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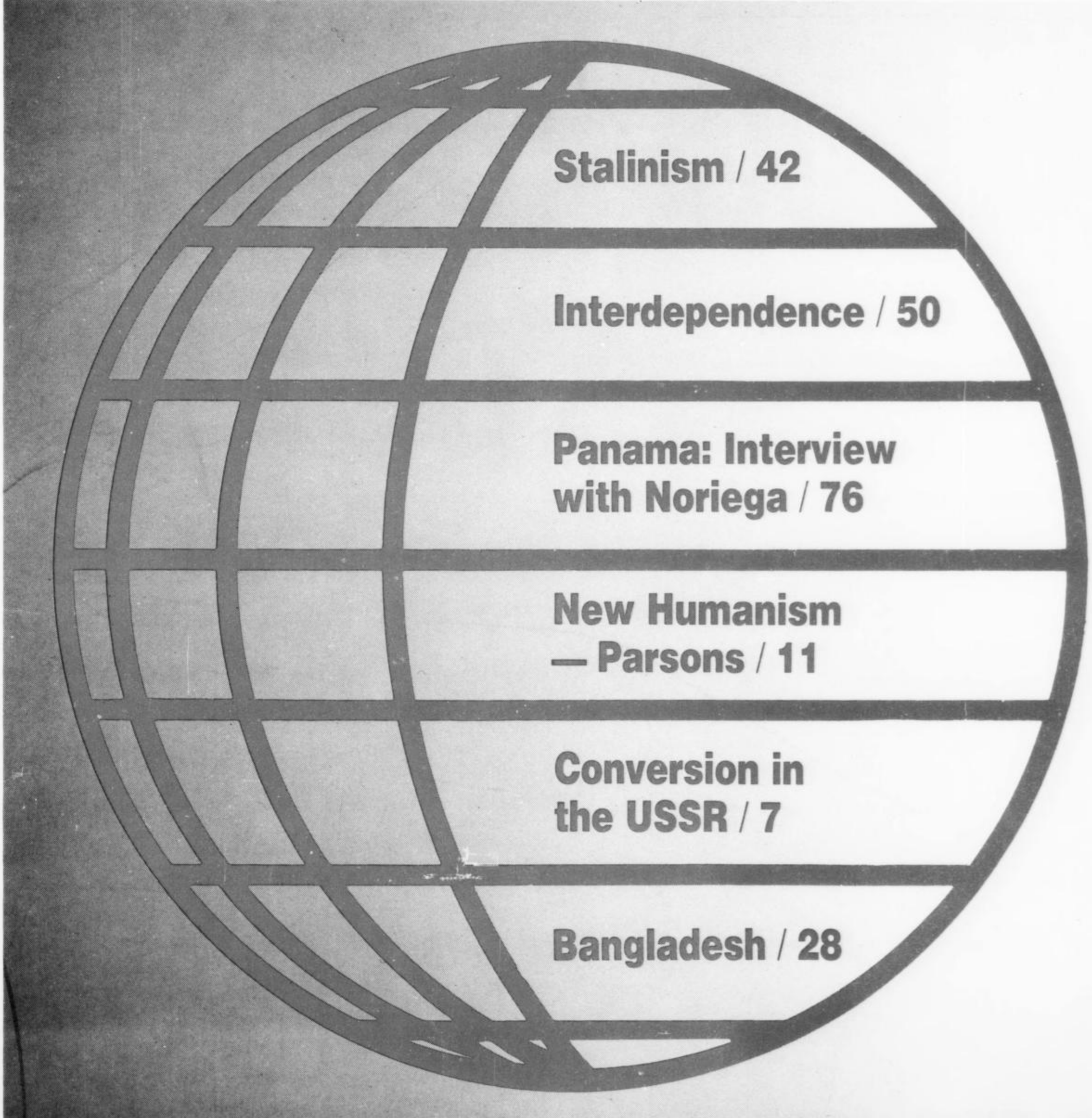
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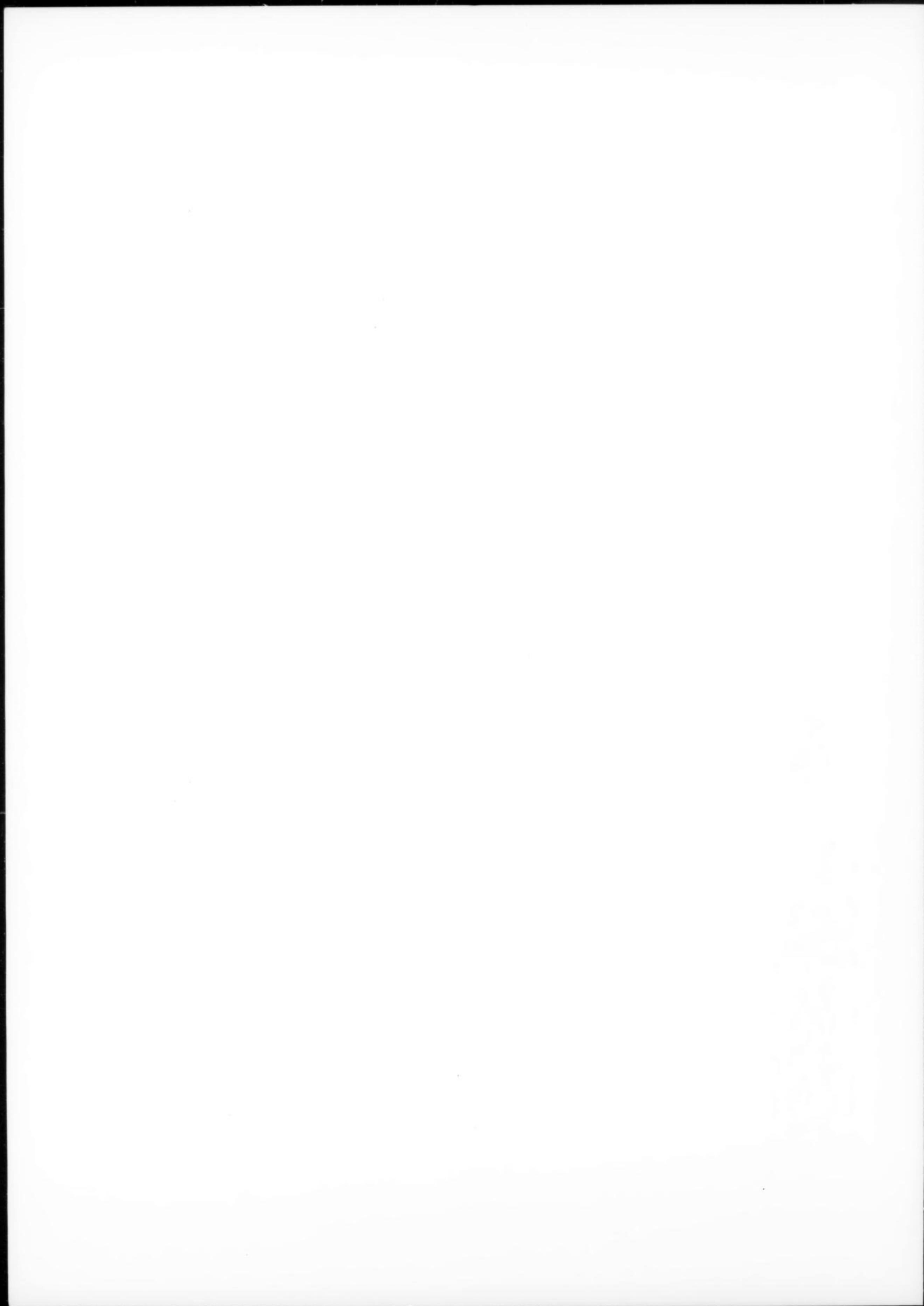
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INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

NATIONAL LIBERATION AND UNIVERSAL SECURITY

Amath DANSOKHO

General Secretary, Central Committee, Senegal Party of Independence and Labour (SPIL)

In the modern world, Communists and all other progressive parties and movements are facing questions of principle concerning the priorities in their work. Among the more important of these is the correlation and interconnection between national liberation and the struggle for peace and universal security. Rather than endeavouring to cover all aspects of this subject, I will merely try to outline those that I, as an African Marxist, regard as particularly important.

The national liberation struggle is always directed against imperialism, which is responsible for colonial oppression and plunder. The most destructive wars of our century have either been unleashed by imperialism or used to further its policies. In other words, it is the foremost enemy of peace, security and the national liberation movement, the common enemy.

My second point is that the collapse of the colonial empires in the late 1950s and early 1960s occurred as international tensions eased. Subsequent progress in the liberation struggle was undoubtedly achieved as a result of the efforts made to strengthen peace.

For their part, the imperialist quarters also discerned this interconnection, but they drew an alternative conclusion: without a policy of creating tensions, they argued, the liberation revolutions in Third World countries would win. Imperialism therefore sought to do all it could to

provoke internal and regional conflicts in the Third World. That was what happened in Kampuchea, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Angola and Mozambique, even though each case was distinctive. The imperialist policy of subversion was conducted against a background of mounting international tensions and was accompanied by growing confrontation between the socialist countries and imperialism, between the USSR and the United States. All this took its toll on the nations fighting for liberation.

So-called local, or low-intensity, conflicts have highly destructive consequences for fledgling states. Suffice it to recall the case of Afghanistan: the fighting continues, and many are forced to live abroad in appalling conditions. In Africa, too, a similar fate has befallen many people. They often wonder whether there is a difference between their plight and the horrors of nuclear war.

Hundreds of millions of people in the underdeveloped countries live in misery. In order to change these conditions they need peace, the essential prerequisite for development and independence. But resistance to imperialism and to its aggressive policies is equally essential. Resolving the numerous complex problems confronting Asian, African and Latin American nations would surely help us all achieve lasting peace: underdevelopment and dependence constantly give rise to social and political tensions which hinder the creation of a universal security system. In short, the two key problems in the world today are dialectically interconnected: peace is essential to independent development, while the advances made in the struggle for peace curb the imperialists and their aggressive forays. I will not delve into this issue deeper here because I think it deserves a separate analysis and an exchange of views between different authors.

Amath Dansokho (b. 1937) joined the party at 20, was elected to its Central Committee five years later, held high-level party posts, represented his party at *WMR* between 1966 and 1978, and was elected General Secretary of the SPIL Central Committee in 1984. He is the author of a number of articles on issues of the international revolutionary movement.

In the light of new political thinking, we are now assessing the lessons of the national liberation struggle in a way that differs in many respects from our earlier appraisal. A growing global awareness is helping us determine the place of liberation processes within the developing world order.

It is one of history's paradoxes, I think, that victory in the struggle for political independence did not mean an automatic or radical break with capitalism or its worldwide system (I will return to the underestimation of this fact later on). But as the capitalist economy becomes increasingly transnationalised and as the gap between the developed world and the backward zones—a gap generated by imperialism—keeps growing, the countries of this zone cannot, on a capitalist basis, resolve the ever deteriorating contradictions within their societies. In Senegal, for instance, the bourgeoisie is incapable of using the capitalist development model effectively. To keep afloat, it has to request emergency assistance from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

The capitalist path cannot ensure progress in surmounting the acute problems of the Third World such as hunger, disease, appalling poverty and environmental degradation. Virtually all the developing countries are facing these sinister manifestations of the global dangers produced by capitalist exploitation. As a result, even the middle strata in our society are increasingly favouring a *revolutionary way* of resolving the existing contradictions. The anticapitalist potential of the national liberation struggle is therefore growing.

The world's nations are becoming increasingly aware that they should be *free to choose* their development path. The importance of democracy, the supreme imperative that shapes any policy, is also increasing worldwide. The revolutionary forces must take this into account, for violations of democratic rights and freedoms threaten not only internal stability but also international peace and universal security. At the same time, actual developments are proving to the Western ruling circles that the dictatorships installed to help imperialism dominate the world are fragile and cannot ensure durable or effective development.

The industrialised nations have recently been showing much greater interest in, and compassion for, the Third World countries. Moved by different ideological, religious and humanitarian considerations, millions of people are working hard to alleviate our plight. Unquestionably, the motives are sincere and, in some cases, the actions effective, and lives have been saved in parts of Africa stricken by drought or other disasters, for instance. Efforts by non-governmental organisations to supply the victims with food and basic necessities and to improve health care and education are becoming more noticeable.

Marxists can only welcome these acts of compassion and goodwill, which reflect the growing desire of international public opinion to combat underdevelopment and translate the basic demands of humanism into reality. I

also see this as a sign of protest within Western society against the pernicious effects of imperialist domination and exploitation of whole nations. There is a growing awareness that the neocolonial structures laid down by imperialism cannot really further development. Western public opinion is beginning to aid the cause of peace and national liberation in a new way. Let me emphasise that *it is not a question of charity but of a realisation that the security of billions of people depends on solutions being found to Third World problems.*

The emergence of a global awareness of national liberation processes is confirmed, among other things, by two very vivid examples. The first concerns the unprecedented international solidarity with the black population of *South Africa* (it's worth mentioning here the fantastic mid-1988 concert of solidarity, staged simultaneously in Dakar, London and Washington, which involved people previously uninterested in civic movements). World (and Western) public opinion supports those fighting against an odious regime which has institutionalised racial discrimination. The imminent collapse of apartheid—especially now that the racist troops have been defeated in Angola—is borne out by the growing understanding in different parts of the world that apartheid is incompatible with universal human values or with civilised behaviour.

The second example is connected with the *Palestinian problem*. The tragic vacillation and confusion brought about by divisions within the Arab world itself (and by certain countries promising too much amid the infighting and irrational rivalries in the Middle East) is now over. The public everywhere, even in the capitalist centres, no longer dismiss the PLO as a terrorist organisation, but regard its struggle for national rights as perfectly legitimate (hence the positive response to the proclamation of a Palestinian state). People are even coming to the increasingly obvious conclusion that terrorism is in fact the essence of Israeli policy.

Whereas, before, it was possible to convince large sections of the public that the national liberation struggle was the main source of terrorism, today the reactionaries—primarily in the United States—are risking a confrontation with the entire international community over the issues of Namibia, South Africa or Palestine.

Against the background of such noticeable changes in mass consciousness, and even in politics, the enemies of liberation are doing their utmost to foment and build up tensions and, with this end in view, increasingly resorting to demagoguery and slander. The national liberation forces should therefore draw up realistic and clear platforms which would prevent anyone from luring us into a blind alley and which would increasingly erode the influence of the militarists on public opinion at home and abroad. Naturally, this also implies an in-depth analysis of a problem merely outlined at the beginning—that of the correlation between the process of national liberation and the evolution of world capitalism.

I would go so far as to say that for all its monstrous effects on Third World nations, colonial rule did create a special kind of relationship between the colonies and the colonial powers. Due account should be taken of this. In those newly independent countries where progressive governments underrated the historical ties between their countries and the former colonial powers, this tended to have an adverse effect on living standards. The revolutionary authorities eventually became isolated and it was easier for imperialism and local reactionaries to hatch their plots, and as evidenced by the experience of several African countries. We understand, however, that an acknowledgement of this factor does not mean any infringement on the sovereign right of every nation to choose its political orientation and its own model of economic and social organisation.

In the development of new thinking, the interdependence of global problems plays a very important role. Foremost among them is the issue of *ensuring universal peace and security*. Let me also single out some other problems that will largely shape the future of the national liberation zones.

Environmental protection is enormously important to Third World nations. With internal and international contradictions still to be settled, the factors that affect the environment (drought, the encroachment of deserts, soil erosion, locusts, floods, hurricanes, pollution and climatic imbalances) are creating hunger and greater poverty and inevitably aggravating social tensions.

In Africa, nature is in a fragile state, and environmental problems keep arising, but public opinion has yet to make itself heard in many African countries. We were saved from recent attempts by TNCs to dump toxic wastes in some West African countries and off their coast only thanks to the public outcry on other continents. Solutions to environmental problems call for broad cooperation and concerted efforts on the part of all nations, governments and organisations. It is therefore natural for us to pin our hopes on international structures—primarily the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement and the OAU.

The *foreign debt* is a particularly acute Third World problem because it continues to generate numerous domestic and international contradictions and to undermine economic stability. Obviously, there is a direct connection between the foreign debt, security and national liberation.

Arms spending is very much responsible for the growing debt burden. The amount individual countries spend on arms (even if carefully concealed in other sections of the budget) is much greater than that of any other foreign debt component. The military-industrial complex produces weapons and sells them to Third World countries, exacerbating confrontations between them, promoting global tensions and aggravating the imbalances in development.

There's no telling what disasters these unsolved problems may provoke since they not only intensify the existing contradictions but also accumulate new ones. I

think we should heed Enrico Berlinguer's warning: global dangers are likely to give rise to new manifestations of barbarity with unforeseen and grave consequences for the human race. We therefore believe that overcoming these threats is the major task facing mankind, and that it must be accomplished jointly.

How are the efforts to ensure universal security influencing the cause of national liberation and of free and independent development? The urgency with which Mikhail Gorbachov has advanced and substantiated his proposals on promoting peace is only to be welcomed. I would say that this vigorous policy began with his well-known January 1986 statement, in which he challenged the nuclear logic of our century. The Soviet policy position helped people better to understand the connection between the scandalous waste of resources, in the form of military spending, and the dramatic position of the developing countries.

Let us be realistic: no one in the North, even in the socialist countries, would ever agree to any deterioration in their standard of living. The argument should be about using the resources which are being squandered, mainly on armaments, in order to increase prosperity in the North and to tackle the serious development problems in the South.

The intertwining of the objectives of ensuring peace, security, national liberation and social progress places enormous responsibility on the revolutionary forces, on our Marxist parties. *While upholding the sovereign right of nations to choose their own destiny, we should at the same time resolve regional and internal conflicts*. Whatever their causes, these conflicts will not promote peace, further security or enhance the prestige of those involved (even those representing the most progressive movements and parties). Instead, they will inevitably plunge countries with limited resources into a wasteful arms race, restrict democratic freedoms, undermine the opportunities for development and, finally, create pretexts for greater imperialist pressure and interference.

Naturally, the situation is largely determined by the international climate: any improvement helps substantially in the settling of many regional contradictions. For example, improved US-Soviet relations have led to a not yet guaranteed but promising reduction in international tensions and paved the way for the political settlement of several armed conflicts. Without this detente, the Iran-Iraq war would still be dragging on, and the policy of national reconciliation would not have emerged in Afghanistan (although it is regrettable that Pakistan and several Western countries are trying to frustrate it). For our part, we in the zone of national liberation should do all we can to attain "internal peace".

How, then, should we regard this peace in, say, Africa? *Internal* armed clashes in our countries have failed to solve a single problem. When reference is made to the civil wars in Russia, France or North America, we know that there, a clear-cut division into opposite camps existed. In Africa,

however, when people are choosing sides they are guided primarily by traditional (that is, ethnic) considerations, not by the confrontation between different classes. This complicates matters and gives rise to parameters which have to be reconsidered in each specific case. Attempts at settling the problems by armed force lead to dislocation and even to utter chaos. Drawing a clear distinction between just and unjust wars is a very difficult matter with regard to the newly independent countries: here numerous distinctive factors are involved in the shaping of social structures; tribal divisions are extremely intricate; and working-class consciousness, by which the workers should be guided irrespective of their ethnic differences, has yet to develop. The dividing line between the opposing forces is blurred by subjective criteria which bear no relation to class consciousness.

The settlement of *regional* conflicts by political means is already feasible, be it the conflict between Morocco and Algeria or between Ethiopia and Somalia. We believe that this way of resolving contradictions is a *model for the necessary transition from confrontation to peace*. This kind of settlement is of inestimable importance for the developing countries. The task of the national liberation forces is to devise clear, precise and effective political moves to help resolve even the sharpest of contradictions peacefully.

In order to clarify and publicise the new concepts about the integral nature of the world and about guarantees of free and worthy development, all democratic and revolutionary forces in Africa, Asia and Latin America will have to work hard and long among the masses in order to raise the level of their political consciousness. As revolutionaries we have a clear duty to find forms for this work which are valid for the demands of the day and for each specific situation. If we continue to exchange ritualistic speeches and to repeat slogans born under different circumstances and on different continents, we will not be

understood. Moreover, we will risk insulting the national feelings of the masses.

Unfortunately, efforts in that direction are still weak and ineffective, mainly because we have to deal with everyday concerns and acute "minor" issues. Also, the antiwar consciousness of Europeans, shaped by the experience and aftermath of two world wars, is something the Africans lack (although both wars affected my country and other African nations, and Senegalese soldiers took part in some of the major campaigns). A relatively low cultural level and strong nationalistic sentiments make it difficult for people in the developing countries to grasp the actual scope and depth of the interdependence between peace, security and national liberation.

I am confident that a revision of outdated ideological stereotypes, and the development of a new social consciousness in the liberation zone, will stimulate the movement as a whole. The important thing is to understand that *national liberation is not an offshoot of the struggle between socialism and capitalism. It is a clash, unrelated to one's ideological or political preference for either social system, between the forces of oppression and the forces of freedom*. The idea about the world's dialectically integral nature is winning increasing recognition. Gradually, the "black-and-white", bipolar view of the world, according to which the two superpowers manipulate either the reactionaries or the freedom fighters, is receding into the past.

I am also convinced that the prejudices and slogans involved in ideological warfare will fade away more rapidly. This view is borne out by the Soviet Union's innovative approach to major world problems and international relations, by the joint Soviet-American agreement on nuclear arms reductions, and by the emergence of a global awareness in the struggle to solve international problems and guarantee universal security. The new progressive trends in world politics and in social consciousness are the national liberation movement's best ally.

SWORDS INTO PLOUGHSHARES. CONVERSION IN THE USSR

Alexei KIREYEV
Soviet economist

Votkinsk, a small town on the bank of the Votka River, is the birthplace of the great Russian composer Petr Tchaikovsky and, paradoxically, of RSD-10 intermediate-range nuclear missiles known in the West as SS-20s. Under the Soviet-American INF Treaty, their manufacture has been terminated. The factory is being converted to peaceful uses, and this has given rise to considerable difficulties. The town used to be a poor relation of the wealthy defence ministry, and the costly military production largely shaped its image. Today, it lags behind the "target development figures" to the tune of some tens of millions of rubles. Wages and salaries are declining, and outlays for social purposes are diminishing because there is not enough money. What next?

The recently-launched disarmament process has imparted great urgency to the problem of converting military production, of reorienting those previously employed in defence to creative civilian tasks. The Soviet Union has decided to draft, in the course of 1989, experimental plans for the retooling of two to three defence factories, to publish the results of the effort to find civilian employment for defence industry specialists and to use its equipment, structures and facilities for peaceful purposes.

In his speech at the UN, Mikhail Gorbachov stressed the topical importance of switching *from the economy of armaments to an economy of disarmament* and suggested that all countries, particularly the major military powers, draw up national conversion plans. On this basis, an international team of scientists could submit a joint report to the UN Secretary General so that this question could be discussed at a session of the General Assembly.

