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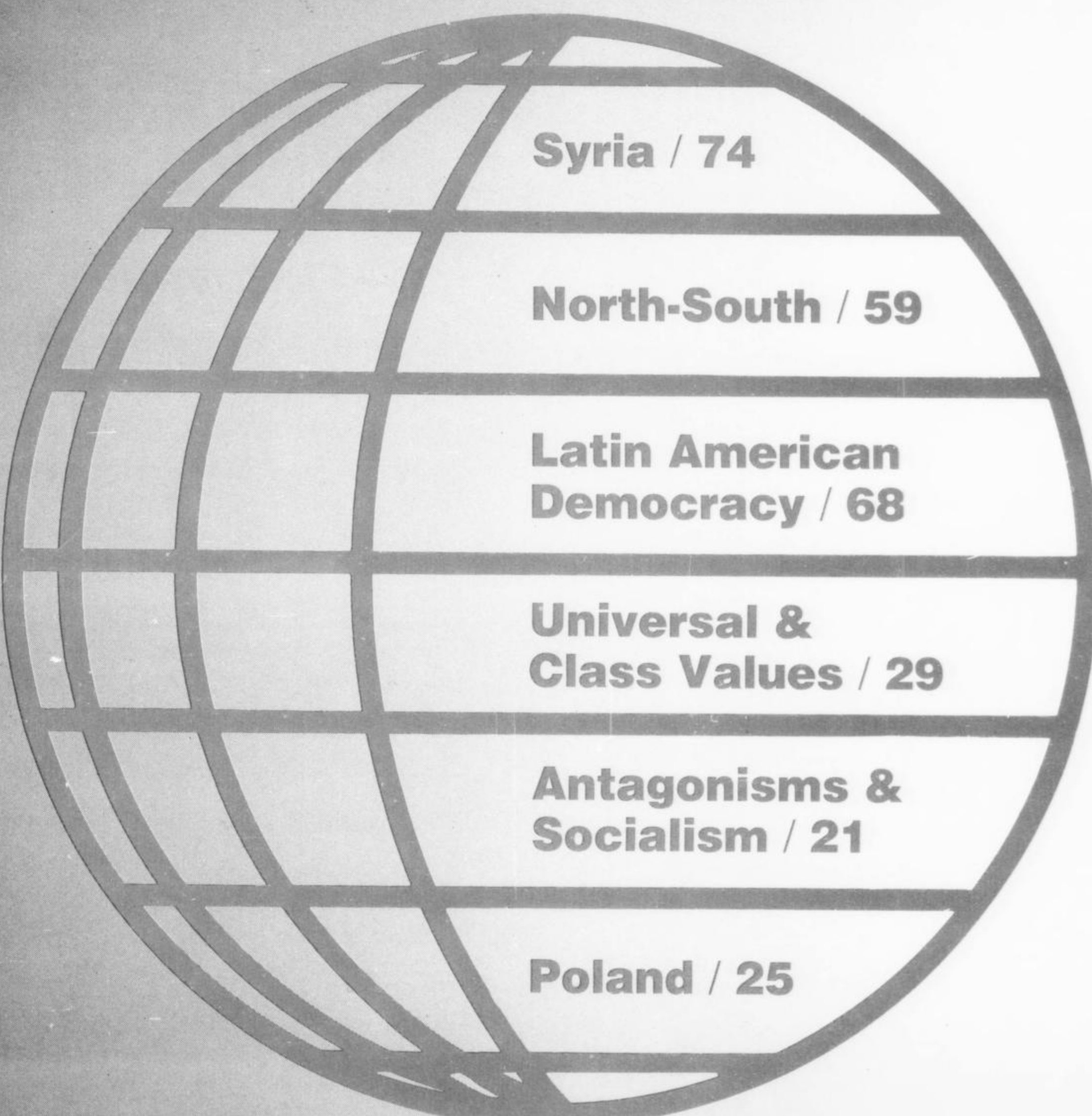
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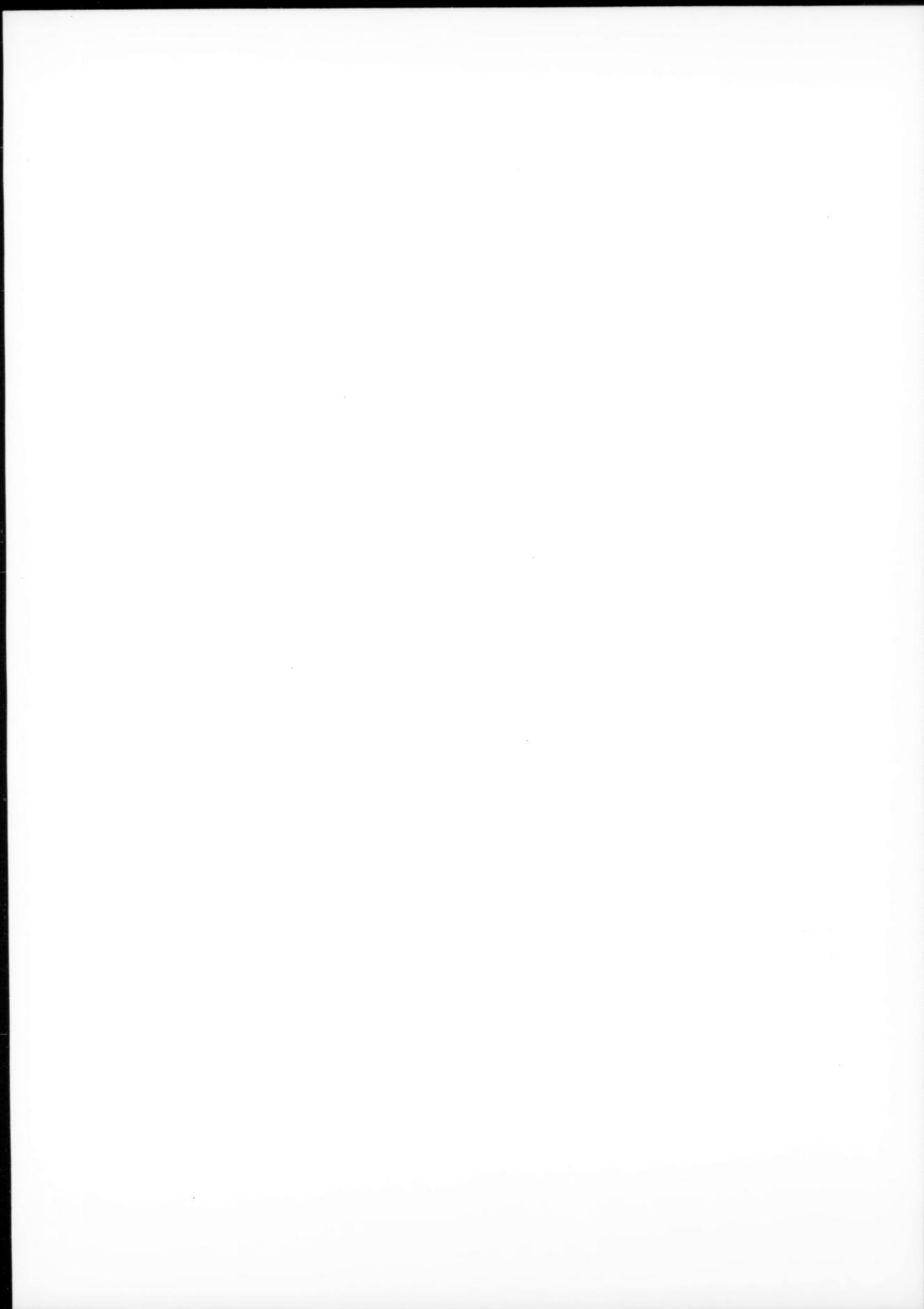
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of Communist and Workers' Parties

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WHAT SORT OF EUROPE?

Julio ANGUITA

General Secretary, Communist Party of Spain (PCE)

The implementation of the Single European Act by 1992 poses grave problems for Spain. Even though this document speaks of free trade, the free movement of capital and labour, and of social perspectives, its main emphasis is on those aspects which will benefit conservative economic circles the most. Daily, the word "Europe" is being bandied about on radio, TV and in the press. Judging by the statements from those who govern us, Europeism is synonymous with modernity. But what sort of Europe are they talking about?

ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE

The present European Economic Community does not suit us. Why? Let's take a look at the facts.

In the European Economic Community 20 million people are unemployed and marginalised. Since its inception in 1957 profound regional differences in the levels of economic development have existed, from an initial ratio of 1:6, to 1:12 after Portugal, Spain and Greece joined. Structural changes and the uncontrolled relocation of enterprises have tended to destabilise the economy and provoke social conflicts. Following recommendations from the Commission of the European Communities, a policy of moderate wages is being applied. There are distortions in competition as a result of "social dumping" (on the basis of lower production costs due to differing wage levels and social conditions in the member countries). The Single Act proclaims a policy of free trade which, if there is no solidarity in the community, will further exacerbate the economic disbalances and ine-

qualities which already exist, most obviously between Northern and Southern Europe. Inevitably there are tensions between the highly developed, dominant countries and those less developed and therefore dominated...

We cannot delude ourselves. We face a single market with the *predominance and hegemony of big capital*. This poses a grave risk for all Mediterranean agricultures. Right now, in Spain, the possibility of a decree which may affect 80% of its farmlands is being studied closely. "Stabilising measures" are being planned, i.e., compensation to those who will be forced to leave their land. These plans clearly contradict the long-standing demand for agrarian reform, particularly in Andalucia.

Passing to foreign-policy issues, we can add that the present governments of a number of EEC countries are, with minor variations of attitude, in favour of a policy of nuclear deterrence and the maintenance of blocs, trying

to affirm this within the framework of the community. In so doing they ignore the disarmament proposals advanced by the Warsaw Treaty Organisation, since these proposals envisage a reduction not only in nuclear, but also conventional arms, thereby invalidating the thesis about the need for European defence.

These and other problems compel the left-wing forces, having accepted the challenge of the new situation in Europe, to articulate an entirely different course. There are elements in Western Europe talking more and more about such a policy. We are trying to make our own modest contribution and working for a cohesive Left, particularly with regard to our

**A Call for Communist Unity
Throughout the EEC**

contacts with the West European communist parties, by discussing with them the problems related to the process of integration.

As we know, among the communist parties of Western Europe there are differences with respect to this question: the French Communist Party prefers to ignore the Single Act, whereas the Italians are talking about some sort of supranational project. The Portuguese are more restrained about this since the right-wing bent of the Single Act is hitting the Portuguese economy and, even worse, the conquests of the April Revolution.

The PCE's position perhaps bears an intermediary character. We state that the development of productive forces is irresistible. Such aspects as the internationalisation of the economy, the intertwining of markets, and the growth of trade and the means of communication, together with the need to go on advancing towards more homogeneous geographic spaces, lead us to the profound conviction that the Communist Party of Spain should stand unreservedly for the *construction of Europe*.

This must be an absolutely clear, coherent, and unambiguous policy. The main thing is to avert nuclear war, preserve peace and defend the interests of the working people. This means defining and pursuing an alternative course, tasks which require a common programme, alliances and accord among the communist parties around a whole set of objectives. Thus, an important aim is to reduce the development gap between the northern and southern parts of Western Europe and between its individual regions. For this purpose the community's budget has to be increased while at the same time lowering military expenditure. Any decisions taken should place man squarely in the centre of economic progress. If we want a society of full employment we must have proper wage systems and reduced working hours. We must also mount a cultural counteroffensive, ensure the protection of the environment, promote new relations with the Third World countries, and so forth. This is the mission of the left-wing forces. But if they are disunited, if they argue amongst themselves instead of talking and putting forward their own alternative proposals, then they will be held responsible for what occurs.

Speaking of possible forms of cooperation among the left-wing forces, I suggest one of them would be to devise a plan that would equalise the development of the various regions of Western Europe, and to campaign for the introduction of economic planning.

The play of economic forces acts in such an absolutely uncontrolled way that planning is impera-

tive. Market logic leads to a concentration of economic power, and to disbalances in the economic process. The Left must go in another direction...

WHAT KIND OF REFORMS?

Our approach to European building is as follows.

Although at this moment we are working within the framework of the EEC, the Communists *have not reduced Europe simply to the West European Common Market*, since we consider that European building should go beyond the community's limits, especially considering the widening economic relations with the CMEA countries.

Spanish Communists do not think of Europe as isolated from the Third World and therefore lacking any plans for three-quarters of humanity. Contrary to the concept of Euro-centrism, we maintain that a solidary Europe must cooperate with them in all spheres—not only on the issue of foreign debt, but also in establishing a new international economic order.

And, finally, our support for European building does not mean that we are abandoning our defence of the interests of Spain and, above all, the Spanish working people.

With regard to the Single Act and its consequences, the PCE is stressing the need for profound structural reforms.

This involves, for instance, establishing uniform standards of financing and crediting in the sphere of social insurance (here Spain is lagging behind the other EEC countries). By way of an example, it would be possible to propose community-wide insurance against unemployment.

Among working people's vital demands is the need to reduce the working week in the EEC to 35 hours. The status of the European firm must be radically reformed by creating mechanisms which would ensure the reinvestment of considerable parts of their profits in the most needy zones. The community's agricultural policy must be revised in order to end the privileged position of producers in the rich regions of the EEC.

A profound reform of the community's budget is also in order. It is ridiculous that it should be less than 1.5% of the EEC's gross domestic product. No serious economic or social programme can be financed on such a meagre budget. Even worse, by 1993 the funds set aside for infrastructure will amount to only 0.3% of the GDP for that year. Funds must be available for financing genuine integration in the fields of research and technological progress,

the protection of the environment, transport and so forth. A new vision of regional development has emerged with the emphasis on the greater coordination of economic policy. This is vital if the consolidation of the European currency system is not exclusively to benefit the most developed nations of the community.

In the field of foreign policy, the PCE is advancing initiatives which could become the subject for a debate among the left-wing forces on the elaboration of common alternative programmes. We suggest considering, accepting and expanding Mikhail Gorbachov's proposals on eliminating nuclear arsenals and reducing conventional arms to a minimum. Our party has come out in favour of the dissolution, through negotiation, of both military blocs. We still object to Spain's integration into the military structures of NATO, especially since the government flouted the will of our people, expressed in a referendum, by signing the treaty on bases with the USA. Any bilateral or multilateral treaties and agreements among the European states in matters of disarmament, the elimination of nuclear weapons, denuclearisation, and the policy of peace demand the broadest support.

In this connection I would like to refer to the problem of the *military integration of Western Europe*. The argument runs that since Europe is being built, it must have a policy of defence. But what any such policy requires is, firstly, that you define your enemy. The enemy until now was said to be the Warsaw Pact. However, with the strengthening of detente such assertions have lost any meaning. For this reason, we are in total disagreement with Spain's entry into NATO and the Western European Union. Spain has no place in these blocs, and we shall maintain this position in the face of other political forces.

As to European *civil institutions*, they can play an important role in the struggle for peace and disarmament. In my view, peace ought to be discussed on behalf of Western Europe by the European Parliament, on behalf of the East by the corresponding civil organisations there. These groups must talk and make agreements, with which the respective militaries must comply.

We support Gorbachov's concept of a "common

European home". This European phenomenon is beginning to appear far beyond the Common Market because of the sheer logic of economic development. Today, people in vastly different places watch the same television programmes or listen to the same radio stations. Modern communications, the press and tourism have drawn people closer together, shortened distances, and cut across boundaries. This implies that, like it or not, Europe will ultimately constitute a single whole.

THERE'S MORE TO THIS THAN NAMES

Naturally, certain social forces with the proper multinational policy are needed if the proposals put forward are to be acted upon. This calls for a bloc

capable of assuming power and redirecting the project of European building, a bloc which would represent a pragmatic alliance of Communists, Socialists, Social Democrats, Christians who go along with this course, Greens, and mass movements, including, of course, trade unions.

Historical experience teaches us that it is very difficult to form an alternative alliance without the united conscious efforts of the Communists. Therefore, we constantly stress the importance of a programmatic agreement, however general in character, among the West European communist parties. We know that there are differences among them. But Communists are being called upon to make an effort involving synthesis, dialogue and patience—the effort to *secure a common pragmatic line*. These steps would not hinder the achievement of understanding with other left-wing forces. On the contrary, as a communist coherence emerges in Europe, the alliance will advance far more rapidly.

The PCE now intends to build a bridge between the various communist parties on this theme. There are two reasons for this: we share with Portuguese and French comrades the idea that it is necessary to create a national front to defend the interests of the national working class; and we are unafraid to share our Italian comrades' wholehearted support for a single Europe. The PCE considers these important, and that one should not be raised above

Left-Wing Forces' Cooperation—the Only Way to Safeguard Workers' Interests

the other. We do not reject the EEC. We take a positive view of its role, given the implementation of alternative programmes. And, of course, we have been consistently working for cohesion amongst Communists. We think that the contacts we have maintained with the Portuguese, Italian, Greek, Belgian, and French communist parties have been of positive significance.

We are appealing for unity to the communist parties of all the countries integrated in the EEC. Efforts in this direction must be kept up, because working people's interests can only be protected on the basis of cooperation and solidarity, features characteristic of the Left.

The problem arises here of defining the composition of left-wing forces, their possible contacts, and, above all, relations among the Communists, Socialists, Social Democrats and others. The concrete political situation must be borne in mind, since it cannot be reduced to any one common denominator. The communist and socialist parties have many differences on both domestic and foreign policy. For example, the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party supports nuclear deterrence, and its national policy is largely subordinated to foreign interests. The Portuguese Socialist Party has agreed to change the democratic constitution of the country. Its French counterpart (with respect to foreign policy) also appears to have very particular views on armaments...

Looking at alliances between Communists and Socialists in the struggle for a progressive solution to European problems, a unique combination seems possible. On the one hand we have socialist parties and communist parties which support West European unity, while on the other we have communist and socialist parties which, considering the European act reversible, think it should be reversed. It goes without saying, however, that the *Communists alone cannot elaborate and implement an alternative policy*.

To my mind, the error lies in the fact that discussion often centres on names when a common programme between Communists and Socialists is being formulated, as though these names had the magic power to create an alternative. The main thing is the programmes, their content, and the attitude to the most important sociopolitical problems of life, those we have mentioned above. Can the Communists, Socialists and Social Democrats agree their positions on these questions? If not, then we shall achieve nothing, no matter how much the Socialists talk about socialism, or how much we refer to the

principles of communism. In the Europe of today the formula "Communists plus Socialists" must prove itself in the testing-ground of concrete problems.

This applies not only to the Socialists and Communists, but also to other movements and organisations, like the Greens etc. Regarding alliances, one cannot say yes or no, a priori. In the end what really counts is the *programme to be adopted*, and putting it into practice.

In this context I would also like to note the role of the trade unions. Some new developments have emerged in the trade-union movement over the last few years. Apart from the traditional, or classical, role, i.e., the defence of the immediate interests of the working people, they have also started discharging sociopolitical functions associated with many aspects of contemporary social and economic processes. Take, for example, the fact that, up until now, trade unions have been demanding higher wages or improved living conditions as the major priority. But what if a person loses a job? To which trade union do the unemployed belong? How can they be drawn into the class struggle? What is the consciousness of an unemployed person, and his attitude to production, if he has been out of work for years or hasn't worked at all, although he is already over 30 years old? This is a problem not only for companies and sectors, but for society as a whole. Trade unions, together with political parties, must see the entire spectrum of social life by transcending their class role, but without losing sight of economic demands.

When we, in Spain, adopt documents together with the Workers' Commissions, we are already envisioning a society with full employment, a reduced working day, etc. Together, the party and the unions discuss subjects of a theoretical or political nature. This means that the problems of "European building", or the future of Europe, also come within the trade unions' purview. They have their own place in the composition of the left-wing forces.

Recently, the Spanish Communists held their Congress of Unity, a milestone in the strengthening of the workers' movement in our country. While fighting for unity in our own ranks, we have been consistently working for the *cohesion of all the movements and formations* which act in the interests of workers and broad popular sections, and which defend the ideas of democracy, social progress, and peace. The changes that have been occurring in the world and here, on the European continent, require joint efforts on the part of all those who want these changes to benefit the peoples of Europe and the world.

WE BELONG TO ONE FAMILY

Joe SLOVO

General Secretary, South African Communist Party

Ken GILL

General Secretary, MSF

A hundred years ago, in July 1889, the Paris Congress of the Second International designated May 1 as the Day of Working People's International Solidarity, to be celebrated annually.

International solidarity has been given a new dimension in today's interdependent world. How to raise the effectiveness of solidarity actions by workers and progressives, and what opportunities does cooperation among Communists, Labourites, Social Democrats and other working-class and liberation movement trends open for this?

This question was the theme of a WMR-sponsored dialogue in London between Joe Slovo, a well-known leader of the communist and national liberation movement of Africa, and Ken Gill, a former TUC Chairman (1985-1986) and the current leader of Manufacturing, Science, Finance (MSF), one of the largest unions in Britain. Below is an abbreviated record of the dialogue.

WHAT IS INTERDEPENDENCE?

Joe Slovo. Today we often hear talk of an "interdependent world". As I see it, "interdependence" means above all, mutual dependence for the sake of survival. This is of course primarily dictated by the consequences of a nuclear holocaust. No one can dispute that such an event would respect neither class nor system.

The earlier Leninist concept that it is impossible to escape imperialist war requires qualification in the light of changing realities. The new concept that the tendency towards war inherent in imperialism can be inhibited is grounded in the existence of a number of objective factors which were completely absent or only partially present in Lenin's time. Among these factors is the substantial risk that a world conflagration would destroy capitalism as well, a factor which is, in no small measure, linked with the relative parity

of military strength between the capitalist and socialist communities.

The way I choose to understand Mikhail Gorbachov's proposition that there are human values which take priority over class values is that the assertion of certain values is in the mutual interests of otherwise contending classes. But the values remain class-related. For example, abolish parity, and it is more than doubtful that imperialism would feel constrained by considerations of human values.

Ken Gill. The world is interdependent and growing more so in the sense that communication and travel are so much swifter, that environmental pollution arising mainly from rapid industrialisation is now threatening the world's ecology system, and that the world debt problem is in a vicious downward spiral, extending poverty, depressing demand and undermining the world's financial and banking arrangements.

All these factors have greatly accelerated in importance over the last two decades. Unless major industrial powers cooperate, these problems cannot be solved. Here, the role of the UN and its specialised agencies becomes enormously important. But none of this, of course, prevents the people from engaging in political struggle, neither does it hold back effective international solidarity. On the contrary, it should create a more favourable political balance of forces for the progressive movements worldwide.

J.S. And in making use of that balance, we should have our goals clear. I think it is theoretically doubtful to pose the problem of interdependence in a way which suggests a subordination of the class struggle to the struggle for peace, or vice versa. The way the two struggles relate depends upon specific conditions at specific moments of time. In some national liberation struggles a precondition for the achievement of peace might well be a phase of armed revolutionary pressure. Namibia was a living example of this. In our case, too, premature talk of a settlement with Pretoria undoubtedly helps to divert pressures which are the only hope of eventually bringing about a peaceful transformation.

In other words, there is in many places a symbiotic link between the struggle for freedom and the struggle for peace. In its extreme form, the attempt to subordinate the struggle for liberation to the struggle for peace will objectively have the effect of subordinating the interests of the developing, unliberated world to those of the developed, liberated world. It could lead to the toleration and freezing of the status quo instead of advancing both those noble objectives through effective solidarity.

K.G. The objective reality today is that the two largest powers confront each other and that their nuclear warheads can obliterate all life on Earth. How then can the vital need to safeguard peace be reconciled with the struggle for social and national liberation? Undoubtedly, the fresh and more dynamic approach brought by Mikhail Gorbachov into international relations can benefit not only arms control and disarmament but also other objectives sought by the forces of progress and liberation.

Indeed, in spite of extensive international support with arms and diplomacy over the years, it has not proved possible for the mass popular movement to bring about decisive victories over the forces of oppression and aggression. In these circumstances, and given the new resolve to seek political solutions to regional problems, it can be advantageous for progressive forces to seek negotiated settlements instead of putting the major emphasis on protracted

armed struggle. But there remain, of course, circumstances in which armed struggle is the best, or only way forward.

Take the south of Africa, for example. Recent developments are very encouraging and there is no question that Cuban troops have played an important role. The ANC enjoys enormous and increasing political following and prestige and this will be decisive in overthrowing the apartheid regime. But I think that the prestige and approach of Mikhail Gorbachov, and Moscow's determination to find solutions to longstanding regional problems, has helped unlock the Namibian situation in favour of the fighting forces of national liberation and democracy.

J.S. But not all conflicts are ripe for political settlement. There are conflicts and conflicts: in the case of disputes between states, the conditions of our contemporary world make it imperative always to seek a political solution. But in some conflicts the main content is basically an internal struggle in which external forces become involved on the side of revolution or counterrevolution. The undifferentiated formula that we must seek a political settlement for every internal struggle can become a slogan which has the effect of preventing or holding back the ultimate peaceful resolution of an internal struggle.

Linked with this is the concept of "national reconciliation". For example, if Angola's MPLA formed a national government with Savimbi's UNITA, it would reduce tensions in the region. But it would also diminish the prospects for the Angolan people and their friends of creating conditions for a future socialist Angola.

The universalised concept of national reconciliation tends wrongly to denude conflict of its class and social base. The social issues affecting the people of a country, which are the real foundation of the conflict, should not be pushed into the background. The philosophy of national reconciliation as a global concept retreats from a key and correct Marxist postulate on the primacy of class and social struggle as the motive force of history.

Of course, where a conflict (whatever the original cause) demands a negotiated, even compromise, agreement, there is no question of a "fight to the death". Such a settlement may be judged to be correct by the internal forces for a number of reasons, both internal and international. It may even be that the internal forces may diffuse or postpone an internal conflict if there is the risk of a global holocaust. But the struggle to assert the right of free choice, the struggle for self-determination and real inde-

pendence cannot be contained or restricted; it will be carried on resolutely, and it calls for international solidarity.

The concept of "just" and "unjust" wars, I think, remains valid, certainly in the case of internal conflicts. In other words, it remains the moral duty of Socialists and democrats to support a just war, and it is immoral for imperialism to support the side of reaction because they would be supporting an unjust war.

K.G. I think, Joe, that you have explicitly substantiated the need to distinguish between class-related conflicts and those which can be avoided through sensible state policies. Class struggle is part of life in capitalist countries, whatever subjective desires there may be to think otherwise or to seek international agreements to dampen it down.

The important thing is to prevent concepts of the interdependence of the world being presented as an excuse for urging social peace. Many wonder today whether the Soviet Union has abandoned international solidarity and will use its influence to promote national reconciliation, rather than support movements for national and social liberation. The West hopes very much that the USSR will renounce support for the revolutionary movement.

It makes me sad to read papers by some theorists who almost confirm such hopes by urging peaceful settlements whatever the price. Interdependence seems to make them panic at any risk that a conflagration can be started by just one spark. But I do not think that such discourses, which devalue international solidarity, necessarily reflect the approach of party leaderships in socialist countries.

Today it is ever more important to involve international organisations in resolving local conflicts. This will make it easier to prevent "flashpoints" creating a danger of a world war. At the same time care should be taken that such organisations are not used to suppress people's struggle for internal social change.

FACING UP TO OBJECTIVE REALITY

J.S. I agree that the current improvement in East-West relations actually helps to create objective conditions for the strengthening of solidarity between progressive and anti-imperialist forces. We will readily support peaceful coexistence, the de-ideologisation of state relations, and disarmament to provide resources for feeding the world's hungry. The success of the Soviet Union's peace offensive has given new hope to humanity.

But there are misgivings about the way some of the correct objectives as articulated by Mikhail Gorbachov are theorised by others.

For example, there is an underplaying of the inherent tendency of imperialism to prevent any new socialist advances and, if possible, to roll back the frontiers of socialism. Ex-President Reagan, in his final address to the nation, boasted that his eight years of presidency would be remembered as years in which not a single inch of the world's territory had gone communist.

Here is another example. We all vigorously pursue a new international economic order. But we should not indulge the illusion, as one of the participants in a *WIMR*-sponsored international discussion does, that imperialism can become a party to the establishment of an "equitable economic order" or to the elimination of "unjust economic relations". Nor can the belief be well-grounded that the release of resources as a result of disarmament could be diverted by the imperialist world "to meet the immediate and long-term needs of the human race".¹

Other authors argue that "anti-colonial struggles are a thing of the past".² The whole concept of neocolonialism is thus virtually dismissed, along with the objective possibility of mobilising the underdeveloped world in the struggle against imperialism.

Nor can we endorse the view, expounded in many articles on new thinking, that rivalry between the two systems can no longer be viewed as the leading tendency of the modern age. Of course, such rivalry must not express itself in violent confrontation. But it surely remains the leading tendency of the modern age. If not, what is left of the contest between the two systems for the allegiance of humankind? And that contest will have to be resolved, not by force of arms but through ideological struggle and peaceful competition.

Some of the contributors to the discussion on new thinking come dangerously close to prescribing the abandonment or the toning down of conflict in internal class struggles in the interests of maintaining "the equilibrium in the international arena",³ and even urge that "the international boat not be rocked". But undoubtedly, every social struggle and national liberation struggle will upset the equilibrium and be a source of irritation between those who support and those who oppose the transformations sought.

Regrettably, these and related aspects are promoted as part of new thinking. We need to question some of them, even at the risk of being accused of "old thinking". All this underlines the urgency of Mikhail Gorbachov's remarks to the meeting of cultural and scientific workers on January 6, 1989, that

"the dialectical interaction between universal human values and class interests has not been given adequate attention".⁴ I could not agree more.

K.G. I wouldn't say, Joe, that the examples you have just cited are those of new thinking. We in good old England are used to attempts to disguise threadbare pro-capitalist recipes for class collaboration as something new. It is important to remember that imperialism has retained its class ambitions. Even today, 20 years after the defeat of the US forces in Vietnam, it would like to divide and suppress the liberation movement and continues to exert enormous pressure on the progressive forces the world over. And the failure of the imperialist powers to respect the Geneva Agreements on Afghanistan shows that imperialism still seeks to dominate the world.

But even if we take Reagan's word for it that socialism made no advances during his presidency, neither was imperialism successful. And its positions were even weakened in some areas. I think that in attaching priority to the policy of peaceful coexistence, Moscow is aware of all that. It is the correct, communist orientation. The class struggle may very well grow if a stronger peace is achieved.

J.S. I think we must be wary of possible misinterpretations of the thesis that as peace becomes entrenched, we can expect an intensification of the class struggle. Transplanted to the internal Soviet situation, this thesis gave Stalinism some of its rationalisations. I would say that with the entrenchment of peace and popular pressures forcing imperialism to inhibit some of its worst excesses, the prospects for the working-class movement of winning class demands become greater than they are in the situation of tension and confrontation, where the imperialists are able to project the so-called menace to national existence as an excuse for undemocratic, repressive and even fascist-like methods of suppressing the progressive forces.

K.G. Quite right. It is a historical fact that many class demands and solidarity actions have been buried by the threat of an external enemy. I would say, moreover, that cold war mentality was behind the split in the European working-class movement, which remains a major weakness.

A few words on the 1985 miners' strike in Britain. There were many remarkable manifestations of solidarity throughout Britain and across the world. The strike did not succeed for several reasons, and one of them was the divisions among workers and their organisations, which prevented the level of sup-

port that the dispute deserved. Hopefully, as we make new advances towards peace, one of the major dividing factors in the working-class movement, both national and international, will tend to disappear.

SOLIDARITY MUST NOT LAG BEHIND

J.S. Capital is becoming more and more interdependent, operating internationally and cutting across and often ignoring national interests. It is, of course, completely correct to de-ideologise state relations, but this does not mean a de-ideologisation of international relations, as Mikhail Gorbachov has noted.⁵ We must meet the challenge of capital by stepping up solidarity at both bilateral and worldwide levels. Undoubtedly, the process of perestroika has contributed enormously to the removal of some major obstacles in the way of finding a wider basis for interaction between different currents of the working-class, communist and democratic movements in the interests of world peace and social progress.

The days of Marxism by edict from a single source are gone. Gone too is the dividing line between the "pure" and the "impure" in left politics. The concept of unanimity and consensus as a basis for cooperation has also faded. Perestroika has provided the impetus to elaborate a new internationalism which reflects the new realities facing Communists.

But again, there is a need to guard against the danger of throwing out the baby with the dirty bathwater. Some fundamental questions cry out to be addressed more directly than they have been. For example, the healthy emphasis on more pluralism makes workers, progressives and democrats wonder what is left of what used to be regarded as the international communist movement. Does it indeed exist? Does the need to relate to broader forces spell the end of proletarian internationalism, a phrase which has almost been phased out from the vocabulary of discussion on new thinking?

Both these notions, the international communist movement and proletarian internationalism, need to be deliberately situated in the new realities. They may well need qualification in the light of these realities. But we should not merely stumble into sidelining them. An international exchange of views among communist and workers' parties on these questions is vital. Social democracy continues to organise regular exchanges. In Africa, for example, Social Democrats call a conference every three or four months. But there are no public meetings of Marxist-Leninist parties on the continent. There has

been no meeting of what used to be known as the international communist movement for over 20 years. Let me express the unfashionable thought that such an exchange today is more necessary than ever.

K.G. I think that is underlined by the way in which capitalism is developing throughout the world, and by the growing might and influence of transnationals. The threat of these monopoly capitalist organisations, very often controlling states, must make us realise how important international solidarity is. The urgent need to safeguard peace is another factor necessitating international solidarity. A new level of understanding has to be reached as to what the priorities and objectives are, and not at the level of closed leadership groups but through an open discussion amongst all the progressive forces.

As for perestroika initiated by the CPSU, the same sort of approach can be applied, surely, to many of the communist parties in the world and to their relations. Since the view is again almost universally accepted that we have to organise on an international level, I would call that a priority when it comes to Marxist parties—that they need to improve their international relations to meet together more often on a bilateral and multilateral basis.

Certainly, the re-examination of many old concepts in the spirit of new thinking creates the impression that the working-class movement is changing its principal direction. But it is objective realities that are changing. It may seem that the very ideological basis of everything that went before is being destroyed. But glasnost allows a wider discussion of what should be retained and what revised, which is as it should be. Yet in any case, confidence in our class objectives and in our theory needs international reinforcement.

J.S. This perhaps brings us to the question of a general solidarity on a world scale, and not just one-directional but two-directional, between the forces in the underdeveloped world, the democratic forces in the industrialised countries, the working-class movement and the socialist community.

Indeed, all the remarkable improvements in the international climate would hardly have happened without the popular pressure from the peace forces throughout the world. And the possibility to cut back spending on weapons and armies also contributes to the progress of socialism by helping it make fuller use of its potential.

The solidarity of the popular masses, if you'll allow me to use an old phrase, remains essential both to safeguarding peace and to the renewal of socialism.

And the democratic and working-class forces have a continuing duty to advance the process even further to remove the remaining obstacles of the cold war period. We have to put an end to the concept of coexistence as a form of the class struggle, not only from our side but from the other side.

Without going back to the unthinking and rather uncritical endorsement of all events, all practices and all policies of the socialist world, the progressive forces, including the working class in the West, freedom fighters and democratic movements, must continue to defend socialist gains everywhere. We should not allow some of the rather murky areas of our past to make us too defensive because, I am sure, socialism is the only system which at the end of the day will create a world of permanent peace, real democracy and social justice.

All the progressive forces mentioned above, diverse as they are, belong to a kind of extended family, without, of course, a hierarchy of authority or blind support for each other's political actions, but with a commitment to common ideals and a desire to realise them.

Solidarity is not just a one-way process, with socialist countries giving assistance to other struggles, but also the responsibility for the fate of world socialism that we as Communists and Marxists should always carry.

THERE ARE DIFFICULTIES, BUT NO PESSIMISM

K.G. I am convinced that the three aims that we are discussing—peace, liberation struggle and class struggle—are closely interrelated. Each process is strengthened by other peoples' victories and weakened by setbacks. What we have is a genuine international interdependence of the worldwide progressive movement. Obviously, we could all benefit from a new international economic order, technology transfers to underdeveloped countries, and the abolition of neocolonialist oppression. And the peace forces must work together for a world of peace and justice.

The point that Joe was making about the distortions in socialism: they were brought about partly by emphasis on self-preservation and protection, by the enormous concentration on defence. Of course defence spending in capitalist countries also distorts economies and political consciousness.

Millions of workers in the West understand capitalism better than some of the academics in socialist countries. Solidarity is so much more difficult

with the prospect of unemployment and poverty hanging over your head. Take defence industry workers in capitalist countries—how are they to react to the disarmament process when they have no assurances of alternative jobs with decent wages? In these circumstances, it becomes that much more difficult to build a mass movement for peace and disarmament. But difficult is not impossible. With the right policies and correct leaderships, it is possible to link disarmament to new jobs, through product diversification and conversion.

I will give you another example of how difficult it can be to mobilise workers in the capitalist world for effective solidarity actions. Transnational corporations operate across national borders, shifting investment and production from country to country at will. The unions defend the interests of primarily their own members in their own countries, and it has proved very difficult as yet to get effective international trade union organisation or action. And it should be said that there are all too few examples of workers effectively challenging the global strategies of the transnationals. Again, the threat of unemployment and poverty allows these companies to play off one group of workers against other national groups of workers. Again, strong leadership and political will can overcome these difficulties and this is an urgent priority for European trade unions.

J.S. The underdeveloped world has no fewer difficulties than capitalist Europe. It is hostage to imperialism, to neocolonialism and to the IMF, for the simple reason that the socialist world has not succeeded so far in generating sufficient resources to make a kind of input which would help develop Third World countries in a way favoured by the progressive forces.

At the same time socialism has done a great deal for the liberation processes, not in the sense of direct intervention but by its solidarity and by its political, and direct material support.

In a broader context, I think we must always dialectically separate the static from the things that are in movement, the actual from the potential. And we should not adopt a defeatist attitude because of the shortcomings of socialism or the weaknesses of the working-class movement. I have absolutely no doubts that when socialism recaptures this potential, which it is trying to do through perestroika, of creating a really new life for people with all the expectations that we have been talking about for 70 years, the whole strength of the working-class movement in the rest of the world and the freedom forces will be influenced beyond recognition.

K.G. I absolutely agree. The main thing is, I think, not to give in to pessimism. We must carry on the struggle and develop solidarity. In this sense I would challenge the old premise of bourgeois ideology, which now seems to be shared by some other forces, that one should always judge the practicality of a given objective by whether victory is assured or guaranteed. We would achieve very little if this approach guided our actions. The objective reality of the Vietnamese people when they started their struggle appeared to be defeat—but they embarked on their struggle against the US Goliath, and they won.

J.S. And who would have thought that in the US, where the working-class movement as we understand it was weakened, strong public forces would rise and force the Administration to stop the "dirty war". There can be no struggle without confidence in victory, and no victory without struggle. The Russian revolutions offer another historical example: the defeat in 1905-1907 did not break the will of the working-class movement, and there came victories in February and October 1917.

K.G. Returning to an event nearer to our time, the British miners' strike. The press and the establishment in Britain were terrified because it looked at one time as if the miners were going to win. So many arguments were put forward on "unrealistic goals", "objective economic processes" and "wrong tactics". In short, if the working-class movement had listened to "our theorists", struggle would already have disappeared. But the working people cannot abandon their struggle to improve their lot and cannot always choose the ground on which to fight.

J.S. There have been many setbacks and retreats of the working class in May Day history. But taking the overall trend, we have every right to say with pride that the world has changed, that relations of exploitation no longer dominate unchallenged, and that the working people with their struggle and combative international solidarity have been the makers of that new world.

1 See the contribution of Prof. Yuri Krasin to the discussion on "Perestroika in the USSR and the International Communist Movement" in *WMR*, No. 9, 1988, p. 102.

2 See the contribution of Doctor of History G. Mirsky to the discussion on "We and the Third World" in *International Affairs*, No. 12, 1988, p. 136.

3 See V. Kuznetsov, "Axioms in a Changing World", *New Time*, No. 52, 1988, p. 25.

4 *Pravda*, January 8, 1989, p. 2.

5 *Ibid.*



HOW TO REMOVE THE BRAKES ON INTEGRATION

Jozsef MARJAI
(Hungary)

As we observe the 40th anniversary of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, we continue our survey of its current problems and the outlook for the future.¹

■ **For ten years you were responsible for your country's participation in the CMEA. Does this organisation still play a decisive role for Hungary?**

Unquestionably, the CMEA initially helped us to industrialise the economy, and to transform our agriculture. But this did not meet the demands of a rational international division of labour. Nevertheless, it ensured the stability, and for a number of years also the dynamism, of our growth. So I can say that, for us, interaction within the CMEA still remains a powerful factor. The community's nations account for about half of Hungarian foreign trade.

However, from the early 1970s, at a varying pace but in appreciable measure, those benefits diminished, reflecting the fact that the productive forces of the community and its relations of production had fallen out of step with the world economy. The CMEA stood still. We proved unable to follow the global revolution in science and technology properly. Our resources and investment did not yield as effective a rise in national income as before.

■ **Yet one cannot say that CMEA did not respond to this lag. In 1971 it adopted a Comprehensive Programme for Socialist Economic Integration, and followed this up in 1978 with specific long-term programmes for energy, fuel and raw materials; agriculture and the food industry; and machine-building. Others came a year later...**

And they have all been only partially implemented. Much of the cooperative effort never went beyond planning. It was hampered by a "command and administer" approach to economic, scientific and technological ties

and by the spirit of bureaucratism. About 40 committees and commissions, plus hundreds of working groups endlessly sat to coordinate the partners' work, processing tons of paper before taking numerous decisions, undoubtedly required and important, but which the principal subjects—enterprises, organisations and institutions—had no incentive to implement. Indeed, their cooperation was sometimes compelled from above.

It was in the early 1970s that we heard the first alarm bells. The CMEA tried to meet the challenge of the times by producing the Comprehensive Programme. An oil price explosion 10 years later surprised us, as it did all other countries. The industrialised capitalist states were fairly quick to adapt, developing science-based energy- and resource-saving methods.

All the top-level CMEA decisions addressed the problems by using new terms, but the old content, a contradiction which still hangs like Damocles's sword over Hungary and many other countries. It has resulted in a greater discrepancy among the fraternal states not merely in production and management, but also in broader, long-term economic goals.

■ **So the extensive model of cooperation, which has for several decades served us so faithfully, is out of date? By the way, the present chair of the CMEA Executive Committee, Andrei Lukanov, shares this opinion (WMR published an interview with him in No.1, 1989).**

Yes. Hungary's position is explicit: the potential of the previous course has been practically exhausted. An immediate and drastic restructuring of cooperation is required. If radical changes do not occur in this field soon, then, we believe, the CMEA will no longer be the engine of renewal, but a severe hindrance to the process that has begun in some socialist states.

But so far we even lack the material and technical basics for this. The main problem, I think, is that we still haven't devised an effective mechanism for resolving collectively the knotty issues behind certain disagreements among us.

■ **Why is this?**

I must say, and most of our partners tend to agree, that some CMEA nations are in an economic mess. Stagnation, or a fall in growth rates, is observable in production, the debt to capitalist states keeps rising, mutual settlements remain unbalanced, and consumer supplies are an increasing headache. Living standards are either at a standstill or dropping, as in Hungary.

The fact that the differences between the various national systems of economic management have been increasing is particularly disheartening. They stand out not so

In 1978-1988 Jozsef Marjai was a Vice-Chairman of the HPR Council of Ministers and Hungary's permanent representative at the CMEA. At present he continues to be concerned with the problems of Hungarian participation in the CMEA's activities.

much at the level of declarations and resolutions as in practice. Hungary undertook cardinal reforms earlier than its partners, and therefore we are on a higher level of market relations. While political aims have been formulated in some other states, implementation is all too slow, the changes minimal or imperceptible. It is very important that the USSR should set up a truly effective (and operating) economic mechanism which would spur the growth of commodity-money relations, otherwise it will be hard to solve the major problems facing the CMEA. The Soviet Union is the determining factor in cooperation among our states.

Besides, in interacting with some countries, we run up against obstacles to the development of positive processes; the emerging structure of trade does not always match the objective interests of partners or the requirements of common economic effectiveness.

■ **What are, then, the possibilities for cooperation?**

I think we shall only be able to find partial solutions in the near future. Bilaterally or trilaterally, we'll try to arrive at mutually acceptable agreements, to build bridges to ensure the coexistence of different economic mechanisms, but necessarily through developing commodity-money relations.

I don't know how much time the transition period will take. Above all, in my view, we should seek to minimise the reduction of benefits, and to avoid sharp turns in the structure of cooperation, while taking maximum account of the interests and potential of individual member countries. One needs to understand that any major restructuring dictates its price, and that the internal sources of development and the chances of attracting them from outside, with the possible exception of the Soviet Union, are very limited.

■ **So you assume a delay in radical changes of cooperation principles until economic mechanisms are revised in a number of countries?**

Describing the current situation, I would say that we're dancing on the "edge of a razor". A temporary decline of cooperation for objective reasons—because of the necessity for fundamental reforms—is a real possibility, but there's no need to panic. We haven't enough resources to finance all our schemes. Participation in the CMEA is no longer the stimulus that it was for each partner. But it is essential that our integration retains its role. As well as helping to end agricultural and food shortages more quickly, this will offer each member a guaranteed supply of energy and raw materials.

