residential areas have emerged, with a mixed population from various social groups, satellite towns of high-rise apartment blocks with residents from every walk of life, and "dormitory suburbs" around industrial centres. People have to commute, spending as much as two hours a day travelling. They come home physically and morally exhausted and rarely go out. Families live in the same place for years without knowing their neighbours.

The onslaught of the mass media contributes to that alienation. Society has changed under their impact. Every household has a TV set and many own VCR's, not to mention newspapers and magazines. There is no need to go out in order to learn what is happening in the country and the world. The cohesion, mutual assistance and common interest of the former working-class districts have given way to isolation within families.

Moreover, though living side by side, people often have different concerns. Some own their flats, others rent private, communal or cooperative housing. Some have permanent jobs and sources of income while others are hopelessly looking for a job or face the risk of losing it. As industries in Austria, for example, scale down production or close altogether, people lose their inexpensive factory housing along with their jobs.

The diversity of living conditions detracts from the spirit of class solidarity. At the same time, views, attitudes and sentiments specific to the working class as well as other social groups increasingly tend to influence each other. When a problem affects everyone in a particular district, people from different social strata and occupational and property groups pool their resources.

New tendencies in the economy, the social sphere, at the work place, in lifestyles and mentality pose complex questions to the working-class movement, communist parties and all the other left forces, and answers to them have to be found now. The fraternal parties' search for such answers turns up very different results, which is explained as much by their different circumstances as by their specific historical experiences, and by the effect of the subjective factor.

According to the Belgian participant, not just Communists but all the left forces of the working-class movement have run into serious difficulties in the northern, Flemish part of his country. The working people's class solidarity has declined. Coalminers in Limbourg province, for example, are fighting to prevent pit closures and to keep their jobs, whereas workers at the nearby atomic power plant do not

see any need for coal since energy can be obtained in a modern, entirely "clean" way. Things have gone so far that workers will rather take the side of their bosses than support fellow workers in other industries.

As a result, in Flanders almost all the PCB factory cells have folded up. The Flemish Communists believe that one way out of the predicament is to set up party organisations along sectoral lines so that they should include workers from both traditional and modern industries. In party discussions emphasis will be laid not so much on concrete socioeconomic demands as on studies of the specific industry's long-term prospects in the context of broader economic development models.

The PST explains its current weak position among workers by the fact that it has been historically associated with the struggle over the years for higher wages, shorter working hours, and social benefits. At present, Swiss Communists realise, these demands have lost much of their relevance in such a highly developed country as theirs. Communists are now shifting their emphasis to questions related to the quality of life, i.e., the reconciliation of the need to raise economic productivity and to protect the environment. These demands have the sympathies of intellectuals, especially students, but often fail to draw any response from workers.

The Portuguese Communists' approach is different. Faced with attacks from the Right and attempts to isolate and weaken the PCP, they are launching struggle in the unions and workers' commissions, mobilising the working class and the mass of people for resistance, and fostering a combative spirit in the party cells. Action at factories and in the unions is centered around economic and political demands.

The West German Communists rely on the hard-core working class—more than 4 million workers in the power, building, steel, mining, chemicals, automotive, computer and communications industries. Those are both high-tech sunrise industries, and traditional ones which are being phased out. Naturally, different groups of workers have different working conditions, skill levels and attitudes. But the DKP believes that the juxtaposition of workers in the sunrise industries and those in the traditional ones is as unproductive as any contrasting of "blue-" and "white-collar" workers.

It is perfectly clear to the KPÖ, as its 26th Congress (March 1987) stressed in its materials, that the Communists should direct their political activities primarily at the working class, which incorporates not all the wage workers but a considerable part of them, including most office employees. Just like industrial labour, they do not own the means of production nor perform managerial functions, having to sell their labour-power and generate profit for capital. Those various groups of wage workers which are not part

of the working class approximate it in the character of work, incomes and legal status.

The industrial proletariat was and remains the paramount factor of the party-building efforts of the KKE, its spokesman noted. The 12th KKE Congress (1987) marked a qualitative change in this sphere, which is manifest in the party's entire activities today. The Congress called for the strengthening of primary organisations in industry, where workers and employees directly oppose the exploiters. Communists consider it their task to stand up to the attempts of the class enemy to split up work collectives and are active in the trade union struggle in an effort to politicise it and to overcome erroneous views and methods of work.

The theoretical orientation to the working class, including both its core and new detachments, is very difficult to put into practice.

Public and large private enterprises remain the Communists' strongholds, the PCP's spokesman noted, but the conditions under which party organisations work are very different there. Some of them are free to operate on the shopfloor, hold meetings and exercise a degree of control over management through workers' commissions. But other enterprises do not even have production councils because proprietors have subdued personnel with pressure and threats. Some party cells operate on an almost semilegal basis. Thousands of Communists paid by the hour or by the job risk being fired at any moment in retaliation for their party or union activities.

Many Greek Communists doing party work in industry also take great risks. Like other progressive activists, they are harassed by proprietors and are the first to be dismissed. Some factory party cells have been wiped out entirely in this way. The odds against party groups are lengthened by the scattering of workers between subcontracts, the introduction of shorter working hours and, ideologically, the imposition of the spirit of reformism and conciliation.

Although continuing their efforts to strengthen factory party cells organisationally and politically, Austrian Communists recognise that the rationalisation of production and the introduction of new technologies complicate their shopfloor activities. Primary party organisations in West Germany, Spain and Portugal often disappear when the plants in which they have operated for years close down, although labour legislation in those countries is fairly up-to-date. Meanwhile, a Turkish Communist detained on the shopfloor for union or party activities faces jail and torture.

Exchanges of information and party work experience at the symposium revealed that *party cells in residential communities are the most widespread form of organisation*. They unite industrial workers from factories which for some reason do not have

party cells, and Communists from other social strata, and also make it possible to organise the temporarily or permanently unemployed. The Cypriot spokesman supplied some interesting information on this: in addition to factory and office workers, artisans and petty traders make up 13.2% and housewives 11% of the AKEL membership.

Orientation to the working class is secured not only through direct shopfloor activities, which are sometimes difficult to pursue. Some of the fraternal parties have been endeavouring throughout their history to establish and maintain primary organisations by trades—including industrial trades—such as carpenters' and railwaymen's organisations in Finland and organisations of metalworkers, artisans and others in Greece. Those cells were directly connected to district party committees and were active in their respective trade unions.

Time has exposed the flaws in that system. First, "unionisation" at the expense of the political character of the party organisation appeared; second, a gap has opened between cells in the community and shopfloor grassroots organisations; and finally, organisations consisting almost entirely of pensioners and housewives have emerged at the community level. Now the system is on its way out.

The efficient combination of the different forms of party organisation, in accordance with the specific circumstances of social development and the tasks tackled by the working-class movement at any given time, is immensely important to the combativeness of the communist party as a national force. This point, made by all the participants in the symposium, is highlighted by the evolution of the PCE.

When the PCE was fighting against the Franco dictatorship, its underground organisations worked mainly in the unions, and among creative intellectuals and students. That was how Workers' Commissions and a powerful opposition emerged, eventually bringing down the totalitarian regime. But at the new stage the party's organisational activities were redirected away from large-scale social battles towards participation in various elective bodies. Emphasis was switched to territorial cells at the expense of work on the shopfloor. It was only thanks to those comrades who dissented from the views imposed from on high and remained active in the Workers' Commissions that the party has retained some influence in the factories.

The Spanish Communists attribute their bitter electoral losses of the past few years in large measure to their attempts to handle all work "from above", while neglecting the grassroots. Since its 11th Congress (1983) the party has reverted to extensive organisational work among the people, namely, in the unions through the Workers' Commissions, in the community through local associations, in consumer

societies and parent-teacher associations, in culture through communist intellectuals, and also in pacifist, women's, ecological, youth and other civic movements.

In drawing up their party development plans, the West German Communists proceed from the assumption that their traditional sphere of influence will be shrinking. New realities prompted them to make long-term (five-year) plans in party work and to formulate major tasks while taking into account the current changes. When they used to fight for every job, Communists often lost sight of the fact that while some industries were declining, others were expanding, and failed to gain ground there in time.

Long-term planning is designed to help the DKP increase its influence in industry. The experience of territorial organisations and party groups at universities in preparing the ground jointly with district party committees for the formation of shopfloor party cells is being accumulated. Communists have to start from scratch: practice shows that it takes several years to organise a cell of 3-4 members at a factory which does not yet have any Communists among its workforce.

Every primary party organisation in communities has one "supertask", which involves work with a major industrial plant or some other economic unit in the neighbourhood. The organisation itself decides how best to go about tackling that task. Communists prepare publications, conduct leafletting campaigns, put up bulletin boards in busy streets, etc. Together with the shopfloor cell (if there is one) they study the problems of the given enterprise and discuss them with workers at the factory gate or in the community, and also with neighbours from other walks of life.

The picture is much the same in Finland. Conventional factory party organisations have been established at only a few of the larger enterprises. Communists, however, combine their shopfloor influence with vigorous union activities and with efforts in local party cells, especially in the numerous towns and communities around one or more enterprises, where the interests of the workers and the local population are interlinked.

The PCB spokesman cited an interesting example of the link between the trade union struggles and Communists' work in the community. A campaign was launched against the government's intention to privatise railroads. Railwaymen and their union were the first to give battle. The party lent them support by organising passenger committees in the surrounding areas. Although their interests do not fully coincide, both railwaymen and passengers will lose out if the roads are reprivatised: the former risk losing jobs and the latter will have to pay higher fares.

The composition of party organisations is becoming increasingly motley under the influence of changes in society. In West Germany, for instance, all the party cells except those at universities used to unite mostly workers and office employees. But at present both shopfloor and neighbourhood party organisations include also engineers and designers, scientists, teachers, workers in culture, professionals and even businessmen. Some worry about making ends meet from one pay-day to the next, others have a stable income and still others are looking for investment opportunities.

All this both enriches party life and makes it more complex. The Communists' task is to raise the standards of work in party groups and make it appeal to all their members. For example, how can the special knowledge and high competence of party members working at research laboratories, planning bodies or atomic power stations be put to better use?

The GCP believes that it cannot confine its activities within the bounds of the primary organisation. Without disrupting organisational structures, regional and district party committees involve specialists in drawing up strategic programmes, e.g., for reconverting the West German munitions industry, which employs 300,000 across the country, to civilian production.

In order to make use of the potential of Communists with high-level professional knowledge and to interest them in party work, the KPÖ is organising special teams of research workers, architects, physicians, etc., who nevertheless remain registered with their local party groups.

A correct and theoretically lucid party-building policy line yields fruit only when backed up by adequate organisational efforts, Greek Communists believe. The 12th KKE Congress has identified shortcomings and weaknesses in that work and they are now being rectified. The party believes that the principal means of overcoming passivity among rank-and-file Communists is to broaden democracy within the party and to make the activities of primary organisations richer in content. Party meetings everywhere should be organised as attractive and lively events that would encourage everyone to take decisions and then stick to them.

West German Communists believe that the task of restructuring party work is to specify general political concepts for every level and to ensure that every organisation, from primary to district to regional, knows what to do and when, and that every Communist identifies himself or herself with the party's goals. To this end it is necessary to involve people at the grassroots level in the formulation and discussion of party concepts.

Another important goal in party work, according to participants in the symposium, is to set party cells *definite and realistic, if limited, goals and to*

encourage them to concentrate their efforts on these. Nothing buoys up the spirits of a party group better than tangible little victories, making people realise that their time and effort are not wasted. With this in mind, the DKP has taken root in the municipal councils of several towns and communities in the Ruhr.

Although improvements in party-building work are very important, the central issue for fraternal parties is still that of *working among the people in order to win new allies*. If those efforts are successful, Lenin's words—that a communist party may be "ten times, a hundred times, more than a hundred times, greater than its numbers"²—will be borne out. When all is said and done, party work, be it on the shopfloor, in the community or in the unions, is efficient only when it breaks out of the relatively narrow circle of sympathisers into real action among factory and office workers, intellectuals and all the other working strata of society.

The fraternal parties' experience of mass work and policies of alliances that was presented at the symposium is so vast and diversified that this account is only able to illustrate certain aspects with individual examples. We will supply summaries from each of the ten participating countries.

Austria. Communists are the most stable component of a strong peace movement. They cooperate effectively with environmentalists, advocates of the public sector, and with people campaigning against unemployment and for democratic change in education. Austrian Communists cooperate with ecological groups in communal policies, and take part alongside workers, teachers, pensioners, housewives, students and unemployed in committees against the dismantling of the social security system.

Belgium. The France-based TNC Michelin has closed its Belgian subsidiary and laid off 1,000 workers. The PCB immediately urged its local groups and Communists in municipal councils to launch a "Don't Buy Michelin Tyres" campaign. Posters and leaflets were issued, petitions and letters of protest written and sent out, and activists went round car workshops and pools to talk to their owners. In a month, Michelin tyre sales dropped by 40% in Belgium. Although the transnational refused to reopen its Belgian subsidiary, solidarity did work: to restore its image, Michelin has pledged to pay their redundant workers 80% of their wages until retirement age if they fail to secure other jobs. Belgian Communists believe that the plant could have been saved if the struggle had begun before it was actually closed. To do so, however, it was necessary to know the company's intentions in advance. That is why it is very important to have a system for exchanging information between party organisations in different countries working for the same transnational.

² V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, p. 406.

Cyprus. Soon after being legalised in 1941, AKEL established party cells and clubs for political and cultural work among the people in virtually every rural community. The clubs have become common centres for the party, women's groups, youth and sports organisations, and the unions, and rallying points for all sympathisers of the Left.

Many women are attracted by AKEL-sponsored tea parties, to which a well-known woman performer or physician invites 20 to 30 neighbours. They discuss not only new fashions but also the still topical problems related to the genuine emancipation of women.

The Communist Mayor of the large Cypriot city of Larnaka hangs a plaque on his door inviting anyone to come to his office to discuss his or her problems. At dawn he goes out to the city marketplace to have a look at goods and prices and to hear people talk about their lives. Thanks to such efforts AKEL has retained strong positions among the population: in 1985 its candidates were elected mayors in 9 out of the 18 cities of the country.

FRG. Communists have become a vigorous force in the campaign to prevent the planned closure of the Rheinhausen steel plant, which would wreck the livelihoods of almost everyone in a town of 20,000 people. Democratic parties and organisations, and the unions have joined forces in the face of that threat. Local artisans and traders, truckers and municipal officers, and even policemen have joined in the metalworkers' struggle. The forms of protest, old and new, include strikes, picket lines, demonstrations, rallies and sealing off streets.

Most of the local party groups actively cooperate in the peace movement with clerics, Greens and the unions. The DKP believes that these efforts have not been sufficiently intensive or consistent on the shop-floor. The party attaches much importance also to civic initiatives, in which people unite, often temporarily, for a specific purpose.

Finland. Primary organisations are a success when they closely follow efforts to resolve problems of concern to the population, monitor the proposals made by other forces in the municipal councils, think through and table their own initiatives and press for their implementation. Although at their congresses Finnish Social Democrats have passed more than one resolution against agreements with other parties, cooperation between them and Communists is making headway in the provinces, particularly in trade unions, municipal councils and commissions, and in the cooperative movement. Communists join forces on individual issues also with the Greens or the Centre Party. Cooperation runs into difficulties, however, during election campaigns, when every party nominates its own candidates and hunts for votes.

Greece. Two-thirds of the KKE locals in Thes-

saloniki, the country's second largest city, are community organisations. When the party's structures were reorganised, those cells were replenished with workers, intellectuals and artisans. Party groups see to it that municipal authorities are independent and take the initiative in all matters of public concern. They deal with problems concerning the environment, health care, sport, recreation and culture, launch political campaigns for peace, democracy and stronger national independence and are active in the work of various mass associations. As a result, there are no large autonomous petty-bourgeois organisations or movements that involve themselves with those issues.

Portugal. The PCP is the leading municipal force in 30% of the country. The party does the bulk of its work in neighbourhoods. On the national scale that work is coordinated by a special CC commission. Party locals are supplied with a range of materials, from leaflets and booklets to video cassettes. On Fridays there are mass political campaigns at factories, on public transport and in offices. On Saturdays Communists go door-to-door canvassing and in the afternoon rallies, with party leaders, are usually organised. Communist MP's are regular visitors to residential districts. They learn about people's needs and demands and formulate initiatives, which are followed up with organised action under the leadership of local party cells.

Hundreds of party centres in communities and urban districts, which are always open to anyone, provide a link between the party, its deputies and the population. Pensioners and housewives go on duty there in the daytime, and workers from nearby factories in the evenings. The centres have various commissions, such as for youth and women's affairs, for propaganda, etc. The PCP cooperates at the political level with the Greens and with the Democratic Action organisation.

Spain. The PCE is the only party in the country that readily makes its promises available for meetings of pacifists and other democratic and left movements. Joint campaigns are launched in which unity of action is forged not only around local issues but also at a higher, political level. Some 80% of Spanish Communists work in the community. They use the press, municipal radio and TV networks and personal contacts to make party decisions known to people and invite them to discuss together various issues. Local cells do invaluable work in election campaigns and referendums, like the one on Spain's membership of NATO.

Switzerland. Working in the unions and locally, Communists concern themselves with improvements in housing conditions, city planning and the environment, the democratisation of school education, broader civic participation in management and administration, and many other problems. This pays off when they act with maximum public openness

and conduct a continuous dialogue with the people, primarily with young men and women. In the small town of La Chaux-de-Fonds, whose municipal councillor represented the PST at the symposium, the party group often invites everyone to its meetings and gives them the floor.

Turkey. As distinct from the more developed countries, workers and similar social strata are concentrated in socially homogeneous population centres and neighbourhoods, which makes it easier for the banned TKP to keep in touch with them. In the past few years local action groups, concerned with the environment, infrastructures, etc., have begun to emerge in urban communities. There is no alternative ecological party in the country, which enables Communists effectively to make use of relevant problems to establish contact with the mass of people.

Purposeful work in neighbourhoods makes it possible to forge broad democratic alliances in order to begin the struggle around specific demands. For instance, a mass campaign of protest against the building of a NATO airfield was conducted in a large city in Central Anatolia. The democratic forces' campaign to collect signatures in defence of human rights and against the trial of the Turkish Communist leaders Nihat Sargin and Haydar Kutlu has also had strong repercussions.

The policy of alliances and open dialogue, the need for which is recognised by all the parties and in pursuit of which many of them have already accumulated some experience, exerts a tremendous influence on the party structure itself and gives rise to new and difficult problems.

Thousands of new members joined the DKP through mass organisations and social movements. Some party groups grew rapidly from 3-4 to 20-25 members. However, about one-third of the newcomers have already dropped out, many of them having proved ideologically immature or too weak in their convictions to live the difficult life of a West German Communist. Others have failed to understand and accept the organisational norms of party life that involve discipline and democratic centralism. Still others could not overcome their purely pacifist views and put into the right perspective the difficulties faced by socialist countries or the realities of the class struggle.

Some people who, for whatever reasons, have dropped out of the DKP, cooperate with Communists in various actions of the peace movement. Their membership of the party, brief as it was, has enriched both them and the party itself with new experience and fresh ideas.

Spanish Communists reject the utilitarian approach to their allies, be they the unions or civic movements. They respect their partners' autonomy and try patiently to smooth out any differences that may

arise. They show special flexibility in work with creative intellectuals, academics, journalists, and other social groups which exert considerable influence on the public. The idea is to place the achievements of culture in the service of progressive policies, with proper respect for various viewpoints. The policy of openness attracts fresh forces into the party. But some Communists of the older generation are wary of this course. In their view, it distracts attention from the chief issues of the class struggle, while outside opinions may cause the party to lose its identity.

There are also doubts in the KPÖ that work in the unions and social movements detracts from mainstream party activities. Some comrades are worried that, along with the success of the policy of alliances and the resultant electoral advances, the political work of party groups is slackening and a gap has opened between policy on the one hand, and the organisational structure that is to translate it into practice on the other.

The KPÖ spokesman stressed that the party's policy of alliances was successful only so far as it manifested itself as an independent force. Communists offer their allies their own experience, knowledge, organisation and consistency, and are by rights considered sound partners. The important thing, however, is not to dissolve in an alliance while working in it. To avoid that, a party cell should have an intensive life of its own and appeal to people rather than deter them by certain sectarian positions.

The policy of openness and dialogue described by the Swiss spokesman enabled his party group at La Chaux-de-Fonds quickly to recruit dozens of new members, mostly young people, and thus overcome the grave affliction of "ageing" that has hit a number of West European communist parties. The representative of the Swiss Communists dismissed fears that the absorption of outside views may harm Communists. Why not give a hearing to more convincing arguments than one's own? One finds oneself following in the wake of others when one accepts their views a priori in order to make, or at least not to lose, temporary allies. But when Communists participate as equals in honest and unbiased discussions and draw conclusions, it reveals their acceptance of the indubitable fact that *today no one, ourselves included, has the monopoly of truth.*

The participants in the symposium voiced their satisfaction with the substantive exchanges of information on new areas in party work. However, the meeting was limited to participants from ten European parties, and not all the relevant questions were dealt with. They also noted the need to give broader and more regular coverage in *WMR* to the experience of the fraternal parties' primary organisations.

MARX'S PHILOSOPHY: FROM A DOGMATIC INTERPRETATION TO CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Damian PRETEL

*Central Committee member,
Communist Party of Spain;
Doctor of Philosophy*

THE SOCIAL realities of the late 20th century make it incumbent on us to advance our Marxist theory considerably. This advancement and development implies not simply the addition of new storeys to the existing edifice but, to a certain degree, its rebuilding. It calls for corrections to be introduced into previously accepted provisions and notions and for outdated formulas and postulates to be replaced. In other words, it should be a complex and responsible undertaking which cannot be tackled if we fail to use the method of dialectics, that highly valuable tool of Marxist philosophy.

Meanwhile, contrary to protestations of the significance and importance of dialectics, our theory was in fact long dominated by dogmatism, the antithesis of dialectics. In many popular science books which are available on the mass market and which help shape people's beliefs, much is written about the opposition of Marx and Engels to right-wing revisionism and considerably less about their struggle against vulgar oversimplification and dogmatism. As a result, we are left with the wrong impression that Marx and Engels regarded oversimplified and dogmatic concepts as less dangerous to the working-class movement. In actual fact, however, they waged a tireless battle against dogmatic interpretations of Marxism. "All I know is that I am no Marxist," Marx himself used to exclaim when coming across crudely primitive presentations of his doctrine.

Dogmatic thought patterns gained particular currency during the Stalin years. They played into the hands of right-wing revisionists, providing them with

certain justification of their critical attacks. Dogmatism also resulted in the fact that theory and revolutionary strategy lagged considerably behind the times. *New political thinking is changing this situation radically, opening favourable prospects for creative research.* However, before these opportunities can be used, we should solve a number of questions, primarily those of our philosophical method.

The Key Role of Method

During Marx's and Engel's lifetime, few of their coworkers were skilled dialecticians. Engels complained that there were amazingly few people in the German working-class movement capable of advancing theory effectively or creatively. Those who possessed outstanding theoretical abilities—for example, August Bebel—were forced to deal with practical matters. "Routine party work," Engels wrote, "enables him to bring this finest quality of his into play only in applying theory to practical activities."¹ Apparently, the same thing happened to several other gifted young Marxists too. As a result, there were more interpreters among them than people capable of profound theoretical work.

Significantly, Engels said in this connection that "in general, the word 'materialistic' serves many of the younger writers in Germany as a mere phrase with which anything and everything is labelled without further study, that is, they stick on this label and then consider the question disposed of. But our conception of history is above all a guide to study, not a lever for construction after the manner of the Hegelian."²

¹ Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, Vol. 37, p. 290.

² Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1965, p. 416.

Engels spoke repeatedly about the key role of method in theoretical research. In one of his letters he stressed that Marx and himself "laid, and were bound to lay, the main emphasis, in the first place, on the *derivation* of political, juridical and other ideological notions, and of actions arising through the medium of these notions, from basic economic facts. But in so doing we neglected the formal side—the ways and means by which these notions, etc., come about—for the sake of the content. This has given our adversaries a welcome opportunity for misunderstandings and distortions..."³

Please note that in this case, Engels's primary interest lies in the genesis of ideas, in the logic guiding the development of theoretical thought, i. e., in dialectical logic. That is a point he made in another of his letters where he referred to Marx and said that "his way of viewing things is not a doctrine but a method. It does not provide ready-made dogmas, but criteria for further research and the method for this research."⁴

Why was Engels so intent on defending these ideas? *The record shows that without dialectics, research loses its creative impulse and becomes petrified, merely listing facts, dates, cases and examples.* The result is an unconscious revision of the theory advanced by Marx who said that "Hegel never described as dialectics the subsumption of vast numbers of 'cases' under a general principle."⁵ Besides, the dogmatic view is that the ideas voiced by the founders of Marxism are valid in any situation although, as Marx stressed repeatedly, continuous objective change affects people's worldviews, and new fields of knowledge, as well as new concepts and ideas emerge, highlighting the dependence of the development of thought on specific conditions and circumstances. *Concrete analysis of concrete situations is Marx's foremost methodological principle.* Significantly, Engels criticised those who "interpret as absolute those provisions that, in Marx's view, are valid only under specific circumstances".⁶ The flaw of this approach is that it imparts a rigid pattern to theory, depriving it of the capacity for self-development and, consequently, for effectively influencing practice, the course of history.

As a result, those political organisations of the working class which follow such patterns acquire a strong resemblance to sects and turn into groups and parties closed in on themselves and poorly connected with actual social processes. Engels noted that members of such organisations "can only interpret this vibrant theory of action, of cooperation with the working class at all possible stages of its development as a collection of dogmas to be learned by heart and recited repeatedly like formulas, incantations or Catholic prayers".⁷ According to

Engels, such parties, "as Hegel says, come from nothing through nothing to nothing".⁸ This echoes a point made by Marx: "Above all one must remember that our Association is the *militant organisation* of the proletariat and by no means a society for the advancement of doctrinaire amateurs."⁹

Aware of the dangers inherent in such attitudes, the founders of Marxism saw their task in offering a systematic outline of dialectics, of the theory behind their method. For example, Marx wrote to Engels that "if ever the time comes when such work (philosophical generalisation.—D. P.) is again possible, I should very much like to write 2 or 3 sheets making accessible to the common reader the *rational* aspect of the method which Hegel not only discovered but also mystified."¹⁰ Marx kept mentioning this plan later too.

For his part, Engels also wrote to Marx about his decision to tackle the problems of the dialectical method. After ten years of work, he produced his remarkable *Dialectics of Nature*. "...Dialectics," he said, "cannot be despised with impunity. However great one's contempt for all theoretical thought, nevertheless one cannot bring two natural facts into relation with each other, or understand the connection existing between them, without theoretical thought. The only question is whether one's thinking is correct or not, and contempt of theory is evidently the most certain way to think naturalistically, and therefore incorrectly. But, according to an old and well-known dialectical law, incorrect thinking, carried to its logical conclusion, inevitably arrives at the opposite of its point of departure. Hence, the empirical contempt for dialectics is punished by some of the most sober empiricists being led into the most barren of all superstitions, into modern spiritualism."¹¹

Let us admit that today, on the eve of the 21st century and more than 100 years after Engels's *Dialectics of Nature* was published, this conclusion remains valid for Communists.

Neodogmatism Disguised as "Marxist Philosophy"

The torch of the struggle against scholastic theorising passed on to Lenin. He referred many times to the need to complete the plan of Marx and Engels for creating a Logic with a capital L. In his *Philosophical Notebooks* he said that in the development of dialectical materialism, the emphasis should be not so much on materialism as on its dialectical aspect, on the method.

Lenin did not abandon these plans after the October Revolution either. Moreover, he set the task of training a party cadre of theoreticians capable of

³ Ibid., p. 459.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 480-481.

⁵ Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 41, p. 333.

⁶ Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, Vol. 36, p. 96.

⁷ Ibid., Vol. 38, p. 101.

⁸ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 474.

⁹ Ibid., p. 279.

¹⁰ Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 40, p. 249.

¹¹ Ibid., Vol. 25, p. 354.

using the art of dialectics. Specifically, this is clear from his famous "Letter to the Congress": "Speaking of the young C. C. members, I wish to say a few words about Bukharin and Pyatakov. They are, in my opinion, the most outstanding figures (among the youngest ones), and the following must be borne in mind about them: Bukharin is not only a most valuable and major theorist of the Party; he is also rightly considered the favourite of the whole Party, but his theoretical views can be classified as fully Marxist only with great reserve, for there is something scholastic about him (he has never made a study of dialectics, and, I think, never fully understood it)." ¹²

Unfortunately, as it is now clear from assessments made by Soviet comrades, Lenin's behests were not treated with the attention they deserved. Some attempts to train a creative philosophical cadre were indeed undertaken in the Soviet Union, but they were blocked by the Stalinist leadership which launched a number of political campaigns, including one against so-called Menshevik-style idealism. Most of the better thinkers were purged. Rigid ideological controls were imposed on philosophy, checking any and all attempts at creatively interpreting new realities, primarily those emerging in the course of socialist construction. Any departure from the Stalinist dogmas was condemned.

The development of theory came virtually to a standstill. Crude oversimplification and primitive dogmatism held sway, culminating in Stalin's brief work "On Dialectical and Historical Materialism". In it, he drew rigid distinctions between dialectical and historical materialism, the former completely losing its methodological significance: dialectics was reduced to four "rules", while the law of negation of the negation was jettisoned as "Hegelian". Stalin turned dialectics into metaphysics. Besides, the emphasis was on ontology, epistemology being in fact pushed to the background. Stalinist pressure isolated philosophy from other sciences, both social and natural. Philosophers merely provided an apologia of Stalin's scholasticism, crudely and obviously oversimplified Marxism, and obligingly supplied justification of current policies and decisions. Much of the then theoretical research was therefore barren. At the same time, philosophers were accused of evading practical questions and topical problems. They were conditioned to work on instructions "from on high".

With its critical aspect eroded, the official "Marxist philosophy" long espoused by the theoreticians of the administration-by-flat school in the USSR and elsewhere had nothing in common with Marx's life-giving ideas. It was in fact their negation. Compounding this was the primitive idea that after the emergence of Marxism, all bourgeois philosophy—as well as the ideas produced by non-Marxist natural scientists—was reactionary through and through.

With the 20th Congress of the CPSU in 1956, a

de-Stalinisation of science began tentatively, but the thaw proved to be short-lived. The command-style bureaucratic system which, by the 1960s, held most of its ground in the USSR did not need either critical reflections on the present or bold forecasts of the future. It had no use for those philosophers who sought to follow up on the ideas of the 20th Congress. In the realm of theory, dogmatism still dominated, albeit slightly updated, and command-style management of science remained in force. The way to greater knowledge of dialectics, to a better understanding of the method (this way called for a free discussion of problems connected with worldviews and methodology) was blocked by a morass of neodogmatic placidity and torpor in which creative thought got bogged down.

Nowadays, neodogmatism manifests itself above all in the practice of presenting the very subject of Marxist philosophy as something given once and for all. Paradoxically, our philosophy, while arguing that everything is in a state of constant flux and development, defines its subject the way it did decades ago. Besides, this subject—whether it concerns matter and consciousness, space and time, relationships, objective laws, etc.—is treated in isolation from the problem of man. However, evaluation of objective reality is important not by itself but in its relation to social motion, to the development of consciousness and human activity. Therefore, in the spirit of Marx's theory, we are to *restore the unity of dialectical and historical materialism* and place the problem of man at the very centre of Marxist philosophy.