Prompt implementation of such a broad programme demands that resolute action be taken by all those concerned and that due attention be paid to the experience already available in this field.

The history of conversion in the USSR is connected

with the postwar civilian retooling of the economy and with subsequent unilateral and bilateral disarmament moves. This experience, both past and present, is undoubtedly of considerable interest.

In the midst of World War II, on March 18, 1943, the Soviet government adopted a resolution on resuming the manufacture of farming machinery and equipment. The then People's Commissariat for Munitions was instructed to earmark 11,000 tons of rolled stock for civilian needs. Several defence factories were ordered to increase their output of tractors and combine harvester engines.

That was the beginning of *reconversion*, which was to restore the economy to its prewar structure. The process was completed in 1948, by which time civilian output had topped the 1940 figures, and the 8.5 million demobilised servicemen and the 4.5 million former displaced persons had been given jobs. The problems involved in the postwar demilitarisation of the economy were tackled without undue delays or any major socioeconomic complications. As a rule, everything was done on a planned and centralised basis. The enormous loss of property caused by the war and the shortages of most goods increased the opportunity for employing the growing workforce.

During that period, specific conversion programmes were also drawn up at factory level. For example, back in 1944 the Uralmash factory that manufactured T-34 tanks set up a working group to study the prospects for gearing the production capacities to postwar needs. The group suggested that the factory focus on several key lines of products instead of returning to the relatively wide prewar range of goods. Major retooling and retraining was envisaged. Having planned its reconversion in advance, Uralmash was able to switch promptly to civilian production.

As a *unilateral disarmament* measure, conversion took

place in the latter half of the 1950s and early 1960s. The USSR unilaterally cut the strength of its armed forces by 640,000 men in 1955, by 1.84 million in 1956, and by another 1.2 million in 1960. At the same time, several munitions factories were closed down, and some military hardware was either scrapped or transferred to the civilian sector.

A series of measures was devised to enable many demobilised servicemen to find civilian jobs without any loss of income. The demobilised officers and men were to be offered jobs within a month of their return home. They were given grants for retraining and received home improvement loans and other benefits.

The employment of those demobilised from the army was made easier by the large-scale projects launched at the time in housing construction, the cultivation of the "virgin lands" and the exploitation of natural resources in Siberia and the Far East. This influx of labour made it possible to double the volume of housing construction, farm vast tracts of unused land and reduce the workday without affecting the scope of production.

The postwar conversion record was summed up in "The Economic and Social Effects of Disarmament", a Soviet document submitted to the UN. In it, we said that in the course of the conversion effort, it would be useful in most cases not to close munitions factories and the numerous military organisations but to gear their equipment and personnel to civilian uses. Conversion in such cases can be effected relatively fast, without any break in the work of the factory or organisation in question.

Today, new conversion experience is being accumulated due to the implementation of the INF Treaty. The Soviet Union has ceased manufacturing medium- and shorter-range missiles, their launchers and auxiliary equipment. Certain missile components are being scrapped and others, worth 150 million rubles, including 50 million rubles' worth of heavy trucks, are being handed over to the civilian sector.

This conversion is being effected on a *bilateral basis*, although it is not symmetrical: the number and the structure of the military facilities and armaments affected by the INF Treaty differ considerably in the Soviet Union and the United States.

In the USSR it has been announced that instead of the missiles, new types of drilling equipment, metal-cutting machine tools, improved machinery for processing farm produce, as well as consumer goods will be manufactured. The plans are aimed not only at recouping the investment, but also at releasing resources for socio-economic purposes. The reorientation of the missile-producing factories alone saved tens of millions of rubles for the economy in 1988. Besides, 300 million rubles previously earmarked for military purposes have been channeled into the social sphere.

The missile reductions have made it necessary to change the specialisation of a number of organisations and agencies. For example, the design office that

developed the RSD-10 missile is now working on a booster rocket for weather satellites.

The INF Treaty affects not only the Soviet Union but also the GDR and Czechoslovakia, where our missiles were deployed. Those covered by the treaty have been withdrawn, but the adaptation of the former missile bases to civilian needs has required certain additional expenditures. For instance, the military facilities at Waren Müritz in the GDR have been handed over to the Free German Trade Unions Confederation and converted into a holiday home with 700 beds.

So far, the amount of weapons being eliminated is relatively small, and the problem of finding employment for the servicemen is easy to solve. Those who have completed their tour of duty are being demobilised; many officers are opting for retirement or discharge in line with the pension arrangements and the privileges due them; the rest have been transferred to other units.

The signing of the Soviet-American treaty opened greater opportunities for conversion. Scientists maintain that nuclear warheads can yield fuel for nuclear reactors. The amount of U-235 and plutonium contained in 10,000 such warheads is enough to keep 40 1,000-megawatt power plants operational. Nuclear fuel can also be used by nuclear-powered icebreakers.

The warheads to be destroyed are best exploded underground in order to help create reliable oil and gas storage facilities or increase the yield of mineral deposits. In future, "demobilised" nuclear power may be used to create geothermal power plants.

Many other missile components will also find new applications in the national economy. The Soviet Union disagreed with the US proposal about cutting up and scrapping the missile transporters. These will instead be re-equipped to perform strictly civilian functions, such as transporting large-diameter pipes, power grid pylons or oversized tree trunks.

In January 1988, the West German Liebherr Company and the Odessa Heavy Crane Manufacturing Amalgamation set up a joint venture in the USSR to mount special telescopic cranes onto the SS-20 transporters. They will be used in housing and power plant construction, in road building, and in the chemical and oil processing industries.

Under a protocol to the INF Treaty, launchers and other auxiliary equipment are to be eliminated by making them unusable for military purposes. In this connection the stationary and movable fuel tanks of our R-12 missiles are being removed from launching sites: they can also fit into the civilian economy. A missile with its launcher can be regarded as a ready-made water supply system. For example, two medium-range missiles have been handed over to the Communard horticultural association in the Kharkov Region, which has converted them into water towers. Installation cost only 500 rubles each, a saving of more than 20,000 rubles. Certain components can also be used to heat large garages or vegetable storage facilities.

In other words, part of the missiles' cost can be recovered in different ways.

We also believe we can solve the problem of *converting those factories* which specialised in the now redundant military hardware. In the USSR, this applies to the factories in Votkinsk, Volgograd, Petropavlovsk and Sverdlovsk. Although the INF Treaty does not prohibit their use for the manufacture of other types of weapons, they have already been turned over to civilian production. At the Votkinsk engineering plant, an automated assembly line has been installed for programmed high-precision machine tools; other products include equipment for dairy factories, power feeding systems for ground and underwater drilling rigs, passenger car parts and components, as well as washing machines. The experience accumulated augurs well for the prompt completion of the conversion programme.

In the course of the current drive to restructure industrial management, former military branches are being entrusted with the retooling and modernisation of civilian enterprises. It has been decided to commission 250 defence factories to manufacture equipment for the processing of farm produce. Work on the plans will involve more than 200 leading defence industry research institutes and design offices.

The defence industry is already producing some 2,000 types of civilian goods which account for 50% of its output. In 1988 alone, it manufactured almost 10 million television sets, 95% of all domestically produced refrigerators, 62% of all washing machines and 69% of all vacuum cleaners. Within the next few years, the industry is to start manufacturing more than 140 types of sophisticated goods and appliances, including digital laser turntables, video cameras, "talking" pocket watches, video cassette recorders, personal computers, etc.

In January 1989, the Soviet Union announced that it was cutting the strength of its armed forces by 12%, its military budget by 14.2%, and its output of arms and other military hardware by 19.5%. *A new stage in the conversion drive* is beginning. What would be the most rational way of carrying it out?

As a first step, the Defence Ministry has drawn up a list of items worth more than 500 million rubles to be offered for sale to individuals, cooperatives and other organisations through state-run territorial outlets. These include various instruments and devices, over 20,000 vehicles for use in farming, equipment for the transportation and piping of fuels and lubricants, a large assortment of radio equipment, and even some auxiliary naval vessels.

Frankly though, there is not enough information available yet about military spending, the scale of the defence industry, its geographic distribution, the range of its products and its employment structure to allow for a comprehensive discussion of the issue. Fuller information would make it easier to conduct a public debate, search for the best avenues of conversion, and compare our plans with the Western record.

In this respect, the national conversion plans being drafted in the United States, Sweden, Norway and several other countries would be of interest. For example, many US experts believe, with good reason, that conversion will be effective if undertaken both "from above" (by federal agencies) and locally (by the individual military contractors). The factories themselves know better than anyone else what civilian goods they can produce with their equipment. I think the Americans are also justified in stressing that conversion calls for continuity: relevant programmes can be drawn up, say, once every two or three years. This is important in view of the pace of technological change. It also envisages financial support from the authorities, particularly at the initial stages.

Other countries have also acquired useful expertise. The successful conversion effort at Britain's Lucas Aerospace is a case in point. Back in the early 1970s, several of its military hardware plants were about to be shut down. On the initiative of the trade unions, a special interfactory committee was set up which drafted questionnaires and circulated them among all workers, engineers and technicians. The idea was to find out what alternative goods they thought could be produced using the existing facilities. Some 150 different goods were named which, despite competition, would find civilian customers.

The record of conversion planning indicates that it is important to draw up the plans in advance. The Soviet Union is therefore considering the drafting of a broad *socioeconomic programme* related to disarmament which would complement the relevant military and political programme set forth in Mikhail Gorbachov's statement of January 15, 1986 and in the decisions of the 27th party congress. This would allow for an economic assessment of the major steps planned—the 50% cut in strategic offensive armaments, the convention banning chemical weapons, the reductions of conventional forces in Europe, etc.

Conversion plans would be implemented at different levels—*within the nation as a whole, within particular sectors of the economy, within particular regions and within particular industries*. It would be useful to incorporate such plans into the economic development programme at all these levels. This approach would not only demonstrate our readiness for a radical demilitarisation of our productive forces but also provide conversion-related social guarantees to those employed in the defence sector.

With many goods in short supply, the problem of marketing is not as acute for the converted enterprises in the Soviet Union as it is for Western companies. But it is quite likely for other problems to emerge, particularly those concerning the jobs to be offered to the work force released from defence industry employment. It is therefore very important for the conversion plan to be integrated, to include nationwide objectives and the means by which they can be achieved, to comprise technological and economic arguments in favour of closing down or retool-

ing particular military industries, and to contain provisions for employment compensation, as well as the relevant information and education to support these steps.

Another difficult question is, how do we ensure the painless adaptation of the Soviet economy to the disarmament process? Practical conversion is, to say the least, some way ahead of the necessary research in this field. In fact, it is already under way. The main concern is to make it loss-free. The record of several countries shows that *it is now extremely expensive not only to arm oneself but also to disarm*. Retooling military factories, destroying or adapting to peaceful uses military hardware which has already been paid for, finding employment for the demobilised servicemen, and retraining certain defence industry personnel all requires considerable additional expenditure.

There are three possible ways for making rational use of the resources released by the cuts in the Soviet military budget:

- use the savings to cover the budget deficit (one of the main reasons behind our economic difficulties);
- finance the production of consumer goods in particularly short supply;
- adapt military factories to the production of high-tech civilian goods (personal computers, video equipment, cars, etc.) that meet international quality standards.

Which of the three options would be best?

The appealing thing about the first one is its simplicity. But it is impracticable because coping with the budget deficit this way fails to remove its causes.

The second option appears more rational. If the con-

verted enterprises were to produce more consumer goods, this would make it possible to meet the demand more fully and to reduce the amount of money currently in circulation. However, this version would only work if the economic efficiency of the converted factories were not to decline in any way, something that is far from assured. Conversion would be economically justified only if every ruble released from defence expenditure were to yield two or more rubles in civilian production.

This makes it clear that the best way of using the converted defence enterprises would be to saturate the market with internationally competitive machinery and equipment produced at minimal cost. That way conversion would not "gobble up what it saves". It would help create a material basis for efforts to tackle our numerous economic and social problems, like those of Votkinsk, which I used by way of an example at the beginning of this article. This is why I think the third option would be the best.

A thorough scientific appraisal must be made of every phase in the disarmament process. Attention might usefully be paid to developing a new branch of economic science—*disarmament economics*—which would effectively study the opportunities for a transition from the traditional—and by now obsolete—militarised model of socioeconomic development to the new and more promising non-militarised one. This discipline could work out the economic mechanics of demilitarisation—another important objective of the antiwar drive. It will take a concerted and comprehensive effort to break down the absurd logic of the arms race once and for all.

NEW HUMANISM NEEDED TODAY

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Humanism is the doctrine and practice that puts human life first, above all other values. It is of, by, and for humanity. It is the theory and active conviction that human beings, as persons and as a species, are the knowers, choosers, makers, and experiencers of their values. For it, humanity is a system of interacting persons and communities, spread across the earth, ever changing, growing, dying, and being reborn. As participants in this process in time, its living members inherit and transmit cultural history and sustain interdependent relations with the ecological system of our planet. Humanism takes this earthly process of living to be ultimate in reality. This process embodies all actual and possible values, discoverable and realizable, that are needed for living and for living well. Humanists acknowledge the reality and value of other life forms and our dependence on many powers of nature not of our own knowing, making, or control. At the same time we affirm the claims of humanity to exist and grow; and today we dare to assume our historic responsibility for guiding humanity-in-the-ecological-system toward its fulfilment.

HUMANISM FACES A GRAVE CRISIS

Throughout the world today the preponderant mass of people are humanistic, and the leading philosophies—religious, socialist, democratic—are all humanistic in one form or another. True, anti-humanistic views are at work—reaction, neofascism, neocolonialism, militarism, authoritarianism, elitism, fatalism, nihilism, and necrophilia. But if we compare the nation-states and the values and thought of people today with those of the 1930s, we can observe a distinct advance by the forces of humanism. An important witness and instrument of this ethos today is the United Nations Organization.

Humanistic views vary in their form and content. Some are mixed with moderate and conservative political outlooks and supernaturalistic cosmologies. But all agree on the value of human living and its development. All are set against conditions that thwart, injure, or destroy human living, its dignity, and its development. Such are the mental conditions of ignorance, false ideas, prejudices, dogmatism, disrespect toward others, expressions of superiority (nationalist, racist, ethnic, sexist), fanaticism, and closure toward opposite views. Such are the physical conditions of poverty, homelessness, disease, economic backwardness, political and legal tyranny, illiteracy, want of schooling, and the use of violence against persons and groups.

A humanist is committed to the eradication of all these forms of oppression over the minds and bodies, the thoughts and feelings and actions, of people.

Today humanism faces its gravest crisis ever—just because humanity, which it claims to represent and guide, faces such a crisis. With our 60,000 nuclear warheads, we stand on the brink of lasting oblivion—of omnicide, of nuclear winter. Worldwide poverty takes a toll of 40,000 dead children every day. One out of five children dies before the age of one. Seventy per cent of the world's population live in underdeveloped, poor countries with a per capita income of less than ten per cent of that in advanced capitalist countries. Of the five billion persons in the world, one billion are malnourished and 0.5 billion of these are starving. Two billion, lacking adequate and uncontaminated water supplies, live in squalor; 0.8 billion are illiterate. Nearly one-third of the adults are unemployed for life.

Most of these poor peoples are handcuffed and incarcerated in the prison of imperialism and neo-colonialism. They owe a one trillion dollar debt, mainly to capitalist nations, above all the USA; the burden of payments checks their export earnings, their accumulation of capital, and their economic development. They are the drifting, sinking flotsam on the floodtide of transnational corporations, most of them foreign US enterprises now producing nearly forty per cent of the aggregate goods and services of the US economy. Surrounding and restraining the people of these captive economies are armed forces, deployed in 119 countries. Governing them are client or partner states, many of them brutally repressive, torturing and killing members of the opposition and thousands of innocent women and children.

This imbalance of economic and political power is associated with a transnational information hegemony centered in the media of capitalist countries.

Moreover, every single person on earth is adversely affected by the increasing poisoning, disorder, and degradation of the biosphere—the pollution of soil, water, atmosphere, and foodstuffs, the greenhouse effect, the eroding of the ozone layer, and the disruption of ecological cycles by industry, agriculture, the military, and other interventions of greed and folly into the human environment.

In such a situation, what has become of the great humanistic values, actual and ideal: international peace, understanding, and cooperation; adequate goods and services for a decent existence for all; freedom from fear; freedom to know; freedom to participate in democratic

decision-making and social construction; equality of treatment before society and the law; equality of opportunity to live and grow toward fulfilment; and a favorable mutuality with the life forms and materials of our common habitat and home?

The fact is that our crisis is unprecedented in the whole half-million years of history of our species on this planet. (1) We can lose everything—all civilization, all future existence—in a nuclear holocaust. As a result of "limited" war with weapons of mass destruction, or of ecological disaster, or of pandemic disease, we could lose a large portion of our species, reverting to severely diminished numbers and a retrograde mode of existence. (2) Humanity for the first time in recorded history is a single, indivisible unit; we will live or perish, prosper or fail, together. (3) Therefore, for the first time the future existence of humanity and other life forms on the planet depends on our wisdom and cooperation. (4) We are the sole responsible caretakers and guardians of the biosphere of earth, having the power to cherish and tend it for our children and future generations or to throw away this one and only pearl in our known universe. (5) What is the alternative to the loss of this precious world of humanity and of planetary life? A wonderful world to win, for one and all, unified and humanized, now and in time to come.

WE MUST BE SURVIVORS

In epochs past, the choices of human beings were not dichotomies. War, enslavement, famine, pestilence, devastation, and other miseries were not absolute catastrophes, without any residue for recovery. But now we must choose the road of life—or else turn down the road of irreversible death.

So we must be survivors. But not in the traditional sense. In the 19th century Marx and Engels cogently put the proposition that "humankind must first of all eat, drink, have shelter and clothing, before it can pursue politics, science, art, religion, etc."¹ Up until August 6, 1945 the struggle for these vital materials of human survival was a prime imperative. It still is. But since that fateful date the struggle has grown complex.

It is not only individual, social, national, and class-based; it must be international, global, and all-human. Moreover, it must be directed not only to the physical necessities of human living; it must become a movement transfiguring personality, character, and the human and humanizing relations between peoples of diverse social systems and states. It must be a progressive qualitative growth toward a unified planetary community. We must not only save the sacred gift of life from nuclear annihilation; we must save it by transforming it through creative and constructive cooperation. To preserve our species-life against insecurity, deprivation, and death, we must change the way of life that breeds these evils.

"New occasions teach new duties"—new sentiments, new zeal, new values, new goals, and new methods—as

well as the "new thinking" called for in perestroika. That means giving up the old counterproductive patterns of thought and action: the self-centeredness and aristocratic claims of individuals, social systems, and ideologies; unreason and prejudice toward people different from ourselves and our group (racism, apartheid, fanaticism); domination of others (tyranny, hegemonism, national chauvinism, aggression), and the use of force to settle disputes.

Does this mean a slowing down or surrender of the class struggle? By no means. Classes and class struggle are an ongoing fact of contemporary history. But today they have emerged into a new stage of breadth and complication. Economic, technological, political, military, ecological, communicative, informational forces are driving the different nations and peoples of the world together—for good or ill. Because of this growing interconnectedness, our human problems cut across lines of class, economic system, nation, culture, religion, and ideology. To struggle for oneself and one's working class is not only to battle for better wages and conditions in one's workplace. It is to join with others for peaceful international relations, for the abolition of racism and apartheid, for political freedom at home and abroad, and for a well-ordered, beautiful environment of nature useful to our human needs and respected in its own right.

The struggle of the working peoples of the world has become, willy-nilly, a global movement. Working peoples of course vary very much in their awareness of specific objective circumstances and in their level of development. But because of conditions common to their lives and work, they share a consciousness of living in one world with others, of facing common problems, and of participating in a common undertaking and destiny. And in the necessary course of the evolution of that common consciousness, they will come to understand the critical role of class in the causation and resolution of their problems. Moreover, *the mandate of unified struggle does not deny or dispel the factor of class*. The competition of economic systems and institutional motives will continue; our problem is to contain and in time conquer the antagonism by the strength and wisdom of a united world movement.

STRIKING FOR PEACE AND SOCIAL PROGRESS

Our humanistic imperative today must be to engage all people in creative work so as to produce and distribute needed goods for one and all, to participate in the decision-making and problem-solving of a democratic social order.

The subjective or personal factor in such work has a new and increasingly needed role. While objective forces are driving nations and economic systems together, ruling classes have responded to the new technology with subtle attempts to exploit and suppress the working people. Manipulation of economic and financial markets by

transnational corporations centered in the US has induced poverty and unemployment at home and has driven the poor of the world into ever deeper misery. Class opposition has ramified into the most remote regions of the globe.

What to do? The human thing is to fight—to rally ourselves, the working peoples, to consciousness of our own powers, rights, and duties. We must inform, educate, agitate, propagandize, organize, mobilize, demonstrate, and demand. We must understand our conditions—its causes, consequences, and cures—and take up collective action to transform it in our own interests, the interests of humankind.

In the battle against the new forms of class domination people must come to see that the struggles for security, national independence, racial and gender equality, economic freedom, political autonomy, and social justice are *inseparable parts of a single struggle of all the world's working people for peace and development*.

Survival as avoidance of nuclear holocaust is an absolute minimum. The peace movement of more than forty years has been vital in advancing us toward this goal. US public opinion helped to force an end to the Vietnam war and to open the way to detente in the early 1970s. After President Carter broke off his support for SALT II and President Reagan tried to revive the Cold War in the 1980s, the peace movement in the US and Europe compelled his administration to negotiate with the USSR. In the past three years this movement has pushed President Reagan to join in four summits with General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachov; the INF treaty is already taking effect and for the first time in history nuclear weapons are being destroyed.

Still, we must pressure our governments to negotiate a nuclear test ban, a reduction of strategic nuclear weapons, the elimination of other weapons of mass destruction, and other measures—all aiming at a nuclear-free world by the year 2000. These are achievable! We must speed up the momentum in shaping a political climate of goodwill, dialogue, trust, and negotiation. This atmosphere has made the critical difference in the political process of peace-making.

Yet the peace process as a movement toward survival must at the same time be a movement toward a life worth living. Safety, yes—but also progress. True progress creates peace and saves life, that it might go on; true peace can be attained only through progress in the flourishing and fulfilling of human life. What is the logic of peace work? *Halting and reversing the arms race* calls for understanding and serious cooperation among states and peoples for solving their problems. This requires that all resources hitherto spent on armaments threatening everyone's security must be appropriated by the people for the production of food, housing, health care, educa-

tion, jobs, tools, machines, infrastructure, and all else needed. This appropriation of the people's wealth for their own use and well-being is now *the number one demand of humanism*.

In this we in the US especially need the international perspective: the conviction that our only security and welfare in the world are interlocked with those of other national and economic systems. As long as the ruling classes impose institutional force and violence on the poor at home, armed intervention on the poor in revolt abroad, and invasion into whole countries that, being different, threaten their real or imagined hegemony—how can the large middle classes at home be secure or comfortable? Crime, drugs, disease, and alienation will seep into their quiet suburban neighborhoods and schools; runaway capital and taxes to pay for imperial armies abroad will eat up their incomes, lay them off from their jobs, snatch away their homes, and in time throw them out into the streets.