We should be more clear about our goals, the practical steps to be taken and their economic impact. In 1987 at the 43rd CMEA Session we unanimously voted for much more effective cooperation. But we disagree on the methods and pace by which it should be achieved. Since the reforms are slow, Hungary must continue to offer new proposals and consistently defend its stand. In particular, we regard the

inadequate monetary-financial system as one of the main reasons for the inertia evident in our relations.

■ **You obviously mean the transferable rouble—the CMEA states' collective currency?**

Unfortunately, you can't even hold it in your hands because it is only used in a multilateral system of settlements among the CMEA member countries. This currency is inapplicable in trade ties with other states.

For a start we should ensure the convertibility of the transferable rouble within the community, and then internationally. Of course, the Soviet Union has the last word here. But we think that partial convertibility can be introduced in a relatively short period of time. In turn, it would influence the real exchange rates, and also the formation of domestic production prices. These last, I believe, must be geared more to the world market.

■ **And what do you think must be done to change the pricing system?**

I believe that eventually we will switch to the system of world prices: CMEA prices often differ from them, and in no way influence those used by other states. This is one of the reasons why socialist integration has very little impact on the rest of the world, even though it wields considerable economic power.

■ **How close are Hungarian to world prices?**

Of course, our system does not have the kind of price relations that exist in the capitalist market. Deductions from enterprise incomes and subsidies for unprofitable output incline our prices away from world prices.

Let me give you an example. Because we limit imports we naturally create shortages. Hence our prices rise rapidly in relation to those elsewhere. Insufficient competition means many enterprises have a monopoly position and this also inflates prices. State intervention, though now modest, does nevertheless exist and narrows market relations, again affecting prices.

■ **The problem of exchange rates is perhaps also involved here?**

I think that the transferable rouble's present rate of exchange is unrealistic, both against the national currencies of individual socialist states and against the freely convertible currencies. Comparing the rate of the forint against the dollar and the transferable rouble gives two quite different ratios. I see this as a major brake on the functioning of exchange rates as a market factor. The same thing exists between individual national currencies, impeding their use in mutual settlements.

The problem in mutual relations is compounded by unbalanced bilateral trade. Hungary has a surplus in trade with the Soviet Union. This tension could be eased by expanding barter deals and tapping other possibilities for import, but we haven't had any acceptable offers. We believe the imbalance can be solved by means of a freely

convertible currency, which would heighten interest in greater exports, and in higher-quality goods that could compete not only on socialist, but also on world markets.

■ **People are now widely discussing the prospects for a unified socialist market. What do you think about this?**

Basically, Hungary is ready for the eventual creation of a Common Market of CMEA members. We don't foresee any barriers, although the system has not yet been elaborated. In general, market formation has been proceeding more rapidly here than elsewhere, and we are in the final stages of developing of commodity-money relations. Frankly, the gap between partners in this regard is widening, and the differences are inhibitive, because a country with sufficiently well developed commodity-money relations can participate in such a market far more effectively, and vice versa.

The word "unified" so far implies that this could be willed by resolutions. We're striving for a common market based not so much on political or economic decisions as—and even more so—on the natural development of the fraternal states. Our ultimate aim is a free movement of resources, capital, goods, and services where the most favourable conditions exist for their effective use, the need for which was discussed by the 1984 Working Meeting of Leaders of Fraternal Parties of CMEA Member Countries. It is essential that the market should be more open to the world economy, not less.

Hungary says that you can't unify non-existent national markets. Such attempts, unsupported by economic or fiscal measures, only lead to the break-up of the old mechanism, not to the birth of a new one.

Nearly all CMEA members, except Romania, would agree to a unified socialist market, but they aren't clear how to go about it, and there are substantial disagreements. I think that new market elements will have to be laid "brick by brick", relying on teamwork and the pace of transition to market relations in a number of countries.

We in Hungary want *genuine* autonomy for enterprises—not only legally, but in the sense that they should be full and discretionary participants in the economic process. Such freedom in all the CMEA member countries is impossible without an agreed system of prices, foreign exchange rates and convertibility. You can't bring all these interrelated factors together at one go. But this is the way to give countries and enterprises a real interest in developing effective cooperation.

■ **Last year's 44th CMEA Session noted that joint ventures were not yielding the expected returns, and had not become a booster to cooperation. What do you think hinders this?**

I wouldn't harbour any particular illusions about this, because the above factors are lacking and it is very hard to ensure the functioning of such ventures. It seems we are still looking at each other from opposite sides, and you

don't reach a common denominator easily in this context. Real joint ventures are the exception so far. This situation may well continue for several years.

■ **Does this apply to the Hungarian-Soviet enterprise Micromed? It is said to be working quite efficiently already...**

This is a comparatively young firm, and it is obviously too early to judge its performance. It must serve to broaden our Micromed's export capabilities. It's good that the two sides' interests coincide. The USSR needs such products and 60% of the joint output goes there.

However, if a firm is only interested in exporting to one particular country it won't bother to seek other markets. As a result a situation arises whereby the corresponding import for the Hungarian side becomes more difficult, leading to a disbalance in foreign economic ties. We cannot use our assets and, say, the transferable rouble earnings to buy specific goods even from the USSR, let alone other socialist states.

With joint ventures you look beyond the immediate gain. For example, Hungary's Sim firm produces machine tools which are in demand in the West but are unavailable for the USSR. Joint-venture talks went on for a long time. We could have increased our exports to the Soviet Union, but we weren't offered any goods we needed in return. Mutual interest is not enough here; the sides must share the load equally, and that means in monetary-financial questions too.

■ **Is the experience of the EEC of any use in solving these problems, and in creating a unified socialist market?**

Standardisation, public health, veterinary science and environmental protection should take pride of place for us as they do for the Common Market nations, and the sooner we absorb their experience in this area the better, otherwise we are bound to run into trouble with our exports to the West. We're talking more about it, but we've not yet taken the proper steps.

Let me reiterate that large-scale changes are impossible until we have carried out a thorough review and created the requisite conditions. In order to create a free trade zone we need to introduce quota-free trade, establish links between the domestic system of prices and those on the world market, and make the currencies convertible. These questions can only be solved in the future, although much of what we intend to do has already been achieved by the EEC.

■ **Obviously, EEC methods have not been studied adequately?**

Hungary is studying them carefully, but the CMEA secretariat does not have a body which could examine the various aspects of the European Economic Community's work.

- ***You have mentioned the possibility of reduced or decelerated CMEA cooperation. But, just as nature abhors a vacuum, so a country's foreign economic interests must be fully satisfied. Does this suggest expanded ties with other—non-socialist—states?***

Yes, it does. No one denies the fact that the growth of the nations in our community is impossible without active participation in the world division of labour. I refer, in particular, to the signing of a joint CMEA-EEC declaration on the establishment of official relations.

We consider Hungary as having an open economy: more than 50% of our national income derives from foreign trade, capitalist states accounting for a third of it. This explains why Hungary was the first among the CMEA members to sign an agreement with the EEC. I think, though, that this is a pre-eminently political move which has not yet found direct material expression. An institutional system of cooperation is being created which may speed the removal of the artificial barriers on the world market that exist for the socialist countries, including ours.

This agreement is thus simply a starting point. There is

still a long way to go. Quantitative restrictions on Hungarian exports to the West will finally be lifted by the end of 1995. We're going to negotiate an extension of the agreement for steel products with the European Coal and Steel Community. As you know, a practically internal EEC market arrives in 1992. We must purposefully and thoroughly prepare for this.

- ***So a complete removal of the barriers is still far off?***

Yes, many of them still remain. I believe that the CMEA should give much more thought to such problems. We cannot do without the advantages of broad international cooperation so vital to a nation's growth. The economic and technological isolation of both parts of Europe, to say nothing of military-political confrontation, needs to be consistently removed. This will provide new opportunities for Europe to play a fitting role in the advancement of human civilisation.

1 See *WMR*, No. 1, 1989. —Ed.

NEW FEATURES IN THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Prof. Rudi WEIDIG
D. Sc. (Philos.), (GDR)

The social structure of the German Democratic Republic is now basically socialist in character. A breakdown of those employed in the national economy attests to this: 74% are workers, 7% cooperative farmers, 15% intellectuals, 1.8% cooperative artisans, and 1.6% private artisans and those engaged in home industries.¹ On the basis of social, cooperative and private forms of ownership they make their own specific contribution to production and the development of socialism.

The allies of the working class—the cooperative farmers—provide the Republic's population with a stable supply of food, and industry with agricultural raw materials. Agricultural production cooperatives, as the major unit of social organisation of labour in the countryside, work 87% of farmland and provide 95% of the state purchase of farm, and 75% of livestock products. The raising of the average yearly grain yield to 45.4 metric centners per hectare is a great achievement on the part of the cooperative farmers.

Artisans and people engaged in the home industries (who have been stable sector in the social structure ever since the founding of the GDR) help considerably in more fully satisfying national requirements. Over the last five years, the sum of services offered by the cooperative and private artisans has increased from 13.5 billion to 21.5 billion marks, of which artisan production cooperatives' share in 1987 was 40.9%, and private artisans', 59.1%. All in all, these enterprises account for 67.2% of the republic's total volume of repair work and public services.²

There is little need to explain what influence the cooperative and private artisans, and those engaged in home industries have on the consolidation of the socialist way of life in our country. Together with the class of cooperative peasants they will continue to form part of the potential of developed socialism.

It is important to stress this last circumstance as an *essential feature in the improvement of social structure*. On the basis of a tried and tested strategy involving the unity of SED economic and social policies, our Republic has achieved a high level of education and skill among working people. Eighty-five percent of people employed in the socialist economy are professionally qualified, 64% are skilled workers and foremen, and 21%, graduates of specialised secondary or higher educational establishments. Fifteen percent of the population have no professional qualifications. By comparison, 40 years ago, when the GDR was established, over three quarters of employees

were unskilled or trained on the job, and only 3% had completed a specialised secondary or higher educational establishment. In our villages a professionally trained specialist was then a rarity, whereas in 1987, 94.2% of the workers in socialist agriculture had such an education.³ The growth in skills reflects *fundamental changes in the intellectual potential of society*, which is of invaluable significance to its progress.

The perfection of the social structure is continuing. Based on the programme adopted by the 9th SED Congress in 1976, the party believes that the "formation of developed socialist society is a process of deep political, economic, social and cultural transformations, including a creative quest for the best ways of solving new tasks and problems".⁴ It is in this sphere that a number of questions are arising which presuppose the creative application and enrichment of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine of social structure and classes.

THE CRITERIA FOR PERFECTION

Such questions usually arise in connection with the level already achieved by society as a whole, and with the new-quality demands being made on the development of productive forces. For example, the scientific and technological revolution, with its inherent technological changes, raises the tasks of further stabilising and improving the social and class structure under socialism. This underscores the validity of the Marxist-Leninist conclusion that *the formation of the structure of a society is determined by the level and type of its productive forces and production relations*.

However, social classes and strata in turn exert an active and determining influence on the improvement of production relations. Moreover, the working classes—including their distinctive sections—are the main *subjects* of scientific, technological, economic and social progress in general. Therefore, social structure, from the development level of individual classes, strata and groups to the state of their relationships and the degree of their rapprochement, must be assessed from the chief vantage point of its productive potential. What energy can it release and how can it use it most effectively, both economically and socially, to provide the new quality of productive forces?

This means that the criteria for the improvement of the social structure are determined, first and foremost, by the possibilities and requirements of an intensive expanded reproduction, and of the creation of modern productive forces. Its quality and effectiveness, and its role as a factor of growth and the driving force of intensification take centre-stage in the policy of alliances, educational measures, and in the entire social and economic thrust of the SED. This is undoubtedly right, especially as our country's demographic dynamics look to be heading for a decline rather than an increase in the working population. Quantitative growth in one sector is only possible at another's expense. Considering the present alignment of

classes and level of production this is hardly realistic. Demography once again confirms that a *social structure cannot be formed in isolation from the economy and from scientific and technological progress*. The achievement of full social equality, or a homogeneous society, as an end in itself, without historical and economic justification, is itself impracticable and has not proved viable. Today it would simply be an anachronism.

Consequently, we cannot view the perfection of the social structure merely as a mere economic factor or an element in the labour process. We can't assess its level only by the effectiveness of material and spiritual production. Here we must keep a constant eye on *political aspects*, and with good reason—the stability of socialism as a whole largely depends on the stability of social, and particularly class structure.

The very course of strengthening the political foundations of society, and of consolidating its stability, poses a number of essential questions. How can the working class retain its leadership role? How better to use the social interests of the workers and other working people as the starting point for the social strategy of a Marxist-Leninist party? How can the classes and strata play their objective role as owners of the various types of property even more effectively? How is an alliance of classes and strata to be formed?

A prompt answer to these questions has to face many problems: the development of socialist production relations, and of socialist democracy, an efficient management and planning system, the provision of education and training, and the strengthening of ideological positions and political consciousness. Without detracting from the significance of other social factors, it is essentially a question of developing and fostering structures which, firstly, correspond to the social goals, values and possibilities of socialism, and, secondly, meet the requirements of economic growth and the affirmation of a new quality of the productive forces. The experience of the policy of alliances, and of the unity of SED economic and social policies, have put these two closely interrelated criteria on the agenda in our Republic. They both aim at activating the working classes and social strata as the subject of the improvement of productive forces.

SOCIAL EQUALITY

How is social equality or community formed and, conversely, how does social differentiation arise? What line is to be pursued in this matter? This problem also plays an important role now in international debate, particularly with regard to the discussion of the concept of socialist construction.

Against the primitive notions of equality, and the mechanistic views on a rapprochement among classes and strata, at all costs, as it were, we now rightly oppose the conclusion that *socialist society is not a homogeneous mass*. Proceeding from our country's experience, par-

ticularly from the policy of alliances pursued by the SED, one can see the absolute inconsistency of those who defend such a superficial homogenisation of structure, and socialist society as a whole, indignantly rejecting social differentiation, or the distinctions in society, as a "leftover of capitalism", or as a sign of the "underdevelopment" and "weakness" of the new system. Such approaches, ignoring as they do the real dialectics involved in perfecting the social structure under socialism and tearing it away from the economy, when they became the basis of policy, led to stagnation and a discrediting of the communist idea of social equality.

At the same time our experience and theoretical views suggest that while negating these primitive concepts, we cannot *fully* discard the idea of equality as ostensibly illusory and not corresponding to the spirit of the times. A certain degree of social equality, contained in socialist production relations and in the level of society's economic maturity, is possible and even necessary. This is an achievement, and the motive force of socialism.

We regard equality in terms of *social security for all*. This notion supposes the provision of a job to each able-bodied person in accordance with his acquired skill and social requirements. This guarantees an equal approach to each based on the single criterion of service to society, insurance against poverty, basic equal rights, and opportunities for education. Surely people will fight for such equality as a realistic task and as a social conquest for socialism?

In our opinion, fundamental equality serves as the vehicle for realising the *chief advantage of socialism*. It forms the main characteristic of its social structure, which requires constant strengthening. Within the framework of the unity of SED economic and social policies there develops an essential prerequisite and a component part of the all-round stability and improvement of society. This equality—an historical possibility and economically provided for—meets the aspirations of the working class and of all social groups. The communality of the basic interests of the classes and strata becomes stronger. Unemployment, marginalisation, poverty, etc. are excluded. There are tremendous opportunities for working people to realise themselves, and the motive forces of great labour achievements, inherent to socialism, show themselves in full measure.

WITHOUT LEVELLING

Of course, it is not the affirmation of equality alone which typifies a social structure of the GDR. It is but one face of an historical process which began with the establishment of working-class power. We are trying to get a clearer picture of differentiation, its causes, dynamics and functions in the sphere of economic efficiency, and its correlation with the goals and values of socialism.

It was once customary for Marxists to think that the socialist revolution would eliminate differentiation within

society fairly rapidly after the old class structure, with its inherent antagonisms, was abolished. This differentiation—or, under socialism, social distinctions—was often regarded as the legacy of capitalism and a flaw in the new system. But the real story is different.

Though the character of such distinctions in socialist society has changed radically, and antagonistic contradictions are no longer intrinsic to them, the distinctions have proved tenacious. For a long time some of them have even been reliably serving efficiency and progress. The reasons for this lie in socialist production relations under various forms of ownership and distribution, in the degree of economic maturity achieved by society at the lower phase of communist formation, and in the appropriate level of productive forces and the type of the social division of labour. Such is the *objective basis* on which the forms of social differentiation exist and inevitably reproduce themselves—for example, the differences between working classes and strata, between town and country, and between physical and intellectual labour. This leads on to the more obvious differences in job conditions and content, and in the life environment. On the basis of pay according to work—an important principle of social equality and justice—noticeable distinctions in the level of incomes arise and recreate themselves.

In its policy of alliances, and in carrying out its socioeconomic course, the SED takes into account the fact that *with differentiation always go various conditions, demands, interests, and requirements*. Therefore, while promoting the further development of the social structure of society in line with the requirements of high economic efficiency and the values of socialism, the party is focusing its attention on a number of important qualitative aspects.

Firstly, the issue is how the distinctions caused by the certain social groups' unfavourable working and living conditions, and by physically heavy, not very intellectually undemanding, unskilled and health-hazardous jobs, can be more quickly reduced and, ultimately, overcome. This kind of thing affects those who are employed in industry, agriculture or the service industry in jobs where there are enough low- or semi-skilled workers. Of course, the aim is not to reduce the high level to a lower one. On the contrary, we want to raise this level up to the higher one and gradually remove whatever allows for the continuance of inhospitable conditions. Ultimately, the problem will only be solved, along the lines of scientific and technological progress and socialist rationalisation, when the jobs which continuously reproduce unfavourable working and living conditions are purposefully reduced.

In keeping with the SED directive on combining rationalisation in all spheres with social progress, noticeable successes have been achieved. Thus, between 1981 and 1985, industry, construction and transport modernised 1.2 million jobs, and have targeted another 1.3 million for 1990. Where flexible automation has been introduced the demand for unskilled work has been virtually nullified. Although these advances have still not removed the

problems mentioned above, it is already clear how they can be solved.

Secondly, there is a long-term need to reproduce, and to a certain extent to even more palpably underscore, the social distinctions that arise on the basis of the socialist principle of pay according to work in the shape of unequal incomes and, consequently, unequal opportunities for material and cultural advancement. In fact, while guaranteeing social security for all, it is necessary to vigorously and consistently stimulate collective, group and individual awareness of the clear connection between their level of incomes and the results of work for the benefit of society. If remuneration, and hence the real chances for a better life, are clearly perceived by the worker as based on the social results, good or bad, of his or her labour input, then this will awaken effective motor forces, and a socialist attitude to work, economic growth and a quest for the application of new ideas will develop.

Here the distinctions have a *productive function*, and meet the requirements of efficiency and the yearning of working people for social justice. Central to this is the ability to work productively and, at the same time, the measure of differentiation acceptable under socialism. Experience (and not only the GDR's) has revealed that an egalitarian incomes policy and a restriction of social differentiation by levelling, just like an exaggerated differentiation not based on the results of work, undermines the motive forces that are stimulated by the socialist principle of pay according to work. We have chosen to consistently apply this principle at all levels, especially for those social groups which are in the vanguard of scientific and technological progress.

Thirdly, growing significance is attaching to the assessment and stimulation of differentiation, which manifests itself in the distinct habits, traditions, interests and skills of the representatives of classes, strata and other social groups. They derive from conditions and intellectual capabilities which no longer bear the imprint of social distinctions or inequality, but which mean a lot for the realisation of a specific function and the development of productive forces.

CONSIDERING THE SOCIAL PROFILE

In full accordance with its programme, the SED takes its cue from the fact that cooperative ownership in agriculture and the class of cooperative farmers—the bearer of this ownership—have a long-term perspective. Social status and living standards in the Republic do not differ much among workers and farmers, in public and cooperative ownership, or between cities and villages. Herein lies the objective result of social and economic progress, and also the historically new content of the social structure of society. *Class distinctions are no longer the main determinant of social differentiation*. I have already remarked that the farmers' living conditions are generally as high as those of the working class and city dwellers, but they *differ*. The characteristics of agricultural work on the basis of

cooperative ownership generate specific interests, hopes, abilities, and patterns of behaviour which determine the social profile of the people. They treat the land, machinery, animals, rural environment, etc. in their own way. This peculiarity must not be underestimated, and certainly not rooted out. It invariably merits attention and care since, as a part of the content of the work and life-style of the cooperated farmers, it has a great significance for the development of the personality and the raising of the efficiency of agricultural production.

What has been said of the cooperative farmers, by and large, also applies to the working class, the cooperative and private artisans, those engaged in home industries, the intellectuals and other social groups. Practice shows that the struggle for the highest achievements in the field of science and technology, for the development and application of key technologies, and for the rationalisation of production, requires that the greatest consideration and the most exposure be given to those specific characteristics of research and engineering personnel which distinguish them from the working class. This is all the more important since the GDR's own scientific and technological potential

can now be mainly—even almost exclusively—increased only through qualitative growth and the intensification of mental work.

This does not by any means involve the moulding of an elite detached from the working people, or the establishment of privileges tied to job performance. Our task lies in taking into account and developing the special conditions, interests, and experience of *each social group, class and stratum* which correspond to socialist values and world view, and which they need to fulfill their specific function in society. Thus the evolution of the social structure brings to life the motive forces that are of fundamental importance to the formation and effective use of the new quality of the productive forces.

1 *Statistisches Jahrbuch der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1988*, p. 111.

2 Estimated on the basis of *Statistisches Jahrbuch der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1988*, pp. 174, 297.

3 *Ibid.*, pp. 17, 112, 124, 186.

4 Erich Honecker, "Traditionelles Bündnis bewährt sich auch Heute", *Neues Deutschland*, September 9, 1988, p. 4.

ANTAGONISMS UNDER SOCIALISM?

Prof. Anatoly BUTENKO
D. Sc. (Philos.) (USSR)

My contribution to the *WMR* discussion on contradictions under socialism¹ is devoted to one issue, which I consider the crux of the whole problem.

Those who recognise the reality of such contradictions should first of all clarify their nature: can there be antagonisms in socialist society or are there just non-antagonistic contradictions?

The answer to this question has important theoretical and practical implications because, without it, there is precious little chance of correctly understanding the history of socialism, defining the tasks for the revolutionary restructuring of society, or determining the opportunities for its development.

A CHALLENGE TO DOGMATISM AND OSSIFIED PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIETY

By antagonism Marxist authors usually mean those contradictions between classes and social forces which are a reflection of not just divergent but mutually exclusive interests. The most pronounced antagonism is that between the exploiters and the exploited in a social system which involves the appropriation of the results of work done by others. Antagonisms develop in turbulent ways, and solutions to them often involve violence.

Marxist-Leninists generally agree that a complete transition from capitalism to socialism and the consolidation of the new social system leads to the eradication of the sharper social conflicts and of the division of society into hostile classes. That is why antagonisms disappear, although non-antagonistic contradictions remain. In other words, from the point of view of the general logic of history and that of the socialist ideal, socialism ought to remove antagonistic contradictions and pave the way for a qualitatively different stage of development. The practice of building socialist society testified to the correctness of these general principles. However, it also showed that they are not sufficient for an understanding of the real complexity of social processes. The primary question here is that of *the boundaries of the transition period and the specific features of "early" socialism*.

All-pervasive dogmatism was a formidable impediment to the study of these problems. Under the personality cult and in the stagnation period, hardly any other area of Soviet social sciences suffered greater incompetent intervention

and wilful interference than the analysis of antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradictions during the establishment and building of socialism.

It may seem at first sight that approaches to these contradictions in the two qualitatively different historical stages of the social process—the transition from capitalism to socialism, and the latter's development—ought to be different. Let us not jump to conclusions, however: facts show that a rigid demarcation line between the two periods in effect contributed to misinterpretation of the problem of social antagonisms.

At a time when the ideology and mentality of stagnation held sway, our philosophers (and non-philosophers) had an unquestioning belief in Lenin's well-known dictum: "Antagonism and contradiction are two very different things. Under socialism, the former will disappear, but the latter remains."² This methodological conclusion became a dogmatic canon. Social development was divided into two stages: exploiter systems, which were characterised exclusively by antagonisms; and socialist society, which was pictured as an idyll evolving towards ever stronger unity and accord, with contradictions about to disappear entirely.

That euphoria was taken to extremes. First, a theory of two dialectics (one for antagonistic and the other for socialist society) was devised. Then an "innovative" interpretation of the dialectics of socialism emerged according to which this system had no room for antagonisms. Moreover, its motive force and source of development was claimed to be unity rather than contradictions.

Lenin's words come to mind here; making abstracts of Hegel's works, he pointed out that belittling contradiction in favour of identity and unity is a justification for stagnation and deadness, that it "is only the determination of simple immediacy, or of dead Being, while Contradiction is the *root of all movement and vitality*, and it is only insofar as it contains a Contradiction that anything *moves and has impulse and activity*".³

In the atmosphere of "struggle for the purity of Marxism-Leninism", which intensified especially in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the above-mentioned demarcation line between the transition period and socialism was imposed. "There emerged an ossified picture of the socialist relations of production, and their dialectic interaction with the productive forces was underestimated. The social structure was portrayed schematically, as if it were devoid of the contradictions and the dynamic relationships between the diverse interests of its various strata and groups."⁴

At a time when one's loyalty to Marxism-Leninism was determined not by an in-depth analysis of objective reality but by an ability to quote chapter and verse from "scripture", many did not stop to think how society and its people—living in a state of natural necessity where labour was still a need and not a pleasure—could have changed so abruptly and decisively? How could those who only yesterday were exploiters and crooks, vassals and lackeys, careerists and con men, have suddenly peopled the world

with "angels in flesh and blood" incapable of pilfering from the "common pot"?

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONTRADICTIONS

Reality compels us to acknowledge that the general premise of antagonisms disappearing under socialism is inadequate because it does not account for the complexity of this process or for dialectic relations between various groups of contradictions.

To begin with, it seems wrong to limit oneself to setting antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradictions against each other as opposites. According to Lenin, "ordinary imagination grasps difference and contradiction, but not the *transition* from the one to the other, this however is the most important".⁵ He argued that one should go further than recognising opposites and identify "the 'other' as *its* other, development into *its* opposite".⁶ He wrote: "*Dialectics* is the teaching which shows how *Opposites* can be and how they happen to be (how they become) *identical*,—under what conditions they are identical, becoming transformed into one another—why the human mind should grasp these opposites not as dead, rigid, but as living, conditional, mobile, becoming transformed into one another."⁷ Lenin thus postulated a whole programme for studying opposites and their movements, convergences and interaction.

Important though general theory is, one can hardly deny that the transition of antagonistic contradictions into non-antagonistic ones and back under socialist development has greater theoretical and practical significance than ever. Some people tend to dismiss the problem altogether under the pretext that there are no antagonisms under socialism, simply certain contradictions, and therefore we should study contradictions and not some "transitions". But what about the transition from capitalism to socialism, from the exploiter system, which is the embodiment of antagonism, to the new system which has no room for it?

It is an incontrovertible fact that antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradictions in society are opposites. Anyone denying that such contradictions are transformed into one another will have to answer two questions.

One is theoretical: do the *general principles of dialectics* cease to operate under socialism? Specifically, is the above quotation from Lenin (that opposites become identical through being transformed into one another) relevant to socialist society?

The other is practical: can conditions appear in socialist countries which encourage the *transformation* of non-antagonistic contradictions into antagonisms?

It would be wrong to claim that we have resolved the problem by formulating those questions. The point is to understand the *dynamics of the transformation* of opposites into one another; to clarify the real conditions un-

derlying such transformations rather than simply acknowledge the evolution of relations representing the social antagonism between classes into relations with non-antagonistic contradictions and back; and to find the solution to the question posed by Lenin: how are opposites transformed into one another?

Although a variety of views are put forward in today's discussions on the criteria of socialism, most Marxists seem to agree on its fundamental attributes.

It is a social system without the domination of the private capitalist ownership of the means of production and without the sway of the exploiting bourgeois class born of that form of ownership. Socialism has no room for the exploitation of one class by another, which means the eradication of the once rigid division of society into the exploiting and the exploited classes.

But the historical fate of social antagonism cannot be considered closed. The problem persists for the following reasons: firstly, because of contradictions in the implementation of the main principle of socialism, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his work"; secondly, because of possible distortions and perversions of socialism; thirdly, because socialism uses individual labour, and family and cooperative forms of production; fourthly, because of joint ventures with capitalist companies. Let us have a closer look at these factors.

Those who would like to "close" the problem of the relationship of non-antagonistic and antagonistic contradictions under socialism seem to believe that the assertion of public ownership of the means of production in itself eliminates the possibility of the results of one's work being appropriated by another. But that is not the case. Property has been public in the Soviet Union for several decades now, but it was noted at a Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee in 1987 that it "has come to be used in many cases to derive unearned income",⁸ i.e., to appropriate the results of work done by others, or to practise indirect exploitation.

One can cite several specific reasons for this situation, from defects in the accounting of labour inputs to shortcomings in the distribution system. To repeat, there can be no rigid demarcation line between non-antagonistic and antagonistic contradictions when we are dealing with a *real post-capitalist society* rather than with some idealised abstraction. We have to apply a broader dialectic approach, one which will account for relationships and mutual transformations, including those of contradictions themselves. Indeed, unjust relations, antagonistic contradictions and the forces chained to them—forces hostile to the nature of socialism—do not just disappear once and for all. They try in every way to survive and even to regain lost ground. The external and the internal, the past and the present, the non-socialist and the socialist are in a state of incessant *interaction*. And social justice, which is characteristic of socialism, does not assert itself of its own accord, without the day-to-day struggle of the new against the old, against various attempts to appropriate the results of work

done by others, and against other unjust forms of social relations.

Negative processes and reverse tendencies that are alien to socialism are especially strong in countries where the new system has not yet consolidated itself. Wojciech Jaruzelski, First Secretary of the PUWP Central Committee, told the 1984 national party conference: "The working class is especially sensitive to social injustice. The decline in general living standards has further intensified its sensitivity. In every crisis extremes of wealth and poverty appear and exploitation grows, both in the form of the appropriation of surplus-value, which is the case in our petty capitalist sector, and in the form of black-marketeering, corruption, tax evasion and economic swindles. These produce a specific kind of capital which may be called speculative capital."⁹

The PUWP recognises that relations of exploitation are tenacious, that attempts are made to introduce them even in the socialist economic sector, and points to a specific form of exploitation which also appears in the cooperative and public economic sectors. Those who violate labour discipline, do not work at full capacity, produce shoddy goods, or those workers at unprofitable enterprises who demand higher wages, or actually get pay rises by unjustifiably inflating prices for their goods, are also reaching out for the fruit of others' work. They thus go against the socialist system of values by sponging off others.

The PUWP stressed emphatically at its 10th Congress in 1986 that "the present stage of building socialism in Poland is characterised by antagonistic contradictions. The barricade divides representatives of opposing interests and positions, including socialist and anti-socialist, worker and anti-worker, progressive and reactionary".¹⁰

IMPACT OF DISTORTIONS OF SOCIALISM

There are also distortions and perversions of socialism which entail injustices and inequalities that are alien to the socialist system, and manifestations of the "corrosion of social relations", which have been discussed and criticised at length in party documents and in the Soviet press over the past few years.

Here are some examples.

Stalin's abandonment of Leninist domestic and foreign policies and the establishment of state-bureaucratic socialism alienated the working people from both property and power. The resultant antagonistic contradiction is being resolved today through the dismantling of the bureaucratic system and the restoration of the real power of the working people through revolutionary perestroika, political and economic reforms and other far-reaching transformations of Soviet society.

Furthermore, quite a few antagonistic contradictions arose in the economy during the personality cult and the period of stagnation, as is evidenced by the numerous facts with regard to corruption, theft and the embezzlement

of public property on a massive scale that have now come to light. Vast areas of the Soviet Union were infested with organised crime and a huge "shadow economy" took shape. A mere five years ago few people would have believed that racket could exist in the Soviet Union. We learned about racketeers in other countries from books. But today the press reports attempts by criminal gangs to blackmail cooperatives, conflicts between racketeers as they divide "spheres of influence", etc. Recently the head of the Dzerzhinsky District Fruit and Vegetable Board (Moscow) was executed by firing squad after being sentenced by the Moscow City Court: he had been a big-time *mafioso*, the ringleader of a criminal gang which had been in business for over ten years. The gang included functionaries from several government and party offices, and over the years stole vast amounts of public property.¹¹

Can we comprehend such phenomena if we deny the existence of antagonistic contradictions in socialist society? In what way should we then analyse the working people's attitude to "Soviet" millionaires, underground business sharks or retail trade grabbers? Are theirs earned incomes? Of course not: they appropriate the results of work done by others, which means exploitation in new forms.

Or let us turn to *relations between nationalities*, which are of vital importance in our multinational state. We understand that transformations in society should take account of the interests of all the nationalities living in the country. Nevertheless, problems in relations between nationalities were ignored for decades, became explosive, and now demand serious analysis and adequate solutions.

Addressing the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR in November 1988, Mikhail Gorbachov urged a resolute struggle against antisocial and anti-perestroika elements, and against nationalist-minded extremists, all of whom would like to push through "alien values".¹² It is necessary to prevent the further aggravation of contradictions, which can be resolved best by "adjusting and improving the existing machinery and harmonising relations".¹³

Those who shy away from the problem of antagonisms under socialism like the devil from holy water have some difficult questions to answer. For instance, why do the recently drafted and adopted Soviet laws on individual labour, on cooperatives, and some others strictly regulate the use of hired labour?¹⁴ Haven't our law-makers been trying to prevent one-man businesses, family cafes, etc., from becoming enterprises which can practise exploitation, which means the appearance of the exploiters and the exploited with their antagonistic interests? And won't such possibilities sometimes become reality?

One conclusion offers itself here: whether they want it or not, those who deny the real evolution of non-antagonistic contradictions into antagonistic ones actually *disarm Marxists* and deprive them of the methodological tools necessary to analyse complex processes. The situation has become even more serious since mixed enterprises

with the participation of foreign capital were allowed on Soviet territory. Will foreign capital operate without profit? And won't profit be derived from the appropriation of surplus-labour?

Such questions clearly show that dogmatism is entirely alien to *human interests, to the interests of socialism*. With its fake concern for "the purity of Marxism" and its hidebound orthodox approach, dogmatism denies Soviet people the full potential of Marxist philosophy and methodology in analysing the controversial problems of social development.

RESOLVING CONTRADICTIONS

But true Marxism has absolutely no room for the dogmatic and the doctrinaire, both of which hinder a proper analysis of reality. Anyone familiar with Soviet Marxist studies knows that many authors have begun to pay much more attention to contradictions under socialism. They do not confine themselves to recognising that antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradictions are opposites but proceed, in the spirit of Lenin's call to grasp "the transition from the one to the other", to analyse the *conditions* under which non-antagonistic contradictions can become antagonistic ones.

A better understanding of the contradictions underlying social conflicts is important in trying to prevent them intensifying. Such an understanding alone makes it possible to determine practical ways of settling contradictions. Generally speaking, socialism can prevent a break between opposites because society is able to identify its intrinsic contradictions, take them into account and set in motion processes to settle them.

The responsibility of scientists has grown immensely in the present circumstances. The 19th national CPSU conference reiterated how immeasurably important it is to improve social sciences on the basis of Marxist-Leninist philosophy and methodology. The further Soviet society

advances, the more we need studies that encourage perestroika and promote revolutionary transformations in the development of socialism.

1 See Gombyn Miyegombo (Mongolia), "To Spot the Chief Link of Contradictions", *WMR*, No. 8, 1988; Tibor Polgar (Hungary), "Politics: Contradictions and Alternatives", *WMR*, No. 12, 1988.

2 *Leninskiy sbornik*, XL, Moscow, 1985, p. 391.

3 V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p. 139.

4 *Materials of the Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee, January 27-28, 1987*, Moscow, 1987, p. 8.

5 V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p. 143.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 262.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 109.

8 *Materials of the Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee, January 27-28, 1987*, p. 9.

9 *Biuletyn informacyjny KC PZPR*, 1984, No.2, p. 41.

10 *10th Congress of the Polish United Workers' Party*, Moscow, 1987, pp. 52-53.

11 See *Ekonomicheskaya Gazeta*, No. 43, November 1988, p. 18.

12 *Pravda*, November 28, 1988.

13 *Ibid.*

14 The Law of the USSR On Individual Labour reads, inter alia: "Individual labour with the use of hired labour, or with the purpose of deriving unearned income, or to the detriment of other social interests, shall not be permitted". See *Individual Labour. Collected Legal Regulations*, Moscow, 1987, p. 3.

The Law On Cooperatives in the USSR states: "The state shall take action to stop cooperatives from being used for private enterprise involving hired labour in the guise of the creation of cooperatives", and further, "The proportion of individuals admitted to a cooperative under the labour contract to members of a cooperative shall be regulated by the Executive Committee of the local Soviet of People's Deputies with due regard for demand and the type of cooperative". See *Law of the USSR On Cooperatives in the USSR*, Moscow, 1988, p. 53.

SOCIETY AND INFORMATION AT A TIME OF REFORM

Jerzy URBAN

Government Minister and Press Spokesman for the Polish Government

- *Now that processes of renewal are under way in Poland and a number of other socialist countries, the large-scale public airing of issues has become a major means of democratising social life and involving the mass of people in political activity. What sort of "mirror" does the Polish press hold up to the current reforms and other transformations in the country?*

Just as our society is contradictory today, so is the picture of the country drawn by the Polish press. Even the party press is not unanimous and some periodicals are sceptical about the reforms. The sociopolitical weekly *Sprawy i Ludzie* is sharply critical of the government, and the magazines *Polityka* and *Zdanie* call for drastically deeper reforms. The opposition press, including such church publications as *Tygodnik Powszechny*, describes Poland as a country which has failed to achieve anything in the last 40 years. Socialism is described as a complete failure and the present state of affairs as a catastrophe, with the socialist forces now apparently leaving the political scene.

We have many opposition periodicals, and even an underground press. But the effective openness and bold reformist spirit of official statements now, and their readiness to discuss issues have to a large extent neutralised the influence of that part of the press. Genuine openness and free exchanges of opinion enable the reader to hear different viewpoints and to compare facts and arguments. But people prefer newspapers and magazines where their own views and attitudes are represented.

The diversity of opinions and evaluations in the press is quite natural given the conditions here. But openness has laid "a trap", as it were, in that the surfeit of information makes it difficult for people to tell major events from trivia in the avalanche of news and comments. Important issues may get lost against this background. For example, I have repeatedly had to deny rumours of a currency reform in Poland, but the public is still worried.

- *How do you make your information effective? How do you counter the opposition media, including the illegal press and Western propaganda?*

According to public opinion polls, most of our people trust the official press and television and prefer them to other information sources. But of course there are people who listen only to the other side and don't believe a single official word. The effectiveness of information depends primarily on the extent to which it accords with reality—that is, on its truthfulness—but also on people's readiness to accept it. Information is often accepted or rejected depending on the subject. For example, few people believe that wages grew faster than prices last year, yet when we expose past mistakes and criticise our own record, the public believes us absolutely.

We have to consider the specific aspects of public opinion, especially now when there is a contest for the majority, who sometimes listen to us and sometimes to our opponents. The interests of national accord demand that we present forceful arguments and frankly discuss even the most thorny issues.

We take a broad view of freedom of the press, but we still have to have certain restrictions. For example, press publications cannot be allowed to subvert the constitutional foundations of our socialist state, nor to undermine Poland's alliances with other countries, or provoke hostility between nations. With the exception of these natural restrictions, which are the only ones enforced through censorship, freedom of speech is exercised most effectively on the basis of principles guaranteed by the Law on Press Control and the Law on the Press. They stipulate that information must be truthful and objective, and oblige all government institutions to provide information to the press. If access to information is denied, any publication can take the case to court. The law also guarantees the right of reply and the right to correct errors in published information.

We seldom take issue with underground publications. They have small print runs and exert little influence on the public, but Radio Free Europe and other Western radio stations are quick to take up their main arguments. Polemics with these powerful and influential ideological adversaries is an important aspect of our counter-propaganda. Usually we concentrate on broadcasts which are likely to have undue influence on listeners. We tell the truth about facts and events which have been either deliberately or inadvertently misrepresented. For example, we give the lie to allegations that Poland has suffered an "ecological disaster", that our exports are wholly unprofitable, or other tales which excite the public.

- *Poles, and friends of Poland in other countries have different views of the current large-scale social and economic reforms, and some of them even worry that the socialist state and the party are surrendering their positions. How do the media handle the situation?*

These issues have indeed become the focus of fierce debate, and this is reflected in the press and on radio and TV. The growth of the market economy worries the public, primarily because prices are rising. The government en-

visages reducing subsidies, in which case only those goods and services which are of special importance to society will continue to be subsidised at the same level. We try to explain to people that frugality and thriftiness are needed in order to increase the national income (which then becomes the object of distribution).

Our system of distribution has not been entirely fair. For example, the maintenance of special shops for certain social groups was the subject of sharp criticism. These have now been closed. The main principle of socialist distribution—to each according to his work—must be observed unflinchingly, and our reform envisions a considerable differentiation of earnings.

Public opinion of the private sector is gradually evolving towards greater support for the plans to encourage private initiative. We cannot ignore the reality that the Polish private sector generates 80% of the total farm output and provides about one half of all the services. In practice, private clothes-makers, shoe-makers, watchmakers, etc. offer the best service. This is not a deviation from socialism since it should put to use the potentials of a variety of economic structures, especially when you consider that private producers constitute a mere 6% of Poland's production sector. Private businesses are small-scale enterprises and almost 70% of them do not use hired labour.

The public, in particular the working class, look askance at large firms, including those involving foreign capital, whose owners earn fat profits and flaunt life-styles beyond the reach of most Poles. Yielding to public pressure, we have tried more than once to restrict this sector, but on every occasion had to admit our mistake as certain social needs were neglected because of such restrictions. One way of dealing with this contradiction, as we see it, is to give every encouragement to enterprise in the socialist sector by using competition as an incentive.

We hope that competition between different sectors will prod socialist enterprises into increasing labour productivity and, as a result, raising wages. The attraction of foreign capital will also help modernise production. On the whole, the public tends to support this policy as an incentive to economic growth and a means of raising living standards.

We are learning from our mistakes and do not think, I repeat, that the measures we are taking contradict socialist principles. We are aware of the dangers, of course. Clashes between different forms of ownership may result in abuses, black-marketeering and corruption. The law must be applied resolutely to fight all such distortions. The important thing, we think, is that the reform will help meet consumer demand and improve living standards. This is the main goal of socialism as a system oriented primarily to human interests.

All these problems are being hotly debated in our press. The party press advocates the mode of thinking and action which I have outlined, while the opposition media argue that "capitalism is better" because it is more efficient technologically and is better able to meet human needs, and

that socialist justice is an outdated concept, a historical experiment which has failed. Well, the reform is designed to deflate these arguments.

■ ***To what extent was the Polish public informed of the proceedings and decisions of the 10th PUWP Plenary Meeting, which marked a turning point in the life of the country? If we judge by the press what is the public attitude to those decisions, including the possible legalisation of Solidarity and political and trade union pluralism?***

The Plenary Meeting held both open and closed sessions,¹ and all the open discussions were given broad coverage in the press, which even reported that Wojciech Jaruzelski and the other Political Bureau members were prepared to resign if their proposals were turned down. The debates on those proposals were covered in detail. There still are demands for more information about the Plenary Meeting, but every party has the right to deal with its internal matters behind closed doors. Anyway, every important decision on the social aspects of the PUWP's policy has been made public.

The implementation of reforms has led us to the need for a radical revision of policy, both for domestic and for external reasons.

As to the latter, they include improvements in East-West relations resulting from a fundamentally new Soviet policy, which is having a tremendous impact on international relations. There was a time when the West goaded the Polish opposition into confrontation. The situation has changed greatly.

The domestic political situation has also inclined us towards drastic change. Over the last two years, and especially in 1988, we made mistakes in our economic policy which led to public disquiet. There were two waves of strikes, although they were on a limited scale. The myth of Solidarity's omnipotence, on which people pinned their hopes for economic improvements, was revived, and more than 300 illegal Solidarity branches were set up in industry, including large plants. But the opposition itself has split in two. One part is opposed to socialism in Poland, while the other believes that socialism can reform itself and evolve into a system better suited to human needs.

The PUWP took the initiative and embarked on changes, some of which went even further than opposition demands.

The number of people in favour of the legalisation of Solidarity has grown from 30% at the start of last year to 70% today, and this growth is largely a result of the press showing the opposition leaders' change of heart, in favour of constructive negotiations and compromises, and their readiness to respect the law. We also know how many workers intend to join Solidarity, roughly 17% of the total, far below the number of supporters of the union's legalisation.

That pluralism has become a political fact in Poland is no longer the subject of much discussion. People are now

arguing about its scope and its limits. Most people, and the party as a whole, consider political pluralism to be a natural state of affairs that should develop along institutional lines. Opinions differ only as to what form these should take, the majority opposing extremist, anti-socialist forms.

- ***Solidarity has been reported as demanding access to the mass media, including the party press, and state radio and television, and also broad coverage of the talks between the government and the opposition. What is your view of these demands?***

Solidarity's access to the mass media is on the agenda of the talks. They are entitled to it because the legal functioning of a public force is not normal without an informational base. Nor can political pluralism exist without being adequately reflected in the press.