Neodogmatism also preserves the gap between theory and practice. True, the latter is recognised as the criterion of validity, as the source and basis of knowledge. Still, we have failed to profoundly grasp and develop the idea that practice is a *fundamental* category and that its incorporation into the very fabric of dialectical materialism marked a genuine revolution in philosophy.

We are yet to define the "basic cell" of dialectics. Nor have we developed a sufficiently orderly system of categories of dialectical logic. They are being correlated without clear-cut methodological criteria. As a result, we lack a comprehensive picture of the unity of being and consciousness.

We have not properly covered the problem of the unity of logic, dialectics and the theory of knowledge either—although, according to Engels, by discovering the unity of the laws governing objective reality, thinking and knowledge, Marxist theory made a particularly substantial contribution to the advancement of the world's philosophical culture. In his *Dialectics of Nature* Engels said that "our subjective thought and the objective world are subject to the same laws, and ... in the final analysis they cannot contradict each other in their results, but must coincide... It is the unconscious and unconditional premise for our theoretical thought". ¹³

¹³ Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 544.

¹² V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 36, p. 595.

The authors of many popularly written works on "Marxist philosophy" are virtually silent on a major issue raised by Marx—the *correlation between the logical and the historical*. Marx said that "man's reflections on the forms of social life, and consequently, also, his scientific analysis of those forms, take a course directly opposite to that of their actual historical development".¹⁴ There is no doubt that without a thorough examination of this problem, philosophical knowledge cannot develop successfully.

Neodogmatism completely ignored the question of prevision, of theoretical prognostication, etc. We know that in a certain sense, theory is "superior" to practice because—as Lenin argued in his *Philosophical Notebooks*—consciousness not only reflects but also "shapes the world". By refusing to recognise this fact, neodogmatism clung to passive reflection of reality—something which, in the final analysis, replaces dialectics with formal logic.

The tone of the works popularly written by representatives of the dogmatic school bears no resemblance to the critical reflections and doubts typical of Marx, Engels and Lenin or to their philosophical thinking, permeated with a passionate commitment to revolution and radical social change. Neodogmatism is listless and complacent. Conversely, a *critical spirit that stops at nothing is central to Marx's philosophy*. It is a critical attitude to social reality, to the ideas that dominate society, to the traditions that dominate people, as well as to the thinker himself, to his ideals and practical actions. *It is constant and total criticism which is to stimulate the creative efforts of philosophers, civic leaders and political parties aimed at not only explaining but also changing the world.*

Of great interest in this connection is, I think, one of Engels's letters where he attacked the mechanistic views of socialism held by those to whom "socialist society" appeared not as something undergoing continuous change and progress but as a stable affair fixed once and for all".¹⁵

Frankly, the same can be said about the past and present dogmatism which has taken root in official "Marxist philosophy". By contrast, where socialism is seen as a process, not a state, and where social relations are being restructured, accompanied by polemics and a search for new solutions which often clash with conventional theoretical precepts, conditions arise for the development of a dialectical philosophical concept.

A Theoretical Guide to Action

A great deal of work must be done to really revive the philosophy of Marx, Engels and Lenin, its creative spirit and critical attitude. Of course, it would be an oversimplification to maintain that dogmatism has completely paralysed all philosophical thought

in the communist movement. Deep down, creative work went on. There has always been a desire to think the way Marx, Engels and Lenin did, to overcome the barriers of Stalinism and of the stagnant years, and relevant examples are many. (Suffice it to recall the late Evald Ilyenkov, an outstanding Soviet philosopher who published brilliant works on dialectics in the 1950-1970s.) Otherwise one could not explain today's shift to new political thinking. At the same time, a definitive break with dogmatism calls not only for cleansing Marx's philosophy of crudely simplistic accretions and trite interpretations but also for its development in concert with the demands we are facing on the eve of the next millennium.

In order to accomplish these tasks we should, I think, define the subject and the specifics of our philosophy more fully and comprehensively and with due regard for the aspect of historical development. At the same time, we should fully understand and apply Marx's idea that dialectics is above all a method, a *theoretical guide to action*. Lenin shared this view too. True, some philosophers are now arguing that dialectics is not one of the methods capable of ensuring the development of scientific knowledge. No one denies that its application yields no results if it is dogmatic and rests on outdated postulates. But genuine dialectics is the key to a critical analysis of established notions. It is a continuous assertion and rejection of research results. It is a method which is itself changing and acquiring a new content in the course of historical development.

Following up on this idea, he wrote that "in every epoch, and therefore also in ours, theoretical thought is a historical product, which at different times assumes very different forms and, therewith, very different contents. The science of thought is therefore, like every other, a historical science, the science of the historical development of human thought".¹⁶ Moreover, "the theory of the laws of thought is by no means an 'eternal truth' established once and for all, as philistine reasoning imagines to be the case with the word 'logic'".¹⁷

This approach to dialectics makes it possible to effectively include practice in the subject of modern Marxist philosophical thought. First and foremost, we should ponder the best way of enabling everyone to develop and assert one's potential and become a vigorous participant in the effort to reshape the world. A relevant impulse is inherent in the humanistic traditions which Marxism has enriched. Unfortunately, they were shouldered aside first by crude oversimplification and then by neodogmatism.

It follows that simply emphasising the significance of method in philosophy is no longer enough. The question should be raised in a broader context: I hold that the theory of method lies at the heart of Marx's

¹⁴ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, p. 75.

¹⁵ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 415.

¹⁶ Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, pp. 338-339.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 339.

philosophy—naturally, if “method” is interpreted as a system of categories and laws of dialectical logic which reflects the development of both material being and of thought itself. The important thing is not only to recognise the role of this method but also to apply it skillfully and dialectically, in an honest dialogue with those who represent other theoretical currents and deal with acute social problems.

Dialectics and the system of its categories and laws should therefore discharge a new epistemological function by *extending the field of revolutionary vision of the historical process*. The wide spectrum of global problems (those facing the entire international community and all civilisation) is one of the fundamentally important spheres where philosophy can fully perform its mission.

In discussing these aspects and directions of the advancement of theory, it is important to continue the constructive dialogue that underlies new political thinking. Scientific and technological progress and its consequences is one of the subjects for a serious philosophical discussion. In the course of polemics, different views may coincide and converge. This is something in which science differs from various dogmatic, religious and political creeds. One cannot rule out the possibility of conditions arising as a result for allaying ideological differences. This deserves a special examination because new opportunities will open at the national and international level as far as social interrelationships are concerned, and new dimensions will be added to the dialectical wealth of social contacts that will help bring on an age of reason and humanism.

While on this subject, one must not forget that idealism has drawn continuously on the store of materialism. In turn, the latter has not been absolutely immune to the impact of certain postulates of “rational idealism”. History and its dialectics tell us that the division between materialism and idealism implies, not rules out, a degree of interpenetration of their elements.

To sum up, philosophy is a method because it is a synthesis of history and of all human thought. It is becoming increasingly clear that *in order to scientifically grasp the processes under way in today's world and to ascertain the global prospects of its development, the creative potential of dialectics should be revealed fully*. This is hardly possible without an in-depth study of the “subject—object” problem and of the vigorous role played by consciousness (which enhances our capacity for rational revolutionary action) in transforming the world. We would do well to stress once again that our worldview is revolutionary because Marx's philosophy is a method. In other words and contrary to what is usually claimed, it is not a method because it is derived from our worldview. It is a method because our worldview itself is a method in action and development.

COMMENTS

FOLLOWING UP THE POINT: WOMEN'S ISSUE

ON THE NATURE AND EQUALITY OF WOMEN

Gerry van HOUTEN

Central Committee member, Communist Party of Canada

I AGREE with Elean Thomas of Jamaica that our studies of the women's question “would hardly be comprehensive if we confine it to the pages of the *WMR* March issue alone and to the opinion of a few women from among the communist party leaders”.¹ That this has in fact been the case reflects a certain theoretical and political underestimation of women's role in society and in the struggle for progress and socialism.

In the past, we treated women's issues as if they concerned only women and not men. This, in turn, reflected the attitude that women's issues, including those of the family and the home, were something apart from the struggle for social progress. Let us therefore try and outline the historical and ideological roots of inequality between the sexes, and to get at the source of attitudes we Communists still hold. Elean Thomas' article was therefore a highly important step toward dealing with the women's issues not as issues for women but as issues for progressives, as issues belonging to the whole of society.

Engels and Lenin made very important theoretical observations that were subsequently neglected and even ignored. I am referring to them not because what they had to say was the absolute word on the

¹ See: Elean Thomas, “Questions to the Readers, Women, Men and Myself”, *WMR*, No. 3, 1988, p. 86.

subject but because I think their historical postulates have retained all of their validity to the present day. Although conditions have changed since these two famous revolutionaries made their remarks, we have failed to build on this theoretical heritage. Thus, when the women's movement became a major force in a number of countries, we Communists found ourselves scrambling to catch up.

It goes without saying that there are many aspects to the women's question, but central to them all is the issue of women's *equality*, or rather of the lack of equality between men and women. This inequality between the sexes has existed for so long that, even among men who are otherwise revolutionary, archaic views about the woman's nature as a social and biological being are still held.

Frederick Engels was the first to apply the science of historical materialism to the women's question. He demonstrated that women's inequality arose at the same time as and was connected with the transition of human society from primitive communalism to class societies: "The first class antagonism which appears in history coincides with the development of the antagonism between man and woman in monogamous marriage, and the first class oppression with that of the female sex by the male."² *The oppression of women was the first form of inequality ever to appear in human history.* It has become so deeply entrenched in social consciousness that it has come to be seen as a natural, biological phenomenon reflecting sexual, almost genetic differences, rather than as a social phenomenon arising out of exploitative society. This alleged biological uniqueness is then extended to other issues. The desire for peace, for example, has been treated in *WMR* and elsewhere as if peace were a natural, innate attribute of women by virtue of being mothers. When phrases such as "woman by her very nature has the mission of preserving and continuing the human race" or "as the giver of life" are offered as reasons why women are more for peace than men, then what is taking place is a certain mystification of women's nature, a nature which is in fact the result of her social being and social relations but not of her biological make-up.

Because of the division of labour between the sexes which assigned the care of children and the household to women and the affairs of private property and the state, including war, to men, women were, for historically determined *social and class reasons*, given almost exclusive responsibility for the welfare of the family. Women in general developed a vested human interest in peace because peace was a necessary prerequisite for the successful performance of their social function as the raisers of children, not as the bearers of children. This is the objective basis

for why women have a stronger desire for peace than men—at least historically.

By the same token, social and class relations can also reverse the traditional roles of men and women. Contrast profound humanists such as Mahatma Gandhi and Albert Schweitzer with the Nazi concentration camp overlord Ilse Koch who, as the "Beast (or Bitch) of Buchenwald", oversaw the torture and deaths of many inmates. And there is British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher who conducted a war against Argentina, adopted a shoot-to-kill policy in Northern Ireland and continues to give considerable support to the South African apartheid regime. Both women were mothers. All four are the exceptions that prove the rule that *social relations, not biology are the determining factors in the formation of individual characters.*

The desire for peace, particularly in the nuclear age, is not a biological characteristic which is somehow stronger in women because they bear children. It is shared by the vast majority of men and women from all walks of life precisely because of their common interest in preserving life from the very real danger of nuclear annihilation.

Engels emphasized that the rise of class society led to the oppression of women not only socially but also domestically within the family and the household: "The overthrow of mother right was the *world-historic defeat of the female sex.* The man seized the reins in the house also, the woman was degraded, enthralled, the slave of the man's lust, a mere instrument for breeding children. This lowered position ... has become gradually embellished and dissembled and, in part, clothed in a milder form, but by no means abolished."³

The nature of the household was radically transformed. Its administration lost its public and social character and became instead a private service by the woman to the man. The wife became the first domestic servant.

Having been relegated to the role of domestic servant for many centuries, women are faced with an uphill struggle to achieve genuine social and economic equality as well as to overcome deeply ingrained ideas of male superiority and domination.

Here is one of the contradictions arising in the course of the struggle. Women, knowing that they have to take time off for pregnancy, birth and child-rearing, accept part-time jobs because of the extreme shortage of affordable child-care facilities. These very same factors can delay or prevent women from pursuing careers with the same degree of consistency as men. Indeed, women suffer double jeopardy. And in this, the woman under socialism suffers from the same problem as the woman under capitalism: if she attempts to fulfill her functions as mother and

² Frederick Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and State*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1985, p. 66.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

wife on a full-time basis, she is excluded from the wage-earning work force and therefore cannot earn anything. But if she attempts to get a job so that she can earn her living independently, she soon finds herself in a position where she is unable to fulfill adequately her family responsibilities.

In the capitalist society of the late 20th century, women's oppression is somewhat milder than in previous class societies or even in earlier phases of capitalist development. However, inequality remains blatant. Women are still in an inferior social, economic and juridical position.

For example, women in Canada still earn, on average, only about 60% of the income received by men. Twenty years of the women's movement has made no appreciable impact on closing the gap. Although some individual women have become highly paid professionals, most are still channeled to the low-paying clerical, trade and service jobs. They account for almost two-thirds of Canada's part-time workers—workers whose jobs are usually unskilled, low-paid, insecure and lacking most of the fringe benefits enjoyed by many, mostly male full-time workers.

In Canada, juridical inequality continues to exist despite some gains in recent years. The federal and provincial governments have stubbornly refused to enshrine women's equality and rights in the country's constitution. Legislation imposing equal pay for work of equal value remains severely limited in scope and effectiveness. Women are still victims of sexual harassment on the job and can lose a promotion or even their job if they fight back against unwanted attention. Wife abuse at home and sexual assault are common.

All these phenomena reflecting women's inferior social position are made possible and reinforced by the ideology of male domination. Man is the hunter and woman is the prey. Modern capitalist society maintains the material basis for the ideological oppression of women and simultaneously uses that ideology to maintain their economic and social inequality. Class society fosters the belief that the woman is economically and socially inferior because of her biological nature, her femaleness. For many Canadians, both men and women, the tendency to reduce inequalities between the sexes to biological-sexual differences is very strong because this is an easy way of explaining real inequalities between the sexes, inequalities whose roots were formed in socio-economic formations based on exploitation, oppression and class antagonisms.

As women are effectively denied many rights enjoyed by men, the ideology of male domination glorifies motherhood as the main function of a women's existence. She is no longer a social person but rather a biological entity who is "the slave of the man's lust, a mere instrument for breeding children". In fact, in Canada, reactionaries offer the

glorification of motherhood as the substitute for conceding real equality to the woman and for providing her with the conditions that would make it possible for her to be both a mother and a productive member of society. Instead, the glorification of motherhood is used to deny women equal opportunities to jobs and education, the right to determine whether they want or do not want a pregnancy, and child-care, all on the grounds that "women's place is in the home".

In the course of socialist transformations, Engels argued, "the peculiar character of man's domination over woman in the modern family, and the necessity, as well as the manner, of establishing real social equality between the two (emphasis added—G. v. H.), will be brought out into full relief only when both are completely equal before the law. It will then become evident that the first premise for the emancipation of women is the reintroduction of the entire female sex into public industry; and that this again demands that the quality possessed by the individual family of being the economic unity of society be abolished."⁴ He thus linked general emancipation with the ending of male domination and the involvement of women in production.

Socialism would create the material and juridical conditions for women's equality, but neither Marx nor Engels had any illusions that socialism would automatically lead to equality between the sexes any more than it would lead to immediate real equality in society as a whole. Socialism abolished antagonistic classes but it still had to overcome the inequalities in both the material and the ideological spheres that previous class societies had left behind. Marx urged Communists to view socialism in a realistic way. What we have to deal with, he said, is a society "just as it emerges from capitalist society; which is thus in every respect, economically, morally and intellectually, still stamped with the birth marks of the old society from whose womb it emerges".⁵

No doubt, the victory of the socialist revolution in Russia in 1917 constituted a huge leap forward in the struggle for women's equality because, for the first time since the rise of class societies, a state was created which actually gave women complete juridical equality and enshrined it in its constitution. Keenly aware of the fact that inequalities continued to exist under socialism, Lenin wrote that "equality before the law is not necessarily equality in fact".⁶ And he saw housework as the most obvious and blatant example of the continuing inequality between men and women: "Even when women have full rights, they still remain factually downtrodden be-

⁴ Ibid., p. 74.

⁵ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1970, p. 17, Lenin vigorously defended this interpretation of socialist society in his famous work *The State and Revolution*.

⁶ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 371.

cause all housework is left to them. In most cases housework is the most unproductive, the most barbarous and the most arduous work a woman can do. It is exceptionally petty and does not include anything that would in any way promote the development of the woman."⁷

The socialist countries do have every right to be proud of what they have done for women in the juridical, social and economic spheres. They have, for example, established a comprehensive child-care system which has enabled women to participate more fully in economic and social life. In contrast to capitalism, there are no directly economic constraints preventing women from obtaining an education which would open doors for them to highly skilled, well-paid jobs or to promotion to top posts in the economy, state and the party. In fact, the participation of women in most areas and levels of socialist society is far higher than it is for women in capitalist societies.

Following the frank and open debates in *Für Dich*, a GDR women's magazine, it is clear that one of the big problems facing women in that country is how to reconcile the pursuit of a woman's professional career with her responsibility for maintaining the household and rearing children. The fact remains that real inequalities continue to exist between the sexes precisely because the main burden of the household and the family falls on the woman.

Moreover, social consciousness, particularly that of men but by no means exclusive to them, has lagged behind the demand to solve problems specific to women. *Ideas of male domination, one of the birth marks of the old society, continue to have their impact in socialist societies even though economic as well as juridical equality is a real possibility if not an actual reality there.* These ideas survive, in part, because real social inequalities have not yet been overcome. What women in socialist countries are still seeking is a solution to the contradiction between their traditional domestic function and their relatively new-found social function.

Inequalities also survive in part because Communists themselves are unaware that they sometimes carry ideas in their minds which are thousands of years old. It is still common in socialist countries to hear both men and women say that the responsibility for housework and the family belongs mainly to the woman, and that she has certain social and political characteristics that can be traced to her gender. This in turn gives justification in ideological form for perpetuating inequalities between the sexes and for avoiding coming to grips with outmoded forms of social consciousness.

⁷ Ibid., p. 43. These were not even Lenin's strongest words on the matter. In *A Great Beginning*, he remarked that although Soviet power had the right to be extremely proud of what it had accomplished in the juridical emancipation of women, the woman continued to be a domestic slave whose petty housework stultified and degraded her (see *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 429).

Women have and will overcome much of their historically rooted inequalities, as Engels argued, by their massive involvement in social production and in the achievement of economic independence. The more developed socialist countries have come very close to proving that Engels was correct. However, Marx's illustrious partner did not suggest what could be done to minimize housework and reduce the burden of rearing children. For his part, Lenin declared that real communism would only begin "when an all-out struggle begins ... against this petty housekeeping, or rather when its *wholesale transformation* into a large-scale socialist economy begins".⁸

Regrettably, Communists have often interpreted Lenin's prescription to mean that women should be supplied with modern appliances as a way of reducing housework and with child-care facilities as a way of reducing the time required for the rearing of children. Of course, Communists favor such changes, but no matter how much the work load in the home is reduced by technology and social programs, the reality still remains that, *as long as people hold onto ancient ideas that housework and children are women's work, the main burden, no matter how lightened, still falls on the woman even when husband and wife are otherwise equal.*

Socialism is thus faced with the task of not only overcoming juridical and economic inequalities between the sexes but also of combatting an ideology which has given most advantages and privileges to men. *The achievement of equality in the juridical and economic spheres can only sharpen the contradiction between socialism's inherent long-term tendency to eliminate inequalities between men and women and the continuation of ideological and psychological expressions of inequality and oppression.*

Speaking about men, Lenin observed that "the proletariat cannot achieve complete liberty until it has won complete liberty for women".⁹ How right he is! There will always be some housework and there will always be children who need and want parental care. Thus no true equality can be said to exist between the sexes until both men and women, with all other things being equal, share equally in housework and the rearing of children.

Author's note: My contribution is based on ideas expressed by Frederick Engels more than a hundred years ago and by V. I. Lenin shortly after the establishment of Soviet government. My article does not attempt to polemicize with this or that individual theory about women's nature and their role in society.

⁸ Ibidem.

⁹ Ibid., Vol. 30, p. 372.

FEMINISM IS NECESSARY!

Jose HOHNE-SPARBORTH

nun of the Giordano Bruno Dominican Community,
member of the Netherlands Committee
for European Security and Cooperation

We have received a response to the WMR March 1988 interview with Marie Kabrhelova, Chair of the Czechoslovak Women's Union. It raises questions that we think will interest representatives of the women's movement in the socialist countries and encourage further WMR discussion on this issue.

YOU HAVE the quintessence of Marie Kabrhelova's remarks in the title of the interview, "Socialist Feminism? No, Complete Equality." I find this approach, whereby one concept is directly opposed to the other, too categorical. It ignores the similarities that exist between everyday problems facing women under capitalism and under socialism. Surely the two concepts complement each other. And the differences in specific forms which feminism assumed in Western Europe and the USA also have to be considered.

It is all the more urgent to talk about this as there has been no profound East-West women's debate on feminism as yet. Neither was it discussed at the World Congress of Women in Moscow. Yet, mutual information and a clarification of attitudes would be exceptionally useful. What, for my part, do I think important to note in this dialogue?

I shall begin with theory. Many new concepts have appeared which extend the analysis of women's place and role in society, their struggle for their rights, and relations between the sexes. The debate is affected appreciably by differences in world outlook and political approach. All this is essential to understand our positions and to look for ways of change—but was left outside the scope of the interview.

There are, for example, different interpretations of "feminine" and "masculine". The *bourgeois interpretation* accepts distinctive roles and hinges on a philosophy that views society in terms of the laws of nature. Its protagonists dub the woman's child-bearing capacity "feminine", and reckon that she should be more sensitive, patient, caring and pragmatic. Whereas the man's role is "by nature" to stand aloof from the "trivialities" of life, and be tough, stubborn and aggressive.

Many in the *radical women's movement* think that the power balance, and pretensions to domination, largely determine the way "feminine" and "masculine" types behave. The group in power, or aspiring to it, should acquire the "masculine" qualities: to be combative and single-minded; unscrupulous when it comes to infringing on others' interests; dispassionate; and to prescind from everyday problems and conflicts.

Christian circles are engaged in a similar discussion—about the image of God. Some feel content to

stress the gentle, "feminine" characteristics in Him. Radical women theologians do not confine themselves to this; they join the Latin American liberation theologians who reject the God of those who govern—God the master—and appeal to the God of those who demand liberation from oppression.

Lastly, one cannot avoid interiorisation.¹ In the past the woman was reputed to be the seducer, the witch (potentially, at any rate), and only those beyond reproach could avoid gossip, shame and disgrace. Centuries of estrangement and oppression, of the demonisation of her body and soul, have left their imprint on her self-consciousness. Among Christian women you will find many who negatively assess themselves or, at least, their sexuality. Moreover, the rape victim feels guilty and even hears reproaches implying that she may herself have been provocative. This gives rise to an inferiority complex—the idea that she is totally unable to accomplish anything serious.

But how is Western feminism trying to solve these problems and what are its concrete expressions, for example in my country? Some women loyally defend the social order here. In certain bourgeois quarters we notice a sort of colonial or patronising attitude towards working-class women, or women from the Southern or Eastern countries; it betrays a desire to "put them in their place". On the other hand, those who won't look beyond the gender issue and see class relations as an essential component of our status, are bound to be imbued with the "natural arrogance" and "organic impudence" of capitalism.

The "free" press, while glibly assuring us of the existence of a liberal capitalism without ideology, somehow prefers to talk almost exclusively about the "apolitical" kind of feminism. That is why working-class women remain aloof from it and try to resolve their problems on their own. They have too high a sense of their own worth to "simply" share the views and interests of the rich ladies.

Bourgeois feminism is suffused with the spirit of liberal capitalism in yet another regard: by laying the emphasis on the woman's liberation as an individual, on changes within one's own self (i. e. on self-perfection), it loses sight of the mechanism of power and the essence of domination. As a result, personal emancipation appears to be natural and in the order of things, and is romanticised and idealised. This leads us away from understanding the origins of, and the ways to end, the real inequality we all face.

In the Netherlands bourgeois women liberals stress equality and are content with this. Our sisters, especially from Latin America, resist such views, and Black sisters and white women from the socialist movement say bluntly: formal equality is not enough, feminism must therefore be strengthened. But what Madame Kabrhelova means by this is the fight by

¹ Interiorisation is a psychological concept; it means making external influences, and the social forms of communication, a part of one's own inner being or mental attitudes.—Ed.

certain women's groups against particular shortcomings and the manifestations of inequality.

Regarding the motivation of our struggle I would single out the following feminist groups:

- those who try to bring about changes for all women despite expressions of male supremacy. Their aim is child daycare to free mothers for professional activity; equal pay for equal work; equal opportunity for career advancement; protection against sexual harassment at work, especially from the bosses; acknowledgement of the problem of violence against children and adults; help for women who have to maintain their families on social benefit;

- those who have found themselves in the position of outcasts, but for different reasons. Among them are disabled women, Blacks, immigrants, lesbians, those who earn a living by exhausting manual work, etc.;

- those who defend women at risk in society. They form solidarity groups with women who are victims of the trade in human beings; the wives of foreign workers who endure particularly extensive discrimination; the victims of domestic beatings and humiliation; the women who work at home, and those intensely exploited and having no recourse to trade union protection.

Men in our country often accuse us of making groundless complaints about life since other categories of people, so they assert, are much worse off. This appears to justify their shirking of fundamental issues. The bourgeois feminists, for their part, declare: "Enough of sacrificing our own interests for the sake of those of the other sex!" But the call becomes a trap: the relations of domination and oppression are shifted from social on to individual lines, with an attendant contradistinction between the most diverse groups and categories of the population. There is a growing awareness in radical women's circles of the various kinds of mechanism for domination. One of these is the pressure from the "masters"—healthy white rich men—which determines the living space of such "minorities" as women, the poor, Blacks, gays, and the disabled.

On the subject of "domination" and "submission" I would also like to mention the very detailed language studies by feminists. Whereas bourgeois feminists confine them to an analysis of sexism and are satisfied with appropriate changes in the dictionary, the politically-oriented feminists here, too, are trying to expose other manifestations of oppression which bear the mark of racism or class struggle.

Now my questions to women from the socialist countries. Satisfactory theories of class struggle and the construction of a new society, regarded as a major basis for action and constantly tested by practice, have been developed there. But why is the need for feminism as a theory not considered under socialism? Why should the countries where improvements in women's status are so much in evidence have, as far as I can see, little or no *fundamental*

theory for the question and why do the nations which are yet to resolve many such problems boast such comprehensive and thorough doctrines?

Is it not, in particular, because women in the socialist countries, with their windfall of opportunities after the general triumph of the working class, did not learn to fight for their rights *independently*? As they strove for equality in the absence of a serious theoretical elaboration of the question, wives and mothers really had in effect to look after their families single-handed, without abandoning their professional activity; they also fell behind in acquiring executive skills and positions because they made too high demands on themselves... Can they engage in theory (as a personal initiative) whilst there is a large (male) force available for the elaboration of socialist teaching? This seems unrealistic.

When Marie Kabrhelova lists all that the women's movement is doing in her country, I begin to think: Don't these kids have fathers, or do women's organisations have to look after them on their own? Men appear to lack the responsibility to join in the upbringing of their children (mostly bearing their fathers' surnames), which would lighten the burden for mothers. Women would then have much more time and energy to devote to such undertakings as the development of socialist teaching or an anti-pollution campaign.

Arguably, men under capitalism think and act differently from those under socialism. However, it seems to me that the new system remains unable to repudiate a certain self-humiliation on the part of women, or the glorification of man.

Radical feminist circles are giving much thought to how, and in what degree, the *methods of the administration of power would change* if women were enlisted in decision-making on a more representative basis. Is everything really so harmonious and democratic in the sphere of government and control? Do we see men's perestroika failing here?

Women in the socialist countries are asking themselves whether there is anything that the feminism of capitalist society could teach us?

In raising all these questions, I acknowledge the existence of increasing equality in a number of socialist countries; they reached decades ago what we are only now attempting to gain. The manifestations of feminism in the Southern, Eastern and Western countries stem from different issues; thus it is not an item of export.

I say frankly that we know very little about the development, by the women's movement in the socialist countries, of a profound theory of the relations between man and woman, in either the social or the personal spheres. Undoubtedly, interesting concepts and observations have appeared. But the Western progressive movement has also amassed such a large amount of tried and tested ideas, findings and conclusions, that an exchange of information would be very useful, if not indispensable.

HISTORY OF THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT: FACTS, PEOPLE, IDEAS

WHAT THE COMINTERN'S ARCHIVES WILL REVEAL

Fridrikh FIRSOV

D. Sc. (History), section head at the Institute
of Marxism-Leninism, CC CPSU

The year 1989 marks the 70th anniversary of the Third Communist International, founded on Lenin's initiative. The Comintern became a school of internationalism and revolutionary brotherhood, and a forum for the collective planning of the strategy and tactics of the communist movement. As part of the Comintern, parties were introduced to the art of class battles, mastered the theory of revolution and learned to apply the principles of Marxism-Leninism in practice. They fought against capitalism and reaction, fascism and threat of war, and were upholding the interests of the tolling and oppressed nations.

While recognising the immense importance of the Comintern in the history of the communist movement, we cannot help seeing that it had a chequered record. "The truth about it has still to be restored and its true history has yet to be written," Mikhail Gorbachov said in his report on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution. "In spite of all the shortcomings and miscalculations in its activities and the bitter memories of some pages from its history, the Comintern is a part of the great past of our movement."

The CPSU Central Committee's proposal for a new procedure of involving the use of the Communist International's archives, which met with understanding in many fraternal parties, prepares the ground for writing a proper history of the Comintern. The article below introduces a series of publications based on documents related to the activities of the Communist International.

THE COMINTERN'S activities, and especially its role in planning the strategy and tactics of the communist movement, have been analysed in many works of Marxist-Leninist historiography. But scholars and the general public with an interest in its history are no longer satisfied with those. Most importantly, an examination of the Comintern's positive and negative experiences is essential to an understanding of the entire history of the communist movement and the laws governing its development. *Hence the need for collective efforts by scholars from many countries, comparisons between differing viewpoints, and broad discussions. All Comintern documents and archives, previously out of reach or completely inaccessible, must of course be made available to the scientific community.* The first few steps are now being taken in this direction.

The Comintern was founded in response to the needs of the communist movement—which was

emerging under the impact of the ideas of the October Revolution—and to the desire of the nascent communist parties and left-wing internationalist socialist organisations for unity. That association was conceived as the headquarters that would coordinate the forces of the proletariat's revolutionary vanguard in the struggle for the victory of "communist revolution worldwide".