As our objective, material struggle is indivisible, so our thinking must be indivisible. The movement for peace and development, for security and progress and justice, *must bring together in unified struggle* all forces thinking and working toward those goals. We must expose and reject divisive positions and concepts—above all, anti-communism and anti-Sovietism, which still infect the US peace movement; religious apocalypticism, widespread in the far Right; apathy, alienation, and pessimism; anarchism, individualism, fantasy, and hopelessness; sectarians who insist on just their own way; the Cold Warriors, nuclearists, and America-firsters still prominent in scholarship, the media, and the political scene; and various forms of elitism that look down on the working people, the Black and Hispanic and other minorities, women, religious faiths, ethnic groups, etc.

We must keep our eyes on the prize: we must build a *powerful coalition comprised by the diverse individuals who are the real working people of our world*. It is we who suffer under exploitation, it is we who have the most to lose by poverty and omnicide, it is we who have the most to win in a triumphant struggle. That is what humanism is all about.

The unity of working people of goodwill in struggle toward peace and development—that is the key that will lock forever the dark door of the past against misery, oppression, and early death. The same key will open the bright door of the future toward a new day of a prosperous, free, and peaceful humanity.

1 Frederick Engels, "Speech at the Graveside of Karl Marx" in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1970, p. 162.





RESTRUCTURING IS A TRAJECTORY OF RENEWAL

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The course of human history and the shape of things to come are confronting Marxists with many complex theoretical problems. These problems cannot be resolved without a profound analysis of the world's view realities and trends, their nature, the contradictions existing between them, and the methods for coping with globally dangerous phenomena.

This becomes all the more urgent in view of the further deterioration of the environment, which has already reached crisis point and which threatens an imminent universal catastrophe. It must be admitted that not only the industrialised capitalist nations but also the socialist countries have revealed a lack of preparedness in the face of a global environmental threat. Another new reality they have encountered concerns a decline in economic growth rates. Meanwhile, the present advances in science and technology—a field in which the leading capitalist countries are very active—are changing previously held views about the evolutionary capacity of capitalism. This potential has proved greater than many Marxists hitherto believed. Besides, this capacity may well be used to keep the gap between the developed and the developing capitalist countries from growing bigger (this growth would endanger the whole world). The West not only faces the need to update its own technological infrastructure and reduce its pressure on the environment, but also the problem of preventing the collapse of the world economy and creating the international means for its regulation.

The socialist world confronted similar acute issues, and this gave rise to new political thinking and to a search for ways of ensuring human survival. There was a need to develop Marxist theory. Now we have to reveal the potential for renewal of the world in general and of socialism in

particular, and we have to help socialism tackle present and future problems.

Several socialist countries reached a watershed during the 1980s. A restructuring drive is under way throughout society. The old and the obsolete are being discarded, and new social structures are being created. All this produces numerous difficulties and new problems, as well as a critical reappraisal of our past experience and of the current practical efforts to transform society. In other words, we are dealing with a *phenomenon which is revolutionary in its essence and historical significance*. The idea may sound unusual and resemble a metaphorical explanation—but only partly so. It is a metaphor in the sense that a *strictly theoretical concept of the new type of revolutionary process inherent in the dynamics of socialist development has yet to be fully worked out*. That was only to be expected: the processes in question are far from completion; they are gaining momentum and unfolding under different specific historical conditions and against the background of substantial national and regional differences. Hence the quite contradictory assessments and attitudes. But the important thing is to see that they all have common elements. Identification of these elements will enable us to make certain progress in a conceptual analysis of the problems generated by the new type of revolutionary transformations currently under way in a number of socialist countries.

A PRE-CRISIS SITUATION

Turning to the diversity of the causes that prompted socialism to undertake a restructuring effort, we can group them under two categories—the internal and the external factors that made changes imperative. An analysis of the former indicates that previously established models of socialism lack the necessary impetus for self-development. Extended reproduction based on these models is increasingly discovering its own limitations. Society not only finds itself unable to ensure the attainment of the objectives set by its leading political force but also enters a *pre-crisis stage or simply a period of crisis*, when it either marks time or “wears out” the potential of its resources. Manifestations of this phenomenon vary from country to country both in terms of acuteness and in the range of the social spheres affected (production, services, politics,

ideology and morals). There are also noticeable dissimilarities in the causes that bring this about.

For example, in China and in several other under-developed socialist countries the crisis was brought on primarily by the arbitrary wish of the political leadership to yank the nation out of its backward state overnight, "leap across" several stages of development and "drag" it into socialism. The belief was that even the higher stages of socialism (up to and including communist relations) could be achieved by idolising the leader, instilling faith in the omnipotence of his decrees and enforcing universal compliance with them. That was in fact "barracks socialism", which brought discredit upon socialist ideas. As a result of such policies, the economic base usually contracted. A primitivisation of the economy and of the people's requirements set in, and the nation dropped out of the mainstream of world developments.

The factors behind the pre-crisis situation in several European socialist countries, including the USSR, were different (and this is noted, among others, by Soviet scholars). They were rooted mostly in a conservative and bureaucratic resistance to all that was new, in an obsession with a system of administration by fiat which had long become obsolete and stood in the way of urgent social reform and change. Where this change has already begun and certain results have been achieved, the restructuring process is now being held back by the delays, inconsistencies and lack of resolution in the implementation of the necessary projects. Obviously, this makes it impossible to enhance the positive experience available. Moreover, it raises additional obstacles in the path of the changes and puts off the solution of pressing economic and social problems.

In Yugoslavia, negative symptoms in the economy were in some cases preceded by "steps too far" ("contract economics")¹ and in others, passivity was to blame—the desire to work in the old way, without risking any innovation, as though progress in science and technology could be avoided. The League of Communists of Yugoslavia noted at its conference in Belgrade on May 29-31, 1988 that as a result, economic stagnation was continuing, labour productivity declining, and the switch to modern technology was slow. The effort to improve relations of self-government is also showing signs of stagnation, and is accompanied by an entrenchment of the government bureaucracy and a weakening of working-class influence in tackling economic problems. This pushes the immediate and long-term interests of all citizens to the background.

This seems reason enough for effecting far-reaching reforms to cover all aspects of life in socialist society. But I think such reforms would barely have been started in some socialist countries, or abandoned or delayed in others, had it not been for the emergence of new international factors. Their combined impact did much to make the need for restructuring more urgent.

I am referring above all to the continued lag of the

socialist countries in improving their economic potential and the qualitative indicators of economic growth that are now essential to a sustained rise in labour productivity. The situation does, of course, differ from country to country. However, a comparative analysis demonstrates that in Asia, the socialist countries' performance lags behind that of their newly industrialised neighbours (South Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia and Singapore), and West European nations have outstripped Eastern Europe. The level of social labour productivity in the USSR is noticeably lower compared to the United States, the Soviet Union's main rival and partner in international affairs. Over the past 35 years the socialist world has failed to catch up with the developed capitalist countries in this field (see table).

1986 LEVELS OF SOCIAL LABOUR PRODUCTIVITY²
(Average performance of developed capitalist countries as 100%)

	Overall economic performance	Industry	Agriculture
The world	18	48	7
USA	145	130	200
Western Europe	80	95	100
Japan	85	90	37
Socialist countries	13	34	5
CMEA members	36	52	15
USSR	41	58	20
European CMEA members	42	50	22
Cuba and Asian CMEA members	5	13	3
China	4	15	3

Both groups of factors (internal and external) form the basis and the imperative for restructuring in the socialist countries because the record shows that their "models" are losing their effectiveness relative both to progress at the national level and to the new realities of science and technology in the industrialised capitalist countries. As one would expect, the latter factor affects the appeal of socialist ideas and the ability of socialism to renew the world and solve the problems of ensuring human survival. All this highlights not only the distinctive aspects of the pre-crisis or crisis situation but also the distinctive steps that must be taken to overcome it. These should be far-reaching and urgent, that is, essentially revolutionary.

IDEAS AND THEIR IMPLEMENTATION

Whatever the causes, character or forms of the crises, negative phenomena eroded the credibility of the policy

that led to them. This affected the prestige of the ruling parties, and mass consciousness increasingly reflected the need for radical changes in the social system. *These critical attitudes helped political leaders develop a critical understanding of the new realities.* True, in some cases it was the political leadership that took the initiative. But that was only a first step. It was followed by the *shaping of a political will dedicated to far-reaching change* and to the scrapping of the existing mechanisms and structures. This stage also featured *elements of a theoretical substantiation and ideological understanding of the concepts underlying the reforms, the specification of these concepts and their transformation into an effective strategy of restructuring.*

In some countries the process unfolded in the form of open and sharp debate. In others there was a covert struggle between the forces that were afraid to take responsibility for the situation and those who were more far-sighted. *As a result, the political leadership in most socialist countries demonstrated its readiness to run things in a new way.* This process has advanced particularly far in those countries where the ruling parties act not from positions of power but, first and foremost, as the *ideological and political motive force of restructuring.*

But let us not anticipate developments. Two stages—the stage at which the past was critically reassessed, mistakes were admitted and the causes of the crisis phenomena were identified, and the stage at which the political will took shape and there was a break with the dogmatic views of the system's mechanisms in different countries—displayed their individual salient features. Both these stages must be studied in greater depth. This study has a practical value because it enables us to see the prospects of restructuring: I hold that the more successful we are at every stage, the greater the opportunities for reform. For example, the record shows that delays in the implementation of reforms may aggravate contradictions and crisis phenomena and give rise to short-term problems which hamper the concentration of our efforts on the long-term and decisive aspects of social change.

An important yardstick by which one can judge the intensity of the period of preparation for restructuring is represented by an analysis of the *theoretical ideological instruments* used to substantiate its concept and the impact of the latter on social consciousness. In other words, many new and complex theoretical and practical questions emerge which are connected both with making our plans more specific and with looking for effective ways of implementing them. In my view, the following are particularly important.

First, the effort to define the essence of socialism and to identify the avenues and stages of its development. This means that we should cleanse Marxism-Leninism of Stalinist, Maoist and other vulgarising distortions and dispense with unscientific and simplistic views of socialism. We should "return to the classics", but only having crea-

tively grasped those of mankind's recent accomplishments which make it possible to enrich the theory of socialism with new humanistic and democratic values and to use it as an essential factor of support for restructuring.

Second, we should identify and study in greater depth the criteria of planning-cum-market socialism, reveal the organic interconnections between different forms of ownership, and show how extended reproduction is to be regulated at the present stage of the revolution in science and technology, without managing the economy by administrative fiat.

Third, we have to work out the principles of a democratic representative political system and of collective social self-government, and to widen the range of group and individual civil rights that ensure dynamic socialist development and the withering away of the state.

Fourth, the objective is to identify the role of the communist party in the strategy of restructuring and cast new light on the party's internal self-organisation, which has to secure the policy of reform and shape an effective system of self-government.

Fifth, we should broaden our understanding of the ways in which socialism can be integrated into the global economic, technological, scientific and cultural processes occurring in a single, interdependent but contradictory world.

We can see that many theoretical problems have accumulated, but there are not enough practical answers. Meanwhile, the demand for such answers keeps growing because without them we cannot effect the changes that we need so badly or cope with the tasks of contemporary history. These answers should differ radically from everything we used to associate with the word "socialism". Only then will socialist ideas gain a new lease on life and have a mobilising effect.

CRUCIAL JUNCTURE

Although this is debatable, I believe that the socialist countries that have embarked on a restructuring effort are now at a *decisive, crucial juncture in the implementation of their reforms.* Let us look at the evidence. Firstly, the reforms began in the economic sphere. It became clear, however, that their implementation called for radical change in other spheres too, for the removal of obstacles to economic restructuring and for an organic combination of the new social conditions with advances in science and technology. As one can see from the practical work to effect these transformations, *political reform should complement economic reform.* This is the key to the revolutionary renewal of socialism. *The far-reaching changes in the national economy are either followed up objectively in the political area and thus transformed into a comprehensive structural reform, or remain unfinished, thus calling the future of restructuring into question.* I hold that this critical stage has been reached by several countries which

have adopted a policy of social renewal and in which a kind of cross between the old and the new has developed.

The reason why such things sometimes happen is that revolutionary upheavals are resisted not only by the "stagnation" forces but also by a wider range of people. Disruption of the established order affects not only the well-being of those connected with the administrative command system, but also the interests of other social strata. The temporary adverse effects of a reform (rising prices, layoffs and the like) usually make themselves felt before its long-term positive results materialise. This gives rise to factors favouring a slowdown. So far, we have not yet created relevant political mechanisms to neutralise these factors—mechanisms that, together with the party, would become a natural agent of democratic socialist renewal at all "rungs" and levels of social organisation.

A feature of this approach to the problem is that the *attempts to create a support base for restructuring outside the ruling parties have proved ineffective*. They prompt the conservative, antirestructuring forces (in the state apparatus and in other structures), who are afraid of the "resurgence of antisocialist elements", to rally together, and this makes the implementation of our plans more difficult. Besides, in many cases the policy of renewal is a kind of "revolution from above". Hence the need for special methods capable of channeling the energy of all strata, including intellectuals, into the mainstream of restructuring. These methods and means include *openness, the right of people to self-organisation and self-government, and the renewal of the entire intellectual sphere*.

It is still not quite clear how the vanguard role of the party is to be imbued with a new essence, or how its activities are to be combined with the institutions of pluralism, representative democracy and self-government. Many researchers who are working on this problem note that in addition to the decentralisation of power and the right to autonomy which workers' and other social collec-

tives have acquired, we also need a vigorous and authoritative (not authoritarian) political agent of restructuring. But one must also remember Lenin's well-known point that the history of revolutions is always richer in content and more ingenious than is imagined by even the most class-conscious vanguards because these vanguards express the consciousness, will, passion and imagination of only part of the people, whereas radical transformations are effected by far greater numbers.³

The masses, their attitude and their tangible contribution to restructuring are the crucial factor here. There are certain difficulties involved: the working people have to bear the "cost" of restructuring. But there is also a positive aspect: awareness of losses and gains is essential to the promotion of social self-government and of a new way of revolutionary thinking.

I agree that restructuring processes follow a twisted path, and that the results to be achieved in this or that country cannot be predicted with certainty yet. But there is reason to believe that these processes will continue to gain momentum. Objectively, they are irreversible, and the successes scored in some socialist countries will influence the transformations launched in others. To sum up, socialism can now prove its capacity not only for overcoming underdevelopment but also for advancing rapidly under the new conditions of progress in science and technology. That, I believe, is the essence of the crucial juncture our restructuring effort has reached in different countries. That is the thrust of the revolutionary mission of socialism, of its development and of its impact on world history.

1 Economic activity based on contracts concluded by economic units to allay the adverse effects of market trends.—Ed.

2 Compiled from *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodniye otnosheniya*, No. 12, 1987, pp. 144-148.

3 See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 95.

WMR QUESTIONNAIRE

SOCIALIST IDEALS: A PERSONAL VIEW

We continue with answers to our international questionnaire (see WMR, Nos. 1 and 3, 1989). The questions are:

- *What do you regard as the supreme value in the life of your country and what do you object to?*
- *What topical issues should be tackled in your country in the near future?*
- *What does the socialist status of your country mean to you personally? Are you able to take a direct part in asserting common objectives and interests? What are your proposals and hopes for closer cooperation among the socialist countries?*

Below we present answers from Mongolia

I REFUSE TO BE AN "AVERAGE INTELLECTUAL"

Sharavyn SURENZHAV
Mongolian poet

Access to knowledge and everyone's right to study and be educated are, I believe, the greatest value of socialism. My father was a peasant, and if I have risen to be an intellectual the way was opened for me—as for many of my compatriots—by our socialist system.

What I resent most keenly is the attitude of indifference and nihilism amongst some people towards the intelligentsia. The widely accepted term "working intelligentsia" seems to limit mental activity. Could this be the origin of the humiliating notion of "average intellectual"? Could this explain the levelling of all those who work with their brains into an unnatural human mass in which no distinction is made between talented people and the rest?

This, I think, is an abnormal and unscientific approach, and I believe it derives from the time of Choibalsan's personality cult,¹ when diktat and repression inflicted irreparable harm on the intellectual and moral potential of Mongolian society. Contrary to expectations, the subsequent period, almost until the mid-1980s, did not lead to the spiritual liberation of our creative forces. The atmosphere of mistrust and suspicion surrounding the intelligentsia, which lasted for decades, led to moral stagnation and to a depreciation of our spiritual values.

The process of profound renewal now under way in

Mongolia is a joy and an inspiration. One of its notable features lies in the recognition of the great role of the creative individual as the party restructures its relations with the intelligentsia. I believe respect for its intellectual forces to be the hallmark of civilisation in any society.

We are clearly aware that in the past the approach to our national culture, history and education was wrong. But the fresh wind of restructuring and renewal gives us hope of changes for the better. There is a saying in the East that only that which has been proven is true. That is why I believe that the supreme purpose of socialism is to show the truth and tell the truth, thereby giving our people genuine freedom.

Mongolia's economic development is undoubtedly the major task ahead, but social problems need to be given top priority by involving the people in running society. The faster we do this, the faster the country will develop.

If food supply, marketing and cultural services for the population are to be improved, there is a need, I think, to do everything to develop lease contract and cooperatives, both of which offer greater economic incentives to the working people.

We have to learn to display a sense of utmost responsibility in any matter affecting society as a whole. If we are to borrow anyone's experience, we should not do so for the sake of imitation, but thoughtfully and for the good of what we are doing. We must rid ourselves as soon as possible of our ingrained habit of adopting a wait-and-see attitude until the order comes down from the top. The main thing is, as the great Sukhe-Bator² put it, to devise a common objective and pool our efforts.

Mongolia is a part of the socialist world and this gives us great advantages in ensuring our national security and independence, thus guaranteeing peaceful creative labour, the development of mutually beneficial trade, cul-

tural exchanges, and the extensive application of science and technology in the national economy. Because our country is a member of the socialist community, we are able to enjoy modern living standards and to satisfy our spiritual requirements more fully. Of special significance in this context, I think, is the improvement in friendly relations between our northern and southern neighbours: the USSR and the People's Republic of China.

I have the opportunity and the desire to become better acquainted with those works of Soviet and progressive literature which are an influence on world culture. Unfortunately, Mongolian writers hardly ever go abroad except to the socialist countries. I should like very much to see the whole world for myself.

I feel, on the whole, that friendship with fraternal peoples should be developed and deepened more effectively: after all, we have to learn from each other as members of the same family.

Cooperation is a living process and it cannot be unified. If it is to proceed freely, as it should, then we, for our part, should get rid of bureaucratic practices and formalism. I stand for the widest development of direct contacts and ties between individuals and work collectives. I believe this to be the basis for strengthening the socialist community, for paving the way towards brotherhood and joint endeavour.

1 H. Choibalsan (1895-1952), Mongolian party leader and statesman; prime minister of Mongolia from 1939 to 1952. — *Ed.*

2 Sukhe-Bator (1893-1923), the founder of the Mongolian Revolutionary People's Party and of the Mongolian people's state. — *Ed.*

DIRECT TIES: A RELIABLE WAY

Ayuushiin ZUMAA

Director of the Second Knitted Goods Factory in Ulan Bator

I think that the creation of the people's state, the conversion of the means of production into social property, and the right of the members of our society to dispose of the results of their own labour are the most valuable achievements of socialism in Mongolia.

As a woman (and women comprise more than half the workforce in Mongolia) I want to emphasise that our libera-

tion from inequality, both in society and in the family, is one of the incontestable advantages of our system. My own experience testifies to this. My father was a peasant, and like most other women my age I received a secondary education in Mongolia. In 1968, I graduated from the textile institute in Leningrad and started work at the knitted goods factory in Ulan Bator. I worked my way up from shift foreman to factory director. I have travelled to many socialist and to some capitalist countries, where I studied textile technology and observed the life of the working people. I have no complaints about my lot.

Having said all that, I would not go so far as to claim that the women's question has been settled once and for all in Mongolia. We feel an acute need for further improvement in social and everyday conditions and in the development of emancipation.

Things are not as simple as they look. There is great variation in the quality of workmanship, and far from everyone behaves as a master should in his country. Wages do not stimulate people to raise their skills or the quality of their performance, nor do they encourage an innovative approach. This is why the socialist principle of distribution does not quite work, and why a part of the population is socially and politically passive, tending to take a narrow-minded "Do less, get more" approach.

I fully support the measures taken recently by the party and the government. Our democracy is being advanced, there is openness, and the rights and independence of enterprises and other economic organisations are being extended. The changes are already taking place, but I feel that renewal in Mongolia is still slow.

A socialist society is a self-organising organism, and it is necessary to work hard in order that all citizens become socially active, display creative initiative, improve discipline and maintain order. Much also remains to be done in improving administration and management.

A special feature of Mongolia is that a working class emerged only during the people's revolution. Consequently, more must be done than in other countries to foster those remarkable qualities which the international proletariat has acquired in the class struggle. We are striving to attain the supreme goal of socialism: well-being for one and all, and the development of men and women of culture, moral integrity and sound health.

What are our most pressing problems? In an age of scientific and technological progress, our main aim is the intensive development of agriculture and industry, with the industrialisation of the countryside and a stable power supply being especially urgent. This will determine our ability to step up the pace of growth. My desire is to see the rich natural resources of Mother Earth used rationally on the basis of precise knowledge.

Among Mongolians, the technical intelligentsia in particular, there is a tendency to underestimate our own experience, skills and potential, to be unsure of ourselves and to rely too much on the skills and abilities of others. I think that it is important to overcome this mentality, to give

due appreciation to the potential of our national cadres, to encourage their initiative and spread technical thinking among the masses. Faster industrialisation means automation and electronics, the training of highly-skilled specialists, and a technical education from an early age.

I feel that direct ties between related enterprises and the policy of joint ventures should be broadened within the socialist community. In the past, when cooperating within the framework of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, we studied advanced experience, raised our skill standards and exchanged technical projects or working groups. We are now establishing producer ties with several enterprises in the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria. We are also familiarising ourselves with new forms of cooperation in the production of leather, woollen, and knitted goods. This has helped to raise labour productivity, improve product quality and range, and make production as a whole more efficient.

Like my fellow-workers, I want to take an active part in the practical application of the restructuring now under way in many countries of the socialist community. I believe that personal contacts between citizens of the modern world are exceptionally important these days. For instance, there should be greater opportunities for trips abroad by personal invitation.