The leaders of the union have a special interest in television and would like to use it as they see fit, with a certain amount of air time, a channel, and eventually a TV station of their own. We consider this out of the question. State television cannot be carved up. As for specific details, they will be hammered out in the talks. Our position is clear: they can use television to inform and to present their views, but in the spirit of pluralism, that is, along with other parties, unions, etc. In this context a legal Solidarity can be expected to contribute towards greater public openness.

As regards the "round table", which was a success, government talks with the opposition received broad press coverage. We reported their progress objectively and honestly and stated our opinion of the presented views and proposals. All the participants in the talks, including the Solidarity negotiators, kept in touch with the media in order to popularise and explain their positions.

- ***What has changed in the relationship between the government and society? Does the government know how the public reacts to official information? How is public opinion analysed?***

"Feedback" has shown that the government's credibility plummeted last year, which was one of the factors that brought down the previous cabinet. The measures taken by the newly-formed government have generated unprecedented support for its policies. But the "honeymoon" will very likely end in a few months as a result of seemingly inevitable price rises and goods shortages brought on by the fact that there is more money in circulation than there are goods on the shelves. The ongoing radical economic reforms will yield results only in a few years, but the people seem to be running out of patience.

We have enough hard information on public reactions to government initiatives and we are continually analysing public opinion. Two state-run centres for public opinion research organise up to five polls a week in order to discern changing attitudes to the authorities and to party and government policy, and to discover the dynamics of social optimism and pessimism. Long-term studies on individual subjects are being conducted, and public responses to key

statements by leaders are monitored. Every two weeks the chairman of the Council of Ministers makes a public statement on his cabinet's performance.

The party and the government rely on all this diverse information in policy making.

- ***What do you think of media responsibility? What lessons and conclusions do you draw from your contacts with the press and your experience of press conferences?***

Our journalists are different in terms of both political views and professional qualifications. Regrettably, some of them do not have a very great sense of social and political responsibility, and some press organs publish material which is based on unverified or one-sided information, or even contradicts the real facts. We try to find ways of dealing with bias. For example, we plan to invite press journalists to appear on television in order to point out their mistakes in informing the public, to engage them in open debate and, of course, to present our own arguments, especially in cases of sensationalism and superficial generalisations.

My regular press conferences also demonstrate the importance of this approach. Our journalists are becoming more active at them. In the past, when I addressed Western correspondents who summarily criticised Polish reality with the use of political stereotypes, Polish reporters simply looked on in silence. Today, press conferences are different. The Polish press argues more boldly with the Western media in order to defend national interests against biased attacks. Western correspondents themselves have been somewhat confused by the dramatic changes in our country.

Are we learning anything from this? "Yes" is the easy answer. But I will give you a different one, based on the usefulness to the government of information provided by such press conferences. They stimulate the exercise of government and prompt a more rapid and clear-cut official response to issues of interest to the public and, therefore to the mass media. They also help keep the world public informed of developments in Poland.

- ***You are not a party member, but as a minister you speak on behalf of a government headed by a party premier? Doesn't this make your work more difficult? How do you operate?***

One thing I've never felt is any restrictions on account of my not being a party member. Generally speaking, party affiliation or non-affiliation is not a problem in Poland. I enjoy the government's trust, otherwise I couldn't do my job. The PUWP Central Committee people are polite and courteous with me, and they cannot tell me to toe the party line, which is also a good thing.

Sometimes my personal opinion differs from the official view which I am obliged to present and defend. But this is only normal and I don't see any moral problem here.

Everyone knows that I speak not for myself but for the government, which is my job.

As a professional journalist, I continue to publish satirical sketches and articles on questions unrelated to official policies. A few years ago one of my pieces even provoked a debate in the Sejm. In order that the truth be known, I recalled that a cleric who died in the Nazi death camp Oswiecim and was later canonised had before the war professed anti-Semitic and chauvinistic views. There were protests, even demands for my resignation from certain circles. But I retained my job and the right to present my personal views in the press, though under a pseudonym.

A few words about the way I operate. I have two assistants to help me prepare for press conferences. They use various information sources to monitor developments in Poland and reports about them in the West. They also analyse government documents and public opinion. I seek advice from the government, including its presidium and

working groups, in order to gain an overall picture and anticipate possible questions from journalists.

As you can see, it's a simple system, but I must be able to absorb a great deal of diverse information, especially now that society demands more openness at a time of reform and democratisation within Polish society.

■ ***Do you intend to write your memoirs, but without "blank spots"?***

When I quit my job, I will have more time for writing and, then perhaps, I will publish my memoirs. Generally speaking, I do not believe that memoirs can be entirely honest. Authors always try to make themselves look good to the reader. But I will write as sincerely as I can...

¹ The Plenary Meeting was held in two halves, in December 1988 and January 1989. —Ed.





CLASS-BASED AND UNIVERSAL HUMAN VALUES

Ernst WIMMER

Political Bureau member, Central Committee, Communist Party of Austria (KPÖ)

History has most commonly, if not most rationally, followed an infinitely convoluted path. One of the reasons would seem to be that in most of the world, people cannot yet control the circumstances under which they live. Even in the socialist countries the revolutionary socialisation of the means of production, although essential, cannot guarantee the planned and balanced development of society. Nor can it serve as a substitute for a way of thinking which, while rooted in the natural and social sciences, looks to the future and seeks to take all its intrinsic interconnections into account. Another reason, I think, consists in the fact that history's negative lessons have a rather persistent effect. One is tempted, while correcting mistakes, to accept wholly or in part the misconceptions on the opposite side of the spectrum. Today, however, to continue along this course means to endanger the human race and even to threaten posterity itself.

No Marxist would deny that the *integral nature of the world has emerged as its salient feature*. States and nations have closer ties now and their interests are interwoven. A multifaceted interdependence exists, if only because no one is immune to the fateful moves of others. It is equally clear that the concept of "absolutely closed societies" and the calls for "complete autarky" are untenable. Our awareness of the world's integral nature is connected with a better understanding that nuclear war, irreversible environmental imbalances, the exhaustion of limited natural resources and the rapid and uncontrolled development of the productive forces may threaten "the whole"—the entire human race. This awareness is not just a "new idea" but a reflection of new circumstances and new developments.

In the past, people often noticed only the world's con-

traditions, ignoring or obviously underrating the many factors that amalgamated these contradictions into a *single whole* and prevented them from generating continuous and sharp conflicts.

It is to the particular credit of the international aspect of Soviet perestroika that in analysing radically new elements in relations between different states and social systems, practical conclusions have been drawn from the *understanding that universal human interests have priority in international affairs*. Hence the idea that our world can be secure only if every nation is secure, and that the fewer weapons we have, the greater our security and the less our wasteful economic burden. The old adage that "if you are powerful enough, you can have everything you need at others' expense" no longer applies. The present situation prompts one to think and act in a new way.

It would be surprising if the Marxists' appeals for thinking not only about class interests but also about human survival did not encourage some people to conclude that we need a radical and even "revolutionary" renunciation of all *class-based viewpoints*. Some wonder how an ideology which regards the struggle of opposites, of classes, as the motive force of history can be reconciled with the demands of today's world. Others proclaim these contradictions to be secondary and no longer important. Sometimes wishful thinking leads people to claim that the solution of global problems will largely alleviate or even completely remove the contradictions that exist in the world and in individual nations.

Rejecting these extremist views, Communists usually recognise the dialectical interconnection of universal human and class-based interests. *The way* these interests are interlaced is obviously a question of crucial importance for the identification of the revolutionary parties' objectives, character and functions, and for their unity and consciousness.

In his speech at the United Nations Mikhail Gorbachov described 1789 in France and 1917 in Russia as "two great revolutions" and said that "making man's life happy, just and secure" was the "foremost question" of social development. This question is, of course, connected with the problem of human survival. But I do not think we can identify the former with the latter. Now matter how "important" it is, mere survival is too little for most of those who lack freedom and are humiliated and oppressed.

Let us consider whether it would be useful to distinguish between the "interests of mankind", which embrace the central problems of long-term survival, and "universal human interests" (happiness, freedom and justice), which existed before and will continue to exist for a long time to come.

It would be a mistake to look for answers to all of today's problems in the Marxist classics. But failure to use their

We are continuing with our series of articles on the subject. See: "Peace and Revolution in the Nuclear Age", *WMR*, 1989, No. 2; and Hermann Axen, "The Imperative of General Human Interests", *WMR*, 1989, No. 4.

Ernst Wimmer (b. 1924), a professional journalist, has been a member of the KPÖ Central Committee since 1970 and of its Political Bureau since 1974 (he is in charge of ideological work and culture). He also serves on the editorial board of *Weg und Ziel*, the party's theoretical journal.

ideas and guidelines to explain the historical framework of these problems would be tantamount to radical *ideological disarmament*.

Marx did not deny the contribution to progress made by capitalism, which developed the productive forces and freed workers from personal dependence by replacing it with material dependence. But Marx also stressed that the pursuit of profit as a *special* and dominant interest, although possibly performing an important regulatory function at some historical stage, would inevitably clash with the interests of the overwhelming majority. Marx was therefore convinced that a *political* revolution should be followed by a *social* one which would give people real freedom.

Why, then, did Marx see the working class as the maker of the revolution? Not because of its innate virtues as a "collective messiah", but because, in order to emancipate itself, the working class had to transform all society in such a way as to make people masters of, rather than slaves to, their circumstances. In this way the natural connection between human progress and the emancipation of the working class—the most important aspect in their interaction—was established.

Obviously, it would now be irresponsible to connect human survival solely with the worldwide victory of socialism. Things being what they are, it is not enough to fight only for society's revolutionary transformation. But this does not detract from the importance of the "foremost question"—how can we make life happier and freer?

Gradual advancement with the help of reform and compromise is essential in tackling *both* these questions in order to make the best of the task. Can we cope with the more important problems in this way? I doubt that anyone would now give a straight yes-or-no answer to this question, but it is certainly worth trying. But can we solve the foremost problem without eradicating exploitation of man by man and without overcoming alienation—in the material infrastructure, in relations of ownership and of power, as well as in thinking? If this were feasible and if there were a model capable of "making everyone happy", then we would indeed need a "revolutionary break" with all revolutionary tradition. We would have to agree that the revolutionary parties which are guided by the fundamental ideas of Marxism and which think in terms of the development and resolution of contradictions, are no longer needed.

Putting the question in such a way is likely to annoy some people. But if you study closely the historical experience of the working-class movement and try to take a sober look at a problem that contains both old, well-known and new, less familiar elements, you are bound, sooner or later, to reach this crossroads.

More than two centuries ago the remarkable German polymath Georg Christoph Lichtenberg said that "enlightenment is in fact the awareness of the interests of all the estates". In this sense, it is now particularly important to assess reality soberly, without entertaining illusions. The objective is to get rid of *idees fixes* and find out which

interests, even radically different ones, can interact; in what areas, for what purposes, under what conditions and for how long such interaction (or at least neutralisation of contradictions) is possible; and when and where these interests are bound to clash.

An examination of the pernicious consequences of thinking in "ideal model" stereotypes undoubtedly leads one to conclude that it would be wrong to fit into some sort of global "integral reality" pattern the equally real problems of individual countries, the distinctive opposites and contradictions within them, and the distinctive functions of individual parties, states and institutions—and to ignore everything that does not fit into this pattern. At the same time, it would be reckless to deny the urgent need for a solution to global problems, or to forfeit an opportunity for enhancing the prestige and the influence progressive movements have gained thanks to their commitment to a more effective protection of common human interests. This is above all where we should use the world's integral and contradictory nature as our starting point in order to accommodate the interests of all humanity, as well as the interests of those classes and strata whose needs our social and historical communist background compels us to champion.

Why is it so important today to recognise the integral nature of the world? The rapid development of the productive forces has introduced radical changes into our living conditions and, even more so, into the *possibilities open to us and into the consequences of human action*. How can we attain at least a diminution of the global threat without taking the necessary joint steps, without negotiation, regulation or collaboration, without overcoming the contradictions that exist in the world—primarily those between different social systems? For example, even the boldest unilateral disarmament moves by the socialist countries would not be enough to resolve the backlog of problems the arms race has created. *International agreements* are therefore the only way out. Progress along this path will, of course, depend to a large extent on the alignment of forces between the different social systems and within individual countries, and not only the bigger ones.

Many people are horrified by the hole in the ozone layer over the Antarctic and by the hitherto incalculable damage which space radiation may cause. Equally alarming is the buildup of carbon dioxide which is likely to irreversibly poison the air and alter the temperature balance.

I could go on with the list of the problems affecting humanity as a whole. To question the importance of development as a global factor does not mean proving one's commitment to "revolutionary ideology". For example, the KPÖ regards it as its internationalist duty to demand that the government of Austria, a neutral country, submit ideas and proposals and take steps so as to promote a favourable international climate, and that it contribute to the solution of pressing problems.

However, it would be a fatal mistake to pay insufficient attention—both in political thinking and, more importantly,

in practice—to the fact that the *world's contradictions are as real as its integral nature*. The French Socialist Jean Jaurès remarked several decades ago that capitalism is pregnant with war the way clouds are pregnant with rain. I do not think that the economic laws of capitalism have changed radically since.

Bitter experience shows that aggressive and expansionist trends are innate in imperialism and its economic structure. At the same time, we know (and this point is now particularly important) that this does not rule out the possibility of securing profits without arms manufacture or militarism. Those who are tempted to dismiss state-monopoly capitalism as an obsolete theoretical concept would do well to take this and other facts into account.

True, capitalist states do not exist in symbiosis with military-industrial complexes alone. Different monopoly groups are vying for influence within it, and this makes its domestic and foreign policy quite variegated. On the one hand, this situation indicates that an "alliance of reason" is possible. On the other, the infighting of different finance capital coalitions also creates many obstacles to the formation of such an alliance: relapses into a mossback policy of confrontation are not infrequent and the numerical strength of the far Right, not inconsiderable.

The existence of socialist countries and the differentiation within the capitalist camp lead some representatives of the bourgeoisie to reflect on whether the inner laws of their "market economy" permit development paths more favourable than that of securing profits by means of blackmail and confrontation, which is fraught with a nuclear apocalypse.

This does not imply that capitalism is virtuous. One of the more depressing realities of today's world is that vast masses of people pay a high material and spiritual price for capitalism's obsession with arms manufacture and militarism. The present situation raises a number of questions: how can we mobilise the entire potential for peace and set it in motion in the right direction without provoking hostility even from those who have created the danger in the first place? How can we exert the obviously necessary political pressure while having to rely on the peculiarities of economic laws which do not, because of the subjective factor, run like clockwork?

The concept of an integral world means that anyone who asserts that international cooperation between countries with different social systems is impossible is likely to suffer severe penalties. There is no doubt that the way should be paved to a *full* understanding of this truth. But we would be on shaky ground if, in the name of this concept of an integral world, we ignored the existence of contradictions or dismissed those who remind us of it as "advocates of conservative, obsolete thinking".

Today, different sources reply differently to the *questions of key importance for the Communists' future*: will the intensity of ideological debate decline? Will a common "humanistic" denominator ever assert itself for different social systems? The difficulties are compounded by the past

dogmatisation of Marxism, which was catechistically reduced to a "purely class-based" world view. This clearly oversimplified Marxism, alienated certain quarters from it and impeded the understanding of its rich creative potential.

Given the actual state of affairs, the existing trends and the nascent prospects, there is little reason to believe that ideological struggle in a world at peace will diminish even if the effort to tackle the global issue of survival affects, to varying degrees, the value orientations of *all* ideologies. It goes without saying that we have to purge international relations of ideologically charged attitudes, if only because one cannot conclude important agreements while accusing the other side of a congenital inability to negotiate.

It follows that we should arrive at a certain "balance of interests", as Mikhail Gorbachov put it at the UN. In other words, we should take the vital interests of the other side into account. But this does not imply that one should ascribe nonexistent virtues to any partner for the sake of reaching agreement. The previous, allegedly Marxist-Leninist practice of ideologising science has cost us a great deal. Yet, amongst those who realise that to renounce an ideology rooted in one's own thoroughly analysed interests is like skinning oneself alive, is there anyone who would follow to the end the advice to remove ideology from all interpersonal relations?

Past experience and specific interests are quite capable of changing people's ideological positions. How else can one explain the transformation of dedicated anticommunists into opponents of confrontation-oriented policies? At the same time, how can one realistically assess the capacity for change or the resilience of ideologies if one fails to understand that they are a very complex reflection of social contradictions?

In all global matters which demand joint resolution (or at least an easing of existing contradictions, settlement and control), a clash with the forces ideologically opposed to agreement is inevitable. In order to reach a consensus, these forces must be pushed aside and isolated both politically and ideologically. Long-term commitment to the arms race, "permanent deterrence" and "positions-of-strength" policies is impossible without the corresponding ideological substantiation. The struggle for peace therefore requires a systematic, flexible, stubborn, even merciless effort to *combat all versions of aggressive ideology*. As we combat them, we should distinguish clearly between the polar modifications of bourgeois ideology—in some cases permeated with an insane hatred of the enemy, in others, oriented on systems of values distanced from, or even opposed in one way or another to, extremist expressions of ideological aggressiveness.

Does this mean that it is no longer necessary to combat the currently widespread ideas and arguments of the moderate, rather than confrontationist version of bourgeois ideology? Perhaps we should renounce ideological struggle in cases when the ideology of our opponents is not overtly aggressive? This leads us to the fundamental issues

concerning the *optimum correlation between the interests of all humanity and the class-based considerations*.

One would be justified in expecting the results of a sufficiently prolonged period of peaceful coexistence, disarmament, the consequent release of financial resources and of expertise, as well as increased international cooperation, to become factors encouraging domestic reforms and favouring their implementation in individual countries. But if one rejects wishful thinking, there is no real reason for believing that a policy of peace and international cooperation necessarily implies a vigorous readiness for domestic reform. Mikhail Gorbachov spoke at the UN about the need for "new international relations", in the sense that new standards of political behavior and thinking are essential in order to at least ease *global* problems. His emphasis on the imperative "freedom of choice" means that a "new world order" must not prescribe a particular way of life for a particular nation. However, as peaceful coexistence continues to develop and competition opens up between the two systems, greater importance is likely to be attached to the thrust of specific policies not only on the international scene but also *in a particular country*.

In discussing the idea of the "global threat facing the international community", people often deal only with its negative aspect. I suspect we should devote much closer attention to the issue of the revolution in science and technology giving rise to many *new prospects* for mankind's development—prospects we have not fully grasped yet. To my mind, this imparts special significance to the question of the degree to which the working class and its allies can use these opportunities—at first to effectively protect and champion their interests, and then to create the necessary basis for "rebuilding" their own home. Such tasks can be set as long-term historical objectives. This is obvious, and so, I believe, is the prospect for expanding and invigorating ideological struggle in new forms geared to the "spirit of the times".

The process of confining most workers to the periphery of capitalist society and the orientation on the "two-thirds society" are not a grotesque fantasy of the military-industrial complex. They are part of a long-term strategy, pursued by the more influential sections of monopoly capital against the background of the revolution in science and technology, that can be used as a highly effective means of reducing the influence of and fragmenting the working class, marginalising a growing part of society, and largely destroying the conditions necessary for the development of individuals.

However, this cuts both ways. It follows that, in the new conditions, the extremely important social struggle deals with issues which are basic to human existence—the meaning and the potential of labour, the conditions and the quality of life, the protection and the development of the human personality and, consequently, man's *social protection* and reason for existence. All these questions have a *class* aspect because they are generated by a society consisting of antagonistic classes. That is the angle

from which these problems should be viewed, no matter how pressing the need to think about the survival of the human race, of which social classes are part.

When a radically new situation arises and seemingly immutable concepts become less well-defined and assume new forms of dubious stability, one is particularly tempted to resort to highly dangerous oversimplification.

One can, of course, misinterpret the "end of ideology" slogan and reduce *all* evil in the world to the notion of a "crisis of civilisation". But this logic is flawed. If a person has appendicitis, you cannot say that this is a "personality crisis". A more specific diagnosis is needed if the patient is to be treated properly.

There is a logic to repeated warnings about the trends that threaten humanity. It is, of course, very important to draw everyone's attention to the dangers facing the international community and to the need for urgent joint action. Effective resistance to the various global threats means fundamentally different communities pooling their efforts in a common endeavour. For example, we know that we cannot do without international agreements in tackling various environmental problems. But does this justify the unfortunately widespread view that some issues can be settled only through international cooperation?

The long-term effects of the reckless destruction of tropical forests pose a very grave threat to the world's climate. Recently, the trade union activist and environmentalist Francisco Mendes was assassinated in Brazil. He was one of the more than 1,000 people murdered by killers hired by big landowners wanting these forests destroyed despite the resistance offered by agricultural labourers and small peasants. The interests of humanity (saving the forests in order to preserve the world's climate) are not the same as those of agricultural labourers and small peasants. If they understood how badly the world needs their struggle, they would fight it even harder. But if they were only aware of this universal human interest and knew nothing of their own needs, if they relegated their own concerns to the background for the sake of "universal cooperation", they would not benefit either themselves or the human race.

Oversimplification was the reason Communists failed for so long to respond vigorously enough to the accumulation of environmental problems. They accepted a one-sided interpretation of Marx' idea that while the development of the productive forces is essential to human progress, under capitalism it means plunder of labour and nature as the two sources of wealth. At the same time, the belief was that socialist relations of production would automatically solve these problems. There was even talk about the "neutrality" of all productive forces without exception. It was also a mistake to maintain that the pursuit of profit ruled out any attention to environmental issues on the part of capital, and it was wrong to ignore the bourgeoisie's vested interest in preserving the basic general conditions of production, including the chance for capitalists to make money by fighting evil.

Yet again, a specific question arises in this field: how

much is being done to prevent the dangers from building up or to eliminate them? Another one, closely related to the former, is: who is to pay for all this? In the rarefied atmosphere of abstract thought one can avoid contact with class-motivated interests, but in real life one keeps encountering them all the time.

The trend toward greater and more intensive contacts between nations has imparted a new and specific meaning to the word "humanity". There is no doubt that humanity as a single whole is facing a number of global threats. Readiness to cooperate calls for something much greater than simple exhortations: it demands that we take various interests—and the balance between them—into account even in those cases where, for reasons of *principle*, different interests cannot be reconciled through convergence. But does this rule out "any political condemnation", as is sometimes claimed? It seems to me that this claim is motivated by a desire to blame humanity, and civilisation as a whole, for all global dangers and crises. The way history is developing has already produced the *first signs* of the

possible emergence of "humanity" as an agent. Nevertheless, it is a mistake to underrate or ignore the fact that classes, social strata and groups remain consciously active agents.

Today, social progress calls for alliances of different classes. Yet again, we encounter a problem: what interests should be acted on for the sake of a particular objective, a particular progressive transformation? Human survival indeed requires an "alliance of reason". But it would be absurd to conclude that everyone who has chosen to fight for human survival is ready to abandon those special interests which, in the final analysis, determine the mode of his or her life beyond "survival".

It is impossible to provide universally applicable answers to the question of what forces are ready for cooperation for the sake of common human or class-based objectives. And definitive answers are even less likely. We can only find the right ones if we pay attention to international and national realities, to the world's integral and contradictory nature.

THE REALISM OF DREAMERS

Prof. Frederick MAYER

member, Club of Rome;

vice-president, Vienna International Cultural Centre

In today's world, there is a backlog of many urgent problems waiting to be solved. To tackle them, we must be realists and dreamers at the same time—realists fired by a sense of hope. We cannot forget for a minute that with the entry of the INF Treaty into force and with the emergence of other positive trends in international affairs, the threat of a nuclear catastrophe has diminished only a little. It has not been eliminated. The sword of Damocles—the threat of overkill—is still hanging over humanity.

Nor are we able to cope with the environmental crisis, although pollution is a dramatic problem in all parts of the world, and the threat to the environment is growing rapidly.

Or take the glaring social contrasts. There are islands of extravagant wealth and ostentatious luxury in a sea of abject poverty and misery. Mistrust and fear between different nations are being fomented, and this is compounded by lying, mercenary propaganda.

Ethnic strife and religious intolerance are rampant. There is, for example, the case of Northern Ireland and the terrible consequences of the divisions there, the rifts that have remained so acute for so long. Why has there been no progress in healing them? I think that there, as in many other cases, the causes are rooted in a narrow-minded way of thinking.

Sir Francis Bacon¹ blamed the errors of reason on different types of fallacies, or "idols". Some, he said, pertain to human nature itself ("idols of the tribe"), others creep into the minds of individuals ("idols of the cave") or stem from an uncritical attitude to widespread views ("idols of the market-place"), and still others are born of a blind faith in established and traditional notions and dogmatic systems with their deceptive verisimilitude of theatre performances ("idols of the theatre").

Be that as it may, we must debunk such "idols". It is time for fruitful change, for the kind of change that can result in the creation of a safe, stable and prosperous world. This calls for closer cooperation involving different states, nations and groups, as well as for an abiding and restless commitment to social development.

In this connection, the speech of Mikhail Gorbachov in New York was a historic event, a symbol of new thinking on a global basis. Mikhail Gorbachov stressed the importance of the United Nations. We know today that the League of Nations failed because there was not sufficient support, because there was too much nationalism, because the danger of fascism was underestimated and because on a global basis people did not realise how important it was to

cooperate. Things have changed since, and today we know that the United Nations has done tremendous work. Suffice it to recall its mediation in the Middle East, its efforts to alleviate the condition of children, its promotion of industrial development, or its contribution to controlling the atomic menace. No wonder that Mikhail Gorbachov selected the United Nations as the forum for this historic speech.

The points he made constitute almost a revolution in international relations. He said that militarisation of outer space must be avoided, and he mentioned other major aspects of disarmament. Disarmament is not just a theory. It is the greatest necessity, because as long as such huge sums are being spent on arms worldwide, humanity cannot be at rest.

I believe that Mr Gorbachov made a profound and relevant point when he spoke about the watershed we had reached in world developments. He is quite right to stress that further progress can be achieved only through a search for a universal consensus on the new world order we are seeking to create. It is particularly important to observe the principle of free choice, rooted not just in good intentions but in the objectively growing diversity of social development in different countries, both socialist and capitalist.

The Soviet Union's unilateral disarmament moves evoked worldwide admiration. It is a practical step, a step that deserves to be emulated. It shows that the Soviet Union really regards world problems from a global viewpoint.

The ideas and proposals of Mikhail Gorbachov are the foundation for new thinking and new action for the sake of our future. It is, of course, very good that the world responded to them with understanding, but now action is needed. Action is needed more than ever, because apathy can pave the way to destruction; the important thing is to work to build a new world, a 21st-century world, by promoting genuine international cooperation, firmly strengthening the UN and effecting social reforms on a global scale.

The essence and the future of perestroika in the USSR are being debated extensively everywhere. This is natural because the prospects for radical transformations in one of the world's biggest countries are of concern not only to Soviet citizens.

History gives us ample proof that after a time, revolutions and reforms are usually followed by periods of stagnation. A period of radical change is followed by a gradual growth of mental attitudes characterised by complacency and defence of the status quo. Conservative sentiments take root. The bureaucracy becomes particularly powerful. Again, everything begins to be determined from on high.

It is too early to assess the significance of perestroika in the Soviet Union correctly or fully. But there is no doubt that Mr Gorbachov is working to renew Soviet society and to create an atmosphere of dedication, openness and integrity. The Soviet Union needs new ideas and concepts to accelerate its development; it also needs better cooper-

ation with other countries—that is, a more effective foreign policy. The international aspect of perestroika is as important as the internal one.

Previous Soviet leaders stressed repeatedly that the Soviet Union had no ambition save for peace, understanding and cooperation with other nations. However, these protestations were not always backed by practical moves. Today, commitment to peace is an obvious element of Soviet foreign policy. The new aspect is that the USSR is now guided by the *priority of universal human interests* over all others, and that it is advancing valuable initiatives much more often and much more forcefully in an effort to translate its policy of peaceful coexistence into reality.

This is indeed bringing results.

I would like to place special emphasis on the advocacy of the "development through disarmament" concept. We must not forget that while astronomical sums are being spent on sophisticated means of mass annihilation, including apocalyptic nuclear weapons, most people in the world live in squalid poverty. More than 800 million human beings are illiterate. Daily, 40,000 children die because they do not have enough to eat and receive no medical assistance. Other global problems are deteriorating. Humanity is encountering new dangers—for example, AIDS.

Mr Gorbachov proposes resolutely that we give up obsolete thought patterns, nuclear weapons and the use of force in general. He is convinced that humanity's salvation cannot be ensured by military or ideological blocs, that we must build a future in which all nations will be bound together by a common dedication to prosperity, peace, higher living standards and (most importantly) to better understanding.

As I see it, perestroika in the USSR is directed against bureaucratic distortions. It is no accident that the word "bureaucracy" has acquired a negative connotation in almost all languages. It is true that modern society cannot exist without organisation, without order, without rules and, consequently, without those individuals and agencies that perform these functions. But the danger lies elsewhere—in the fact that such mechanisms may deviate or be divorced from their true initial mission and therefore function without regard for the human factor or the end result. In other words, a tool, an agent becomes lord and master through

self-promotion, self-aggrandisement and self-perpetuation. As a result, thrombosis of society's blood vessels sets in.

A progressive ideology always requires a creative approach, not rigid adherence to something immutable. I would say that in the Soviet Union many bureaucrats had an excellent opportunity not to think, not to change anything and to avoid self-examination and criticism in order to uphold obsolete, mossback principles. An essentially parasitic way of life proliferated. Bureaucratic social organisation sooner or later leads to social degradation. I believe that perestroika will enable the Soviet Union to overcome its problems, become a truly dynamic society and give the green light to the development of the personality and its talent.

The success of perestroika and of new political thinking largely depends on how these ideas are implemented. Personally, I would like economic management and sociopolitical administration in the socialist countries to change for the better as soon as possible. That would mean profound transformations throughout the social fabric, including education and culture. It would also give free rein to initiative. State control and planning are necessary, of course. But you cannot accelerate social progress without the initiative of individuals or without an atmosphere that encourages creative work.

To abide and develop as a theory, Marxism demands a constant re-evaluation of newly emergent realities. However, *Marxism is not only a theory: it has to be lived in practical terms*, and this practice is of interest to others too. Our age has given us an excellent chance to translate progressive ideas into reality. Mr Gorbachov has raised the issue of new forms of cooperation, and we can learn from each other within this framework. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, the task of the teacher is not to explain nor mainly to analyse: it is to provoke. Today, Marxism provokes many millions to turn to new, progressive ideas. Most importantly, I think, it encourages a creative application of truly scientific principles and the development of a genuine global perspective.

1 Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1626) was an English materialist philosopher.—Ed.

SOCIALISM AND THE DEMANDS OF DEVELOPMENT

Samir AMIN

Director, UN African Institute for Economic Development and Planning, Dakar

Like all social systems, capitalism is not immortal. The development of its own contradictions is sure to produce a different, superior social system which will make it possible to transcend the historical bounds of capitalism. But what are these historical bounds?

The issue can be approached in two ways. One can focus on what determines the essence of capitalism, i.e. the contradiction between labour and capital. This means recognising the need for an evolutionary process: backward (peripheral) capitalist societies are supposed to "catch up" with the advanced model of the system and only then transcend its bounds.

The other option is to regard "actually existing" capitalism as a system that has resulted in polarisation between the periphery and the center—something that cannot be overcome within the confines of this system. If this option is accepted, one has to choose an alternative, because this means denying the primacy of the law of value worldwide and confining it to the national framework. If the bourgeoisie is unable to make this choice, the people will see for themselves that without it no development project can be implemented. The course of events will then lead inescapably to a prospect that can only be described as socialist.

This form of rejecting the capitalist system on its periphery calls for a serious reappraisal of the issue of "socialist transition". Marxists are still handicapped by their continued belief that, on the basis of advanced productive forces, working-class revolutions usher in a period of society's relatively rapid transition to socialism, with the

popular masses exercising their power in a more democratic way than in the most democratic of bourgeois countries.

Summing up the lessons of our "postcapitalist" experience, one can note the following.

The uneven character of capitalist development has made the *revolution of the peripheral nations* (an *anticapitalist* revolution in the sense that it is directed against the capitalist system the masses find unacceptable) the order of the day. The more violent contradictions generated by capitalist accumulation and exploitation now occur not so much in the central areas of this system as on its periphery.

Marxism has developed a theory of a classless society and a period of transition from capitalism to communism, known as the socialist phase. We can share the concept of the ultimate objective, but without accepting the idea that socialism should be built in all developed capitalist countries only through working-class revolutions.

We hold that the revolutions of recent history (in Russia, China, Vietnam, Cuba, Yugoslavia, etc.), invariably called socialist and indeed pursuing socialist objectives (as their leaders intended), were in fact more complex anticapitalist revolutions because they occurred in the world's underdeveloped areas. That is precisely why they failed to usher in an era of socialist construction in the strict and classical Marxist sense of the term. That is also why the attempts undertaken in a number of Third World countries to radicalise the national liberation movement have been described as socialist too, although the transformations effected there clash with the classical criteria of socialism.

Experience prompts us to reassess the nature and prospects of "postcapitalism" begun by anticapitalist revolutions on the periphery. In the course of this reappraisal we should not confine ourselves to a recognition of the "generally positive" achievements of existing socialist societies, despite the mistakes they have made, or to an ideological debate over deviations from the theoretical socialist model as it is usually presented.

If this approach is rejected, two possible options remain. The *first* is that the national liberation revolutions have in fact opened an era of capitalist development in the Third World, although this development demonstrates distinctive features and is temporarily in conflict with the main centres of world capitalism. We cannot accept this view, and so we counter it with the *second* option: we are dealing with popular national liberation revolutions that have, to varying degrees, succeeded in overcoming numerous contradictions while simultaneously enabling highly dissimilar statist, socialist and national capitalist trends to develop.

The postcapitalist societies must accelerate the development of their productive forces. It would be irrational to base social progress on poverty and backwardness. Even if we reject the capitalist way of life with its inhuman consumerism, there remains the need to boost food production and industrial output, open schools and hospi-

We continue with our series of articles on the choice of development paths, including socialist-oriented development. (See: Amath Dansokho, "The Destiny of Capitalism and the Prospect Before the Developing World" in *WMR*, No. 1, 1987; Vital Balla, "Life Versus Dogmas" and Benecio Costa, "How We View Liberalisation of the Economy" in *WMR*, No. 8, 1987; Georgi Kim, "The Socialist Orientation: Theory and Practice" in *WMR*, No. 11, 1987; and "Lessons of Socialist Orientation. Review of Discussion at an International Symposium in Prague" in *WMR*, No. 6, 1988).

Samir AMIN, D. Sc. (Econ.), b. 1931, Cairo, graduated from the University of Paris and worked for the Economic Development Organisation, Cairo, 1957-1960, as an adviser for planning to the government of Mali 1960-1963, and as professor of economics at the universities of Poitiers, Paris and Dakar. Director of the UN African Institute for Economic Development and Planning since 1970, he is the author of many books on the economic and social problems of the developing countries. —Ed.

tals, build housing, etc. Nothing can seriously compete with the technology developed by capitalism for tackling these tasks. If one agrees that technology serves the interests of a particular class, then the level it helps to attain in the development of the productive forces obviously implies certain forms of labour organisation (and, consequently, of the relations of production) that are similar to those existing under capitalism.

Recognition of this imperative does not mean acceptance of the claim that the phase of initial capitalist accumulation cannot be bypassed. The reason is that, unlike bourgeois revolutions, national liberation revolutions are essentially effected by the popular masses. Directing their movement are political parties with an openly anticapitalist ideology.

The manifestations of this new and distinctive contradiction, which Marx could not foresee as he reflected on the prospects for a transition to socialism, determine the actual nature of the postcapitalist regimes which, in a rather contradictory way, combine three trends—socialism, capitalism and etatism.

This conflict cannot be reduced to a formal recognition of the coexistence of different sectors, some of which claim to be socialist, citing public ownership of the means of production, while others are designated as capitalist because they involve private property. The point is that within the public sector itself, hierarchic relationships are taking shape between the decision-makers, the administrative personnel and the working people. The organisation and the efficiency of production largely remain as they were under capitalism. Autocratic government circles manipulate socialist slogans and use the well-developed techniques of Marxism to provide ideological justification for their course.

In anticapitalist revolutions, the ruling class is part of the national popular movement. Relations between the new government and the people are not rooted in any transient factors. A very complex relationship between the new government and the people as a whole emerges—an alliance-and-conflict relationship.

After an anticapitalist revolution, capitalist trends continue in society because of the need to develop the productive forces. Greater freedom of operation for market relations and for small private enterprise, and even the privatisation of some industries, almost always prove effective, and this helps make capitalist enterprise more popular. Although the authorities view it with almost spontaneous hostility at first, in the final analysis they necessarily extend recognition to it.

Why this obvious superiority of capitalist forms over state-run economic management? Or, to rephrase the question, why does the public sector lag so obviously behind private enterprise? The answer seems to be that, despite the blows dealt it during the national liberation revolution, the bourgeoisie has remained sufficiently well-organised. Meanwhile, the popular masses have only begun to organise in the course of the revolution. They are

still too weak to rebuff the bourgeoisie or to confront it with their own viable development alternative.

This brings us to the *question of democracy*. The record of the postcapitalist societies proves that popular democracy is essential to accelerated material development. We do not suggest any recipes because the forms of democratisation can only be shaped by social practice. But we ought here to assert the principle that popular democracy upholds the heritage of bourgeois democracy (human rights, an independent judiciary, respect for the pluralism of views, separation of powers, etc.) so as to advance it and add a new social dimension to it.

Nor can democracy be reduced to a paternalistic attitude on the part of the state, which guarantees employment, education and health. Democracy should enable the working people to exercise actual control over the means and conditions of production. In this sense, self-government, trade union freedoms, peasant cooperatives and the like are particularly important.

The leaders of some newly independent countries may regard these forms of popular democracy as forced concessions to be granted as a last resort. This attitude prompts us to consider the question of etatism and the fetishism of power.

However, before we tackle it, let me say a few words about the impact of peripheral capitalist development. The weakening of the newly independent countries is a concomitant of their peripheral economic condition. True, nationalism does give rise to numerous problems and does have negative aspects. Like any other stage of human history, it has its historical limits. But it still remains an objective factor that cannot be ignored. Given the lofty ideals of humanism, social emancipation and internationalism which were produced by progressive bourgeois thought and by Marxism, we should note the *profoundly progressive character of the idea of national liberation*.

Optimism about the prospects of popular government should not, evidently, be boundless. The Western model has substantial appeal. An insufficiently critical attitude to the criteria of efficiency may subsequently turn them into factors of convergence following a period of temporary divisions. In this connection, two things should be noted.

The *first* is that now, and in the foreseeable future, the issue is not that of convergence, in the sense of the developing societies being integrated into the world's socioeconomic capitalist system and subjected to the logic of global capitalist development, but rather simply that of an intensification of external interrelationships, which the newly independent states are quite capable of controlling.

In this context, the socialist countries' firm commitment to the idea of national independence is a tangible and positive factor. There is no reason to believe that their governments would agree to play a comprador role. That is the lot of the ruling classes in the capitalist Third World.

The *second* point is that even if the new societies decided, in the more distant future, to intensify their external

relations to a degree that would come close to convergence with capitalism, this would gravely affect the international balance of forces. A global system readjusted along these lines could no longer be seen as purely capitalist: convergence has to be preceded by substantial domestic progress which is only possible if the socialist trend gains ground within national societies. On the other hand, this would also require the West to introduce major changes into its political system so as to benefit the people—possibly, and even probably, on the basis of the present social democracy. But then we would have a world socialist system everyone would have to reckon with.

In his reflections on the "organic" intelligentsia Antonio Gramsci assumed that throughout history, every major class, whether dominant (as the bourgeoisie under capitalism) or aspiring to a ruling status (as the working class), created its own ideology and culture, its own forms of organisation and its own practices. The "organic" intelligentsia acts as a catalyst in this process, to which it imparts a corresponding expression which enables its ideology to come to dominate society. On the other hand, Gramsci took as his starting point the revolutionary nature of the working class in the principal capitalist centres and, on the basis of that hypothesis, reflected on the conditions essential to the creation of an "organic" intelligentsia in the course of a socialist revolution led by a vanguard party. If one regards Gramsci's hypothesis as incorrect and maintains that the working class in the capitalist centres also accepts the main rules of the game imposed by the system, then the conclusion is that the working classes of the capitalist centres are incapable of creating their own "organic" socialist intelligentsia. They do, of course, have a cadre that organises their struggle, but this cadre has refused to think in terms of an alternative, classless social project. It is true that in capitalist societies, there are people committed to this model, but Western, sectarian and academic Marxism wields no influence. In these societies, other views of a socialist character are also current, and they have to contend with a multitude of different opinions. Significantly though, they do not merge into a single global project. For example, the environmentalists and the feminists refuse categorically to go beyond their distinctive demands or to call for socialism as we understand it.

Along the periphery of the industrialised world, the popular masses are innately anticapitalist. But their position differs from that of the working class in the classical Marxist sense of the term: they are highly heterogeneous and cannot, by themselves, arrive at any project for a classless society. These strata are capable of unrest (as they continually prove) and, in a broader sense, of resistance. These circumstances create historical room for the emergence of a social force capable of performing the socially necessary function of a catalyst. This force develops a social project which offers an alternative to capitalism, organises the popular masses and directs their action against the class adversary. This role is to be played by the intelligentsia, with its distinctive anticapitalist thrust, orientation

on global civilisation and, consequently, an ability to identify its place in the world, analyse its contradictions and identify its weak points, while preserving close and vibrant ties with the masses and sharing their culture.

The national popular postcapitalist society is not only the scene of a conflict between capitalist and socialist forces. It also includes a *third social component*—etatism. There is nothing historically new about government intervention in the social fabric. At different stages of capitalism, the state performed different functions. But in this case, etatism emerges after an anticapitalist revolution, and new questions arise.

Etatism is not simply a front for capitalist development. Nor is it a form with a socialist content, as its ideologues assure us. A national popular state of a new type is needed for many reasons. It is based on an alliance between classes whose interests in part coincide and in part clash. For example, the interests of rural and urban dwellers clearly diverge. The state is a tool with which relations between them are to be managed.

Under the circumstances prevalent in a number of societies that won their independence in the postwar period, fetishism of power has produced dangerous illusions about the possibility of controlling the balance between capitalist and socialist elements. However, history shows that the authorities can regulate capitalist tendencies only by suppressing them, and that the price of such regulation involves economic difficulties. The control exercised by the working people, coupled with state paternalism, the manipulation of public opinion and repression, is proved by history to erode the effectiveness of the economy and have its own limits.

Referring to the national popular society, we therefore reject the official interpretation of the essence of socialist construction: even regarded as having been built, socialism constantly finds it necessary to use commodity market (capitalist) relations so as to develop the productive forces effectively. Many decades after socialism "triumphed" in the USSR, the question of the market is again on the agenda. Twenty years after the "cultural revolution" was supposed to have "resolved" this problem, the "abolished" relations have to be restored.

Instead of engaging in empty and dogmatic rhetoric about socialist construction, the political leaders of the developing countries would do well to analyse the available postrevolutionary experience. Such concrete analysis rules out any unconditional acceptance of a *single model*, or any reduction of the diversity present in this experience merely to the consistent implementation of a particular overall policy. On the contrary, in examining this diversity it is important to emphasise the distinctive aspects of every success or failure and to deal with the impasses and the ways leading out of them.

These questions are raised by the national liberation movement because, in essence, it does not differ from the movement that led to socialist revolutions. Both respond to

the challenge of capitalist expansionism and reject the peripheral underdevelopment generated by it.

The national liberation movement is an expression of a social alliance comprising broad popular masses. While in some cases these masses are quite obviously led by the bourgeoisie, in others this is not so obvious. All too often, the national bourgeoisie of the newly independent countries has been hostage to a compromise with imperialism. The radicalised national liberation movements also include the intelligentsia as the catalyst of the popular forces. Very often it played a more substantial role than the petty bourgeoisie which is often mistakenly seen as the chief protagonist.

One could say that socialist revolutions are national popular revolutions which have attained their objectives through dissociation from the exploiter bourgeoisie, while the national liberation movements still led by the bourgeoisie have yet to reach their objectives. That is why *new revolutions* are the order of the day in the Third World. They may be no more socialist than the previous ones and remain merely national popular revolutions, but, as in the past 70 years, these revolutions will be a major catalyst of world development.

Stage-by-stage, the foremost contradiction of the modern world (the effect of the continued accumulation of capital) is becoming increasingly aggravated. The worldwide expansion of capital exacerbates rather than alleviates the conflict between the centre and the periphery of capitalism. If the developing nations cannot respond to this crisis effectively, if the progressive forces of the developed countries allow themselves to be pushed aside and toe the line of big capital, the world will lapse deeper into barbarism. The choice is between *socialism and barbarism*. But while classical Marxism maintained that the transition to socialism depends on the triumphant struggle of the working class in the industrially developed countries, today this path appears longer and more arduous, passing through the national popular revolution on the periphery in anticipation of a time when, thanks to their own gains, the nations of the West help create conditions necessary for global renewal.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The notions put forward in this article can, of course, be countered with different concepts. We invite our readers to debate the questions raised by the author.





WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A COMMUNIST TODAY?