But the original objective was not achieved. The Comintern itself went through a series of changes which affected its internal affairs and methods of work. Collectivism was the hallmark of the Comintern's activities when Lenin was personally involved in its work and when the ideological, theoretical, political and organisational principles of the communist movement were formulated. All discussions at its forums were democratic, everyone was free to take a stand and all were endeavouring together to find answers to the more important problems of the

day with due regard for specific historical circumstances, national characteristics and traditions. Contentious issues were resolved on the basis of democratic centralism. Some of the premises formulated at the time were too "universal", of course, but, as historical facts show, that was caused by the desire swiftly to master the experience of Bolshevism and by certain influence of the "revolutionary instinct".

Objectively, this stemmed from the belief, which had arisen in the revolutionary movement after the triumph of the October Revolution, that the epoch of the decline of capitalism would be short-lived. That is why even some of Lenin's statements of the period bear an imprint of revolutionary romanticism. But Lenin, the great realist that he was, quickly revised his assessments when necessary; yet his reassessments were not readily grasped, even by leaders of the communist movement, let alone the mass of people. The Comintern's early activities were a reflection of a distinctive brand of revolutionary ideology, or even ethics, if you wish. It presupposed the unconditional recognition of the historical mission of the working class and its revolutionary parties to the exclusion of everything else. It took Communists time and effort to realise that in the course of the struggle for social progress they should not only re-educate the peasantry, intellectuals and "specialists", but also learn to borrow some of their social ideals.

All that notwithstanding, the basic feature of the Comintern's development in those years was an urge to formulate political assessments and conclusions, and define the prospects and tasks of the struggle through an analysis of social trends, concrete situations and the totality of international and internal factors. Lenin vigorously encouraged such an approach among the Comintern cadres and emergent communist parties. At the time very few people approached Lenin's grasp of the revolutionary movement's problems. It proved especially difficult to realise the need to go from attempts to mount a direct assault on the bourgeois system to a planned and protracted siege of the "capitalist fortress", i.e., painstaking day-to-day work among the masses and ever broader struggle for their vital interests.

Historians have already studied how, under Lenin, a collective analysis of the tendencies and contradictions in the class struggle at that time developed. But in our view these problems should be further researched. Those archive documents which show how the more far-sighted and experienced Comintern leaders, such as Clara Zetkin and Bohumir Šmeral, rallied around Lenin are of special interest and importance. Researchers have to demonstrate in detail, on the basis of facts and documents, that this cooperation contributed to the enrichment of communist theory and to the comprehensive generalisation of the accumulated experience, and also to illustrate how the activities of the Comintern's Executive Com-

mittee, and the situation in some parties, influenced the development of other parties.

Studies of documents related to the emergence of the *policy of a united worker's front and the attempts to pursue it, and also to relations between the Communists and the Social Democrats* continue to be relevant, I think. The very emergence of the Comintern, caused by a rift between the revolutionary and the reformist trends in the working-class movement at the time of the 1919-1920 revolutionary upheaval, turned those relations into fierce and irreconcilable conflict between the two trends. But in some cases, such as the Kapp putsch in Germany in 1920, relations between the Communists and the Social Democrats were not always overtly inimical.

Changes in the situation in late 1920 and early 1921 demanded that priority be given to the united front policy. Lenin stressed at the time that, without discontinuing the ideological struggle against social reformism, the Communists should find ways of approaching Social Democratic-minded workers so as to stand up jointly to the onslaught of capital. He rejected the artificial aggravation of confrontation with the Social Democratic organisations and attached priority to fostering the spirit of joint action in the mass of people. The Comintern put forward the slogan of a worker, or a worker and peasant government, based on cooperation among various proletarian and democratic parties and organisations, as an alternative to the bourgeois government.

By then the communist movement had already outlined a new concept of revolutionary development in capitalist countries, namely, that the way forward lay in the mobilisation of the masses for the implementation of current transitional tasks. These could be tackled by different detachments of the working people jointly, by means of *mass resistance* against the onslaught of capital, reaction and fascism. Although that idea of Lenin's was in fact rejected at the time—to re-emerge later, during preparations for the Comintern's 7th Congress—research into all the relevant material is very important and useful. It will add to our understanding of the importance of Lenin's period in the Comintern to the subsequent evolution of the communist movement, and provide conclusive proof of the continuity and innovation of Leninist communist policies.

That period saw rather heated and fierce debates and clashes of opinion at the Comintern's forums, such as the discussions on the "21 conditions" for admittance to the Comintern at its 2nd Congress, on tactics at its 3rd Congress and on the "worker government" slogan at its 4th Congress. The break with opportunism and the overcoming of mistakes, including left-wing sectarian and adventurist sentiments, often involved struggles and conflicts, some of them quite dramatic. But those were debates between *like-minded associates* and Lenin, who attached much importance to the democratic procedure of decision-making, was consistently seeking respect for the

opinion of every party and its contribution to the common cause, so that the Comintern's internationalist principles took "due account of the experience of the workers in different countries..."¹

In Lenin's day all the more active and able leaders of the communist movement were involved in the Comintern's work. Among them were also members of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) detailed to the Comintern, such as Leon Trotsky, Josef Pyatnitsky, Dmitry Manuilsky, Jan Berzin, Fyodor Raskolnikov, Gregory Zinoviev, Nikolai Bukharin, and Karl Radek, who contributed substantially to the formulation of the Comintern's political goals. Naturally, that does not apply to all of them in equal measure or to their entire activities. The contribution of those and other leaders to the Comintern's development is yet to be analysed thoroughly, on the basis of facts and documents and without the entrenched stereotypes.

Analysing the Comintern's theoretical, political and practical activities after Lenin's death, one is bound to note that many basic tenets of his doctrine were turned into dogma or distorted. The mood of a "frontal revolutionary attack" prevailed over a sober and accurate analysis of the situation, especially in the mid-1920s and early 1930s.

The exaggerated expectations of a swift mass shift to the left sometimes involved attempts to secure unification on a purely communist platform. Sectarian and dogmatic mistakes in the evaluation of the situation were not caused solely by the Comintern's insistence on those principles, of course: some communist parties suffered from a petty bourgeois revolutionary spirit, simplified perceptions of the ways of class struggle, etc.

The interpretation of the united front as a tactical manoeuvre rather than the real goal of forging a sound alliance was a simplification of Lenin's idea. The strategic concept of the communist parties, formulated by Stalin, on aiming a blow at social democracy in general, and especially at its left wing, led to the aggravation of the struggle primarily with those contingents of the working-class socialist movement which were the closest to the Communists. That line effectively nullified the united front policy and, in fact, added to the reformists' influence.

The communist parties' vigorous protection of the working people's everyday interests objectively motivated them to overcome dogmas, such as "the tactic of a united front only from below" and Zinoviev's and Stalin's perception of social democracy as an accomplice and twin of fascism.² Today's

scholars concerned with the historiography of the Comintern have been given access to documents which have been kept under wraps over the years in order to find out why many of Lenin's principles were turned into dogmas or distorted, and to discover the causes of the leftist sectarian mistakes and dogmatic ossification in theory and politics. Generally speaking, the Comintern's ideological and theoretical activities, and the communist parties' discussions on their content and methods, perverted by Stalin, will have to be re-evaluated substantially on the basis of studies of archive documents.

Some communist parties *protested against those mistakes*. One example is a letter from the CC of the Communist Workers' Party of Poland to the CC of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), which rightly objected to the "united front from below" formula as an erroneous abandonment of the united front and transition slogans³. Clara Zetkin criticised the sectarian slogans at the 6th plenary meeting of the Comintern's Executive Committee in February 1926: "The worker cannot understand the ambiguity when a comrade says to him as to a union member, 'Come into my arms, comrade proletarian, long live the united trade union front', and as to a member of the Social Democratic Party, 'You are a fascist and a traitor and I'll hit you on the head'."⁴

Other leaders of the Communist Party of Germany were also deeply worried by those assessments of social democracy and by the fact that little difference was made between its right-wing leaders and the rank-and-file. Addressing a plenary meeting of the Comintern's Executive Committee in July 1927, Ernst Thälmann objected to the organisation of independent revolutionary trade unions. Being a Communist with a sense of discipline, he defended the Comintern's positions, but at the same time stressed continuously that "the proletariat's main enemy today is fascism". He was presenting his arguments consistently also in October 1931, when the Communist Party of Germany, following the Comintern's directives, had to reverse its correct decision not to participate in the Nazi-inspired referendum against Prussia's Social Democratic government. In May 1932, Thälmann called upon the Presidium of the Comintern's Executive Committee critically to reappraise its approach to the united front policy. In the same month he substantiated at a plenary meeting of the CC of the Communist Party of Germany the need for a new anti-fascist policy with the aim of mobilising a broad popular movement of Communists, Social Democrats and other opponents of Hitler.

At the 6th Congress of the Comintern, Palmiro Togliatti, speaking on behalf of the Italian Communist Party delegation, objected to the allegation that social democracy was about to evolve into a

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 269.

² We should add, for the sake of historical truth, that the flagrant anti-communism of many social democratic leaders contributed to the popularity of sectarian slogans among the mass of revolutionaries. It seems to have been that factor which provoked the Comintern's uncompromising and, more importantly, erroneous attitude towards its potential political allies.—F. F.

³ *Nowy przeglad*, Gliwice, No. 3, 1924, pp. 665-667.

⁴ 6th Plenary Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, Stenographic Report, Moscow-Leningrad, 1927, p. 228.

fascist workers' party. "We think that this premise is absolutely unacceptable," he said. "Our delegation is absolutely opposed to it. This is bending reality."⁵

Georgy Chicherin also strongly objected to the harsh propaganda campaign against social democracy and to extremist evaluations. Gravely ill and undergoing treatment in Germany, Chicherin wrote to Stalin on June 20, 1929, that "the hue and cry about social fascism is ridiculous nonsense" and that to base a policy on false information and crass agitation "means leading the Comintern to ruin"⁶.

In October 1932, Georgy Dimitrov, at that time head of the West European Bureau of the Comintern's Executive Committee, recommended in a letter to the Executive Committee that instead of offering the Social Democrats a united front on the condition "Come to us and fight together with us", Communists should adopt the following position: "Workers, regardless of party or organisational affiliation, unite to elect your militant organs on the basis of proletarian democracy, and take collectively concrete decisions on countering the pilfering of wages and benefits, fighting fascism and police and national-socialist terror, and defending your own militant positions, your lives and the lives of your leaders"⁷.

When the Comintern leaders discussed, in the spring of 1933, after the Nazis' rise to power in Germany, whether it was useful to enter into direct talks with the Socialist Labour International in order to resist fascism, on April 7, Maurice Thorez and Klement Gottwald sent telegrams to the Executive Committee in favour of talks. But on instructions from Stalin the Executive Committee leaders circulated to the communist parties a directive "to step up the campaign against the Second International, which is not only keeping silent about the betrayal of German Social Democrats and is ending the campaign of protest against German fascism but is also, at the insistence of German social democracy, rejecting a united front with the Communists. The Second International and its sections are subverting the struggle against fascism and the onslaught of capital on the working class. It is necessary to emphasise the flight of German social democracy to the fascist camp."⁸

All this shows that the *search for a way out of the blind alley of dogmatism* continued even in the early 1930s, when leftist sectarian precepts were adversely affecting communist parties' policies. Communist thinkers were trying to shake off sectarian dogmas and stereotypes. But those efforts were in vain because the internal situation and atmosphere in the Comintern's governing bodies and the methods

by which it influenced its sections had been badly deformed.

The trend for unconditional obedience and for waiting on directives from the centre was gaining ground in the Communist International as a result of the process of "Bolshevisation", in the Stalinist sense of the word. The plurality of political solutions and diverse approaches to the analysis of specific situations were banished in favour of dogma, stereotypes and ossification. Any attempt to take a sober and realistic view of developments was resisted and even vilified as opportunism, an abandonment of revolutionary perspective and a right-wing deviation. The Communist International was turning into a highly centralised organisation trying to direct all its sections on a day-to-day basis, which slowed down the formulation of slogans that would meet the challenges of the time and the planning of efficient tactics of the struggle.

In the late 1920s, especially after Bukharin had been removed from the Comintern, and even more so in the 1930s, disputes began to be resolved more and more often through the isolation from the communist movement of those who disagreed with Stalin. Discussions were restricted to a predetermined set of narrow topics, or turned into routs, name-calling and moral excommunication. It was out of the question even to mention that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks) could be mistaken or that the building of a new society in the Soviet Union involved serious distortions. Those who doubted, in whatever form, the correctness of anything that was taking place in the Soviet Union or criticised Stalin's methods were immediately cast in the role of renegades and enemies of the USSR and the communist movement. The leaders and staff of the Comintern were controlled by Stalin and his inner circle.⁹

It was very belatedly that the need to revise the policy of the Comintern and the communist parties to counter the growing fascist threat sank in. Although the onslaught of reaction and fascism and the growth of the war danger gave priority to anti-fascist and general democratic tasks, the Comintern adopted a policy of stemming the tide of fascism with socialist revolutions. The antifascist struggle was identified with the struggle for the overthrow of the capitalist system. The Communists and the Social Democrats, who were at the head of the bulk of the working class, failed to join forces in order to block the path of fascism. The well-known Soviet writer and journalist Ernst Henry testifies: "Social Democrats and Communists everywhere were raving against each other like mad, under the fascists' very eyes.

⁵ Central Party Archives, Institute of Marxism-Leninism, stock 493, list 1, document 403, p. 38.

⁶ Central Party Archives, Institute of Marxism-Leninism, stock 558, list 2, document 48, p. 11.

⁷ Central Party Archives of the CC of the Bulgarian Communist Party (Sofia), stock 146, list 6, document 813, p. 3.

⁸ Central Party Archives, Institute of Marxism-Leninism, stock 495, list 18, document 967, p. 28, pp. 1-2.

⁹ In December 1929, the journal *Communist International* published an article entitled "Stalin", which read, inter alia, that since Lenin's death Stalin had contributed actively to the preparation of every major document of the Comintern. It also noted that the Comintern's archives kept the entire history of Stalin's work in that field. I think that the time has come to disclose the secrets kept in the archives.—F. F.

I well remember all that. I lived in Germany at the time and will never forget how veteran comrades clenched their fists, seeing their cause crumble into dust, how the social democratic leaders gloated and how the theory of social fascism was paving the way for Hitler week after week and month after month. People gritted their teeth and obeyed the 'mind and will' as they marched to their deaths in SS dungeons. It was not until 1935 that Stalin abandoned his theory of social fascism but it was too late: Hitler was already mocking both the Communists and the Social Democrats"¹⁰.

Stalin was indeed clinging to his concept of "social fascism". It was in that spirit that he responded to Trotsky's article about the situation in Germany, published by *The Manchester Guardian* on March 22, 1933. The article said, inter alia, that by restraining workers from struggle, the Social Democrats facilitated the advent of the fascist dictatorship, and also criticised the Communists for their absurd axiom, formulated in accordance with Stalin's flawed concept that the Social Democrats and the National Socialists were merely two kinds of Nazism.

Stalin remarked in a marginal note on the translation of Trotsky's article: "But wasn't that fully confirmed?"¹¹ Stalin was outraged by Trotsky's argument that the Communists and the Social Democrats ought to enter into a defensive alliance against the onslaught of Nazism. He wrote: "Defending the parliamentary government (of Schleihers and von Papens) and Leipart's trade unions? Is that a basis for a united front? But that is Wels's and Kautsky's platform. And in that way the Communists would abandon Marx and Lenin and go over to the Hindenburgs' side"¹². The very idea of possible cooperation between Communists and Social Democrats in the struggle against fascism on the platform of defending bourgeois democracy seemed to Stalin to be class betrayal and was absolutely unacceptable. We should remember also that Trotsky, who strongly criticised the "social fascism" theory, later resolutely opposed the slogan of the Comintern's 7th Congress on a united worker and broad popular front as a deviation from the class policy line towards class cooperation.

The archives which I have studied show that working on new policies, Comintern leaders realised that the point was to overcome Stalin's dogmas. Yet in view of the personality cult it was necessary to do so in a way that would not provoke any resistance or suspicion of disloyalty, otherwise everything would be lost. In a letter to Stalin on July 1, 1934, Dimitrov outlined the principal ideas of his future report to the 7th Congress and suggested that instead of using the united front tactic "exclusively as a manoeuvre to expose social democracy without any

serious attempt to forge real workers' unity in struggle... it should be turned into a potent factor of organising mass struggle against the advance of Nazism"¹³. Stalin wrote on the margin of Dimitrov's letter, "We must", and added: "Who is this thesis against?"¹⁴. Answering Dimitrov's question, "Is it correct summarily to qualify social democracy as social fascism?", Stalin noted: "Yes with regard to the leadership, and not 'summarily'"¹⁵.

We thus see that Stalin was clinging to his sectarian view of social democracy even at a time when communist parties in a number of European countries were breaking through the wall of mistrust between the Communists and the Social Democrats to achieve a united front and when the Comintern's Executive Committee had begun, under Dimitrov's leadership, to revise flawed concepts and dogmas. He yielded to the pressure of developments but was worried that everyone would realise who had been insisting on those goals.

As regards the resolutions of the 7th Congress of the Communist International, adopted at the time of the rampant personality cult, we should note that they actually cast aside quite a few sectarian dogmas and restored and further developed Lenin's principles; they amounted to a major breakthrough in theory and opened broad room for political practice. I would say that they were a serious attempt to restore the Comintern to its role of an organ working according to the Marxist-Leninist principles with due regard for the internationalist nature of the movement and for its national specific features in different countries. They bore witness to the huge ideological and political potential of the communist movement, its growing maturity and its progress in the main direction, which ran counter to Stalinism.

But as the Comintern and communist parties began to implement the policies of the 7th Congress, they were not just facing difficulties and obstacles posed by the resistance of the class enemy, the opposition of the right-wing Socialists and other such factors. They were stabbed in the back from very different quarters. Stalin's order to coopt Nikolai Yezhov into the Executive Committee, elected by the 7th Congress, and Meyer Moskvina (Trilisser) into the Executive Committee's Presidium, looks especially sinister in the light of subsequent developments.

Stalin's terror against the Leninist cadres of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks), unleashed in the late 1930s, also took hold of the Communist International, including leading figures of the communist parties of Austria, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Yugoslavia and other countries. Many communist emigres who had found refuge in the USSR were among the victims of Stalin's, Yezhov's and

¹⁰ *Druzhba Narodov*, No. 3, 1988, p. 235.

¹¹ Central Party Archives, Institute of Marxism-Leninism, stock 558, list 1, document 5,236, p. 1.

¹² Central Party Archives, Institute of Marxism-Leninism, stock 558, list 1, document 5,236, p. 2.

¹³ *7th Congress of the Communist International and the Struggle Against Fascism and War*, Moscow, 1975, p. 29.

¹⁴ Central Party Archives of the CC of the Bulgarian Communist Party, stock 146, list 6, document 754, p. 1.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

Beria's despotism¹⁶. The dissolution of the Communist Party of Poland on Stalin's express orders in December 1937, following the arrest and execution of its leaders, was one of a series of political crimes perpetrated by Stalin.¹⁷

Recalling those tragic chapters in the Comintern's history, which we have no right to suppress, we should note that in that situation Georgy Dimitrov as General Secretary of the Executive Committee was fighting for the lives of many Communists. He made submissions to Stalin, to CPSU(B) CC Secretaries Andrei Andreyev and Georgy Malenkov and to those who decided the destinies of arrested comrades, namely, Yezhov, Beria, Frinovsky and Merkulov, and defended those comrades in whose innocence he believed. Sometimes his intervention was successful. Meanwhile, no Comintern leader at the time was insured against the risk of falling into Stalin's meat-grinder. At a 1958 trial, one of Yezhov's henchmen, the investigator Lanfang, testified that "cases" against Dimitrov, Pieck, Florin, Pollitt, Ulbricht,

¹⁶ Stalin's terror claimed all the members of the Presidium of the 1st Congress of the Comintern, among them Fritz Platten, who represented the Swiss Social Democrats, the German Communist Hugo Eberlein (Max Albert), and the Communist Gustav Klinger, an ethnic German from the Volga. There were many other victims, including Avetis Sultan Zade, a leader of the Communist Party of Iran and a member of the Comintern's Executive Committee; the Indian Communist Gulam Ambia Khan Luhani; Constantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea, one of the founders of the Communist Party of Romania; Kullervo Manner, a secretary of the Communist Party of Finland, and his associates Gustav Rovio and Alexander Shotman.

Antonio Roasio, a veteran of the Italian Communist Party, wrote in his memoirs that hundreds of Italian Communists who had fled from fascist persecution to the Soviet Union had been exposed to Stalin's terror.

Hermann Remmele, Heinz Neumann, Fritz Schulte and Karl Hans Kippenberger, leaders of the Communist Party of Germany, were arrested in 1937. Having signed a non-aggression pact with Germany, Stalin, it transpired later, treacherously turned over to the Nazis many antifascists who had been given political asylum in the USSR since 1933. Those Austrian Social Democrats who, in February 1934, had taken up arms to block the advance of Nazism were repressed at about the same time.

Some Yugoslav sources cite a list of 800 well-known Communists annihilated by Stalin, among them Filip Filipovic and Vladimir Copic.

The first two volumes of a large biographical dictionary of leaders of the Polish working class movement, put out in Poland, contain the names of hundreds of people who perished in Stalin's repressions; there were among them leaders of the Communist Party of Poland, such as Edward Prochniak, Jan Paszyn, Julian Lenski (Leszczynski), and Maria Koszutska.

Harsh repression was unleashed against the Communist Party of Hungary: Bela Kun and many members of the party's Secretariat and Central Committee were executed.

The same happened to many leaders of the Bulgarian communist and working-class movement, including Roman Avramov, Lenin's close associate who had joined the Bolshevik party before the First Russian Revolution (1905-1907); Boris Stomonyakov, who played an active part in that revolution; and Krystyo Rakovsky, a member of the CC of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) in Lenin's day and head of the Council of People's Commissars of the Ukraine.

These facts are eloquent proof that Stalin's personality cult and the terror unleashed by him were a tragedy for the entire international communist movement.—F. F.

¹⁷ In 1956, the Central Committees of the Communist Parties of Bulgaria, Italy, Finland and the Soviet Union together with the CC of the Polish United Workers' Party revised the decision taken by the Comintern's Executive Committee (signed on its behalf by the representatives of these four parties). It was found to be erroneous and the evidence for the accusations against the Communist Party of Poland was dismissed as fictitious.—Ed.

Marty, Kuusinen and other leaders had been forged, though not brought against them.

The 1939 Soviet-German Treaty also had a bad effect on the Comintern and seriously confused the communist movement as a whole. The Communist International failed to show political independence in that situation. At a time when the Comintern was following closely in the footsteps of Soviet foreign policy, the tactical considerations of not giving Hitler any pretext for violating the treaty harmed the Communists' antifascist policies. The Comintern's documents no longer applied the term "fascism" to Hitler's Germany. Emphasis in propaganda was shifted anew to attacks on imperialism "as a whole", especially British and French imperialism. It was not until the collapse of France and the German invasion of Yugoslavia that the Comintern began to revise that approach.

The Comintern's assessment of the Second World War as imperialist on both sides, made in late 1939, ignored the especial danger posed by the fascist bloc, which aimed at enslaving the whole world, and disregarded the national liberation and antifascist tendencies that were gathering momentum. It was those tendencies that became decisive after Nazi Germany had attacked the Soviet Union.

In the late 1930s, the Comintern's organisational bonds became a brake on the political mobility and activity of the member parties. Our movement had outgrown that form of organisation while the communist parties, having assumed the leadership of the liberation antifascist struggle everywhere, proved their independence in practice. That decided the fate of the Communist International which was disbanded in 1943.

The harm caused by Stalinism to the communist movement, its ideology, strategy and tactics and its influence in the world, and also to the influence of the ideas of socialism is immense. But it did not destroy the communist movement, the existence and development of which are governed primarily by the laws of the struggle waged by the working class. The exposure of the dogmas, distortions and deformities fostered by Stalinism in our movement is part of our getting rid of everything that hinders development and fetters communist thinking. It is necessary so that the movement should get a second wind and reveal its humanistic nature. Here special emphasis should be laid on those aspects of the Comintern's history which illustrate the complex tendency for the *continuous expansion of the Communists' sphere of activity*, from the battles for the interests of the proletariat to the harmonisation of the struggle for socialism with the struggle for democracy and against war.

The study of historical experience and the restoration of historical truth will help uproot Stalinism completely and restore and develop further Lenin's concept of the communist movement. Undoubtedly, the opening of the Comintern's archives to historians will contribute to that aim.

CONCERN FOR THE FUTURE

ANTONIO GRAMSCI'S "PRISON NOTEBOOKS"

Giuseppe VACCA

CC member, Italian Communist Party,
Director of the Gramsci Institute

Antonio Gramsci's rich theoretical ideas and original vision of the ways in which Marxism develops have long attracted researchers' attention. Many aspects of Gramsci's legacy, however, have not yet been adequately illuminated, among them his perceptions of revolutionary transformations in the world as a whole and in the Soviet Union in particular.

Destinies of Revolution

In October 1926, Gramsci noted that the Soviet Union's revolutionising influence on Europe was waning. "Today, nine years after October 1917, the fact that the Bolsheviks took power can no longer have a revolutionising impact on the mass of people in Europe: it is a fait accompli which has already exerted its effects,"¹ he wrote to Palmiro Togliatti. What did he mean? His idea seems to be that the mass belief in the rapid building of socialism by the proletariat in one country, and in its new victories on the international scene, had begun to teeter as a result of the activities of opposition groupings within the CPSU (Bolsheviks), the weakening of the Bolsheviks' core of leaders and their excessive preoccupation with purely "Russian issues".

Gramsci pointed out the danger in a letter to the CC of the CPSU (Bolsheviks) in late 1926: "Comrades, for the past nine years of world history you have been the organising and driving component of the revolutionary forces in all countries. The function you have been performing is unprecedented in depth and scope in the entire history of humanity. But what you are doing today is destroying your own creation, you demean yourself and risk losing the leading role that the Communist Party of the USSR has gained with Lenin's inspiration. We think that you have been carried away by the desire to deal with Russian issues, which blurs your vision so that you lose sight of the international aspects of the very same Russian problems."²

Gramsci tried to analyse the possible effect of that new development on the character and progress of

the Soviet state itself. His comments in the *Prison Notebooks* on "the economic-corporate phase in the development of the state" seem to contain such an analysis: he already discerned the outlines of the administrative-command system that was taking shape in the USSR. According to Gramsci, the "economic-corporate phenomenon" consists in that "the hegemony of the new social group, which has founded the state of a new type", is "predominantly economic". Its overriding goal is the economy, i.e., production, rather than the comprehensive and all-embracing development of the individual. Under these conditions, "elements of the superstructure cannot help being underdeveloped". Policies and "planning" in culture "will be mostly negative in character, and confined to criticism of the past and to forgetting and destroying the old, while the policy line of creation will be charted only in 'general outline', which can (and indeed must) be altered at any moment to suit the newly built economic structure".³

That characteristic of the superstructure gives us an idea of Gramsci's perception of the possibilities for the emergence of corporate structures in the system that was being built in the USSR. Their functioning really required rigid centralisation, a domineering bureaucracy and an all-pervasive control of the spiritual life of society. Gramsci was worried that rigid centralised planning would discourage the working people from showing initiative and creativity or taking personal interest in the results of their work, which would eventually slow down the growth rates and twist development patterns. Clearly, when labour itself becomes a subject of economic management, by virtue of its changed situation it ought to look after its own interests and weigh them constantly, so as to encourage the initiative for progressive movement.⁴

Gramsci rejected the type of relationship that was taking shape between the centralised planning machinery and the production collectives of workers and, moreover, was critical of the Soviet Union's initial planning options in the late 1920s, the period when the desire to achieve high growth rates in heavy industry obscured the needs of the countryside and light industry, the tasks of social and cultural development, and man as the very subject of social production. Planning of that type, according to Gramsci, proceeded from the structures analysed in the second volume of *Capital*, which related to the reproduction of capital and could not be made the basis of socialist construction.

It was those theoretical scenarios that Gramsci worked out in his critique of the book *Political Economy in Connection with the Theory of the Soviet Economy*, by I. Lapidus and K. Ostrovityanov (published in 1928 and translated into Italian in 1929). Gramsci demonstrates the two authors' limitations in

¹ A. Gramsci, *La costruzione del Partito comunista 1923-1926*, Torino, 1971, pp. 136-137.

² *Ibid.*, p. 128.

³ A. Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, Torino, 1975, p. 1053.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 1261-1262.

identifying new problems in the socialist economy. "What strikes one especially," Gramsci comments bitterly, "is that instead of a critical approach that should be as intellectual, impartial, fresh and theoretically ingenious as possible, there is the monopoly of narrow, petty minds, whose dogmatic positions place them squarely amidst second rate literature rather than in science".⁵

His conclusion is that "the gravest danger is posed by ossified thinking".⁶ That critique must have been addressed implicitly to the Stalin leadership: although never saying so outright, Gramsci noted that the book he had reviewed was in fact an "official textbook" of the political economy of socialism.

But what danger did Gramsci see in that trend of thought, that type of "development" of Marxism? It follows from his notes and comments that the class winning power could find itself faced with the establishment of a political hegemony of bureaucracy, the administrative-command layer, in society. The *Prison Notebooks* contain a hint that, in such circumstances, the proletariat is likely to receive certain material benefits—a sort of payoff—at the expense of the peasantry; but that is fraught with the collapse of the alliance of the workers and peasants, and a distortion of the building of socialism and of the state of a new type.

Pondering the probability of such developments, Gramsci did not rule out that the working class could develop specific corporate sentiments linked to its immediate interests and thus ignore its historical tasks of worldwide importance. In this context he attempted a political analysis of the processes which had begun in the USSR after Lenin's death and introduced the concept of "caesarism"; but he warned that it should be taken not as a canon but as an image provoking thought and ideological polemics. As distinct from antiquity, he wrote, today's circumstances may lead to the establishment of caesarism without a Caesar, i. e., a great "heroic" personality. That mission can be fulfilled by political parties or other social institutions, such as corporations and coalition governments.

In my view, with regard to the Soviet Union, Gramsci meant not Stalin's personal power, which he had just begun to accrue, but rather the incipient institutional model of the party-state relationship. Nevertheless, the *Prison Notebooks* do not rule out the possibility of that model evolving towards more authoritarian rule, because there was one more reason for the "caesarian" tendencies: the balance between the forces of progress and conservatism, those which aspired to build a new society, on the one hand, and those which wanted the revival of the old social structures, on the other. "One may say that caesarism is the reflection of a situation," Gramsci wrote, "when the opposing sides are in a catastrophic

balance, i. e., a balance in which the continuation of the struggle can only have as its outcome the mutual destruction of the antagonistic forces."

Gramsci's appraisal of the model of the political regime that was emerging in the USSR in the late 1920s was not definitive, because the direction in which it was going to develop was not yet clear. But there is one very interesting theoretical idea that is worth special mention. Pointing out that restrictions on democracy and the emergence of corporate sentiments and "caesarian" forms of government were inevitable in specific historical circumstances, he did not summarily censure them but drew the line between "progressive" and "reactionary" caesarism.