THE WORLD IS WIDE AS THE STEPPE

Ulemzhiyin AVARZED

Chairman, Badrol Agricultural Association, Tsagan-Ula Samon, Khubsugul District

Mongolia has made many gains in the course of socialist construction, and the most important one, I think, is political freedom, the liberation from the stupefying Buddhist religion and from backwardness, and the assertion of a new culture. Our state has risen to become a fully-fledged partner in world affairs, and although Mongolia's development still tends to lag behind that of the other socialist countries, I am not unduly worried. On the contrary, I take pride in the fact that our country has risen to its present level, especially since it confronted the legacy of feudalism after the revolution: poverty, illiteracy, wandering herds of cattle and numerous monasteries (although I do not decry the rich cultural heritage created by our ancestors over the centuries).

We have come a long way, but I want my country to advance faster and more confidently. I believe that the supreme goals of socialism are, above all, to prevent a world thermonuclear war, to provide for the material and spiritual requirements of the fraternal peoples as fully and as rapidly as possible, and to enable our men and women to develop their personal qualities through labour.

There are many vital problems in Mongolia which need to be solved. My own main concern is how to raise the low profitability of the main sectors of the economy—livestock farming, agriculture and industry.

What can I say about the everyday conditions and the culture of those who live in the countryside? We are still short of material and financial means, and what has been built up is not always used correctly. Here, I think the old economic system is mainly to blame, because administrative orders, which dampen initiative and independent action, still tend to prevail. That is why I believe releasing the creative and imaginative energy of our men and women is a top priority. The potential of the socialist economy can be properly utilised only by consistently deepening the economic reform begun in the country.

Everything that is created by human hands must increase the country's prosperity. Unfortunately, one cannot take comfort from the state of the ecology: our vegetation is being trampled down, there are fewer fish in our rivers and lakes, pastureland and tracts of forest are ravaged by steppe and forest fires, our rivers grow shallow, and our regeneration works tend to lag. This is a source of worry for the Mongolians, who have always lived in close harmony with nature. It is everyone's duty to take care to preserve the natural environment.

There is a Mongolian saying that the world is as wide as the steppe for him who has many friends, but it is as narrow as the palm of his hand for him who has none. The two million people in my country are fortunate to belong to the socialist family. Alone, we would long since have been subjugated by the neocolonialism of the imperialist powers. I myself, for instance, would surely have been a lama or a servant of some rich man, or perhaps would have died as a child (the former Mongolia was dying out).

Of course, I have the desire and the opportunity to take part in asserting the common internationalist goals and interests. I am a Communist, and I have sworn to spare no effort—not even life itself—in the struggle for the cause of socialism.

I look to the future with optimism, because the friendship and cooperation between the socialist countries have been growing. The fraternal peoples, and our closest friend the Soviet Union, are well aware of Mongolia's lag and its slow development, but I believe that we shall fulfil our common plans. Above all, what we must do is think through every step and work hard. I myself would like to see our republic cease trading in livestock and dairy products, and start selling processed products. The way to this lies in building meat packing plants, especially in

the country's southern and central areas, in trading more widely on the world market. Because of its climate, Mongolia also has a problem with low yields of cereals, potatoes and vegetables, and our pig and poultry farming is not all that satisfactory. The answer lies in setting up modern farms in association with other socialist countries. Frankly, the export prices for our products are lower than those on the international market.

What the fraternal peoples have been doing for us cannot be overestimated, but there are some things that worry me. Unfortunately, certain leather goods and foot-

wear enterprises, built in Mongolia 10 to 15 years ago with the help of our friends, turn out low-quality products which are unpopular at home, to say nothing of markets abroad. Everything depends mainly on the work of our cadres and the potential of our economy. Why don't we get together with experts from the CMEA countries and arrange to modernise our plants? I am sure that, like ourselves, the entire community wants to see Mongolian production becoming more profitable, and our trade developing further.

We are closely following the perestroika in the Soviet Union. For us, it is a real example.

* * *

STATE AND CHURCH IN POLAND

Wladyslaw LORANC

Minister, Head of the Office for Religious Affairs,
Council of Ministers, PPR

There are 42 religious associations in Poland today. They differ in their traditions, their approaches to the articles of faith, numbers of followers, in their relation with other denominations, and in their attitudes to those people who manage without the Church.

The Roman Catholic Church influences 90% of Poland's 38 million inhabitants. As to other religions, the Orthodox Church has about 850,000 followers; the Evangelical Augsburg and Evangelical Reformed Churches number over 110,000 adherents; and there are 80,000 Jehovah's Witnesses, an organisation yet to be legalised. The Moslem religious union has about 2,000 supporters; Messianic sects, around 1,800; and Buddhist communities, over 900.

Poland is proud of its long-standing tradition of religious tolerance, although people here are less-tolerant of atheists, or those who remain indifferent to faith.

The first constitution of the bourgeois Polish state, formed in 1918 (123 years after Poland's division between tsarist Russia, Prussia and Austria), gave "precedence among equal denominations" to the Roman Catholic Church. In contrast, the Basic Law of socialist Poland, adopted in 1952, establishes three democratic principles for dealing with religious affairs: the equality of citizens, whatever their faith or beliefs; the separation of the Church from the state, with each Church guaranteed freedom of worship; and the equality of all religions before the law.

Unarguably, these provisions are perfectly fair—in theory. It is perhaps harder to ensure their observance in practice, or to achieve a consensus in assessing the work

of the clergy or the conduct of believers. Nevertheless, the party has been firmly and consistently looking for ways to consolidate society.

DIALOGUE

Relations between the socialist state and Poland's religions have their history. Pride of place here belongs to the dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church, which has been headed by Pope John Paul II—a Pole—for over ten years now.

Church activities in the past are variously judged. In the 17th century, during the Counter-Reformation, and in the period of the decline of the Rzeczpospolita¹ at the end of the 18th century, the church hierarchy played a negative role in the country's destiny. However, in a divided Poland and in the years of Nazi occupation, the clergy expressed patriotic sentiments, helped preserve national self-consciousness and culture, and supported the movement for a revival of independence. This last circumstance erased much of the bitterness felt towards the "house of God" for the social egoism of its servants, for its reactionary influence on intellectual life, and for its former alliance with the landlords.

Current relations between the state and the Roman Catholic Church typically bear a *political* character. In Poland and outside it, especially since August 1980, anti-socialist elements and Western centres have played a complex game, seeking to draw clerical circles into a confrontation with the left forces, which have rallied around

the PUWP, and to set the Church against the people's power. While strongly claiming that workers associate their hopes with the Church, they classify the state as atheistic, not as worker-peasant or socialist.

The would-be dismantlers of socialism have not succeeded—thanks to a determined government policy and the sober position of the majority of the church hierarchy. Nevertheless, attempts are still being made to give the activity of the clergy an anti-socialist thrust.

In such a complex situation, the chief and most difficult task has to be the *integration of Polish society and the consolidation of all patriotic forces. We must do whatever is necessary to achieve political stability, relieve the strain on the economy, and ease the burdens of daily life for people.*

The policy of the PUWP and government is geared to this aim, as is the practice of party organisations and state agencies with respect to religious associations. We proceed from the premise that social development also brings about significant, often positive changes inside each faith. As revealed by Marxist analysis, the content and functions of religion differ from those which the classics of scientific communism studied and criticised. This circumstance, as well as historical experience, cannot be ignored.

Under the influence of the working-class and national liberation movements, the Church in many countries has weakened its links with the propertied classes and does not so obviously support neocolonial aspirations. Certain sections of the clergy understand and sympathise with the democratic processes, and have adopted the standpoint of so-called liberation theology². There have also been significant attempts by the Polish Church to update its views on labour and on the problems of its social organisation. The clergy has declared its readiness to take part in solving social issues, and has continued to criticise the inequity of international economic relations.

Taking all this into account, the 10th PUWP Congress has worked out a position based on the fact that *serious differences of opinion and outlook continue to exist in our society and that these are both natural and inevitable*. However, the problems in relations between the state and the Church are not limited to them. The principle of co-existence must be maintained here in the future as well.

We expect at least political neutrality from the clergy. Besides that, many would do well to stop thinking that socialism in Poland is but a transient historical episode. At the same time, we see the potential and need for *joint actions* with the clergy in solving many issues of major public concern. This involves, for example, promoting industriousness as a fundamental moral value for people. It is possible to work together to strengthen the family, and to fight alcoholism, drug addiction, and social and moral turpitude; to preserve the environment, protect cultural monuments and to safeguard the development of public health; and to work in the cause of general disarmament, security and peace.

LEGAL BASIS

The effectiveness of a policy of interaction with the Church depends on many factors, both domestic and international. One of the most important is the *legal regulation of state-church relations, and also the normalisation of ties between Poland and the Vatican*.

Speaking of the former, one should note that conditions of religious liberty have not always obtained in Poland over the last 40 years, not least because in the recent past the clergy were often used in the struggle against the socialist system. In turn, the state, subscribing to a misconceived theory that foresaw the rapid demise of religion, at times applied repressive measures. Nevertheless, today's dialogue between the authorities and all the religions is broader and deeper than envisaged by the legal acts, many of which entered into force over 50 years ago. Although the reasons for this vary, the root cause is the increased democratic requirements of society, enhanced by the state policy of socialist renewal and reforms. In our bid to normalise relations with the Church, we want to consolidate, and provide a *legal basis* for what has already been achieved.

Not everyone knows why the legal aspect of our country's ties with the Vatican is still unsettled. This dates back to 1945, when the Provisional Government of National Unity proclaimed that the concordat, concluded in 1925 with the Vatican, was no longer valid because of certain unfriendly decisions, taken in the autumn of 1939 by the Roman Curia, which placed the occupied Polish territories under the jurisdiction of the bishops of Hitler's Germany.

The restoration of diplomatic ties with the Vatican began after June 1972 when the boundaries of the western and northern dioceses were brought into conformity with the state frontiers of the new Poland. The abolition, in October the same year, of the artificially maintained representation in the apostolic capital of the London-based Polish bourgeois emigre government was also instrumental in establishing contacts. In 1974 the PPR and the Vatican signed a protocol, thereby creating groups to ensure permanent working contacts. In June 1987 the sides noted that the existing level of ties was patently inadequate, had no legal basis and did not meet the interests of either side. They decided to exchange an Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador from the Polish side and a nuncio or pronuncio from the Vatican. They agreed that the document regulating their relations ought to consist of a convention rather than a concordat since such a form would correspond more to the essence of the system existing in Poland.

A joint drafting board was commissioned to work on the convention by the Joint Government-Episcopate Commission, which has been in existence for over 40 years. In June 1988, having completed the bulk of work, this document was handed to the special commission nuncio in Warsaw. The final variant will now be discussed and completed at special talks.

A bill on the state's attitude to the Roman Catholic Church is being worked out, and a law guaranteeing freedom of conscience and religion is also nearing completion. Together with the government, the churches which are members of the Polish Ecumenical Council are helping to prepare it. This law will form the basis for regulating the status of all religious associations and communities. These documents are expected to be submitted to the Sejm for approval this year.³

Normalising relations with the Roman Catholic Church may have a considerable effect on Poland's internal situation. In the first place, we expect that the conditions now being created will help to:

- expand the social base of party and government policy, and enlist new forces from among the believers, especially the Catholics, in the implementation of political and economic reforms;
- weaken the destructive influence on society of the opponents of our socialist system;
- show the invalidity of the claims that the state's present good relations with the Church have been prompted by expediency and do not arise from the stable and firm will of the authorities;
- define the boundaries of church influence on the various spheres of sociopolitical life in the country.

Our formula for normalisation is as follows: since today we cannot count on church participation in socialist transformations, then at least we can bar any attempts to place the Church in opposition to our aims, socialist principles and practice, or any bid to turn it into a "state within a state".

Naturally, in promoting this dialogue with the Church, we are thinking of its international effects, the most important of which could be:

- the image of Poland as a country with guaranteed freedoms of conscience, religion and worship, with a Church free to discharge its functions, will improve in the eyes of the world. This will meet the spirit of the international documents accepted by us, in particular those which have been worked out on the initiative of the United Nations;
- Polish emigres' links with their country will grow stronger;
- our experience will benefit other socialist countries tackling similar problems.

We are well aware that relations between the state and the Church bear a specific character. Therefore, we are acting openly, talking and writing in detail about these and related issues, and submitting our own ideas for assessment before any decisions are taken. There is nothing mysterious or secret about our actions. The party considers it its duty to take every opportunity for *strengthening the process of socialist renewal* rationally and effectively, and to encourage the unification of the patriotic forces still suffering from the effects of the conflict of 1980-1981.

MINORITIES

The fact that most Poles belong to the Roman Catholic Church does not detract from the public significance of the activity of non-Catholic Churches and communities. Although their relations with the socialist state have at times been difficult, positive tendencies nevertheless tend to prevail here. Thus, the conscientiousness of Protestants at work appears to be very valuable, as does the respect for different national cultures shown by the Orthodox Church, or the practical experience amassed by the Adventists in overcoming the consequences of social disasters. Besides that, religious minorities serve to maintain the secular character of the state and its educational institutions. Their position shows that between piety and tolerance—the ability to respect other philosophical world views—there is no insurmountable contradiction. As part of the mainstream of Polish interests, the small Churches also maintain international contacts.

The existence and activity of various religious associations helps to overcome the politically and ethically harmful stereotypes that distort our people's past and present. I mean, above all, the false image of "every Pole a Catholic".

In relations between the state and the Churches, the principles of co-existence are being gradually supplemented with the practice of interaction. The sides are re-considering the theoretical and practical aspects of the construction of socialism in a society which was, is and, in the foreseeable future, will continue to be linked with religion. As a result, society will preserve their common and specific features. Mainstream sociopolitical forces, the religious associations and communities and, importantly, the believers themselves, approve of such development. We regard this process as positive and stable, although this does not mean that nothing threatens it. As before, various Western political forces have a great desire to replace dialogue with confrontation. Supporters of this policy can also be found in the Roman Catholic Church itself. We resolutely oppose such tendencies.

MARXISM AND RELIGION

In our view, successful solutions to these problems depend on an ability to look anew at important questions like the Marxist attitude to religion. Without a profound and comprehensive analysis it is impossible to stimulate positive tendencies in the dialogue between the state and the Church, which are today finding practical uses.

Marxism is now routinely accepted in Poland. Many of its theoretical assumptions shape people's social attitudes, one way or another. It is easy enough to find evidence, even in official Catholic Church documents, that the classic works of scientific communism have been studied. This allows for optimistic conclusions about changes in social consciousness.

However, a serious danger also lurks here. Instead of the kind of detailed theoretical analysis of social processes

made by Marx, Engels and Lenin in their day, some people are apt to vulgarise certain ideas from the classics.

A case in point is the idea of religion as the "opium of the people". Even though this was formulated within Marxist theory, it is not central to an understanding of the materialist teaching on religions. The basic idea is that the religious form of social consciousness reflects an inverted world, denying the possibility of Man's cognition of the forces of nature and society, making him dependent upon them instead.

Religion is also an attempt to re-invest Man with the ability to influence the world around him, in which he lives, as both its creator and its slave. Marx was thinking in particular of this dependence when he wrote: "The demand to give up illusions about the existing state of affairs is the demand to give up a state of affairs which needs illusions"⁴. The same applies to opium—it can be a medicine, or a narcotic paralysing the human will.

Ludwig Feuerbach once expressed the thought, much appreciated by Marx, that God was created by Man. However, this cannot be interpreted superficially. Theoretical studies point to four main reasons for the origin of religion:

- people believe in God because they are uneducated or poorly educated;
- people believe because the wealthy minority uses its power to impose religion on them, making it easier to rule over the majority;
- people believe because society is often guided by the laws of struggle rather than by the principles of mutual assistance;
- people believe because they yield to their consciousness, which refuses to accept that it is as mortal as the body.

Each of these theses is correct and can easily be proved. But let us continue:

- people believe because they depend on history. They are burdened with it, and they are unable to rid themselves of it, or the customs which have become its most important part;
- people believe because they fear for the future, because they somehow believe that fate can be influenced;
- people believe because the existence of a God makes the Universe simple and intelligible.

All this can be summed up in a single sentence: people believe because the recognition of God justifies their weakness, a condition which has as many concrete forms as there are dangers facing Man. We can't dismiss the present and future presence of religion in the life of the individual and society as a mere theoretical problem to be solved by effectively influencing consciousness. The last word here belongs, first and foremost, to *social practice*.

We must revise our views on religion, and on a future for it which has long been thought of as depending only on the level of general education and the ownership of the means of production.

POLICY

Although our Marxist knowledge and judgements about the world are very important, it is the experience acquired in the course of social transformations that decides everything. If we ignore this dependence and try to deal with the question of faith in any other way, then we risk making the same mistake Engels warned against when he looked at the experience of the Paris Commune: "...Persecution is the best means of strengthening undesirable convictions! This much is certain: the only service that can still be rendered to God today is to make atheism a compulsory dogma and to surpass Bismarck's anticlerical *Kulturkampf* laws by prohibiting religion in general"⁵.

Our religious policy is being built with this understanding in mind. Of course, one cannot ignore the fact that religion still serves the ideological requirements of conservative or avowedly reactionary political currents and views. However, our attitude to the clergy and believers should not be reduced to a simplistic reaction to the politics of a Church or a church state.

Our position is not a tactical move, but the result of our conviction that the Church is actively looking to adapt to the optimistic—and alarming—changes in the contemporary world.

Polish Marxists have no reason to maintain that socialism built with the participation of Christians, especially Catholics, will be any less solid or less Marxist. It will just take longer to build, and will be built in a different manner than was assumed at the turn of the century. As we are convinced of this, so we reject the accusations that our position on religion is merely expedient. No, this is a stable and principled policy. It is part of the strategy for rejuvenating socialism, now a world system.

1 Rzeczpospolita—the name of the Polish state in the 15th-18th centuries and in 1918-1939.—Ed.

2 See Stepan Mamontov, "Christ Was the Name of the Political Prisoner", *WMR*, No. 10, 1988.—Ed.

3 These bills have been endorsed by the Sejm.—Ed.

4 Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 176.

5 Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, in three volumes, Vol. 2, p. 384. *Kulturkampf*—measures taken by Bismarck's Prussian government in the 1870s against the Catholic Church, which expressed separatist, anti-Prussian sentiments.—Ed.

LAOS GETS A NEW LEASE ON LIFE

Muonkeo ORABOUNE

Deputy Editor-in-Chief, *Alounvan May*, the theoretical and political journal of the CC of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP)

The Lao people are now overcoming their age-old backwardness and pursuing socioeconomic and cultural development programmes. At its plenary meetings in 1988, the LPRP Central Committee analysed the economic situation and plotted a course for economic development. *WMR* asked Muonkeo Oraboune to answer a number of questions.

■ ***Bypassing capitalism, the country set about building the foundations of socialism. What difficulties did it face at that stage?***

In December 1975, the National Congress of People's Representatives abolished the monarchy (the King abdicated) and proclaimed the Lao People's Democratic Republic. That was the *peaceful, bloodless* completion of the national democratic revolution, carried out under the leadership of the LPRP which follows the principles of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism.

We chose socialism as the most progressive road of development, one meeting the people's interests and aspirations.

The devastating war waged against Laos for over 30 years by the French colonialists and then by the US imperialists ravaged the country, leaving a quarter of the population as homeless refugees. Half a million officials, military, policemen and their families contributed nothing to production, but lived off the people. There were food shortages, while 40% of the ploughland lay idle, and pre-feudal methods of land use sometimes persisted.

Small-scale, scattered production prevailed: Laos produced little more than tobacco, cigarettes, soft drinks, shoes, furniture and matches. The rest had to be imported, which pushed up the foreign trade deficit. And then, as soon as the power of the working people had been established, the West cut off aid to Laos.

We had to build everything, including the productive forces, relations of production, a basis and a superstructure, from scratch. To this end historical circumstances and the specific national features of the people's life had to be respected: with a population of 3.6 million Laos is home to some 70 nationalities and tribes, some of which are still establishing themselves as ethnic communities.

■ ***What were the priority tasks after the abolition of the monarchy?***

The government approved a plan of action on the very

day of independence. It called for economic restructuring, the nationalisation of banks, the confiscation of the property of compradores, capitalists and other reactionary elements who cooperated with the US imperialists, the gradual development of public property and the consolidation of the public sector. Russia accomplished all that in the October 1917 Revolution, but we left private enterprise under state control in those sectors where it was necessary.

People urgently required the basic necessities. In this we were helped by the fact that we had a certain amount of experience gained from the small industrial plants and progressive land cultivation schemes which operated in the areas liberated by the patriots before 1975. Using this we were soon able to open workshops in other provinces to repair tractors and other machinery and to make spares and work implements. We were still conscious of the need to develop state-owned mining, chemicals and steel plants and hydropower stations.

Some plants, whose corrupt owners had fled abroad, were taken over and managed by revolutionary committees consisting of factory and office workers, while others were placed under mixed public-private management.

Cooperatives modelled after those in Russia in the early years of Soviet government began to be organised in agriculture, crafts and the retail trade, and they still represent a valid option alongside the development of state enterprises. This way it is easier to introduce advanced technology and processes, to organise purchases of farm produce and to build up food stocks. Here, the party borrowed from the experience of fraternal socialist countries and relied on Lenin's ideas of the character of the cooperative movement. The steps it took helped achieve basic self-sufficiency in food as early as 1980, a great accomplishment for a country which had been in the grip of ruin and hunger five years before.

A public sector was established, and banks, enterprises, transport and communications were nationalised by the 3rd LPRP Congress (1982).

■ ***Could you describe the achievements of the country in greater detail?***

They are best illustrated with figures. The 4th party congress noted in 1986 that gross industrial output had grown by 340% over the previous 10 years, and that dozens of old plants had been modernised and new ones built. At present some 400 state-owned plants are in operation, many of them created with help from socialist countries, and these generate up to one-half of the GNP.

Agriculture, the key economic sector, is also making progress. Regrettably, the cut-and-burn method of rice-growing is still practised in many areas. Every year about 300,000 hectares of forest are burned down, and fields are cultivated with primitive tools for just a few years, until the topsoil has been exhausted. However, irrigation systems are already under construction; 130,000 hectares have been irrigated during the past 5 years, and this is expected

to treble in the next five years. Areas which yield two crops a year are also being expanded. Rice—"the bread of Asia" as it is known—is cultivated intensively and we are closely studying the advanced experience of rice-growing in various provinces and in other countries. Competition is under way between state farms and cooperatives to produce a total of 400 kg of rice per capita annually.

At present Laos has some 30 state farms and 4,000 cooperatives, the latter uniting more than half the peasant homesteads on a voluntary basis, and accounting for over 50% of the paddies. During the past five-year plan period rice production rose by a third, or by more than 100% of the 1976 figure. Livestock-breeding is making good progress as well.

As for the more general indicators, since the revolution gross social product has doubled and per capita income has risen by 60%.

■ ***The 4th congress of your party has stated that better results could have been achieved with more efficient economic management. What measures are being taken to improve it?***

Our society is not what it was when it had just begun building socialism, the congress noted. Nor can it yet be considered fully socialist because the subsistence economy still has an important part to play. Development potential is not being put to its full use, the social division of labour and the dismantling of the bureaucratic administrative machinery are too slow, and production efficiency is not increasing fast enough.