FOLLOWING UP ON A QUESTIONNAIRE IN *THE NEW YORK TIMES*

The fact that a major US newspaper published a large series of articles on the communist movement in three of its January 1989 issues is, in itself, remarkable. It was indeed an ambitious project involving 26 correspondents who interviewed, at length, 50 Communists in 23 countries. According to *The New York Times*, the objective was to "get a sense of how Communists now see themselves and the outlook for their movement in a rapidly changing world".

The times they are indeed a-changing, and we can only welcome the fact that an influential bourgeois newspaper has enabled its readers to take a look at a subject which the "big press" does not usually lavish much attention on, to hear Communists speak and learn about the life and work of communist parties.

Still, one understands after reading the articles that *The New York Times* used the interviews to justify its own assessment of the current state of the communist movement—an assessment based on obsolete clichés.

But let us not lapse into the practice of offering an immediate "rebuff", an attitude we demonstrated all too frequently in the past. Even biased conclusions are often backed by certain realities. This is why we have asked Communists in some of the countries where the US reporters took their interviews to reply to several questions based on the NYT evaluations.

We present replies from Czechoslovakia, El Salvador, Great Britain, Italy, Spain and the USSR.¹

Yuly Oganisian, Sergei Yastrzhembsky
WMR staff members

1. The process of change in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries evokes both hope and dismay, the NYT says: dismay that so much of the terrible sacrifice, struggle and deprivation Communists have endured for so long must now be acknowledged to have been in vain, that the secular faith that once promised so much now stands revealed to its own adherents as a failure. Could you comment on that?

2. What remains of the old zeal and "idealism" of Communists, the sense of historical inevitability, of an inspired vanguard leading the masses to utopia?

3. Are intolerance, personality cults and the other mistakes pervading the history of communism an inevitable product of the ideology or an aberration?

4. Do you agree that Communists are no longer united by a single set of beliefs or a transcendent vision of the future?

5. Do you agree that Marxism has lost its intellectual prestige? Is there anything sacred for you in Marxism, and if there is, what is it?

6. Have you ever been ashamed of being a Communist? What makes you proud to be a Communist and what has your communist identity given you?

PERESTROIKA STRENGTHENS OUR IDEALS

Jaime BARRIOS, b.1923; joined the Communist Party of El Salvador in 1951; member of the PCES Central Committee; author of several books on historical subjects; married, with six children.

1. I see perestroika as a real revolutionary process, as a revolution within a revolution, as a new chapter in the history of the USSR. Therefore, we should not be surprised to see the reforms under way there evoke different types of reaction both within the Soviet Union and abroad. Along with optimistic assessments which have a solid basis, there are pessimistic views expressed too. One can also hear the voices of those who, shaken by the revelation of historical truth, dismiss all the pitched battles fought by the Soviet people and Communists in other parts of the world as "pointless". My question to them would be, what has enabled the Soviet Union to become a superpower (an incontrovertible fact)? Concisely, the answer is: it was the sacrifice and the privations of millions upon millions of Soviet people representing many generations. They planted the seeds which are now yielding the fruits of freedom and democracy. We have just begun to harvest the crop.

2. In my personal case, perestroika reaffirms and reinforces my communist ideals and my view of the future which—for the sole reason of its remoteness—may appear as a "utopia". Nevertheless, I believe that this future will, inevitably, arrive. One cannot predict the exact date or even era: Communists are not soothsayers or necromancers. Still, there is reason to believe—given the wealth of the world's cultures—that unity in diversity will be the salient feature of the communist "utopia".

The triumph of humanism in the policy of perestroika and the struggle against dogmatism and for democracy represent a fresh wind of change in the ideals of socialism and humanism.

3. Witch-hunting, excommunication and the quasi-religious—or plainly religious—veneration of ordinary, not to say fallible, persons are alien to the scientific ideology of Marxism-Leninism. They are painful aberrations and deviations, the work of those who promoted such attitudes. That was what caused the once fruitful tree of social science in the Soviet Union to wither almost completely. Dogmatism played its fateful role here, simultaneously doing enormous damage to democracy.

4. The world is becoming ever more complex. Each nation and each region, to say nothing of whole continents, has its own distinctive problems. But there are also global, universal problems we should confront jointly. This is why I believe it is an absolute must for Communists to observe the dialectics of the general and the particular. There is now

an obvious diversity of convictions, but they are all rooted in the abiding need to view the future of humanity integrally.

5. Marxism has not lost its prestige as a view of the world, man, nature or society. What we are witnessing is a more critical attitude to the aberrations I mentioned and to many others. No one can claim to be the final judge of or sole heir to the ultimate truth. We do not know how long this process of criticism will last, but Marxism will emerge from it purged of extraneous accretions and capable of serving constructive endeavour in all fields of human activity.

Naturally, there is nothing sacred in Marxism because it is not a religion, although there have been those who misinterpreted our science and tried to impose a sort of Marxist theology on it by using pseudoscientific methods of the worst neoscholastic kind.

6. Have I ever been ashamed? As a Communist, never. But I have often been full of indignation at the big and small aberrations and distortions of our ideology and of the forms and methods used to translate it into reality. If I were offered another life, I would choose the life of a Communist.

I have been a member of the Communist Party of El Salvador for almost 40 years now. I would not say that I am proud of my political convictions because pride is close to vanity and arrogance, and it clashes with modesty—something which should be one of the fundamental virtues in a Communist. Rather, I feel spiritual satisfaction with the fact that at 28, when my consciousness matured, I chose the party I now belong to. I joined it because it represents genuine patriotism. There is its admiration and respect for our people in their struggle to resolve the many problems confronting them. There is its internationalism and vigorous solidarity with other nations. I am grateful to my party for having given me millions of brothers the world over.

THE NEED FOR NEW IDEAS

Adriano GUERRA, b. 1926; joined the Italian Communist Party in 1947; Moscow correspondent of *l'Unità*, 1966-1969; member of the board of the Gramsci Institute; author of *The Years of the Cominform*, *After Brezhnev* and *The Day Khrushchev Spoke*; married.

1. The restructuring process now under way in the Soviet Union and some other socialist countries is indeed a source of hope, but also of concern about its favourable outcome. This concern is perfectly understandable because after the 20th Congress of the CPSU the process of cleansing socialism of Stalinism failed to develop. Still, the hope prevails that the reform will succeed not only in transforming Soviet society but also in enhancing the Soviet contribution to the struggle for peace and progress.

2. The way the question is worded suggests that Communists are supposed to be a single whole and adhere to

a common and fatalistic view of the world. That is not so because Communists are highly dissimilar. For example, there are those among us who are doing all they can to defend Stalin. I think it would be absurd to retaliate by "ousting" them from history or discriminating against them. But the fact remains that the Communists who fight against Stalinism differ fundamentally from those who uphold its principles and methods.

Besides, why is the idea of a "vanguard" being revived? In actual fact, it is far from everywhere that Communists are in the front rank of social progress. On the other hand, there are non-communist, non-Marxist forces which by right can be seen as champions of change.

3. I think we should look for an answer to the question of personality cults not only in practice and ideology but also in the doctrine. One can note the historical lag of socialist, communist theory in analysing issues of freedom and democracy. This lag no doubt played its part and affected social practice.

We know that to this day, Communists differ radically in their attitude to the meaning of "freedom" and "democracy", the interconnection between the state and the individual, and the criteria and values of socialism.

Some see it above all as a system of public ownership, others as self-government, and still others as democracy "all the way". A variety of interesting answers has been offered—in Poland, the Soviet Union, Hungary, etc. Italian and Chinese Communists are also offering their own options. The search for answers is being conducted with the help of a critical analysis of the past in order to prevent mistakes from recurring in the effort to renew socialism.

4. I am absolutely sure that we cannot speak of the communist movement as something with a single set of beliefs or a transcendent vision of the future.

5. This may sound paradoxical, but I am glad that some Marxist-Leninists have lost their intellectual prestige. That is the price of having been hostage to outdated notions for many years. At the same time, you cannot make sweeping generalisations about Marxists. There are those who, quite early on, spoke out against the dogmatic approach to Marxism and criticised the idea that objective laws of socialism exist which everyone should observe. Such Marxists have not lost, but rather gained intellectual prestige.

It appears that Marxism contains certain aspects which resemble religious concepts in the eyes of some people. This impression is strengthened, I believe, by certain rituals present in the socialist experience. They were particularly repulsive during the Stalinist period. But there is also the powerful tradition of secular Marxism which has always fought against prejudices.

6. Frankly, I would like to ask the *NYT* reporters, be they Democrats or Republicans, about their attitude to recent events in American history such as Vietnam or Watergate.

We should speak not so much about the shame Communists are supposed to feel as about their ability and readiness to examine their past objectively and soberly.

For example, I see the problem of freeing ourselves from Stalinism as a fundamental issue of our century. It affects not only Communists, but them most of all. As a member of the Italian Communist Party I have reason to feel proud in this regard because we took a timely if inadequate step toward solving this problem. Besides, I am entitled to take pride in the fact that the PCI did not wait for the advent of Mikhail Gorbachov to assume a principled stand on the Afghan issue or to uphold Andrei Sakharov's right to return from Gorky to Moscow.

On the other hand, I admire the way new political thinking is now being interpreted in the Soviet Union and the way the USSR is looking for methods to tackle global problems. We obviously need new ideas because we are living amid realities mankind has never encountered before. Participation in the search for a Marxist response to the new realities is further cause for us to feel proud.

I AM A DEDICATED OPTIMIST

Jaroslav Kase, b. 1926; a historian by training, joined the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in 1945; worked in the youth movement and had a job with the political education department of the CPCz Central Committee; since 1979 he has served as editor-in-chief of *Nova mysl*, the theoretical and political journal of the CPCz Central Committee, and as a member of the Central Committee's Ideology Commission; married with two children.

1. The process of socialist construction has not been as simple as many people thought it would be. It was a quest for new, virgin paths. Advancement along them involved mistakes and illusions, and there were losses and even sacrifices. But socialism has undoubtedly proved its ability to develop the economy with a view to promoting social justice, ensuring basic social rights and providing the people with access to the accomplishments of culture. We need an honest and concrete appraisal of the past.

For example, we often hear that the 1968 events in Czechoslovakia were a kind of prelude to perestroika in the Soviet Union. That is not so. The party leadership under Alexander Dubcek had to guide the country towards renewal while simultaneously repelling internal and external counterrevolution. But the leaders' passivity and their inability to tackle pressing problems and curb the right-wingers enabled the counterrevolutionaries to gradually assume control. Socialist gains in Czechoslovakia were in danger, and the threat of a civil war even arose. This is why we believe that our allies discharged their internationalist duty by assisting us in August 1968. There is no link between the "Prague Spring" and perestroika. Contrary to the socialist thrust of the current restructuring processes in the

Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia, the then Prague "reformers" rejected Leninism and the leading role of the working class. They were guided by elitist concepts. Today, our objective is to develop socialism; in 1968 the objective was to destroy it.

2. The most important thing is that the faith of the masses in socialism is alive. This is borne out by everything that happens in our society. People want to improve, not destroy, socialism. Socialism is an open system. We seek to enrich it by learning from the past and by developing democracy. This we connect with the need to enhance civic responsibility, order and social discipline. The leading role of the party does not run counter to socialist democracy. Instead, it rejects authoritarian methods and ensures the free development of all fields of human activity.

3. To claim that intolerance, personality cults and the like are a product of Marxist-Leninist ideology is like identifying fascism, racism or militarism with bourgeois ideology in the general sense. It is obviously absurd to raise the issue in such a way.

4. *The New York Times* would like to have us believe that the communist movement no longer exists. It has been "buried" that way many times, and there have been attempts to present it as a "blind alley". But it is alive, and it keeps developing. Today, our movement is on the threshold of a new period increasingly dominated by common human values. Its unity has passed through severe trials but survived, and it is being renewed, becoming ever more steadfast, creative and effective. As a dedicated optimist, I declare that communist ideals now unite us more than ever before.

5. I see no signs of Marxism losing its prestige with honest, progressive people. Increasingly, it is revealing its creative potential, showing humanity the way to social justice and freedom. It is a science containing a system of general laws of social development, of everlasting values and principles. Our philosophy does not at all resemble a religion. However, Communists do have an emotional attitude to reality. Despite all the storms, the future belongs to communism, to its ideals. Such is my conviction and, in this sense, my faith, if you will.

6. It is not shame but indignation that the Stalinist and other distortions of socialism evoke in me. But they cannot shake my pride in being a member of my party. I joined it when Czechoslovak society was divided by a social chasm and when, led by Klement Gottwald, the CPCz directed the struggle of the working class against capitalist exploitation and asserted our national sovereignty after the Nazis had trampled it underfoot. I am proud that, thanks to the Communist Party, Czechoslovakia joined the revolutionary process launched by the great revolution of October 1917, that Communists remain the most consistent champions

of peace. I am aware that, like other socialist countries, Czechoslovakia has failed to use all the available opportunities in its historical competition with the more advanced capitalist nations. But the present restructuring process is strengthening the dynamics of socialism, which is in turn gaining its "second wind". This reinforces my optimism.

THERE IS NO VATICAN IN THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

Damian PRETEL, b. 1930; joined the Communist Party of Spain in 1949; member of the PCE Central Committee and a professor at Granada University; has two children and a grandson.

1. I would like to begin by saying that some of the *NYT* assessments are phrased so as to present a caricature of Marxism. Still, it would be wrong to keep silent about them.

Have the sacrifice and the deprivation endured by Communists been in vain? Definitely not, and here is why: Firstly, it was thanks to socialism—specifically, to the Soviet Union—that Nazism was defeated and humanity was not plunged back into slavery. Secondly, it was socialism—primarily, the Soviet Union—that suggested ways of tackling the more pressing problems in a spirit of new political thinking and with due attention to the conflicting realities of our interdependent world. It has proved the practical feasibility of nuclear disarmament. Thirdly, there is more justice in socialism than in any other social system we know of. The problem of interethnic relations has largely been solved under socialism, and considerable progress has been achieved in health care, education and culture within a relatively short time. Moreover, the efforts of Communists and all Marxists have not been in vain because they have helped in part to transform the world.

2. Most importantly, the ideals of socialism, creative Marxism and our ability to correct our own mistakes and shortcomings still remain. This deserves special mention because self-criticism is a feature of Marxism not found in any bourgeois ideology.

3. Personality cults and intolerance are antipodal to socialism. They distort its nature. This should be stated plainly because I believe our ideological opponents raise the question in this way in order to confuse the public. Marxist ideology is an ideology of justice and democracy. The slogan "more democracy" is therefore aimed at consolidating and developing socialism; under capitalism, its long-term objective is to transform capitalist society into a socialist one.

4. To maintain that Communists are no longer united by their convictions is an obvious exaggeration. As I noted earlier, there exist common socialist ideals. The overall principles of revolutionary Marxism also remain, although

different countries will reach socialism in their own distinctive ways.

5. Name a single bourgeois ideology that has preserved its prestige. I think all ideologies are now in crisis. There is no ideology that could boast a monopoly on truth or justice. As to Marxism, I hold that the crisis affects those who interpret it dogmatically, not Marxism itself.

If the question has religious overtones, then there is nothing sacred for me in Marxism because Marxism is not a religion and the communist party is not a church. Besides, there is no Vatican, no universal spiritual centre in the communist movement. If I were asked what is important and indisputable in Marxism, I would reply that it is the defense of national interests and of the rights and freedoms of the working people, as well as the creative development of our theory.

6. I am very proud to be a member of the Communist Party of Spain. First, communism has taught me to think and act scientifically and creatively. Second, it helps people overcome the alienation everyone feels in capitalist society. True, I am ashamed of the many mistakes and crimes committed by Stalin and his coterie, but I am glad that socialism is capable of analysing and correcting its failures—something one cannot say about capitalism.

WHERE ARE THE COMPETITORS OF MARXISM?

Bert RAMELSON, b. 1910; a lawyer by training, fought in an international brigade during the Spanish Civil War and in World War II; became a Communist in 1936, served as a member of the CPGB Central Committee and Political Committee in charge of relations with the trade union and labour movement; now retired; married with three stepchildren and seven grandchildren.

1. To say that the efforts of the Soviet people were in vain is superficial nonsense, springing not from an attempt to assess the reality of things but from deeply rooted anti-communism. I have seen these efforts change the world. They transformed Russia, an economically backward country, into one of the world's leading powers within a few decades. The very existence of socialism in the Soviet Union forced the ruling classes in the capitalist countries to grant previously unheard-of concessions to the workers out of fear of the example the revolution of 1917 presented. The Soviet Union certainly played a key role in the defeat of fascism, delivering the world from the threat of Nazi bondage. Socialism contributed tremendously to the collapse of colonialism.

Naturally, we should not ignore the fact that the socialist countries have so far failed to provide their people with living standards as high as those in the advanced capitalist countries. But on the other hand, I have never seen

thousands of people sleeping in the streets in Moscow, the way it happens not only in Third World capitals but also in the West. Yes, there are housing and other acute problems in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. But they try to tackle them guided by considerations of social justice.

2. I would rephrase the question about the enthusiasm of Communists: Do I believe in the historical inevitability of the objective I have devoted my whole life to—the establishment of a social system free from exploitation, inequality and the war threat?

I would answer it the way I would have answered it 50 years ago: yes, I do believe in it. My determination in the few years that are still left to me is to continue, to do all I can to try and bring that necessary and worthy objective closer. I am a bit older and perhaps wiser now. I do not think it is as easily attainable or as simple as I thought it was, but that it *is* attainable I have no doubt whatsoever.

The word "vanguard" is used in *The New York Times* in a somewhat elitist sense—as, unfortunately, it has long been used by many Communists, and this alienated people from us. Together with my party, I stopped using the word "vanguard" in that sense 30 years ago. We are convinced that the word applies not to the party but to the whole working class as the major force which, in association with other sections of the population, can bring about the victory of the new social system.

3. I do not think that intolerance, personality cults and the like were inevitable in the history of communism. At every juncture the possibility existed for making different choices. If the working people had taken power in a country with a tradition of democracy, socialism would no doubt have taken a different shape. If the Communists in the Soviet Union had taken the advice of Lenin and removed Stalin from the post of General Secretary, it is quite possible that the course of history would not have been so tragic. If Stalin had not reversed the New Economic Policy, which really envisaged a prolonged period of transition, Soviet society may well have developed more productively.

Let me now say something one might view as heresy: it was our ignorance of Stalin's crimes that led Communists the world over to copy the structures and the forms of work of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. That was a non-Marxist approach. The CPSU developed in distinctive conditions. For example, Lenin's concept of the party and its structure may have been appropriate for the Russian masses, but it certainly was not for countries such as mine, with its long-standing democratic traditions and history of working-class struggle.

4. Although the world's Communists have long been doing without a centre or an international organisation, there is much that is common to them. There are many things that unite us if not in a single movement, then at least in what some would call an extended family with its members re-

presenting different generations and different degrees of kinship. Communists do have common features which distinguish them from other parties, they have a common philosophical view of the world. We all agree that we should support those struggling for a more just social system. We are united by our solidarity with the nations fighting against oppression. We are united in our rejection of war. True, we are divided in our conceptions of how to bring about social change or attain specific objectives. But this does not mean that there is no room for us to coexist as brothers and comrades.

5. In the final analysis, the prestige of a particular doctrine is determined by its comparison to other doctrines. I personally do not see any social doctrine that could compete with Marxism intellectually or politically. People make a mistake when they confuse Marxism with everything Marx has written, when they regard all his forecasts as absolutely right, or when they judge the validity of Marxist theory by checking it only against the way it is being translated into reality in the socialist countries. To err is human, and Marx was human. His successors made even more mistakes. It is the dialectical method, his analytical tool (which should always be used with due regard for the changing realities) and an understanding of society based on historical materialism that remain invariably effective and valid.

6. I have never been ashamed of my communist convictions. That does not mean that I have never been ashamed of things done by other Communists. When we learned the truth about Stalin from Khrushchev's speech at the 20th Congress, we were tremendously upset and angry that we supported a party whose leadership committed such terrible acts and crimes. I objected to the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the troops of the Soviet Union and its allies and to the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan. I hold that such actions are incompatible with communism, and so I cannot be morally responsible for them. I am also sure that they should not be the exclusive criterion of one's attitude to the CPSU because they do not stem from its communist essence.

I am proud of being a Communist, of having served for decades in a movement which has effected the greatest social transformations in history for the benefit of man. This identity has given purpose to my life.

OUR PATH HAS TURNED OUT TO BE MORE ARDUOUS THAN EXPECTED

Fridrikh FIRSOV, b. 1935, graduated from Moscow State University and joined the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1960; Doctor of History, he has been with the Institute of Marxism-Leninism under the CPSU Central Committee since 1957, specialising in the history of the Communist International; has written several research papers, including "Lenin, the Comintern and

the Emergence of Communist Parties"; married with two children.

1. From the outset, I would like to note the clearly flawed way in which some of the *NYT* questions are worded. Does the process of change in the USSR and other socialist countries evoke hope? Of course it does. Moreover, I am convinced that today, *perestroika is socialism*. But why should it evoke dismay? It is true that there was terrible sacrifice and tragedy in our history. The fact that we have finally found the courage to admit this makes us confident that these things will not recur.

Nor can I accept the claim that the faith of millions stands revealed as a failure. To begin with, our vision of socialism is not a faith but a conviction based—perhaps not always consistently—on a scientific approach to reality. Under certain circumstances, this approach does not rule out doubt, protest or discontent. We are bitterly aware that there must be no discrepancy between the end and the means. The problem is not one of faith. It is that our historical path has turned out to be more arduous and agonising than expected.

2. I object to attempts at ascribing some sort of messianism to Marxists. It is wrong to see Communists as an elitist vanguard or to hold that they are to command the masses. The creation of socialism is the people's cause. The Communist Party merely organises this movement of the masses, it is not a martinet. As to the "idealism" of Communists, it should be viewed from a historical standpoint. Indeed, a certain tendency to idealise revolutionary objectives and put the cart before the horse was typical of many of those who took part in the October Revolution and worked in the Comintern. That involved both positive elements—revolutionary enthusiasm and selflessness—and leftist mistakes divorced from reality.

3. No revolution, whatever its social character, offers an "ideal" or "flawless" example of social transformation. Revolutions cannot occur without violence. That alone makes them dramatic. The question is, what price is paid and what means are used to attain their objectives. That depends on the specific conditions in which they take place. The bitter experience of Stalinism does not reflect any general law that could be interpreted as denying the natural historical need for the emergence of a new social system. Stalinism was a disease induced by the conditions existing in my country, although we know that similar things happened in other countries too. I am convinced that the Communists will learn these tragic lessons of history.

4. It would, of course, be a utopian mistake to assert that Communists in different countries have uniform convictions and the same vision of the future. At the dawn of our movement, when many of its participants believed that communism would triumph worldwide, if not tomorrow then the day after, they were united by a certain ideological

monolithism. But as they developed, our parties became increasingly dissimilar due to the distinctive histories, traditions and national conditions in their countries. Today, it is simply absurd to picture the international communist movement as a uniform entity or a troop marching in step. Naturally though, we do have certain ideas and principles in common. It is our commitment to justice. It is a materialistic understanding of the historical process. It is humanism which, in my opinion, is essential to the communist movement. There is no humanism where communist ideals are subordinated to self-serving objectives or turned into ideological fetishes.

5. I do not think that Marxism has lost its intellectual prestige. True, dogmatism has undermined it severely in the eyes of the intellectual community. Nor was it enhanced by the deformations in socialist construction. But as a Marxist I am sure that our theory has an enormous creative potential. The important thing is to use it not dogmatically but as Marxists should—above all, taking reality into account and revising our concepts and views if they no longer correspond to the changing circumstances.

After all, there are no untouchable dogmas or eternal truths in Marxism. Innately dialectical, it must develop con-

tinuously to remain what it is. That is the only aspect of Marxism I would describe as "sacred".

6. As I said, the history of my party and my country is complicated and in many ways dramatic. Some pages in it do evoke a feeling of shame because my generation is responsible for them too. I am ashamed that the USSR remains a nation of wholesale shortages, that far from all the rights to which the citizens of a socialist country are entitled are something which our people are clearly aware of and which they exercise daily. But this feeling is inseparable from others, from the pride I take in my party, my country and in the accomplishments they have made which have changed the world. I think it would be unworthy and humiliating to reduce everything to repentance. Lamentation alone is not enough. We have work to do, and opportunities for it have been created by the revolutionary restructuring of our society. The opportunity to be active in this work is the greatest boon my membership in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has given me.

¹ Several comrades stressed that their replies reflected their personal views. —Ed.

COMMUNIST CONGRESSES

COMBINING DIFFERENT METHODS OF STRUGGLE

Jose ARIZALA

Central Committee member, Colombian Communist Party (PCC)

The Colombian Communist Party held its 15th Congress in Bogotá in December 1988, reasserting openly and boldly its dedication to democracy and peace. The hundreds of photographs of assassinated and missing Communists on the walls of the congress hall were proof of the great sacrifices the vanguard of the working people has to make in its struggle.

Taking part in the work of the congress were more than 800 delegates, guests of honour, diplomats, observers from all of Colombia's Left parties, and journalists. For the first time, our congress was open to the press, and reporters were able to attend all meetings, except, of course, those at which the Central Committee was elected. The nation's leading mass media covered the work of the congress, and several major newspapers published editorials stressing the importance of this event for Colombian politics.

For four months before the congress, discussions were held in the grassroots organisations. Communists were able to express their views in *La Tribuna*, a special periodical published for the purpose. There was no unanimity in the assessment of the PCC political line, and there was criticism of the leadership. Various political quarters were also invited to offer their opinion of the Central Committee's "Theses".

The major task facing the congress was to analyse the work of the party over the past four years (one of the more turbulent and tragic periods in Colombian history) and to formulate our course for the future.

THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION AND PERESTROIKA

Both during the pre-congress debate and at the congress itself, the international situation was a subject which evoked particular interest. There was agreement that we were witnessing a renewal of international affairs. At the same time, many comrades criticised the relevant section of the "Theses", maintaining that it did not properly reflect the essence of certain new developments, specifically the transformations under way in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries.

The issue of war and peace generated a lively discus-

sion. General Secretary Gilberto Vieira of the PCC Central Committee stressed in his report that as long as the world faced the threat of a nuclear catastrophe, the struggle for peace and disarmament had primacy and reflected the cherished aspirations of all nations. However, for all its importance, this cannot replace the revolutionary movement. The two should not be contrasted, the way it is done by those who claim that revolution may transform our planet into a radioactive wasteland and that broad unity of the peace forces is impossible if the class battles for national liberation and social emancipation continue.

Peace and revolution are the demands of social progress, of life itself. *The struggle against imperialism and its policy of war is the only way of attaining these lofty objectives.* The report also emphasises that "any advance of the cause of peace and detente contributes to the national liberation struggle".

The congress described perestroika in the Soviet Union as a revolutionary renewal of socialism led by the party of Lenin. It is called upon to revive the values of a progressive social system, ensure genuine popular rule and create a new image of socialism.

Colombian Communists have yet to grasp perestroika's profound spirit of self-criticism and its effort to eliminate shortcomings and gear socialism to the demands of the late 20th century. That is the objective pursued by the economic and political reform and by the development of the CPSU's theory and practice.

In his opening remarks, Gilberto Vieira noted that the Communists sought to use the lessons of socialist renewal for improving the methods of their work and enhancing democracy within the party. He also spoke about the beneficial influence perestroika exerted on the struggle for revolutionary transformations in Colombia.

The PCC leadership admitted frankly that in the past it had not always been objective and critical in assessing international developments or the mistakes, deficiencies and violations of socialist principles on the part of the parties and governments of the socialist countries. Furthermore, the Colombian communist leaders were not thorough enough in analysing the capacity of capitalism to adapt to situations arising in the course of competition between the two systems. In future, the party should approach these issues in its own independent way.

LATIN AMERICA

Central America and the Caribbean are where Latin America's nations clash bitterly with imperialism. This view is borne out above all by the developments in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Panama, where the United States has resorted to political and military intervention in order to preserve its traditional domination. Nevertheless, the Cuban and the Nicaraguan revolutions are growing stronger and gaining prestige as they defend national sovereignty and tackle complex economic and social issues.

The foreign debt is Latin America's biggest problem. It has exceeded the \$410 billion mark, and its impact on living standards has been catastrophic. Debt servicing swallows 50% of all export earnings. *The creation of a broad front against the external debt* is a vitally important task for the Latin American popular movement. Public support for the idea is growing.

The 15th Congress of the PCC stated that the prospects for Latin America's future were positive. Major change is under way there, as one can see from the election results in Peru, Mexico, Ecuador, Brazil and Venezuela.

New elements in relations between the United States and the socialist countries are benefiting Latin America because they are eroding the "bipolar approach" to its problems, which was used to justify interference in the affairs of the continent's nations. Colombia's foreign policy shows that our government is pursuing a contradictory course. While the Virgilio Barco Administration largely supports US foreign policy, it is also taking certain independent steps.

A self-critical analysis of the PCC attitude to international issues led the delegates to conclude that we should extend our contacts with organisations and movements operating under different conditions, and with those parties from which we used to distance ourselves because of ideological differences. The PCC underrated the importance of creatively studying international experience, and this in fact excluded it from the discussion of the revolutionary movement's topical issues. The party has to foster in each Communist an ability to take a broad and unbiased look at the world's social and political developments.

The congress expressed its appreciation of the role played by the Social Democrats in the struggle for peace, disarmament, human rights and democracy, and stressed the need to look for understanding with them, as well as the Catholic Church and Christian movements.

THE COLOMBIAN ECONOMY AND THE SOCIAL STRUGGLE

A period of economic recovery began in Colombia in 1984. Gross domestic product has been growing by more than 5% a year—one of the highest figures in Latin America. This is the result of an official policy openly favouring big capital. The millions of dollars made by the drug dealers have also contributed to the upswing. However, these bright prospects are overshadowed by the very real threat of a slump and by a growing foreign debt which, by the end of 1988, stood at more than \$16.5 billion.¹

The struggle against the foreign debt in its present form is a cause to be championed by all genuine patriots. *The Communists advocate a freeze on debt servicing*, and they are ready to discuss any proposals on joint action with other social forces.

Colombia has become an agrarian-industrial country and entered a phase of monopoly capitalism which has been deformed by dependence—one of the main reasons

for the nation's crisis. Our party has put forward a programme for overcoming this state of dependence. It calls for an expansion of the domestic market on the basis of a substantial rise in the incomes of the working class and the middle strata, and the creation of a mixed economy in which private, cooperative and public sectors would operate within the framework of democratic planning.

The Colombian people are suffering from unemployment and rising prices. In our nation of 30 million people, three million are fully or partly unemployed. Real wages keep declining. Six million people live in the slums that surround the big cities.

The establishment of a Unitary Trade Union Centre was a major step forward in the effort to rally labour. The Centre now represents 70% of all organised workers. But the unions have yet to devise an effective response to the terrorist campaign which threatens their very existence. The general strike of October 27, 1988, staged by the leading working-class organisations and supported by all Left parties, failed to achieve the desired result.

The Colombian popular masses are now using two main forms of struggle—marches in the cities by thousands of peasants demanding an end to violence and a solution to the more acute agricultural issues; and so-called civil strikes for the right to life, housing and education. In the course of these actions, an *alliance of different social classes and strata* is in fact taking shape. The creation of the Simon Bolivar Committee of Insurgent Organisations is part of the unification of the nation's political and social forces.²

The position of women has changed perceptibly due to their involvement in the production of goods and services, greater access to education, attainment of political rights and a drop in the birth rate. As a result, both the psychology and the social behaviour of Colombian women are changing. The more advanced among them have realised that a special women's problem exists side by side with the class contradictions typical of exploiter society. This means that we should conduct a theoretical study in order to devise a democratic programme for solving the women's problem and overcoming the prejudice that is so deeply rooted in social consciousness.

The production, export and marketing of cocaine yields enormous profits. Colombian drug traffickers have cornered a large part of the US drug market. The capital that builds up as a result is penetrating all structures of Colombian society—banking, industry, commerce, the media and even professional sports. Drug dealers buy up tracts of land to "launder" their money. The underworld has established close ties with many army officers and created a pretext for the conduct of military operations in different parts of the country, for imperialist intervention under the aegis of the US Drug Enforcement Agency, and for propaganda about "guerrilla drug pushers".

The Communists maintain that the production and marketing of narcotic drugs should be combated in an international effort coordinated by the United Nations. The

steps taken against drug producers and dealers should be based on criminal law. At the same time, our party is against the extradition of Colombian citizens to the United States and against the court investigation of their cases there.

COMMUNIST TACTICS

The PCC has in recent years suffered tragedy and brutality such as few political parties have ever experienced. Hundreds of our cadres have been killed in popular actions or fallen victim to the reign of violence and terror known as the "dirty war". It is being waged by the sections of the military and the police connected with the latifundistas and the big bourgeoisie. The drug traffickers' mafia also finances far-right paramilitary gangs.

Although our state is formally based on the rule of law, the republic has been in a state of siege for decades, a situation which has led to our already restricted democratic freedoms becoming completely nonexistent. An authoritarian regime is emerging in Colombia, a regime that coexists with militarist groups and gangs of hired killers. State terrorism is on the rise, in the form of planned genocide to which the government is completely indifferent and which the ruling class abets. The local reactionaries have often resorted to political assassinations, but the present-day situation has developed certain new features. We are in fact dealing with a kind of *preventive counter-revolution* aimed at crushing the democratic movement.

In some areas communist organisations have been decimated. The PCC has taken steps to repel these attacks. Despite considerable difficulties, special units have been formed to protect our cadres and party centres. But we believe that the most important thing is to make the people realise that we have to frustrate these murderous plans, mobilise the masses for a resolute protest against the crimes of the far right, and publicly expose those who mastermind them. We therefore set great store by *international solidarity and support* on the part of governments, political parties, revolutionary and democratic movements and all nations.

Naturally, purely political action is not enough. As the congress stressed, it is important to move vigorously to promote mass resistance and use the people's right to *legitimate self-defence* against the inhuman brutality of the reactionaries. Today, the foremost task is to fight for the right to life, and against assassinations, torture and kidnappings. A movement to promote those noble objectives has spread across the nation, covering large sections of the population.

The issue of combining different forms of the mass struggle did not feature prominently in the pre-congress "Theses". At that time the party leadership believed that this question was sufficiently clear to all members because the PCC had been using the relevant tactics since the 1950s. However, this was one of the main subjects of debate in the pre-congress discussions.

The practice of alternating or combining legitimate, peaceful action and clandestine, armed struggle is quite distinctive in Colombia. For decades, simultaneous use has been made of constitutional forms of struggle (including participation in elections, which has given the Communists a considerable number of seats in the parliament) and, in response to the violence of the reactionaries, guerrilla operations supported by the peasants. The Communist Party has drawn serious theoretical conclusions from the rich experience it has accumulated. The concept of *combining different methods of work* is now an integral part of Colombian communist strategy in a country where a revolutionary or insurrectionist situation has not yet matured.

The congress stated that as a result of the "dirty war" and of the government's concessions to the reactionaries, armed clashes could escalate, thus creating difficulties for mass action. For this reason the party, while continuing to observe the strategic principle of rationally combining all forms of the popular struggle, has *accorded priority to an open mobilisation of forces* so as to create an organisational and ideological basis for major democratic, anti-imperialist and revolutionary transformations. The congress has reaffirmed that the Communists do not aim at total war: they seek to preserve and consolidate the political ground necessary for launching constitutional and democratic action.

The party welcomed the 1984 truce between the government and the guerrilla organisations, including the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia. This truce contributed to the development of social movements and helped make the masses more active. The PCC supports the recently established Commission for Democratic Coexistence, which includes the Catholic Church and the political parties seeking a broader dialogue with the guerrilla movement.

Although Barco was elected President by a sizable majority of votes, the present model of government, the congress stressed, is becoming increasingly oligarchic and elitist. However, the head of state has failed to rally all sections of the ruling classes around him. The putschist trends that have surfaced up to now may seem isolated, but one cannot rule out the possibility of reckless ventures by the military.

Barco has changed the two-party system he inherited from the National Front³ and replaced it with Liberal rule. He has spoken in favour of direct negotiations with the guerrillas provided they cease military operations and agree to disband their units by a specific deadline. The guerrillas rejected this proposal because acceptance would have meant recognition of a defeat they did not actually suffer. Nevertheless, guerrilla leaders reiterated their readiness to conduct peace talks.⁴

The PCC congress called for a referendum on revising the Constitution. This should provide for the election of a Constituent Assembly since the present parliament has proved unable to effect the necessary reforms. The enact-

ment of the law on switching to direct mayoral elections as of 1988 is the only positive step it has taken.

The Communists believe that *another political crisis is approaching*. The nation is suffocating under the sway of the Liberals and the Conservatives. The PCC proposes the creation of a *democratic convergence government* as a step towards a popular, anti-imperialist and democratic revolution which would open the way to socialism. The revolution would establish an advanced democracy open not only to the Left but also to a much wider range of forces.

The Colombian Left is approaching unity. Its main currents—the Patriotic Union, the Popular Front and the Struggle Organisation—are converging. The Patriotic Union, to which the PCC belongs, has emerged as a powerful and crucial force for the creation of a *collective vanguard* capable of leading the entire spectrum of movements advocating political and social change.

THE PARTY

During the four years between our 14th and 15th Congresses, the numerical strength of the party has increased by about one-third. It now has more than 50,000 members, 23% of them women. There are 320 regional and 2,000 grassroots party organisations. Communist influence is felt in more than 1,700 mass associations.

The PCC is active virtually throughout the country, but its positions are still weak in the cities, where social contradictions and injustice are particularly pronounced. That is our major shortcoming. 43% of all Communists live in agrarian areas—Uraba, Arauca, Magdalena and Caqueta. The bigger delegations at the congress were therefore peasant ones.

The congress determined that the lag in ideological and theoretical work and the insufficient attention paid to the ideological struggle against rival sociopolitical currents were major mistakes on the leadership's part.

The congress considered amendments to the Party Statutes and approved the establishment of a commission charged with drafting a new version of the Party Programme within a year. The leadership of the party was elected for the first time by secret ballot, although some procedural snags did occur. The Central Committee was enlarged to comprise 80 full and 10 alternate members. The composition of the Central Committee and of the Executive Committee was renewed by 50%. Gilberto Vieira was re-elected General Secretary, and Alvaro Vasquez was elected to the newly created post of Vice-General Secretary.

After the introduction of a number of amendments, the congress unanimously approved important documents—a Peace Plan, a Political Declaration, amendments to the Statutes and the main reports.

The congress formulated the Communists' fundamental position: growing violence in the social and political struggle may push the nation into a civil war. This is why the Colombian Communist Party is firmly committed to the *political settlement of conflicts*. We are convinced that reliance on violence and bloodshed runs counter not only to the vital interests of the Colombian people, but also to the general course of human development.

1 Our high defence spending accounts for a large part of this sum. The government has recently spent \$200 million on Israeli-made Kfir planes. Arms purchases to the tune of \$750 million are planned for the next three years.

2 See: *WMR*, 1988, No. 12, pp.114-117.

3 The 1950s-1970s bloc of Colombia's traditional political parties—the Conservatives and the Liberals.—*Ed.*

4 In January 1989 the April 19 Guerrilla Movement started talks with the government on a transition to legal political activities.

FOR POPULAR UNITY

Gisele RABESAHALA

General Secretary, Madagascar Independence Congress Party (AKFM).

The AKFM held its 11th Congress in September 1988. In an interview taken in Antananarivo by WMR Editorial Council member Ali Malki, Gisele Rabesahala explains the significance of the forum and describes progress in the implementation of its resolutions.

■ **Several months have passed since the 11th AKFM Congress. In hindsight, what do you think of the forum?**

It was a milestone event for the party. Firstly, it coincided with the 30th anniversary of the AKFM. Secondly, important changes had taken place at home and abroad in the five years since the preceding congress, and they needed to be closely examined. Lastly, the party forum was convened on the eve of a series of important elections scheduled for 1989.

The socioeconomic realities forced many people, including party members, to wonder if the republic was abandoning the socialist road of development. The congress unambiguously demonstrated that it was not. In 1975, the Charter of the Malagasy Socialist Revolution, approved in a popular referendum, set the task of transforming the state through socialist orientation. The 10th AKFM Congress noted, however, that socialism had not yet been achieved and that society was going through the stage of the national democratic revolution.

Some people attribute our current economic difficulties precisely to the people's choice of socialist orientation. We do indeed have serious problems here. Madagascar does not have sufficient material and financial resources for development and, like many other young states, has to borrow abroad and pay high interest on loans. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, dominated by the US and other capitalist powers, grant credits under harsh terms which undermine national sovereignty by forcing upon us devaluation, the liberalisation of internal and external trade and the privatisation of state-owned companies. All this holds back our efforts to develop an independent economy.

The congress noted in its resolution that the decisions taken by several capitalist governments to write off the developing countries' debts either fully (Canada) or partially (France) did not significantly ease the debt burden. The terms of trade are even worse now for the young states, and

Gisele Rabesahala, b. 1929, began her political career in the youth movement of the country. Since 1959 she has been regularly re-elected AKFM General Secretary, and since 1976 has been culture minister of the Democratic Republic of Madagascar. Also a leading member of several national and international public organisations. —Ed.

their national currencies are declining. We think that a coordinated effort is needed to defend our common interests. At a Non-Aligned summit Didier Ratsiraka, President of the Democratic Republic of Madagascar, proposed the establishment of three funds for development, and this ought to be examined. The problem is very urgent because Madagascar is not the only country suffering from immense financial hardships caused by unfair rates of exchange and imported inflation. Naturally, all this adversely affects national economic growth and living standards.

■ **How did the party forum view the international situation?**

Changes on the international scene culminated in the Soviet-US INF Treaty, and the Congress characterised it as a major event with a beneficial effect on relations among countries. World leaders, and the people as a whole, are increasingly aware that the priority must be to rid ourselves of the threat of nuclear war. It is time for a new approach to international affairs, a new vision of the world, and a search for political ways of settling conflicts and disputes. Our party members have welcomed the idea of establishing a peace zone in the Indian Ocean and approve the talks taking place in various parts of the world to settle the conflicts in the Western Sahara, Central America, Kampuchea and the Middle East.

The AKFM reiterated the urgent need for struggle against imperialism and for peace, and as a party, *that is, an organised force, it will shoulder its responsibility for mobilising international public opinion for ending the nuclear arms race.* Humanity now has a real chance to advance towards complete and verifiable disarmament, and progress towards this goal cannot but have a beneficial effect on the emergent states.

The Congress noted that disarmament and development were not just dialectically related, but had now become identical.

Scientific and technological progress is gathering momentum, the opportunities for mankind are growing enormously, and it is all the more unacceptable and unjustified that hundreds of millions of people in Asia, Africa and Latin America are living in poverty.

Two-thirds of the world's population live in developing countries and only one-third in the industrialised ones. But the industries of the capitalist powers get most of their raw materials from the Third World, which is becoming progressively poorer. We will not reconcile ourselves to this situation because the possible consequences are unforeseeable.

Another point. The Congress noted that if the young countries continued to sink into the morass of poverty, the capitalist powers would not be able to sell them goods. For example, in 1986 as much as 65% of the world's industrial output was consumed by just 18% of the world's population. This obvious inequality, which is growing worse from one day to the next, is a danger to the whole of humanity and poses the risk of global economic destabilisation.

Today, more than ever, we need unity in struggle against

the intrigues of imperialism, and the Congress broadly discussed the issue of international solidarity. Revolutionary organisations which, like the AKFM, have embraced scientific socialism as their ideological basis and which follow the principles of proletarian internationalism ought to make every effort to strengthen international solidarity.

We support all the liberation movements and peoples fighting for freedom, national independence, and dignity. In particular, we stand in solidarity with the people of South Africa, who are close to us both geographically and politically. The situation in that country undoubtedly influences the whole of the continent and especially its southern tip, and also the Indian Ocean region, including Madagascar.

Everyone knows that the forces of reaction will stop at nothing in their bid to split our ranks. All kinds of anti-Soviet and anti-socialist circles are exploiting Soviet perestroika in order to further discredit socialism, and the very word "perestroika" is used for subversive ends. For example, a Malagasy emigre group in France who oppose socialism smuggle leaflets into Madagascar which claim that Soviet perestroika is evidence of a "renunciation of socialism" and that the Malagasy people should "follow this example" and demand, among other things, a revision of the democratic constitution of the republic.

■ **What were the proposals of the Congress for defending the independence and national sovereignty of the country?**

The AKFM believes that all elements of society committed to national interests should join forces in the struggle for continued economic independence and national sovereignty in order to find ways and means of guarding our economic management from outside pressure. Otherwise the republic may face a serious threat to its independence.

■ **What was the impact of the Congress on internal party life?**

It conducted a critical analysis of the situation in the party and admitted that since its 10th Congress the AKFM had gone through a difficult period, which coincided with the economic crisis mainly affecting Malagasy people on a low income, such as peasants, workers, petty employees and the middle strata, in short, most of the population.

The crisis affected the work of the party as well. Its composition reflects the social structure: 80% of the membership

are peasants who, together with workers, have first-hand experience of hardship. Economic difficulties compel our comrades to work hard and long to make ends meet, and so they have less time to devote to party work than before. People miss party meetings and find it more difficult to pay membership fees.