"The true significance of one form of caesarism or another can ultimately be established precisely only with the help of concrete historical data, and not on the basis of a sociological model," Gramsci argued. "Caesarism is progressive if it contributes to the triumph of a progressive force, even by means of methods and compromises which limit the importance of that triumph."⁷ In other words, a form of caesarism could exist which would make up for the relative weakness and underdevelopment of the progressive subject of history—the working class in post-revolutionary Russia—and which would contribute to a victory over the conservative forces and thus prepare the ground for its own self-negation. But there is another kind of caesarism, that which began to take shape in the course of forced collectivisation and the establishment of all-embracing bureaucratic rule; it led not to self-negation but to its sway over the whole of society.

Gramsci did not live to see the acme of Stalinism. But his *Notebooks* convey his understanding of that phenomenon in revolution. As was his habit, he did not jump to conclusions in defining areas where the progressive was gaining ground or where it was yielding to the past, which re-emerged in different shapes and forms. At that time the important thing for Gramsci was to point out the sociopolitical implications for Soviet power of the disruption of the alliance between the working class and the peasantry, and of the assertion of the priority of corporate interests.

Warning against them, he outlined a "blueprint" of a state that was clearly different from the one Stalin was to build. "Of course, at this stage (meaning the 'economic-corporate phase'—G.V.) the state constitutes 'property' owned by a definite social group and intended to create favourable conditions for its maximum growth and the maximum expansion of its influence. All that, however, is considered in the context of the motive force of general development and the release of every type of 'national' energy, meaning that the interests of the dominant

⁵ Ibid., pp. 1805-1806.

⁶ Ibid., p. 1806.

⁷ See Ibid., pp. 1619-1622.

group directly mirror the common aspirations of all the groups dependent on the state. State affairs in that case are a process, in the course of which occasions of tenuous equilibrium between the dominant and the dependent groups are continuously arising and being resolved within the bounds of legality. Given such equilibrium, the interests of the dominant group prevail, but only within certain bounds, i.e., not so far as to concentrate solely on its own economic-corporate interests."⁸

In effect, Gramsci meant that, having taken power, the proletariat would be able to retain hegemony only by sacrificing its narrow corporate interests to the paramount task. He thus passed an advance verdict on the Stalin leadership, which misled the working class by reducing its general tasks to specific ones and eventually made it dependent on the administrative-command system, which operated according to its own laws against the real interests of the working class.⁹

"Stabilisation of Capitalism" or "Passive Revolution"?

Some scholars concentrate on Gramsci's opposition to Trotsky's theory of "permanent revolution" and draw the conclusion that the author of the *Prison Notebooks* viewed Stalin as the inheritor of Lenin's course of building socialism in one country, and specifically of Lenin's policy on the peasantry. They also point out that the *Notebooks* do not contain any real mention of Stalin, but concentrate on polemics with Trotsky and on criticism of his concept of building socialism in the USSR. Other arguments are cited as well. What strikes one is that, unlike Gramsci's approach, they show no understanding of the essence of Leninism. An analysis of Gramsci's legacy indicates that he was intolerant of anyone who distorted that essence, which was exactly what Trotsky was doing at the time.¹⁰ The very fact that Trotsky's ideas (and not Lenin's) were eventually embraced by Stalin, in one way or another, proves Gramsci's perspicacity and the timeliness of his criticism.

What motivated him and why did he worry after 1926 about the fate of the October Revolution? A part of the answer has been given above, but to get the complete picture, we should turn to Gramsci's analysis of the new situation after World War I.

"The wartime myth of a world united in a League of Nations in fact presupposes the establishment of a global Anglo-Saxon monopoly in ways and means made possible by the system of private and national ownership. The economic and political life of various

states is strictly controlled by British-American capital: all the world's markets, and land, sea and river communications, the earth and its mineral resources, the means of production, and commerce are under its close watch. The freedom struggles in various countries resulted in their loss of sovereignty. Italy, like many other states, has become a sort of 'proletariat state' because it is subject to exploitation by British-American capitalism... The world is 'united' in the sense that there has emerged a global hierarchy which exercises authoritarian control over it and teaches it order."¹¹

Thinking over that order, Gramsci discovered that "Americanisation" led to rationalised production and methods of work and to altered social structures in Europe. The meaning and objective significance of that phenomenon is that "it constitutes also one of the greatest collective efforts so far undertaken to create, with unheard-of swiftness and unprecedented awareness of the final objective, a worker and individual of a new type".¹² He observes furthermore (in his notes on Americanism and Fordism) that the positive tendencies, ripening within capitalism until 1914, burst into the open after the war and, struggling with the old, were beginning to gather strength (the development of institutions of representative democracy, the unions' striving to control the labour market, etc.).

Gramsci thus drew the conclusion that Marxist political science needed the concept of "passive revolution", which in his view accurately characterised the age that had begun in the West after World War I. To him that historical period meant more than the "relative stabilisation" of capitalism, as the Comintern's resolutions qualified it, but a turning point in development, namely, a transition to a new type of production within the capitalist system. From the objective historical point of view, that new mode of production led to social development of greater scope, and so communist parties had to evolve a drastically new strategy of struggle along with new ways and means of winning mass support and taking power.

In formulating his concept of "passive revolution" (i.e., progress in forms other than outright revolution), Gramsci noted that "basic social relations are bound to change under a certain political covering, and vigorous political forces are bound to emerge and develop in order to exert, slowly but inevitably, indirect pressure on officialdom, which is also, unknowingly or almost unknowingly, undergoing a change".¹³ Defining in detail new phenomena in the evolution of capitalism, he stressed that its main contradiction had not been resolved, but only neutralised temporarily. The process of positive change continued at the "molecular level", as it were, and

⁸ Ibid., p. 1584.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 1601-1602.

¹⁰ See G. Vodolazov, "The Choice of History and the History of Alternatives. Nikolai Bukharin vs Leon Trotsky", *WMR* No. 10, 1988.—Ed.

¹¹ A. Gramsci, *Lo sviluppo della rivoluzione*, Torino, 1987, p. 20.

¹² A. Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, pp. 2164-2165.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 1818-1819.

not necessarily "on the initiative" of the main antagonistic forces.¹⁴

In prison Gramsci, naturally, could not fully expound his ideas, which predicted the development of the world economy and politics for years to come. (In fact, "passive revolution" made its impact on Western Europe at a level other than "molecular" only after World War II.) Moreover, his prolonged imprisonment prevented him from conveying to Italian Communists and fraternal parties what could have become the subject of creative discussions and the basis for planning effective directions of struggle under the new conditions that were shaping in the West. But what makes the *Prison Notebooks* immune to the mould of time is their perspicacity and profound ideas, characteristic of a theorist with a genuinely dialectical approach. Pondering over passive revolution, he wrote: "These arguments are both useful and dangerous. The general formulation of the problem can induce apathy, the fatalistic perception of history, etc., but the concept is dialectical because in the first place it opens up possibilities for various quests ... at a time when we have no other, more convincing arguments."¹⁵

Gramsci tried to show that the post-World War I age was far more complex than perceived by many Marxist theorists, and that "passive revolution", related to the United States' emergence as the world's leading economic power, was giving rise to a new political situation in a Europe where monarchies had collapsed. According to him, the October 1917 Revolution—the breaking of a weak link in the imperialist chain—was a result of the "catastrophic" shift of the capitalist economic axis away from Europe to the USA during the war, a revolution that was "imposed" by the course of history rather than "chosen freely". What did he want to tell the revolutionary forces in the West in this way and what points did he want to bring to their attention?

From "Frontal Attack" to "Trench Warfare"

Gramsci wanted his concept of "passive revolution" to draw attention to the need for the national detachments of the Western communist movement, born as a result of the influence of the October 1917 Revolution, to change their strategies. Above all, he wanted to show that a "frontal attack" on the strongholds of power, similar to that made by the Bolsheviks in 1917, did not accord with new European realities. Gramsci was opposed to the mechanical copying of the experience of the October Revolution and argued that the revolutionary process in the West, with its specific economic and political

structures, ought to be advanced in different forms. He viewed the October Revolution as a model of "the art of politics", but one which should be applied skilfully in the changed European situation. He stressed that in the last years of his life Lenin "realised the need to turn the mobile war started victoriously in the East in 1917 into trench warfare, which alone was possible in the West".¹⁶

Taking issue with Trotsky's concept of "permanent revolution", Gramsci argued that the time of a "frontal attack" had given way in the West to that of protracted "trench warfare", which presupposed long sieges to the "fortresses" and the capture and holding of the "trenches", constituting a kind of system of political communications in civil society. From that premise he concluded that, as it built socialism, the working class of the world's first proletarian state would long have to do without the effective assistance of the Western proletariat, which could have an adverse effect on the progress of that effort.

Gramsci believed that Trotsky's ideas reflected that situation in their own way. The ambition to give national priority "too resolutely" (and hence irrationally) to industry, and to use forcible methods and strict production discipline for the sake of its speedy growth, resembles a "military" solution rather than a creative revolutionary process. It does not suit the East, to say nothing of the West, and cannot have any positive effect on the working class. Such a decision would not amount to "permanent revolution". On the contrary, it resembles a Bonapartist (caesarian) reaction to "passive revolution".

Gramsci attempted to explore the alternatives that the working-class movement could offer to that concept, and to understand the meaning of "trench warfare" by turning to the experience of workers' councils (Soviets) in Turin. His reflections on that theme went far beyond the communist parties' strategic goals of the period. Gramsci considered the possibility of alternative ways of industrial growth and a transition to a new stage of industrial production. He suggested in his *Prison Notebooks* that the proletariat could exercise control over the technological developments that had come to be known as Fordism and Taylorism. There are many moot points in that idea, of course. The involvement of the working class in "passive revolution" was a complex process because that revolution itself was at that time unfolding at the "molecular level". He nevertheless drew the important conclusion that in individual countries the proletariat could, at the national level, exert substantial influence on economic progress and open up an international perspective.

But even Russia's victorious proletariat failed to meet that challenge, he noted. After Lenin, the strata which represented the general economic, social and cultural circumstances of an underdeveloped society prevailed over the "embryonic" vanguard forces, and as a result, the latter failed to

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 1359-1361.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 1827.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 801-802.

exert the proper influence on the "trench warfare" in the West. This meant that the outdated policy of continued "frontal attacks" eventually gained the upper hand.

Criticising that policy, Gramsci stressed (*Notebook* No. 14, section 68): "The concept 'national' is indeed a result of the 'original' and unique (in a sense) combination, which must be understood and comprehended in all its originality and inimitability... The perspective, however, is international, and cannot help being such. That is why it is necessary to know the exact combination of the national forces which the international class must direct and develop in accordance with the international perspectives and the needs of international development. The leading class will in fact lead only if it accurately interprets that combination, of which it is a part. Then it will be able to steer in a definite direction with definite prospects."

Gramsci took up the "united front" formula, put forward by Lenin at the 3rd Congress of the Comintern, and stressed that Lenin "just did not have the time to expound that formula"¹⁷ and that his followers' task was to do that job, namely, to survey the political opportunities, take account of the successes and failures of the working-class movement, and consistently to take over key positions in society. Gramsci was gradually realising the significance of that formula as a means of effectively countering fascism, which was besieging the key "fortresses" of civil society. He believed that the formula would help communist parties to lift the siege, to develop, to master the political art of exercising the hegemony of the working class, and to establish new East-West relations on that basis.

Today the rich theoretical ideas of the *Prison Notebooks* call to mind real problems of our time, such as the ongoing "neoconservative revolution" in the West and the complex processes of transition from the industrial to the postindustrial mode of production. One is even tempted to draw certain parallels between these and "passive revolution". And what would Gramsci have had to say about our world, he who, after 1926, argued the priority of the universal class tasks of the proletariat over its narrow corporate tasks?

Now that new political realities are gathering momentum and that favourable prospects and positive tendencies are opening for world transformations, the ideas in the *Prison Notebooks* sound more and more relevant.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 866.

ANTONIO BUERO VALLEJO RECALLS...

On a trip to Madrid, Hector Mujica, a member of the WMR Editorial Council from the Communist Party of Venezuela, met with Antonio BUERO VALLEJO, a member of the Spanish Royal Academy, and an outstanding Spanish playwright. We hope that their conversation will be of interest to our readers.

ONE CANNOT talk about the Spanish theatre today without mentioning Antonio Buero Vallejo. He was born in Guadalajara in 1916 and studied fine arts at university until the course was interrupted by the outbreak of the Civil War in 1936. In 1949, he was awarded the Lope de Vega Prize for *The History of a Stairway*. He has written many other plays for the stage, among them *The Flaming Darkness*, *A Dreamer from the People*, *The Apparition of St. Ovid*, *The Skylight* and *The Sleep of Reason*. He is renowned also for his remarkable adaptations of works by William Shakespeare and Bertolt Brecht.

Let me say right away that we did not discuss his plays, which are well known, but rather his life and times.

He is one of those who make many digressions when discussing a topic, but eventually return to it. He is not in the habit of putting on an air of scholarship. "One of us", is how the writer Pedro Emilio Coll used to describe such people in Venezuela.

Like a practised bullfighter, I looked for an opening and tried to make use of "my banderillas"¹ to taunt Vallejo into "attacking". I said that, firstly, I should like to hear about his imprisonment in the fascist period, the death sentence passed on him, the commutation of the sentence, and his subsequent release, and then also about his father, an officer who was shot by the "Reds" early in the Civil War.

Vallejo sat placidly puffing at his pipe.

"Right," he said. "After the Civil War, I found myself in one of the many concentration camps. I spent about a month there. With the exception of specially selected persons, we were then gradually released, without much harassment. You see, most of the men of the defeated Republican Army had been confined to these camps, and it was no longer possible to keep such a large number of people."

¹ Banderilla—a barbed dart with banderole used in bullfighting.—Ed.

"That was in 1939?"

"Yes, ... Let me add that we were released with strict orders to report to the local authorities as soon as we got home. I came over here, to Madrid, to my father's flat, where I lived with my mother and other relatives."

"And the first thing you did was to report to the officials?"

"Of course not. The local authorities would have sent us right back to a similar camp, from which the inmates were let out with a 'collective passport', that is, one for a group of 20 men."

He rarely left the flat, but quite often had his army friends and political comrades come and visit him. That was when he joined one of the clandestine organisations of the Communist Party of Spain. It operated for only a few months, and, he says, did next to nothing since the possibilities were very limited. The members of the organisations simply helped each other, for instance, by obtaining forged documents for travelling in the country or for moving to another place of residence.

"There was an informer among us," Vallejo recalled. "We were caught unawares, and everyone was arrested. About twenty of us were put on trial. It was shortly after the war, and our activity was regarded as a heinous crime. Six of us were sentenced to death, many to 30 years of imprisonment, and the younger men received shorter sentences. Four of those sentenced to death were shot. I myself and another comrade were implicated in the same case, we felt as though we were ..."

"On a knife-edge?"

"Exactly. The sentence was 'death'. We felt that that was the end. Happily the wife of the other man in the case turned out to be a very energetic woman, and kept trying to get a commutation of the sentence passed on her husband."

"What was your most poignant moment while you were waiting for the end?"

"It was the news that our 'case' had been transferred to those who were to execute the sentence. My own life depended on that of my comrade, for whom his wife was pleading. If the sentence on him were not repealed, mine would not be either, and if he were not executed, I, too, could hope to stay alive, because in the organisation I was his subordinate. One day the comrade's wife told us that our case had been handed over to the military district command with the order 'to carry out the sentence'. It was for the following day. But this woman, who belonged to the bourgeoisie, had some good connections, and on the night before the execution she virtually tore the case out of the hands of the men on the military district command and had it reviewed. And so, eight months after the death sen-

tence had been passed, it was commuted to 30 years imprisonment."

"So you spent eight months in the death cell. Were you then, at the age of 23, quite aware of the gravity of the situation?"

"I certainly was... Any day could have been our last. Once or twice before the four others were shot, we were informed by our prison comrades that so and so would be shot that night. (Luckily, they were mistaken.) So we calculated when our turn would come, and were prepared 'to drink the cup', as the saying goes."

His 30-year sentence of imprisonment was reduced to 20 years, and after almost seven years in various prisons—including the Ocaña, where he painted the well-known portrait of the great revolutionary poet Miguel Hernandez, which later went round the world—he learnt that he was paroled.

I asked him whether he had been tortured in Franco's prisons.

"Everyone was tortured—systematically. But I escaped it. Why? The first reason is perhaps that I was interrogated last. Everything that I could have told had already been told. The second was a subtler and more complicated social reason. The fact is that I was the son of a lieutenant-colonel with the engineers who had been killed by the 'Reds'."

"But you learnt about the shooting of your father later?"

"Oh, no... I learnt about it at once, in my own home, right here, where we are now talking. Ours was a family of military men. My brother, a lieutenant with the engineers, was also arrested here. But no definite charges were preferred against either my father or my brother. They fell victim to the mass raids, the so-called 'preventive arrests', which were made in the early months of the war. That was when Mola² declared that none of the four army columns approaching the capital would be able to take Madrid. That, he said, would be done by a 'fifth column'. Both military men and civilians from the right-wing forces were arrested. My mother and I inclined to the assumption that father was in prison. But the worst happened. He was shot. That happened on November 6, 1936, when mass shootings were carried out in the prisons where Franco supporters and those suspected of connections with the Francoites were held..."

When Vallejo was arrested the authorities already knew what had happened to his father, and so he was treated as the son of a martyr. Such is life, and such are the destinies of man...

Hector MUJICA

² Emilio Mola (1887-1937), a Franco general.

COMMUNISTS, CULTURE AND REVOLUTION

Volodya TEITELBOIM

*Political Commission member,
CC, Communist Party of Chile*

LESS THAN a year before the fascist coup that was to crush Chilean democracy and send Pablo Neruda to his grave, the poet, responding to a smear by an *El Mercurio* journalist in December 1972, illuminated the role of socialist ideas, the Great October 1917 Revolution and the Communists in Latin American culture. The mercenary hack had reviled Communists as "deficient blockheads", "resentful malcontents" and "befuddled losers". In reply Neruda merely listed the names of some of the better known "deficient blockheads" of our century who called themselves Communists, among them Gorky, Gagarin, Tupolev, Joliot-Curie, Picasso, Matisse, Anatole France, Barbusse, Mayakovsky, Aragon, Eluard, Brecht, Mariategui, Vallejo, and, of course, outstanding thinkers and politicians, such as Lenin, Dimitrov, Gramsci, Ho Chi Minh and Recabarren, the founder of the Communist Party of Chile. "I humbly presume to count myself among these 'deficient blockheads'," the world-famous poet concluded proudly.¹

Those people are an embodiment of the priceless treasure of the human spirit. They devoted themselves wholeheartedly to the cause of freedom and revolution, and that was what made them criminals to the capitalist system, and giants in the eyes of their contemporaries and succeeding generations.

¹ See *WMR* No. 11, 1988.

Thousands of other names could be added to that list. All those people had one quality in common which Gorky defined thus: "Man, a proud word!" Man is to Communists the beginning and the end of their selfless efforts and the measure of all their concerns, so humanism is logically the paramount principle in the Marxist approach to the world and its culture.

The Unbreakable Bond Between Past and Present

Culture is not born outside of time and place. It may die but continue dialectically, it may break with the past but absorb everything good that has been created by the preceding generations. We have inherited not only that which hampered creative endeavour and the quest for new depths in man and for the mysteries of the universe, but also whatever remains relevant to the development and enrichment of the intellect and emotions.

By its very nature culture is always contemporary. It is a product of an increasingly internationalised humanity, but it should remain loyal to its national roots. Revolutionaries ought not to keep to themselves but rise above groupings and sects and operate as citizens of the world. Communists must not confine themselves to party interests but ought to influence people and nations, not just because communist ideas are the mainstream of contemporary philosophy but also because a revolution cannot be made by the vanguard alone. The world, looking forward to its future, hears not just our voices but also the many voices of friends, of those who believe in man, in the people, and in life and peace.

That is what is taking place everywhere, Latin America included. Here is a graphic example: all the Latin American winners of the Nobel Prize for literature—Gabriela Mistral (1889-1957), Miguel Angel Asturias (1899-1974), Pablo Neruda (1904-1973), and Gabriel Garcia Marquez (b. 1928)—of whom only Pablo Neruda was a Communist—write about social themes; to them, as to Gorky, the significance of literature lies in its service to man.

Anyone, preparing to celebrate, in three years' time,

the quincentenary of the "discovery" of America, who claims that the arrival of Columbus heralded the birth of Latin American culture, will be making a bad mistake because they are dismissing all the ancient Indian civilisations. More and more people are rejecting the term "discovery" in favour of the meeting, clash, or cross-fertilisation of cultures from the two different hemispheres. After all, the American aborigines were simultaneously discovering for themselves Europe. The significance of that event, perhaps, was a perception of that the world came to be perceived as something complete. That "discovery" was proof that the Earth is round and that people are the same in the "Old" and the "New" worlds.

Intellectuals used to serve the ruling classes, justifying social injustice in lands which suffered under the colonial yoke for three centuries and then endured the burden of neocolonialism, underdevelopment and illiteracy, a burden carried primarily by the exploited and the dispossessed. But even during the period of colonisation there emerged a different culture and a different type of intellectual. He was gradually to forge knowledge into a tool of truth and wield his pen like a mighty sword. Although the process was sometimes imperceptible, it never stopped.

During the struggle against foreign domination in the late 19th century—a struggle ignited by issues of class and national liberation, and not without its racial contradiction—the Cuban Jose Marti (1853-1895) became the harbinger of a new age for Latin Americans. He represented a blend of politics and culture, ideas and action, freedom and poetry, literature and life, and by his example he anticipated the slogan "Patria o muerte!". Although he died in battle, his self-sacrifice was not in vain, and his name lives on. His heroic death inspired a spirit of revolution. His blood soon nourished the most beautiful flower not just in Cuban but in all Latin American history. Marti became the progenitor of the Cuban Revolution, which we all consider the greatest political and cultural event in the history of our continent.

There were many such prophets. For instance, Che Guevara, one of the greatest Latin American fighters and thinkers of the 20th century, gazed into the future from unattainable moral summits and paid for it with his life. As he made ready for his odyssey into the Bolivian Andes, convinced that physical death would not belittle his dreams and deeds, he wrote: "The man of the 21st century will be our own creation."

The Echo of the October Revolution

Politically, the 20th century began in 1917 rather than 1900. The Great October Socialist Revolution was an unprecedented spiritual upheaval for millions of workers, students and progressive intellectuals in Latin America. Assessing the impact of that event, the Argentine philosopher Jose Ingenieros (1877-1925)

wrote: "Now all the peoples have embarked on the road of comprehensive renewal; and we can only guess about its everlasting political, ethical and economic significance." Just a few months after October 1917, the campus in Cordova, Argentina, became the centre of a movement for a university reform that swept almost the whole of Latin America. Anibal Ponce (1898-1938), a 20-year-old Argentine participant in those events and an outstanding Marxist of his time, had this to say about the events in Russia: "The red flames that engulfed the East set fire to our old university as well."

As everyone knows, the Russian revolution, which contributed to the emergence of communist parties and to the worldwide spread of Marxism, was a turning point in the destiny of Latin America. Neruda included in his list of outstanding Communists of the 20th century, cited at the beginning of this article, the Peruvian J. C. Mariategui (1895-1930) and the Chilean L. E. Recabarren (1876-1924). Those two men deserve special attention because they were not only perceptive political thinkers but also organisers of the working class, and the founders of working-class parties in their own countries.

Mariategui is rightly considered the first outstanding Marxist in Latin America. Much has changed in his country, in Latin America, and in the world as a whole, since the untimely death of that remarkable revolutionary in 1930. His many sociological and journalistic writings should be read as we read any classic, that is, from a contemporary point of view, picking out everything of lasting value but at the same time never taking his views on his own surroundings as the last word on anything. Mariategui's major accomplishment was that in the brilliance of the October Revolution he was the first to attempt a serious analysis of the situation in his own country and in Latin America. That was a feat of creativity. His journal *Amauta* made a lasting imprint on the culture of the continent. His *Seven Essays on Interpretation of Peruvian Reality*, published in 1928, opened up new horizons to the readers, provoked creative thinking and urged collective action. On October 12 of the same year, Mariategui told the Lima-based newspaper *Variedades*: "Spanish America, or Latin America, whichever you call it, will never achieve unity under the bourgeois system. It is up to Anglo-Saxon North America to crown and complete capitalist civilisation. The future of Latin America is socialism."

Thirty years later, the victorious Cuban Revolution became the greatest triumph of Marxism in the Western Hemisphere and changed the course of our history. Its success was ensured by a close link between theory and practice, which continue to enrich each other and find their expression in mass action. Fidel Castro, the outstanding Latin American leader, gives them forceful and profound expression and inspiration with every word and deed, which reach every heart

Neruda mentioned, in addition to Mariategui and the well-known founder of the Communist Party of Chile, L. E. Recabarren (whose life as a political thinker and fighter is not unlike that of the Peruvian leader), Mariategui's countryman Cesar Vallejo (1892-1938), a Communist and a poet of great talent. He and his people suffered so terribly under the exploiter system that he was ashamed of his pursuit of poetry and sometimes even condemned it. His poetry was a remarkable contribution to world literature. Although his worldview was extremely tragic, the poet inclined towards the great revolutionary movement, which was shaping the course of world history. He refused to accept the triumph of chaos and absurdity, represented by the inhuman capitalist system, visited the Soviet Union and, shortly before his death, wrote works that were a paean to life, including those about the revolutionary war in Spain.

The seven decades since the October Revolution have seen in Latin America the immense influence, direct and indirect, of *revolutionary culture and Marxist ideology*. The contribution of Communists, representatives of other trends of the progressive revolutionary intelligentsia and non-affiliated people, to the spiritual life of the continent makes itself felt among "ordinary" people and among the intellectuals, that is, in literature, the arts, and natural and social sciences. In virtually every country of the subcontinent Communists are making their mark on social, political and cultural life. In fact, every Latin American and Caribbean people, from Mexico to Chile, has produced its own revolutionary artists and tribunes. It is our historical and cultural duty to put their legacy within reach not only of the narrow circle of our compatriots but of all the other fraternal nations.

A quarter century ago, the Guatemalan writer Luis Cardoza y Aragon (b. 1904) said that "Mexican murals are America's only contribution to world art". Today, the Latin American novel is considered to have attained that high level as well. Some people see a sort of natural regularity in such peaks of creativity: muralists produced their best creations amidst the roar of the Mexican revolution (1910-1917).

The rise of the Latin American novel in the past few decades has eloquently reflected the spirit that was fostered on the continent by the Cuban Revolution, another witness to the crisis of ideological colonialism and the resurgence of national self-awareness. It inspired painters of inimitable personal temperaments, such as the Ecuadorean Oswaldo Guayasamin (b. 1919), the Cuban Wilfredo Lam (1902-1982) and the Chilean Roberto Matta (b. 1912), to name but three of the towering peaks in the Cordilleras of Latin American painting. The picture is the same in music, the theatre, the cinema, dancing and all the other arts. There was also great progress in architecture, the chosen field of the world-renowned Oscar Niemeyer (b. 1907), creator of Brasilia.

The names of revolutionaries who have made their

mark in the culture of our countries would have added up to a bulky volume. But an article is not a telephone directory and we have cited just a few examples to give the reader an idea of the scope of that process.

The Cuban Revolution prompted an awareness of the commonality of the historical destinies of Latin America and the Caribbean countries in every area of life. Havana became the veritable capital of Latin American culture. Moreover, it began to tear down the "Great Wall of China" which culturally separated Hispanic America from Brazil, and also proclaimed the need for mutual contacts between Latin American and Caribbean cultures. What had seemed impossible on the continent under feudalism and capitalism began to be introduced on the initiative of socialism.

Workers and Intellectuals

Marx stressed the leading role of the working class in society. Communist parties should consist primarily of proletarians or, in a broader context, of working people who comprise the conventional, and rather inaptly termed category of "manual and intellectual workers". But some fraternal parties occasionally succumbed to anti-intellectual tendencies, to the pernicious and senseless "ouvrierism"², which, strange as it may seem, is often found among some intellectuals and which has caused much harm to the revolutionary movement. That movement is unthinkable without the workers, but it also needs intellectuals. Their contribution to revolution is irreplaceable, as is forcefully exemplified by Marx, Engels and Lenin. We in Latin America do not overlook the role of political thinkers inspired by the ideas of the struggle for independence, and of its heralds and leaders, such as Miranda and Bolivar. It does not take exceptional perspicacity correctly to appreciate the role of intellectuals in the Cuban and Nicaraguan revolutions.

Theoretical deficiency and ideological poverty in revolutionary activity may have very grave effects, especially on the leadership: they will sap its strength, make it incapable of responding adequately to the needs and demands of the struggle, and slow down and impoverish it in the face of the enemy, who resorts to increasingly sophisticated, malicious and hypocritical misrepresentations of reality in pursuit of his own ends.

Latin American countries have now been inundated with various "foundations", which hold seminars, symposiums and conferences and publish theses, papers, synopses of speeches, etc., presenting historical figures and interpreting events and views as they see fit and rejecting whatever concepts are not to their liking. Sometimes—regrettably, not always—

² From the French *ouvrier*, worker.—Ed.

there are progressive motives behind such activities. It is important for us Communists to develop our own cultural and historical awareness, one that would enable us to decide unerringly what is progressive and revolutionary, and what is merely convention and reaction disguised as "renewal". Latin American revolutionaries have achieved a great deal in the field of culture, but there is much more to be done. Our contribution to criticism and theoretical debates in various areas has so far been modest and our ideological discourses often err on the side of sectarianism or liberalism.

If one recognises that politics is both art and science, one has to study it and to prepare oneself for running it. *The class instinct, intuition or outdated prescriptions are not enough to find one's bearings and act in today's labyrinthine society, or to understand properly the intricate dialectics of life, which day after day poses the most difficult questions, leads into the unknown and demands answers to complex problems.* All that takes sound knowledge and collective wisdom, which is the sum of the wisdom of individuals. So let us not look down upon intellect and education or underestimate culture. The communist movement has had more than its fair share of protracted tragedies, in which one man thinks for everyone and any unconventional idea is not only treated with suspicion, but even at times proves fatal for its author.

Lenin credited Russia's workers and peasants with the leading role in the development of the great revolutionary cause. The idea of an alliance of the working class, the peasantry and the middle strata engaged in manual or intellectual work is the absolute imperative of today's world. No victory on the road of revolution is possible without that alliance, to which Fidel Castro referred when he emphasised the specific need in Latin America for cooperation between Marxists and Christians. That is especially true when incessant attempts are made to isolate communist parties and neutralise their influence on the mass of people, and when the bourgeois press persistently claims that the communist movement is in the grip of a "crisis". As a component of the revolutionary forces, we Communists are needed today more than ever. The question is: Can we perform our revolutionary mission? But we will fail if we do not get rid of our outdated ideas. However hurtful and unjust my words may sound, *we may become captives of our own ingrained conservatism, and we must overcome that danger and banish conservatism from our mentality.*

Even the more outdated, arch-conservative, fundamentalist or neofascist regimes have their intellectual hirelings, adept at cosmetic and plastic surgery, who can present outright obscurantism as the latest fashion. Pinochet, for example, has his own court team of "scholars", at whose prompting he holds forth on seven "modernisations". They say that the time of revolution is past. But in fact, far from bow-

ing out of history, it constitutes the real aim of the mass of people.