By following the precepts of Marxism-Leninism in defining future economic development we are able to respond flexibly to changing conditions. The resolutions of the 4th party congress and subsequent CC Plenary Meetings and their decrees on various financial and economic problems made good use of the experience accumulated by the party in the course of building socialism. Those documents are, I think, consonant with perestroika in the USSR and the restructuring in some other socialist countries. The changes we are introducing rely on the correct application of Lenin's ideas of a new economic policy in the practical social and economic circumstances of Laos.

The development of a progressive kind of management in tune with the real needs of the country is a major condition for the conversion of enterprises to socialist production, observed Kaysone Phomvihane, General Secretary of the CC of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party and Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the republic. We consider it important to use commodity and money relations and to streamline the national economy in order to encourage its development and achieve large-scale state trade, as the 5th CC Plenary Meeting (January 1988) noted in its resolutions.

Some 60% of the country's enterprises now operate on the basis of cost-effectiveness and self-management. They are free to increase production and make a profit, and the results have been encouraging. Having paid taxes,

enterprises have enough money left to meet their needs, including those in the social sphere. An integrated system of prices has been introduced in order to cut back on state subsidies.

Foreign trade is being improved. The provinces have been given the right to trade directly with foreign companies. There is competition between some 100 government and provincial companies, cooperatives and mixed enterprises, as a result of which exports have risen and commodity supply to the domestic market has improved.

The private sector exists mainly in retail trade and in services. Rather than eliminating it, we are seeking to use more private resources for the good of the country. For example, only 20% of the shares in a recently launched rubber shoe factory near Vientiane belong to the state, the rest being held by private interests.

The 6th CC Plenary Meeting (June 1988) noted that the development of agriculture and forestry now underpins the national industrial growth that will shape a new economic structure. By 1990 we plan to raise food production to between 2 and 2.2 million tons, which will include 1.8 million tons of rice (430 kg per capita). Industrial production will grow by 90% and the national income by 60% in the current five-year period.

■ ***What are the results of cooperation between Laos and fraternal socialist countries and what prospects lie ahead?***

I will start with Lao-Soviet ties. Our people are sincerely grateful to the USSR for its friendly fraternal assistance. Bilateral trade and economic agreements were signed way back in 1976. Bridges, roads, hospitals, farm machinery and auto repair workshops, state farms, an oil depot and many other projects have been built with Soviet help since the revolution. A good deal has been done together to create expanding infrastructures for transport, the building industry and agriculture, to develop natural resources and to establish communication networks. A satellite communication station, built in 1981 as a part of the Intersputnik system, provides reliable telegraph and telephone links, and allows us to receive TV programmes from the USSR and other socialist countries. Bilateral trade is growing dynamically: we supply the Soviet Union with coffee, tin, timber products, crafts, and other goods, and receive machinery, equipment, fuel, lubricants, building materials and medicines. The volume of trade will grow by half in the current five-year period.

We also get considerable support from Vietnam, our neighbour and ally. Around 200 key economic projects in Laos have been built or are under construction with Vietnamese assistance.

Other CMEA member countries are contributing to the development of the republic as well. State farms, broiler factories, a livestock-breeding complex, a sheep-breeding farm, schools and hospitals have been built with the assistance of Bulgarian, Cuban, Hungarian and Mongolian

specialists. The GDR is helping with the development of coffee plantations and the construction of printshops, Poland with the development of transport, and Czechoslovakia, along with the others, supplies equipment for small hydropower plants. In short, they are good friends, and it would have been tough without them.

■ **How are living and cultural standards growing?**

All our transformations are aimed at achieving such growth. As I have said, most people have enough food, especially rice. Retail trade is growing steadily, and more and more sugar, salt, meat, fish, fabrics, clothes, writing paper, household goods, implements and bicycles are on sale. More than 1,000 state and cooperative shops sell goods at stable prices.

The introduction of cost-effectiveness and self-management in industry has made it possible to peg pay to actual labour inputs. At some plants workers have had their wages doubled and now receive far more than government employees, teachers, health care workers and army officers.

Under colonial rule more than 90% of the population were illiterate and the country was among the most backward. Today we have practically eradicated illiteracy. Compulsory elementary schooling has been introduced for all the ethnic groups. Until recently we had no institutions of higher learning, now there are six, and also dozens of specialised secondary schools. More than 7,000 men and women have higher-school diplomas. Many of them have studied in the USSR, Vietnam, and other socialist countries, and become proficient specialists. At present, for example, more than 3,000 Laotians are studying in the Soviet Union alone. All in all a quarter of the population are involved in various studies and training programmes.

Health care merits a few words. In the colonial period the country had 6 hospitals and some 40 first-aid centres. During the independence struggle, 100 large hospitals and clinics were opened in the liberated zone. The number of hospitals and first-aid centres has doubled under the people's rule. There are now 10,000 country's health care personnel, whereas before the revolution the country had

just 80 physicians. Free health care was introduced in 1976. We have eradicated various dangerous diseases, such as smallpox, cholera, trachoma and leprosy, and the death rate has dropped markedly in the past few years. During the current five-year period the number of health care personnel will increase by more than half, and the number of outpatient clinics and first-aid centres double.

■ **What are the party's main tasks today?**

To begin with, we attach special importance to improving the work of party and government bodies at every level by reinforcing them with proficient and patriotic men and women. When all is said and done, it is this factor that largely decides the victory of the revolution. Unfortunately, party members sometimes breach our principles of morality, something we do not tolerate. The party undoubtedly needs an infusion of fresh blood, but we are resolved to get rid of those who do not live up to the trust placed in them. We try to turn every party member into a propagandist and mobilise people for the implementation of party decisions.

The 4th party congress noted that the leading role of the LPRP should be enhanced, that its policies should be promptly formulated and consistently implemented. We try to learn the objective laws of building socialism and to apply them creatively, wherein lies the strength of the ruling party. Close links with the people guarantee the implementation of its strategy.

Naturally, we concentrate on ideological work and theoretical studies. The journal *Alounvan May* (New Dawn), published in 2,000 copies, occupies an important place here, following in the wake of a party journal which circulated in the liberated zone until 1975, when it was discontinued for various economic and organisational reasons. The new theoretical journal of the LPRP started up in 1985. Its main purpose is to popularise the ideas of Marxism-Leninism, to which end it publishes theoretical articles and reports on the experiences of socialist countries. Knowledge both of the achievements and of the difficulties in building socialism is very useful to Laotian Communists, who have just started out on that road.





THE PARTY

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

OURS IS A STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY

Saifuddin Ahmed MANIK

CC General Secretary, Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB)

The communist movement has reached a watershed. Crossing it will largely depend on the ability of every party to assess the rapidly changing domestic and international situation in a new way. In his article "Facing the New Terrain",¹ Dimitris Christofias, General Secretary of the CC, AKEL, called on fraternal parties operating under different conditions to discuss, in *WMR*, new aspects of their theoretical and practical work and of the way they understand and assert their role at national and international level.

The leaders of several fraternal parties have responded to this appeal.²

We present the replies of the Bangladesh General Secretary recorded by a *WMR* staff member.

The Russian word *glasnost* has entered many languages, and the principle of new thinking has spread to different spheres, not only in international relations but also in the internal affairs of many parties comprising the communist movement. This spirit has also given rise to lively debate among the Communists and other left forces in Bangladesh. We are trying to analyse today's realities in greater depth, to overcome old stereotypes in assessing the situation in the world, in our region and in our nation, and to outline our role and our objectives with greater clarity.

PRESENT-DAY TASKS

"The Bangladesh Road to Socialism" is the name of the party programme adopted at the 3rd Congress of the CPB in 1980. In April 1987, the 4th Congress approved an updated version, setting the objective of fighting for national

renaissance via a socialist-oriented national democratic revolution. Today, in specifying our theoretical approach to the future of Bangladesh, we are guided by the need to *accord more attention to the objective internal and external factors furthering or impeding the attainment of our objectives.*

Bangladesh is one of the countries the UN has classified as the world's poorest. This poverty is indeed a fact. We have a population of 110 million living on a relatively small territory with a far from favourable climate. We have underdevelopment and abject poverty (the legacy of our colonial past), with precapitalist formations persisting to this day. Besides, our underdeveloped capitalist sector is dominated by a parasitic comprador bourgeoisie which puts its profits before everything else. Finally, the country is completely dependent on foreign aid.

All attempts of the present regime to impose a thriving capitalism from on high with the help of external imperialist forces have failed. Neither the reprivatisation of the industries nationalised after independence in 1971, nor the massive and continuous financial injections from abroad have served any useful purpose. The handful of speculators connected with the powers-that-be is growing richer, while the living standards of the overwhelming majority keep deteriorating. The gap between the ruling clique and the people is growing, and internal contradictions are becoming increasingly aggravated. The present military regime of General Ershad is incapable of resolving them.

At the same time, our analysis of the situation in Bangladesh has highlighted two more distinctive features.

First, there is the *problem of national unity* and the threat of the country's fragmentation. Last year the parliament, under pressure from the government, proclaimed Islam as the state religion. Discontent has been growing among our minorities who number more than 10 million: their religions are different, and they now feel like outcasts. The idea of a separate state for the Hindu minority is gaining ground. Our people fear the outbreak of a conflict similar to what is happening between the Sinhalese and the Tamils in Sri Lanka.

Second, there is the *issue of survival* aggravated by the floods that have been hitting our country for several years in a row. The latest was particularly disastrous: more than half our territory was flooded. Farming has suffered huge losses, and it is doubtful whether we can have another crop this year. The problem of food aid has become even more pressing: we have to import millions of tons of grain to prevent famine.³

All these issues and many other difficulties will be a

tough nut to crack. The serious problems often faced by the socialist-oriented countries will have to be taken into account. *We must be realists.* Bangladesh receives 87% of its budget from abroad—from various governments, banks and foundations. It is fully dependent on the world capitalist market, in terms of both imports and exports. Besides, there are additional handicaps we must take into serious consideration.

Regional cooperation in South Asia is very important to us. Our partners are the bourgeois governments of India and other capitalist-oriented neighbouring countries. Besides the imperialist and regional interests, there is also the Islamic factor—the financial support we receive, together with a degree of ideological and political influence, from the oil-producing monarchies of the Persian Gulf.

I would not like to create the impression that we have reached an impasse. Rather, the international situation prompts us to be more optimistic. Broadly speaking, I am referring above all to the response Mikhail Gorbachov's UN speech last year continues to generate. The part of the speech dealing with the restructuring of economic relations between developed and economically backward countries indicates that opportunities exist for more effective and less politicised assistance to the poorer countries. At the regional level, we are heartened by closer Soviet-Indian ties.

Moreover, the economic restructuring the Soviet Union and other socialist countries have undertaken will, in the coming years, make socialism more attractive to people and provide a material and moral boost to the struggle for the socialist transformation of underdeveloped countries.

Given the present-day objective internal and external circumstances, our conclusion is that *far-reaching change in Bangladesh is both necessary and inevitable* because those at the top can no longer rule the country in the old way, while those at the bottom can no longer tolerate this rule. The conditions and the correlation of forces being what they are, it is *realistic* to speak of a *democratic regime replacing today's autocratic military rule*, which is supported by the comprador bourgeoisie and imperialism.

In practical terms this means that now, within the framework of the capitalist mode of production, such a regime would improve the political situation on the basis of broad democracy and ensure gradual economic progress by rationally using the domestic labour and natural resources and the external aid which is now largely wasted or embezzled by the ruling bureaucracy. The people do want such an alternative. It will gradually strengthen those forces and elements that will ultimately transcend the boundaries of capitalist society.

TO BECOME A CATALYST OF PATRIOTIC UNITY

Over 20 political parties are now in opposition to the military regime. It is a wide range of diverse forces—from former Maoists to bourgeois nationalists to religious fun-

damentalists. It would be no exaggeration to say that the Communist Party features prominently among them and that its role is recognised by the working people and even by bourgeois quarters. The CPB's influence is quite strong, and it keeps growing.

Last year we entered the fifth decade of our party's history. It is not easy to be a Communist in Bangladesh. Prior to independence, we had to operate underground. Since the military coup of 1975, the party has been banned several times and its activists have been arrested. But our constant and growing ties with the masses have prevented the authorities from removing us from the national political scene. On the contrary—paradoxical as this may sound—these reprisals have enhanced the CPB's prestige. One cannot help respecting those who are ready for sacrifice in the name of the people and the nation.

We are, however, perfectly aware that despite the obvious helplessness and inability of the bourgeois parties to resolve the country's pressing issues, *the people do not yet see the Communists as presenting a potential alternative to the present government.* The people expect a different thing from us—an effective contribution to the unity of all those who are ready to do something for the people and alleviate their plight. They want us to play the role of a shepherd who gathers in the sheep—or, to be more precise, to act as a *catalyst promoting the unity of the democratic forces*, including the national bourgeoisie and a section of the comprador bourgeoisie in opposition.

We are ready to meet these popular expectations, not acting alone but together with other left parties and organisations. These are numerous, and even ex-Maoists now acknowledge that we are the leading force of the Left. The reason is clear: over the few years we have been working in the open, the CPB has tripled its membership. It maintains 1,600 grassroots organisations in virtually all districts, has strong positions in the trade union movement and in the mass organisations of peasants and agricultural workers, and is represented on local government bodies.⁴

We take pride in our achievements, but we are not euphoric about them. *We do not declare ourselves to be the vanguard* in the traditional sense of the word, which we have grown accustomed to over the decades and which is often meaningless. We do accept the role of a catalyst, even of a motive force for positive change—but not of a vanguard superior to everyone else. Our motives are not tactical. We really do not see ourselves as the only champions of the nation's progress, who know what is good and what is bad for Bangladesh.

The Communists of Bangladesh always try to consult with the people. When preparing for our latest congress, we widely circulated our draft documents among non-Communists and asked workers, peasants and intellectuals what they thought about them, approaching all those who were ready to suggest better formulas. People see this, and the appeal of the party is growing: they come to our organisations and committees for support. They are

eager to learn how the Communists approach this or that question and what they are going to do about it.

Positive changes in the party's internal affairs also further the growth of its prestige. More democracy within the party is the most important thing now. At our 3rd Congress many candidates to the Central Committee were nominated from the floor, and then an election was held by secret ballot. We followed the same procedure in 1987 too. This voting procedure is becoming increasingly accepted in party organisations at different levels.

But that is not all there is to inner party democracy. I would say that it is very important to *overcome the feeling of uncertainty, even of fear that has been building up among us for years*. Rank-and-file Communists sometimes kept silent even about things they did not agree with—either because they did not believe their opinion would be taken into account or out of fear of falling out with comrades in higher echelons. That is something we have uprooted resolutely.

Our activists are to shape an open and creative atmosphere within the party and ensure continuous dialogue at all its levels. A special responsibility devolves on the party's leaders. The involvement of the main body of party members in the discussion of any question depends on the way our leaders understand and perform their role. We do not want decisions to be thrust upon the comrades. Those concerned and competent should be asked to discuss and decide on relevant matters before finalisation by the higher committees.

For example, when all our comrades elected by the people to local government bodies were invited to come to Dhaka for a three-day general party meeting, they did not come to be lectured by the Central Committee. Openly and without any interference, they discussed problems over which they were concerned and which they knew well. They even addressed critical remarks to the party's leadership and outlined new tasks. The final decision was approved by the Central Committee without any additions. This made it practical and better geared to day-to-day requirements.

In another development, an important question was discussed at a conference of Communists active in various cultural associations. It was the issue of the party's policy in this highly sensitive intellectual sphere. Some held that since the General Secretary was to be present, he would deliver a speech; then we would have a brief discussion and that would be it. Nothing doing, I said. It was a free and constructive discussion from which all of us, including party leaders, benefited a great deal.

The atmosphere of openness and broad democracy within our party is quickly changing for the better its image in the eyes of our present and potential allies, in the eyes of all our people. They see that ours is not a rigidly programmed structure, not a party with a dictator of a General Secretary, but a genuinely democratic organisation. This is dispelling formerly held fears that the Com-

munists want to lord it over others, muzzle those who do not agree with them and dominate every structure they have joined. I am heartened by the fact that these fears are receding.

MORE GLASNOST, MORE PLURALISM

New thinking in all matters and at all levels sums up our evaluation of the principle underlying the party's domestic and international activities. We would also like this principle to apply to the *communist movement as a whole*, to its theoretical research, practical work, standards of interparty ties and relations with other progressive and democratic forces.

Quite candidly, I must say that although we have long ceased to speak about a centre or a leading party in our movement, we the Communists of Bangladesh have always seen the influence of our Soviet comrades as decisive. Moreover, we got used to regarding everything done or decided by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union as invariably right.

Radical change is now in progress in the USSR, and Soviet Communists are assessing many past events differently. The most important feature of the new period which was ushered in by the 27th Congress of the CPSU is that *each party bears full responsibility before its people and the world both for its political stand and for its practical actions. It follows that we should always act independently.*

Such attitudes are obviously spreading increasingly within the international communist movement. An atmosphere of genuine cooperation in diversity is taking root in it. Things were different in the past. Stereotypes used to hold sway: something was declared to be right, and even though many had their doubts, they did not believe it necessary to speak their mind.

In our movement, new thinking means more pluralism. We should acknowledge in practical terms that every country has its own distinctive circumstances and aspects of development Communists are to reckon with. *Independence, diversity and the exchange of experience will enable us to march ahead.* The principle of openness makes it possible to considerably broaden this exchange and to learn more about the useful aspects of other parties' practical work and theoretical studies, including those conducted by Marxist scholars in the socialist countries.

I believe we owe a great deal to our people as far as the development of our theory is concerned. *The practice of treating a given precept as the ultimate truth has made us lag behind reality.* Today, Communists (not only in our region) would do well to examine in greater depth the rapid economic growth not only of Japan but also of South Korea, Singapore and the ASEAN nations, as well as generally the *growing role Asia is playing in the world community*—a point Comrade Gorbachov made.

We honestly regard Communists as the most consistent fighters for the people's cause, and we invariably stress this conviction of ours. We therefore attach great

importance to strengthening our movement's unity. A lot depends on its ability to arrive at common attitudes to the key problems of today's world. At the same time, the *drafting and adoption of comprehensive and binding documents is clearly a thing of the past*. It is simply impossible, given the vast diversity of views and positions.

In our view, regional contacts between Communists are quite productive. For example, we in South Asia would like to discuss problems related to the communalism and religious fundamentalism that threaten our region's countries. One can also consider broader international conferences, but only on specific issues—say, peace, environmental protection or steps to overcome economic backwardness. A common strategy on these matters can be worked out.

Communist unity should no longer be understood mechanistically. We can achieve it via open debate and thanks to a commitment to reach agreement on questions where such agreement is possible and necessary for joint action. Again, this calls for more pluralism and more openness.

These principles are particularly topical in our relationships with our allies, with the democratic, progressive and peace-loving forces outside the mainstream of Marxism. I would say it is very important to *abandon once and for all the claim that since we are armed with the advanced theory of Marxism-Leninism, we can always give the right answers to all possible questions*. Let us get used to the idea that others can be right too. Our party's experience bears this out.

1 WMR, No. 12, 1988, pp. 26-32.

2 See, for example, K.P. Silva, "In the Spirit of Openness, Glasnost and Realism", WMR, No. 1, 1989, pp. 26-28.

3 For more details, see: Ajoy Roy, "When the Green Revolution Fails to Reach Its Goal", WMR, No. 12, 1988, pp. 103-107.

4 Together with other opposition parties, the CPB boycotted the latest parliamentary elections in 1988. It had 5 seats in the previous parliament. For more details, see: Shankar Basu, "Against an Authoritarian Regime", WMR, No. 10, 1988, pp. 105-108.—Ed.

FROM THE PRESS

CPSU STATISTICS

The journal *CPSU Central Committee News* (No. 2, 1989) has published statistical data on the party of the Soviet Communists. These figures show, in particular, that since the 27th CPSU Congress the party's yearly recruitment has been half what it was in the preceding few years. This is evidence of marked internal changes in the party.

As throughout Soviet society, perestroika and renewal are gathering strength in the party.

In the 3 years since the 27th Congress, party membership has increased by 483,000 and now stands at 19,487,822. Average 1986-1988 yearly growth was 0.8%, as against 1.7% between the 26th and 27th Congresses. Significantly, "only" 522,884 joined in 1988, down from 609,927 in 1985. By and large, this is the result of a more exacting attitude towards potential members.

So-called recruitment quotas having been abolished, the composition of new members differs slightly. Thus the number of workers has dropped from 59.4% (between the 26th and 27th Congresses) to 56.4% (during 1986-1988), while that of technicians, engineers, agronomists, scientific personnel, teachers, doctors and other specialists has risen from 26.1% to 28.5%.

On the whole, people engaged in production still make up the majority of new recruits. In 1988, workers and collective farmers constituted 61.2% of all new candidates. During 1985-1988 the number of recruits from the Young Communist League fell from 71.6% to 61.2%. This was because greater numbers of more mature people were joining and because insistence on the at times excessive intakes of young people had been abandoned.

As of January 1, 1989, the breakdown of CPSU membership by social status was as follows: workers 45.4% (in 1981 43.4%); peasants and collective farmers 11.4% (12.8%); and office employees 43.2% (43.8%). During the same period (from 1981 to 1989), the number of women in the CPSU grew from 26.5% to 29.9%. At present, the party incorporates members of over 100 nations and nationalities.

Data on 1988's report-and-election campaign, which proceeded under the impact of the ideas and decisions of the 19th All-Union Party Conference, affecting virtually all links of the party structure except for the republics' party committees, are also interesting as evidence of greater activity, the renovatory tendencies, and results.

Elections in primary party organisations thus led to the replacement of over 160,600 secretaries, including more than 2,300 who ran but were defeated. This constituted 37.2 and 1.5% respectively, against 25.4 and 0.1% three years ago.

As to the party bodies at district, city, or area level, 62% of elected representatives are new members. At regional and territorial level the figure is 58.6%.

Every third group organiser, half the shop and primary organisation secretaries, 1,117 district and city committee secretaries (including 269 first secretaries), and 8 regional and territorial committee secretaries were elected from among two or more candidates at meetings, conferences and plenums of party committees.

The renewal tendencies are being accompanied by an overhaul of the party apparatus, the CPSU CC having shed 40% of staff, the central committees of the communist parties of the constituent Republics, and the territorial and regional party committees, 30%, and the party committees in city districts, 10-20%.

These and other published statistics, prepared by the CPSU CC department of party building and cadre work, eloquently testify to the fact that the party is actively restructuring itself and its inner life.

COMMUNISTS IN MUNICIPAL COUNCILS. EXPERIENCE, PROBLEMS, PROSPECTS

Review of an International Symposium in Vienna

Can municipal councils act as organs of popular self-government in a bourgeois state? What are the Communists doing to achieve this goal, and how do they combine efforts for solutions to local problems with the pursuit of an overall political strategy? What possibilities does participation in municipal councils offer Communists for forging alliances with other left and democratic forces in the interests of the working people and the cause of peace and social progress?