The Congress discussed all these problems and stressed that party discipline should be respected regardless of the circumstances. Bearing in mind new factors, we will take steps to prevent anyone diverting the party from its chosen course and to rid ourselves of methods of operation which are alien to the party's organisational, political and ideological principles.

The Congress also analysed the party's composition. The delegates' average age was 45. Regrettably, we have few women in the party, but the infusion of "fresh blood" is heartening. But we have a problem here as well: many of the people who joined the party 6 or 7 years ago know little about its history and the difficulties it encountered in its evolution. That was why a recommendation was made to devote more effort to the ideological and political education of young people and to studies of party history. Knowledge of the past helps one understand the important role of the AKFM in the country's life today and the respect accorded to it by various political forces.

The AKFM has worked out its tactics for the forthcoming elections. We are appealing to everyone, especially the organisations making up the National Front for the Defence of the Revolution,¹ to act responsibly in the election campaign. The various tendencies within the Front should not provoke conflicts with grievous effects on the situation in the country. Any action endangering national unity must be blocked.

Popular unity is the main achievement of the revolution in the history of independent Madagascar, and every effort must be made to defend and strengthen it.

¹ Founded in 1976, it includes seven political parties, among them the AKFM. The Front is chaired by Didier Ratsiraka, President of the Democratic Republic of Madagascar and General Secretary of the Vanguard of the Malagasy Revolution Party (AREMA). —Ed.

IN BRIEF * * * * *

Austria The Communist Party of Austria (KPÖ) will convene its next congress in January 1990. It was stressed at a KPÖ CC plenary meeting, which met to consider preparations for the congress, that there was a need to pay attention to rejuvenating the party's governing bodies when these were elected. In this context, Franz Muhri informed the plenary meeting that the KPÖ CC Political Bureau had unanimously approved his proposal to elect a new chairman of the party at the forthcoming congress. Walter Silbermayr, KPÖ CC

Secretary, has been nominated for the post.

PRC The Chinese Society for the Study of the History of the International Communist Movement and a number of civic organisations held a scientific conference in Beijing to mark the 70th anniversary of the Comintern.

GDR A multilateral meeting of communist and social democratic parties, attended by the Bulgarian Communist Party,

the Socialist Party (Flemish wing) of Belgium, the Social Democratic Party of Denmark, the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, the Party of Labour of the Netherlands, and the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, was held in Berlin. The participants supported the USSR's initiative for a treaty on a 50% reduction in strategic offensive weapons, with strict observance of the ABM Treaty, consistent limitation of nuclear tests until their complete cessation, and a tighter regime for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

REACHING OUT

The Brussels Meeting of European Left Periodicals

The Belgian capital is well-known as the headquarters for many international organisations. Brussels is a kind of "European crossroads", the site of conferences, workshops and conventions. But even against this sophisticated background, the meeting that occurred at the International Associations Centre in March did not go unnoticed. Aside from the fact that the forum of Europe's Left periodicals, sponsored by the Belgian *Cahiers Marxistes* monthly, was devoted to a topical subject—the strategy of the progressive forces in the light of the prospects for the creation of a "single Europe" after 1992—the interest in the event shown by various mass media was explained primarily by another consideration: it is not yet too often that one can see Communists, Social Democrats and representatives of other left forces gather at the same round table. Contacts which are still difficult to establish in interparty relations have proved possible in this form.

Monthlies from France, Belgium, the FRG, the Netherlands, Italy, Spain and Greece were represented in Brussels. Also present were observers from Hungary, the Soviet Union and Sweden, as well as a staff member of *WMR*.

In a frank and completely unrestricted discussion the participants exchanged views on a wide range of subjects: whether the development of the "core" at the expense of the "periphery" in "Europe'92" could be prevented; the "social dimension" of the integration process; how cooperation should be promoted with non-EEC countries; and whether the European Left had its own alternative political strategy.

As Rosine Lewin, editor-in-chief of *Cahiers Marxistes*, stressed in her interview for Belgian television, Europe does not end at the boundaries of the "single market". This point was also made in the course of the meeting. There was also an unplanned but, apparently, not accidental discussion of perestroika in the Soviet Union and the transformations under way in Poland and Hungary. There was an argument about the role of the market under socialism and under capitalism.

Naturally, the debate demonstrated the differences present in the assessments offered and, frequently, in the

mentality of those representing different parties and movements. Some gravitated toward the views of Gianni Cervetti, member of the Leadership of the Italian Communist Party and chairman of the communist faction in the European Parliament; while others tended to support Peter Glotz, editor-in-chief of the West German social democratic periodical *Die Neue Gesellschaft*. The Dutch Socialist Paul Scheffer maintained that the idea of European Left unity was vague, but the Belgian Communist Pierre Gillis was more optimistic. There were also those who came to Brussels to listen rather than to speak, as well as those who merely wished to state their views. Parallel monologues did not always develop into a dialogue, but when the participants left after meeting for two days it was not without a certain feeling of satisfaction—something people always experience after crossing a difficult boundary and taking another step toward each other.

It was noted at the end of the conference that this was not the first meeting of Left journalists: similar projects have been organised annually by several social democratic press organs, the latest in Vienna in June 1988. At that time it was decided to set up a kind of sponsoring bureau and a standing group to coordinate the ties existing between Europe's Left periodicals. The initial plan is for all interested editorial boards to inform the group about the contents of their regular issues. This information will then be collated, translated into the working languages and presented to all those involved. Anything further—reprinting and other contacts—will, of course, depend on the willingness and interest of the editorial boards concerned. But they will have a minimum technical infrastructure for cooperation.

Meeting in Brussels (and in Vienna) were the editors of periodicals connected, in one way or another, with political organisations which are not only dissimilar, but also have their differences, sometimes verging on open rivalry.

Many of those present admitted that they were not ready to repeat all they had said there before a large audience. One thing on which everyone agreed was that, however distinctive the position held by a particular party or periodical, it should not rule out contacts with other forces, including those beyond the national framework.

As the participants left Brussels, the common call was "See you in Rome". This is where the next meeting of European Left periodicals is slated to be held in September.

S.B.

***** IN BRIEF

Kampuchea In November 1988, the People's Revolutionary Party of Kampuchea had over 23,000 members in 3,023 party organisations. Party committees have been set up in 21 provinces, as well as in 159 of the 169 districts.

Mongolia The Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party has taken a number of measures to improve party organisation and ideological work. The 12 departments of the CC have been reduced to 8, and, as these are reor-

ganised, their staffs are to be cut by 25%. Changes will also take place in the village, town and district committees of the party.

USSR General Secretary of the Italian Communist Party Achille Occhetto paid a working visit to Moscow. During his meeting with CPSU CC General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachov they discussed the criteria of progress today, and new methods of revolutionary development, both nationally and internationally. They exchanged views on the problems of the

working-class movement in Europe as it approaches the creation of a single market in 1992, and the role of left-wing and other progressive forces in the Helsinki process.



A FUTURE WORTH FIGHTING FOR

A ROUND TABLE IN DENMARK

A round table, cosponsored by Tiden—Verden Rundt, theoretical journal of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Denmark, and by World Marxist Review, was held recently in Copenhagen. Taking part were Gert PETERSEN, Chairman of the Socialist People's Party (SF) and member of the Folketing (Parliament); Ole SOHN, Chairman of the Communist Party of Denmark (DKP); Bent HANSEN, Social Democratic Party member, and leadership member of the General Workers' Union of Denmark, former minister; Else HAMMERICH and Jens Peter BONDE, Europarlament members representing the People's Movement for Withdrawal from the EEC; and Ib NØRLUND, Political Bureau member and secretary of the DKP Central Committee, Tiden—Verden Rundt Editorial Board member and DKP representative at WMR.

The participants discussed three groups of questions—the struggle for peace, Denmark's membership in the EEC and NATO, and cooperation within the Left and among democratic movements. An abridged transcript follows.

PROSPECTS FOR THE PEACE MOVEMENT

Nørlund. *To begin with, does the incipient progress in detente and disarmament imply that the mission of the antiwar movement has been accomplished? What does "new thinking" mean to you? Is it mostly a propaganda notion or does it reflect today's objective realities?*

Petersen. We have witnessed only limited progress in detente and disarmament. Besides, NATO tends to offset the reduction of medium- and shorter-range missiles by rearmament in other spheres. If this trend gets the upper hand, a new round of the arms race may begin. The peace movement is facing a formidable task: to bring pressure to bear on political decision-makers so as not to miss the chance of creating a better world order.

Hammerich. New thinking reflects an urgent imperative. But it can degenerate into propaganda if the world's nations fail to see what specific path to take. I have read the verbatim record of the Danish Folketing session which discussed the Brundtland Commission Report.¹ The impression was depressing. No strategy was devised for curbing the arms race, protecting the environment, promoting development in the Third World or tackling other issues. Many members of parliament had little of

substance to say on the matter. The discussion was turned into a political ping-pong match of mutual recriminations. But the report is not a Doomsday prophecy. It should be treated as a basis for dealing with global problems.

Bonde. Among other things, peace champions could launch a dialogue with the military in the East and the West and suggest meaningful proposals. For example, the military could be called on to join the struggle against hunger and the encroachment of deserts and to help develop the infrastructure in Third World countries. *New thinking will take root in the military only if the peace movement itself proves capable of thinking in a new way—that is, if it no longer automatically regards the military as the enemy and instead tries to persuade army officers to change their world view.* I think we should tackle issues of survival before we get down to sorting out our differences. We should learn to cooperate so that universal human interests would have priority over all others.

Sohn. A tendency to let things slide has surfaced in the antiwar movement. But it still faces important tasks, and Denmark is no exception. We must remember that most of our people still support Denmark's NATO membership. Therefore, we have to focus not so much on whether or not Denmark should withdraw from NATO (al-

though I think it should), but on issues which can assure us of the broadest possible support—a nuclear-free zone in the north of Europe, conventional arms reductions and the like. On this basis, *resistance* to NATO policies would gradually increase, and the idea that military blocs should be dissolved would begin to gain ground.

■ **Nørlund.** *The work of the Palme Commission and the report of the Brundtland Commission have led to a broad interpretation of the notion of security. Could this offer an opportunity for cooperation between uncoordinated special interest movements to resolve specific issues?*

Petersen. A broad interpretation of security has long been the subject of debate in Denmark. The idea that assistance to Third World countries should be treated as an aspect of general security is not new to us.

The important thing is to recognise that security cannot be reduced to purely military matters. But as far as priorities go, I am convinced that *putting an end to the arms race and achieving disarmament* is of prime importance. If substantial cuts in nuclear weapons become possible, this will have a favourable impact on the international climate as a whole, including the effort to close the North-South economic gap.

Bonde. The Cold War which gave birth to the two military-political alliances created a world order which, while objectionable, was clear and predictable. Suppose it is decided to have the blocs dissolved in the name of common security. Then new "rules of the East-West game" will materialise. If this or that country begins to gravitate away from the centre of its former bloc, the opposing centre must resist the temptation to play on that. Otherwise extremely dangerous situations may arise running counter to the development of detente. In other words, the United Nations' universal principles concerning equality, mutual benefit and non-interference should become basic *standards* underlying all international relations.

Hansen. I personally see no particular danger emanating from Soviet-American relations today. Their power structures seem more or less to have learned to control the terrible weapons they possess. My concern is with the fact that the nuclear genie is out of the bottle. We cannot rule out the possibility of a state or group of states resorting to nuclear weapons if they feel seriously threatened. Besides, there are many hotbeds of tension not directly connected with East-West rivalry. These tensions have completely different causes, including Third World poverty. Each of the hotbeds in question may provoke a new war.

Hammerich. You are talking about things that may happen. I am more concerned about developments already under way and sure to produce irreversible complications—the holes in the ozone layer and the greenhouse effect. The probability is increasing that the polar ice caps may start to melt and the sea level to rise. Wars are a distinct possibility if many port cities and

densely populated coastal regions are flooded and migration begins on an unprecedented scale. These issues must not be left for the environmentalists alone to tackle. Let trade unions, popular movements, political parties and all those concerned, draw up several general projects for environmental protection. One of them should be aimed at reducing the consumption of fossil fuels, preferably without nuclear power. This is where I would pass the ball into Nørlund's court.

Nørlund. All right, let me try and answer that. One can, of course, say that my approach to environmental issues is all wrong and imply that Niels Bohr was my uncle. But as we can see from his open letter to the UN, he pinned his hopes on the peaceful uses of atomic energy. That is something I would like to emphasise.

Sohn. As Gorbachov said, it is now particularly important to shift policy to the plane of *practical action*. So I think Else's proposals have considerable potential, especially as regards the opportunities for resolving major issues in specific ways. One can add to the list of the problems, but the approach itself is right, I believe.

■ **Nørlund.** *How important is it to dispense with the "enemy image" if we are to assert new thinking and solve other related problems? How do the changes under way in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries influence Danish public opinion in this respect?*

Petersen. As a rule, the "enemy image" is not wholly divorced from reality. True, propaganda has played and is still playing a major role in promoting it, particularly in the military sphere. It is widely believed in Denmark that if there were no NATO and if it did not maintain a certain level of armament, the USSR could begin to pressure the West European countries and dictate its policy to them. I think this is a fundamentally wrong view. The Soviet Union has never dictated its policy to Austria or Finland, which are neutral countries and do not enjoy the protection of NATO. Consequently, there is no reason to believe that the Soviets would pressure other European countries. Obviously though, both NATO and the USSR possess enormous military capabilities. For the "enemy image" to be abandoned without delay both in the East and in the West, it is very important to secure the lowest possible level of military confrontation.

Hammerich. Contacts do a great deal to help destroy the "enemy image"—but not just any contacts. A couple of years ago I took part in a women's conference where delegates from East European countries told us how great it was back home. It sounded really ludicrous. But when we talked to those women informally in the evening, we heard quite different things from them. In other words, I am in favour of candid contacts instead of meetings at which we would speak about the problems of women in capitalist countries and be told about how happy they are under socialism.

In Murmansk, Gorbachov advanced far-reaching military and environmental initiatives relating to the north of

Europe. This first step should be bolstered tangibly on both sides. Followed up with practical projects, such proposals deal particularly destructive blows to the "enemy image".

Sohn. The Soviet Union's foreign policy proposals have indeed revolutionised the thinking of many people in Denmark. A social democratic member of the Folketing has even said that Gorbachov is a godsend to the Soviet people. I don't think this was a sign of the speaker's religious devotion. Rather, it shows his party's changed attitude to Soviet policy.

With regard to contacts, I would emphasise the development of a direct dialogue between young people in different countries. I am inspired by the work of Denmark's Youth and Peace movement to organise the "Next Stop: the USSR" campaign.² Within it, meetings will be held with young Soviet men and women representing different social strata, sports clubs, rock ensembles and trade unions. That is one way of overcoming prejudiced attitudes.

EUROPEAN INTEGRATION THREATENING DENMARK?

Nørlund. This brings us to our next question: Can Denmark play an independent role as a "builder of East-West bridges"? How is this affected by our membership in NATO and the EEC?

Hammerich. Like any other small country, Denmark can play such a role. I see the EEC as the main obstacle to this because economic competition with the United States, Japan and Southeast Asia is its foremost objective. All else is secondary to the EEC.

Sohn. I think membership in the EEC and NATO is incompatible with Denmark's *independent role* in a dialogue on international issues and security policy. One of the reasons is that the EEC is a supranational body. I think that Denmark's opportunity for independent East-West bridge-building calls above all for closer cooperation with the other Nordic countries. Of course we will encounter difficulties, but this path will enable us to pursue a vigorous and independent policy.

Petersen. The Socialists would like to see Denmark unaffiliated to any blocs. But as long as it remains a NATO member, it should try and influence developments in line with the tasks set by the antiwar movement. This end is served by the so-called *policy of reservations*. On the one hand, it enables Denmark to show its political independence. On the other, by expressing reservations on NATO decisions—reservations reflecting the distinctive views of the Danish people—we can call on public opinion in other NATO countries to follow suit and exert pressure on their governments, particularly with regard to the more important issues such as SDI, chemical weapons, a nuclear-free zone in the north of Europe and the elimination of all nuclear weapons on the European continent.

As for the EEC, I do not quite share Ole Sohn's assessment. Denmark can benefit a great deal from European political cooperation. Within the Community, meaningful

results can be achieved—say, in shaping the EEC's position on Central America or the Middle East, a stand one could hardly expect the Danish government to assume on its own.

Hansen. We believe that there is a positive aspect to Denmark's EEC membership because it gives us an opportunity to be heard, something our northern neighbours lack, and it increases the political weight of our nation. But we are also aware of the problems this membership generates. Our trade union is particularly alarmed by the removal of the last restrictions on the flow of capital between Denmark and other EEC countries. The steps taken by the present Danish government may make it very difficult for it to pursue an independent economic policy.

■ **Nørlund.** *We have broached the issue of the possible danger to our economic and political independence, a concern shared by many in Denmark. How great do other participants in our round table think this danger is?*

Petersen. Looking ahead, membership in the EEC is much more dangerous than membership in NATO. As a NATO member we refused back in 1957 to deploy nuclear weapons on our territory, at least in peacetime, and we have honored this decision. But it is very difficult to avoid closer economic integration. The liberalisation of the flow of capital Bent Hansen referred to is very dangerous because it deals a blow to Denmark's political independence.

Bonde. Given a free flow of capital, the nation's economy and finances will be directly and increasingly dependent on the foreign holders of Danish government bonds and securities. This opens enormous opportunities for bringing pressure to bear on our political developments, up to and including parliamentary election results. Denmark's independence is also threatened by the expansion of arms manufacture under the EEC aegis—a process fraught with the emergence of a military-industrial complex, a major factor in making the Community more and more politicised. I am particularly alarmed by this aspect of EEC cooperation.

Sohn. The communist approach to the EEC does not mean that Denmark should refrain from taking part in international cooperation, including cooperation under the treaties we have concluded. But there is a substantial difference between the kind of cooperation involving limitations imposed on national sovereignty in certain fields only, and the voluntary delegation of decision-making to supranational bodies (in this case, to the EEC). As a result, the Folketing is gradually losing its decisive role in the shaping of economic policy. Since we joined the EEC in January 1973, our foreign debt has been growing. It follows that there is a *cause-and-effect relationship* between the loss of economic and political independence. With the creation of a single EEC market and the removal of obstacles to the flow of capital, the situation will only get worse.

Petersen. We won't be able to avoid the liberalisation

of the flow of capital. But if we are talking about plant closures, buyouts, transfers abroad and the like, then please note that the FRG and Britain, two major EEC members, have adopted laws which can sometimes prevent such moves. I think we should enact similar legislation.

Sohn. I am not raising the issue of withdrawal from the EEC because there is no realistic basis for it in the present situation. But even remaining within the EEC, Denmark should be guided above all by its national interest. A special point I would like to make is that *if we move to preserve Denmark's independence, we will inevitably come into conflict with overall EEC policy.*

■ **Nørlund.** *What alternative can Denmark's Left suggest to the conservative bourgeois project of transforming the EEC into a supranational body and of further integration within its framework? In Italy, they are talking about turning the Europe of the monopolies into a Europe of nations.*

Bonde. The Left should respond by searching to *combine the economic, political and environmental elements of development.* It is clear that economic integration cannot be avoided. Every country has to find its place in the international division of labour. So the prospect for Denmark does not involve isolation. Rather, it implies new kinds of links with the Community which would ensure a more equitable relationship between us and the other EEC countries.

The idea of creating a Europe of nations on the basis of the EEC does not appeal to us. We would prefer to have the UN Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) as the proper base. Today, one cannot expect the emergence at the EEC level of parliamentary democracy leading to real change. For this to be achieved, the arrangements arising from the EEC treaty will have to be revolutionised.

Hansen. I would like to note that the EEC is an established structure, and its nature is determined by the participating governments.

Hammerich. It is not a neutral structure interpreted differently by different countries. The Community is tending towards increased integration with the crucial role played by the transnationals. We maintain that this is an obsolete form of international cooperation. We would welcome Denmark exchanging its EEC membership for rational and peace-loving economic cooperation with other countries. We want to be part of a Europe of nations, but if this is to materialise, we must preserve *our independence.*

PROSPECTS FOR COOPERATION

■ **Nørlund.** *The final question in our discussion is how successfully the popular movements, particularly the trade union movement, can play their role in resolving the problems we have outlined.*

Hansen. Over the past 10 years the activities of the

General Workers' Union, the biggest in Denmark, have acquired an increasingly clear political thrust. During the 1987 election campaign, the union's leadership earmarked 180 million kroner for a campaign against Poul Schlüter's right-wing cabinet and decided to support workers' parties. During the 1980s our union was active in the struggle for peace and disarmament. This helped shape the Social Democrats' position on domestic and international issues.

Bonde. Opinion polls show that only 28% of the Danish people regard union membership as imperative. Environmental awareness is spreading, and people even support the idea of closing plants, including their own, if they pollute the environment. So to preserve its leading role, the trade union will have to tackle new tasks. *It should become the organising centre in the effort to uphold common human values, not only class-based interests in the narrow sense of the term.*

Hammerich. It is also important to overcome the old notions about the right-wing and left-wing currents in the labour movement. We should no longer maintain that one must be on the Left to be honest and rational. The reality is different. We are seeing the progressive majority for disarmament, detente, environmental protection, social justice and assistance to the developing countries destroying the old divisions between the Left and the Right. True, this majority does gravitate towards the Left, but progressive views are also spreading among those we have identified with the other wing.

Petersen. The myth that only Left-oriented people can fight against the arms race is peddled by the right-wing bourgeois opponents of disarmament in order to present antimilitarist sentiment as something suspiciously left-wing. Facts prove that this is not so. The peace movement in Denmark could have never become so widespread without the participation of the many supporters of NATO membership.

■ **Nørlund.** *Would you agree that cooperation within the Danish Left could go further than the fight for peace and expand to cover social issues too? What stands in the way of closer cooperation in this field?*

Petersen. The crisis the capitalist world has entered after a long recovery, the offensive of the bourgeoisie, the structural changes in the economy and the instability of the exchange rates all contribute to a rightward shift. However, *many values which the socialist and democratic forces have been fighting for have retained their significance*, values that were particularly prominent in 1968 and in the years that followed. In a sense, the demands for democracy, justice, solidarity with the Third World and environmental protection have grown even stronger.

Hansen. Neoconservatism is not supported by the public as broadly as the coalition government parties would have us believe. This is clear from the September 1987 and May 1988 election results. In neither case did the reactionary conservative parties win a majority. Besides, as Else Hammerich rightly noted, sufficiently

progressive views are also current among supporters of the bourgeois parties.

Opportunities for *joint action by the Left* have improved in recent years. Our trade union hopes to boost cooperation between the Social Democrats and the People's Socialists at government level.

Sohn. When several pressing problems emerge, cooperation begins primarily at the *grass roots*. The trade union offers the best example, with excellent examples of joint action involving Social Democrats, People's Socialists, Left Socialists and Communists. For instance, May Day rallies are held jointly virtually throughout the nation.

The barriers that have long obstructed such cooperation are gradually crumbling. Naturally, ideological and political differences between our parties do remain. Among other things, we believe the country needs more far-reaching economic reforms than those advocated by the People's Socialists or the Social Democrats. We also differ in our attitude to the alternative economic policy designed to offset integration within the EEC. But this does not have to hamper cooperation. The biggest problem joint action involves is a lack of common sense.

Petersen. We in Denmark did not have to wait for the advent of new thinking to ensure reasonable and sufficient left cooperation. Although the People's Socialists seceded from the Communists and the Left Socialists withdrew from our party, these three forces established good relations in 1973. Our cooperation with the Social Democrats is progressing too. Today, the important task is to convince the people that the workers' parties offer a viable alternative to the bourgeois government.

Sohn. During the latest election campaign the four workers' parties agreed informally not to waste time on mutual criticism but instead devise a rational way of col-

lectively resisting the bourgeois parties. This confirms our desire to win majority support for our alternative.

In order to step up the drive for securing such a majority, the DKP has decided to work for the establishment of a *Democratic Renewal Forum* which will be open to all interested forces. We want it to debate not only domestic issues but also global problems. We are motivated by our commitment to involve in the debate a broad spectrum of left forces, including politically unaffiliated people active in the grassroots movements. They could create a forum of their own and take part in the shaping of a domestic political course. If this idea wins support, the forum has a chance to grow into an electoral alliance which can gain ground for the Left at the level of the Folketing too.

Hammerich. I think the working-class majority should be open and amenable to contacts with people who are not politically organised. Without such mass-scale support, our majority will fail. There is a great difference between simply ticking off the name of a workers' majority party on your ballot and effectively supporting a new government people would really regard as their own.

■ *I would say, Ib Nørhund said in conclusion, that we have held an interesting exchange of views useful to all participants. The debate has made it clear that in contemporary society, not least in our country, there are many phenomena calling for more profound analysis and explanation. Efforts towards this end can, in themselves, create a basis for cooperation.*

1 Gro Harlem Brundtland, Prime Minister of Norway, Chair of the Norwegian Labour Party and head of the World Commission on Environment and Development.—Ed

2 The previous campaign of the Danish antiwar youth movement was called "Next Stop: Nevada". See *WMR*, No.4, 1988.

DIALOGUE

NORTH-SOUTH: TWO VIEWS FROM THE LEFT

The economic backwardness and the foreign debt of the developing nations, their relations with the industrialised Western countries, the terms of trade with and assistance to the Third World, as well as the impact of its economic difficulties on international stability and on the prospects of social progress make up the bulk of a global issue known as the North-South problem. Many political and academic figures believe that the dangers with which this issue is fraught are comparable to the threat posed by nuclear self-destruction or an environmental catastrophe.

Jan PRONK
Deputy Chairman,
Labour Party
(Netherlands)

*These topical matters were the subject of the dialogue we present here. A few words about its participants: the Dutch economist Jan Pronk has served on the Independent Commission on International Development Issues (the Brandt Commission), as a member of the European Parliament and of the Dutch parliament, as his country's Minister for Development and Cooperation (1973-1977), as UNCTAD Deputy Secretary-General (1980-1985) and as UN Assistant Secretary-General (1985-1986). Semou Pathe Gueye, Doctor of Philosophy, is editor-in-chief of the Marxist periodical *Gëstu* and Editorial Council member of *World Marxist Review*.*

Semou Pathe GUEYE
Political Bureau member
and Central Committee
Secretary, Senegal Party
of Independence and
Labour

- **WMR.** *In 1980 the Brandt Commission issued its first report entitled North-South: A Programme for Survival, which generated a widespread international response. Today, virtually all major sociopolitical forces throughout the world stress the gravity of the North-South contradictions and advance their own proposals on resolving them. International social democracy is one of these forces. Why has it been paying more attention to this problem?*

J.P. First, one of the elements of any socialist ideology is that it should be internationalist and oriented towards equality. The second reason is of a more pragmatic nature. When Willy Brandt took over as President of the Socialist International, he launched several initiatives to meet the interests of the SI's African, Asian and Latin American members. Having joined the SI, these parties insisted that the North-South problem be put on the agenda of SI meetings. The third reason is that during the

1970s, several West European social democratic parties were in power, and they wanted to work out among themselves a joint policy vis-à-vis the developing nations.

In the mid-1980s the SI drew up the *Global Challenge* paper. This time it was addressed specifically to the SI member parties. It was in fact a new face of the issue of a new economic order, a question the developing countries had promoted in the early 1970s. We also tried to respond to several problems which were not sufficiently covered by the Brandt Commission—adjustment, the debt issue, conditionality and the like.

INTERDEPENDENCE OR EQUALITY?

S.P.G. I agree with your assessment of the political motives behind the increased attention to North-South relations. But I would like to immediately stress a very important aspect. Before the Brand Commission's report,

the entire problem was raised in a very paternalistic and even sentimental manner, as something to do with charity. The reasoning was along these lines: "Morally, the North is duty-bound to help the South, but it has nothing to gain from this assistance." I give particular credit to the Brandt Commission for showing that *the fates of the North and the South are inseparably linked*, that it is not only a matter of solidarity or charity. The North and the South are indeed interlinked, and the growing difficulties of the South are, little by little, creating problems for Western Europe and North America. It is not so much morally as *economically* imperative to close the gap between the industrially developed nations and the Third World. If the latter is unable to buy the goods produced in Europe, North America or Japan, these regions inevitably face a *marketing problem*, with all this entails. I think that in making this policy turn, the Socialist International sought to accommodate both the needs and aspirations of the South and the interests of the North: the gap is not only an obstacle to economic development in Africa, Asia and part of Latin America; it is also beginning to hold back the industrialised nations.

J.P. To a certain extent, I think you are right about *interdependence*. During the 1950s and 1960s paternalistic attitudes were indeed reflected in the "development aid" programmes. But the developing countries' demands related to the terms of trade did not get much of a response—until 1973, when the oil crisis broke and some of these nations were able to exert a certain *economic* pressure, something that had political connotations. The North had to respond, and that was when a debate began on how justified the demands of the South were and on the extent to which the North was likely to suffer if it failed to respond to them properly. The conservatives said the developing countries should be "taught a lesson"; others were simply scared. Still others said that this should never happen again and that we should be self-reliant, at least as far as the energy supply was concerned, and have alternative energy sources. There was also the reaction of those who said the Third World demands were justified and suggested a positive response to them. They realised that if we failed to come to terms with the other party, a worldwide economic crisis would begin. These ideas were supported by the social democratic parties.

But if we focus *exclusively* on the aspect of interdependence, we run the risk of forgetting that this is interdependence in an unequal situation. This may merely aggravate the inequalities or replace past inequalities with new ones—for example, in the field of technology. Naturally, the SI and the Brandt Commission in which so many Social Democrats were participating tried to highlight that this interdependence was a fact and that we could not close our eyes to it. But it will all end just with the statement of this fact if you do not combine it with a policy for equality. Strictly speaking, the idea of interdependence was put forward within the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development back in 1977, even before the Brandt

Commission. But it was tackled without regard for equality, and the concept proved unbalanced.

I remember that there was quite a fight over this issue in the Brand Commission too. Some members from the West could not accept what was a logical concomitant of the idea—a new round of global negotiations on energy, food, trade and capital. You could say that they flatly rejected the notion of a new international economic order. To a certain extent, we in the West encountered a recession in the 1980s because in the 1970s we had been unable to build such a system. Of course, we may have got into that recession anyway, but then we would have been in a better position to cope with it in a more equitable and fair way.

S.P.G. "Interdependence with equality" is a fine idea, but what does it mean in concrete terms?

J.P. For instance, equal participation in international economic bodies such as the IMF, which is still dominated by the US and some other Western countries but in which neither the East European nor the developing nations have a say. We have come forward with a rather radical proposal for changing the voting procedure in these organisations, and the Bretton Woods system itself.¹ We also suggest equality in the terms of trade so that within a reasonable period of time every country could have the prospect of becoming more or less self-reliant—earning enough to pay for its imports and for its economic growth. As far as aid is concerned, we should advance to the creation of a mechanism according to which aid would not depend on decisions made in the countries of the North but would be extended, as it were, automatically, financed from "international taxes". In other words, international trade and finance would not only serve the interests of the rich countries but also ensure positive gains for *all*. That is our general idea of a new international economic order.

S.P.G. There is a special aspect to the problem of the aid the developing countries receive. The mechanics involved are not at all simple. Very often, former colonial powers in fact fed the bureaucracy, the ruling upper crust, through development aid programmes instead of actually helping the people in the newly independent countries. They did not care whether the regime was democratic or not, or how the aid was actually used.

One of the more dramatic aspects of the debt problem is that the oppressed masses of the debtor countries are forced to pay for the outrageously extravagant lifestyles of a handful of nouveaux riches who wallow in luxury financed from Western aid. It is therefore only fair to note that the international financial centres bear much of the blame for this.

J.P. The West has its share of responsibility for it. That's why the Social Democrats are now stressing the need not only for external assistance but also for a just domestic policy in the South as a precondition for development. In this approach we are coming closer to the socialist countries of Eastern Europe. But it is a two-

way street: they, too, no longer say that there should be a precondition in terms of a communist party coming to power in order to guarantee a just policy. That shows the possibility of cooperation in this field.

S.P.G. Steps to strengthen the political independence of the developing countries are also part of the problem of equality. Or are you referring only to economic equality?

J.P. Of course, one takes for granted that as a result of decolonisation nearly all the developing countries are, legally speaking, independent.

S.P.G. But very often their independence is largely nominal.

J.P. Circumstances are different in different countries. India is independent, not only under the law but also in actual fact; Grenada, not at all. My country is subject to outside pressure, and your country as well, each in its own way. But at any rate, political independence can last only if the nation has a certain degree of economic self-reliance because political independence does not mean much if you are economically nowhere.

S.P.G. Things being what they are, the countries of the South can hardly attain this self-reliance. It seems that, so far, people are talking about helping them tackle their current difficulties, about "stopgap" measures instead of about creating the necessary conditions for genuine development towards self-reliance.

J.P. That's right. Several steps backward have even been taken compared to the recommendations of the Brandt Commission and the *Global Challenge*. The decade of the 1980s was, in my opinion, completely lost as far as objectives such as self-reliance are concerned. I would call it a period of adjustment rather than of development: Third World countries were being asked to adjust to the deteriorating economic situation—on the basis of decisions taken in Western capitals.

True, previously this process did not develop as smoothly as we had hoped, but there were advances. However, after UNCTAD-V in 1979, when the West rejected the developing countries' strong programme of demands, we entered a stalemate aggravated by the debt crisis and the food crisis. The only message was, "Adjust! Tighten your belts!"

After 1987 we could finally say that the worst was behind us. This is connected with new developments in international relations, especially East-West relations. I have always thought that conflict between the East and the West is never good for the South because it is bound to be an arena of their rivalry. The Soviet Union has submitted major proposals in favour of greater *multilateralism* in world politics. I welcome Moscow's new South policy and the settling of some regional conflicts, vestiges of the Cold War.

S.P.G. A great deal has changed recently in the Communists' attitude to the North-South issues. True, the socialist countries have always displayed their solidarity

with the newly independent nations and helped as much as they could. But as to highlighting the *global* character of the problem and the interdependence of different groups of countries, one must admit that the Social Democrats were ahead of us in stressing the interconnection of the different "worlds". Communists divided all nations into "progressive" and "nonprogressive" and believed that this problem had nothing to do with the socialist countries: it resulted from colonial rule, and the elimination of its consequences was the duty of the former colonial powers, as the culprits.

Today, these attitudes are changing. Significantly, in his UN speech Mikhail Gorbachov expressed the Soviet readiness to impose a long-term freeze (of up to 100 years) on the debt servicing of the less developed countries and, in a number of cases, to write off the debt completely.

YOUR PARTNER'S INTEREST IS YOUR OWN

■ **WMR.** Some political figures, including those on the Left, note that not only time was wasted during the 1980s: that decade also dispelled the illusions about the ability and readiness of the North to really tackle the problems in question. They claim that since the North has discredited itself, one should look for solutions within the framework of South-South relations. Do these sentiments reflect reality?

S.P.G. The South-South Commission established by several developing countries has recently held a meeting in Dakar. Its results have made me very sceptical about the possibility of resolving Third World problems along the lines of "God helps those who help themselves". Any *global* solution should help bring about social justice in these countries. But if the gap between the ruling elites and the masses keeps growing, no reform of the world economy will prevent instability from increasing, and the effects will also erode global security.

The impression is that not only among conservatives but also on the Left—say, in Western Europe—many have not realised yet how interdependent the world has become and how the economic difficulties of African or Asian nations can, through the system of various ties, affect the economies, living standards and politics of the Old World. Many people in Britain, France or Belgium do not believe that the debt issue, hunger or underdevelopment in the Third World has anything to do with them. Obviously, something is missing in the understanding of this problem in the North.

J.P. Not "something" but a lot is missing.

There is the history of the colonisation of the South and the subsequent Western efforts to create a neocolonial system. The level of imperialist and colonialist policies has even risen compared to the 1960s or 1970s. This prompts the developing nations to mistrust the North.

But the North is not homogeneous. Different currents

are active there, and internal struggle is going on—and mind that Eastern Europe is often seen as belonging to the North. During the 1980s a belief in market forces and neoconservative concepts gained the upper hand in our part of the world. As a result, the decade was "lost", not only for the South but also for those in the North who have been affected by unemployment and declining living standards.

Naturally, we are sure that when the Social Democrats are in office in most West European countries, better opportunities will arise for asserting an *international ethics of interdependence*: you see the interest of your partner as part of your own interest. There will be better prospects for true equality, successful environmental protection, peace and disarmament. That is what we are fighting for in our countries. As happened many times in the past, the development of the South will depend in no small measure on the outcome of this struggle: the reports we now refer to were drawn up as a weapon to be used by the progressive forces against Kissinger, Reagan, Thatcher and their ilk.

Then, quite unexpectedly for us, Moscow advanced its new ideas and concepts. Together with Egon Bahr, I accompanied Willi Brandt during his visit to the USSR, and I had occasion to meet Mikhail Gorbachov and explain the SI's attitude to the problems we are now discussing here. I was particularly impressed by the fact that we could speak with a Communist in an entirely new language, a language I had never heard before. As Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD I had had many discussions with delegates from the socialist countries, but we always spoke different ideological languages. But now I feel we can find common ground. The framework of the discussion is changing.

One significant example will suffice. At UNCTAD-VII in 1987 the Soviet Union announced that it would go along with the common fund—something we had been requesting for years. This is most welcome. I also strongly support Mr Gorbachov's recent proposals on the debt question which you mentioned a while ago. We hope the USSR will also join the IMF and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development—after an equitable system of decision-making without veto powers for the US is adopted in these two organisations.

IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES AND COMMON CONCERNS

S.P.G. Peace and disarmament are usually the first to be mentioned when the possible basis for cooperation between Communists and Social Democrats is discussed. Steps taken in this direction are well-known. But we shouldn't limit concerted action to this sphere alone.

J.P. I think that within Europe, for instance, we can have active economic, environmental and technological cooperation which will also help lessen political tensions. That, in turn, will have important consequences for the general attitude of the North towards the South and for

the structure of world spending, most of it still used—in the developing countries too—for arms purchases.

Opportunities for cooperation that used to be purely theoretical are now becoming quite feasible. Some Soviet proposals on improving international economic relations were not heard in the West because they were on a different wavelength, as it were. Today, we can hear each other. We can talk. Of course, we need negotiations—for example, on questions of interdependence. If the East and the West both agree that developments in other parts of the world have consequences for their own welfare, then a completely different basis for a dialogue will have been created. I used to hear this a lot in Moscow.

■ **WMR.** *What, then, stands in the way of closer cooperation on these issues between Communists and Social Democrats?*

J.P. We hold that some obstacles are connected above all with the different ways we approach human rights.

S.P.G. My impression is that these issues are mainly used in the West as a pretext for political moves whose real motives are different. For example, I see no other explanation for the situation in which some African regimes violate democratic standards, but their friends in the SI, despite all their high-sounding declarations, seem to turn a blind eye to such practices.

J.P. I will never agree that human rights are merely a pretext for us. Social Democrats are absolutely sincerely committed to personal freedoms. We may not always be consistent enough in applying our principles, but we unquestionably aim at a real improvement of democracy everywhere—North, South, East and West.

■ **WMR.** *The Social Democrats stress that their approach to North-South problems is inspired by the traditional principles of justice and equality. But the Communists also refer to these ideals, don't they?*

S.P.G. There is a range of social problems not as ideologically charged, say, as some issues of running the state, of the party's role in the political system and the like—questions over which we usually clash. I do not think that fighting for a new international economic order is only a social democratic, communist or liberal cause. If a nation overcomes dependence and underdevelopment, this benefits us all. Here we can find a basis for cooperation between different political forces.

■ **WMR.** *Does this mean that there will be no rivalry between them here?*

S.P.G. Of course there will be rivalry. There is room for rivalry even when we cooperate for peace. But if we emphasise concrete, practical questions, it will be possible to find common solutions *despite the rivalry*.

For instance, I have read *Global Challenge* several

times over. One can, of course, reason that "since it was written by Social Democrats, there must be something there we cannot accept". But I think that Communists, too, can back the ideas of this report. Of course there are differences between us on issues of Leninism and the class struggle. But let us instead speak about how we can improve the world.

J.P. I would not underestimate ideological differences, particularly over the role of the state and the party. These questions still have their impact on our relations and their prospects. But the important thing is that none of us sees our ideology as something holy and immutable. Each side wants to put it under discussion. This debate is already going on, both among Social Democrats and in the socialist countries.

Besides, there are important pragmatic reasons why we should seek agreement. I recall writing several articles on convergence with Jan Tinbergen² in the 1960s. At that time little attention was paid to our forecasts, but now I feel there is reason to say that there was some element of truth in them. I think there will be more common elements in the way both the West and the East develop: you need some degree of convergence in order not simply to exist but to cooperate.

S.P.G. The idea of convergence still gives rise to many doubts and differences.

J.P. Nevertheless, as far as our subject—the South and its problems—is concerned, the overcoming of ideological differences and a degree of convergence against the background of interdependence will mean that the West and the East will display a greater readiness to pursue a concerted policy towards the South. I don't think that the West alone can do the job. There is a degree of common responsibility devolving on both capitalist and socialist countries since the difficulties of the South threaten global stability. There are signs that both East and the West understand this interdependence.

■ **WMR.** *One sometimes hears that while one can hope for human reason to prevent a worldwide nuclear catastrophe, one cannot discern any signs that we can avoid a global economic disaster which the aggravation of North-South contradictions may bring about. Do you agree?*

J.P. I wish I could share the optimism concerning the nuclear problem but, regrettably, I cannot. I agree that East-West relations are improving, but many alarming

things still remain. Take, for example, the proliferation of nuclear weapons: they are becoming comparatively cheap and available. They can get out of international control and into the hands of irresponsible forces.

As to the problems of the South, I fear I must agree with the pessimistic assessment. Poverty and injustice are increasing, and so is the danger of possible conflicts. Transnational corporations have become part of the world economy, and the influence of governments on economic processes is declining in many countries. This exacerbates inequality and deepens the gap between the North and the South, the strong and the weak—at the global level and within individual countries, including West European nations.

S.P.G. They even say that "the North has its own South within it". There is the concept of a "Fourth World"—the dispossessed in the highly industrialised countries.

J.P. The problem is that neoliberal policies breed divisions into rich and poor everywhere—on a global scale, at regional level and within individual nations. This can also happen in a socialist society. Look at what is going on in China: on the one hand, there are areas with a development level high enough to manufacture goods that can compete with Japanese products; on the other, there are backward regions with a very poor population.

S.P.G. I agree with many aspects of your assessment. But I would not say I am pessimistic about the future: our mission is to fight to overcome the existing obstacles and contradictions. "We", in this case, does not refer solely to the Communists. The Social Democrats are a very important force of our age, some of their parties are in power and their potential is great. If we try to pool our efforts and cooperate where cooperation is possible, we can find acceptable and just solutions to many issues of concern to us—perhaps not tomorrow and not even in the next decade, but find them we will. It is a tough challenge, but we can meet it.

1 Under this system, established at an international financial conference in Bretton Woods, USA, countries are to have reserve stocks not only in gold but also in US dollars for covering balance-of-payments deficits. —Ed.

2 A Dutch economist and Nobel Prize winner. See his interview in *WMR*, 1988, No. 8. —Ed.





WEST EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AND THE WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT

WHO HOLDS THE "TRUMPS"?

Alekos ALAVANOS

candidate member, CC, Communist Party of Greece (KKE); member of the European Parliament

■ ***The European Community intends to introduce a free movement of capital, goods, services, and labour after 1992. How do you see this from the working man's point of view?***

I do not think that in creating a unified internal market, priority would be given to working people's problems or interests. If you look for the major social forces behind it, you soon come to the large companies who want to expand and trade without borders. A little further and we see the more conservative EEC governments, especially Mrs Margaret Thatcher's cabinet, among its political backers. There is little to reassure working people in this scheme, designed as it is to boost Western Europe in inter-imperialist rivalry with the USA and Japan, help transnational corporations to seize key areas in the national economies, and reinforce the basis for an anti-labour campaign.

Many trade unions and left-wing parties in the EEC countries have sharply criticised the single-market programme. Even the European Trade Union Confederation is on record as complaining that the integration mismatches social reality and the needs of working people. It is accompanied by increasing attempts to scoop back their gains and undermine the postwar system of social security in the so-called general welfare states. None other than Mr Delors, the President of the Commission of the European Communities, said after the October 1987 stock-market crash that the international capitalist economy had become casino-like. This can only boost the formation of a unified internal market. The free movement of capital, goods, and services without reference to the demands of economic growth, and the disavowal of social programmes (i.e., the supremacy of the principles of capitalist competition as the linchpin of integration) will do nothing to help solve working people's problems.

Greater rivalry in production and marketing will force companies and governments to try and restructure labour relations in order to intensify exploitation, reduce man-

power costs and cut down on social spending. *Unless the masses determinedly resist such processes, the creation of a unified internal market will prove enormously costly for working people, because economic and political integration runs parallel with social regression. Movement towards 1992 will then become movement towards the demolition of the "general welfare state".* Hardly an area of social life would remain unscathed: labour relations, employment, working time, labour law, social security, unemployment benefits, trade union freedoms.