The process of intellectualisation embraces not just the intelligentsia but everybody, especially now in the midst of a scientific and technological revolution, with the world of labour and material production producing numerous innovations which require high-level training. In this sense one has every right to say that man himself is becoming more and more intellectual. The same holds true for the communist party. Naturally, the talk is not of a special party of the intelligentsia but of the collective intellect of the party intelligentsia, which are two very different things. *There is a need for change in our political, scientific and technological culture, for the rectification of mistakes, for diverse views, for a willingness to discuss new problems, and for continuous work on questions of ideology and studies in science, literature and the arts.* All this necessitates a move towards mass participation in the process of change, so that everyone becomes the subject rather than the object of history. These goals presuppose genuine democracy, the free play of opinions and the lofty responsibility of the participants in the collective struggle for a better future.

Concern for the future is gaining ground and taking on concrete forms. The UNESCO-sponsored World Decade for Cultural Development began in 1988, and it is our duty to support that initiative in every way.

Communists in the Face of Change

Mikhail Gorbachov said in his speech on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution that the communist movement needed qualitative change. In our view, it is important to take those words seriously and get down to business as soon as possible, not least because we have already lost much time as it is. To begin with, we should have a clear idea of what to do and where to go. *The movement is in need of renewal if we are not to be consigned to the wasteland of history.* This doesn't mean simply taking a leaf out of somebody else's book. Copies, clichés and photostats, so common in everyday life, are an intolerable absurdity in politics and, what is more, undignified.

The essence of Mikhail Gorbachov's views, I think, is his call for new thinking, his desire to commit to the museum of antiquity the outdated icons and myths that blinded us for so long, and his willingness to take life as it is, unadorned, in order to improve it and to give a fresh impetus to the revolutionary process. Analysing Soviet experience, he formulates methodological principles that are relevant to all Communists. He deserves the utmost credit for his ability to consider phenomena without any bias, in the spirit of Marxist dialectics. *So let us follow the example of that honest, heartfelt criticism and self-criticism, put an end to bureaucracy*

and, yielding to practical demands, break the thrall of empty slogans, meaningless phrases, stereotype verbiage and high-flown rhetoric and replace them with the fresh, rich and concrete language of reality.

It is inadmissible either in a scholarly study or in a work of art to violate their inherent laws or tolerate outside administrative meddling. We have always believed that the party cannot and must not dictate its doctrines, concepts of art or any official prescriptions in aesthetic matters. The spark of creativity is in the mind and heart of the author, and if that mind and heart is committed to revolution, their product will belong to it too.

Another problem lies within ourselves. Naturally we have many shortcomings in cultural matters, primarily in the practical implementation of cultural policies. Many Communists approach culture in a way very different from Engels's: he noted that it was an equal and inalienable whole with politics and the economy. But we often relegate it to a secondary role as a tool. Many specialists fear that culture could become a meaningless adornment or even a "fifth wheel".

But culture is not shoes that can be changed at whim. Neither is it the spice in a hot political dish because it is itself *politics, in the deepest sense of that word*. Occasionally, it may provide the entertainment or spectacle that people want, especially in such forms as the cinema, television or video. Sometimes culture is involved in the joyous, dramatic or formal culmination of mass popular festivities or holidays, although that is not its most important function. One must not manipulate culture or use it as a stopgap. It is more than a precious necklace because it is not an adornment but a means of searching for truth, goodness and beauty. It is a blend of ethics and aesthetics. It is the conscience of the world, embodied in man so that he should be capable of transforming consciously and rationally the surrounding reality. Its domain is ideology and knowledge. When all is said and done, it is the product of our behaviour and everyday endeavour, not just in intellectual matters but in every sphere of spiritual and material life and with regard to all sorts of interests—partisan and universal, private or common.

Communists undoubtedly ought to work better and on a broader front. The party ought to provide for its members not just a home but a fraternal, open and hospitable community bustling with life because, ultimately, revolutionaries must live their lives of danger within it. After all, these are people who under capitalism deny themselves many things, swim against the current, risk their lives and are exposed to a host of other perils. Communists should, of course, improve to the utmost the standards of their work with the mass of people, sharpen their political instincts, and give others credit for superior intellect where it is due. They should appreciate and cherish

the talents of thinkers, artists and scientists, promoting their careers in the service of the people and society and respecting the time they put into their work and their great contribution to the common cause.

That does not mean ideological disarmament or an end to the historical dispute with capitalism. Polemics on principles should be even sharper, more penetrating and better argued because there are still many cultural contradictions. *To us it is not an abstraction, but part and parcel of life itself and of the struggle for democracy and socialism.* Hence the need to develop the ability to pursue a constructive policy that would make it possible to fight the battle under more auspicious conditions. I think that the revolutionaries of our continent, living in an atmosphere of unfulfilled hopes, tensions and unresolved problems, should produce a programme that would be acceptable to all the progressive sections of society. Progressive intellectuals and students should not just be considered spontaneous rebels or heralds of the "conflict of generations", but ought to join in the battle which they, being by no means "fellow-travellers", by rights consider their very own.

The communist and revolutionary movement is living through a very crucial period. The task in hand is to bring our thinking into harmony with the needs of the world on the threshold of the 21st century. Our theory and practice, as well as the economy, politics and culture have to be restructured.

Communists and all the other revolutionary forces are confronting capitalism, which has refined its ability to fake modernisation and which is ready to meet our challenge in any given situation. It shamelessly exploits the achievements of the scientific and technological revolution to further its own interests. That is why it is time for us to return to Marx and Lenin and to apply what they taught to the present situation.

The 20th century has a record of not only impressive achievements and colossal transformations but also one of unprecedented tragedies, including those which involved serious distortions of the principles, spirit and morality of socialism. The century can be credited with the greatest social movements in history and the triumph of scientific and technological progress (which does not invalidate social revolution). We are about to complete one phase of history and enter another, in which a revolution within a revolution is to be launched.

As for capitalism, it is indulging in claims of a "second youth". It proclaims the "modernisation" of the Right, which attacks public property everywhere. It has adorned itself with the prefix "neo", which Nazism and fascism have immediately borrowed from it. But no amount of facelifting will resolve the key problems of our time, those which are rooted in the antagonistic contradictions of capitalism. There

can be no true change in society without a change in relations between the classes. Capitalism in Latin American countries is not going to make the slightest effort to "improve" itself if it means rejecting the glaring inequality between the outrageous wealth of some and the abject poverty of others.

There is no "decline" of ideologies, the subject of much discussion recently. In fact, they are all-pervasive. Big Capital continues to assert its ideology at the political and state levels, in the economy and social life, in legislation and in the mass media, as it seeks to take control of any and everything that could legalise and perpetuate its dominance. The institutions which churn out ideological precepts are strictly subordinate to the reactionary power centres. We Chileans know that only too well—generals run our universities.

On a recent visit to Chile I witnessed an impressive rallying of intellectual forces in defence of universities. The brazen fascist dictatorship is out to obliterate those centres of knowledge and research. The polemics between the reactionaries and the advocates of change is hotting up. The pressure from neoconservatives and their ability to disguise themselves are something worth thinking about.

In Step With the Times

Communists must thoroughly reappraise the fraternal parties' achievements over the years and the tasks for the next millennium. No one can malign our contribution to 20th century world culture, as Neruda demonstrated with his list of illustrious names. Although it has been a revolutionary, creative and remarkably far-reaching contribution, it should not prevent us from analysing it self-critically and recognising the intricate problems that face the communist movement, and the urgent need for change.

The signs of a crisis are increasingly evident in the capitalist world. But it is not going to commit suicide. *We can and must take the offensive because revolution, far from running out of steam, still retains its great potential.* Marxism has translated its theory into practice in many countries and remains the leading current of thought worldwide. It is now gathering momentum as it returns to its timeless origins and wakes up to the dangers implicit in absolute determinism, dogmatism and the mentality of powerless "cogs".

Marxism offers the world ideas that have become a material force, ideas that are simple, rational and indisputable, such as the need to save the world from a nuclear holocaust. They respond to the instinct of self-preservation, elementary logic, scientific conclusions—in short, the natural laws of life—

to such an extent that Mikhail Gorbachov, their most outstanding champion, was in 1987 chosen "man of the year" in the United States and many West European countries. Naturally, the worldview he professes is not just his own. He is not simply a dreamer or an armchair philosopher, fantasising about a world without war. He is the standard-bearer and herald of a great society called socialism and the great idea of eternal and universal peace. It is important to bear in mind not just the moral grandeur of his principles but also their skillful and straightforward presentation, which many people should learn from. As we need air, so we need a *burst of the intellectual energy latent within the people and the revolutionary movement.*

The correlation between the destinies of the world and those of Latin America, between politics and culture and between universal peace and man's age-old dreams was highlighted in a talk between Mikhail Gorbachov and Gabriel Garcia Marquez on July 15, 1987. Man today has to change his thinking patterns. Commandment No. 1 in the new Decalogue is to safeguard life and annihilate nuclear weapons. Gorbachov believes that "the whole world needs perestroika". The great novelist is certain that "if perestroika, if what you are doing is brought to completion, this will be the greatest event in contemporary history". It was not the writer but the politician who remarked: "We need creative imagination very much today". The Colombian writer for his part exclaimed adamantly: "Not a step backward!... You may be certain that intellectuals in Latin America are on your side. Everything taking place in the Soviet Union is followed with immense interest there". It was not a Communist but an unaffiliated revolutionary who spoke, and his words convey the mood of our people as well as of most Latin American intellectuals. Gorbachov added: "I am very interested in that continent and its destiny. It is a continent full of great potential and traditions. In spite of all the difficulties, the people there have a strong desire for a better future. But there are serious obstacles in their path and you know about them. The path to freedom is difficult. But I am certain that Latin America's progress will gather momentum".³

It is that task the Latin American peoples are tackling, and their culture is pursuing the same goal. The dialogue cited above conveys, in one way or another, the thoughts shared by all of us, and confirms anew that we Communists are part of the worldwide movement in defence of human life, freedom and prosperity, in defence of humanism. In fulfilling that task, the Latin American revolutionary intellectuals are in the front ranks, together with all those who have no use for dogmas in their thoughts and actions.

³ *Pravda*, July 16, 1987.

THE INDIAN AGRARIAN SCENARIO

Krishna RAO Y. V.

Member of the National Council, Communist Party of India, and General Secretary of the All-India Kisan Sabha (peasant organisation)

THE INDIAN agrarian economy is facing a multi-dimensional crisis: a crisis of agrarian structures, a crisis of development, growing interpersonal and inter-regional inequalities, poverty at one end and land and asset concentration at the other, and, last but not least, the growing ecological and environmental crisis.

The situation has further worsened with the recurring droughts and floods over a large part of the country. The economy of the working peasantry in general, and of the small and marginal farmers in particular, has been hard hit in these areas. The country witnessed, during 1987-1988, not only starvation deaths in the famine-affected areas of Orissa and Rajasthan, but also suicide deaths of cotton growers in the fertile regions of Andhra Pradesh, due to crop failures and a fall in prices, which increased the debt burden.

While the majority of cultivators, small and marginal farmers with tiny and fragmented land holdings, are suffering not only from resource constraint but also from social, caste and other forms of oppression, a small section of capitalist farmers and rich peasants are dominating the rural economic, social, political and cultural life. These powerful sections, mostly from upper castes, are fully utilising the caste, communal and other traditional institutions to divide the democratic movements so as to subserve their narrow selfish class interests. The policies pursued by the bourgeois ruling class to build capitalist relations in agriculture, of course, without radically restructuring and completely abolishing the old feudal relations and the conservative method adopted to transform the feudal landlords into capitalist farmers, are the root cause of the present agrarian scenario.

Aborted Land Reforms

The hiatus between promise and practice of the ruling class is not so wide in any other field than in the field of land reforms.

The first round of land reforms, abolishing statutory intermediary interests in land, was at least implemented in the course of 10 to 15 years, after a lot of litigation and payment of huge compensa-

tion of about 6,700 million rupees, leaving 20 million acres of the so-called *khudkhast*¹ land to the landlords and also allowing them large extent of residential area, big mansions, buildings, etc. With these enactments a large section of intermediate cultivating castes—about 20 million families—got full proprietorship rights over their lands, which helped them to develop agriculture and also to consolidate their socioeconomic position.

The second and third rounds of land reforms, regarding tenancy and imposition of ceiling on ownership of agricultural holdings, have failed in the main, except in Kerala and West Bengal. Also, a section of protected tenants in Maharashtra, Gujarat and the former Hyderabad state obtained ownership rights. In the 1970s, state government led by the CPI leader Achutha Menon in Kerala conferred ownership rights on more than 2.2 million tenants. In West Bengal the left front government recorded 1.5 million tenants and gave security of tenancy.

Except partly in Karnataka and Tamilnadu, tenants were evicted on a large scale and the landlords took over the land for self-cultivation. As a result of this large-scale eviction of tenants (according to the renowned Indian economist Dr K. N. Raj, about 9 million by 1971-1972), the percentage of tenants and the land under tenancy sharply declined and the percentage of land under owner cultivation has increased.

The landlords were able to sabotage the ceiling legislations and conceal much of their land through fraudulent partitions among family members and by *benamy* (fictitious) transfers.

The total area declared surplus under the pre-revised and revised ceiling laws by March 31, 1985, was 2.92 million hectares, the area taken possession of was 2.31 million hectares and the area actually distributed was only 1.73 million hectares. Thus the area declared surplus is less than 2% of the cultivated land and the area actually distributed was about 1% only.

There are a number of studies which have clearly documented how the land reforms, particularly the tenancy and, the more so, the land ceiling enactments were sabotaged by all the three wings of the state power—the legislative, the administrative and the judicial.

Powerful capitalist farmers and rich peasant sections fought tooth and nail against these land reforms. These rural land-owning sections are well entrenched in the power structure at the state level and are in full control at the local level.

The ruling bourgeoisie has quietly acquiesced with this position. They have not dared to resist this landlord influence on the power structure. They also depend very much on the big vote banks which these sections command in the rural areas. As a result the land reforms issue has been effectively pushed under the carpet.

¹ *Khudkhast*—self-cultivation.—Ed.

Though the tenancy and ceiling laws and the distribution of surplus land have been mainly a failure, a certain indirect impact of these measures is visible. The landlords in some states have disposed of part of their lands through sales. Under the threat of land reforms, they have reclaimed their leased-out lands and taken up so-called personal cultivation. The ceiling enactments have come in the way of further acquisition of land. Though inequalities in land ownership continue, there are a number of changes in the production relations. The upper sections in the rural economy have utilised the institutions of input supply, credit and marketing to strengthen and perpetuate their dominance.

Structural Crisis

There are some serious disturbing trends in the structural changes of operational holdings during the period 1961-1981.

The total number of ownership holdings has increased from 49 million in 1953-1954 to 81 million in 1970-1971, which gives a compound rate of increase of 2.82% per year. The number of operational holdings, which stood at 48.88 million in 1960-1961, has increased to 70.49 million by 1970-1971 and to 89.35 million by 1980-1981, i.e., an increase of 40.47 million, or 82.7% in just 20 years. The increase in the number of marginal holdings below 1 hectare was particularly steep in the decade 1970-1971 to 1980-1981, from 35.68 million to 50.52 million, i.e., an increase of 41.6%. The percentage increase in total holdings was only 26.6 during this period. The marginal and small holdings below 2 hectares account for 74.5% of the total operational holdings, covering 26.3% of the total area.² In some states more than 50% of the operational area is accounted for by these sections. Of course, the distribution of ceiling surplus land to 3.24 million beneficiaries, and the distribution of government cultivable waste land to an almost equal number of beneficiaries have accounted for the increase in the number of small and marginal holdings.

The percentage of medium and large holdings (4 to 10 hectares and 10 hectares and above) was 9.1% and 2.4% and the area under them accounted for 29.7% and 22.8%, respectively, in 1980-1981. Though the number and the area has somewhat declined, land concentration still continues. The agricultural census figures do not, of course, include the area concealed by the landlords under fictitious names.

This all-India picture conceals significant differences in the composition of agrarian structures in different states.

In this connection it is important to note the all-India structure of ownership and operational holdings and the area owned and operated by classes of different size. While the percentage of ownership holdings of marginal farmers was 66.6 in 1980-

1981, their percentage in operational holdings was only 56.4. That means that a number of marginal farmers have leased out their lands and are dependent on wage labour. While the percentage of the area owned by small and marginal farmers in 1981-1982 was 28.8, the percentage of the operated area was only 26.2.³

This clearly shows the trend indicating the consolidation of capitalist farming.

Though the contribution of agriculture and allied sectors to the net national product has declined from 51.2% in 1951-1952 to 37.3% in 1981, the percentage of labour force dependent on these sectors has at best decreased marginally over the three decades and is still very high at 70% of the total labour force. A major cause for this trend in the agricultural sector is the rapid population growth and the inability of industrial development to increase its share in absorption of labour force.

This agrarian overpopulation is clearly reflected in the rapid proliferation of small and marginal farmers and also in the low growth in per capita income in the agricultural sector when compared to the per capita income growth in the non-agricultural sector.

Between 1963-1964 and 1983, the number of rural households increased by 49% while that of agricultural labour households increased by more than 100%. The percentage of agricultural labour households in the total rural households grew steadily from 21 in 1963-1964 to 31 in 1983.

During the period between 1961 and 1981, while the percentage of cultivators among the total number of workers declined from 52.3 in 1961 to 41.5 in 1981, the percentage of agricultural workers among the total number of workers increased from 17.2 in 1961 to 25.2 in 1981.

The 38th Round (1983) of the National Sample Survey data show two major trends: firstly, an increase in the overall percentage of wage labour in the total workforce and, secondly, casualisation of wage labour. The all-India percentage of rural male wage labour in the total work force in 1982-1983 was 39.6 and the percentage of casual wage labourers in the total wage labourers was 72.3.

There are wide variations in the percentage of male wage labour and casualisation of wage labourers among different states. The percentage of wage labour varies from 72.1 in Kerala and Karnataka to 20.9 in Jammu and Kashmir. So also the percentage of casualisation of wage labour was 87.3 in Kerala, 82.2 in Bihar, 81.5 in Gujarat, and 49 in Assam.

The rising proportion of hired labour is attributable more to the entry of marginal farmers and artisans in the labour market than to proletarianisation per se.

In the decade of 1971-1981, the rural exodus to urban areas assumed massive proportions, such

² 1981-1982 Census of Agricultural Holdings, Government of India Publication.—Ed.

³ Structure of Landholdings. Mid-Term Appraisal of the Five-Year Plan, Planning Commission, Government of India.

migration accounting for 28 million and constituting 55% of the urban population growth during this period.

New Agricultural Strategy

From the mid-1960s, the ruling classes have opted for the seed-fertiliser technology for agricultural development.

Dr P. C. Joshi has characterised the green revolution strategy as "the response of the ruling class to the unresolved problems of Indian agricultural development which symbolised a decisive shift from an institutional to a technocratic approach to the development of the rural economy".⁴

The new agricultural strategy was essentially based on the already well-endowed regions having a higher percentage of irrigated area and other infrastructural facilities. It is further based on the large surplus producing farmers. Equality and social justice were sacrificed. The strategy simply aimed at achieving large marketable surpluses to cater to the needs of the urban consumers.

Hence, all funds, inputs, infrastructural facilities, etc., were concentrated in these areas and the upper sections of the farmers were given all concessions and encouraged to produce more.

This strategy was responsible for achieving near self-sufficiency in food grains in the country. Of course, this is in the context of the fact that large sections of the people have very limited purchasing power. In the short run, this strategy has produced large marketable surpluses in food grains, not only to supply urban consumers, but also to build up large buffer stocks. However, the long-term effects of this strategy are very serious and cannot be ignored any longer.

It has been clearly brought out by eminent economists, like Ch. Hanumantha Rao, S. K. Ray and K. Subba Rao of the Institute of Economic Growth, that instability in agricultural production has increased in the post-green revolution period on account of the rise in the sensibility of output to variations in rainfall. This rising vulnerability of agricultural output, especially food grain output, to droughts is traceable to the high complementarity of new seed-fertiliser technology with water and the inadequate expansion of irrigation facilities. They have sharply pointed out how stability, equity, and efficiency in the growth of agricultural production were sacrificed with the seed-fertiliser technology.

The area under irrigation has increased from 17% in 1950 to about 30% of the total area under cultivation by now. But 70% of the area is still dependent on the vagaries of the monsoons.

In addition to this, drought and floods have become a recurring phenomena, causing colossal losses of crops, cattle, property and human life. Due to the senseless felling of trees and destruction of

forest wealth on extensive areas, serious ecological imbalances and environmental problems have arisen. More than 7 million hectares of arable land have been degraded and rendered unfit for cultivation.

Extension of irrigation, flood control, power, marketing and credit institutions can definitely play an important role in expanding the base of agricultural growth, imparting stability and equity and providing more employment.

Along the lines of comprehensive land reforms, a policy of preferential aid to the poor, small and middle peasants to increase agricultural production in their sector and eliminate the non-equivalent exchange between agricultural and other sectors is the urgent need of the hour.

The drought of 1987 has also brought home the realisation that without agricultural development, the high growth rate in industry and in the economy cannot be sustained. The Economic Survey for 1987-1988 admitted that agriculture should be given top priority. It said that "the tempo of higher growth recorded in the first half of the 1980s has been disturbed by recurring monsoon failures during the last four years. With a view to recovering the momentum of agricultural growth, it has been decided that top priority should be given to this sector in the remaining two years of the plan."

Based on this understanding, a new action plan to extend the green revolution strategy to some more new areas has been worked out and it is being implemented in 169 districts of 14 states.

Poverty Alleviation Schemes

The analysis of the data of the 38th Round of the 1983-1984 National Sample Survey on rural poverty by Ch. Hanumantha Rao indicated a reduction not only in the percentage of rural people below the poverty line from 51 in 1977-1978 to 40 in 1983-1984 but also a reduction in the numbers of absolutely poor from 253 million to 221 million, despite an increase in rural population during this period. (Rural households with an annual income below Rs. 3,500⁵ are considered below the poverty line.) But, according to V. M. Dandekar, "the proportion of population below the poverty line, namely 44.4% in 1983-1984, is of course, below the same in 1971-1972, namely 46.0%. But the decline is too small, only about 1.6 percentage points in 11 years, to derive comfort from. The size of the problem is simply too large compared to the size of the anti-poverty programmes. Incidentally, we may note that the small decline in poverty since 1977-1978 is partly due to the prices of primary food articles not rising to the same extent as the rise in prices of other commodities."

There are large variations in the percentage of rural people below the poverty line between different states. The incidence of rural poverty was

⁴ P. C. Joshi, *New Wave*, March 31, 1985.

⁵ The Sixth Five-Year Plan figure of poverty line.—Ed.

51.35%, the highest in the country in the state of Bihar in 1983-1984.

The mid-term appraisal of the Seventh Five-Year Plan claims that the poverty ratio was 39.9% in rural areas and 27.7% in urban areas in 1984-1985. But with the severe drought and consequent loss of crops and employment, and with the rising inflation and spiralling prices, the percentage of rural people below poverty line (families below the annual income of Rs. 6,400)⁶ might have gone up again during the recent years, though the latest figures are not available.

Though the government-initiated several schemes, like Small Farmers and Agricultural Labour Development Scheme, Integrated Rural Development Scheme, Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Scheme, National Rural Employment Programme, Drought Prone Areas Development Programme etc., from 1970 onwards about 80,000 million rupees were spent up to now on poverty alleviation schemes, no serious dent has yet been made in the scourge of poverty. A major part of these funds is finding its way into the pockets of those in command of the rural power structure, corrupt bureaucracy and middlemen, through large-scale leakage.

The Seventh Plan Report itself admits that "these anti-poverty programmes cannot by themselves be expected to remove poverty on a substantial basis".

These schemes by the ruling bourgeoisie are in response to the growing inequalities and sharpened social conflicts in the rural parts. This is an effort to moderate the functioning of the resource power, of course within the existing unequal socioeconomic framework. They tend to slow down the process of ruination of small and marginal farmers, though marginalisation of these sections is proceeding relentlessly.

The All-India Kisan Sabha has noted that poverty is inbuilt in the system of agricultural production itself and cannot be removed without restructuring the entire social and agrarian structure.

Only such a restructuring will greatly facilitate the expansion of the home market and remove the retarding factors for the advancement in the economy as a whole.

Peasants and Remunerative Prices

One major change brought about by the economic development of the post-independence period is that the big industrial and commercial bourgeoisie and the monopolists and the multinationals have emerged as the main exploiters of the peasantry.

The ruling bourgeoisie has been consistently pursuing a policy to keep the agricultural prices artificially depressed so as to keep the wages low and supply cheap raw materials to the industries and thus increase the profits of the Indian and foreign monopoly sections. For this, several policy

instruments are used, such as fixing of low support prices,⁷ imports, exports, etc.

With the growth of energy-intensive and capital-intensive agriculture and large-scale product exchange, the market dependency of the peasantry has increased immensely.

With the deepening economic crisis, the ruling bourgeois circles are shifting the burden of the crisis onto the shoulders of the peasants and other toiling sections. Ever since 1950-1951, except for a brief period of 10 years from the mid-1960s, the terms of trade have gone against the agricultural sector, particularly after 1975. Year after year, thousands of millions of rupees are transferred from the agricultural sector to the other sectors.

Capitalist Relations in Agriculture

Due to the changes in the agrarian setup, brought about by the national bourgeoisie in the post-independence period, the situation in the agrarian sector has substantially changed. Cultivations by employing wage labour by landowners has substantially extended. Many semi-feudal landlords and a section of rich peasants have thus become capitalist farmers. Agricultural production has nearly trebled from about 51.00 million tons in 1950-1951 to 150.44 million in 1985-1986, and dependence on food imports has come to an end. Shortages of agricultural raw materials like cotton and jute no longer exist, though India still has to import large quantities of edible oils, rubber and at times sugar.

The 22nd National Conference of the All-India Kisan Sabha held in 1979 characterised the Indian agrarian economy as "transitional, unstable and multi-structural", in which the capitalist, the semi-feudal and small peasant sectors "co-exist and contend against each other". It was further stated that capitalism, being the "formation moulding structure", was constantly endeavouring to remould the other two sectors "in its own way". But this process was slow and painful for the masses inasmuch as agrarian capitalism in India was not "pure" capitalism but was "characterised by the combination of capitalist forms of exploitation with the remnants of feudal forms of exploitation, thereby subjecting the rural toiling masses to the worst features of both feudal and capitalist exploitation, which makes the burden on them still more oppressive".

Since then, during this decade, the capitalist sector has further strengthened at the cost of the feudal and semi-feudal sectors. The small peasant sector also has grown, taking the country as a whole.

The seed-fertiliser technology has given a big boost to the growth of commercial agriculture, money-commodity relations, commodity production and growth of capitalism in agriculture. Market dependency of

⁶ The Seventh Five-Year Plan figure of poverty line.—Ed.

⁷ In India the government fixes the floor prices of food grains before the harvest.—Ed.

both big and small farmers has grown sharply. Agriculture has become profitable to the large owners since the mid-1960s. This has encouraged owner cultivation with hired labour and resumption of tenanted lands on a big scale. Traditional relations in the countryside are disintegrating.

The capitalist farmers and rich peasants, besides investing in agriculture, social forestry, and other allied activities, have also been investing their surpluses in industry, trade and commerce and in speculation. Thus they are transforming into farmer-businessmen and farmer-industrialists.

Various studies in different states have proved beyond doubt that despite the constraint of resources the small and marginal farmers are also adopting new technology. Productivity of their farms has increased as well. However, according to several studies, the latest trend is that large farms have proved to be efficient vis-à-vis the small and marginal farms. With the green revolution strategy the rural inequalities have further increased, and the social contradictions have sharpened.

The state policies have greatly helped the consolidation of large farmer cultivation. After the nationalisation of scheduled commercial banks and increase in cooperative credit, the supply of institutional credit to the agricultural sector has expanded significantly and in 1981-1982, it accounted for 63% of the total outstanding cash debts according to the Debt and Investment Survey of National Sample Survey. To that extent, the role of usurious capital has been reduced. With the expansion of activities by state commodity corporations and cooperative marketing federations, the role of the trading capital also has somewhat lessened. But it still occupies a dominant position.

In the level of capitalist development in agriculture, North-Western States of Punjab, Haryana, Western Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and some parts of Rajasthan occupy the first place. States like Maharashtra, Gujarat and the four southern states come next.

In the Eastern parts of the country, i. e. in Bihar, West Bengal, and Orissa, though capitalist relations are making headway, still the feudal and semi-feudal relations are very strong. Madhya Pradesh and the rest of Rajasthan stand in between the Southern and the Eastern States in this regard.

Commercialisation and market integration of tribal areas are proceeding. This, coupled with the replacement of tribal systems of tenure by the individual system, has been leading to growing landlessness in these areas. The new developments are also creating a sub-stratum of new classes among

the tribals aligned with the elite from non-tribal groups.

As has been noted earlier, the inter-personal inequalities in income and assets and also the inter-regional inequalities have further grown.

The atrocities by the powerful landed interests and by the newly-rich against people belonging to the scheduled castes⁸ and the tribes, are on the increase.

As noted by the All-India Kisan Sabha, the above situation is leading to the accentuation of two types of contradictions: between a handful of substantial land owners, on the one hand, and the mass of agricultural labourers and the poor and the pauperised peasants, on the other; and between the big industrial and commercial bourgeoisie and the multinationals, on the one hand, and the mass of the peasantry, on the other.

Accentuation of these two contradictions constitutes the crux of the new agrarian crisis in the country. This is quite different from the old.

Immediate Tasks

Based on the above analysis, the Communist Party, the All-India Kisan Sabha and Bharatiya Khet Mazdoor Union (Indian Agricultural Workers' Union) have been carrying on a consistent struggle for remunerative prices for agricultural produce, for implementation of genuine land reforms for the abolition of feudal and semi-feudal remnants for a living wage and social security for the agricultural workers and for agricultural development. The realisation of the latter demands calls for an effective public distribution system and reduction of the tax burden of the peasantry. We strive for improving the husbandry of the poor, small and middle peasants through a policy of preferential aids, including credit and other inputs to them. This is the general direction of our contemporary struggle on the agrarian front. The AIKS and the BKMU have been consistently opposing the communal, caste and separatist forces, and fighting against the economic and social oppression of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes people. The All-India Kisan Sabha is one of the strongest contingents of the anti-imperialist peace forces in the country.

The left peasant and agricultural labour organisations are fighting for radical alternative policies to the discredited, anti-peasant and anti-people policies of the present Congress (I) government.

⁸ The so-called untouchables, the lowest in the caste hierarchy in India.

END APARTHEID VIOLENCE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

Chris HANI

*member of the National Executive Committee,
African National Congress, South Africa,
Chief of Staff of Umkhonto We Sizwe,
Military Wing of the ANC*

The world public has been closely watching developments in Southern Africa. In this interview the leader of the ANC's military wing deals with the course of the struggle in South Africa, the problems of young independent states and the influence of the new processes in international politics on the situation in the region.

What predetermines the choice of methods of struggle against the apartheid regime? Which of them do you prefer as a military man?

THE FORMS of struggle in any revolution are influenced by objective conditions in a particular country or a particular situation. Our struggle after the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910 was non-violent; it was a very peaceful struggle. The priority then was to forge a national consciousness, to create a common organisation and to seek redress from the worst excesses of racism and colonial domination. But the white minority was unprepared to grant any concessions to the Blacks and concentrated on institutionalised violence.