These and other questions were considered by participants in an international symposium on "Communists in Local Government Bodies", held in Vienna and sponsored by the CC of the Communist Party of Austria and World Marxist Review. Contributions to the discussion were made by Franz HAGER, a Political Bureau member, CC, Communist Party of Austria; Eva WAGNER, a staff member of the communal policies department, CC, Communist Party of Austria; Gerry van HOUTEN, a CC member, Communist Party of Canada; Jose ARIZALA, a CC member, Colombian Communist Party; Jose REGATO, a CC member, Communist Party of Ecuador; Herbert STIEF-VATER, a Board member, German Communist Party, and a municipal councillor of Nuremberg; Dimitrios SARAFOGLU, an alternate CC member, Communist Party of Greece, and Mayor of Karazini; Kellawan LALL, an Executive Committee member, CC, People's Progressive Party of Guyana; Juan TUTUY, a CC member, Peruvian Communist Party; and Sergei TSUKASOV, Doctor of History and WMR Managing Editor.

On behalf of the WMR Commission on the International Communist Movement and Exchanges of Party Experience, the discussion was summarized by WMR staff member Aris PAPANTHIMOS, a member of the Communist Party of Greece.

Although the countries represented at the symposium are in different geographical regions and have diverse cultural and historical traditions, their delegates to the symposium identified many similar aspects of Communist communal policies. *The importance of such policies has grown so drastically over the past few years that Communists are having to revise their conventional approach to work in municipal councils as to a secondary area of class confrontation.*

Municipal councils can become a vehicle of progressive change and a school of democracy for the mass of people, although under reactionary regimes they face great difficulties. But on the whole, the experience of the parties represented at the symposium does not corroborate the

Before the symposium, WMR gave coverage to Communists' work in local government in non-socialist countries, including Switzerland, Spain, Austria, Italy, Portugal, Reunion, Cyprus, Sweden, France and Israel (see WMR Nos. 7 and 8, 1985; Nos. 10 and 12, 1986; Nos. 2, 3, 5, 6 and 10, 1987, and No. 9, 1988).

argument that Communists' participation in municipal councils helps the bourgeoisie mitigate social contradictions and the effects of the crisis and thus stabilise the dominant system. On the contrary, by being active at the local level, Communists should prove their ability to govern the country as a whole.

LACK OF DEMOCRACY

In many countries, participants noted, local self-government is a major achievement of the working-class and democratic movement. But capitalist ruling classes view local government bodies as an appendage to the state machinery and try in every way to limit their powers. The bourgeoisie regards the growing influence of municipal councils as a threat to its own privileges, so state bureaucracies are increasing pressure on local government in all the capitalist countries.

This pressure is manifest in the reprivatisation of com-

municipal property, in structural reforms to benefit monopolies, and in various legal ploys to dock the powers of local government bodies, powers won by the working people and all the other democratic forces in strenuous struggle. *The deficit of democracy in relations between central government and communal authorities has been constantly growing worse.*

In Greece, for example, a Communist mayor is taken to court when a public park is laid out on a plot which was bought illegally by a real estate shark.

In countries like Peru, local government officers who get on the wrong side of reactionaries risk their lives. Juan Tutuy recalled that in Huancayo (Central Andes), where he was at one time the alcalde (mayor), his predecessor, a representative of the left forces, had been killed. In Colombia, the "dirty war" waged against Communists and other left forces often erupts into gory violence which claims the lives of, among others, mayors and other municipal officers. A serious problem in Ecuador, as in some other Latin American countries, is the drugs Mafia, which has enormous financial resources and can pour funds into election campaigns or bribe influential politicians and lawyers. In pursuit of their own interests drugs barons and their backers try to control and manipulate municipal councils.

In spite of the various intrigues of Big Capital and reaction, Communists are becoming more active in municipal councils. They are aware that *democratic local government helps the mass of people develop an ability to participate in government, prepares them for tackling important social problems independently, and also helps them to get rid of anti-communist bias.* As people see party members at work in local government, they realise that the nature and methods of Communists' activity are not what their enemies allege them to be.

That is why reactionaries are continuing to intrigue against democratic local government in an attempt to belittle its importance, if not altogether destroy its foundations. Austrian Communists understand that if their policies, ideology and philosophy were mostly defensive, they would not succeed. Even when some aggression from capital has to be resisted, telling blows should be dealt to the enemy through the formulation and implementation of concrete programmes and educational work on explosive social problems, Franz Hager said.

It was demonstrated at the symposium that the left-wing democratic forces are trying to win for the local government bodies broader powers and a legal, economic and administrative base so that they could effectively improve communal infrastructures, such as water supply, sewage, housing, school education and public transport, create jobs, advance culture, protect the environment, step up efforts for peace and human rights, etc.

At the same time fraternal parties are taking a realistic view of the situation and abandoning wishful thinking. It would be naive to hope that municipal councils can become bodies of true popular self-government within the

bourgeois political system, Jose Arizala noted. This cannot happen unless a popular movement wins progressive structural changes in capitalist society and unless political power is taken by those who consider municipal councils to be the foundation of people's power, i.e., by Communists and other left forces. Of course, their successes depend on the development level of the mass movement and the specific circumstances in every country.

But in spite of all that, Communists everywhere are standing up to the onslaught of reaction and Big Capital, broadening their positions in the local bodies of government and turning them into bastions in the democratic, anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist struggle on broader issues than purely municipal problems. People must be rallied to tackle concrete problems and to fight every injustice and violation of the laws. For instance, the manager of a Greek supermarket fired a worker who was not a trade union member and therefore could not seek protection from the union. But Communist deputies to the municipal council called upon mass women's organisations in the community to boycott the supermarket in protest; the next day the worker got his job back.

The left forces are fighting obstacles put up by reactionaries. Backed by the mass of people, the Left in Greece sometimes deliberately ignore reactionary legislation, Dimitrios Sarafoglu said. For example, together with the people we have taken over vacant plots of land belonging to banks, or private institutions and built public parks or sports grounds.

"MORE OXYGEN!"

Finances are oxygen, as it were, for municipal councils, and the central authorities, well aware of the fact, never let them have enough to breathe freely. Scarce funds prevent local government bodies in many capitalist countries from meeting the people's basic needs. Moreover, the general trend is to cut back central financing and replace it with municipal taxes.

The central authorities would like to turn local bodies of government into collectors of unjust taxes and thus provoke public wrath against municipal councils. *Should Communists participate in the councils in such circumstances, thus risking their reputation?*

But the participants drew the conclusion that Communists should seek a broader role in local government regardless of the circumstances. As a rule, they work honestly, selflessly, with dedication and competence. Communist-led municipal councils usually cope with problems faster and more efficiently than others, involve the population on a larger scale and report regularly to the electorate. Communists and other left-wing progressives in local government are trying to ease the tax burden on the working people and improve the system for taxing the major monopolies, and these efforts are supported by the people.

Another problem in the focus of attention for fraternal

parties is the rational use of finances, not least in those municipal councils where the Left are in the opposition. If the leaders of such municipal councils cannot or do not want to meet the people's needs, *Kellawan Lall* said, the People's Progressive Party of Guyana launches public protests, involving demonstrations, picket lines, work stoppages, etc. to put pressure on the authorities. In this way the party earns people's trust and gives the lie to allegations that its participation in local government helps stabilise the system.

In practice, if Left-led municipal councils manage their scarce resources efficiently, they achieve better results than those controlled by the Right, which often misuse funds to benefit some functionaries, and also private companies, which inflate the construction costs of municipal projects. When a water supply system was being planned for Guayaquil, Ecuador, *Jose Regato* recounted, Communist deputies drew the conclusion that the requisite system could be built at one-third the cost of the cheapest project proposed by private contractors.

Some local government bodies have set up municipal industries in order to obtain more "oxygen". But it is difficult to run a profitable business under capitalism. Participants in the symposium concluded that *under the rule of Big Capital, there is little hope of municipal councils securing full financial independence.*

But Communists working in local government bodies are defying scarcities and their considerable dependence on the central authorities in order to help out the unemployed and the needy. In Nuremberg, 20,000 people receive social assistance, *Herbert Stiefvater* said. In the past few years Communist deputies, broadly supported by the public strata concerned, have pushed through a package of initiatives to modernise the city's vocational schools to meet the demands of the scientific and technological revolution. The German Communist Party has proposed a concept for modernising society, formulated in a draft entitled "The FRG in the Year 2000"; in particular, it provides for the opening of a centre of labour, technology and the environment, a reform of the teachers' advanced training system to take account of new technologies and the project "Occupations of the future for girls".

Environmental protection is a common concern of the local authorities, especially in industrialised countries. The participants in the symposium were invited by the municipal authorities to a large coal-burning power plant in Zwentendorf, outside Vienna. The plant has the best purification equipment in Europe for preventing dust, sulphuric and nitrogenous emissions, and was built thanks to the purposeful efforts of the Socialist and Communist deputies to the communal council. The visitors heard all this from the deputy mayor and the power plant manager, both members of the Socialist Party of Austria.

Purification technology is costly but the complaints of industrialists and bourgeois government ministers that there is no money for it are spurious: nuclear missiles, bombers, submarines and other weapons of mass an-

nihilation are far more expensive. That explains the close link between the ecological movement and the movement for peace. Communists rally the mass of people for concrete actions against the arms race and for disarmament and environmental protection, and at the municipal level a consensus of broad political forces is emerging on these issues.

My party organisation, *Gerry van Houten* said, was behind the first successful attempt in Canada to set up a nuclear-free neighbourhood in a Toronto city ward. Through the peace movement Communists launched a campaign to put pressure on municipal councils all over the country, and today more than 100 of them in big cities, including Toronto and Vancouver, and in small communities, have adopted a nuclear-free status. The Manitoba and Ontario provinces did the same.

HOW TO AVOID DEVIATIONS?

Communists' success in local government depends to a large extent on the level of party leadership and also on their broad and efficient cooperation with party organisations at community, plant and industry level. Work is coordinated in various forms.

In *Guyana*, most comrades elected to regional and municipal councils are members of leading party bodies, usually chairmen or secretaries of their respective party committees. They seek the people's advice on the actions they plan.

In *West Germany*, Communists' municipal activities are discussed and agreed upon at the level of district party boards, with the participation of city councils and neighbourhood and factory party groups.

In *Greece*, the party has begun to form large groups of Communists within municipal councils. They are responsible for pursuing party policies at the local level, while overall direction is exercised by a special department of the Central Committee.

But the *coordination of Communists' work in municipal councils, and of the activities of party organisations as a whole, often falls short of what is needed today*, which hampers the growth of mass action, speakers noted. Colombian Communists elected to local bodies of government have on the whole helped energise the mass of people, but some of them fail to agree their actions with party organisations, *Jose Arizala* noted. Some MPs and municipal councillors merely raise general issues in parliament or public bodies but do not involve the people in tackling urgent problems.

Another cause of problems is the lack of a dialectical link between the party's efforts to resolve local problems and the Communists' general policy line. Some of the Communists working in municipal councils concentrate on individual issues and overlook strategic objectives. Others, on the contrary, totally ignore local problems as not deserving of their attention.

The participants were unanimous that *vigorous efforts*

to resolve every local problem, however minor, should be harmonised with long-term tasks of an anti-imperialist, democratic and, in the longer term, socialist nature. Through municipal councils Communists address international problems, such as disarmament, security, solidarity with the embattled peoples, and support for the socialist countries' peace initiatives. Regrettably, speakers noted, Communists miss many opportunities to broaden their political influence in those matters.

The training of specialists for work in municipal councils is a problem for all the fraternal parties represented at the symposium. *A party cannot lay claim to political power on a national scale unless it has sufficient numbers of professionally and ideologically trained cadres at the grassroots level.*

That goal can be reached by improving the quality of party education. Study groups and Marxist research centres are being set up to analyse local problems in the context of the overall situation in the country. Two tasks—the training of personnel and the formulation of concrete proposals on a local and a broader scale—are being tackled in this way.

Proposals and projects to this effect, as well as the party's general programme and political line, should be promoted and popularised, first and foremost, by Communist mayors and councillors. Each of them is primarily a people's tribune, that is, a spokesman for all the social strata as well as for the working class, *Juan Tutuy* stressed.

Unemployment, and ecological and housing problems worry people everywhere today. That is why Communists are stepping up their efforts both on the shop-floor and in the community. In *Austria*, *Eva Wagner* said, they try to give broader and more regular coverage to community affairs in factory newspapers, and to shop-floor problems in the communal press. The conditions for Communist success at the local level include collective formulation of party positions, regular public information on discussions in community councils and continuous public presentation of party policies.

But a Communist mayor or municipal councillor can achieve little without close cooperation with local party groups and the public. Mandatory reports to party groups as a party member and to the mass organisations of the neighbourhood as an elected office-holder help here. Practice shows that such people enjoy respect and voter support in municipal and national elections.

THE EMERGENCE OF A LEFT FRONT

Communists working in local government come across many problems of a general democratic nature, and that is why municipal councils offer a unique opportunity to approximate different viewpoints and organise joint action by the progressive forces. In such a way a left front may be forged with the aim of winning national elections.

Speakers pointed out that local forces and their political and trade union leaders could very well unite on a broad

scale around issues of common concern, such as efforts for peace, disarmament, environmental protection and better living standards for the working people. Ecological risks, unemployment, homelessness, hunger and drug addiction do not divide people into "Reds", "Whites" or "Greens", whatever their politics, ideology and faith. On such problems *Communists cooperate even with conservative and right-wing forces on the basis of sensible compromise*, without preconditions but without ideological concessions either.

Lately, there has emerged a tendency for rapprochement between new social movements, such as the Greens, and Communists in a number of countries. *Franz Hager* described such movements as a form of protest against the uglier aspects of the capitalist system, against arbitrariness, privations and restrictions which appear undemocratic. These forces use new forms of struggle and often do not hesitate to defy "the rules of the game" in bourgeois society. The basic causes of their actions are rooted in the contradictions of state-monopoly capitalism, and for this reason most of them are objectively ready to make alliances with Communists on individual issues and even on a broad range of problems facing the people.

But Austrian comrades do not think that an alliance with them can be free from discussions and clashes of opinion. For example, with regard to disarmament the Greens equate capitalist and socialist countries, whereas Marxists try to make it clear which side is pursuing a real peace policy. Communists cannot achieve tangible success in communal policies and alliances, *Herbert Stiefvater* said, unless they stick to their own principles and maintain their image. For their part, the delegates from the Communist Parties of *Peru*, *Ecuador* and *Colombia* advocated as broad and open a policy of alliances as possible as the only feasible alternative for their parties. For example, in 1988 Colombia's Patriotic Union, in which the Communists participate, and other forces helped elect 105 out of 1,009 alcaldes.

The participants showed especial interest in the drafting of common programmes involving far-reaching social transformations. Such programmes are becoming the rallying point for the more progressive forces, which are learning from their day-to-day struggles for local, national and universal human goals that transformations cannot be achieved without profound social change.

Practice shows that a *left front begins to coalesce at the grassroots, at the municipal level, and gradually assumes national proportions*. Rank-and-file Communists and members of other left parties and organisations often find common ground easier than their leaders, but in Guyana, for example, such cooperation is practised mostly at the national level because the local positions of the PPP's allies are too weak.

The forging of such a front is a difficult task. Participants in an alliance ought to have a certain level of culture and preparation, and also an ability to make compromises and mutual concessions in order to preserve unity. A left al-

liance is based on common aspects of the constituents' programmes, not on their differences, which are bound to remain.

Communists try to maintain contacts with bourgeois parties on specific municipal problems, and are patient and flexible. When disputes arise, they insist on carrying on a discussion until a solution acceptable to all is worked out, but in doing so they always defend the main principles of their own position.

We no longer claim a monopoly of truth, *Jose Regato* said. We have learned to listen to our allies, and as a result we have made progress. The policy of alliances is the art of working out a united common stand.

A WAY OF INCREASING INFLUENCE

The exchanges of information and experience on the fraternal parties' work in municipal councils have shown, *Sergei Tsukasov* said in summing up the discussion, that the reformists and the revolutionary forces have had fundamentally differing approaches to participation in local government throughout the history of the working-class movement. The reformists view municipalisation as an end in itself, as almost the chief means of transforming society and improving the lot of the working people.

But under the bourgeois system, municipalisation cannot bring about the ideals of the working class unless society is restructured drastically. Any hope of achieving those ideals in such a way amounts only to "dreams of social peace",¹ as Lenin put it.

The symposium showed that by working with initiative,

as Marxists should, in local bodies of government, and by organising people's pressure on them, Communists are strengthening and promoting the democratic principles in the work of municipal councils, increasing their autonomy, broadening their powers and improving their financial situation. At the same time they themselves are learning to govern and to work in society. That is why fraternal parties consider municipal work to be a key to greater Communist influence on the mass of people, on national policies, and on the arena of struggle for a socialist perspective.

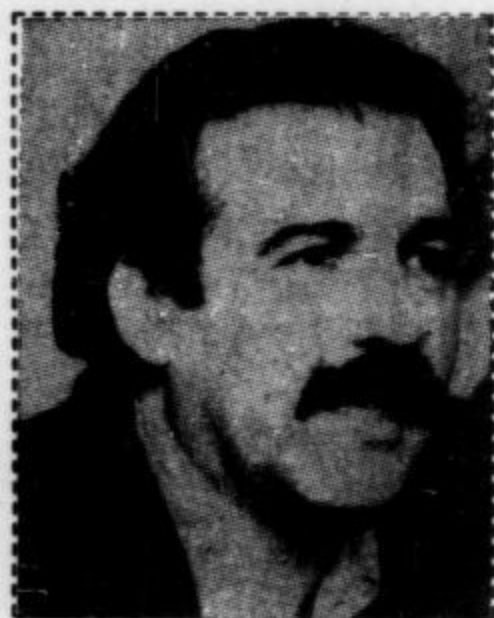
Speakers stressed that local bodies of government are a promising area for a fruitful policy of alliances and for uniting the democratic forces around progressive tasks geared to the interests of the working people. The prospective new approaches of Social Democrats, Socialists and other left forces to cooperation with Communists in municipal councils can *prepare the ground for even closer cooperation between the main detachments of the contemporary working-class movement and for forging broad coalitions with the aim of changing the alignment of forces within the state-monopoly system.*

The main conclusion drawn in the discussion was that Communists should seek to fortify their positions in municipal councils and to further politicise all their communal activities. The fraternal parties represented at the Vienna forum believe that in this way they can attune local government to the hopes and aspirations of the working people and strengthen their links with the mass of people.

¹ See V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 13, p. 359.

WMR INTRODUCES * * * * *

PATRICIO ECHEGARAY—GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF ARGENTINA



A full Central Committee meeting has elected Patricio Echegaray General Secretary of the Communist Party of Argentina. He replaces Athos Fava, elected PCA Chairman. Echegaray was born in San Juan in 1946. He is a teacher by training and for some

years worked in the trade unions. In 1962 he joined the communist youth organisation, and in 1965 the PCA. From 1970 he was on the CC of the Federation of Communist Youth of Argentina, and from 1980 its general secretary.

In June 1981 Patricio

Echegaray was elected a member of the CC PCA and its Political Commission. He was the Editor-in-Chief of the Argentine Communists' weekly *Que Pasa*, and from May 1986, a member of the Secretariat of the CC PCA and Deputy General Secretary.

THE VOICE OF CONSCIENCE

Erica DEUBER-PAULI

deputy to the Greater Council of Geneva from the Swiss Party of Labour (PST)

■ *In Switzerland, there are many parties and movements of left-wing orientation—the Socialists, ecologists, the anti-nuke movement, etc. What has induced you to cast in your political lot with a party which the bourgeois press incessantly depicts as ageing, crisis-stricken and unable to meet the challenge of the times?*

First of all, I do not consider political parties out of their historical context. If the PST, as it now stands, is destined to disappear, then so be it. But the ideas that inspire it will remain, perhaps in a new organisation of a similar or an altogether different kind. I am not one to prophesy. However, I wouldn't be too sure that the crisis which everyone is talking about hasn't hit the other parties too, although I must admit that the PST's numbers have fallen dangerously low.

The causes of this abrupt decline are fairly well known. Internationally, the end of the Vietnam war saw the emergence of new types of conflict. But there is one specific internal factor in Switzerland that cannot be overlooked: the fact that our labour force consists in large part of immigrant workers who are deprived of political rights and who are not involved either in elections or in the democratic process as a whole. This has nothing to do with any particular disaffection for communism or the Communist Party.

It is not my place to judge the historical fate of the Communist Party. It seems to me that a number of other parties no longer answer the concrete problems facing the people of our country, although I would say that some of them have been able to absorb certain of these issues, put them up for discussion, and state their cases on them.

This primarily applies to the Socialist Party, which doesn't hold such radical positions as the Communists, but encompasses in its activity a far wider range of problems, including the quality of life, and takes better account of the specifics of a highly developed capitalist society. However, today everybody's losing speed. It is enough to look at the turnout at party meetings or for an election to see that a whole social movement has emerged which stands in opposition to the regime and yet looks askance at political parties.

■ *Why then did you decide to join the Communists?*

This has something to do with the fate of my generation, which came of age at the turn of the 1960s when issues like decolonisation, the freeing of the peoples of what is called the Third World, headed the agenda. The time to choose moral values is when you're young. We were carried away by the ideas of a new world order based on the principles of national independence, and by the struggle of the peoples of Algeria, Vietnam, and Palestine.

The support we gave to national liberation movements through our solidarity groups and associations somehow separated us from the Communist Party, which then only occasionally concerned itself with these issues. At the end of the 1950s, the Communists were not yet ready to acknowledge the full importance of the problem of decolonisation. Suffice it to recall the problem that existed between those fighting for Algerian independence and the French Communist Party. This affected our thinking, too.

Yet my intellectual development was Marxist-influenced. I wasn't get acquainted with Marxism at school or in university, but through reading. I came from a poor rural family and I made up my mind to study the humanities. This wasn't an easy choice. My father, a farmworker, and my mother, a domestic servant, came to the Geneva canton, where I was born, from German-speaking Switzerland, and we had no connection with local French culture at all.

And so Geneva—and the university. In the 1960s it was still an arch-bourgeois institution with traditions going back to the Reformation that were handed down from generation to generation by representatives of the hereditary bourgeois oligarchy. A university education there was devoid of any criticism or speculation, and I found it very unsatisfying. I had to seek answers to the questions of concern to me, especially about culture, outside the lecture halls.

It was outside the university that I met prominent writers, thinkers, anthropologists and ethnologists, and I also learnt Marxism, which no serious student of contemporary problems can do without, and the entire Marxist critical tradition. And in 1968, having received an assistantship at the university, I also met with Marxist scholars within its walls. My profession—the social history of the arts—helps me to maintain a critical approach, and to apply my own criteria in assessing the realities of our culture.