A glance at the EEC map reveals the acuteness of the problem: almost half the jobs in Spain are already part-time or temporary; in Italy the scale of wage and pension reviews is being sharply restricted; the pensionable age for women has been raised in Belgium; British courts can now intervene in collective bargaining. And it is sometimes hard to distinguish between the attitudes of Social Democratic and conservative governments to working people's needs.

These problems are particularly acute for the less developed Common Market states. Greece, at 48.8% of the EEC average, has the lowest monthly wage. At the same time the costs per unit of output have reached 112.5% of the average level because of low productivity.

Faced by new technologies, scale economies (i.e., transnational corporations within the EEC), and high labour productivity in the industrial countries, the less developed states have no option but to use "their trumps": a long-term policy of stabilisation, and an austerity programme to working people's detriment. This point was made by T. Padoa Schioppa, vice-president of Banca d'Italia, in his report on a unified internal market. According to him, such countries will have to look for unlawful advantages over their competitors through an extreme reduction of wage, insurance and social security levels. The very prospect of such a social dismantling alarms working people in the other EEC countries with a higher degree of social security. Naturally, they fear that their gains will come under pressure from employers threatening to take capital to countries with relatively low wages. While, of course, rejecting such catastrophism, one must not underestimate the reality of an *onslaught of big capital on the social rights of working people* with the coming of a single European market.

We must not forget that in today's "European development" 17 out of 320 million are jobless, another 45 million live in poverty, and that some traditional manufacturing centres, once full of vigour, have become zones of decay, neglect and desolation.

The foregoing debate has proceeded, as the Greeks would say, without the host, i.e., without due consideration for the reactions of those directly concerned—working people, trade unions, and progressive political forces.

With these replies from Greece to our mail-in questionnaire we continue the publication of materials on West European integration. See *WMR*, Nos. 1 and 3, 1989.

Figuratively speaking, their mass actions can not only stem the flow of a current, but also reverse it. Optimistic signs of this are already there. For example, the West German metal workers' union has won a reduction of the working week in the steel industry from 40 to 37.5 hours, with wages uncut. A similar gain (38.5 hours) was achieved in 1987 when a general collective agreement was concluded in Denmark.

■ **The community has been talking a lot about "single social space" recently. Even the leaders of the 12 EEC countries, meeting at Rhodes Island, discussed it. Are there any opportunities for new social gains opening up for working people?**

With regard to this my attention was drawn to an article which appeared in the *Financial Times* in December 1988. In it, the events surrounding the creation of an internal West European market are compared with East European reforms. Considering the character of the *FT*, it drew an interesting political conclusion:

"If there is a risk in the single market, it is not the domination of some vast confederation of trades unions, but instead that it will shrivel the ability of governments to sustain those public welfare activities, such as health, education and infrastructure, which are a valued part of the fabric of European society.

"...Ordinary voters may turn decisively against a Europe of the bosses; and western Europe, by abandoning the most characteristic features of its social organisation, may cease to be a model and an influence on eastern Europe and the Soviet Union".¹

The author is worried that West European workers might increasingly turn their eyes on socialism with its perestroika and glasnost.

Among EEC leaders two *conceptual views* of the social implications of a unified internal market now exist. One, represented by CEC President Jacques Delors, posits a "social space" and argues the need for regulatory action. The other view, with Mrs Thatcher as its protagonist, is against any increased EEC authority in social matters, which should remain the province of national powers. Obviously, the two approaches cannot be equated, but the working-class movement should not restrict itself merely to the lesser of two evils.

A meeting of the European Parliament communist group in Athens in November 1988 discussed the social aspects of a unified internal market. All the participants, in varying terms and tones, criticised the EEC social commission's memorandum on health and safety at work, and vocational training for failing to encompass such major issues for working people as shorter working hours, democratic and trade union rights, and social security. The meeting stressed that the *package of measures offered in the memorandum was not enough*, and that the steps towards the formation of a "social space", dictated by the free-market philosophy, dealt only with secondary elements. These did not inspire faith because, rather than

dealing with dangerous phenomena, they merely reacted to them post-factum.

Communists, other progressive forces, and trade unions cannot limit themselves to the role of a corporative lobby on particular issues, or a rearguard seeking only to lessen the effects of the onslaught of the transnational corporations, now on the scale of a unified internal market. We need a broader, common, alternative approach from the left forces to working people's problems, and a policy of economic development inextricably linked with the protection of their social and ecological interests. The aim must be a "Europe" based on the needs of all working people, on peace and international cooperation.

As we look into the future, we should not neglect current practical issues. Shorter working hours; worker participation in management; the fight against unemployment; a better social security and labour protection scheme; democratic rights; the status of foreign workers, women, and young people; the coordination of trade union action—these are some of the major problems of today.

■ **How do you think greater West European integration will affect the labour movement? What needs to be done to protect working people's interests?**

For big capital and its political parties the creation of a unified internal market is a means towards mastering the objective processes of the internationalisation of productive forces, and towards reaping their fruits. Greeks tend to see the year 1992 as a challenge to the working people. It would be better to say that this challenge arises from the rapid development of these processes in the field of production, technology, and science.

Whether we like it or not, serious questions affecting the working people—economic growth, taxation, incomes policy, labour relations, vocational training, agriculture, and ecology—are now being tackled on an EEC-wide scale. This tendency is increasing as we move towards a unified internal market.

Labour's representatives cannot be mere onlookers here. To the internationalism of capital we must oppose the *inexhaustible strength of proletarian internationalism*. In his *Critique of the Gotha Programme* Marx spoke as if for us when he wrote about the "international functions of the German working class" and the priority of the "internationalism of the programme" over "that of the Free Trade Party".²

Speaking on the 70th anniversary of the KKE, our party's General Secretary Harilaos Florakis noted: "More than ever before, it is clear that we cannot think, define a programme or fight by retiring into our national shell. We must raise our international cooperation to a new, higher level, and give it modern content through a fruitful, equal, international discussion. We must advance the common struggle of the trade unions against transnational capital."

The development of the process of EEC integration has forced the labour movements in member countries to *coordinate their activity* more closely. On this depends its suc-

cess, especially when it comes to decisions being taken by the EEC bodies or transnational corporations. Remember the 1988 strike at the Ford car plants in Britain? A favourable outcome for British workers would have been impossible without the international solidarity on the part of workers at the corporation's subsidiaries in other West European countries.

The labour movement's coordination of activity is certainly not limited to expressions of solidarity. It should not bear a defensive character, but show *initiative* and embrace the overall policy of the movement. Trade unions, public forces, and left-wing political circles must actively intervene in integration, and put forward concrete demands, both directly concerning working people (on the creation of a "social space", for example) and involving the broader issues of peace, ecology, and East-West cooperation.

Is it harder or easier for working people to fight for their rights under integration? On the one hand, it is harder, for in each EEC country they face not only indigenous big capital and the ruling class, but also their allies in the community and supranational authorities. On the other hand, it is easier because their struggle can assume a multinational dimension, produce broad alliances transcending the boundaries of one country, and mobilise the inexhaustible reserves of international solidarity.

The internationalisation of production creates a *large new arena for the struggle between sociopolitical forces*. For the labour movement, brought up on the ideas and practice of internationalism, new and favourable opportunities are opened up. Two circumstances must, however, be borne in mind. Firstly, actions taken with regard to integration cannot replace the national class struggle. On the contrary, the success of these actions depends on how a labour movement seeks to achieve working people's aims in its own country. Secondly, problems for humanity such as peace, the prevention of nuclear war, the protection of the environment, and Third World indebtedness have acquired a global dimension. On our continent, too, we need joint efforts on a European scale in the fields of security, conservation, transport and power development, and economic cooperation.

In the face of these problems, the framework for West European integration turns out to be rather narrow. The ruling circles often attempt to solve them by taking a selfish view of EEC interests. This is why the labour movement puts forward its own ideas and formulates a policy which meets both the global scale of most current problems, and the task of creating a "Europe of the peoples".

There are many difficulties on this road in the shape of language barriers, traditions and customs, and legal distinctions. There is also a certain telling discrimination in the non-admission to the European Trade Union Confederation of the French CGT, the Portuguese Intersindical Nacional and the Spanish Workers' Commissions. And yet, more and more *common meetings* of various trade unions

and organisations of the labour movement are taking place to discuss *programmatic aims*.

Guided by the ideas of internationalism, our movement can and must give the best answer to the requirements of the internationalisation of production.

■ ***It is known that there are significant differences between the communist parties and other progressive forces in the Common Market countries in assessing the EEC's problems. Does this hinder their cooperation?***

The October 1988 Dublin conference of nine communist parties from the EEC member countries did indeed offer a variety of positions. Some took the view that the left forces should take a more active part in integration while at the same time resisting the transnational corporations' policy of creating a unified internal market. Others raised their countries' withdrawal from the EEC. This reflected the dissimilar position of the industrialised Northern states against those in the less developed and dependent South.

In EEC parlance, the community operates at "variable speeds". This makes it hard for progressive forces to use only a "single speed" and respond to problems. They surely cannot abstract themselves from the national peculiarities, specific issues or particular interests of the working class and all working people in the various countries. It follows logically that each country's labour movement *should approach capitalist integration in its own way*. But the differences should not become a hindrance to cooperation and concerted international action, or lead to a fragmentation of the progressive forces. By maintaining a creative discussion, we can acquaint ourselves with the experience and opinion of others, enrich our views, and expand and develop cooperation. An ability on the part of the left-wing forces to share views on the modern world, and set common objectives, would impart powerful dynamism to the coordination of their activity on a European scale. We see proof of this conclusion in the fact that Mikhail Gorbachov's slogan of "Europe—our common home" has transcended national boundaries and found understanding among all the European peoples.

■ ***A while ago a rapprochement started between the KKE and the United Democratic Left Party which has resulted in the conclusion of a political agreement. Earlier, these two parties differed considerably on the issue of Greece's membership of the Common Market. What changes have occurred here?***

This rapprochement among the left forces in Greece with regard to the EEC is similar to the processes that have taken place in Spain, and fully corresponds to the spirit of our time. Although we still do not agree with the other left forces on everything, we believe that it is important "not to remain stuck to rhetorical accusations or simply repeat the thesis about a withdrawal from the EEC", as Florakis has put it. To defend the concrete interests of the working people and the country, the KKE advocates the elaboration

of a realistic programme for active left-wing intervention in the process of integration.

The agreement between our two parties rests on an acknowledgement of Europe's significance and the common destiny of its peoples. While still differing on a number of issues and leaving open the possibility for a constructive dialogue, both parties have formulated certain joint objectives which, as is pointed out in the agreement, conform to the "general dream of creating a Europe of peace, cooperation and working people's solidarity". In their totality "they aim at active, offensive intervention by the left-wing forces in the processes of integration and internationalisation". Together we intend to work to orient the European Community towards peace, disarmament, mutually beneficial international cooperation, and to counter militarisation. We feel it essential to seek a reduction of the development gap between individual countries and regions within the EEC, respect for the special needs of each partner, and equal cooperation. This also involves defending and expanding working people's social rights, protecting the environment, democratising the EEC institutions and, finally, promoting EEC-CMEA relations with a view to deepening all-European cooperation.

■ **At the end of 1988, in Athens, your book *Notes on***

***the Left-Wing Forces in Europe* was published. What is its main idea?**

Looking through Marx's *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, I encountered in one of the footnotes a reference to Montanari, an Italian mathematician who studied problems of finance. He was already saying, in 1683, that: "Intercourse between nations has spread across the whole globe to such an extent that one could say all the world has virtually become a single city..."³ Such a bold definition has acquired an impressive relevance now.

In my book I have argued that with today's internationalisation of production, which has been proceeding with impetuous, and at times supersonic speed, the policy of Europe's left-wing forces must reflect the new tendencies promptly, accurately, and with wisdom and imagination. By adopting an internationalism which meets the requirements of our epoch, they will also have an irreplaceable weapon for struggle on a national scale.

1 *Financial Times*, December 22, 1988.

2 Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, p. 22.

3 Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 384.

LATIN AMERICAN DEMOCRACY: TALKING STRAIGHT

The Permanent Conference of Political Parties of Latin America (COPPAL) is a very influential continental organisation. When a COPPAL delegation visited Moscow, its members talked to Prof. Stepan MAMONTOV, WMR staff member. The ways of Latin American democracy were discussed by Carlos OZORES, COPPAL President and Vice-President of the Revolutionary Democratic Party of Panama; Luis NEGREIROS, MP, COPPAL Vice-President and former General Secretary of the APRA Party (Peru); Pompeyo MARQUEZ, President of the Movement to Socialism Party and Vice-President of the Senate of Venezuela; Hugo VIGORENA, member of the Political Commission of the Radical Socialist Democratic Party of Chile; Mauricio CORREIA, member of the leadership of the Democratic Labour Party of Brazil (PDT) and PDT leader in the Senate; and Guillermo CAPOBIANCO, member of the Secretariat and the Political Commission of the Left Revolutionary Movement of Bolivia. Below is a brief record of the discussion.

Mamontov. "Democracy" is a polysemantic concept in contemporary political science. Various public circles impart different meanings to it and speak about diverse types and shades of democracy, including bourgeois, socialist, "advanced", limited, "controlled", etc. But it is the extent to which rule by the people is practised that constitutes the core of any democracy. I suggest that in our discussion we use this understanding as the starting point and do without qualifiers. Since the Latin American countries became independent, democratic reforms have been gaining ground, though there have been both victories and defeats. What are the specific aspects of the democratic process on the continent?

Negreiros. To begin with, the important thing is that it is not a phenomenon but a *process*, in other words, the *gradual* and *dynamic* evolution of democracy in Latin America. We are talking about the *democratisation* of the entire system of existing social structures. One noteworthy feature of the process is the growing recognition by the Latin Americans of their common political, economic and social problems, above all, the external debt and the need for continental integration. One more important factor is the consistent stabilisation of democratic institutions, such as parliament, the free press, independent courts of law, etc., which are a counterbalance to executive power. The consistent narrowing of possibilities for coups d'état is further evidence of the consolidation of democracy in our countries.

The Latin Americans' political awareness is changing substantially as well. There is general agreement on the need to encourage and support such changes if we want real democratisation in Latin America, because persisting social relations are unjust and outmoded and do not at all correspond to the present criteria and demands. Finally, I think it an important aspect of our advance towards democracy that we are searching more intensively for our historical, cultural and political identity.

Vigorena. I think that the chief specific feature of the democratic process in Latin America is instability. All of us are familiar with this ailment, caused not by our peoples' inability to embrace democracy, but by the fact that they cannot exercise their rule unless certain conditions, related primarily to the economic situation and public welfare, are met. Culturally and historically, we are a part of the dependent world, and that dependence on North American imperialism has thwarted democratic processes in Uruguay, Argentina, Brazil, Chile and other countries on more than one occasion...

Correia. I personally believe that the more significant achievements of our democracy, at least in Brazil, are attributable to the existence of a strong civil society, whose core is made up of journalists, the mass media in general, lawyers, a substantial segment of the Catholic clergy represented in the National Conference of Brazilian Bishops, and the unions, although the latter do not play a very

noticeable part because of the restrictions imposed on them. All those public forces are very important in our country.

Marquez. Latin America is now progressing towards broader democracy, or the restoration of democracy in those countries where it has been suppressed, such as Chile and Paraguay. The public is increasingly aware of the urgent need for the Latin American countries to reach agreement on integration in order to redefine their status vis-a-vis the United States and the world as a whole. We seem to be witnessing a diminution of the political weight of Latin American countries in the world community. But this cannot be allowed to continue at a time when European unity has become a reality and there is talk of the "European house", when Japan and the United States are growing stronger, and when socialist countries are pooling their efforts. All this is fresh proof that Latin America must look for its own ways of integration.

Ozores. In addition, now that most of the savage military dictatorships on the continent have collapsed, the democratic process seems irreversible.

ACHIEVEMENTS ARE MANY, BUT...

Mamontov. There must be some objective and subjective difficulties which explain the dynamism and instability, irreversibility and intermittency of democratic development against the background of a continuous economic crisis and the striving of the Latin American nations for unity. What are they?

Negreiros. The objective factors include our underdevelopment and dependence, and the subjective ones, the still low or insufficient level of political culture and the Latin Americans' wariness of the kind of democracy which has not had the best of records in the history of the continent, often being formal or just for show.

Correia. Brazilians also are concerned about the consolidation of the democratic process. The adoption of the 1988 Brazilian Constitution was a great stride forward, but conservative, reactionary and other right-wing movements still exist, and there still is talk that Brazil cannot live by such a progressive Constitution. Working people have been given rights they never had before. So it is only natural that the conservatives of every ilk have stiffened their resistance. Even in the government there are supporters of the old state of affairs.

Ozores. Democracy in Latin America seems to be in danger again. Conflicts have broken out in several countries between the governments which don't have the resources they need and the peoples who are voicing their demands ever more resolutely. Aware that the situation in one republic or another is likely to deteriorate, the military are already "poised" to go into action because they feel it their duty "to restore order". But military regimes, which are even closer to Washington and the Pentagon than the right-

wing parties, will of course be unable to resolve any of the problems, and will only add to US influence in the region.

Marquez. In my view, the obstacles to the democratic process in Latin America can also be divided into internal and external ones. The former include privileges and the concentration of political and economic power in the hands of small groups which are averse to administrative deregulation, to any attempts to reduce their monopoly of power, or to independent development. That is why our countries are lethargic, bogged down in routine, and why the mass media are being used to manipulate public opinion in favour of foreign domination and colonialism, including cultural and intellectual domination. These obstacles, along with a bureaucracy which has amassed great power in Latin America and which is opposed to broader democracy, have to be overcome. The role of the military, worried by any sign of progressive change, has been rightly mentioned here, but I must say that in the armed forces as well as in the church there have appeared trends in favour of change, renewal and modernisation.

As for the external obstacles, the chief of these is the US policy of intervention. Washington does not seem to understand that the Latin Americans are going to continue on the road to independence and sovereignty. Hence our relations with the US will be such that the "Northern neighbour" will have to face up to the reality of growing democratisation in the countries of the continent.

Capobianco. In South America democratic processes have reached a crossroads, as it were. Many nations in the region have won political freedom and restored legal state and constitutional guarantees, but have then come up against serious economic difficulties. In Bolivia, for example, the transition from dictatorship to democracy is an extremely painful process.

Vigorena. I share much of what my colleagues have said, but will add a few words about subjective difficulties. Many of them are caused by the fact that our political organisations still suffer from relative provincialism. The parties of the region cannot live up to present-day demands. They do not have the adequate instruments or the appropriate structures and infrastructure to pursue dynamic policies.

WHO IS "FOR" AND WHO "AGAINST"?

Mamontov. As rule by the people, democracy is impossible without the people's active role in deciding the fate of the continent. Which social strata do the COPPAL member parties consider the chief contributors to democratisation processes?

Negreiros. They are primarily the growing working class, and also the peasantry, which is exerting constant pressure on the governments in order to make them put in more effort. The agrarian reforms introduced by several countries have reaffirmed and increased the role of rural

workers. The trade unions and youth are also among the social forces paving the way for rule by the people, although I don't think that young people have been involved adequately in the tasks they have to tackle in the course of change. Intellectuals are an important element of democratisation, but some of them are passive: the middle classes ought to play a far more dynamic role in asserting democracy on a truly popular basis.

Vigorena. I agree that the main motive force of democratisation is made up of the working people and their organisations, such as political parties, professional associations, trade unions, etc., which forge mass unity. The process of democratisation consists in the involvement of the mass of people in the political, economic and social administration of their countries.

Ozores. In my opinion, the process of democratisation is being influenced not only by political parties, but also, and sometimes even to a greater extent, by professional groups, by organised groups of students and professors, and especially by left and centre-left trade unions, which are really taking the initiative. In social affairs many of them feel they are being pushed to the sidelines by party functionaries, whose upper crust does not help very much, sometimes even preventing the "grassroots" from showing the initiative and contributing to change. So I think that eventually the trade unions and other worker organisations will become the most influential factor in a future Latin America.

Capobianco. One more point deserves mention in view of the difficulties confronting the continent (some of them created not without help from our "great Northern neighbour"): only truly national governments with a strong commitment to sovereignty and the people are able to maintain the social balance and adequately guarantee the development of a democracy which has a truly popular "taste" and "smell" in their countries and which involves the broad participation of the mass of people.

Mamontov. You have rightly noted the influence of the US on the ways of democracy in Latin America. Political scientists are divided: some of them think that this influence is negative, while others, primarily North Americans themselves, argue that the US must play a greater role in the democratisation of Latin America than any other party. Which is true?

Capobianco. The US role is always important. Latin America is a part of the "sphere of influence" of the US and the "strategic zone" controlled by it. That is why the countries of the region can do little but try in every way to develop an ability to assert their sovereignty in order to achieve full equality in relations with Washington. The United States' functions and policies in Latin America have varied from one historical period to another. Lately, the White House has been in favour of "redemocratisation", just as before it supported authoritarian and militarist governments. Today it claims to be an ally of our democ-

racies. But which democracies? This is the crux of the matter and the subject of many debates.

One camp is made up of the political forces which believe that democracy must rest on the participation of the mass of workers, of the peoples themselves, and on appropriate economic factors. But this approach runs into the narrow dogmatic views encouraged from the North, particularly with regard to economic organisation. The US seems to be saying: do as I say, not as I do. Take the protection of national markets, for example: the US has recently been advocating and encouraging neo-liberal, "open" economies in Latin America. But when it comes to the home market, it practises protectionism.

Negreiros. We in APRA think that the part played by the United States does not at all meet the interests and aspirations of the Latin American peoples. As a powerful neighbour, the US could very well foster relations of equality with us and really help promote democracy to the south of its border. But facts testify to the contrary, and there are many political and economic difficulties confirming my negative view of its role.

Vigorena. I think that the US has always played a very negative role in the development of democracy on our continent. Of course, in its propaganda it has been trying to put its best foot forward, but one cannot help seeing that it practises a double standard: on the one hand, when a people tries to install a popular government, Washington pays lip service to democracy and the need to "restore" it, while on the other it backs Pinochet and other Latin American tyrants who serve US interests. Washington puts its own benefit above everything else.

Ozores. Concrete facts show that the vaunted US "commitment to democracy" is false. Look at the Washington Administration's policy of aid to the Nicaraguan contras and the failure of this policy. It was an insult to the whole of Latin America when the bandits were compared to "freedom fighters", to the outstanding heroes in the history of our independence struggle. Or take El Salvador, where US policy is suffering setback after setback in spite of Washington's massive support for the Christian Democrats.

As for my home country, Panama, the US has perpetrated a flagrant act of economic aggression against it in order to overthrow its lawful government and install stooges who would immediately start talking to Washington about revising the Torrijos-Carter accords and preserving the US military bases in the canal zone after the year 2000. But it has failed because the present Panamanian leadership has secured the support of the popular masses, primarily workers and peasants.

Even the democratic governments which have recently emerged in a number of Latin American countries cannot be considered Washington's puppets. They are committed to national ideals and have solid links with the international Social Democratic movement. For example, the Social Democratic president Rodrigo Borja of Ecuador had the

courage to invite Fidel Castro to his inauguration ceremony.

DEMOCRACY AND THE DEBT TRAP

Mamontov. It seems axiomatic, as has already been mentioned here, that the progress of democracy depends also on economic factors, and the growing financial indebtedness of all Latin American countries, without exception, has been the most important of these in recent years. What is the specific relationship between the democratic process and the problem of external debt?

Vigorena. The two are closely linked. Clearly, democracy cannot flourish amidst extreme poverty, widespread suffering and the daily struggle for subsistence. And the noose of external debt held around Latin America by ruthless creditors restricts, holds back and neutralises democratic processes.

Correia. It is a serious problem, and in Brazil those who do not want democratic change are exploiting it by arguing that only a "strong power" can overcome the present difficulties. So the link between external debt and progress towards popular rule is as clear as daylight. Undoubtedly, the bigger the external debt, the more likely the onslaught of the anti-democratic forces.

Negreiros. Any democratisation is unthinkable without a sensible and fair settlement of the problem of external debt. Democracy cannot be restricted to elections. The Latin Americans need greater opportunities for self-assertion, which means that democracy cannot be achieved without prosperity, without a general improvement in the standard of living. But debts compounded by usurious interest make self-sufficiency impossible, sap the people's vital energies and deny them the fruit of their own labour.

Marquez. External debt is the key problem and it has countless implications. It is a manifestation of the dominance of neocolonialism, which is trying to debilitate the national economies of Latin America. But I am absolutely convinced that it also creates a basis for Latin American unity in the people's interests. Debts as such, however, work against democratic processes because they adversely affect economic indicators and aggravate the poverty of the mass of people, who then mount organised protests, thus provoking the authorities to resort to repression.

Capobianco. I fully agree that the external debt is the critical problem. But it cannot be resolved singlehanded: only cooperation among all the debtors, that is, dependent countries, and their concerted actions will make our struggle really common. It will be a historic day for Latin America when such a possibility materialises.

Mamontov. The world at large still knows little of COPPAL's place amongst international organisations of political parties. What are its relations with the Socialist In-

ternational and European social democracy and how do they cooperate?

Ozores. The future of Latin America lies in growing continental integration, and COPPAL has to play an important part here. We maintain broad contacts with the Socialist International, although we are not the same kind of political organisation. Many of our member parties, including my own, actually participate in the Socialist International. The unity of nationalist and anti-imperialist parties within COPPAL is important also because there is evidence that the internationally coordinated growth of Christian democracy in some Latin American countries is being financed on a large scale by the US, the West German and Italian Christian Democrats and, very likely, the Vatican. It is a safe guess that the new US blueprint for some Latin American countries envisages the installation of Christian Democrats in power, although such a plan for El Salvador has failed dismally.

Naturally, our contacts with European social democracy are very close, but are usually confined to moral solidarity and support, and various statements and forums in favour of one Latin American initiative or another. Regrettably, such support usually remains on paper. But the time for discussion is over and we should get down to business: identify the real causes of our urgent problems and seek quick solutions to them. Otherwise, rather than a rapprochement with Social Democracy, both sides will cool off and lethargy will set in.

Vigorena. I would add that COPPAL is neither a tool nor an "arm" of the Socialist International. Many of the COPPAL member parties do not participate in the Socialist International, while those which do, make good use of their dual membership to concert political actions in order to win democracy in some countries or to consolidate it in others.

Correia. The United States is known to be closely following developments in Latin America. COPPAL was conceived as a body that would draw general conclusions from the experience of Latin American countries in order to discuss and resolve various problems. Our working philosophy is simple: the complete liberation of Latin America from foreign capital. We welcome all the positive experience gained by the Socialist International, and even by Social Democratic countries that could help strengthen COPPAL and broaden its ideological base.

Capobianco. I believe that every country and every people seeking a better future should count first of all on their own forces. True to its name, our Conference enables the democratic movements and their leaders to maintain purely personal contacts along with inter-party relations. We are united by our commitment to the common ideal of establishing and strengthening rule by the people, or restoring democracy in such countries as Paraguay or Chile. We also share the socialist ideal, and these two great goals add to our confidence in fruitful cooperation between COP-

PAL and the Socialist International. We have always had it and, I think, will continue to maintain it at the same level.

Negreiros. Our relations with the Socialist International are fraternal, although we do have certain political and ideological differences which are explained by the realities of Latin America and Europe. International support for the democratic process in Latin America is manifested in well-known forms of cooperation.

ATTITUDE TO COMMUNISTS

Mamontov. One more question to clarify COPPAL's standing on the inter-American scene: what is the member parties' view of the Latin American Communists' role in the struggle for democracy, and of possibilities for cooperation with them?

Ozores. The roles played by communist parties in Latin America vary from country to country. In some they have been banned. I think that certain Latin American communist parties need to change themselves. Perestroika, as a kind of change in the way of thinking and the mode of conduct, will eventually influence them. If that does not happen, if the old system of views is perpetuated and the status quo maintained, I don't think that such parties will be able to play the desired role. Ultimately, the Latin American Communists could increase their influence through a search for greater social harmony within individual countries and through an ability to avoid those sharp confrontations which are used either by the military to justify coups d'état or by the United States to intensify its penetration of our economies.

Negreiros. Generally, the Communists play a positive role on the continent, and I would say that cooperation with them is possible objectively, especially if the spirit of renewal and pluralism, characteristic of perestroika, prevails. I believe that these processes and sentiments will grow stronger. The time of primitive local anticommunism, or the more decent imported sort, is past in Latin America. Naturally, the Communists and us have very distinct and substantial ideological and political differences. But this does not mean that they should be excluded from the pluralism that is characteristic of a democratic system, nor does it deny opportunities for us to find grounds for cooperation or points of contact in the struggle for economic and social democracy.

Vigorena. During 15 years in exile I had the good fortune to find myself in close touch with the Communist Party and other parties of the Chilean working people. In the course of joint work we (that is, people with views close to those of my party) found out that, contrary to what is said about them, Communists are committed to democracy, are thinking about democracy and are struggling for democracy.

Correia. Since Salomao Malina became General Secretary of the Brazilian Communist Party, it has been pur-

suing an absolutely sensible policy line in the political processes in our country, without any extremist radicalism. Communists have correctly grasped the specifics of the present situation and made an inestimable contribution to the latest democratic achievements. They share with other political forces credit for creating today's Brazil. In the capital of the republic the positions of the Democratic Labour Party, which I represent, have much in common with Communist policies.

Capobianco. In Bolivia we had an experience of good and fruitful cooperation with the Communists in the anti-dictatorial struggle, I think. It was not so good later, when we were together in the government. The Democratic Popular Unity, which came to power in 1982, formed a joint front to tackle electoral tasks but, regrettably, it was not cohesive and viable enough even to exercise government properly. That is why we are looking for other ways when it comes to the establishment of a broad national movement. This is our priority.

I think that the Bolivian Communists' contribution to the democratic process is quite substantial, but my personal experience has given me the impression that when it comes to power, the formation of a government, they adopt an approach which is too narrow and rigid, and in a sense dogmatic. As a result, they end up in sectarianism, primarily in ideology, and their vision of the country makes it impossible to unite broad social forces. I want to stress that I criticise Communists fraternally and with all respect because, I repeat, the Communist Party of Bolivia was with us in government.

DEMOCRACY AND PERESTROIKA

Mamontov. In conclusion, it would be interesting to hear your views on the influence of Soviet glasnost and perestroika on Latin American politics and its democratisation.

Ozores. The current processes in the Soviet Union known as perestroika are inspiring great hopes and expectations in Latin America. We see them not just as a programme for domestic political and legal changes, but as a drive for substantial transformations in the national economy. Naturally, Soviet foreign policy and trade will be involved, and have already become involved. I think that Latin America will gain considerably from improvements in the Soviet economic situation: clearly, we have good opportunities for mutual exchanges. We can no longer reconcile ourselves to our growing dependence on the United States and Japan, whose manufactures are aggressively making inroads into our continent.

Vigorena. To my mind, perestroika, new political concepts of government and a new approach to the party's role in the Soviet Union will considerably facilitate cooperation and mutual understanding between communist and workers' parties on the one hand, and parties of the middle strata and the petty and middle bourgeoisie on the other.

Correia. I was born in 1934 and lived in my country long enough to conclude that many sections of our people used to misunderstand the Soviet Union because of anti-Soviet propaganda from both the North American and the Brazilian media. Perestroika has ushered in a new period, associated with Mikhail Gorbachov's wise policies, and now in Brazil there is much interest in the Soviet Union. The USSR has never had as much prestige in my country as it does today, not least because of the Soviet people's critical view of themselves and, at the same time, their self-respect.

Capobianco. I was pleasantly surprised by what we saw during our brief visit to the Soviet Union. The conviction and enthusiasm of Soviet leaders when they discuss perestroika are especially impressive. What I mean is not just confidence in its eventual success, but, as I saw in Estonia, for example, the real passion that people put into it. This is as it should be, I think. To me, the most interesting

subject in our numerous conversations has been socialist pluralism, which is rapidly gaining ground. Its real meaning, successes and limitations—why keep silent about them?—will largely determine the outcome of the great processes unfolding in the USSR.

Negreiros. The influence on Latin American politics of these changes within the frame of socialist principles and socialist pluralism ought to be evaluated, and the ideas voiced by Soviet leaders on the subject seem important and well-grounded. For example, the problem of external debt, which we have discussed, is clearly linked to disarmament, which is a priority in Soviet foreign policy. And disarmament will release enormous resources which could be used to meet the needs and help resolve the grave problems of the developing countries. Such an approach is absolutely correct. It is the struggle not just against death, embodied in the runaway arms race, but also for a more decent life for humanity.

SYRIA. HOW TO GET OUT OF THE CRISIS

Khalid HAMMAMI

member, Political Bureau,
the Central Committee of the Syrian Communist
Party;
SCP representative on the WMR

Upon winning political independence in 1946, our people and their progressive patriotic forces had to consolidate and defend the Republic from the designs of imperialism and reaction, to rid its economy of foreign monopoly diktat, and to ensure social progress through the development of productive forces.

The initial period of independence saw a succession of politically different governments and some important gains, such as the nationalisation of foreign and large domestic companies, and an agrarian reform. This was done even before the re-alignment of forces that led to the establishment of a progressive national regime.

Israel's imperialist-backed aggression of 1967 was a failed attempt to nip it in the bud.

The regime assumed the task of reinforcing political with economic independence. It signed agreements with the USSR to carry out key national economic projects (the Euphrates dam, irrigation systems, railways, a national oil industry, etc.). However, Syria's political and economic policies were for a while isolationist in some regards, and this prompted a "corrective movement" in the autumn of 1970.

A People's Council was set up, a new Constitution was adopted, and a National Progressive Front was formed of various patriotic forces, including the Syrian Communist Party.

The Front's statute speaks of the need to accomplish many democratic changes, and reaffirms that socialism is the goal of all its contingents. It proclaims the ruling Arab Socialist Renaissance Party as the leading force in government, the trade unions, and local councils.

During almost 20 years since then, several, mostly ambitious five-year development plans have been implemented to some extent or other. On the basis of nationalisation and the agrarian reform, carried out before October 1970, the public sector has been expanded, and industrial production diversified. Alongside light industry, mining branches have appeared and hydropower schemes, electric power lines, and irrigation systems have been built. The agrarian reform has moved on, the volume of construction has increased, and new schools and hospitals have appeared.

There has been much wider cooperation with the USSR and other socialist states in all fields—political, economic,

cultural, and military. Treaties of friendship and cooperation between Syria and the USSR, Bulgaria, and Czechoslovakia were ratified and these are having a positive influence on the development of our country.

Parallel efforts have been made to strengthen the army—both to defend the country and free the lands occupied by Israel in 1967. Naturally, this has been a drain on the economic resources of society. Syria remains staunchly anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist and has played an outstanding role in frustrating hostile conspiracies against the peoples of the region.

This explains why imperialism, US imperialism in particular, and its strategic ally, Israel, hate our country so much. Hence their aggressive actions against Syria to which local, Arab and international reaction has made its contribution. The clear aim of all this was to force our people to their knees before imperialist hegemonism, not only militarily—or through economic and political pressure—but also by sabotage and terror: the blowing up of factories, arson, the destruction of homes, often leading to the deaths of innocent women, children and old men...

The economy suffers most. Three major factors have triggered the crisis situation. Let us consider them at length.

First. Apart from imperialist corporate plunder through the mechanism of nonequivalent exchanges, the developing economies are vulnerable to the general and cyclical crises of capitalism.

We still have close economic ties with the world capitalist market and these prevail in our foreign trade. Syria often faces various forms of severe economic pressure. Recently, it has suffered direct blackmail by the United States and the EEC, who do not even stop at economic sanctions against our Republic because they perceive it as an instigator of international terrorism.

Although the West has now abandoned such extreme actions as useless, it still counts on other leverage. Our country has proved capable of holding out, finding an alternative in self-reliance and re-orientation towards socialist markets. As a result Syria continues to have firm positions. It has signed new agreements with socialist states to lessen the harmful effects of the economic blockade. This, if coupled with a reinvigorated economy, will effectively limit the imperialist monopolies' sway and social base in Syria.

Second. Over the last 15 years Syria has tried to achieve the fastest possible growth, often ignoring the conditions that ensure stronger economic independence. The projects under contract with capitalist companies have proved costly, and many have turned out to be either unsuitable, or insufficiently productive, being mostly "final touch" ventures¹ which depend totally on external supplies.

The right proportions between industries have not been observed. Bank policy has failed to promote growth, as is evidenced by the distribution of credits to the capitalist sector: 77% to subsidise trade activity, and only 15.4% to finance industrial, and 7.6% agricultural projects.

In addition, the crediting of productive branches has gone without control over fulfilment: much of the investment was not being used for designated purposes. There was little effort to enlist Syria's own resources. Instead of a thorough tax reform, profit taxes were cut while those on wages were raised. At the same time tax-collecting procedures were toughened.

A significant part of budgetary allocations, especially in the sector involving Western capital, has been spent on recreational and entertainment projects. This diverted production capacities, materials and resources.

Third. This kind of economic policy, along with the skillful exploitation of the regime's mistakes by the capitalist sector, has given rise to the formation of a sizeable parasitic bourgeoisie. Using this chance, they have been able to grab a significant share of the national income, including public-sector revenues, and partially lay their hands on foreign aid and loans.

This criminal activity has taken on a variety of intermediary forms, involving graft, speculation, smuggling, deception and fraud, profit-tax evasion, etc. One of the practices has been to enlist high government bureaucrats in "participation" and "cooperation". The corrupted officials have thus become direct accomplices of the parasitic bourgeoisie and act as a political force trying to impose a reactionary line on Syria in order to benefit from its economic difficulties.

I would list the following social and economic symptoms of the crisis:

- since 1983, with a few exceptions, production has been varyingly reduced throughout the basic industries, as is evidenced by the decrease in per-capita national income;

- plummeting foreign and internal receipts have caused a budget deficit, the curtailment of social development projects, and the partial or complete shutdown of a number of state-owned enterprises heavily dependent on capitalist states for their equipment and materials. This has had an adverse effect on the public sector-supplied private industry, and on handicrafts;

- scarce consumer goods, and an increasing monopolisation of the market, leading to rife speculation and smuggling;

- higher inflation and unemployment, runaway prices, a steady fall in the purchasing power of wages, and the loss of many of the working peoples' social gains. Despite nominal rises in 1985 and 1987, real wages are only half what they were, dropping, on average, below the subsistence level and failing to offset high prices.

A sharp public controversy over *solutions to the crisis* has flared up.

The parasitic bourgeoisie, having adapted to existing conditions, are blocking any effective remedial action. They are waiting impatiently for the top bureaucrats to invite them, and the entire status quo lobby, into the state machinery. End legal restrictions on our activity, they demand; weaken and phase out the public sector, and

seek closer ties with the world capitalist market, foreign loans, and a total submission to the World Bank's dictates.

All this smacks of an "open door" policy which would let parasitic capital reap huge profits and secretly transfer them abroad, bleeding the economy white—an obvious case of blackmail to get new privileges and advantages.

The steps taken by the authorities to treat the economy and ease the crisis have tended, despite the importance of some of them, to cause new deprivations for workers, the village poor, and all those who live on wages. Prices keep growing while wages are frozen, subsidies for a number of foodstuffs are withdrawn, and social spending is cut.

From the National Progressive Front to the trade unions to the broad working masses, *protest is mounting* against the "solutions" being imposed by the parasitic bourgeoisie. People understand that Syria can't go on resisting imperialist and Zionist conspiracies without overcoming the crisis. The fight for improvement stems not only from the majority's daily needs, but also from the requirements of such economic growth as would meet the popular interest, further social progress, and strengthen national independence.

Syrian Communists, as constant watchers of the economy, warned early on against the possible consequences of the regime's economic policy, exposing its negative aspects and pointing out the gap between words and deeds.

Although the National Progressive Front's statutes, and the programmes of its member parties, fundamentally coincide with the aims of the Communists, their realisation has gone awry.

Yet our position is not limited to criticism, containing as it does *constructive proposals* and appeals for mobilising society to act upon them.

As a cure for the crisis, the Syrian Communist Party suggests that the public sector should be made the standard-bearer of the economy.² This calls for improving its management, raising its profitability, and expanding the sector by creating new enterprises which would rely mainly on local resources.

It is important to end the activity of the parasitic bourgeoisie, and to cleanse the state apparatus of "their men". Subvention for essential goods must remain, and wages be raised to match the cost of living. We urge the promotion of handicrafts and small-scale production in the private sector, with joint ventures established there under state control, as best ensuring compliance with the law.

Developing agriculture by establishing state farms, adopting a considered price policy, and promoting cooperatives in every field of individual enterprise would also reinvigorate the economy.

Our party is demanding that embezzlers of public resources should be brought to account, that workers advancing the national economy should be valued and encouraged, and that democratic management be introduced throughout society. We are for *self-reliance* as a firm and constant basis of economic policy, for less dependence

on the world capitalist market and for wider cooperation with the socialist, Arab and other developing states based on equivalent trade and mutual benefit.

It is the duty of all the country's progressive and patriotic forces to work for such a policy, which becomes feasible only if there is the will and coordination. In this way, the broadest sections of society are aroused, their readiness

to join the fray expressed not in declarations of good intentions, but in real deeds.

1 Enterprises operating merely as the final cycle of production, using imported systems, components, and semimanufactures.—Ed.

2 See *The Economic Situation in Syria*. A publication by the Syrian Communist Party, 1988 (in Arabic).

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PAGES OF HISTORY

STALINISM IN THE BRAZILIAN COMMUNIST PARTY

Antonio Ribeiro GRANJA

member, National Leadership, Brazilian Communist Party (PCB), PCB representative on WMR

As a party veteran, I am often asked about the impact on Brazil of major developments in the Soviet Union, and about the gravity of the effects of Stalin's personality cult on the PCB in view of the fact that we were working in a huge country with poorly developed communications far removed from Eastern Europe.

Approaching the former question, we should bear in mind two factors of special importance to the formation of the Brazilian Communist Party. Namely, the development level of local capitalism at the beginning of the century and the October 1917 Revolution in Russia. The capitalist boom after World War I gave rise to a new proletariat, which after 1917 became involved extensively in vigorous industrial action. Going on strike, workers relied on trade unions with their new awareness of a leadership role in economic and political actions. But theirs were isolated and sporadic actions: they lacked an organisation capable of relating strikes to efforts for national liberation and against imperialism and latifundismo. In such circumstances the emergence of the Soviet form of government and the Soviet socialist state gave strong encouragement to the establishment of a communist organisation.

The Brazilian Communist Party, founded in 1922, opened up broader horizons before the working class movement by wedding industrial action to the struggle for democracy and genuine national independence. The demise of the infamous anarchist philosophy, once the prevalent trend of thinking among the trade unionists, was another result of the growing political awareness of the proletariat.

Even at that time our party felt close ties of fraternal

solidarity with the CPSU (Bolsheviks), so that we considered every success of theirs, every victory won by the Soviet Union, to be our own. That spirit has survived to date because we know that, having pioneered socialist revolution, the CPSU has always sided with the oppressed peoples and led the way to human survival.

Brazilian Communists are not ashamed of following the example of the CPSU in spite of the disastrous effects of Stalin's personality cult on the communist movement in my country. The specific circumstances in which the PCB was working, and the ideological and theoretical level of the mass of people, made it very hard to avoid those effects. The way in which the personality cult was fostered, with the actions and collective wisdom of the CPSU being replaced gradually and almost imperceptibly with the one-man accomplishments of a "far-sighted leader", proved fateful. Any major event in the Soviet Union was played up so as to give him maximum credit. That process, which reached a peak during World War II and continued until Stalin's death, was reproduced within the PCB with varying degrees of likeness to the "original".

In the period of Stalinism the Brazilian Communists equipped themselves with an array of sectarian and dogmatic principles which obscured the view of objective national realities and led them to think in terms which may have been applicable elsewhere, but which were absolutely unacceptable in our circumstances.

Stalin's personality cult was embraced and promoted on such a scale that it made itself felt in the policies and even in the gestures, speech and appearance of individual leaders, in the "barracks discipline" that was imposed, the contempt shown for cadres, the replacement of comradeship with "communist arrogance", and so on. At the same time the PCB created its own system for idolising the leaders. Each sang the praises of his immediate superior and expected those below to do likewise. There was one rule beneath that veneer of harmony: don't cross the boss. "Ideological terrorism" was practised against party activists from on high. Disagreement with the leadership was viewed as disagreement with the party, and punishment was not long in coming. For starters, culprits were censured for disloyalty, and if they persisted in their "harmful" views, they could be expelled from the party. Ostensib-

ly, all that was being done to forge a close-knit and disciplined organisation that would be worthy of its leader, "Comrade Prestes", who was looked up to as another Stalin.

In 1947, the PCB went underground after ruthless political repression was unleashed against it. A plenary meeting of the Central Committee, held in 1950, turned to the left, adopting fallacious theses which, among other things, asserted that capitalism would be unable to maintain scientific and technological progress, or withstand another crisis. Moreover, a resolution passed at the time claimed that Brazil was teetering on the brink of an abyss, facing a "life-and-death" choice between complete liberation or total slavery. The Constitution was dismissed as a disciplinary code and elections as a downright farce. Proceeding from such far-fetched assumptions, the Central Committee drew the utopian conclusion that a revolution was round the corner and could even be triggered by an elementary demand. Such views betrayed their true belief: the revolutionary process did not require the participation of the mass of people, but depended solely on the resolve of a handful of heroes.