Since its advent to power in 1948 the National Party has been pursuing a policy of apartheid—complete separation of the races and naked repression. This began with the immediate outlawing of the Communist Party of South Africa, which was a component part of the national movement. And when the ANC was banned in 1960, it was quite clear then that the people could not turn the other cheek. We formed our own army—Umkhonto We Sizwe (The Spear of the Nation). Since then mass political actions have been combined with armed struggle.

I personally stand for the peaceful means of struggle, against bloodshed. People's consciousness is transformed in a revolution. They participate in the movement because they want to end poverty, exploitation of man by man, and to build a new society and be master of their own fate. And in that case nobody would say that to achieve such an aim the best, and even less so exclusive, form of struggle is armed struggle. But we have been forced to take up arms by objective conditions: the racists' leader Botha is not prepared to bring about democracy but is only intensifying the repression. South Africa is reeling and staggering under a state of emergency; terror and violence prevail. There is no freedom of expression and assembly. Our leaders are in prison: Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Ahmed Kathrada—to mention but a few. In fact, thousands of patriots are in detention without trial. So I con-

sider the use of armed struggle completely justified. It remains central to the strategy and tactics of the national liberation and working class movement in our country. We need to escalate the actions of Umkhonto We Sizwe which in turn would stimulate and raise the level of effective actions of our entire movement.

However, I repeat, armed methods are being used in combination with mass political action. And these vary. Mass organisations have been ever more determinedly active of late. We have seen the growing strength of the biggest trade union confederation in national history—the Congress of South African Trade Unions. Within a short time it has become the majority trade union in our country. The COSATU has not only involved itself in the economic struggle, but is presently a major contingent of the national liberation movement as well. The oppressed and superexploited working class in South Africa is showing by its resolute actions that it is the leading force in the struggle for national liberation. Then there is the United Democratic Front which has a membership of more than 2 million and is still operating, despite the bans imposed on it.

Tell us about yourself, please. How did you come into the movement? What influenced your world outlook?

I am a product of the South African environment. I come from an oppressed community, I was born into it. My own parents are workers with a peasant background. I was brought up in a rural area. My father was a migrant labourer, so most of the time he was not at home. We were left to our mother who looked after us, arranged our education. In that sort of situation life was very difficult. Sometimes there was no adequate food. We had to walk for kilometres and kilometres to the only mission school in our own area. And one didn't have shoes until he was more than 10 years old. And there was just suffering almost everywhere. Youngsters wouldn't finish their education because their parents had no money. I can't remember, in fact, a clinic within a radius of fifty miles in our area. Babies died, and there was high infant mortality. So I grew up in these conditions.

My uncle and my own father got involved in the struggle for national freedom, and they brought home some of the ANC's publications. Gradually I came more and more across the ideas of the African National Congress and met some of its leaders in our province. They had a very big influence on me, like on many other people. And so for me it was easy to accept the ideas of the ANC—the ideas of its Freedom Charter—when they spoke about the distribution of wealth, democracy, the right of workers to organise in trade unions, housing for the people, the turning over of the land to the peasants, etc. Those Charter provisions made an impact on me because this is what was denied completely and absolutely to our people. National liberation is not just the changing of flags. I believe in deep-going changes which would give the majority of the people a determining role in government, in the management of the economy and indeed of all affairs of the country.

The ANC comprises people of different political outlooks. What unites them in its ranks is their quest for freedom and for democracy, the non-acceptance of white minority rule. Far from all of them would necessarily perhaps want socialism; we've got

Christians, for example, who feel that the South African state is un-Christian and unjust. But these people are all bound by the programme of the ANC—the Freedom Charter.

Ideologically I was particularly influenced by the greatest event in human history—the October Revolution. Socialism has become a mighty world system. I consider that the revolutionary transformations in the USSR and other socialist countries are of universal significance. They have always inspired us to struggle. I am influenced by the ideas of progressive and democratic thinkers and writers, including Marxism-Leninism.

The racist regime has made numerous attempts to assassinate you. What do your children think of the fact that you're fighting and risking your life?

I rarely see my children. Maybe once a year. ANC fighters' children either grow under the supervision of only the mother, or without both the mother and the father. It does have its own negative effects on their growth. But then we are struggling for their bright future. Let us be optimistic—the days, I am confident, will soon come when our children are going to live normal and happy lives. As they grow up, they themselves join the ranks of fighters for this noble cause...

My children have been present when the regime has made attempts on my life in the past. Assassination attempts against those who are involved in our fight are a feature of the struggle; especially a struggle like ours where we are fighting a regime which has institutionalised murder, violence and terror. Many of our people have died. The regime sends its murder squads all over the world to kill South African patriots. Not only those who are participating in the military struggle of our people, but it kills ordinary members and political representatives of our organisation. We've expected this from the fascists. They cannot act in any other different manner, particularly when they sense that their defeat is imminent. So the attempts on my life and those of my comrades make all of us feel that we've got to redouble our efforts to achieve our objectives: an end to apartheid and the establishment of a South Africa where leaders of our people are not left to die in prison, as is happening now with Nelson Mandela.

How do you see the future of the ANC Army once you gain freedom?

It is axiomatic that the costs of maintaining an army are very great. Lots of resources in developing countries go on security and arms purchases.

The dialogue between the USSR and the USA now centres on peace and disarmament. Billions of dollars, or pounds, or roubles were and are being spent on state-of-the art weaponry. Imperialism's desire to dominate the world still blights the international

climate. I think it was correct for the Soviet Union to build up its military strength because it faced a challenge in terms of its own existence from imperialist states. But the situation has changed now. The USSR is a powerful country economically, politically and militarily. And imperialism will have to think a million times before it can dream of attacking the Soviet Union or other socialist countries. Because the reality of the world today is that there are two world sociopolitical systems, with an established military-strategic parity between them.

Now the issues of disarmament have become a matter not only for the politicians, diplomats and generals, but also for the millions of people in all countries. The warmongers can no longer ignore peoples' will for peace, nuclear disarmament and universal security. The antiwar movement includes many social forces. It's not just the Communists, the Socialists and progressives but even people supporting bourgeois parties: they feel that the resources used to build the armament industries should be utilised to improve the social conditions of people.

Who is interested in the nuclear and other arms race? The imperialist circles. They know that nuclear weapon cuts would ultimately reduce expenditure on the military, thereby creating better conditions for the struggle for democracy. So we can think of a situation in future where the role of the military would considerably decrease. But so long as the threat of imperialist intervention exists, there would be a need for a well-organised, powerful army.

Now to some more general questions. How do you assess the present situation in your own country and Southern Africa as a whole?

The struggle of our people has reached unprecedented heights. Never before has the wave of mass protests and actions in South Africa been so high. Millions of working people have joined the movement. The Botha regime is having to resort to extreme measures. Black townships are controlled by an occupying army. Pretoria is committing acts of aggression against neighbouring African states.

But the wall of apartheid is beginning to crack. Last October the racist regime organised ethnic local elections. Voters could only vote for candidates from their own designated racial groups. Pretoria launched a massive propaganda campaign, claiming that these so-called "elections" would show that its "reform process" has the support of the black people. The apartheid regime made it illegal for any organisation, institution, or individual to call for a boycott. Despite the millions of rand spent on the campaign, despite the acts of repression against activists from the mass democratic movement, and despite the state of emergency, the black people of South Africa boycotted the local ethnic elections. This was a powerful demonstration of the people's rejection of apartheid and their demand for one person—one vote in a united democratic South Africa. Now you see antigovernment organisations appearing even among the white population of our country. Young whites refuse to serve in the army in increasing numbers. A general crisis situation has developed which the

ANC regards as an objective factor of substantial positive value. The racists cannot overpower the national liberation movement, and the regime is in an unprecedented political and economic crisis. But we also are not yet strong enough to overthrow it. Some of our detachments are ready for a decisive storming, but the need is for an all-out mobilisation and consolidation of our forces.

Apartheid is the source of instability in Southern Africa. This regime uses its vast arsenal of arms, its economic strength to undermine the independence of Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Botswana and other countries. A regional war is taking place as a consequence of Pretoria's aggressive policy of destabilisation.

For years with active assistance from imperialism, especially the United States of America, South Africa has waged a war against the people of Angola. Hundreds of villages have been destroyed, and immense damage inflicted on the economic infrastructure of that country. The bandit formations of UNITA would not have been able to do this without the assistance of the Reagan Administration and the Botha regime.

South Africa also continues, against the wishes of the people of Namibia, and in violation of the decisions of the United Nations, to occupy Namibia.

Racist South Africa has overstretched itself in its aggression against our people, as well as Namibia and the frontline states. Apartheid South Africa received a massive military defeat in Cuito Cuanavale and was compelled to withdraw from Angola and to enter into negotiations on the independence of Namibia. It has been forced to do so by the increased militancy of the peoples of Southern Africa and by the extremely tense situation in South Africa itself. I must stress that it is doing so from a position of weakness, and not strength. Though the Botha regime's non-constructive stand leaves the fate of a settlement open to doubt, in principle I consider that the process of a peaceful solution of regional conflicts must everywhere be transformed: from dictatorial regimes and minority governments to the power of the majority. The international community has played an important role in isolating racist South Africa. We should redouble our efforts to ensure the imposition of comprehensive mandatory sanctions. Apartheid is a crime against humanity. Humanity must act against apartheid.

What is, in your opinion, the role of economic levers in gaining independence?

The movement for democracy is closely linked with the economic plight of Africa, and I must say that little has changed in this regard over the last few years. Our continent is economically dependent on imperialism, and remains a source of cheap raw materials for the industry of capitalist states. Africa is producing enough raw materials and farm produce, but it is not we who establish prices and it is not we who enjoy the fruits of our labour. The development of our societies depends on those who control the means of production and exploit national wealth.

Africa's struggle to end the legacy of colonialism and for economic independence is developing in various forms. The states anxious to get rid of the shackles of neocolonialism, as a rule, fall victim to the blackmail of capitalist monopolies.

Economic sanctions, and political and financial pressure, are applied against them. The International Monetary Fund intrudes into the life of the African countries, imposes its diktat, and forces them to set high prices for popular goods, causing the resentment of most of the people and thus inciting them to antigovernment action. Financial institutions of the capitalist world deny loans to progressive regimes until they retreat before blackmail and submit to fettering terms.

The unequal struggle for economic independence of many African states is sharpening up. In this sense the African countries should seek to expand and strengthen economic relations with the socialist countries. The freedom we envisage for South Africa is a freedom that includes not only political freedom, it also includes the economic freedom to bring about the situation where the wealth of the country lies in the hands of, and is being used to benefit, the majority of our people. The struggle with the transnational corporations and every indigenous monopoly, which now receive superprofits by exploiting our natural and human wealth, is going to be fierce. Britain, the USA, Japan, the FRG, and France have got billions invested here. And they are prepared to fight for each dollar of that vast investment in order to prevent serious economic changes. But that struggle is just as important as the struggle we are waging at the present moment, the struggle for national liberation.

What do you think about the changes in the socialist world? Do they influence the processes in Africa?

Today, the struggle for freedom, independence and world peace has greatly intensified; it has become more diverse in form and is actually proceeding under the deep influence of developing socialism. The CPSU has come up with a concept of perestroika, which means radical changes and an accelerated development of society. More and more people realise that socialism alone is in a position to grant the people a broad spectrum of opportunities for participation in the management of social affairs.

It is under socialism that the Soviet Union has made giant strides in the economic, social and political fields. Presently the Communist Party of the Soviet Union is demonstrating that a Marxist-Leninist party can have the determination and the commitment to look at and review the long path it has traversed. This does not involve just looking at the mistakes made in the past. An honest analysis of history is needed to move forward and to improve the well-being of the masses.

For us in Africa perestroika further enriches the concept of building the new society; it is a new theoretical weapon in improving the quality of our own fight, the fight for national liberation. Also for us it shows that a party or movement should never allow a situation to develop in which one powerful individual becomes an autocratic decision-maker. The Soviet Union at the present moment is teaching the world about the importance of collective work and democratic decision-making, so that the exposure of the violations of democracy under Stalin is also an important lesson for those who are fighting for freedom, for those who are building new, just societies in their own countries.

WEST EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AND THE WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT

The members of the European Economic Community intend by the end of 1992 to complete the formation of a single internal market involving 320 million inhabitants of 12 countries. The effects of this act will have a great impact on the combined economic, social and political conditions in Western Europe. Within the working-class movement the analysis and assessment of this process and its possible consequences has provoked wide-ranging discussions. Various views are being expressed on the prospects for action by working people's political organisations and trade unions, and for the defence of their immediate and long-term interests.

WMR intends to devote extensive coverage to ideas on this problem expressed by representatives of communist and workers' parties, and of other left-wing and democratic forces. The article below sets forth the views of the French Communists, and is the first in this series.

WHAT 1992 HAS IN STORE FOR EUROPE

Bernard MARX

CC member, French Communist Party (PCF)

IN ORDER to justify their initiatives, the leaders of the EEC countries which signed the 1988 Single European Act point to the demand for international cooperation and development, the interests of peace, humanitarian ideals, popular aspirations, and the need for a Europe without borders or conflicts.

Their actual purpose is to consolidate the basis of their domination and increase profits for the major capitalist groups. This means further savage attacks on employment, social security and rights, the further renunciation of national sovereignty for the benefit of transnational monopolies and supra-national statist bodies, and greater exploitation and division of the peoples.

Negative Result

One has to say that the 1988 Act does not hasten or expand any of the processes that would help the peoples. Contrary to the objectives of the Treaty of Rome, the EEC countries come out worst when compared with the United States and Japan, or even with other capitalist countries in Europe.¹ The EEC has the sad privilege of showing the lowest economic growth rates since 1980 (an average of 1.6% a year, as compared with 3.0% for the United States; 3.6% for Japan; 3.2% for Finland and Norway; and 2.0% for Sweden and Switzerland), particularly in industrial production. There has been a massive reduction in the number of jobs (6m lost in industry since 1975, and at least another 1m in all economic sectors since 1979, while 13m jobs have been created in the United States, 4.5m in Japan, and 1m in European capitalist countries outside the EEC). Unemployment averages over 11% of the active population, as compared with 6% in the United States, 3% in Japan and 2% in Norway and Sweden.

There are even greater imbalances and disproportion-

¹ See Yves Dimicoll, "L'escroquerie de l'Europe", *Economie et politique*, February, 1988.

tions within the EEC. In 1986, the FRG had a surplus of 23.5 billion ECU in its trade with the other EEC countries (16.7 billion in its trade with the Netherlands, and 2 billion with Belgium and Luxembourg). With the exception of Spain and Italy, all the other countries have a trade deficit within the community.

Let me stress in particular the decline of France, which has one of the lowest production growth rates, and one of the highest unemployment rates in the EEC. It has its largest deficit in trade with the FRG, which went up from 3 billion francs in 1967 to 40 billion in 1987. Within 20 years, the franc has lost two-thirds of its value against the mark.

These poor results are so obvious that some promoters of the single market by 1992 have tried to use these to justify their schemes: if we are to believe them, things have not gone well for the EEC because there is "too much national egoism" and "not enough Europe". The actual causes are rooted in the capitalist structures and the austerity policies. Employment has been sacrificed, wages and social expenditure have been depressed, and priority has been given to increasing the profits of capital. Investments have been used to reduce the number of jobs and to introduce flexible working in order to increase profit margins, while doing little to increase the product.

This policy has deprived France of its advantages, weakened its production capacities, and prevented the massive promotion of human capabilities. It has inflated financial and speculative operations in each country: resources have been used mainly for the export of capital, bank deposits, the purchase and sale of enterprises to obtain unearned incomes exceeding the rate of profit afforded by production or to take over markets whose development is hampered by greater exploitation.

This policy has been pursued in each country, particularly in France, but the essential responsibility lies with the organisation of the EEC, which led to a rise in exploitation, mass cutbacks in production capacities in iron-and-steel, the textile industry and shipbuilding, and to a redeployment of the TNCs as the EEC was enlarged from 9 to 12 countries. This makes the EEC a zone of instability dominated by the strongest: by the FRG within the community, and by the United States and Japan throughout the area, in the key spheres of technological development and in the monetary and financial sphere. Thus, the common market for goods is defenceless, except in part of agriculture, but there again the agrobusiness is favoured against the family farms, a fact that has led to the growth in imports, for instance, of US oil-producing crops at the expense of the marketing of EEC farm produce.

The losses caused by the creation of the EEC are, therefore, considerable. There is also evidence of further deterioration in each country.

With the decline in the exchange-rate of the dollar, the United States has been winning markets at

Europe's expense, although the former still has an enormous federal and external debt, and has failed to make its economy truly efficient by putting pressure on working people and maintaining large-scale military expenditure, which conflict with the requirements of civilian production.

The less developed countries continue to be stifled by trade terms, interest rates and the enormous burden of their external debt, all of which narrows down the marketing outlets for the industrialised capitalist countries.

The financial and commercial markets are threatened with fresh upheavals from mounting inflation and rising interest rates.

This tends to sharpen the contradiction between the existing social structures and the policy of exploitation and domination on the one hand, and the universal demand for peace, security, the development of human potential, and genuine cooperation for economic growth and employment, on the other. These demands arise from the worldwide struggle and the possibilities for technological change.²

Under these circumstances, the leaders of the capitalist states are looking for ways to defend and consolidate their domination, and keep capital financially profitable, instead of seeking solutions that would meet peoples' hopes and aspirations.

Flight Forward

These efforts are aimed to bring about a large-scale remodelling of internal and international capitalist structures, of which the single EEC market is one of the main components.

Its establishment signifies a veritable flight forward along the way of more intense exploitation, unemployment, domination and suppression of the peoples' sovereignty.

Take the *European social space*. EEC firms and governments have already started to lay emphasis on super-exploitation. All of them are conducting a policy of reducing the number of stable jobs and expanding casual forms of employment. Successive French governments since 1982 have increased the number of such forms under what has been called the social treatment of unemployment (public works, training and occupational orientation, local initiative programmes, etc.), when the employers are given large public subsidies for creating casual and low-paid jobs which often require few skills and are designed for specific categories of people (the young, long-term unemployed, etc.). Legislation on working time has been altered, and this has enabled the employers to alter working hours without paying compensation for partial unemployment or overtime. The Jacques Chirac government gave the employers a free hand on redundancies and abolished the rule that redundancies for economic motives had to be administratively authorised in advance. "Free"

² See Paul Boccard, "Vers une nouvelle phase de la crise" *Economie et politique*, March-April 1988.

zones in which national laws on social contributions and taxes do not apply were set up.

The social security system was likewise attacked, notably public health (lower medical aid benefits, abolition of the 100% compensation for long and expensive treatment, curbs on medical prescriptions, and the elimination of thousands of hospital beds).

But this is only a foretaste of what the heads of firms and of the states want to impose through the single market and European social space by 1992. Their objectives are many.

They want to extend the general instability of employment in order to pay lower wages. For that purpose, they have tried to exploit the divisions and rivalry between the working people of the European countries and to dismantle the rights and social gains won in social and political struggles. Jacques Delors, President of the Commission of the European Communities (CEC), says that the creation of a "European social space" by 1992 implies the establishment of a "minimum base" for working people's social rights in the various EEC countries. This clearly shows that their objective is to deny all rights, because the base will be set as low as possible.

The EEC institutions and the various governments are marching shoulder to shoulder in this direction. The free circulation of workforce means an end to the nationality clause, casting doubt on the national status of public employment, and institutionalising casual forms of labour through their inclusion in a "European" labour code. Among these is nightwork for women, extension of the zones free from national legislation, and the forced mobility of wage-workers depending on the exigencies of the TNCs.

Labour protection has also been subjected to various attacks on the pretext of "harmonising European rules". A recent CEC directive recommends the transfer of all the powers in this area to management, although the French working people had won important rights of control and intervention through the committee on hygiene and labour safety.

Another objective is to undermine social security and national insurance. In all the EEC countries, pressure on wages and employment tends to erode the basis of funding in this area, and the employers, pointing to the creation of a single market and more competition, demand a reduction in their "social burden" and insist that the social insurance system be funded from the working people's incomes and taxation. Margaret Thatcher has been trying to destroy the national health service and to develop private insurance. The government in France has been studying new measures that would also lead to the establishment of a dual system with minimum benefits paid out of taxes, and additional benefits increasingly linked to family insurance contributions.

In most of the EEC countries, higher insurance contributions and limitations on pension rights are being used by the governments to cope with the effects of demographic shifts and the ageing of the

population, as is the case, for instance, in the FRG.

Finally, their third objective is to control the supply of skilled workers required for modern production by means of casual employment schemes and mobility, something that will make it possible to lower the pay for skilled labour.

The Movement of Capital

Monetary and financial integration is yet another important dimension of the EEC single market. The formation of a large-scale capital market is the motor behind the creation of the Europe of 1992. By June 1990, all restrictions on the movement of capital and banking services within the EEC will have been lifted, with a few temporary exemptions—until 1992—for Spain, Portugal and Greece.

Consequently, French firms will be able to pay francs for shares on the Frankfurt and London stock exchanges, to finance their purchase of public-sector enterprises, to invest capital abroad, and to borrow money from foreign banks operating in France. Foreign capitalists, firms and banks, particularly West German, will be able to directly use their national currency to control French enterprises and banks and to cream off the most lucrative French clients.

The key element in these reforms is that all the important bank deals will increasingly run through a Europe-wide financial market as a part of the integrated international financial market. In this way transnationals operating on a world scale are trying to create new conditions in the European area so as to restructure their empires and form the necessary alliances. They want to take the cream off the research results, human capabilities, and the available financial resources to expand their markets and profitable investments in new technologies.

The free movement of capital goes hand in hand with the drive for capital, with an urge to take hold of the various financial centres through tax concessions and subsidies. The old systems for financing the construction of public installations, housing and infrastructures, and for covering social services deficits are being dismantled. Local authorities, hospitals, communes and the state itself have to turn increasingly to financial markets for their funds. The activity of public services is being disrupted by private transnationals, which have been stepping up their pressure on employment and wages in this sphere, undermining it and intensifying the inequality, and infringing on such social rights as the right to health care, housing, decent living conditions, education and information.

Far from opposing the domination of US and Japanese transnationals, European firms have themselves sought to penetrate into the US zone and to arrange alliances there. They are opening up Europe for ever wider penetration by US and Japanese capitalists and have concluded alliances with them.

The process of European financial integration is conceived as Europe's contribution to restoring the balance in the US economy, and this has been supported by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). One French paper says: "An improvement in the external economic position of the United States may occur mostly through worsening balance of payment situations in other OECD countries. As for Europe, such a deterioration is likely to affect particularly the countries with the largest balance of payments deficits, i.e., countries like France or Great Britain."³

The same paper says that the factors of West German domination within Europe are being aggravated as a result of the FRG's superiority in financial resources and credit potential. French entrepreneurs and state authorities hope that "Germany will lend", but one specialist has stressed that the banks which "own most German enterprises ... will not seek to expand France's strategic production capacities that could compete with their firms". West German investments in France will be attracted mainly by the cheaper workforce or the possibility of further penetration into the French market. These two variants, he says, do not augur well for the specialisation and development of our economy.

In a bid to encourage the priority strategy of exporting capital and striking alliances with more powerful transnationals, the French big bourgeoisie and leaders of our country are prepared to sell off our assets and acquiesce in squandering and submission. In a way, this is a policy of capitulation in the current economic war.

Take the crucial military sphere. Attitudes here certainly differ from state to state, but the EEC leaders, notably those in France, believe that military integration constitutes, after money and finance, the second pillar in the process of European integration. Their objective is not disarmament or the prospect of abolishing nuclear weapons by the year 2000. On the contrary, they have tried to counter the pressure for disarmament and do not want any independence in relations with the United States.

The European construction is the key element in the efforts to remodel the whole capitalist system. It is designed for the systematic appropriation of national resources and achievements by the dominant transnational capitals carrying on a broad offensive against peoples' working and living conditions. This means the creation in Western Europe of a society of casual employment, extensive unemployment, divided masses of working people and nations, elitist groups and socially dispossessed strata with limited access to consumer goods and modern services.

The creation of such a Europe is an important element in attempts to transform the system of imperialist domination around the tripartite association

of the United States, Japan and the FRG. It opens up the field for the United States and Japan to attack the European markets, and favours FRG domination over the rest of Europe.

This construction does not allow the development of cooperation between the European countries and the peoples of the Third World, notably those of Africa, with which Europe has historical ties. It dovetails with the prospect of military integration and the rejection of nuclear disarmament, which impedes peaceful cooperation between the peoples of the capitalist and the socialist countries. As for the idea of relations with the socialist states, the TNCs have not abandoned their hopes of establishing commercial and financial domination, regarding these countries as a reservoir of skilled labour, potential R & D, and a marketing outlet on which they could capitalise.

This European construction implies abandonment of popular sovereignty, and submission to dominant forces. The French nation is under a particular threat in view of the policy of collaboration with these forces, conducted by the leaders and capitalist groups of France.

One can expect no good to come of the single market. Delors himself has said that "it will be necessary to begin with sacrifices. The benefits will come later".⁴ He means that the benefits of economic growth and fuller employment should result from "the lowering of costs as all the fetters are removed, from growing competitiveness and sounder cooperation".

In actual fact the proposed lowering of costs means mainly cuts in wages and social spending, which lead to a narrowing down of the markets, constraints on economic growth and lower levels of employment. Most official EEC reports, which are kept secret from the public, emphasise these dangers. The Padoa Schioppa report, prepared at the request of the CEC, speaks of a growing destabilising influence on the economy from the speculative movement of capital, and of a "radical depletion of entire industrial sectors".

French economic institutes predict a particular aggravation of unemployment in France, which, according to the French Economic Conjuncture Office could go up from 10.5% to more than 15%, which means 4.5m jobless by the end of the century.

Nothing Has Yet Been Decided

All the political forces in France are in favour of "Europe'92", with the exception of the PCF which is firmly opposed to it. During the latest presidential elections, François Mitterand, Jacques Chirac and Raymond Barre gave priority to the single market which they project as the centerpiece of their future policy. They have put forward such similar

³ *Le Monde*, June 7, 1988.

⁴ *L'Expansion*, June 17-30, 1988.

projects that one commentator said they were in effect "an implicitly common programme". This consensus is the basis for the efforts to change the country's entire political scene and to create a new combination of political forces, spanning the gulf between the Left and the Right, and to unite a right-wing party and the PS parliamentary majority within the power structure.

The new government, which was formed after the presidential and parliamentary elections, already includes eight ministers from right-wing parties. One can well understand now why the forces of capital are actively seeking a political realignment. They want to have a social and political base which is broad enough to put through a policy running counter to the most vital national and popular interests.

The advocates of "Europe'92" claim that since the Single European Act has been signed, the process is irreversible. In this way they want the people to resign themselves to the prospect. But nothing has yet been decided. In most EEC countries, a social struggle is underway against implementing the decisions taken within the framework of the building of the single market. In some countries, working people and those who use the public services, for instance, are opposed to their privatisation and deregulation. In all the EEC countries there is a growing movement for disarmament which can rely on the first results and new initiatives of the USSR and the Warsaw Treaty countries. Successes on the way to disarmament constitute the foundation for developing cooperation between the peoples of the whole of Europe, while eroding the process of integration under the EEC Act.

It is also necessary to reckon with the sharp contradictions dividing the various capitalist countries in the course of integration. Not all have acted like the French big bourgeoisie—which is giving up sovereignty and advocating "coupling" with the powerful FRG—as will be seen from the recent statements by the British government which is opposed to the prospect of monetary integration.

We are only at the beginning of the formation of the single market, and its contradictions and antagonisms are bound to grow. The peoples of Europe will not allow their rights and social gains to be trampled or their living standards worsened. Without ignoring the factors of division, which will increase, one must not underestimate the vulnerability of the capitalist forces' plans and the possibility of upsetting these schemes and putting forward a different perspective: Western Europe on the way to international cooperation for the common good of the sovereign peoples.

For the French Communists it is not a matter of seeking some good alternative policy within the framework of the community, but of struggle for the country's interests in an atmosphere of genuine international cooperation and progress, in Europe and throughout the world.

The PCF Programme formulates proposals for radical changes in France's structures and policies, both on an internal and an international plane so that the country can take the way of recovery and defence of national interests. It is important that the French nation re-establish its sovereignty in monetary and financial matters, so as to create employment and produce more wealth, oppose speculation, the selling off of our enterprises, and defend the public and nationalised sectors, which should have the leading role to play. Our sovereignty is under constant threat as a result of the decisions being taken by the state leaderships and by the managements of firms, banks, public finance, etc. That is why we urge the working people of our country to fight everywhere for transformations, democratic social controls over the use of financial resources and credits, and for other reforms, for instance, on taxation, in order to resist the wasteful policies of capital.

Only by re-establishing its sovereignty will France be strong enough to act in the international arena for accord between the peoples and for new forms of cooperation which each country needs for economic growth and full employment.

There is a need for popular associations and coalitions to beat back the TNC offensive and prepare the ground for fruitful cooperation between all the European states, from the Atlantic to the Urals, and for the establishment of new relations with Third World countries. Joint action is required not only for peace and disarmament. Advances should be made along new lines, for goals like the following:⁵

- control by national organisations of working people over the use of money by the TNCs, for wider employment, higher wages, and skill training in each country;
- openness in the use of European public funds;
- defence and extension of the working people's rights in fighting against casual employment and the erosion of social security;
- transformation of monetary and financial organisations of the EEC and the establishment of new and broader institutions of cooperation for using international credits for the benefit of the population and in the mutual interests of the peoples.

The development of civilian industries in Europe is one of the most important tasks. The setting up of coproduction throughout Europe—primarily by public-sector enterprises making use of national achievements for economic development and international cooperation—is necessary and would assure each country of fuller employment and the fuller use of the national wealth.

Finally, it is in the supreme interests of Europe to build relations of genuine cooperation with the developing world, and this requires unity and a struggle for common goals.

⁵ See Philippe Herzog, "La France, l'Europe, capitulation ou coopérations véritables", *Economie et politique*, April 1988.

AN ECONOMIC MIRACLE FOR THE JAPANESE?

For a long time Japan was held up as a model economic miracle in the capitalist world. Its rates of growth in the 1950s and the 1960s excited its rivals' envy. Ferrous and non-ferrous metals, oil refining, chemicals, shipbuilding, motor cars, and general engineering developed rapidly. Japanese monopoly capital entered the foreign markets with confidence. Highly exploited labour has been a major factor behind its competitiveness. The following data illustrate this well. From the mid-1950s to the mid-1970s the number of workers more than doubled, but their wages' share of the national income rose by only 14%, though employers' profits doubled too.

Our readers from a number of countries ask what happened to the economic miracle next? The publications by the Japanese Communist Party pay much attention to the problems of economic development and how the changes affect workers' job and living conditions. These materials form the basis of the survey, prepared by Irina Pirogova of the Institute of World Economics and International Relations (USSR Academy of Sciences) at our request.

THE WORLD structural crisis has not bypassed Japan. Its heavy and chemical industries gradually ceased to be the engines for economic growth. From the 1970s the country embarked on structural readjustment tied to the STR. Above all, the "old" industries are being trimmed, and so is their manpower. Steel's payroll, for example, has shrunk from 140,000 to 100,000 in the last few years. Of the seven aluminium companies, only one remains. In 1990 Japanese shipyards will build just a third of the tonnage they did in 1984.