■ *Something much deeper was thus added to the purely emotional political protest...*

That "something" was the need to fight intensely on the cultural front, both in theory and practice—through participation in different kinds of movements. For example, from 1965 I worked in the Association for Friendship with China, was among the sponsors of the Switzerland-Palestine Committee, and cooperated with various groups to protect the architectural legacy of Geneva, which had become endangered by big capital's financing of new development projects. I also helped to arrange regular Marxist meetings to discuss the theoretical aspects of culture and art, prepared exhibitions and organised film reviews.

Though all this was unpaid work, my job at the univer-

The interview was given to a staff member of WMR.

sity left me enough free time for such social activities. In doing so, I never really felt at any significant distance from the Communist Party and always cooperated in Geneva with comrades from the PST on culture and international solidarity.

At the same time I found myself concerned with the problem of the nuclear industry. This came about for the simple reason that the commune where I live has known since the early 1970s of a plan to build a nuclear power plant on a bank of the Rhone river about ten kilometres from Geneva. The federal authorities gave the go-ahead for its construction in 1974. The whole village was up in arms, a local protest organisation emerged, and I found myself in the front rank, not out of ecological conviction, but because I could not accept the way in which Berne was attempting to impose this project economically and politically on people without regard for real energy requirements and without a proper study of the possible consequences for the population. Everything was done hurriedly in order to suit those with a vested interest in electricity production.

I ended up heading this frondist organisation, which brought together representatives of the bourgeoisie, ecologists, and people of left-wing views at village and district level. I gradually began to coordinate the movement on a national level. We came up with a popular initiative, the aim of which was to establish democratic control over the industry, and demanded that permission to build a nuclear plant should be preceded by a vote among the people in the immediate area.

Having launched such a campaign, we naturally sought support from various political parties. I have to say that in the early 1970s the Communists refused to help us. At that time the PST and the international communist movement considered any opposition to technological progress irrational. They might agree with the democratic initiative, but they would not join these radicals. Again, I was distanced from the Communists after the dialogue was broken off.

■ ***It turns out that the Communists were left outside the struggle for a time...***

Yes. But as a federal referendum on democratising the process of decision-making in nuclear matters approached—it was scheduled for 1979—the PST's position began to change. This was because it now involved a political issue affecting people's rights, and in a very important branch of the economy. Under pressure from young members, and from some leaders (former General Secretary Armand Magnin, for example), the party re-assessed the situation. I remember the historic speech which the then PST Chairman, Jean Vincent, made in Parliament. Contrary to his own conviction, but responding to the sentiments of rank-and-file Communists, he backed our initiative. This came at the beginning of a period of *ouverture*, and coincided with the democratisation of the mechanisms of the party. That was when I felt I had a bond with it again.

In order to avoid further losses among the electorate, in the 1985 cantonal elections party leaders decided, as in the

past, to open the PST lists to outsiders who were quite close ideologically. I too received an invitation. This was no great problem for me, because I had long since shared the aims of struggle being pursued by the Communist Party. What it really meant for me was that, while retaining completely free views, I would receive new support in my customary political activity. I accepted it and was elected to the Greater Council (Parliament) of Geneva.

I also said if the party wanted me to, I was ready to join it, although personally I thought it better to wait a year or two and try and enlist several followers who could work on its commissions and take part in PST activities with a view to becoming members. The party badly lacked intellectual forces. After the war and in the late 1960s, and even later, the intellectuals who came into the party were always held back because of the dominant *ouvrieriste* spirit.

■ ***It's hard to believe that intellectuals wanted to join and the party was rejecting them...***

It's somewhat more complex than that. Any intellectual, be he a sociologist, an historian or an economist, looks at reality through the prism of his/her own views, and acts accordingly. The result is that one often questions outdated decisions and attitudes that derive exclusively from old habits, or even from an adherence to dogma. That was why in the 1950s the PST intellectuals, and there were outstanding personalities among them, found themselves in a difficult relationship with the party.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s a group of Marxist-oriented intellectuals who had participated in the youth revolts of 1968 came to the PST. Apparently their behaviour sometimes threatened the stability in party ranks where the level of theoretical grounding was generally not high and the membership base consisted mainly of workers. It is difficult to reach agreement when different ideas and interests clash in debates or over proposed decisions, especially in a small organisation with little room to manoeuvre.

Consequently the influx of intellectuals was short-lived. Some left and others were expelled. Since then there has been no palpable intake of intellectuals into the party and I really don't think there are enough of them now, although present conditions seem favourable for such reinforcements. By the way, many of those who I have talked with lately are eager for contacts with the party, and for work on some or other of its commissions. As to their joining the Communists' ranks, however, nothing can be done without special efforts on our part.

■ ***What makes you think conditions are auspicious for an influx of intellectuals today? Has the party changed or is the surrounding world now different...?***

The world has changed. When I recently became a candidate member of the PST, I knew that to some extent my professional reputation would suffer, but I realised that with the party behind me I could wage the struggle more effectively. I am happy to see factors that hindered the activity of left forces on an international scale, such as the

Soviet-Chinese conflict, being gradually reduced, if not disappearing. Greater opportunities are now available for addressing such pressing problems of the end of our century as poverty, superarmament, the menace to world peace, the strengthening of North-South ties, and the onslaught from the Right and, in Switzerland, from the far Right.

The urge to find solutions was what caused me choose my allegiance and to help consolidate the left forces—Communists, Socialists, ecologists. It was in this spirit, with a measure of guardedness, that I made this move, but I am not sure that I would have done it ten years ago when the doors for dialogue were completely closed.

The party has opened up considerably, as exemplified by its governing bodies' stance on international issues and environmental protection. On the latter theme, which is of particular interest to me, the Communists have adopted a more far-reaching programme than the ecologists. The PST's conservationist programme is based on an in-depth analysis of the existing social, economic and political mechanisms in society.

■ **What is your opinion of Switzerland's Social Democracy, particularly the Left Socialists?**

I have often been asked why I did not join the Socialist Party since it does have quite a few intellectuals in its ranks, some of whom work selflessly, even heroically. The fact is that my experience when trying to communicate with this party was not one that made me want to join, even though it is true that there are lots of very good people over there.

In our canton, for instance, they have done a great deal to advance education, health care and the public services, and they are fighting against the ugliest manifestations of capitalism. When a Socialist heads a municipal department, you can count on progressive shifts. In the Geneva Parliament, where the Socialists form a very strong group, they, together with the Communists, and sometimes the ecologists, have been able to carry through some good decisions. However, they have also had to retreat from certain positions, and to strike deals with right-wing, pro-Zionist and opportunistic elements.

Power gives an opportunity to place "one's own" men in cushy public-service jobs. Many people joined the Socialist Party simply to get a piece of the action, and this is obviously a bad thing. The opportunists have been getting their posts, only to show a dismal performance.

I can't stomach this sort of thing and it wasn't for me. Joining a party means demonstrating a certain solidarity. The PST is different, it is a *party of exceptional integrity*.

■ **As a member of the Swiss Party of Labour, how would you assess its role and place in the life of your canton, of the country as a whole, and what are the prospects for the Communists?**

In national life, it still plays a very weak role. Nor can it—honestly speaking—have any greater influence because of its limited representation. But it is the voice of conscience. In the egoistic world of capitalist society, where the meaning of human existence is reduced to "buy-and-sell" relations, it is necessary that somebody should act from a position of conscience and revolutionary, social consciousness. PST General Secretary Jean Spielmann appears on the radio, writes in the bourgeois press, and participates in television debates when an election approaches. It isn't enough, but it suffices for the voice of conscience to be heard.

Internationally the role of the PST is much more significant, and this is due to the relations which communist and workers' parties of the world maintain among themselves. Within our canton, too, its influence is fairly high: the PST enjoys the support of 8% of the electorate here. It is open now to all social movements—for solidarity with embattled peoples, protecting the environment, and for defending tenants' rights. As in the past, it looks after the interests of the dispossessed in society. It makes its presence felt and it is necessary.

I must say that even if we fail to carry through our initiatives or bills in Parliament, or reach the public, then, as a rule, the motives contained in them re-emerge in another form, for instance, in less radical proposals put forward by the Socialists, or sometimes even by bourgeois parties.

Our party had several seats in Parliament in the 1950s, but no longer wields such influence. However, PST leaders have won respect from society. As the Soviet Union appears less of a "monster" in the eyes of the bourgeois public, so the grounds for going on about human rights, political prisoners, superarmament, and the threat to Europe crumble away. These arguments cannot easily be used now against the Communists.

It seems that there is a great deal more sympathy with us—from the former Leftists of 1968 and other comrades who, though not in its ranks, have constantly been within the orbit of the party. But the party is not homogeneous, and a tendency to infighting and wariness towards new members remains. It may not be discussed openly, but I feel that things are not going to be easy and that, above all, we need time.

IN BRIEF * * * * *

BELGIUM The Communist Party of Belgium will now be called the Union of Belgian Communists. Back in the summer of last year, at their extraordinary congress, the Communists decided to structurally formalise the party's three main constituent parts: in French-speaking Wallonia, Flemish-speaking Flanders, and in the capital, Brussels, where members of both communities live. It was decided that each component part of the Union should elect its own governing bodies and map out independently the policy to be pursued in its region. At the same time, the party will preserve its single bodies. Under the new Statutes, amended last March at the 26th party congress, these are the General Council elected by the national forum and the Bureau of the Union.

BRAZIL *Voz da Unidade*, the newspaper of the Brazilian Communists, held a festival in Belo Horizonte in the state of Minas Gerais. The party has been operating legally in recent years and the festival is becoming a fine tradition. It reflected the growth of the party's influence and prestige—in the past year its numerical strength increased from 20,000 to 130,000. Roberto Freire, leader of the parliamentary PCB in the National Congress, has been nominated by the party to run for President in the forthcoming general elections in November.

CUBA A conference of the editors-in-chief of national newspapers and magazines published by fraternal communist and workers' parties in the socialist countries has been held in Havana. Representatives of the Angolan and Nicaraguan press attended the meeting as guests. The participants discussed the role of the party press in present-day conditions and its tasks in the processes of restructuring and renewal now under way in a number of socialist countries.

GDR At a meeting in Berlin, leaders of research institutions of communist and workers' parties from 18 countries examined the relevance of evolving a modern concept of socialism which would take into account both general principles and the diversity of the conditions and experience of individual states and parties. The significance of new political thinking was stressed, along with the priority of universal human interests, the struggle against militarism, and the struggle for nuclear disarmament, stronger peace and international security.

GREAT BRITAIN During Mikhail Gorbachov's official visit to Britain, he and Alexander Yakovlev, member of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee, met with Gordon McLennan, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Great Britain, and Gerry Pocock, Political Committee member of the party's Executive Committee. Both sides noted an identity of views between the CPSU and the CPGB on nuclear disarmament, and they discussed certain topical international events, in particular, the Namibian settlement. The participants in the discussion agreed to invigorate contacts between the two parties and remarked on the growing tendency among the workers' movement and left forces towards mutual understanding and closer ties.

HUNGARY A change in the system of political institutions is a condition for the success of the economic reform in the country, it was stated in documents of the March (1989) Plenary Meeting of the CC of the HSWP. Communists feel that the exercise of power should be publicly controlled in an atmosphere of representative democracy and on the basis of a multiparty system. The HSWP is ready to discuss this with any organisation working within the

framework of legality, supporting the socialist way of development and the country's international allied commitments. The Plenary Meeting's documents stress the significance of consistent efforts for the renewal of the party.

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In the autumn of 1987, the party had 880,000 members, while in April 1989, it had 780,000. Some people have left the party for political reasons—because they disagree with its line on a multiparty system and a restructuring of political institutions, for instance—and these account for 12% of those who left. 45% of those who quit failed to explain their decision. The social proportions within the HSWP have changed: 39% of the party members are workers, 7% cooperators and 53% are non-manual workers. In 1988, the percentage of industrial workers among new members dropped from 43% to 36%, while the share of non-manual workers rose from 33% to 40%. In the first three months of this year some 2000 people have joined the party. The main criterion for enrolment was whether one agreed with the current thrust of HSWP policy and with the aims of renewal.

PRC At a meeting with Kharilaos Florakis, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Greece, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of China Zhao Ziyang spoke highly of the level of relations between the two parties after their normalisation in 1987. Both leaders agreed that the reforms under way in the socialist countries, including the PRC, helped to reveal the potential and opportunities of socialism.

ROMANIA The Political Executive Committee of the CC of the RCP considered and endorsed the preliminary steps towards the 14th party congress, due to meet in November 1989.

SRI LANKA On a visit to Sri Lanka a delegation from the Workers' Party of Korea talked with the leadership of Sri Lanka's Communists about stepping up interparty ties and about topical issues of world politics, including peace and stability in the Asia Pacific region.

USSR At their meeting in Moscow, Mikhail Gorbachov and Karoli Gross, General Secretary of the HSWP noted that exchanges of opinion and experience as well as multilevel contacts are vital now, at a time

when the socialist countries are testing new ways to renew society, reform the economy and rejuvenate political institutions. Conditions are now ripe for profounder political dialogue and for improved economic and humanitarian cooperation among all European states, it was observed.

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In conversation with Hans-Johann Vogel, Chairman of the Social Democratic Party of Germany, Mikhail Gorbachov noted that relations between the CPSU and SDP had come

a long way—from the initial contacts on a postwar settlement to issues of an exclusively international character. They are now at the stage where ideas are compared and contrasted and where any problems are discussed in an atmosphere of trust and mutual understanding. The meeting reflected the dynamics and promising nature of interparty ties. The two sides looked at possible joint undertakings within the international workers' movement in connection with the centenary of the Second International and the 125th anniversary of the First International.

FROM THE POLITICAL DOCUMENT ADOPTED AT THE 18TH CONGRESS OF THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY

In order to overcome the crisis of their representation, role and programmes, the trade unions should propose new solutions to the problem of unity and autonomy.

We regard the attainment of trade union unity and autonomy as a fundamental task. The struggle for unity and the struggle for autonomy are inseparable. However, the opportunities for unity as a basic category should not be restricted by a biased veto imposed by any side. The unity of the working people and of the trade unions is to be promoted by continuous efforts and a continuous struggle: this objective cannot be reached once and for all. Democracy and self-determination by the working people should be the lodestar and the principal criterion of this struggle.

We are also convinced that trade union autonomy is essential to any truly democratic society. Pluralism in the trade union movement contains a body of priceless experience accumulated throughout the history of the Italian working-class movement, and it should therefore be viewed as the basis of, not a limit to, this autonomy...

The creation of new tools of democracy and participation demands that the trade unions be capable of advancing new proposals and acting as mediators

in matters such as employment, the quality of labour and of development and the reform of the state as a social entity.

The attainment of this objective calls above all for new and real representative powers, including those exercised in the course of collective bargaining at local level; for making the working people and the trade unions capable of introducing changes into relations of production; and for the exercise of their right to employment in their trade or profession, to labour safety, health, skills and freedom—the objectives that express the essence of the processes under way.

In other words, the problem of trade unions seeking to represent a sizable part of hired labour and to defend its ideals, not just to function as a link between different narrow group interests, is one of securing the ways and realising the aims of restoring the effective solidarity of the forces the unions represent.

Therefore, the problem of trade union autonomy is above all a problem of policy autonomy.

The trade unions need a new and different culture of thinking which would transcend the bounds of the mentality typical of the classical industrial phase.



STALINISM—TIME TO TELL THE WHOLE TRUTH

Stalin... It is hard to imagine an historical figure whose words and deeds, whose very name, could have aroused so much acrimonious debate in the world communist movement.

Khrushchev's "secret report" to the 20th CPSU Congress, later widely circulated in the West,¹ provoked shock, bewilderment and confusion in numerous communist parties, at the same time giving rise to a powerful desire to understand the rationale for Stalin's crimes, to get to the root of the Stalin phenomenon.

But Marxist thought was then unable, or rather had no time, to give a convincing answer to many fundamental questions. This failure was largely due to the briefness of the Khrushchev "thaw", which failed to continue or develop.

With today's democratisation and openness, and the revival of the creative spirit of Leninism in the USSR, historical experience again figures in communist debates. There is much heated controversy, and questions are being raised which only yesterday people were loath to discuss publicly:

What are the doctrinal, socioeconomic and political roots of Stalinism?

Is there any relationship between Stalinism and Marxism or Leninism?

By condemning Stalinism, are we denying Stalin's own contribution to the historical conquests of socialism?

Would it have been possible to avoid the grave deformations in socialist construction in the USSR?

*These questions were the focus of a recent meeting in Moscow between Ib NØRLUND, a Political Bureau member and secretary of the CC of the Communist Party of Denmark, Damian PRETEL, a member of the CC of the Communist Party of Spain, and the Soviet historian Roy MEDVEDEV, author of *Let History Judge*, a book on Stalin and Stalinism which has run into several editions in many countries.*

Below is an abridged version of the conversation.

Ib Nørlund—b. 1917, a nuclear physicist by training, author of several books on the history of the Danish working-class movement and on the questions of international solidarity;

Damian Pretel—b. 1930, at the age of 8 was taken from civil-war Spain to the USSR where he lived, studied and worked until 1964; a doctor of philosophy, professor at Granada University, and the

author of a number of philosophical works;

Roy Medvedev—b. 1925, a philosopher by education, an author whose books have been published in more than 20 countries. This year, in the USSR, six literary and art magazines are publishing his writings. He was recently elected a People's Deputy of the USSR.

IS THE TERM PRECISE AND WHAT STANDS BEHIND IT?

Roy Medvedev. I have been using this term since I began working on a history of Stalin's rule. What do I understand by it? Most importantly, Stalinism is not an ideology or a theory, but first and foremost a secret practice couched in high-sounding words. For a long time we mistakenly denied this term because we treated it by analogy with the concepts of Marxism and Leninism. Stalin, however, unlike Marx and Lenin, created no theory of his own. He always used Lenin as a cover, calling himself a loyal pupil. The 13 volumes of Stalin's collected works contain very few ideas that do not correspond to Lenin's doctrine (apart, of course, from his schematic understanding of Leninism and simplifications). But Stalin said one thing and did another. It is this gap between words and deeds that, I think, lies at the core of Stalinism.

A group of writers once asked Stalin what they, as Soviet literary men, should write about. He replied: "Write the truth." Stalin used to say that the Soviet man should be nurtured in the same way that a gardener tends a fruit tree. He also insisted that the cadres decided everything, and that they should be looked after. Even while rooting out the old Leninist guard, Stalin never advocated the destruction of the best cadres. Nor, for that matter, did he ever suggest revising Lenin's concept of the party, managing instead to do this in practice by turning it into a kind of secret order, an organisation in which the members were required to stick to the unwritten rules and, as their most essential virtue, to obey their "master" unquestioningly.

Stalinism gradually became an established practice completely at odds with the tenets of Leninism, which manifested itself as a dictatorship, an autocracy more omnipotent than the Tsar's. Stalin needed not only an obedient party, but also a submissive populace, and this explains the terror he unleashed against his people—the intelligentsia, the peasantry, and the working class. The victims of Stalinism include the people who died in the terrible famine of 1932-1933, the families of "dispossessed rich peasants", the deported peoples of the Northern Caucasus and Volga areas, the Crimean Tartars, and the ethnic Germans...

In my books I assert that the history of Stalinism is the history of a disease of Soviet society. By Stalinism, then, I mean the totality of the distortions of Marxist-Leninist teaching and the deformations of socialist ideals and practice which so completely belied the propaganda.

Ib Nørlund. These arguments fully support my view that the term "Stalinism" is somewhat inapt, and also rather confusing. Any concept ending with an "ism" seems to me to represent a certain system of logically constructed theoretical views belonging to a particular scholar. However, this doesn't apply here. And, so far as I know, I am not alone in my view: several years ago

Mikhail Gorbachov told *l'Humanité* that he did not accept the term "Stalinism".

It is very important now for Communists to refrain from pinning labels on each other or accusing opponents of Stalinism or anti-Stalinism. We ought long ago to have cured ourselves of this bad habit. The problem of such "isms" is not simply a theoretical issue; it has a great deal of practical significance, particularly for a country like Denmark. And it is precisely because it is so contradictory that we must resolve it through joint effort and by avoiding any further growth of differences.

Damian-Pretel. I tend towards a third point of view. I am convinced that Stalinism should be seen more broadly than Comrade Medvedev views it. I think we are dealing with a new political system, created by Stalin, fundamentally opposed to the democratic system which emerged after the Great October Socialist Revolution, and which relied on the Soviets and based itself on the idea of a leading, not a commanding, role for the party in society. Stalinism means subjectivism and voluntarism in relation to the economy, a denial of the objective character of economic laws, and an attempt to run the economy by "command-and-administer" methods.

Stalinism also means a special approach to culture: in essence, the denial of freedom of artistic expression, and the forcible imposition on society of certain aesthetic concepts—for example, socialist realism—which become state policy.

I also think Stalinism is a kind of ideology, one which has not merely systematised and simplified, but also profoundly distorted the essence of Marxism and Leninism. It would be no exaggeration to say that if Stalinism is Marxism, then we are not Marxists. Stalin's emasculation of the doctrine of Marx and Lenin was most evident in such basic elements as the theses on revolution, the state, and political alliances in the class struggle. Stalinism is thus a distortion of the very essence of Marxism and Leninism, resulting in a new theory different from that created by Marx, Engels and Lenin.

R.M. On the whole, I have to agree with both my opponents. Of course, the term "Stalinism" is not a good one. There has been much discussion in the USSR about the fact that, since it ends with an "ism" (which we usually attach to various doctrines), the concept of a *Stalinshchina* (the time of Stalin) would do better. But a term already ingrained in consciousness, practice, and literature will not disappear, no matter how hard we try to remove it. The term "Stalinism" has taken root. It is, of course, possible, as Gorbachov has said, that bourgeois ideologists have sold us on it. Even though the term itself is inaccurate, it has been accepted by Soviet scholars, it is now associated with an extensive historiography, and it is ingrained in the consciousness of the people who fought against Stalinism. We must take this into account.

With regard to your view, Comrade Pretel, I don't think

it is sufficiently precise. In the Soviet Union there was no democratic political system for Stalinism to set itself against. Although Lenin raised democracy as an ideal, he had no time to create a fully-fledged democratic society. During the Civil War, Soviet society could not be democratic. It denied the existence of other parties, based itself on the dictatorship of the proletariat, and often resorted to the use of violence. New laws were so loosely worded as to allow for almost any abuse of power. Stalinism, therefore, was not a complete denial of everything that had taken shape in the preceding period. In fact, Stalin used most of the structures and institutions created earlier. It was then that the VChK,² a completely non-legal organisation which combined investigatory and punitive functions, had emerged. Stalin "merely" widened the scope of its activity and turned it into the country's major political institution, even placing it above the party. It wasn't until Khrushchev's time that this state of affairs was brought to an end.