The reality was very different. Three months after this "prophetic" resolution, general elections were called in the country. The party urged voters to cast blank ballot papers, a move that the people rejected. Presidential candidate Getulio Vargas, who had close links with the working people and a pointedly anti-imperialist platform, won with a large margin. During his term state-owned industrial plants with modern equipment were built, which met the Communists' long-standing demand, and Brazil embarked on a new road of relative democracy and economic progress.

In 1956, as the above processes were gathering momentum, the 20th CPSU Congress denounced Stalin's personality cult. The exposures caught the PCB Central Committee unawares and caused confusion and disarray. The Secretariat members did not know what to do, saw no way out of the predicament, and had nothing to say to comrades asking for explanations. This helplessness and indecision cost the leadership their credibility. Many disillusioned and disgruntled party members quit, and the numerical strength of the party dropped markedly.

It was a sad and complex situation. Brazilian Communists had to look for new approaches, seek out the causes of their mistakes and re-examine the concepts which had led to such an impasse. One thing was clear: sectarianism and dogmatism had to be discarded without delay and drastic changes made immediately, without fear of the inevitable miscalculations or possible political and ideological costs. It was no longer possible to carry on in the old way, nor could stagnation and disorganisation be allowed to replace the personality cult.

At that time, the constructive position of the core of the PCB manifested itself clearly as it realised the need for far-reaching, consistent and continuous self-criticism: fire had to be levelled not at targets out there, but at the party

itself because all its members were involved, in one way or another, in the construction of the Stalinist system. We understood that Stalinism was not dead but would rise from the ashes wherever and whenever individuals or small groups of leaders, opposed to the party and its policy line, came to the helm. This law is inescapable, and that was why the PCB leadership decided that mistakes should be rectified starting from the top. That rule has been followed in the PCB ever since.

But at that time, confusion seemed to be total. Many people dropped out of the party, following the example of those who had left earlier because of their disagreement with the tilt to the left. The loss of membership was alarming: it had shrunk from 200,000 in 1947 to a mere 3,500 by 1958. Organisationally, however, the situation was not as bad as all that: there was relative unity in the Central Committee. In March 1958, virtually exercising the powers of a congress, it passed a resolution drastically altering the course plotted by the previous party forum. That document was widely discussed in grassroots organisations and, with some amendments, was approved in principle as the party's platform for its 5th Congress in 1960. The decisions taken at that time are still relevant, despite the three congresses held since and the diverse political changes that have occurred in Brazil, as in the rest of the world.

The road travelled over the past three decades has been difficult and painful, but also instructive, and rich in lessons and achievements for our revolutionary process, all of which has helped promote new thinking among the party cadres. In the ensuing debates the Central Committee admitted to deviations from the general principles of Leninism and disregard for the experience of the worldwide working-class movement. This could have led to the party losing its class character and degenerating into revisionism. It was also admitted that the party risked raveling itself in sectarianism and dogmatism and becoming unable to exercise its political role because of an inadequate scientific analysis of Brazilian realities and ignorance of the specific circumstances in its own country. Finally, the need to get rid of deep-seated ills and embrace a qualitatively new world view was clearly realised. The March 1958 Resolution read, *inter alia*: "Dogmatic and sectarian concepts, the main danger the party should fight today, are absolutely at odds with the character of the historical tasks set before the Communists".¹

Given the then development level of the PCB and the history of changes we initiated long before perestroika and the decisive contribution of the Soviet Union and Mikhail Gorbachov to it, one can hardly disagree that the PCB's decisions were forceful proof of our party's maturity as it tried to rectify its mistakes and fearlessly drew criticism from within the party and outside.

The Communist Party unhesitatingly came out in favour of participation in a united front and called upon workers, peasants, the patriotic urban middle strata, and even big national bourgeois and latifundistas unhappy with the growing US penetration of the Brazilian economy, to strug-

gle together for the establishment of a nationalist democratic government. Of course, it was to be an alliance of very motley class forces, from the most consistent champions of far-reaching revolutionary change to the most conservative sections of society. But all of them were opposed to subservience to North American imperialism.

The Communists understood that the broader the unity, the easier it would be to defeat subordination, because "no one social force can singlehandedly resolve the problems stemming from the need to ensure the country's independent development towards democracy".² As for the working class, its task within the united front, according to the March 1958 Resolution, was not to isolate the bourgeoisie, but rather to involve it in more energetic actions against the common enemy, and in every way to defend the vital interests of the working people and the popular masses.

It was not without difficulties and troubles that the new policy line was put into practice. Four comrades from the old PCB Presidium stuck to their delusions and, having been defeated at the 5th Congress, split off to form a new (now pro-Albanian) party. When a military dictatorship came to power in 1964, four more members of the Executive Committee left the PCB to start a Brazilian Revolutionary Communist Party and launch guerrilla warfare. They were killed by the security forces even before they were ready for battle.

These developments culminated in a split within the PCB, engineered by its General Secretary in 1980. Hoping for outside moral and financial support, Prestes assumed a very radical, leftist posture and accused the party of

making concessions to the Right. Like other former comrades-in-arms who had opposed the policy line approved by the mass of party members, he eventually dropped out of the party.

The party's policy line was reinforced by its 8th Congress in 1980, which maintained that the Brazilian proletariat needed a Marxist-Leninist vanguard to pursue its class policy and that the PCB was such a vanguard. It is still small, the party forum noted, and needs to grow and to win over to its side millions of followers in order to perform its historical mission. A recruitment campaign was decided upon, and within eight months the membership had grown from 10,000 before the congress to 100,000. New people continue to come in—further proof of the correctness of our course and its endorsement by the people.

I will conclude with a quote from what was said 30 years ago: "Subjectivism, which dominated our ranks for so long, must be torn out by the roots through the re-education of leaders and activists in the spirit of a new policy, one that stems directly from the objective realities of the country and represents a correct application of the universal principles of Marxism-Leninism to the inimitable specific circumstances of the life and history of the nation".³

1 PCB: *vinete anos de politica (1958-1979)*. Documentos, Sao Paulo, 1980, p. 26.

2 Ibid., p. 15.

3 Ibid., p. 26.





THE BOOK SCENE

CHE'S BOLIVIAN DIARY

EL DIARIO DEL CHE EN BOLIVIA,
La Habana, Editoria Politica, 1988, 428 pp.

The works of men are judged by history. More than 20 years ago Ernesto "Che" Guevara gave his life in the Bolivian mountains to the cause of internationalism. But he still lives on: his ideas have spread far and wide throughout the world, and his glorious name is cherished by Latin America's nations.¹

"His ideas, his personality and his name are a banner in the hands of the oppressed and the exploited in their struggle against injustice," says the introduction to *The Diary of Che in Bolivia*, recently published in Havana. "The reason is that Che is the purest embodiment of the internationalist spirit which is typical of today's world and, increasingly, of the future" (p. XIV).

On October 9, 1967 imperialist mercenaries killed Che at La Higuera, Bolivia. The US authorities soon received photostats of Che's diary from their local stooges. But Washington did not dare publish these papers: the imperialists realised they were too explosive. When Cuba published the diary and denounced the cowardly assassination of Che, the US immediately tried to falsify his biography and his revolutionary ideas.

Between 1968 and 1971, some 30 biographies of Che appeared, most of them negative. The authors deliberately distorted Che's ideas, particularly those concerning the strategy and tactics to be used in winning political power. These theoretical precepts, based on the experience of the Cuban revolution, were misrepresented not only by right-wing authors, but also by some on the Latin American Left. Rejecting the "theory of the guerrilla focal point", many of them tried to justify their dogmatic stance and described Che as a headstrong subjectivist because he allegedly failed to take the distinctive conditions of different Latin American countries into account. They claimed that Che ignored the importance of the subjective factor in the

social struggle, paid too much attention to the peasant class, and underrated the leading role of industrial workers. He was called an idealist and a romantic who conceived a continental revolution "out of time".

A comprehensive analysis of Che's theoretical heritage has yet to be made, but the true "worth" of these crude and deliberate distortions is already obvious. True, Che did single out armed methods as the essential element of the struggle in Latin America, but he did not turn this into an absolute. The real capacity of a revolutionary, he believed, is measured by his ability to identify revolutionary tactics for every change in the situation, to be familiar with all types of tactics and to put them to the best possible use. It would be an unforgivable mistake to underestimate the value participation in elections can have for revolutionary objectives. It would be equally unforgivable to reduce everything to the electoral struggle and to ignore other means of winning power, including armed action.

Che did not see the revolutionary process as a mechanical repetition of the Cuban experience: "The Cuban Revolution has demonstrated an experience which, however, is not unique for Latin America." He was sharply critical of those who "try to implant the Cuban experience without considering whether it fits the situation or not".²

The vanguard, Che noted, should play an important role in the shaping of the subjective factors involved in the struggle. He kept insisting on this in an effort to overcome the contemplative and passive attitude which had been typical of the Latin American Left for many years (the Cuban Revolution marked the beginning of a change in this field too).

An integrated analysis of Che's revolutionary ideas shows that he did indeed accord priority to the struggle in rural areas and to the important role of peasants. But that does not mean he ignored the role of the working class or of its advanced ideology: "The peasants are a class ... which needs revolutionary guidance from the working class and revolutionary intellectuals, without which it cannot join the struggle and achieve victory."³

Firmly rejecting the assertion that the Cuban Revolution

was a fluke of Latin American history, Che held that imperialism and bourgeois ideology should be confronted in all fields. He suggested an open and frank discussion of this subject by the revolutionary movement. Despite the inaccuracies and exaggerations one may find in his ideas, they were undoubtedly of great value at the time. The underlying strategic precepts remain valid to this day—naturally, if applied creatively and with due regard for the changes that have occurred since.

All sorts of fraudulent stories appeared about Che's death. From the outset, Comrade Fidel Castro repudiated them, saying: "An artist can die, particularly if he is active in an art form as dangerous as revolutionary struggle, but the art to which he devoted all his life and his intellect can never die."⁴

Che always saw death as something natural and probable, and he stressed that his death would not stop the advancement of the revolution in Latin America. In a letter to his father he said: "This letter may well be the last. I do not seek death, but it is within the logical range of probabilities."⁵ The soldier of the revolution was not afraid of death. We can see from Che's diary his profound faith in the justice of his cause and in victory.

Che believed that the insurgency in Bolivia would spread and that all those ardently wishing to fight for national liberation in Latin America would join the struggle. He envisaged the guerrilla war in Bolivia as a kind of revolutionary school with classes on the battlefield.

When Che's detachment suffered losses, even when it was completely cut off from the outside world and from new recruits, the commander remained optimistic. This is clear from the following entry: "Morale is as firm as ever. The guerrillas are eager to go on fighting... The army has failed to accomplish its military objective" (p. 269).

Historians have yet to take full stock of Che's guerrilla operations in Bolivia. But whatever conclusions they arrive at, it is clear, in the words of Fidel Castro, that the death of the courageous revolutionary did not mean his ideas were defeated or his inspiring example was lost. This has been confirmed by the people's victories in Vietnam, Angola and Mozambique; by the Sandinist Revolution, in which an armed uprising of the Nicaraguan people ousted a dictatorship nurtured by the US government; and by the armed struggle of the defiant people of El Salvador for liberation from local reactionaries and US imperialism.

The publication of *The Diary of Che in Bolivia* more than 20 years after the author's death is not accidental. The new edition adds a great deal to what we already know about Che's revolutionary ideas and accomplishments. The book includes pages deleted from the first edition, as well as previously unpublished photographs from 1966 and 1967. The real and assumed names of all guerrillas in Che's unit are listed, as are the dates on which they joined it together with other information about them. Supplementary notes about people mentioned in the diary and, directly or indirectly, connected with the liberation struggle are of particular value.

The new data are the result of research conducted by Adys Cupull and Froilan Gonzalez who toured all the sites connected with that epic guerrilla trek. They heard eyewitness accounts and studied the areas where military operations were conducted. They have proved that wherever the guerrillas passed, they are still remembered with great affection.

The heroic exploits of Che and his comrades inspired Nicolas Guillen to write these fine and moving lines, which are a call to revolutionary battle:

You are walking in your faded combat fatigues.

You are now in the selva,

The way you were in the Sierra.

A gun is slung across your muscular chest,

In which passionate words are born.

A wind is blowing, and you can smell the scent of roses,

But you walk on.

We salute you, Guevara!

Wait for us there, in the mountains, and we will join you.

We want to die to live as you lived,

To live as you live on,

Comandante Che, our friend.

Alejandro QUIROGA,
Cuban Journalist

1 See: Antonio Diaz-Ruiz, "Che Died for Us and for Entire Mankind", *WMR*, No. 12, 1987; Luis Suarez Salazar, "The Comandante of the Americas", *WMR*, No. 12, 1988.

2 *El Pensamiento del Che. Cuadernos Ideologia y Politica*, Buenos Aires, 1988, p. 34.

3 Ernesto Che Guevara, *Obras 1957-1967*, Vol. 1, La Habana, 1970, p. 163.

4 Fidel Castro, *Velada Solemne 18 de Octubre 1967*, La Habana, 1967, p. 39.

5 Ernesto Che Guevara, *Obras 1957-1967*, Vol. 2, p. 693.

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SPAIN IN HIS HEART

Santiago ALVAREZ,

MEMORIAS I. Recuerdos de infancia y de juventud (1920-1936). Edici6n do Castro, Sada, A Coru6a, 1985, pp. 228.

MEMORIAS II. La guerra civil de 1936/1939. Yo fui Comisario Politico del Ejercito Popular, Edici6n do Castro, Sada, A Coru6a, 1986, pp. 512.

MEMORIAS III. La lucha continua... El exilio. La 2a Guerra Mundial. El regreso clandestino a Espana (1939-1945), Edici6n do Castro, Sada, A Coru6a, 1988, pp. 454.

This three-volume set, *Memoirs* by Santiago Alvarez, an honorary member of the CC of the Communist Party of Spain (PCE), describes many historical events in Spain and other countries in which this indefatigable Communist took part, and gives a broad retrospective view of the international communist movement between 1920 and 1945.

"I was born on February 11, 1913 into a peasant family of the Galicia interior. Thus I came into the world the year before the outbreak of World War I," we read on page 7 of the first volume. Later, the author would endure the hardships of two wars—the Civil War in Spain and World War II. His accounts of the cruelty of the battles fought convey the simple human message of *Memoirs*: humanity must never repeat the bitter

experience of the past, instead it must strive for a non-violent world and for equitable relations between nations.

Alvarez relates in detail how his class and political consciousness was formed. Reading how he joined the party at 18, one finds oneself reliving with him this significant event, which determined his future as a professional revolutionary.

The author recaptures the tense, pre-storm atmosphere that had developed in Spain's political life by 1936. Alvarez portrays the leaders of a number of political parties and currents of that period, and offers a Marxist analysis of their work.

"I Was a Commissar in the People's Army" is the sub-title of the second volume, which deals with the war of 1936-1939. The author's voice rings with passion and truthfulness as he recounts the events of those years, from the military-fascist coup of July 17-18, 1936, through to the final battles. He bitterly reflects on the fate of his country, subjected to a cruel fascist blow. Scrupulously exploring the political causes of the Republic's defeat, Alvarez pays special attention to one of them—the position of a number of West European governments. In August 1936 they signed an agreement on non-intervention in Spanish affairs which was not, however, observed by Germany or Italy. The other countries—France, Great Britain and the United States—used the agreement as an excuse for prohibiting arms supplies to the Republicans. This finally untied the hands of Hitler and Mussolini, who sent in large regular army units to aid the rebels.

The author examines the errors committed by the command of the Republican Army, and the differences within the PCE and their causes, and analyses the correlation of political forces in the country.

Dwelling on the history of the creation of the Republican Army, Alvarez proudly recounts its glorious victories and the major battles of the Spanish war: the defence of Madrid, fighting in the provinces of Guadalajara, Saragoza, Teruel and Barcelona, in Catalonia, and on the Ebro and Jarama rivers. The writer speaks with particular warmth of the camaraderie and sincerity that existed among its soldiers. The book recreates the drama of their heroic last-ditch stand, and of their retreat into France.

The second volume focuses mainly on the role of the 35,000 internationalist volunteers who helped to defend the Republic against attacks from a 400,000-strong fascist army.

Alvarez recalls how the International Brigades sprang up in October-November 1936, displaying the anti-fascist solidarity of people from 54 countries. He writes: "From the defence of Madrid to their withdrawal from the front lines, I had the luck to fight shoulder to shoulder with these volunteers... Several of their units were under our direct political leadership... There were never any conflicts between us whatsoever... As the political commissar of a superior unit, I never encountered the slightest disobedience or lack of consideration from the International Brigades' chiefs and commissars. On the contrary, I saw supreme examples of conscious discipline which, rather than deriving from hierarchical subordination or the army regulations and manuals, were the product of an elevated political consciousness" (p. 181).

A succession of vivid portraits passes before the readers' eyes: Georgi Dimitrov, Jacques Duclos, Mate Zalka (Luckas), Vassil Kolarov, Mikhail Koltsov, Nikolai Voronov, Dmitri Manuïlski, Pietro Nenni, Ana Pauker, Wilhelm Pieck, Harry Pollitt, Karol Swierczewski, Maurice Thorez, Manfred Stern (Kleber), and many others.

Absolutely dedicated to freedom and justice, the internationalist volunteers remained undaunted by any sacrifice or hardship. Some 20,000 of them were killed, wounded or reported missing in action. It is the author's profound conviction that the internationalists played an outstanding role in the Spanish Civil War. Their bravery in combat will live on for future generations as a striking example of fraternal solidarity.

The years of war in Spain moulded Alvarez as a journalist. His work as a political leader required of him both knowledge in organising newspapers and the daily writing of articles, reports, and features. Since then he has not laid down his pen...

In the first chapter of the third volume, the writer describes the tragic plight of the 500,000 Spaniards (including himself) who, after the Republic's defeat, crossed the border into France in the hope of gaining political asylum. But the former soldiers and commanders of the Republican Army, together with their families, were put into concentration camps. The author is full of anger and compassion as he relates the deprivations and sorrow that befell the Spaniards languishing in captivity, as well as the cruel reprisals unleashed against them. He writes: "Nobody had expected that we would be received in France as victors, because we were the vanquished. But we did not deserve the kind of treatment meted out to us by the forces representing a state whose watchword and whose interests coincided with the cause which we had defended against fascism and Nazism, which, as became clear very soon, were also their enemies" (p. 33).

Against the hostility of the French authorities Alvarez places those progressive, democratically-minded forces who gave them support. At their head stood the Communist Party, the French section of the Labour International (SFIO), and the General Confederation of Labour.

Speaking further of the split in the Spanish emigration and analysing its causes, Alvarez blames the Socialist Indalecio Prieto for this. A dramatic consequence of the split was the departure of many emigres for other countries.

Imbued with the internationalist spirit, the book moves on to tell about the world campaign of solidarity with the Spanish Communists, and about the action taken, by the Soviet Union, Mexico and Chile in particular, to alleviate the lot of the Republicans and their families. Among those who condemned the French authorities were many political and public figures, scientists and cultural personalities.

In 1939 the French government decided to expel Alvarez, thus launching him on a long odyssey through many countries, with ever new acquaintances and problems. He was particularly active in Latin America. He worked in Cuba with the newspaper *Hoy*, published by the Communist Revolutionary Union, and maintained friendly relations with David Alfaro Siqueiros, Nicolas Guillen and Ernest Hemingway. The fact that he had known Hemingway since the Spanish war and had recognised the merits of this outstanding writer and consistent internationalist did not prevent Alvarez from expressing a view of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* that diverged from the generally accepted evaluation.

The author devotes three chapters to the Soviet Union's war against Nazi Germany. He describes the major battles on the Eastern Front that were turning points in the course of World War II. His account of the little known Spanish participation in the defence of Moscow and in the partisan movement is an indisputable creative success.

The *Memoirs* end with July 1945, when Alvarez returned

home to continue an underground struggle against the fascist dictatorship of Franco.

The book is striking in its excellent style, its clear narrative logic and its significant array of unique photographs and hard facts about outstanding Communists, politicians and cultural figures. This is an unquestionably valuable contribution to the study of the history of the communist movement and the Civil War in Spain.

Luis VELEZ,
Venezuelan journalist

* * *

WHEN MARXISM IS DENIED

John Keane, *DEMOCRACY AND CIVIL SOCIETY. On the Predicaments of European Socialism, the Prospects for Democracy, and the Problems of Controlling Social and Political Power*, Verso, London-New York, 1988, 253 pp. *CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE STATE. New European Perspectives*, Edited by John Keane, Verso, London-New York, 1988, 426 pp.

Taken together, these two volumes present a detailed and wide-ranging critique of the welfare state; the strategies of Socialists and Communists in the West, and of the socialist societies of the East.

Driving force behind the project is British academic John Keane from the Polytechnic of Central London. The book he edits is a "companion volume" (with contributions from West German, Italian and "dissident" East European writers among others) to the work which he writes himself, and is intended to provide wider support and authority for the left-libertarian themes he expounds.

Contemporary socialism, Keane tells us, has lost its way and has been gravely damaged by calamities of its own making. As the titles of the two volumes suggest, the solution to the problem lies, as Keane sees it, in rethinking the relationship between the state and what he (and many of his contributors) call "civil society"—the area of private and public life outside the state. If democracy is to be realised, civil society must become increasingly autonomous—"a permanent thorn in the side of political power". On the other hand, if this "voluntary sector" is not to develop new forms of inequality and unfreedom, a sovereign state is necessary in order to reconcile and mediate conflicting social interests.

Keane is clearly no Marxist. Marx, Keane argues, wrongly analyses civil society in purely capitalist terms: he failed to see that many of the organisations of civil society are linked to professional and cultural groups and cannot therefore be analysed as forms of class power. (This point is echoed in Melucci's essay on the social movements.) Moreover Marx was wrong to envisage the disappearance of the state—a self-

governing "civil society" requires the state—and he failed to see that revolutionary politics can only destroy the democratic process.

If Marx got it wrong, what about Gramsci? The edited volume (its militant protestations of pluralism notwithstanding) contains Bobbio's highly contentious analysis of Gramsci's view of civil society, written in 1969, but omits (the French Communist) Jacques Texier's equally classic critique of Bobbio. This already suggests luke-warm support for the real Gramsci. Peloczynski tries to analyse Polish Solidarity as the rebirth of a "civil society" (in a way which unwittingly highlights some of the abstract weaknesses of Gramsci's own concepts), but it is left to Keane himself to insist on the need for a "post-Gramscian approach". Because Gramsci as a Marxist is concerned to actually transcend the distinction between civil society and the state, he fails to make the grade as a pluralist democrat. His interest in civil society can only be "wholly opportunistic" (see pp. 365-368).

Not surprisingly, Keane and most of his contributors feel that organised workers no longer have much of a role in bringing about social change. Indeed drawing upon the work of West German scholars Claus Offe, Karl Hinrich and Helmut Wiesen-thal, Keane goes further and rejects the relevance of full employment as a socialist goal. He proposes instead the concept of a citizen wage. A guaranteed income from the state which would make it possible for all individuals to escape if they wished from the "compulsions" presently experienced in the private household and the labour market.

An attractive idea? There is only one problem. The "compulsions" from which these individuals may wish to escape, are inherent in the civil society which Keane is so anxious to defend! As Marx argued so well in *Capital*, the very conception of a "purely" voluntary sector—independent from and yet balanced by a liberal parliamentary state—is rooted in the "dull compulsion" of a capitalist society.

This is not to say that the problems which Keane and his contributors seek to tackle are not real ones. The role of the welfare state in the postwar period; the changing character of the working class; the contradictory role of the state in the struggle for socialism. These are all important questions, but they are questions which *cannot* be meaningfully tackled without drawing upon those Marxist categories which Keane is so quick to reject.

Nowhere do we see this more clearly than in the analysis which Keane and some of his contributors make of the socialist world. Keane characterises the socialist countries of Eastern Europe as "oppressive totalitarian regimes bent on stamping out civil society". But this concept of totalitarianism only really makes sense if we assume that in liberal capitalist societies (as opposed to socialist ones), power is not concentrated but dispersed. That in these "non-totalitarian" societies, power has ceased to be tied to the specific interests of a ruling class and is no longer concentrated in the state—the institution which (never let it be forgotten) enjoys by definition a *monopoly* of legitimate force.

As a good pluralist, Keane should want to get rid of the state—but instead he adopts the wholly uncritical position that without a state, society would not be able to govern its affairs. When he is actually confronted by the existence of the "transitional" state under socialism—a state which seeks to dissolve its concentrated powers back into society—he denounces it as totalitarian presumably because as a "transitional" institution,

the socialist state seeks to dissolve away the stark (bourgeois) chasm between the public and the private! Yet unless we look *beyond* the existence of the state (and thus the traditional liberal dualism concept of the public and the private) how else can we establish a social order in which popular self-government ceases to be an abstract mirage and can become a living historical reality?

With this doctrinaire attachment to the abstract categories of liberal theory, it is perhaps not wholly surprising that the dramatic developments around glasnost and perestroika in the USSR in no way reassure Keane and his "dissident" contributors. On the contrary. As one of Keane's Czech contributors from the "underground" declares, perestroika is likely to make the "totalitarian system" all the more efficient and dangerous by giving it a "democratic facade" (see p. 212).

Democracy in the eyes of Keane and (at least some of) his contributors is simply an idealised vision of liberal pluralism—all it requires is that different groups within society can continue to articulate their respective interests. Proletarian or socialist democracy is therefore a contradiction in terms. Philosophically, Keane tells us, his analysis of democracy rests upon a firm commitment to relativism since the identity of each contending group can only be justified on its own terms. We no longer require—he insists—an "historical agent of emancipation" (p. 238). Exploitation and structural oppression simply disappear once the state and civil society are spliced apart!

Keane's rejection of Marxism not only makes it impossible to understand contemporary developments in the socialist world. Given the menacing concentration of power which is daily gathering apace in Thatcherite Britain, it takes an astonishing complacency to abstract form from content, liberal appearances from underlying class realities, in this kind of militantly mystifying way.

John HOFFMAN,

a lecturer at the University of Leicester (Great Britain)

AN AUTHOR'S VIEW

CAPITALISM TODAY

New York-based International Publishers has put out *Superprofits and Crises: Modern US Capitalism* by Victor Perlo, well-known Marxist scholar, member of the National Committee and chairman of the Economic Commission of the Communist Party USA.¹

Here is Victor Perlo discussing his new book with George Solly of *World Marxist Review*.

■ Who is your book addressed to?

It is a political economy study of today's capitalism and, at the same time, a book of general reading. Economic realities are subject to radical and rapid change. What are the outstanding characteristics of the contemporary capitalist economy? The profits of monopoly capital have reached incredible, unprecedented heights. At the same time, the bourgeois system is rent

by contradictions and by a variety of crises which are more and more difficult to deal with. So superprofits and crises is the central theme of the book.

■ One of the chapters is entitled "The Bureaucracy and Decadence". How typical are these things of the United States?

Corruption is as old as class society. All our governments have had elements of corruption, but the corruption of modern capitalism, particularly in the United States, has reached such a scale that it is now a real economic factor. According to some sources, the scale of corruption equals 25% of the gross national product. With all their wonderful computers and other highly efficient ways of collecting information, US economists are largely ignorant of the real situation because of this vast area of underground economic activity.

The ideology and morals of our society have gradually come to accept corruption, dishonesty and thievery as a natural form of action of the aspiring capitalists. CBS Television has cited the case of a professor who asks his class how many of them would cheat and lie in order to make money. Half of them say they would. He asks them another question: "You are working for a company that has a drug you know from experiments will kill many people. But the drug is very profitable. Would you sell it?" "Yes, we would," the students reply. According to the professor, no student would have dared to say this a generation ago. That is the extent to which the ideology of corruption and decay has become part of our way of life. Corruption and moral degradation are particularly pronounced in the military-industrial complex.

■ What new features has the finance monopoly structure of US capitalism developed?

In *The Empire of High Finance*, which was published in 1957, I named the eight biggest financial/industrial groups in the United States, although there were many more of their ilk. There have been great changes since then. The New York-based groups retain immense power and influence in the structure of finance capital, and they have a wide range of industrial corporations within their orbit. On the other hand, the Western and Southwestern coalitions of finance capital, linked closely with the military-industrial complex, have gained a lot of ground.

California alone accounts for almost 25% of all Pentagon contracts and over one-half of all aerospace contracts. Wall Street now has to share its control over many monopolies with Western and Southwestern groups. Besides, some corporations are converting themselves into new finance capital centers. General Electric, Ford and General Motors set up their own empires, spread out and develop while retaining certain connections with the traditional banking groups.

During the structural crisis of the 1970s and 1980s, the sway of finance capital over all society increased. There has been a certain breakdown of structure of US monopoly capital. There has been a growing differentiation in the composition of high finance and shifts in the balance of forces between banking and industrial corporations. With the takeover boom, the new tycoons appear as powerful figures. Apart from and in rivalry with the old financial power centers, the "new rich" at the same time depend on them for the scores of billions of dollars of loans with which to carry on their takeover battles.

One interesting bourgeois expose-type book newly published is *The Predators' Ball* by Connie Bruck who details the

operations of Michael Milken, a Californian who has joined the elite of high finance. Only time will tell if such groups as Kohlberg, Kravis, Roberts and Drexel Burnham become permanent stars in the US financial firmament or, like the Texas, California and other pretenders to dominance, are absorbed in the Wall Street power structure.

The merger-takeover boom, the wild bidding up of the prices of corporate stock in order to gain control, and the incredible rates of profit on invested capital made by the successful practitioners confirm my earlier concept of the profits of control as a major and dynamic part of surplus value.

■ **What are the transnational trends of monopoly capital?**

As I say in my book, the transnational operations of monopoly capital corporations and banks, whether US, Japanese or West European, are growing much faster than their internal operations. It is now a truism to say that the capitalist economy has acquired a global character. Although each corporation relies politically and militarily on its home base, it operates as a international force without any patriotism as far as its economic activities are concerned. New contradictions have arisen as a result. US corporations have so extended their international grip that a tremendous part of their total production capacity is now in other countries.

The giant corporations now prefer to supply foreign markets from their foreign bases of production. Furthermore, a very large proportion of imports into the United States is supplied by the foreign subsidiaries of US-owned transnationals. This means built-in distortions in the structure of US foreign trade: exports are declining while imports acquire a growing importance. The US balance of trade has turned negative to an extent unprecedented for a major industrial country.

In recent years Japanese finance capital has purchased many big banks and factories in New York and other US monopoly centers. The pyramiding of the market valuation of real estate and stocks in Japan may be a financial time bomb whose explosion will set off the next crisis of overproduction in the capitalist world.

■ **Will US imperialism retain its leading position or will the law of the uneven development of capitalism push someone else into the foreground?**

In my book I stress that in many ways, Japan has already outstripped the United States. Besides, through a certain degree of coordination, the West European countries can also act as an independent financial force.

There is also the comparatively recent attempt to create suprastate monopoly capitalism capable of regulating and keeping within certain bounds the rivalries between the main centers, as well as alleviating crises. Together with other international centers, the United States is trying to be the locomotive that will pull the capitalist system out of its difficult situation.

There are increasing signs that other groups of capitalist countries no longer feel they must subordinate their economic policies to the interest of US imperialism. This applies to the developing countries too: for example, you can see the beginning of closer cooperation among the Latin American nations in dealing with the debt crisis.

Finally, there is an obvious enough tendency of other imperialist countries to break away from US dictates in their economic relations with the socialist and newly liberated nations—although this tendency is still weak.

This is why I do not think that we are coming into a period in which a single capitalist power will have dominance of the capitalist world.

I also think—and I say so in my book—that Western Europe and Japan have so stabilized their capitalist rule that they no longer need US “protection” from their own working class. And it is clear to the leaders of these imperialist centers which are competing with the United States that they have nothing to gain from confrontation and still less from war with the Warsaw Pact.

1 Victor Perlo, *Superprofits and Crises: Modern US Capitalism*, International Publishers, New York, 1988, 548 pp.

* * *

TWO BIOGRAPHIES OF BUKHARIN

*Little was written in the Soviet Union until recently about Nikolai Bukharin, a prominent figure in the Communist Party and in the Communist International. His political rehabilitation has drawn considerable public attention to this outstanding personality. Late last year Nikolai Bukharin by the Soviet historian Ignat Gorelov was published and, in January 1989, the Russian-language translation appeared of Stephen Cohen's political biography of Bukharin.*¹

“A FAVOURITE OF THE WHOLE PARTY”

Ignat Gorelov, *NIKOLAI BUKHARIN*, Moskovski rabochiy, Moscow, 1988, 284 pp.

“Rightly considered the favourite of the whole Party” is a well-known quotation from Lenin which is the subtitle of the main part of the book under review. The other part comprises some of Bukharin's articles, published in 1917-1929 and, to a certain degree, typical of his journalistic heritage.

Gorelov presents Bukharin as a dedicated and energetic revolutionary and a gifted scholar. Bukharin began to work

vigorously as a member of the Bolshevik party at 17, soon after the first Russian revolution of 1905. He was a remarkable and popular figure, and the main landmarks of his biography include activities among Moscow's industrial workers, exile, life as an emigre, participation in the October Revolution, the post of *Pravda* editor-in-chief, which he filled for many years, and his position as the party's leading theoretician during the 1920s, one of its political leaders after Lenin's death, and General Secretary of the Communist International.

It cannot have been easy to write the first book about Buk-

harin to have appeared in the Soviet Union for a very long time, and there is evidence of some hasty work on the author's part. At times he switches unexpectedly from hearty approval to surprisingly categorical and sharp criticism of Bukharin's mistakes—for example, in the section about his opposition to the peace of Brest-Litovsk in 1918. Bukharin's calls to reject the humiliating peace terms and wage guerrilla warfare with the help of highly mobile armed groups sound completely illogical—until one remembers the general revolutionary spirit that prevailed at the time in the nation and in the party.

Gorelov deals in detail with the theoretical differences between Bukharin and Lenin, but in some cases the impression is that he is trying to soft-pedal the more acute clashes. For example, in referring to Bukharin's book *The Economics of the Period of Transition*, he makes absolutely no mention of the way Lenin condemned its scholasticism, demanded that dozens of pages be deleted, etc.² Without an objective analysis of such assessments one cannot understand the depth of their differences on the issue of dialectics, which prompted Lenin to make the well-known critical remark about Bukharin in the "Letter to the Congress".³

Besides, I see absolutely no need for such a study to ignore cases in which the criticism offered by Lenin was not fully valid. For example, on the eve of the revolution Lenin charged that Bukharin interpreted the role of the state from a semi-anarchist viewpoint and, specifically, that he rejected a state based on the dictatorship of the proletariat. But in the summer of 1917 Lenin admitted that he had no differences with Bukharin on this question.⁴ Nevertheless, this polemic was subsequently used by Stalin to argue that Bukharin's theoretical ideas were "untenable".

One of the more complex and difficult questions is whether, when he was removed from party leadership in the early 1930s, Bukharin gave up his struggle against Stalin. In her recently published memoirs Anna Larina, Bukharin's widow, maintains that he did.⁵ Stephen Cohen cites facts to prove that the reverse was true. Gorelov is somewhere in between. He evades several controversial points, but he quite correctly points out the objectively anti-Stalinist thrust of Bukharin's *Izvestiya* articles of 1934-1936, which are permeated with a spirit of genuine humanism.

On the whole, the book under review fills a major gap in our academic literature, presenting a truthful profile of a man whose name has been restored to its rightful place in the history of the CPSU and of the world communist movement.

Professor Stanislav MENSNIKOV (USSR)

1 Stephen F. Cohen, *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution. A Political Biography, 1888-1938*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1973. Professor Cohen of Princeton University is the author of several books and numerous articles published in US left liberal periodicals.—Ed.

2 See: *Leninskiy sbornik*, XL, Moscow, 1985, p. 428.

3 See: V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 36, p. 595.

4 See: Nikolai Bukharin, "Concerning the Theory of the Imperialist State", *Revolution in Law*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1925 (in Russian).

5 Anna Larina, "The Unforgettable", *Znamya*, Nos.10-12, 1988.

STALIN COULD NOT FORGIVE THAT

A TALK WITH PROFESSOR STEPHEN COHEN (USA)

■ What do you think about the publication of your book in the Soviet Union?

I am honored that my book has been published in the USSR. I hope it will contribute to a more civilised dialogue between US and Soviet scholars and convince my readers that not all Western Sovietologists are merely anti-communist propagandists.

The fact that books about Bukharin are appearing in the Soviet Union is a by-product of perestroika and glasnost. Discussions in the Soviet Union's mass media and assembly halls are now richer and more fascinating than in any other country. There is also a passionate debate about the Soviet past, particularly about whether the continued advancement of the New Economic Policy, introduced by Lenin and developed by Bukharin, represented a viable alternative to Stalin's "great divide" of 1929. That question is the central theme of my book. Naturally, as Soviet scholars study the events of the 1920s and 1930s and gain access to the archives, their research will become fuller and deeper than my treatment of the subject. When that happens, I will not be disappointed.

■ What aspects of Bukharin's personality do you see as particularly interesting? What was it that appealed to you as a historian?

He was not unique among the original Bolshevik leaders—highly educated people interested in everything from economics to literature, history, philosophy and politics—but he was the youngest of them all. In some ways he was more of a 20th-century intellectual, while Lenin, I believe, was more of a 19th-century theoretician and revolutionary.

Bukharin often disagreed with Lenin. He rebelled his whole life, both before and after the Revolution. There were disputes about the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, about the "Left" Communists, about the new party programme and many other things.

■ How do you understand Lenin's remark that Bukharin's views could not be described as fully Marxist?

In his "Letter to the Congress" Lenin said that Bukharin was a "most valuable and major theorist of the Party", but "there is something scholastic about him (he has never made a study of dialectics, and, I think, never understood it)".¹ When all the correspondence between Lenin and Bukharin during 1922 and 1923 is published in full in the Soviet Union, it may tell us more about the reasons for this assessment. Meanwhile, my understanding is this. Lenin was deeply influenced by Hegel's dialectics as transformed by Marx. But Bukharin came of intellectual age not in Russia but primarily in Western Europe where, as an emigre, he was influenced by the new kind of Marxism which was more sociological than philosophical. In his writings you can see very few references to Hegel but many to contemporary sociologists—Emile Durkheim, Max Adler and others. Note that Bukharin's *Theory of Historical Materialism* was subtitled "A Text Book on Marxist Sociology". Lenin did not like the sociological interpretation of Marxism. He thought it was a scholastic mistake to underestimate the philosophical, Hegelian tradition.²

■ Bukharin wrote about "pure imperialism", about the elimination of competition and of crises, and Lenin criticised him.

Yes, Bukharin wrote *Imperialism and the World Economy* which Lenin criticised, together with a series of articles about the modern state. But in the final analysis, they were in fundamental agreement: they both rejected the modern bureaucratic state.

As far as I know, there is now a dispute in the Soviet Union over whether Bukharin carried the concept of NEP beyond where Lenin would have carried it. This is a matter to be sorted out by Soviet scholars, of course. But I think Bukharin was in full agreement with Lenin's vision of socialism: Lenin said socialism was a system of civilised cooperatives. But Stalin saw the role of the state in a completely different light. If Stalinism was anything, it was statism. I will be delighted to see Soviet scholars conduct a comprehensive analysis of Bukharin's thinking about the ways of building socialism.

■ He is often accused of rudely attacking artists, writers and intellectuals—say, his criticism of the poet Sergei Yesenin or the famous physiologist Ivan Pavlov.

Sharp debate was normal for Soviet Russia during the 1920s. It was perfectly acceptable to pull no punches in attacking one another. People didn't choose their words, they just pulled the trigger and let fly. By the way, although Bukharin and Pavlov had a series of public disputes, the evidence suggests they became quite friendly later. Bukharin was also the person who wrote the party's 1925 resolution where he said there should be no censorship, no party line in literature, and it was he who later tried to protect Mandelshtam and Pasternak. He felt completely free to disagree with Yesenin but would have defended to the death Yesenin's right to publish his poetry in Russia.

■ We know that Bukharin changed his views several times. Do you think there is any logic to these zigzags?

In October 1917 Bukharin was not yet 30. He was still very young. The ideas of the "Left Communists" appealed to him. This reflected the peculiar situation of those years, what with the Civil War and then NEP. I think there were two things that caused Bukharin to change his mind.

First, I believe he realised that it would be a mistake to continue the "surplus appropriation" policy vis-a-vis the peasants, and second, he did not want to see the creation of a Leviathan state in Russia. In this he was deeply influenced by Jack London's novel *The Iron Heel*. Hence Bukharin's opposition to coercion, requisition of grain and militarisation of labour. Throughout the 1920s, he attacked state monopolism and advocated the development of the market. He said that the market was the road to socialism, although the closer you got to socialism, the less you needed market relations. He maintained that the market was the road to proper relations with the peasants. It is here that he developed his most explosive attack

on Stalin's "extraordinary measures", calling them the military-feudal exploitation of the peasantry. That was something Stalin never forgave him.

■ Why did Stalin go all out to destroy Bukharin after the latter renounced his views and submitted to party discipline?

Stalin did not just kill Bukharin, he killed them all—Zinoviev, Kamenev, Rykov, Rudzutak and many other prominent Bolsheviks. I think—and I have tried to argue this case in my book—that Bukharin made an effort to convince the party, and Stalin himself, that it was time to put an end to terror, normalise domestic economic relations and prepare for the inevitable war against Germany. In his *Izvestiya* articles of 1934-1936, he was with those people within the leadership who were trying to persuade Stalin to change his policies.

■ How do you assess the role of Bukharin in the Comintern in your book?

He was extremely active in the Comintern from the very beginning and always delivered one of the major reports. When Zinoviev was removed in 1926, he became the Comintern General Secretary and remained in this post until 1929. I was particularly interested in two aspects of his activities there.

First, Bukharin always considered himself an internationalist. He accepted the idea that it was necessary to begin to build socialism in the Soviet Union, but that it would be a backward form of socialism until there were other forms in the West. He could not accept the way "national Bolshevism" was opposed to the international revolution.

Second, there was a fateful turning point at the 6th Congress of the Comintern when Bukharin's line was defeated. He and his supporters argued in favour of a united front and cooperation with the Social Democrats against the fascist threat.³ The struggle was conducted both at the rostrum and in the corridors of the congress. Soon Bukharin was forced to step down and withdraw from the Comintern.

I am not one of those who would say that had Bukharin's line prevailed, Hitler would never have come to power. But I am sure that resistance to fascism would have been much stronger.

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

2 Lenin repeatedly criticised Bukharin's interpretation of dialectics, specifically, in the discussion about the trade unions (see: V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol.32, pp. 83-85, 90-96, 99-100) and in his remarks on Bukharin's *The Economics of the Period of Transition* (*Leninskiy sbornik*, XL, Moscow, 1985, pp. 383-432).—Ed.

3 The united front policy won at the 7th Congress of the Comintern in 1935.—Ed.





DEALING HONESTLY WITH HISTORY

The joint Soviet-Polish academic commission on the history of relations between the two countries, set up in accordance with the Declaration on Soviet-Polish Cooperation in Ideology, Science and Culture signed by Mikhail Gorbachov and Wojciech Jaruzelski as leaders of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR), has been at work for almost two years now. Three joint sessions and nine meetings of research groups have been held. The leadership of both parties is following the work of the commission closely, and so is public opinion not only in Poland and the USSR but also in other countries.

The article that follows covers some of the problems the Polish and Soviet historians are jointly tackling.

CULTIVATING THE GOOD NEIGHBOUR IMAGE

The day the Soviet-Polish commission met for its third session (held in Moscow from November 29 to December 1, 1988), a collection of articles and transcripts from Mikhail Gorbachov's meeting with Polish intellectuals in Warsaw last summer appeared on newsstands. This looks like a mere coincidence, but it is added proof of the importance both parties attach to the work the historians have begun.

Some of the material in the collection was published in the wake of Mikhail Gorbachov's visit to Poland, but the conversation he started with Polish intellectuals at the Royal Castle remained unfinished: there was not enough time for all those wishing to speak to do so. The agreement was that they would submit their statements in writing, and Mikhail Gorbachov promised to reply to them separately. The project was completed as the Soviet-Polish commission began its work. There is a special section on this subject in the afterword the CPSU leader wrote for the collection:

"History must be dealt with honestly. That calls for courage—the courage not to close our eyes to the true causes of this or that event. In other words, it takes an ability to face the truth, be it pleasant or bitter, flattering or humiliating for one's national self-esteem.

"The main lesson we can and must draw jointly from our common history is that both our nations have always had to pay for all the complications either side introduced into our relations. Moreover, this has always adversely affected the national interests of both sides. Indeed, if we take a look at the 70 years of Soviet-Polish relations, we will not find a single painful episode for which only Moscow or only Warsaw was to blame.

"Take 1939. Viewed realistically, the Soviet-German nonaggression pact of August 23 was in fact inevitable—although the question of whether everything was done in our countries to resist the growing threat is a subject we should study jointly and in depth.

"As to the 'secret' protocol allegedly attached to this pact, I must say that the search for its original has so far yielded no results. The copies which circulate in the West and with which we are familiar are suspect for many reasons. Recognising them as authentic would be frivolous on the part of the Soviet leadership. It would also create a dangerous precedent.

"Meanwhile, we regard the Soviet-German friendship treaty concluded a month later, on September 28, 1939, and Molotov's statements¹ in this connection, not only as a political mistake

with grave consequences for ourselves, for other countries and for the communist movement, but also as an obvious and glaring deviation from Leninism, as a violation of Leninist principles.