But, on the other hand, new industries are booming. They embrace electronics, informatics, robotics, biotechnology, and modern materials. Highly functional low-cost microchips, fine ceramics, and composites open up growing opportunities here. Annual hi-tech product sales, at 1 trillion yen in 1980, are to increase 230-fold by 2000 (in comparable prices). Japanese industry now accounts for two out of every three robots operating in the capitalist world; it has five times as many as the USA, not to mention Western Europe. In fact, Japan is switching over from numerically controlled machines and robots to fully

automated production, run by only a few operators. Electronics ensures network information distributing, penetrating into every sphere of society. The new industries need appreciably less manpower, so they cannot absorb all the displaced workers—partly because of their high demands on personnel skill.

Economic changes greatly affect the class structure of society. It is being further proletarianised, workers' numbers and share are on the increase. These processes were analysed in the JCP's journal *Keizai* (Economics). The workforce growth, observed over the entire postwar period, somewhat slowed down in the 1970s but picked up again in the 1980s. The last census shows workers' share in the active population to have been 59% in 1970, 66.6% in 1980, and 71.5% in 1985. Staying at an almost unchanged 29%, the industrial proletariat's ranks had considerably swollen, due mainly to the influx of manpower into the new industries, paralleling workforce cuts in metallurgy, chemicals, shipbuilding, wood working, etc. The number of technicians, shopfloor engineers, clerks, and specialists who are part of the working class rose particularly markedly (from 18.3% in 1970, 23.3% in 1980 to 25.3% in 1985). Retail trade and services, a steadily expanding sector, took in many people. According to forecasts, its share of the economy will increase from 44.8% in 1984 to 51.3% in 1995.

The journal cited interesting data on the changes in other social groups. In 1980-1985 the number of persons categorised by statistics as the bourgeoisie fell from 4.7% to 3.8%. This was clearly due to the strain of restructuring on medium-sized businesses, many of which went bust. The number of self-employed likewise decreased: 34.8% in 1970, 27.3% in 1980 and 23.4% in 1985. In agriculture and fishing, the government's policy of a liberal market and free farm product prices had ruined them. A by-product of this policy has been more penetration of US food, which, given a battered dollar and a soaring yen, the Japanese producers find it hard to compete with. On the other hand, corporate inroads into services and retail trade force the small owners out into the reserve army of labour.

Structural economic changes have aggravated some contradictions. The dependence on both the old and new industries' exports has increased, while imports have decreased because of rigid economies of raw materials and energy. Trade surplus has sharply gone up, particularly with the USA, fueled by numerically controlled machines and semiconductors, not to speak of the "traditional" cars and colour televisions. Foreign trade rivalry, with the USA and Western Europe has evolved into a general confrontation. Robots and the automation of medium-sized, small and very small enterprises has so bloated the pyramid of subcontract relations that any breakdown in the system causes a chain reaction of bankruptcies. Finally, unemployment and the wage freeze have

limited domestic demand, adding to the Japanese corporations' dependence on exports.

A number of steps by the conservative government now aim at "revitalising" big business. They are set out in the so-called Maekawa Report, the Japanese Economic Restructuring Programme (1986) and other documents, and accept the US demand for a dramatic cut in its huge trade deficit with Japan (almost \$60 billion in 1986). This has lifted many of the restrictions on raw materials and food imports, especially from the USA, while at the same time giving every encouragement to capital export and plant relocation abroad. The economy's too great dependence on exports is also to be reduced, and home demand to be expanded. In this way Japanese business would like to offset the effect of the soaring yen on its competitiveness.

Investment abroad makes Japanese companies more and more like TNCs. Raising planned production to up to 2 million cars in their US subsidiaries, the auto giants are already gearing up for mass layoffs at home. Whereas the increase capacity in Asian countries will help to force their Japanese workers' acceptance of wage cuts.

Japan has become a major creditor in the last few years. Its foreign assets have grown from \$25 billion in 1982 to \$200 billion in 1987. But whereas they bring in hefty corporate profits, there is nothing for workers. Worse, they are losing their jobs.

In a recent comment, *Akahata* (The Red Banner), JCP's central organ, has noted that though Japan has turned into the No.1 creditor nation, the real living conditions of the people do not reflect this affluence. Companies ever more often invest their profits abroad, buying up shares, bonds and realty. Japanese monopoly capital thus becomes increasingly usurious.

For all the wealth amassed, investment in the projects to improve people's life is very scant. *Akahata* points to the bad housing situation in particular. Most of the Japanese homes are so crowded and modest that people call them "rabbitholes". Many lack sewerage; American homes are 50%, and West German 66%, better provided. The gap between a flourishing big business and a suffering people continues to widen. Government policy aims at the monopolies' further prosperity.

How do Japanese workers fare in the wake of the economy's restructuring? Do robots actually supplant them? The dynamics of unemployment answers this. In 1985 the number of fully unemployed grew by 15.9%, in 1986 by 27.7%, and in 1987 by about 30%. For the first time in thirty years, the March 1987 rate of unemployment reached 3% of the active population and, according to the Nomura Institute's forecasts, may climb to 4% to 5% by 1990. Among the industrial workers, this indicator is already near-

ing this mark. Young people and the elderly are the hardest hit: 5.6% of the former have no work. In short, since the early 1980s unemployment has been a national problem in Japan.

An employment crisis looms in a number of engineering branches, metallurgy and the textile industry because of curtailed exports and a narrow domestic demand. The steel industry is operating at only 60% of its capacity. Its largest firm Nippon kokkan has announced plans to lay off more than 8,000 workers by the end of 1990. All in all, five leading steel companies want to dismiss over 44,500 people. Even higher (up to 55,000) is the scale of layoffs in their subcontractor firms. Commenting on these intentions, *Akahata* points out that the monopolies seek lower production costs by cutting labour costs in the first place, in order to close the gap in the cost price of a ton of steel in comparison with South Korea.

Similar plans are being nurtured in shipbuilding, electrical engineering, and even car production. Thousands of miners have been left without means as a result of the phase-out of the coal industry where the last 11 mines are to be closed. The state railways now being privatised add their portion to the army of unemployed. But it is the workers of small businesses, with much less scope for manoeuvre, who fare the worst. Hidden mass unemployment exacerbates the problem. High labour-market pressure comes from those not registered on the exchange, but who are active job seekers. They number several million.

An increased use of robots is an obvious spur to labour retrenchment. The capitalists willingly replace people with robots which, though expensive, help to cut costs and limit fresh labour inflows. Economists say that by the end of this century Japan's army of unemployed may reach over 3 million, and the demand for highly skilled workers 2.7 million. The longer a worker stays out of work, the sooner he falls behind the skill requirements of production. The gulf widens between the modern-trade workers attending to state-of-the-art machinery and those who have been made "redundant".

Government circles are aware of the potential social explosiveness of unemployment. There has appeared the so-called New Maekawa Report containing recommendations for lessening the imbalance between labour demand and supply. They call for workers' increased mobility, relocation and large-scale retraining.

Japanese employers are adept in using new technology to intensify labour exploitation. A worker is now not only required to handle the automatic machinery with greater attention; he must also control, adjust and repair it. Previous narrow specialisation gives way to interchangeability; workers assume more responsibility for independent decisions and

this means doing a larger amount of work by fewer people. Take Quality of Life Circles where Japanese workers discuss ways to improve equipment use, save energy and raw materials and improve output quality. On the one hand, the circles help workers' self-expression. But on the other, they permit employers to exploit their creative potential, placing it at the service of profit.

Apart from productivity, microchips and robots mean an abrupt jump in the exploitation of the slimmer workforce. Wages for its highly skilled part never increase on the same scale as its productivity; thus these people create more surplus value, which is appropriated by the capitalists. Exploitation has also intensified where the new technology is not yet introduced. The employers insist that the workers agree to such intensification and wage cuts so as to sustain the competition from robotised enterprises. As a result, even the threat of shifting to new technology enables the capitalists to get sacrifices from the working people.

The scientific and technological revolution brings serious shifts in the use of working time. As compared with other developed capitalist lands, Japan's workers still work the longest hours, which, incidentally, helps it greatly to compete with its rivals. The hours worked in 1986 by a Japanese worker in manufacturing industry totaled 2,180, as against 1,934 for an American, and 1,652 for a West German worker. In addition to the largest number of working days per year, leaves are short. Only 27% of the workforce enjoy two days-off a week, and over a half take leave once in two or three years lest they should lose their reputation as diligent workers or jeopardise their very possibility to work.

Existing legislation has fixed the maximum length of a six-day working week at 48 hours. Actually this time varies considerably. Back in 1986 the labour minister's work standards committee recommended a flexible schedule: it would not exceed 10 hours a day, but would average out to the prefixed 44-hour week over three months.

Analysing this project, which remains unrealised, the journal *Rodo undo* (The Workers' Movement) had described it as an onslaught on the hard-gained 48-hour working week. In fact it suits the employers, who could arbitrarily extend the working day in peak-load periods without paying any overtime. No wonder the project ran up against workers' resistance.

Japanese reality attests to the unfair distribution of the fruits of scientific and technological progress in the capitalist world. The large-scale use of robots and computers has strengthened the monopolies' power at home, widened their expansion on the world capitalist market, and brought in billions in profits to them. The rich in Japan grow richer on new technology too. And what about workers? They still work longer than their counterparts in industrialised capitalist states, are paid less, fear for their future, and accept lower-standard housing and social services. The flow of STR-generated boons by-passes them.

The 10th Congress of the Japanese Communist Party (1987) had characterised this situation as antisocial. It has called for an economic policy that would cater for the interests of the people. This means gearing the huge profits of Japanese big business to workers' better living conditions and increased consumption.

DOES THE US WORKER LIVE BETTER?

George KRIKORIAN

member, Economics Commission, CPUSA

THE RESTRUCTURING of U.S. capitalism has had a profound effect on the conditions and composition of the U.S. working class and the situation of the labor movement. Its objective is to drive down labor costs and to raise the rate of exploitation in order to create more profitable conditions for the accumulation of capital.

The U.S. economy entered a period of slow growth in the early 1970s punctuated by the break-up of the Bretton Woods system, the rapid increase in energy prices, growing budget and trade deficits, heightened inter-imperialist competition, and downward pressure on profit rates. The period since has seen the reversal of the postwar increase in the living standard of American workers. Between 1972 and 1987, the average real weekly income of U.S. workers fell by 15%. The purchasing power of the current gross weekly wage has fallen to the level that prevailed 27 years ago (in 1961). Accounting for the increased overall tax burden on workers, it is likely that the average income of American workers is now at the level of the late 1950s.¹

The decline in real wages has revealed itself in a decline in family incomes. While average median family income doubled from 1947 to 1973, it has fallen 5% since 1973. Family income has not fallen as much as average real wages, however, because of the large-scale entry of women into the workforce.

Whereas the single-earner family was typical in the 1950s and 1960s, in the 1970s that began to change. By the 1980s, two earners were required to maintain the living standards generated by one earner in the past. Thirty years ago, 60% of all married men were the sole support of their families. Today, only 32% are sole providers. Of all married women with children under the age of 18, nearly 60% hold jobs. Moreover, many families are now supported by working children. Since 1950, there has been a steady increase in the number of 14 to 17-year-olds who hold jobs while still attending school. Over 4 million high school students—25%—are in the labor force.

The average workweek for full-time male workers is close to 45 hours. Full-time female workers average about 41 hours. The fall in real wages combined with the rise in hours—what Marx called absolute impoverishment—indicates that an unprecedented rise

in the rate of exploitation has taken place over the last decade and a half in the United States. In fact, according to calculations made on the basis of U.S. government statistics for value added in the manufacturing sector, the rate of exploitation rose from 33% in 1971 to 402% in 1982. While later data is not available, we expect that it will show a faster subsequent rise based on the fact that unit labor costs in manufacturing have fallen by 6.2% since 1982. This is the first time that official government statistics have shown a decline in these costs in the entire postwar period.

Falling real wages and rising productivity are the foundation for a rise in the rate of exploitation. Since 1982, productivity growth in manufacturing has increased at its fastest rate since the early 1960s.

The deterioration of the conditions of the working class and the rise in the rate of exploitation have been combined with a redistribution of income to favor the rich. Since Reagan took office the growth of capital income has far outstripped the growth of labor income despite an increase in employment. Total wages and salaries increased 49.7% between 1981 and 1987, while total profits, interest and rental income increased 142.3%.

We must also note that the working class is not homogeneous. White families have a median weekly income of \$578, compared to a median of \$412 for Hispanics and \$399 for Blacks.

About 15% of Americans are in families with income below the official poverty line. This is the highest poverty rate since the mid-1960s, before social welfare programs were put into place.

An aspect of the redistribution of income to the rich from the working class is the shift of the distribution of the tax burden away from corporations onto the workers. According to the Economic Report of the President (February 1988), government receipts from corporate income taxes increased only \$17 billion from 1979 to 1986, while corporate profits rose \$84 billion. As corporate tax receipts fell, receipts from individuals—primarily from workers—rose by more than \$200 billion.

Because of the combined destruction of *employment* in manufacturing—particularly the unionized manufacturing sector—and the rise in employment in the relatively low paid service sector the average wage of U.S. workers has fallen. Between 1979 and 1985, 2.3 million jobs were lost in the private sector, and 9.2 million jobs were gained. The average job lost in that period paid \$444.30 a week. The average job gained paid \$272.39.

The rise of part-time employment is a typical trend. Part-time jobs have grown at twice the rate of full-time jobs in the Reagan years. At present, 17 million people work at part-time jobs.

Structural change in the economy reflected in the decline in manufacturing employment has created havoc with the lives of million of workers. Between 1981 and 1985, 11 million workers lost their jobs due to plant closings. Almost 46% of those were

¹ All data and calculations are based on U.S. government statistics from the Commerce Department and the Department of Labour except where otherwise noted.—*Auth.*

unemployed for more than 6 months. And for those that found new jobs, most were below the wages they received in their previous job.

High rates of unemployment have fueled the decline in living standards, as they reduce the bargaining leverage of those workers who hold jobs. The employers have had a ready supply of low paid labor ready to take jobs of unionized workers.

There has been a long-term rise in unemployment since the late 1960s. With each business cycle, the peak of unemployment has increased, reaching over 10% in 1982. While there are currently 7 million workers officially unemployed, or 5.7%, the real number of unemployed is about 12 million, or nearly 10% of the workforce. Unemployment among Black workers is more than twice what it is among white workers.

The overall national unemployment rate conceals a regional disparity. Unemployment rates are typically highest in highly unionized manufacturing centers. For example, the unemployment rate for production workers in the Pittsburgh area is over 20%. In Chicago, it is over 15%. This is nearly six years after the upturn in the business cycle began.

A major factor in the decline in income is the direct assault on the labor movement in the form of "concession bargaining". When Reagan took office, the average wage increase in union contracts was 9.8%. Today, it is down to 2%. Contracts negotiated during 1987 for workers at large manufacturing firms showed increases of only 0.2% over the entire life of the contracts. With inflation forecast at 10-15% over the life of the contracts, real wages will take another deep plunge.

The divergence between profits and wages is greatest at the largest corporations which are the driving forces behind economic restructuring. Between 1977 and 1987, profits of the *Fortune 500* as a percentage of total corporate profits rose from 41% to 66% while their sales and employment fell. This indicates that corporate restructuring has had the intended effect of reversing the fall in the rate of profit that occurred in 1970s.

Corporate restructuring has taken the form of mergers, takeovers, plant closings, sub-contracting, bankruptcies, and other forms of what is called "asset stripping". The net result of each of these forms of restructuring is a reduction in employment in the large firms. There were also the productivity gains at the core monopoly firms. In industries where restructuring has been most pronounced, productivity gains of 5-10% a year are common. (Manufacturers are now spending \$17 billion a year on automation, and the demand is growing 10% annually.)

The large corporate employers set the standards for industry wages and conditions. With continued restructuring and layoffs by the large firms, downward pressure on wages is felt across the economy.

A major form of restructuring is mergers. Mergers and takeovers affect workers. When a corporation restructures its operations in a merger, workers in-

evitably end up losing their jobs or taking wage or benefit cuts in order that the company can service the high debt load that results. The takeover process also jeopardizes union contracts when new employers claim that they are not bound by the collective bargaining agreement negotiated by the previous owner, and often extract major wage cuts or replace all of the workers. This process has been particularly severe in the industries deregulated under the Carter and Reagan administrations such as the airline, trucking, communications and other industries.

Economic restructuring has had its most devastating impact on the unionized section of the workforce. By focusing its attack on the trade union movement, Corporate America seeks to reduce the living standards of all workers.

The attack on the labor movement has shown up in a reduction in union membership to 17% of the workforce. This is half the level it was in the aftermath of World War II. For most of the postwar period union membership was rising, but the workforce grew faster. Thus, the unionization rate fell. But since the mid-1970s—with the onset of the structural crisis—the absolute level of union membership has fallen to 16.9 million from a peak of 22 million. This can be explained by the extent of the economic restructuring described above along with the overtly anti-labor activities of the administration. The combined power of the corporations and the state have been focused on reducing the strength of the labor movement.

The working class has not sat by idly as this process has unfolded. There is a growth of resistance and political independence within the trade union movement. It has taken the form of a struggle against the policies of the administration, and for the removal of ultra-right politicians from office.

The labor movement is experimenting with new forms of struggle. One which is intended to lead to a revitalization of the kind of unity and class struggle orientation that prevailed during the organizing and consolidation of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) is the Jobs With Justice Campaign. This is a movement uniting the majority of trade unions with their allies in the civil rights, peace, environmental, women's and religious movements. Its major thrust is to build solidarity for workers on strike and in other struggles with the strategic objective of increasing the rights and conditions of workers.

The militarist policy of the administration has left the economy saddled with huge debts and trade imbalances. It is clear that the next administration will be faced with growing economic and financial instability. The October 1987 crash was the warning bell that the legacy of Reaganomics will carry a great price. It is also clear that the class struggle will intensify in the context of instability. The labor movement is strong in its orientation that the working class is not forced to bear the burden of the coming crisis.

JUSTICE WITHOUT A BLINDFOLD

ISRAEL has put on trial a group of leaders of the left-wing anti-Zionist organisation *ash-Sharara*, which is opposed to militarism and advocates the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and to an independent national state.

The organisation, established after the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, became active in the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (of which the Communist Party of Israel is a member) and published the weekly *Derech Ha Nitzoz* in Hebrew and *Tariq ash-Sharara* in Arabic.¹

The Minister of the Interior banned the newspaper on February 18, 1988, and its managing editor Assaf Adib and editor-in-chief Michal Schwartz were arrested. Earlier the security service had seized three staff members, Hadas Lahov, Yakov Ben Efrat and Ronnie Ben Efrat. Hadas Lahov was released after a 20-day detention but the others have remained in custody on charges of having committed offenses "against state security".

Yakov Ben Efrat and Assaf Adib were put into the El-Gelma jail and Michal Schwartz and Ronnie Ben Efrat into the criminal block of the Petach Tikva jail. Glaring electric bulbs were left on night and day in the solitary cells assigned to the journalists. They were not given any water for the first three

days and the conditions were totally unsanitary. Schwartz and other political prisoners were repeatedly attacked by common criminals and subjected to humiliation, insults, threats and psychological torture. They were fed leftovers mashed right into the floor. Schwartz was told by her jailers that they would drive her to suicide, as they had done to her husband a few years previously. Ben Efrat was denied sleep for over 48 hours. Interrogations continued round the clock. Eventually, the prisoners had to call a strike.

The prisoners cannot consult their lawyers. Several months passed after their arrest before they were charged with having met representatives of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine in London in late 1983 and early 1984 and consented to publish in Israel a newspaper "in favour of that organisation". The minimum punishment faced by the accused is 40 years in prison.

Notable public figures in Israel and abroad have strongly objected to the authorities' action against the democratic journalists. They have demanded that the Minister of the Interior put an end to the mistreatment of the prisoners and called upon the world public to show solidarity with the Israeli democrats.

A conference on press freedoms took place in Tel Aviv in the summer of 1988 with the participation

of foreign delegates, among them Bernd Reier, Secretary of the International Organisation of Journalists. The forum condemned the actions of the Israeli authorities and approved a Charter on the Freedom of the Press, which contained a series of fundamental provisions for mass media legislation because the Law on the Press currently in effect in Israel derives from the emergency regulations introduced by the British mandate authorities way back in 1945.

The trial of the journalists opened in September 1988. It is expected to last until April 1989. The journalists were brought into the courtroom in handcuffs, which were removed only after a resolute protest from the well-known lawyer Felicia Langer.

The closure of the newspaper and the arrest of its staff is a manifestation of the Israeli authorities' campaign of suppressing democratic freedoms, including the freedom of the press, particularly for its coverage of the Palestinian popular uprising, which has been going on for over a year now. Dozens of journalists have been arrested recently in a desperate attempt to prevent the press from learning about developments in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Israeli democrats believe that the closure of *Tariq ash-Sharara* and the arrest of its staff constitute an undemocratic action by the secret services designed to intimidate those who, opposing the occupation of the Arab lands and the decline of our society into fascism, support a just Israeli-Palestinian peace and broader democracy. The repression of the press is likely to continue, and not just in the occupied Arab lands, as is demonstrated by the government's temporary ban imposed in May

1988 on the newspaper *Al-Ittihad* of the Communist Party of Israel.

A campaign calling itself the 21 Year Movement² arose in the country after the suppression of the newspaper and the arrest of its staff. The movement publishes the periodical bulletin *Haris ash-Sharara* (Guardian of the Spark), whose editorial board includes, among others, the poet Natan Zach, Dr. Assa Kshir, Prof. Mandes Falur, and Dr. Azmi Bashara. The new movement is fighting against the occupation and aims at keeping in touch with the mass media in the occupied lands and at informing public opinion of the developments there. Altogether 1,500 Israelis have signed its petitions. One point should be stressed: there is no ideological link between the banned newspaper and the bulletin; the board of the latter is open also to people who are not members of the 21 Year Movement.

The trial of the progressive journalists is now being covered by means of a telephone link: anyone can call us in Jerusalem at 2-243343 and ask questions, preferably during working hours.³ Send your donations to the fund in support of the accused to the Ha Nitzoz/Sharara Publishers, Freedom of the Press Fund, Tel Aviv 532, PB 4362, account No. 262247, telex 2-221614, or PB 1575 in Jerusalem.

Efraim NOTZRI,
participant
in the Democratic Front
for Peace and Equality
(Israel)

¹ Meaning "Path of the Spark".—Ed.

² In June 21 years ago Israel launched its act of aggression against Arab countries and occupied part of their territories.—Ed.

³ Israel is two hours ahead of GMT.—Ed.

THE BOOK SCENE

CUBA: THE REVOLUTION CONTINUES

**Fidel Castro, POR EL CAMINO CORRECTO,
Editora Politica, La Habana, 1988, 294 pp.**

THE HISTORIC EVENTS in Cuba in 1959 stunned the world with the remarkable heroism shown by those who brought down the pro-imperialist dictatorship of Batista. Courage and determination marked the initial phase of our revolution, when national sovereignty was being restored in a confrontation with the "Northern colossus", and revolutionary fervour is still important now that socialist construction has become the top priority.

The book *On the Right Path*, comprising the speeches First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba Fidel Castro made in 1986 and 1987, shows the qualitative changes that have occurred in every sphere of Cuban life over the past few decades. Resolving the acute problems inherited from capitalist society has altered the situation in Cuba dramatically, but new challenges have arisen in the course of development.

"Today," says the book, "we know what socialism is. We know what the Revolution is and what it consists in. Now we have a very high educational level, particularly among our youth, and it continues to grow. We have a general culture and a revolutionary consciousness and we must try harder, much harder, to do a better job" (p. 78).

The author offers a profound analysis of the new situation, the successes achieved, the errors made, and

the negative trends that have appeared in the economy in recent years. He determines their causes, and indicates ways in which the obstacles can be overcome.

He points out that the yawning gaps in the labour and wages system have to be closed, labour discipline must be strengthened, state, trade union and party standards must be raised, and any omissions in the Communists' ideological and political work have to be corrected.

Circumstances demand a more complex and rational policy of investment, and the completion of construction projects to a high standard and in good time. The Cuban leader also mentions the importance of carefully studying and implementing economic management guidelines, and eliminating the causes of such phenomena as mercantilism, lack of organisation, and bureaucratism.

A sweeping campaign has been launched against indolence, negligence and irresponsibility, and against those who want the most for doing the least. This is a struggle against those who want privileges and easy money and do not shrink from speculation, trade swindles and other abuses. It is a struggle against embezzlers and grabbers, against marketeers who make a killing by reselling farm products at exorbitant prices.

We cannot allow managers to approach business with mercantilist yardsticks, place the interests of the enterprise above those of society, and recklessly raise prices [thus creating an illusion of high profitability].

"We must," says Fidel Castro, "carry on the fight against the remnants of the old system, against the survivals of capitalism and capitalist ideology, against privileges, and the tendency to receive goods from society without the proportionate input of labour" (p. 8).

The collection gives a broad, precise and well-argued elucidation of the concept of rectification, which means finding new solutions to old problems and showing a creative approach to work. It also means not giving in to difficulties. Rectification is impossible without a serious and bold criticism that helps to advance the socialist revolution further. Rectification is a revolution within the revolution.

Fidel Castro warns that this process should not be accompanied by a repetition of previous errors or by a return to idealism and disregard for reality. We cannot violate the laws of socialism, resorting to crude egalitarianism and ignoring the socialist principle of remuneration according to the quality and quantity of work, or underestimate material incentives. It is essential to curb the spirit of mercantilism, improve the methods of socialist construction, set about reducing production costs in earnest, and abandon the simplistic idea that the new society can be built solely with machines, without day-to-day efforts from the party, and society as a whole.

"...The very idea of a communist project," stresses the author, "the idea of a communist society as it was defined by Marx, Engels and Lenin, implies the need for a great deal of political work, a comprehensive political education, the creation of new values amongst individuals, and the need for a vanguard party which would lead society along this path."

The book details certain concrete objectives for socialist construction on the basis of clear and well-defined concepts.

As the Republic of Cuba enters its fourth decade our people have an overwhelming desire to achieve great success in developing agriculture, in strengthening the cooperative movement, and in augmenting industry's output through the maximal use of technology and higher labour productivity. This will not only help to improve people's lives—which is, after all, what socialism means—but will also increase their ability to repel any imperialist encroachments on freedom and independence.

Antonio DIAZ RUIZ
representative of the Communist Party
of Cuba on the WMR

AN AUTHOR'S VIEW

POLITICS IS PRESENT IN EVERYTHING

JEAN-FRANÇOIS OBEMBE, CC secretary of the Congolese Party of Labour, a teacher and a scholar specialising in political sciences and sociology, has written a book entitled *The Principal Problems in Building the Congolese Party of Labour, the First Marxist-Leninist Party in Power in Africa*.¹ He was interviewed by a WMR correspondent during a visit to Prague.

In your preface you say that the book is "designed mainly for political scientists, CPL activists and all those who want to know, in general terms, about the political, ideological, economic, social and cultural achievements of the People's Republic of the Congo". How did the idea of the book originate?

I've been working on it a long time. It was the basis of my doctoral dissertation, which I defended at the Higher Party School of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany in Berlin. The revolutionary process began in the Congo in 1963, but so far

¹ Jean-François Obembe, *Principaux problèmes liés à l'édification du Parti congolais du travail, premier parti marxiste-léniniste au pouvoir en Afrique*, Parti congolais du travail, Presence africaine, Brazzaville, 1987, 196 pp.

nothing has been written about its main stages. Such a work could help explain the basic problems faced by an emergent Marxist-Leninist party in Africa.

In your description of the origins and formation of the CPL, you refer again and again to events in the Congo's history, while warning the reader that this is not a book on the history of the party.

The fact is that many of our present problems are rooted in the distant past, and they can hardly be understood without a historical perspective. That is why, before analysing the achievements of the past several decades, I make a brief survey of the pre-colonial and colonial epoch, before going on to the period of independence and the events connected with the founding and consolidation of the party. However, I am not a historian, but a political scientist, and for that reason I use a somewhat different methodological approach. That is why my book cannot be called the history of the party, at best simply a modest study aid.

Before the CPL was founded, various types of parties emerged in the Congo, each with its own social base. They all turned out to be unviable. Why?

The first parties appeared in our country after 1946, when France allowed the establishment of political organisations in its colonial possessions. Three main parties emerged in the Congo, and these were formed mainly on ethnic lines, which led to intertribal conflicts, a growth of tribalism and eventually resulted in the bloodshed of 1959. It was obvious that the existence of many parties hardly made sense in our conditions, and National Movement for the Revolution was set in 1964; it was a "mass party", or a "front", as such organisations are also called. Everybody in the country was regarded as being a member, which enabled those who took such an approach to deny the existence of contradictions between classes, or even the classes as such. But classes are a reality, although the conditions in Africa do not always make it easy to draw distinctions between them.

In short, the attempt at a multi-party system—which led to internal strife—and the attempt to set up a "mass party"—without a concrete social base, without any serious ideological platform, and thus without the capacity to guide the revolution—both failed. This task could only be fulfilled by the vanguard party which, as the documents of the constituent congress of the CPL in 1969 said, "seeks to become the vanguard contingent of the workers and peasants, to absorb the best elements of the working class and the peasantry, their revolutionary experience, and their boundless loyalty to the cause".

Could you tell us about the role of the CPL's party schools, to which you devote a special chapter?

That is a topic after my own heart, if only because I was once director of the Higher Party School. The specific conditions existing in the Congo, where the metaphysical world outlook prevailed for many centuries, made it unlikely that the Marxist-Leninist doctrine would become dominant of its own accord. Party schools were required to spread the scientific view of the world and to train ideologically well-grounded cadres. Marien Ngouabi, the founder of our party, emphasised that the future of the revolution depended on the establishment of party schools, and so "party schools must be set up in the open air, if need be". Let me say, by the way, that our Higher Party School now has a fine modern building, erected with the help of the CPSU, and similar

regional schools have been opened in all areas of the country.

This is not your first work, judging by the list at the beginning of the book?

Indeed, I have already written books on political subjects, such as *Marxist-Leninist Philosophy in Brief*², which is meant for students, and a study on the theme "The Place of the Marxist-Leninist Party in a Country's Development".³

And I've also dabbled in belles lettres. A few years ago I wrote a short novel entitled *One's Own Style of Living and Dying*.⁴ It tells the story of two state enterprise managers, one honest, the other an idler and an embezzler of public funds. It lays no claim to literary merit and has rather a didactic and even political and education purpose. I have also written some plays, which have not been issued in separate editions, although one of them—*Lumumba's Ideas*—is still performed.

Are you saying that even in your literary works you, like many other African writers, constantly turn to political problems?

How can it be otherwise? After all, the writer has to deal with the problems that are of concern to society. A famous thinker was right when he said: "Politics is not everything, but politics is present in everything."

² Jean-François Obembe, *La philosophie marxiste-leniniste en bref*, Institut national de recherche et d'action pédagogique, Brazzaville, 1984.

³ Jean-François Obembe, "Place d'un parti marxiste-leniniste dans le développement d'un pays", *Revue de recherche de l'Ecole supérieure du Parti*, Berlin, 1986.

⁴ Jean-François Obembe, *Vivre et mourir selon son style*, Pensée universelle, Paris, 1984.

EACH ISSUE HAS ITS OWN THEME

A REVIEW OF THE EGYPTIAN ANTHOLOGY KADAYA FIKRIYA (Questions of Ideology)

EGYPT'S Left forces devote a great deal of attention to the study of the realities of the country's sociopolitical life, the Arab world as a whole, and to a theoretical substantiation of their practical actions. The publication of the anthology *Kadaya Fikriya* also serves this purpose. It has appeared in Cairo twice a year since July 1985. Its editorial board is headed by the progressive writer and scholar Mahmoud Amin el-Alem, a convinced supporter of the ideas of socialism who has enormous experience of political struggle. Under President Nasser he was in jail for five years on charges "of communism". Curiously, after his release, Nasser himself appointed him director of the main state publishing house, Al-Katib al-Arabi (The Arab Writer).

The motto of the anthology is "For the Freedom of Reason and Creation, and for Democracy". Its pages are open to any studies which challenge ignorance, idealism and metaphysics and which decry anything that retards the development of a progressive scientific world outlook. From the very beginning the editorial board did

not conceal that it would adhere to the ideas of scientific socialism.

Kadaya Fikriya's contributors include patriotically- and democratically-minded intellectuals from Egypt, and from other Arab countries, public and political figures, and scholars—economists, philosophers, historians. One can judge the breadth of the ideological and cultural front that has emerged around the anthology by the names, famous in the Arab world, of the authors who have published articles and studies, and of the participants at symposiums, reports on which regularly appear in it. The forms of publications also vary. A set of articles on a topical subject is always the centre-piece of an issue, accompanied by materials from discussions, book reviews, commentaries, and readers' letters and reactions.

"We do not need a neutral or non-class theory," said the lead article in the first issue of the anthology. "We need a theory which expresses the interests of the labouring masses, workers, and peasants, the overwhelming majority of the population. We reject the theory that sides with the parasitic strata exploiting the people, guards the interests of imperialism, colonialism, Zionism and reaction, and calls for racism and war."

We shall describe briefly the contents of the anthology.

"Who Governs Egypt?" is the central theme of its first issue (280 pp.). It carries general theoretical articles on the concept of the state, democracy and power. These were supplemented by research-based works on the structure of the ruling class and the course of industrialisation in Egypt, on the government's rural policy, Egyptian millionaires and others. The section "Reviews and Commentaries" gives, for example, surveys of Lenin's works *Marxism and the State*, and *The State and Revolution*. In all, contributions from 24 authors were published in the issue. In addition, another 14 specialists participated in a round table which thoroughly discussed, on the basis of historical analysis, the theme of power in Egypt.

"The symposium," noted M. A. el-Alem in his concluding remarks "did not seek to answer all the questions raised by life. The task was to show what makes the problem complex and give an impetus to dialogue and the free exchange of opinions. It is essential that the debate should not be confined to our circle, should not remain the privilege of intellectuals. We must draw popular masses into it."

The second issue of *Kadaya Fikriya* (234 pp.) came out in January 1986. It is devoted to the problem: "Egypt: Between Dependence and the Socialist Choice". Non-Marxist authors were also included in the anthology this time, among them the economists Samir Amin and Gouda Abdel Khalek, historian Raouf Abbas, and lawyer Salah Abdel Magid, all prominent figures in the Arab world. The tendency towards widening the circle of patriotic and democratic intellectuals, who, by the way, take no fee for the publication of their works, continues to develop.

"When work on the second issue was still under way," notes its editorial, "President Mubarak, addressing the people's Assembly's opening session, assailed those who talk about Egyptian dependency, calling them conduits for foreign-state interests trying to sow groundless suspicion in weak souls. This challenge and the accusations heightened our sense of responsibility during the work on the issue."

Eminent specialists were enlisted for consultation on materials. A large group of scholars attended a round-table discussion on Egypt's present and future. Prominent National Progressive Unionist Party figure Fouad Moursi, Assistant UN Secretary-General Samir Amin, and economist Fawzi Mansour described the new type of national dependence resulting from international capital's drive for continued world market hegemony. The social base for this dependence was the alliance of the traditional indigenous and bureaucratic bourgeoisie, and the parasitic strata who had joined them. Egypt's integration into the world capitalist economy had intensified, and it was now more actively involved in the neoglobalist plans of international imperialism. New loans and grants, supplemented by large-scale arms imports, had contributed to this.

The analysis gave the participants every reason to declare the failure of the capitalist model of development in Egypt. They thought the sole alternative lay in the mobilisation of patriotic and democratic forces to work for a new developmental policy.

The third and fourth issues (485 pp., October 1986) are joined in one volume under the title: *The Crisis of the Capitalist System in Egypt. What Are Its Causes and Where Does It Lead?* It covers the basic features and the growth dialectics of capitalism in Egypt, its structural changes in 1952-1970, the processes of accumulation, the parasitic nature of the landlord-tenant relationship, the agrarian problem, the essence of the modern bureaucratic bourgeoisie, and the state of Egyptian economic thought. The main publications are reinforced with the materials of a round table. Its participants examined the economy's structural imbalances, due to the specific features of the rise and development of Egyptian capitalism, and analysed today's problems of the national bourgeoisie, taking into account its dependence on international imperialism which tinges every aspect of national life. Ex-director of the Institute of Socialist Studies Ibrahim Saad al-Din and Professor Fawzi Mansur—both economists—took part in the discussion.

The fifth issue (290 pp., May 1987) consists of materials on the subject of "The Egyptian Working Class: Heritage, Reality, Prospects". A feature of this issue is that, apart from scholars, trade union leaders from major Egyptian industrial centres (the steel works at Helwan, the textile mills at El-Mahalla el-Koubra and Shoubra el-Kheima), and workers themselves spoke out in it.

Dr Saad Hafiz, an economist, analysing the structure of Egyptian society, including the working class, notes that:

the village roots of the main sections of society have conditioned their adherence to individualistic values;

the bourgeoisie use the traditional religious world view for their own purposes and seek to oppose it to the world outlook of the working class;

the authorities actively manage social consciousness, cultivating a hostile attitude to proletarian ideology;

the nerve-wracking daily battle for physical survival and the low degree of literacy restrict the possibilities for the development of the intellect and class consciousness of the proletariat;

a dual class position typifies a number of groups of workers. Trying to get along on their own, they have gone into handicrafts, petty trade and transport services, and some have found employment for themselves in

parasitic unproductive work. This has led to an erosion of their sense of belonging to the proletariat: the "non-worker" trades have become a conduit for petty-bourgeois attitudes.

Emigration greatly influences the formation of the working class. The "open door" policy (*infatih*) in the economy, and increasing hardship have forced thousands to look for work in other countries. The number of expatriates now exceeds 3 million. This means that 20% of workers are employed outside the national boundaries. According to Dr Nader Firgani's study, emigration has compounded and delayed the moulding of proletarian class consciousness.

Transnational corporations, the working class, and living standards are the themes explored in articles which deal with the effect of inflation on wages, relations with the employers, industrial action and the extremely low standard of living in working-class areas. Among their authors are trade union leaders Mohammed Gamal Imam and Abdel Magid Ahmed. The serious theoretical piece "The Approaching Era of Robots: Has the Working Class a Future?" by the political writer Mohammed Seid Ahmed concentrates on the great changes brought by the scientific and technological revolution, and their influence on social development.

April 1988 saw the publication of the sixth issue of *Kadaya Fikriya* under the title "The Arab-Zionist Conflict" (Part I, 277 pp.). With the Palestinian uprising continuing in the Israeli-occupied territories, this question is now especially pertinent. The collection includes articles on the roots and nature of Zionism, its alliance with US imperialism, the Israeli "conception of peace" and its aggressive character, and ways to overcome the crisis.

The anthology's seventh issue (280 pp., November 1988) continues to discuss this theme. Among the authors are Egyptian investigative writers Ahmed Abdel Moti Higazi, Gamal el-Gitani, Rifat el-Said, Samir Amin, Mohammed Imar, Palestinian figures—director of the Jerusalem-based journal *Al-Talia* Bashir al-Bargussi, Political Bureau member of the Central Committee of the Palestinian Communist Party Naim al-Ashhab, member of the Executive Committee of the PLO Ahmed Sidki al-Dagani—and Deputy General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Lebanese Communist Party Kerim Mroueh. They all give a high assessment of the Palestinian uprising, which has revived the militancy of the Arab revolutionary process as a whole.

Each issue of the anthology is a notable intellectual event in Egypt. *Kadaya Fikriya* helps to enrich its treasure-house of theoretical thought using the Marxist-Leninist methodology. One may describe it as the temple of thought whose architect is the progressive Egyptian intelligentsia. The collection's edition amounts to 5,000 copies and is sold out completely. Of course, the anthology needs further improvement. Life has shown, for example, that a simpler way of presenting materials would be desirable, making it more comprehensible to the general reader. Without harming the content, it would appear a good idea to reduce the size of articles by trimming a certain amount of superfluous detail. This would help to make the publication more effective.

Mohammed Magdi CAMAL,
Egyptian Communist Party's
representative on the WMR

SURVEYS, LETTERS, DIARY

MEMORABLE DATES 1989

As usual, the year's first issue of WMR carries a brief reminder of the more significant anniversaries related to the international communist and working-class movement, the revolutionary and liberation struggles and world history in general.

A NUMBER of socialist countries will celebrate anniversaries this year: the Cuban revolution triumphed in January 30 years ago, and the German Democratic Republic and the People's Republic of China will each be 40 years old in October.

Seventy years ago (in 1919), the working people of Hungary, Bavaria and Slovakia, influenced by the Great October Socialist Revolution, took power and proclaimed the Hungarian Soviet Republic (in March), the Bavarian Soviet Republic (in April) and the Slovak Soviet Republic (in June). Although those proletarian republics were short-lived, their emergence entered a bright chapter in the chronicles of the working-class movement.

The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, which plays an important part in

the economic and political affairs of socialist countries, will mark its 40th anniversary in January.

The People's Republic of Kampuchea was proclaimed in January 10 years ago, and in July the Nicaraguan people will commemorate 10 years of the Sandinist Revolution.

Quite a few anniversaries are associated with the history of the international communist movement.

In September 125 years ago, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels founded the International Workingmen's Association, the First International, which laid the foundations for the emergence of mass workers' parties in various countries and promoted international proletarian solidarity. July will mark the centenary of May Day, the holiday of working people's international solidar-

ity, inaugurated by the founding congress of the Second International (Paris, 1889). In March 70 years ago, the First Congress of the Communist International opened in Moscow and the Comintern was founded.

Marx's ideological heritage is highlighted by the 140th anniversary of the publication of his *Wage Labour and Capital* (April) and the 130th anniversary of the publication of *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (June). Lenin's *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* was published in April 90 years ago and *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back* in May 85 years ago; in the latter work he thoroughly expounded his concept of the party as the highest form of the class organisation of the proletariat. His article "A Great Beginning. Heroism of the Workers in the Rear. 'Communist Subbotniks'" appeared in June 70 years ago.

Several communist and workers' parties will mark jubilees this year: the Communist Party of Israel will be 70 years old in March, the Communist Party of

Yugoslavia (the League of Communists of Yugoslavia since 1952) in April, the Communist Party—USA in September and the Communist Party of Denmark in November. The Guatemalan Party of Labour will celebrate its 40th anniversary in September. The Communist Party of the Reunion was established in May 1959, 30 years ago.

The international conference of communist and workers' parties opened in Moscow 20 years ago, in June 1969.

Some memorable dates in the history of the international working-class and antiwar movement will be celebrated this year, among them the bicentennial of the French Revolution (July). World War II broke out on September 1, 50 years ago; the day will be observed as the international day of peace efforts and of trade union action for peace. The First World Peace Congress opened in April 40 years ago.

Many of the memorable dates and anniversaries of 1989 will be spotlighted in upcoming WMR issues.

THE READER WANTS TO KNOW

THE SITUATION IN KURDISTAN

We are receiving letters from readers with questions about the Kurdish problem and recent developments in Kurdish-populated areas. For example, Mahmoud Karam-Ogly ABDULLAYEV from Gorlachy Kliuch, Krasnodar Region, USSR, says that "different sources report on the complicated situation in Iraqi and Iranian Kurdistan and on the hostilities there. There is also unrest in the areas of Turkey where Kurds live. Could you tell us about the Kurdish question and the causes of the dramatic events in Kurdistan?"

We present contributions by Siamend KHALIL, member of the Iraqi Communist Party, and by Salah AMIN, representative of the Kurdish patriotic national forces.

The People's Commitment to Freedom

The Iraqi Kurds (who total more than 3.5 million) have always been in the front ranks of the battle for freedom and national independence, and we know that the path of a leader is particularly arduous. The Kurds' militant struggle has been brutally suppressed, but it has received unswerving support from the country's democratic forces, above all from the Communists who were the first to recognise

the right of the Kurds to self-determination. The ICP announced this recognition as soon as it was established as a party in 1934.

The Communists have given total backing to the Kurds' struggle. We hold that the effort to ensure the Kurds' national rights is linked organically with the attainment of democracy for the whole Iraqi people. The decades of stubborn fighting have borne out the Communist Party slogan "The Union of Arabs and Kurds Is an Insurmountable Obstacle in the Path of Reaction and Co-

lonialism". It has been taken up by all progressive and democratic forces in our society.

The present rulers of Iraq were forced by the Kurdish Revolution, the pressure of the democratic forces and tactical considerations to recognise the right of Iraq's Kurdish people to autonomy. In actual fact, however, the authorities purged its legislative and executive institutions of any and all democratic elements. Resorting to demagogic slogans, they unleashed new reprisals against the Kurds and moved to change the population structure of Iraqi Kurdistan. Great numbers of Kurds have been exiled to the nation's arid southern areas, particularly from oil-rich districts. Simultaneously, the population of the northern regions is being Arabised, and Kurds are being ousted by Arab settlers.

The regime is resorting to force and bribery to make the Kurds loyal to the ruling Ba'ath Party—but to no avail. The new wave of repression which rose after the 1975 agreement between Iraq and Iran¹ forced the vanguard of the Kurdish people to declare an armed uprising which was supported by the masses. It was led by the patriotic national forces, including Communists.

The aggravation of the oppressive policy produced widespread opposition to the authorities. Kurdish revolutionaries, Communists and other champions of democracy and progress form the backbone of the inexorably growing movement "For a Democratic Iraq and Genuine Autonomy of Kurdistan". The mountains of Iraqi Kurdistan

are the arena of armed patriotic resistance to the regime. The gravity of the confrontation is also clear from the large-scale uprisings that have swept Kurdish cities. The ruling quarters are trying to drown them in blood, and the reign of terror is intensifying.

Baghdad fears that the struggle of the Kurdish population may escalate into action against the government in other parts of the country. This prospect is quite probable because, in spite of brutal reprisals, the democratic forces are becoming increasingly active. Enmity towards the insurgents has prompted the authorities to use chemical weapons, evict thousands of people from their homes, raze villages and conduct wholesale executions. As soon as the hostilities along the Iranian front ceased, Iraqi troops launched a new offensive in Kurdistan using different types of weapons.

The people of goodwill who support Arabs and Kurds in their drive for democracy can be sure that the new campaign of terror and repression is doomed to failure. The people's commitment to freedom is stronger than weapons.

Siamend KHALIL

We Want To Live in Peace and Harmony

Right-wing nationalist regimes refuse to recognise the national liberation struggle of the Kurdish people or even consider their right to self-determination. The Baghdad authorities are particularly zealous in their chauvinistic policy aimed against the Kurdish people. In March 1988, the Iraqi government mounted a series of offensive operations against the Kurds near the city of Halabja; chemical agents were among the weapons used. The result

was 5,000 casualties, including lethal ones. On August 25, the authorities again used chemical weapons against the civilian population of Iraqi Kurdistan. Thousands of women, old people and children were injured or killed, and tens of thousands fled to Turkey and Iran.

The neighbouring across-the-border areas to which people fled are a natural extension of the Kurds' lands. They are peopled with the sons of the same nation. If the Turkish government had failed to assist the refugees from Iraqi Kurdistan, the Turkish Kurds would have done it themselves. But the authorities are working to prevent such contacts. Turkish security forces have sealed the refugee camps off from the neighbouring communities.

That is why the reports of Turkish and Western news agencies about the humane treatment of the refugees, the erection of tent camps, etc. do not reflect the actual state of affairs.

The security treaty concluded between Turkey and Iraq a few years ago provides for collaboration and concerted action in combating the Kurdish national liberation movement in both countries. The Turkish authorities have indeed set up tent camps for the refugees, and they do supply them with food. However, the true attitude of Ankara to the Kurdish people is obviously hostile. This is clear from reports about Kurds being deported to Iraq by the Turkish government and from the services the latter did the Iraqi regime by groundlessly denying the fact of Iraqi chemical warfare while world public opinion expressed its indignation over these moves.

The record shows that local reactionaries, imperialism, and the Zionists are working to implement

a certain plan with regard to the Kurdish national liberation movement. This plan is aimed at securing control over the Kurdish movement, emasculating its democratic thrust, isolating it from the region's progressive and patriotic forces, transforming it into something resembling the Afghan counterrevolution, directed by NATO circles and pro-American regimes, thoroughly undermining the historically friendly relations between Arabs and Kurds, and fomenting hostility between them.

Also contributing to this plan is the Iraqi government statement about a "general amnesty", a statement that insults the Kurds, denigrates their history and the principles and objectives of their struggle, and pictures the patriots as "mercenary gangs". In this connection one cannot ignore the harm done to the cause of liberation by the policies of some right-wing Kurdish factions.

The progressive quarters have set the Kurdish liberation movement the tasks of pursuing an independent and patriotic national policy, severing all ties with the reactionaries, refusing to be a pawn in the political game of the ruling regimes or to be drawn into conflicts or territorial disputes between them because that does not serve the genuine interests of the Kurds, and concentrating on the prime objective of mobilising all forces in the struggle for self-determination.

We are addressing our friends in all countries and particularly in the Arab national liberation movement, as well as all those who hold democracy and justice dear with an urgent appeal to draw public attention to the developments in Kurdistan and display stronger solidarity with the Kurdish and Arab peoples.

Salah AMIN

¹ Under the agreement concluded by the President of Iraq and the Shah of Iran in Algiers in March 1975, each side pledged to settle territorial disputes and cease assisting the opposition in the other country.—Ed.

A NOTE FROM WMR

The name "Kurdistan" does not appear on the political map of the world. It is an ethnogeographic term usually denoting a predominantly Kurdish-populated mountainous area in West Asia, mostly within the Armenian highland and the Iranian plateau. In 1514 Kurdistan was divided between the Ottoman Empire and Persia (Iran). After World War I and the collapse of the empire, Kurdish-populated areas were incorporated into the states that sprang up on its former territory—Turkey, Iraq and Syria.

The Kurds, one of the oldest peoples of western Asia, live in Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Syria and several other countries (the Soviet Union, Lebanon and Afghani-

stan). Their population now totals 20 to 25 million. The Kurdish language belongs to the western division of Iranian languages and includes several dialects—Kirmanji, Sorani, Bahdinani and others.

The Kurds' history has not been easy. They rose many times against the shahs of Persia, the sultans of the Ottoman Empire and other oppressors.

Today, the Kurds' movement for self-determination is not homogeneous. Dozens of political parties and organisations exist, holding different positions on the Kurdish national question.

At the juncture of the 1950s and 1960s the Iraqi regime opened hostilities against the Kurdish people. As the Ba'ath Party came to power in 1968, efforts to settle the conflict were un-

dertaken. After agreement was reached in 1970 on a peaceful settlement of the Kurdish problem, the government adopted the Declaration of March 11 and thus ended the war which had been fought for almost a decade. In March 1974, a law on the autonomy of Iraqi Kurdistan was enacted on the basis of the declaration; under this law, legislative and executive bodies of the Kurdish Autonomous Region were established. However, tensions again intensified in the late 1970s, and hostilities between government troops and Kurdish insurgents resumed. The Iran-Iraq war further aggravated the situation.

The still outstanding national question in Iran and the refusal of the Islamic Republic government to

meet the demands of the Kurds and other national minorities for administrative and cultural autonomy led to armed clashes between Kurds and the forces of the Teheran regime in Iranian Kurdistan. The press has reported that the Turkish army has repeatedly conducted punitive operations against the Kurdish population of the southeastern areas in recent years.

The world's progressive public opinion is demanding a just solution to the Kurdish problem and calling for the granting of the right to self-determination to the long-suffering people.

Adnan EL-ASAM
WMR staff member

FROM OUR MAILBAG

READERS COMMENT, ADD, SUGGEST

ANALYSIS—A POTENT WEAPON

Remaining your loyal friend, for years I have tolerated the fact that the WMR quite often carried insipid, uncritical material, chewing over copy-book truths.

In the present situation, I believe that our theoretical and information journal should contribute much more to the analysis of the processes and phenomena that have arisen on the historical road of the communist movement, and to the disclosure of the reasons for the difficulties that hinder its advance. And this makes it clear that to encourage this new energy it is essential to sharpen the ideological spear.

Antonio D'MESA
Santo Domingo,
Dominican Republic

ONE'S OWN ... VANGUARD?

I emphatically disagree

with the opinion of some of the participants in the discussion on "mass parties" or "parties of the masses" ("Reflecting on the Concept of the Party", WMR, No. 2, 1988). "Vanguard parties" or "mass parties"? This sounds like a question of Marxist-Leninist parties or parties of petty-bourgeois tail-endism?

"Communist" is a title that you cannot buy on hire purchase. It has not only to be won, but also to be constantly upheld in struggle. You are either at the head of the masses or you're not. For one can't be one's own vanguard. This is sheer nonsense.

Communist consciousness does not arise spontaneously and is not acquired "on a mass scale", and certainly it is not achieved by a generous handout of membership cards.

A broad interpretation of party membership de-

precates the importance of the party, and undermines the trust it commands in society. No doubt, the more party members the better, who is arguing about that! But as regards the transformation into a party of the "masses" ... excuse me, that's quite another matter.

Where does this all lead in practice? To the loss of the substance, ideological base, and distinctive principles of a communist party. What, for example, can one say when the party meeting announces a break for ... a prayer?!

It would be good to return to this theme in the pages of the WMR, because the "mass party" issue should be discussed more widely and objectively.

Ricardo ZAMORANO ALFONSO
Barcelona, Spain

WORK CONTRACTS HAVE MINUSES TOO

The restructuring in socialist countries presup-

poses the large-scale use of work contracts based on full cost-accounting. These include such measures as compensation for defective goods and for the loss of materials, intermediate products or finished articles. Such a system has long been used at Japanese corporate steel plants, or in subcontracts to medium-sized and small businesses throughout industry. Many of our trade unions oppose this system of work intensification and of making up for production losses at the expense of the workforce.

I would like to warn you about the negative side of our experience—it is certainly worthy of consideration under socialism too.

Kadzuo GOTO
Ninomiya, Japan

TELL THE WHOLE TRUTH

One of the distinguishing features of our perestroika

is a realistic approach to every problems, including those at international level.

Only recently the Soviet press was sharply critical of the Common Market, pointing to the incessant disagreement, its huge numbers of unemployed, its "cod", "wine" and other "wars" and, in general, suggesting that the Eu-

ropean Economic Community was about to collapse like a house of cards. Whereas the CMEA, to judge from the press then, was steadily improving. And how could it have been otherwise: the CMEA is "ours", while the EEC is "theirs".

Glasnost has proved convincingly the one-sidedness

of such reasoning. Only now are we beginning to realise the significance of the EEC and the importance of cooperation with this body. Your journal (*WMR*, No. 8, 1988) has reported that official relations were established between the two communities last summer, and besides that, I have read that a large

agreement is in the works between the European Economic Community and the Soviet Union. One can only welcome such agreements, because in the end they work for a common aim—the consolidation of peace and understanding among the nations.

A. KURGANOV
Kolomna, Moscow Region,
USSR

READERS AS COAUTHORS

WORLD MARXIST REVIEW has entered its fourth decade of publication. Having celebrated its 30th anniversary, our international editorial staff is thinking about *WMR*'s future and about the best ways of making its articles more variegated, better written and more informative. This is also our readers' concern. Many letters we receive advise us to look for new methods and forms in the exchange of experience between fraternal parties.

"The changes in the communist movement are obvious," says Andrew Hoffman from the United States. "*World Marxist Review* should deal with their substance, not just outward signs and offer a really scientific analysis of the movement's problems and difficulties and present a greater diversity of views. I think you, too, need a perestroika."

The first steps towards *WMR*'s renewal are already being taken. We are emphasising creative Marxist research into the issues the Communists regard as particularly topical. Our Editorial Council is work-

ing to make *WMR* articles more diversified and interesting and free from dogmatism, rigid thought patterns and doctrinaire exhortations.

"*WMR* should not paint a depressingly monotonous picture," says Pedro Aguilera from Argentina. "It needs a special section in which readers could challenge the views of your authors irrespective of their party position—naturally, treating comrades-in-arms with tact and respect."

This will be the objective of our "Forum" section to which we invite contributions not only from Communists but also from Social Democrats, representatives of other parties and movements, as well as believers, environmentalists and, generally, all those wishing to share their views concerning new thinking and the struggle for disarmament, a nuclear-free world, democracy and liberation of oppressed nations.

We attach particular significance to our coverage of the problems of the international communist

movement. On this subject, too, *WMR* will "tell it like it is" and try to reflect different viewpoints. For example, this approach was manifest in "The Communists in Today's World: Partnership and Its Rationale"—a discussion covered in the March 1988 issue which evoked a response on the part of our readers who encouraged us to continue in the same vein. *WMR* also plans to turn to the Comintern archives and to the history of the communist movement.

Quite recently, the image of socialism projected in *WMR* articles was static and oversimplified. Today, we are focusing on socialist renewal, democratisation of the social fabric and the distinctive national features of socialist development in different countries. We have published items about the Chinese and Yugoslav practice of socialist transformations (this issue, incidentally, also includes an article about China).

The contents of our mailbag indicate that our readers welcomed the "Marxism and Religion", "The Working Class in the Computer Age", "Communists and Youth" and "The

Planet's Flashpoints" series which will be continued this year. We will pay more attention to questions of culture, the role of the mass media in the contemporary world, and the problems of women's, youth and environmentalists' organisations. We hope our readers will share their opinions on these subjects too.

We want our journal to be not only a source of information but also a means of communication. That calls for vigorous participation on the part of our readers. Letters, proposals and remarks concerning this or that article will help *WMR* become a forum of debate offering a much fuller picture of the entire range of current views. This is why we are launching our "Readers as Coauthors" section which we hope will enable us to cement our ties with our readers.

We are looking forward to receiving your remarks, questions and suggestions.

Jorge BERGSTEIN

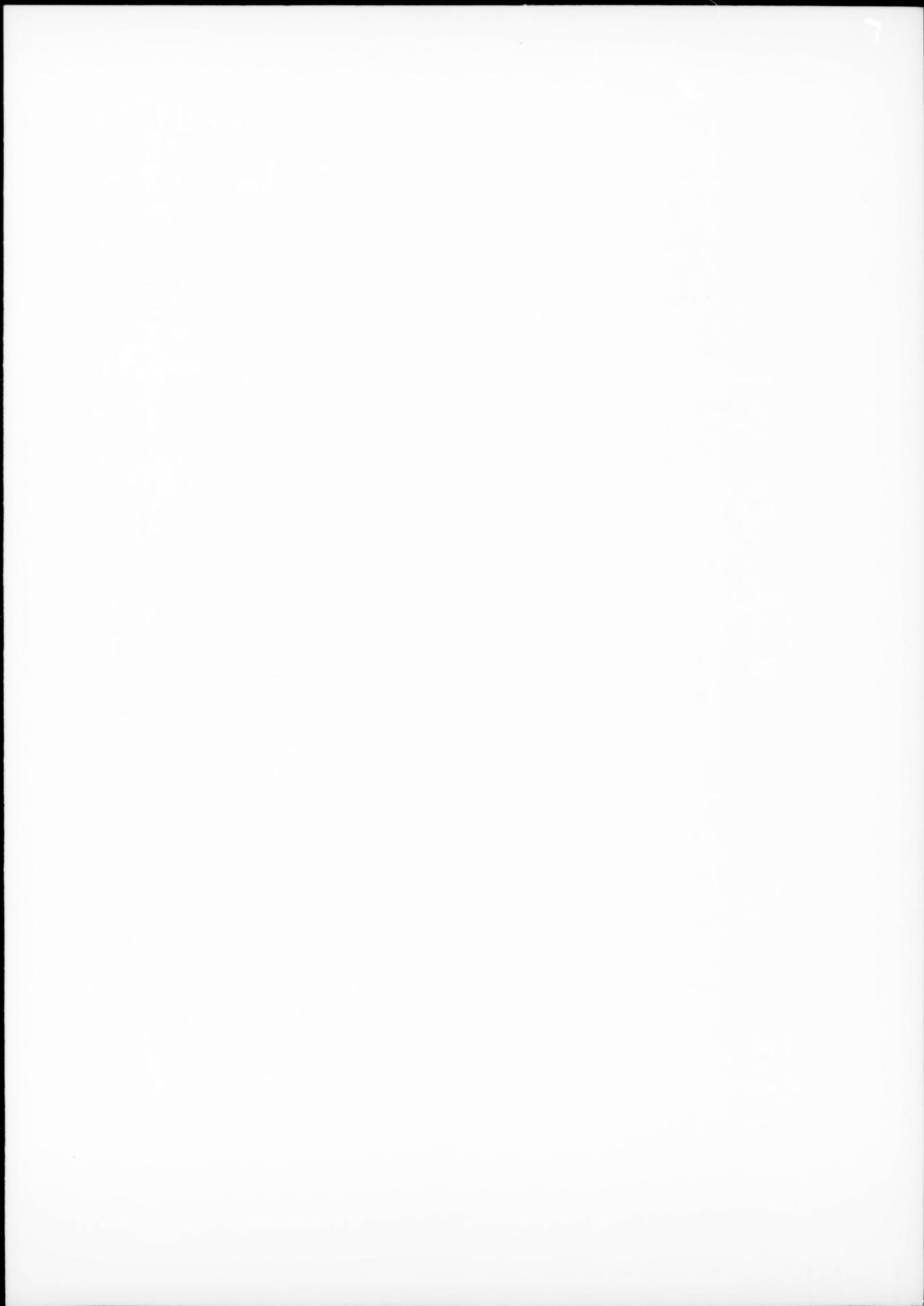
Chairman, *WMR* Commission on Scientific Information and Documentation; representative of the Communist Party of Argentina on *WMR*

WMR TIES

● Members of the Commission on the Mass Media, Reviews and Bibliography have met in Budapest with the Editorial Board of the newspaper *Népszabadság*, the central organ of the HSWP. A conversation on the role of the press in the renewal of Hungarian society took place.

● A *WMR* delegation has attended the festival of the Communist Party of Belgium's weekly *De Rode Vaan* held in Aalst near Brussels.

● Boualem Khalfa, member of the Political Bureau of the Party of the Socialist Vanguard of Algeria, has visited the *WMR* offices. Speaking at an enlarged meeting of the Commission on the National Liberation Movement in Asia and Africa, he described the political, social and economic situation in the country and the appraisal by the party of the prospects of democratisation.





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