"Science will sort it all out.

"And now about the murder of Polish officers at Katyn. Many in Poland are convinced that this was masterminded by Stalin and Beria. A thorough investigation into this tragedy is now under way. We will be able to judge by its results how justified this or that view or assessment is. There are now two monuments standing side by side at Katyn—to the fallen Poles and to the Soviet prisoners of war shot there by the Nazis. It is also a symbol of the common tragedy that befell our two nations.

"I would also like to add that the effort to fill in the 'blank spots' in our past should at the same time be an effort to clear the way to the future of our relations."²

Wojciech Jaruzelski, First Secretary of the PZPR Central Committee, spoke at a session of the Sejm last July about the problems involved in the commission's work. Specifically, he noted that "Polish and Soviet historians continue working on their joint project. We expect it to give us a better view of the background to and character of various dramatic events.

"There is, however, the concept of a

broad historical balance measured not just in terms of individual facts, days or months but also in relation to protracted and multifaceted processes. This balance is positive.

"To sum up, we should not be afraid of evaluating the past in its entirety. The Polish people were saved from extinction. All of us have been able to gather here in this hall for the simple reason that the selfless people and the heroic army of the Soviet Union contributed decisively to the defeat of the Nazi hordes and put an end to Hitler's genocide."³

1 On September 17, 1939 Vladimir Potemkin, deputy USSR People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, presented a note from the Soviet Government to Wacław Gzybowski, Polish ambassador in Moscow, claiming that the Polish state had virtually ceased to exist. The idea was repeated publicly by Vyacheslav Molotov at a session of the USSR Supreme Soviet on October 31, 1939: "One must point to another fact—the military defeat of Poland and the disintegration of the Polish state. Poland's ruling circles took

At the December 1988 Plenary Meeting of the PZPR Central Committee Wojciech Jaruzelski again referred to the way history should be assessed: "We are proclaiming firmly that there will be no return to the practice of keeping whole chapters of history closed. We will uproot all vestiges of Stalinism. Condemnation of crimes, due homage paid to their victims, and the elimination of everything that clashes with the humanitarian and democratic basis of our idea is our everlasting moral imperative."⁴

great pride in the 'durability' of their state and the 'might' of their army. But it took only a brief blow delivered by the German army and then by the Red Army for this ugly product of the Versailles Treaty, an entity that lived by oppressing the non-Polish nationalities, to collapse."—Ed.

2 *The Intelligentsia Facing New Issues of Socialism*, Politizdat, Moscow, 1988, pp. 74-75 (in Russian).

3 *Trybuna Ludu*, July 12, 1988, p. 4.

4 *Ibid.*, December 21, 1988, p.1.

FOR BLANK SPOTS NOT TO BECOME BLACK HOLES

Cochairmen of the Soviet-Polish Commission—Georgy Smirnov, director of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the CC CPSU Central Committee, and Jarema Maciszewski, rector of the PZPR Academy of Social Sciences—have the floor.

Georgy Smirnov. History has bequeathed many complex and painful problems to us—problems on which the April 1987 Declaration signed by Mikhail Gorbachov and Wojciech Jaruzelski orients us. We were unanimous in the choice of the main areas and objectives of our joint research: our foremost concern is to clear up the historical backlog which weighs heavily on Soviet-Polish relations and on our nations' friendship. Within this wide range of issues, we tried to single out the more pressing and acute subjects—11 of them, covering the period from 1917 to 1945.

The commission was aware that the effort to unearth and make public the truth was unlikely to provide a rosy picture. On the contrary, we realised that this would be a painful process which would hardly make either the Polish or the Soviet people happy. It was therefore particularly important to work out a con-

structive approach to our planned research. From the outset, we were convinced that in filling in the blank spots of our history we must not turn them into "black holes" which could obliterate the entire positive experience of the past—experience underlying the comradely cooperation of our parties and the friendship of our sister nations.

We are now analysing in depth a series of complex problems that can only be described as tragic—the war of 1920, the dissolution of the Communist Party of Poland, the events on the eve and at the beginning of World War II, the extermination of Polish army officers and Soviet prisoners of war at Katyn, the subsequent executions of servicemen in the Polish areas already liberated from the Nazis, and several other issues. It is, of course, difficult to remain dispassionate and scientifically objective when probing deep wounds that, to be quite

honest, have not yet healed. There was a time when they were simply covered up hastily in the hope that oblivion would be the best cure. Naturally, that hope has proved unfounded.

Today, we are again feeling this agonising pain. Scholars are only human, and we would like to ease it by telling the whole truth without delay. But I regret that in some cases we cannot do it yet because we have so far failed to provide exhaustive and authentic answers to the relevant questions. The commission has already presented to the public a considerable amount of new, inadequately researched and previously unknown data about Soviet-Polish relations. Still, there are aspects on which the commission has yet to arrive at a highly accurate scientific evaluation.

Voices have been raised both in Poland and in the Soviet Union charging that the commission is dragging its feet. However, haste has never produced any useful results in science; on the contrary, the effects have been sad or, at best, ludicrous. Therefore, the attitude of the commission's Soviet participants—also shared by our Polish colleagues—is to continue our work patiently, conduct thorough research, compare our findings and complement each other's efforts. The commission is firmly committed to the rule that if we make a new statement or release previously unknown data or documents, we guarantee their scientific authenticity.

Regrettably, there are factors which make our work difficult and protracted. In matters where we have achieved a measure of success—for example, in clearing up the circumstances connected with the disbandment of the Communist Party of Poland,¹ the deportation of Poles from the western USSR and several other issues—this was due primarily to the availability of the necessary archives. When we are denied access to them, extra difficulties arise. Therefore, the commission itself and the agencies in charge of archives should pool their efforts and submit the necessary documents to the scholars. This is particularly relevant with regard to the Soviet side.

My last point is that it is very important for scholars to show mutual goodwill and attention. That is what we do have in our commission. We treat the differences that emerge in our views with patience and understanding, and

we search tirelessly for the truth. Outside the commission though, we sometimes encounter incompetent and naive attitudes to our work. Some people are trying to drive a wedge between the Polish and the Soviet parts of the commission and to pit them against each other. That is usually the fault of journalists and writers, but sometimes of fellow historians too. Actually, we are not really alarmed by the emergence of unfriendly and unfounded views now that we have a pluralism of opinion and glasnost both in the USSR and in Poland. But, guided by the logic of our joint search for truth, I must repeat that hasty conclusions can only make our work more difficult and confuse public opinion. The project we have undertaken is too serious to be turned into a source of sensations, let alone malicious speculation.

Jarema Maciszewski. It is no secret that there have been difficult and even tragic pages in the history of our nations' relations. But we are not leafing through them again to present a bill of past injustices to each other. Our objective is to help people rid themselves of hostility and angry emotions.

This does not mean that we have to reshape various traditional elements in our awareness of history. To the Poles, Suvorov's name will forever symbolise the collapse of Poland as a state and the brutal suppression of the Polish people; to the Russians, he will remain a great general. On the other hand, we see Czarniecki as a national hero, while the Ukrainians regard him as the butcher of the rebellious Ukraine. Further illustrations of the difficult and contradictory nature of our mutual past are reflected in the lives of individuals, and I would like to quote a case Wojciech Jaruzelski recalled:

"One hundred years ago Alexander Ulyanov, a young Russian, and Bronislaw Pilsudski, a young Pole, took part in an assassination attempt on Czar Alexander III. It took the liberation movements in Russia and Poland years to realise that fighting czarist autocracy by self-destructive individualistic means was a hopeless undertaking, and to turn to the proletariat, to urban and rural workers.

"The younger brothers of both freedom fighters—Vladimir Ilyich and Jozef Klemens—took different paths. Eventually, they confronted each other.

Such things have happened many times in history."²

This case demonstrated what unexpected zigzags life could take. That is why conventional yardsticks and a "cavalry charge" approach will not do when one studies history: they will always lead to mistakes.

Hence my wish to emphasise our commission's strictly scientific method, one which rules out arbitrary interpretations or hasty conclusions. There are two basic elements to our approach. *First*, we have defined our objective clearly, and we are profoundly aware of our purpose. From the outset, we agreed to try and prevent the "blank spots" in the history of Polish-Soviet relations from turning into a political problem detrimental to our alliance or to our nations' friendly ties. *Second*, our rule is not to allow through even the tiniest of inaccuracies and to use every available opportunity to study and analyse all facts and events thoroughly. If we fail to carry the study of a particular question through, we admit that for specific reasons we have been unable to complete it. Usually, the reason is either a shortage of historically authentic material—not enough to arrive at a definitive conclusion—or disagreement in the assessment of these sources. To overcome these difficulties, we conduct a painstaking search for documentary evidence (say, in the reconstruction of the Katyn tragedy or of the circumstances surrounding the conclusion of the Soviet-German pacts of 1939) and for ways to a consensus that would be acceptable to both sides. That is what a joint commission is for. For example, the Polish members of the commission maintain that, on the basis of our expert analysis of various sources in Polish and Western archives, one can blame the NKVD for the massacre of Polish army officers at Katyn. Another document corroborating this conclusion has been recently discovered in the ar-

chives in Britain. Specifically, it indicates that the executions took place in March and April 1940. Our Soviet colleagues are responding with understanding to the efforts of the Polish historians to clear up the story of the Katyn tragedy. However, for the commission to be able to arrive at a common position on this matter we must have incontrovertible proof, including information from the Soviet archives. During his recent visit to Poland, Mikhail Gorbachov said that work in this direction was under way. Its results will underlie the definitive conclusions about what happened at Katyn. The *third* and final rule is always to tell the truth, however bitter it may be. This rule is dictated by our credibility as scholars, by our conscience as party members and by our sense of responsibility.

A few words about the atmosphere in which the commission is working. I think we should respond constructively to expressions of public concern about our studies and to the desire to see us work faster and more productively. The Polish members of the commission are working under stronger pressure than their Soviet counterparts. That is natural because their position is different. In Poland, the attitude to the history of Polish-Soviet relations is emotionally charged, and our work is being followed closely and continuously by the press and by public opinion. As far as I can judge, the situation in the Soviet Union is different: there, people view our work less impatiently, and critical remarks are much rarer—although they are still made. The important thing is that we are making progress.

1 See: F. Firsov, I. Yashborovskaya, "The Comintern and the Communist Party of Poland", *Questions of CPSU History*, 1988, No. 11, 12. —Ed.

2 *Trybuna Ludu*, July 12, 1988, p. 4.

WARS TEACH THE HARSHTEST LESSONS

An analysis of issues connected with wars—the Soviet-Polish war of 1920 and World War II—is a major aspect of the research conducted by the commission. For a long time these two wars were studied separately, but now the view is spreading among scholars that there was a connection between them. Had there

been no war in 1920, with its dramatic consequences for both sides, had it not poisoned Soviet-Polish relations with mistrust and enmity, no one knows what course European events would have taken—events that culminated in the most destructive war in human history.

Historians have now discovered a

great deal of previously unknown material which makes it possible to reconstruct an accurate picture of the past and, furthermore, to get at the root of those events and draw up conclusions of fundamental importance for the history of Soviet-Polish relations.

What were the causes of the 1920 war? Was it really inevitable, as we have long believed? What new elements is the joint research project introducing into the political evaluation of this war?

Replying to these questions are Professor *Marian Leczyk* of the Polish Political Military Academy and *Inessa Yazhborovskaya*, Doctor of History and senior researcher with the International Working-Class Movement Institute under the USSR Academy of Sciences. The joint commission has charged them with drafting a collective monograph entitled *Soviet-Polish Relations 1917-1921*.

Marian Leczyk. My personal conclusion after years of research into the events connected with the war of 1920 is that neighbouring nations and their political figures do not always understand the nature of the developments across the border. This unwillingness or inability to see things as they are and interpret them without bias, is in fact rooted in the ideological habit of dividing nations into either good or bad, friendly or hostile. This, I believe, was what triggered off that war.

Without going into too much detail, let me say that on the eve of the war, having thrown off the yoke of more than 100 years of oppression, inspired by the revolutionary events in Russia and Germany, and aware of the support other nations extended to them in their desire to create an independent Polish state, the Polish people were only beginning to put their house in order. Previously isolated and divided territories were being integrated into a single whole, national borders were being shaped, and internal government structures were emerging. Intertwined into these complex processes were many social, ethnic, domestic and international problems. The country opted for the bourgeois path of development, and that explained the hostile attitude of Poland's rulers to Soviet Russia. In other words, there were ample motives for the Polish side to start the war. But those who unleashed it were unwilling and unable to understand that the working people of

Soviet Russia would rise to defend their freedom and that they would not allow anyone to take it away from them. That was what happened.

For its part, the Soviet side failed to understand that, as soon as it crossed the border into Poland, it would encounter stiff popular resistance and firm national patriotism and that there would be no response to the ideological reasons cited to justify this move—the interests of the world revolution and social emancipation of the Polish working people with the help of their “class brethren”. Moreover, the Soviet action undermined the prospects for Poland's revolutionary transformation. The Polish working-class movement was severely weakened. The credibility of the Communists—whose warnings about such consequences had been ignored—was largely eroded.

As to the political consequences of the war, I believe that the memories of this tragically pointless conflict overshadowed Polish-Soviet relations for decades to come. It was a very awkward situation. Oblivious to the political realities of the time, the two nations were suspicious of each other. In Poland, the old anti-Russian stereotypes dating back to czarist times grew stronger instead of diminishing: these feelings were nurtured by the fresh losses. In the Soviet Union, Poles came to be seen as invariably anticommunist, and the prevailing mood was that peace with Poland was only an interlude: with the enemy lying in wait across the border, one must be always on one's guard. This attitude inevitably influenced the events that occurred on the eve of World War II.

Inessa Yazhborovskaya. I agree with the overall assessment by my Polish colleague of the causes and consequences of the Soviet-Polish war. But I would like to specify some points and add some details because I think they are important. First, a question I hear particularly often, especially from young Poles: all right, Pilsudski started the war, but why did the Red Army, the army of the country that had adopted the Decree on Peace, fail to stop at Poland's ethnic border, having driven the Polish troops across the Bug river? After all, no one invited the Red Army to Warsaw.

My reply is that no one did—just as no one invited Pilsudski to Kiev. His treaty with Petliura,¹ who waged a war against his own people, could not confer

a legitimate status on the Polish invasion. As far as crossing the border is concerned, a war, once unleashed, has its own merciless logic: when the enemy is retreating, the principle of “military expediency” is invoked, and only victory ends the hostilities. The logic of that war—a war imposed on Soviet Russia, a great burden on and a great danger to the newborn socialist state, one that had just repelled two major offensives by the Western Allies—was what brought the Red Army to the outskirts of Warsaw.

Of course, there were mistakes in the overall assessment of the situation, of the political stance taken by the Polish authorities and of the role played by Pilsudski. There were strategic and tactical mistakes in the conduct of the war, and there was the illusory hope that the Polish people would support the “march on Warsaw”. But the worst thing is that neither side learned the lesson of the tragic events of 1920. This pointless war—which, as it is now clear, could have been prevented—did not help the sides acquire the political wisdom that was needed to avert World War II and prevent the huge losses it brought.

The lessons of World War II. An in-depth study of this subject was begun as soon as the Soviet-Polish commission was established. A joint document on the prelude to and the early stages of the war has been drafted. The plan is to publish it on the eve of the 50th anniversary of Nazi Germany's attack on Poland. Many aspects of this research have already been made public, particularly in relation to the need to revise many widespread and habitual ideas about the events that led up to the war. This point has been raised by Jarema Maciszewski and Georgy Smirnov in an interview published in the press, as well as by other Soviet and Polish scholars in analytical articles that have appeared in newspapers and periodicals.

The scholars began with the methodology of approaching the complex and contradictory events that occurred directly before the war. The problem was that for many years, historical research in the West and in the East was strongly influenced by the ideological and political confrontation between them. Objective analysis was often distorted by biased interpretations and confined to rigid and speculative notions that ignored the specific historical realities. As a result, many Western his-

torians went out of their way to justify British, French and US policies and blamed the outbreak of the war on the Soviet Union.

The picture was similar in the socialist countries, although the objective was quite the reverse—to prove that it was all the fault of the Western nations with their policy of “appeasing” Nazi Germany. As has been noted at sessions of the commission, some authors even apportioned more blame to Western leaders than to Hitler and his clique for unleashing the war. Both sides manipulated historical research and created a distorted picture of the past. This hampered an objective assessment of the causes and consequences of World War II, and created additional difficulties in postwar international developments. It is now time to clear up all these issues. To do that, we must renounce ideological bias in our approach to history.

This is also the angle from which the commission views the role played by the policies pursued by Poland and the Soviet Union during the prewar years. The range of the issues examined by the two countries' scholars is sufficiently wide. One can get a full picture of their conclusions by reading a joint document produced by the commission. In tackling

this subject, the Soviet and Polish historians were guided by the fact that, after it was attacked by Nazi Germany on September 1, 1939, Poland's resistance put an end to Hitler's “peaceful” conquests. From the outset, Poland waged a just war of liberation against the Nazi onslaught. Therefore, the Comintern was wrong to describe the war in September 1939 as imperialist in relation to both Poland and Nazi Germany, without distinguishing between the two.

Molotov's statements to the effect that, overrun by Nazi Germany, the Polish state had ceased to exist were profoundly wrong and insulting. Poland was in a very difficult position, but it kept fighting the invaders, and its London-based government-in-exile enjoyed international recognition. On July 30, 1941, in a perfectly legitimate move, it concluded a treaty of alliance with the Soviet Union against Nazi Germany.

1 Symon Petliura, a leader of the counter-revolutionary nationalist bourgeois movement in the Ukraine, concluded a treaty with Poland on April 21, 1920. Poland “recognised” Ukrainian independence in exchange for annexing Eastern Galicia, Western Wolyn and part of Polesie. —Ed.

No One Is Forgotten, Nothing Is Forgotten

“The commission regards Valentina Parsadanova's study, summarised and discussed at a commission meeting, as a major step forward in the examination of the basic problems connected with the resettlement of the Polish population of the western Ukraine and western Byelorussia in the eastern USSR. She has used many documents from the USSR Foreign Ministry and NKVD archives, and from the Central Archives of the Party, in order to specify the quantitative aspects of the different waves of this resettlement, define the scale on which Polish citizens were forcibly deported, and show the attitude of the local Soviet population

to these displaced persons.

“A great deal of work has been done by the Polish scholar Tadeusz Walichnowski in studying, and in conducting a comparative analysis of the available Polish (including emigre) and Western literature on the issues of the deportation.

“The commission has welcomed the report from Ryszard Nazarewicz about Soviet POWs in Poland and the assistance they received from the Polish population during World War II. The commission considers it necessary to continue the joint Soviet-Polish study of this subject, which is of great importance to the Soviet public.”

From the Minutes
of a Commission Meeting

Valentina Parsadanova, Doctor of Sciences (History) and senior researcher with the Slavic and Balkan

Studies Institute of the USSR Academy of Sciences.

The Polish government-in-exile

refused to recognise the incorporation of the western Ukraine and western Byelorussia into the USSR and the delimitation of national frontiers based on the treaty with Germany of September 28, 1939. It continued to regard all those living in western Byelorussia and the western Ukraine as Polish citizens. The question of the border between Poland and the Soviet Union remained open until July 1944. After relevant instruments were signed by the USSR and People's Poland on July 27, 1944 and August 16, 1945, these territories (except Bialystok District and small areas near Przemysl) were legally incorporated into the Soviet Union.

The deportation of the population from the western regions of the USSR in 1939-1941 violated the Soviet Constitution and at times bordered on genocide. These crimes were committed under the pretext of the need to remove bourgeois elements from the territories in question and of the slogan about the aggravation of the class struggle, virtually reduced to Stalin's pernicious motto—“he who is not with us is against us”. The dismantling of the state and economic apparatus created by bourgeois Poland was accompanied by the wholesale deportation of almost all those who had worked for government and administrative bodies, the judiciary and the police, of capitalists, landowners, businessmen and part of the craftsmen. Intellectuals and relatives of “enemies of the people” were purged.

The documents made available by the USSR NKVD-Interior Ministry archives indicate that a total of 1,173,170 people were uprooted (less the interned Polish servicemen and the Polish nationals drafted into the Red Army or mobilised into the labour-detachments) and that the deportation was not exclusively anti-Polish. The reprisals affected not only Poles but also Ukrainians, Byelorussians and Jews. One should also stress that there were different migratory flows of Poles into the Soviet interior. Aside from the forced deportation of Poles and members of other ethnic groups—a campaign accompanied by violations of socialist legality—there were other kinds of resettlement processes: refugees who fled from the Nazi troops; some Poles who left for eastern regions (for example, for the Donetsk Coal Basin) in search of jobs; many who were drafted

into the Red Army and labour detachments, etc.

Most of the deported Poles—389,041 people—were granted an amnesty during the war and fought against the Nazis. Many left for Poland during the two phases of repatriation in 1944-1946 and 1954-1957. A survey of the Polish citizens forcibly deported to Archangel Region, the Komi Autonomous Republic, Siberia, the Altai and the Far East indicates that 98% were treated kindly and sympathetically by the local Soviet residents in places of detention or exile.

Professor Tadeusz Walichnowski, rector of the Polish Interior Affairs Academy.

My book *The Deportation and Resettlement of Polish Citizens to the Soviet Interior in 1939-1945* is a survey of almost all the relevant documents discovered to this day and of papers published on this subject. The book is divided into several sections—official and semiofficial documents (lists of those killed, missing and deported; letters, memoirs, diaries, monographs, academic articles and excerpts from textbooks), background material and statistics.

One can infer from the available data that the mass deportations from the western Ukraine and western Byelorussia reached their peak in February-June 1941. The book includes memoirs about the sympathy with which Soviet citizens treated the deportees, frequently offering them food and clothes.

The fate of the Polish army officers and men interned in the western Ukraine and western Byelorussia after these territories were incorporated into the USSR is a special and particularly tragic chapter in the history of the deportation. We still do not know what happened to most of them. It has only been reported that they were detained in POW camps at Starobelsk, Kozelsk and Ostashkov. We know for certain that 4,500 Polish officers died at Katyn, near Smolensk.

I think that the suppression of information about these dramatic and painful events, which are very important to the Polish people, was a grave mistake, even though the interests of the Polish-Soviet alliance were cited to justify it. The information which came from the West was used to foment anti-Soviet sentiments among the Polish people. Psychologically, anticommunist propaganda was dealing very accurate blows: since obvious facts are being suppressed, it claimed, there can be no genuine trust or understanding between the Polish and the Soviet people. That is why we must carry our research through and tell the whole truth.

Ryszard Nazarewicz, deputy director of the History of the Working-Class Movement Institute under the PZPR Academy of Social Sciences.

At its second plenary meeting in March 1988 our commission decided that Polish and Soviet historians should reconstruct the full picture of what happened to Soviet POWs in Poland. The decision was motivated, on the one hand, by the need to step up our research into a subject of great importance for the history of World War II and, on the other, by our political and moral duty to recreate the excruciatingly painful but heroic past which our two nations shared in their struggle against fascism.

Polish historians have been researching this field for many years. Of the 808,146 graves of Soviet POWs we have been able to identify 611,000. The names of almost 200,000 Soviet servicemen who perished in concentration camps so far remain unknown. There are indications that we should add to that another 200,000 buried in unmarked graves. This means that the Third Reich rulers killed over 1,000,000 Soviet POWs on Polish soil.

The treatment of Soviet POWs was particularly brutal in the early period of the war. It follows from the German High Command documents we have that from June 22 to December 1, 1941, 3,806,860 Soviet officers and men were

taken prisoner on the Eastern Front. But as of January 1, 1942, only 309,128, including 5,360 officers, remained in the concentration camps. Never before had mass extermination proceeded at such a rate.

Still, however brutally and savagely the Nazis treated the Soviet POWs, the torture could not, with very few exceptions, break their will and force them to betray their country and give up their struggle. That is why the Nazis killed them by the million. My point is also confirmed by other facts, such as mass escapes from the camps—something that called for exceptional courage and heroism. For example, the confidential Chief Office of National Security (RSNA) bulletin of September 12, 1941 reports that 500 Soviet POWs escaped from the concentration camp at Biala Podlaska, 600 from Suchozdebry and 3,400 from Siedlce. It was stressed that the "escaped prisoners are receiving supplies from the locals and organising gangs. Poles, particularly the Polish resistance movement, are assisting them vigorously".

We have found that 10,000 to 12,000 Soviet POWs who had escaped from concentration camps fought in Polish guerrilla groups—about three-quarters of them in the detachments of the *Guardia Ludowa* and the *Armia Ludowa*, and the rest in the *Armia Krajowa* and the *Batalioni Chlopski*. Many came to command guerrilla groups—Fedor Kovalev, Alexander Vasilenko, Akhmollah Adamanov, Yakov Salnikov and Vassily Volodin, to name a few. They are remembered with gratitude in Poland to this day, and our people cherish the contribution they made to the liberation of our country from the Nazi invaders. But we cannot really repay the debt we owe to those who survived the hell of the concentration camps and those who died there refusing to betray their country. A great deal of work lies before us scholars. We must accomplish it to restore historical justice and to be able to say sincerely that no one is forgotten and nothing is forgotten.

THE READER WANTS TO KNOW

KOREA MUST BE UNITED

The 38th parallel which cuts the Korean Peninsula in half symbolises the division of the Korean nation—the result of the US military occupation of the South. In recent months, statements have been issued in Seoul about the readiness of the South Korean regime for a dialogue with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, about the intention to trade and to use other forms of cooperation and even about phasing out the annual "Team Spirit" military exercises conducted jointly by the United States and South Korea. Time will show how sincere these statements are.

One thing is clear: the Korean people, both in the North and in the South, want their country to be reunified. Their commitment to the peaceful and independent development of a united Korea is backed by progressive world public opinion.

In line with requests from several readers to describe the situation in the peninsula in greater detail, we present articles by authors from the DPRK and South Korea, and by the head of the International Liaison Committee for Reunification and Peace in Korea.

THE NATION'S FERVENT WISH

SON SONG PIL

Vice-Chairman,

Standing Committee, DPRK Supreme People's Assembly

The enemies of our nation who raise obstacles to the creation of a united, sovereign and peaceful Korea continue to suppress the truth about the causes of our country's division more than 40 years ago. They try to interpret the present situation in the Korean Peninsula and the military confrontation there as something fatefully immutable, and to present the DPRK, which is purely concerned with defence, as the potential aggressor. In South Korea and in the USA dire prophecies are being uttered to the effect that the reunification of the North with the South would inevitably turn the entire nation into a socialist country. These "arguments" do not hold water.

The Korean people have lived as an ethnically homogeneous nation for thousands of years, creating brilliant and diverse material and cultural values. The division began in 1945, with the arrival of the US occupation troops, which remain in the South to this day. The plight of our nation is not divine punishment. It is due entirely to the imperialist neocolonialist policy of the United States and the docile "government" of

South Korea. Now that colonial rule has collapsed worldwide and only a handful of colonial enclaves—those outrageous vestiges of the past—remain, an end must be put to the virtual occupation of the South of Korea.

The struggle for national reunification is not an attempt to settle any class contradictions within our nation or the antagonism between the two opposite economic and social systems. The objective, the cause for the whole nation, is *Chajusong*, that is, independence.

Since the time the country was divided, the Workers' Party of Korea and the DPRK government have been doing their utmost for the independent and peaceful reunification of Korea. Committed to the three basic principles of independence, peaceful reunification and national unity, our party and our government have put forward a concept for the settlement of the Korean question and taken concrete steps to implement it.

In the early 1980s President Kim Il Sung advanced a proposal on achieving national reunification by establishing a Democratic Confederal Republic of

Koryo. We hold that this republic should be a confederation of two autonomous regional governments, that the present socioeconomic systems should be preserved as they are and coexist, and that each side should refrain from overwhelming the other. As a neutral and nonaligned country, the Republic of Koryo would oppose foreign domination and interference, resist the policy of aggression and war and, for its part, pursue an independent and peace-loving foreign policy. It would develop relations of friendship and cooperation with all nations on the principles of equality, mutual benefit and non-interference in the internal affairs of others.

Meanwhile, the important thing is to create favourable conditions for healing the rift and ensuring peace in the Korean Peninsula. Our position on this score is quite clear. For example, we suggest tripartite talks between the DPRK, the United States and South Korea, steps to demilitarise the peninsula, and its transformation into a nuclear-free zone of peace.

Far from accepting our proposals or treating them constructively, our potential partners at the talks have been trying to prevaricate, downplay the importance of our initiatives, and counter them with the idea of "two Koreas", their "cross-recognition" and entry into the UN. The moment auspicious signs appear for a North-South dialogue, the opponents of positive change and of a radical solution benefiting the entire nation find new pretexts for frustrating prospective contacts. They refer most often to updated versions of the worn-out idea about the "threat from the North". But the DPRK has transferred 150,000 servicemen to peaceful construction projects and demobilised another 100,000. By contrast, the South Korean regime is rapidly militarising the country, modernising the army and acquiescing in the deployment of dangerous weapons of mass destruction on its territory: 1,000 nuclear warheads are already stored there. One should lay special emphasis on the fact that there are neither foreign troops nor nuclear weapons in the DPRK.

People's Korea is determined to create an atmosphere of North-South trust so as to promote the nation's peaceful reunification. "If a guarantee for peace in the Korean Peninsula is to be provided," Comrade Kim Il Sung noted,

"it is necessary to conclude a peace agreement between us and the United States, adopt a nonaggression declaration between the North and the South, have US troops and nuclear weapons evacuate South Korea, and effect a

phased and drastic reduction of the armed forces in the North and in the South." That is the essence of the peace-loving and constructive proposals submitted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

all their hardware, including nuclear weapons. But this was not mentioned by the South Korean ruler Roh Tae Woo when he spoke at the 43rd session of the UN General Assembly in New York. This is added proof that for all their declarations, statements and other talk about "North-South reconciliation and rapprochement" (designed to create the impression that Seoul is committed to the reunification of Korea), the authorities in fact want to perpetuate the division of the peninsula.

As a patriotic party, the National Democratic Front of South Korea sees its mission and duty as uncompromising and implacable struggle towards realising the aspirations of the entire Korean people. The NDFS is resolved to work ever more vigorously so as to involve all strata of South Korean society in the battle for this noble cause and awaken feelings of national awareness, commitment to independence, and firm opposition to the diktat of the United States, which has turned South Korea into its private domain.

REUNIFICATION MEANS SURVIVAL

KIM SUK YUN

Leadership member, National Democratic Front of South Korea

There can be only one answer to the question about what idea is of the greatest concern to the South Korean people—the reunification of their country, of relatives who are now apart, of families that are now divided. The resolve to end the national tragedy now permeates all South Korean society. Our people no longer agree to live divided by a wall of fear, suffering and tears. The understanding is maturing among the masses that national division spells destruction and that reunification means survival, peace and prosperity. This is why new forces keep joining the struggle for a united Korea.

South Korea's rulers have never been averse to holding forth on the idea that reunification would be a boon to our people. But they saw the means and the overriding purpose of reunification differently. The dictator Syngman Rhee advocated "unification through a northward expedition", while his successor Park Chung Hee called for "unification through a victory over communism". Although the dictators keep ousting one another (due, among other things, to popular protest), anti-communist rhetoric continues to run high.

The effect, however, is the opposite to that intended. The people are rising throughout South Korea to fight for national unity. Understanding is growing of the true causes behind the country's continued division. This is clear from the slogans chanted during protest demonstrations—"Let's drive the US imperialists out of our land!" and "Yankees to America, the South and the North are one!"

Young people, particularly students, have demonstrated their strength as a vigorous motive force and the crucial element of the nationwide struggle for the reunification of Korea. It was these young people and students who, in the

early 1960s, launched a steadfast drive for national unity, advocated a North-South youth dialogue and chanted: "Let's go North! Welcome to the South! Let's meet in Panmunjom!"

Dialogue, trust and a willingness to find common ground are essential to erasing the division and peacefully reunifying Korea on the principles of autonomy and national concord. Also essential to the settlement of the Korean problem is the withdrawal from the South of the US occupation forces with

A GREAT DEAL DEPENDS ON PUBLIC OPINION

Guy DUPRE

Secretary General, International Liaison Committee for Reunification and Peace in Korea

The world is witnessing promising changes in the approach of governments to global problems of international security and to the settlement of local conflicts. Against this welcome background, the dangerous gravity of the situation in the Korean Peninsula is particularly clear.

Let me report on what our international organisation is doing to bring North-South reunification, the cherished dream of the Korean nation, closer.

We do not seek to stage countless actions of solidarity, but we know from our Korean friends how much the support for their struggle from international public opinion means to them. Therefore, we believe it important for such actions to transcend national boundaries. From 1981 to 1987 we succeeded in organising 20 world and regional conferences on the peaceful reunification of Korea. The geographic

scope of their venues is quite considerable—Sierra Leone, the Soviet Union, Colombia, Finland, France, Japan, Togo, Norway, Czechoslovakia, Switzerland and many other countries. Those who, like myself, had an opportunity to take part in these international conferences could see for themselves the growing public backing for the idea of Korea's peaceful and independent reunification.

Our committee attaches great importance to the power of the printed word. We regularly publish pamphlets in three languages to tell the public the truth about the peace-loving initiatives of People's Korea and about the danger of an armed conflict breaking out in the peninsula—a conflict that could escalate into a global war. One hardly needs to convince anyone that this educational effort is vital as it makes world public opinion more sensitive to the pain and tragedy of the Korean nation. The

growth of support for Korea's reunification is clear from the fact that new solidarity committees and organisations are appearing every year. By the end of 1988 there were 320 of them in 80 countries.

As far as our plans are concerned, many tasks we have set before ourselves begin with the words "to inform". Telling people what is really happening in the Korean Peninsula is an important and useful objective. I am confident that

the more authentic information international public opinion receives, the more vigorously it will support the just struggle of the Korean people for their country's peaceful reunification.

***** FROM OUR MAILBAG

LET US BE REALISTS

Dear comrades,

I decided to write you after I had read the analytical review "The Communists and Elections" in last year's December issue¹ because my view of some of the problems raised by you is very different.

My arguments are based on my 40-year experience of active work in the party and the unions. To begin with, I think that sometimes capitalist analysts evaluate the situation, including the state of affairs in communist parties, better and more realistically than we do. It is necessary not only to embrace the new thinking but, more importantly, to stop deluding ourselves.

I disagree with the statement that "the fraternal parties are convinced that it is *their own policy that primarily determines their electoral successes and failures*" (p. 71). Our failure to identify environmental protection and nuclear power as major issues at the right time is considered to be one of our principal mistakes. That's as may be, but what if we had raised those problems far earlier? Would our influence have grown substantially, especially in elections? Would our arguments have met with a response? I doubt it, because people would have viewed such arguments in relation to what maybe a worse situation in socialist countries.

Nor do I agree with the assumption that the opponents of communist parties "underestimate the depth of the roots that link the Communists to the working class and indeed all working people" (p. 71). Let me repeat, we must stop deluding ourselves. We lack breadth and scope in our dealings with the working class.

Let us take West Germany, for example. How many workers hear or read

anything about us, even occasionally? Thousands? Tens of thousands? How many of them personally know a Communist? Millions of people have never heard or read anything about the Communist Party, except, perhaps, an election poster once in four years. Millions have never met a Communist, but have anticommunism rammed down their throats day in day out.

It is no paradox that the German Communist Party, though numerically small, has made great headway in the peace movement and in the unions. But if you look at industry and the workforce as a whole, these successes seem extremely limited. Most workers, and the electorate in general, do not even know that they are the result of the Communists' efforts.

How can anyone defy such a grim reality and claim "the depth of the roots" that link the Communists to *all* the working people?

I strongly object to the statement in the review that begins "fraternal parties are convinced..." I think the time has come to tell all the truth.

Why do West German Communists have voter support at elections to factory councils and, partially, at municipal elections, while in Land and national elections those same people vote for other parties? I think we are supported at the lower levels because voters know us personally, appreciate our efforts and can watch and control us directly. But when it comes to big politics, they mistrust us because our criticism of capitalism and our statements that life will be better in a socialist FRG do not sound plausible. Our voters are well aware of the darker sides of existing socialism and fear that if we gain substantial political influence, we will con-

trol them and not vice versa. So they do not want to exchange "the dictatorship of capital", which in any case keeps improving their living standards, for "the dictatorship of the party", under which even today, decades later, people have to stand in lines and are often denied many rights and freedoms.

Communists in capitalist countries are bitter that in recent decades the dictatorship of the party rather than the dictatorship of the proletariat has been developing in socialist states. Small wonder that the Soviet Union is now trying to change this situation drastically.

Of course, we must make improvements to increase our influence and gain prestige. But it would be unrealistic to hope that a decisive breakthrough can be achieved in this way. Communists in the capitalist world will continue to tilt at windmills until existing socialism proves that it is a far superior social system and is worth working for.

A few words about today's social structures. The employment patterns in the FRG have undoubtedly changed, and the numerical strength of the traditional working class has dropped to 50% of the total workforce. It is high time we redefined some of our concepts. Who do we address now when we use the terms "working class" and "worker policy"? Our language must be comprehensible if we want to take account of the changed social structures.

So far, our prospects are anything but rosy. Many capitalist countries are thriving, despite their millions of unemployed, whereas socialist countries are in the grip of severe political and economic crises.

Mikhail Gorbachov is undoubtedly the world's most popular politician

today, but this fact cannot be expected automatically to strengthen Communists' positions in the West.

Communist parties in capitalist countries have a long way to go before achieving a real breakthrough.

With socialist greetings,

Karl Bühn,
FRG

¹ See "Will the Good Signs Become a Tendency" in *WMR* No. 12, 1988, pp. 63-72.

A BAROMETER OF PUBLIC OPINION

I have been a reader of *WMR* for several years now. It's an interesting monthly, but I think it should pay more attention to letters from readers. Any analysis and any theory is right when it offers a basis for a public assessment of practical action.

The influence of communist parties has now declined in a number of countries—apparently, because they have been operating in isolation from the masses. This problem is topical not only for the communist parties of capitalist countries. Experiences of this kind are relevant to my country and my party too. Letters from readers are a barometer of public opinion, indicating how seriously people take the party's efforts to tackle important issues. I am sure that readers' letters would give added impetus for discussion to your periodical.

V. TSYBULKO
Dnepropetrovsk, USSR

ANOTHER COMMENT ON REFORMISM

I believe the international communist movement should effect considerable changes in order to resume its role as a vanguard in the struggle for

social progress. However, these changes cannot be the same in content or depth for all sister parties. For example, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union is meeting the challenge of the times by implementing perestroika and using new thinking—in fact, by completely restoring Marxist-Leninist principles and consistently overcoming Stalin's petty bourgeois authoritarian concepts. Meanwhile, the troubles of the communist parties in the advanced capitalist nations are not so much "leftist" as rightist. I would say *WMR* would do well to tell us more about how Communists in the capitalist world are overcoming their reformist attitudes.

Miguel Angel VILLALON RIVERA
Salamanca, Spain

NO TO "BANS ON PROFESSIONS"

The notorious decree of the provincial prime ministers—an instrument that institutionalised the practice of "bans on professions"—was adopted in the FRG 17 years ago. Since then, more than 10,000 court cases have been heard and many people have lost their jobs as a result. From the outset, the public in the Federal Republic and in other countries has been opposed to this law which violates human rights.

We should long ago have ended the practice of imposing "bans on professions", all the more so because international tensions are now easing, and East-West contacts keep developing. We demand that the Federal government at long last ensure the observance of fundamental human rights at home. As an additional reason one can cite the fact that under the final document adopted in Vienna by the countries participating in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Federal government has pledged to prevent dis-

crimination based on political considerations.

Down with the Ban on Professions
Action Group
Hamburg, FRG

HOW TO COMBAT THE TNCs

I would like to follow up on what your reader Daniel Olssen of Denmark said in the November 1988 issue of *WMR* about the objectives and prospects for joint action by the working class of the capitalist countries against monopoly groups. The working class and its trade unions in the West should use new forms of organisation and struggle against the TNCs because they have a new and radically superior structure. In this connection I would like to find out about the existing opportunities for, and the limitations on, tackling these objectives, particularly with regard to the prospective creation of a single European market.

Bernd GÖSCHEL
Kirchberg, GDR

* * *

I read Daniel Olssen's letter to *WMR* about workers' joint action against the TNCs. My question is this. Joint ventures are now being established in many socialist countries, and some TNCs have a stake in it. One of them is *Bata*, whose workers in different countries are very active in opposing the arbitrary practices of its management. If this, or any other TNC, sets up a joint venture in a socialist country, will the workers of the newly opened subsidiary support their brothers in other regions? I realise that this is not an easy question to answer, and so I submit it for discussion in *WMR*.

Eva BRUSTAD
Oslo, Norway

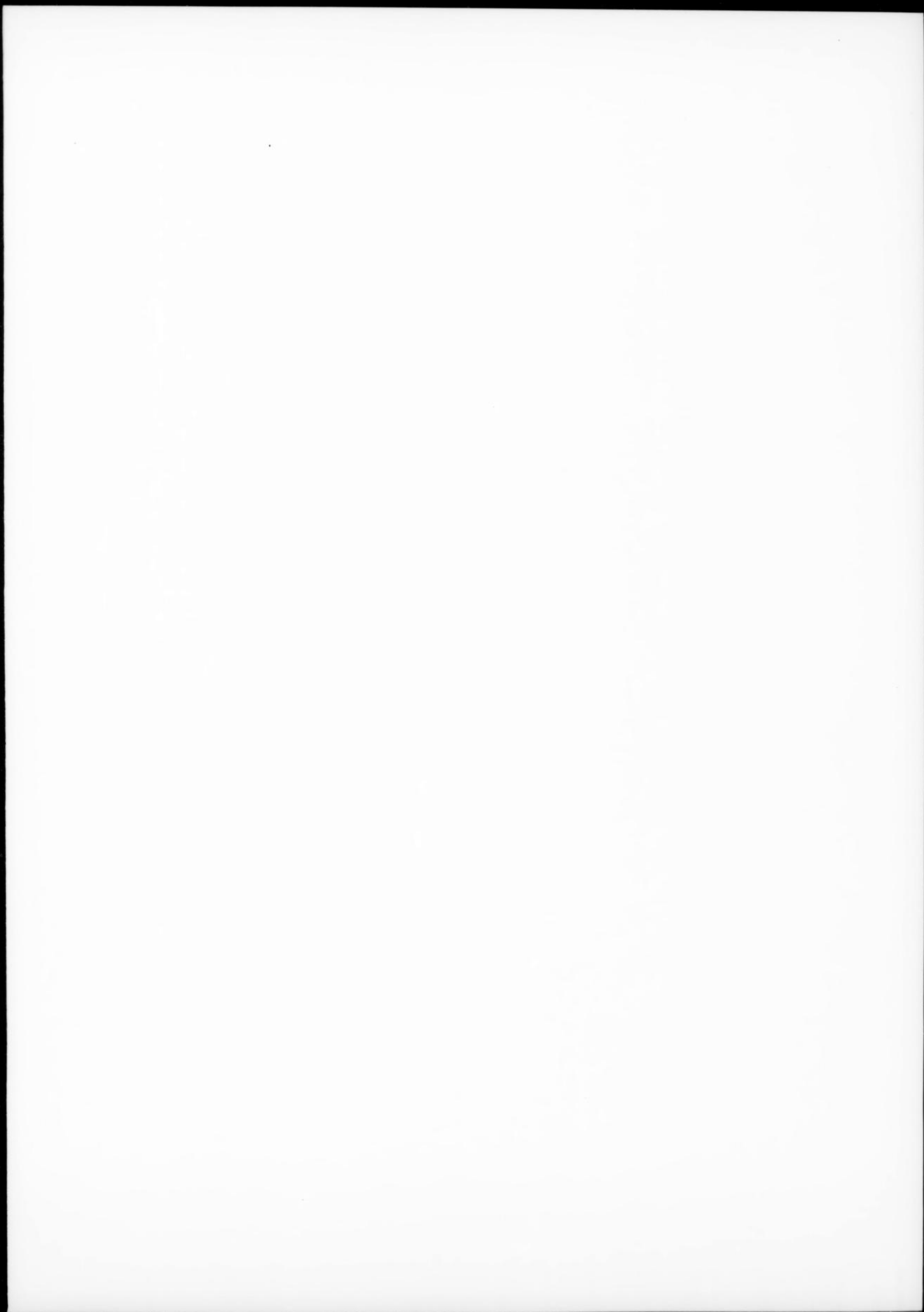
* * * * * **WMR TIES**

★ While in Czechoslovakia, a delegation from the Communist Party of Denmark led by its Chairman Ole Sohn visited the *WMR* offices and discussed the effort to renew and improve the monthly's work, as well as closer cooperation between Denmark's Communists and *WMR*.

★ A meeting with Yahia al-Shami, secretariat member of the Yemeni Popular Unity Party and chairman of the National Democratic Front of the Yemen Arab Republic, was held at the *WMR* offices. The guest spoke about the situation

in and around the YAR and the struggle of the party and the front for workers' interests and for a democratic solution to the national problem of Yemen.

★ The General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Palestinian Communist Party visited the *WMR* offices and told Editorial Council members about the progress of the Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories, the activities of the PCP and the situation in the region.





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