Now, about Stalinism as a coherent ideology. I cannot fully accept this view. Stalin was a populariser of Leninism, he did not create a theory of his own. What he did create was *A Short History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, the bible of socialism, in which primitive explanations of some basic elements of Marxist philosophy, political economy and scientific socialism alternate with a monstrously falsified history of the party. For Stalin, though, theory was simply an additional means of taking and holding power. You might say that Stalinism incorporates an oversimplified and distorted model of Leninism adapted to criminal practice.

To sum up, Stalin did not have to interfere with the political system which had been installed in the early 1920s. He did not, therefore, undermine the foundations. Rather, he took what was worst in the system and put it into practice. In this sense I agree that Stalinism can be interpreted more broadly.

I.N. All of us are unanimous in our condemnation of Stalin's blunders and crimes. But this does not give us the right to disregard a dialectical analysis of the conditions in which he operated. We have to reach a common understanding of all these complex issues, something previous discussions were unable to achieve. As I see it, what Comrade Medvedev has said makes it clear that we are not seeking a total denial of the Soviet people's achievements between 1929 and 1953. I am always surprised, even shocked, when I hear that under Stalin everything was unrelievedly grim. It takes a concrete analysis of a concrete situation to establish the truth.

For example, we must never forget that revolutionary Russia faced the threat of being strangled in its cradle. Such circumstances as external aggression, White terror, and economic sabotage naturally provoked a response from the revolutionary government.

Many of those who were inspired by the October Revolution and the successful construction of socialism in

the USSR simply will not understand us if we suddenly begin to deny everything that was accomplished at that time, by which I mean both the Lenin and Stalin periods. I think Gorbachov's speech on the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution represents the correct approach to this problem.

D.P. I would like to return once more to my own perception of Stalinism. It is true, Comrade Medvedev, that Stalin never claimed to have created a theory of his own, that he simply made skillful use of Leninism. However, I do not think that Stalinism is just a simplified version of Leninism or Marxism. Rather, it is a new interpretation of them.

It is also true that the political system created under Lenin was imperfect and suffered from restrictions on democracy, resulting mainly from the Civil War. But I don't think the idea that for Lenin democracy was simply an ideal stands up. Why? Because in Lenin's time the foundations were laid for a Soviet political order which was, in essence, profoundly democratic. It was this democratic potential that Stalinism completely destroyed. Stalin did not simply schematise the Soviet system, he distorted it to such an extent that a monstrous, totalitarian, dictatorial, anti-party political structure emerged which enabled him to commit genocide against his own people. I think it would be better to talk about the Stalinist political order which replaced the political system created under Lenin.

R.M. Stalinism is a phenomenon which was born in the depths of our society, our country, our system and it is therefore impossible to separate completely what happened under Stalin from what occurred under Lenin. Innumerable threads link the revolution and the time of Stalin. Any revolution creates several possibilities, alternatives, variants of development, and one of them was realised by Stalinism.

Comrade Nørlund is right in insisting that the relationship between the Lenin and Stalin periods should be viewed dialectically. There is no absolute break, nor any complete identity—Stalinism does not stem wholly from what existed under Lenin or during the revolution. Essentially, Stalinism grew out of the entire legacy of social and economic backwardness inherited from tsarist Russia, which the revolution simply could not destroy at one stroke. I mean the illiteracy and ignorance of the bulk of the population, as well as the lack of democratic traditions. Stalin took advantage of all this in creating his terrible system.

But it's impossible to conceive of Soviet society at the time—the period of the "leader of the peoples"—as entirely Stalinist. This is where dialectics comes in. My friends and contemporaries grew up in that same period but I do not consider my generation Stalinist. We believed in the ideals of socialism—all the propaganda, our whole culture, even Stalin's words, ultimately spoke of socialism. Stalin deceived us, and we believed the official propaganda.

I am not talking about the generation of Party members

raised by Lenin. It was undoubtedly the strongest and ablest, but Stalin annihilated it completely. As to the generation of the 1920s and 1930s, it comprised people utterly devoted to socialism. They burned with a desire to help the new system, they studied hard, not out of fear but from a sense of duty, they worked enthusiastically on the early five-year plan projects and, when necessary, they even gave their lives in defence of their socialist homeland. To a large extent, Khrushchev was later to rely on this generation when he delivered his famous report to the 20th Congress.

We are looking back on a time when there were several very different social and economic formations. Of course, Stalinism, or perhaps pseudo-socialism, prevailed. But feudalism basically still existed: a peasantry without rights forcibly driven into collective farms and enslaved. There were even elements of the slave-owning system—hidden behind a socialist veneer—in that living and working conditions for the millions of prisoners in forced labour camps scattered all over the country amounted to little more than slavery.

Yet the socialist element was undoubtedly there. It existed in our own lives, in theory and in education. From the first class we were taught socialism and Marxism, and we read Lenin's original works. I didn't just learn Marxism and Leninism from Stalin's primitive exposition, but by acquainting myself with all the available published works.

It would be naive to think that we had a democratic society then, as Stalin and official propaganda claimed, but at the same time it would be wrong to reduce everything to the Stalin terror. If, as some of our historians maintain, there was no socialism at all, then upon what are we now rebuilding society?

D.P. I realise that it's impossible to separate Stalinism from what happened in the country after the October Revolution—the Civil War, war communism, the serious restrictions on democracy. But, from my point of view, to say that Stalinism derives from Leninism—an idea also current in Spain—is a mistake. Under Lenin the restrictions on democracy were temporary. In the circumstances they were justified.

CAN WE SEPARATE STALIN FROM THE GAINS OF SOCIALISM?

I.N. A critical analysis of the past sometimes involves unwittingly throwing the baby out with the bathwater, as it were. In terms of our conversation, I would raise the need for an honest, realistic assessment of Stalin's personal contribution to the building of socialism and to the achievements of the Soviet people in that period.

R.M. The difficulty lies in the fact that there seem to have been two Stalins, one real and the other mythical. The history of human civilisation is full of myths—in a religious guise, for instance—that have seized the masses, set them in motion and, as a result, changed the

face of society. Take, for example, the history of modern Iran. And so, in our country, on the one hand there was the real Stalin, who was secretly committing heinous crimes, and on the other the myth of Stalin as leader who worked night and day in the Kremlin, cared for all the ordinary people, and thought only of the public good. The Stalin myth was instrumental in uniting the people and cementing the army and society.

This myth also played a very positive role during the Great Patriotic War. It was not only Marshal Zhukov's military genius and the heroism of the troops, but also their faith in the leader that stopped Hitler's army outside Moscow and Stalingrad. Our victory in the war was a great national achievement, but it, too, could have been gained with less blood. Military historians have revealed that in the retreat of 1941-1942, and during the offensive, the ratio between Soviet and German losses was approximately 4:1. One of the reasons for this was Stalin's method of conducting the war: don't spare soldiers, don't spare people.

People believed in Stalin and could not, would not, associate his name with the ghastly crimes being committed. Millions of letters were sent to him pleading for protection from violence and persecution. When my father, a brigade commissar and a professor at the Military-Political Academy, was arrested, we also wrote to Stalin asking him to restore justice. Only the old Bolshevik survivors, who were afraid to express their thoughts aloud, knew that the repression was the work of Stalin.

In short, it is hard to explain the psychological phenomenon of this dualistic image of Stalin. The paradox is that the real Stalin cannot be separated from all that was positive in the development of our country. As head of state he was hardly likely to have been interested in creating a weak state, a disunited society or a spineless party. He obviously didn't want to lose the war either. By concluding the pact with Hitler, he hoped to outwit him and gain time in which to prepare for the impending war. The fact that this policy led to grave errors and that, in the end, Hitler managed to deceive Stalin is another matter.

D.P. I would like to raise another question. Among the members of the PCE there are many who consider that Stalinism, for all its errors and crimes, was necessary in order to make the economic leap forward in the late 1920s and early 1930s and to lay the foundations for an industrial state. The command-and-administer methods of management, the forcible collectivisation—which victimised millions and brought about the catastrophic famine of the early 1930s—and the abandonment of Lenin's New Economic Policy were therefore justified. To me this view is profoundly mistaken. But I would like to hear Comrade Medvedev's opinion on this.

R.M. Stalinism, with its own inherent methods of economic management, was not an historically determined phenomenon. An advanced economy could have

been built with far fewer sacrifices and with much less overexertion.

I.N. All the same, some may retort that the majority supported Stalin.

R.M. That holds true both before and after the war. Even general democratic elections, were we to imagine such a hypothetical possibility, would have given Stalin the majority. This was, firstly, because an unsuspecting people believed Stalin. Propaganda, education, art and science were all geared to convincing them of their leader's brilliance, wisdom and humanity. All the victories and successes were ascribed to him. The truth about the situation in the country never reached the public. For example, reporting at a plenary meeting of the CC on how many people had been deported from the areas of total collectivisation, Stalin lowered the figure of "dispossessed kulaks" by five times. A complete news blackout was thrown on the famine in the Ukraine, and anyone who defied it was arrested for "slander". We actually knew nothing about these horrific events. Secondly, a ramified, all-pervasive system of violence operated. In this way the people were deceived and intimidated. It was this combination of pressure, deception, demagoguery and violence that for years ensured mass support for Stalin. Although there was an insignificant minority who consciously opposed him, these people were mainly in the camps.

That the majority approved and supported Stalin is no excuse for Stalinism. History knows of many demagogues who, for a certain length of time, won over the masses by deception. Hitler, too, succeeded in carrying along, if not the majority, at least a significant part of the German bourgeoisie, working class and peasantry. But this cannot justify Hitlerism. Nothing can justify the deception, the violence against the party and people, or the outrage against genuine revolutionary values.

D.P. What course, what methods are you referring to when you say that industrialisation and collectivisation could have been achieved without coercion and violence?

R.M. With the aid of documents and figures, Soviet economists have convincingly proved that Stalin deceived the party and people by announcing that the first five-year had been fulfilled ahead of schedule. Its economic and social targets weren't even reached in the second five-year plan.³ Far better results could have been obtained by continuing and developing the New Economic Policy, i.e., by creating a mixed economy of socialist, cooperative, and individual sectors. The individual sector's potential was far from exhausted. Incidentally, this was due to a doctrinal error, since both Marxism and Leninism had underestimated the great potential of individual labour. Our economists have concluded that the NEP, faulty and contradictory though it was, could have become a basis for the development of the economy in the 1930s. The end result would have

been no worse than what we actually had before the war, and would not have cost us so dearly.

D.P. Is the personality cult of a state or party leader a fundamental attribute of socialism?

R.M. For many reasons, a personality cult is highly probable in underdeveloped countries which have embarked on socialist construction. But it is not, of course, inevitable. And then a personality cult itself does not always necessarily lead to crimes. We had elements of a personality cult with Khrushchev, and attempts were made to create a cult around Brezhnev, but they did not involve terror or repression. Anyway, I think that a personality cult is really only a certain condition within the individual and society. Among the people there was never any personality cult around Brezhnev for instance. Nor could there have been any talk of a cult of Lenin while the leader of the October Revolution was alive, although he did enjoy great prestige. Elements of a cult of Lenin arose later, when Stalin used it to maintain his own power. But such a course of events is not, I repeat, predetermined for any country.

D.P. Speaking of the NEP, you mentioned Marxist's incomplete analysis of the potential of the individual sector. I wonder if the first socialist revolution brought any other weaknesses in the doctrine to light, and how this affected the fate of the country...

R.M. Yes, I think the revolution did reveal other doctrinal faults, which to some extent "opened the floodgates" for the deformations which occurred in society. But there's really nothing strange in this. Proposing a theory is one thing, bringing it into effect is quite another. Practice showed that some theses, advanced before the revolution and included in Marxism and Leninism as elements of the doctrine, needed to be revised. For example, the prejudice against commodity-money relations played a rather unhappy role in the very first months of Soviet power, the spring of 1918, when the government tried to switch over to direct products-exchange with the countryside and abolish free trade. What Lenin decided upon in 1921, after the harsh lessons of the Civil War, could have been realised in 1918, but the doctrine had said that commodity-money relations were the first dangerous symptom of capitalism.

The wrong meaning was also given to such concepts as civil war and violence. With hindsight we can see that what Marx had said about the proletariat needing 30 or 50 years of civil war in order to rid itself of its defects and vices could not simply be repeated without reservations. The Civil War did indeed rid the proletariat of certain vices. But it also destroyed the best part of it, at the same time producing a large section of party cadres who were used to solving all questions by violence. And it wasn't decades, but a mere three years of Civil War that left a dramatic imprint on the subsequent period of our social development. Experience has also shown that violence cannot be

idealised, that you can't give the power of the gun preference in the work of socialist transformations.

Examples of this abound. The point is that theory must develop constantly, relying on life and testing in practice all its predictions and conclusions.

UNTRUTH HARMS US

I.N. Danish Communists greatly admire the Soviet people for having borne the full weight of Stalin's errors and miscalculations. We favour discussion, and we want an objective analysis of history that would not play into the hands of our ideological opponents. But we would also like this analysis to highlight the great achievements that took place in the life of the Soviet people under Stalin's rule. It is successes that act as inspiration in the struggle.

For us, the October Revolution has always meant the beginning of grandiose social change, proving that victory over capitalism and the construction of a socialist society were possible. I am saying this because we have already seen a flurry of self-criticism in the Soviet Union. While I welcome well-argued criticism and self-criticism, it should not be forgotten that we are not living in a vacuum and that our ideological opponents have not disappeared yet. For example, members of our party were very confused, and indeed disheartened, when the *Literaturnaya gazeta*⁴ claimed, without any proof, that the non-aggression pact with Germany was a great mistake. Bourgeois propaganda was well pleased with that!

D.P. I think everyone would agree with Comrade Nørlund that the Communists are in favour of a proper discussion on the problems of socialism. But I would not limit myself to this. We in the West cannot advance unless we know the whole truth, however bitter it may be. Neither the Spanish, nor the Danish Communists own any banks or possess any capital. Our one and only strength is the power of truth. That is why it is so important to restore complete historical truth on the basis of verified facts, primary sources, hitherto unknown materials, documents, and eyewitness accounts from the victims of Stalinism. Without this, I repeat, neither the socialist countries, nor the communist and working-class movement can advance.

If we do not tell the whole truth about Stalinism in Spain, it will be difficult for us to prove that socialism in our country is possible without it. For nearly 40 years Franco's propaganda stubbornly maintained that it wasn't, and this idea has penetrated deeply into the consciousness of certain sections of the country's population. For the same reason, we cannot in any way justify or excuse Stalinism, let alone whitewash it.

Also, I do not share the views of some Soviet historians, or of F. Claudin,⁵ for instance, who insist that there was no socialism in the USSR under Stalin. Rather, one should speak of primitive socialism, or, to use Medvedev's

phrase, pseudo-socialism. With reservations, I think one could even say that a feudal serf-owning socialism existed in the Soviet Union. Once this is recognised the positive phenomena that existed then in Soviet society become even clearer. No one would deny the great strides made in developing the productive forces, the economy, and education, or dismiss the significance of its contribution to the victory over fascism.

The fact that the Soviet people have retained their faith in the ideals of socialism in spite of all the vicissitudes is an accomplishment which means a lot to each communist party. We have to talk openly about this, because that is the only way we can fully appreciate the enormous task the Soviet people have now set for themselves. Only in this way can we understand why perestroika is a continuation of the socialist revolution.

R.M. I agree that the whole truth is needed. But truth does not simply materialise by itself, without debates and discussions. Comrade Nørlund may have been surprised and upset by the *Literaturnaya gazeta* article on the Stalin-Hitler pact, but this, too, is an element in the current debate on all the aspects of Stalin's domestic and foreign policy. The fact is that foreign-policy miscalculations cost the Soviet people dearly. The circumstances surrounding the signing of the 1939 pact and its repercussions, which provoked a great deal of controversy in certain republics, especially the Baltic states, are therefore bound to crop up in discussion. Personally, I consider the August 1939 Soviet-German pact to have been necessary. But in September of the same year Stalin and his associates made an unpardonable mistake in signing the treaty of friendship with Hitler. These two events are often confused. And it was certainly the Munich deal, not the pact, that gave the green light to World War II. But in discussing this question it is necessary to compare the various positions. The truth is not given us from above, it has to come from long, sometimes sharp debate in which opponents may express both correct and incorrect opinions. Democracy presupposes a free exchange of opinions on any question.

At the moment Soviet propaganda might seem to be concentrating too much on the negative phenomena. For too long—both under Stalin and Brezhnev—we were fed exclusively with positive examples, anything else being labelled as denigration. Although there were all kinds of deficiencies, these were kept hidden from us. Nowadays people don't just want to hear how good it was in the past, they want to know the whole truth. That's why they read and discuss articles about Alexei Rykov, Nikolai Bukharin, Karl Radek, about the murder of Lev Trotsky and so on. Many people knew absolutely nothing of all this. But it would be a mistake to think that most of what is published is negative. In actual fact the press generally gives a balanced view, relying primarily on positive experience.

I.N. Many people are probably unaware of the lengths to which bourgeois propaganda will go to discredit

socialism, taking advantage of negative publications in the Soviet press for instance. For this reason, I think, it's very important to find the right dialectical approach, both in the press and through discussion, to the past realities of socialism. Otherwise, I am afraid people will think that socialism is just a society of grotesque social errors and that the USSR is on the rocky road to ruin!

R.M. Unfortunately, we cannot alter bourgeois propaganda. It will always tend to select what is most negative from the Soviet press. It would be naive to think that bourgeois propaganda might deign to cover our life objectively. This is a job for Soviet propaganda, which itself tended until recently to take a very one-sided view of events in the capitalist world.

I don't mean to preach, but it seems to me that foreign friends of the Soviet Union ought not to treat our affairs apologetically, for much of what happened, and is happening, in our country needs no apology. Soviet society does have firm foundations which sustain its vitality and give it strength. Yet firm foundations cannot in themselves cure the many shortcomings, ailments and vices. The elimination of these is part and parcel of the work involved in creating a truly democratic, rule-of-law socialist state. Our society should be viewed realistically—as one which can serve both as an example, and as a warning: in some cases the accumulated experience should be used; in others it should be rejected out of hand.

STALINISM AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

D.P. Bearing in mind the specifics of *WMR*, I would like to submit for discussion, even if in the most general terms, the question of the influence of Stalinism on communist parties. This is particularly relevant since ridding ourselves of Stalinism has proved not only painful—remember how the communist world reacted to the Khrushchev report in 1956—but also protracted, so much so that many parties still seem to be engaged in the process.

I.N. Everything that surfaced after the 20th CPSU Congress came as a profound shock to our party. We were unaware of those crimes for decades, and so the report was utterly demoralising. For the DKP it was a time of bitter disillusionment, misgivings and soul-searching. We asked ourselves, could our party really have followed the wrong path for so many years? Does this mean that the October Revolution did not open the way to socialism? Is socialism prey to inherently capitalist contradictions?

Somehow we had to counter this reaction and put paid to any doubts about the importance of the October Revolution, the Soviet Union's role in world history, and the prospects for socialism. It was a struggle, literally, for each and every Communist. We argued tirelessly that what was revealed at the 20th Congress did not validate any doubts about the need to fight for socialism. It is important

now to use this experience sensibly, naturally in favour of, not against, perestroika, a process which is also strengthening our party's authority.

R.M. I do know that after the Khrushchev report was published in the West, many people there left the communist party. Why? I think this was mainly because they had believed the lie that Stalin had been feeding the communist movement, because they had believed in a distorted, perverted image of the Soviet Union. The report opened their eyes to a distressing picture which caused a profound psychological shock. Note, however, that the reaction inside the Soviet Union was quite different. It was a depressing time, but many people, particularly among the young, realised that the party was beginning to cleanse itself and to create a democratic society.

For example, right after the 20th Congress I decided to join the party. There's even a whole generation we call the people of the 20th Congress. This is the generation that is now spearheading perestroika. I am utterly convinced that the decisive influence on Gorbachov's world outlook was the fact that the 22nd CPSU Congress was the first congress he attended as a delegate. There, you recall, even more was revealed about Stalin's crimes, and the delegates voted to remove his body from the Mausoleum. The 20th and 22nd Congresses made possible the major regeneration of party and society, and left their mark on national life, something the subsequent period of stagnation could not erase.

D.P. Many in our party once objected to the exposure of the Stalin cult, believing that it was necessary to correct mistakes in silence, without revealing them publicly. Even now, some Spanish Communists prefer to forget or ignore the crimes. But it is impossible to be a Communist if you close your eyes to the reality of Stalinism. It is still ingrained in the world view and habits of some comrades and affects the present policy of the PCE. For example, where does the surviving mistrust of a democratic, peaceful way of gaining power in Spain come from? How is the disregard for reforms to be explained, especially if they refer not to the tactics but to the strategy of our advancement towards socialism? Finally, why should some people continue to regard the Socialists as political enemies!? All this concerns our common Stalinist past, which is why I have touched on the question of the influence of Stalinism on the communist movement.

R.M. The obvious evil effects of this influence have yet to be wholly uprooted. It seems to me we have overlooked one thing: that this influence was made possible by the deficiencies and weaknesses of the communist movement itself. Communist parties lacked the theoretical maturity that would have enabled them to find the answers to national problems. They were also constrained by their religiously apologetic approach to the Soviet experience. Incidentally, according to my observations, the more sober a party's view of our realities, the more quickly it recovered from the revelations about

Stalinism. In other words, the firmer a party stood on national soil, the more assured its development was. Unfortunately, in the Comintern era communist parties were viewed merely as branches of the one tree, which grew in the USSR.

I have often wondered about the Italian Communist Party's long and steady influence. I may be wrong, but I see two main reasons for this. Firstly, the PCI took a sober and critical view of what was happening in the Soviet Union, and, secondly, it has its own ideological basis, comprising the teachings of Antonio Gramsci and the views of Palmiro Togliatti and Enrico Berlinguer. The important thing is that the PCI has not developed by disavowing its previous experience, and has maintained its continuity.

Unfortunately, the Soviet situation was different. In practice, Stalin distorted much of Lenin's legacy. Khrushchev then denied everything that occurred under Stalin. Brezhnev discarded the Khrushchev experience. Now we are rejecting all that happened under Brezhnev. But the fact is that in each of these stages a certain positive experience has accrued!

If the communist movement had developed not as a single world party with its centre in the USSR, but as a totality of independent organisations with firm national roots, the exposure of Stalinism would not have had such dire consequences (speaking of which, Stalin always dreaded the emergence of strong independent "centres" in the communist movement).

But there is another side to this picture. Many parties continued to look on the USSR in the old way, taking its experience as standard and its policies as invariably correct. This lack of independence shows how tenacious Stalinism can be.

I.N. I simply cannot accept this version of events in the communist movement after the dissolution of the Comintern, nor the idea of a lack of independence. The CPSU has never tried to pressure or coerce our party. Danish Communist support for Soviet foreign policy reflects not only an intrinsic internationalism, but also our desire to eliminate the threat of war and to reinforce security.

D.P. I think Comrade Medvedev is right in pointing out the harmful effect of Stalinism on theoretically and politically weak communist parties. However, it is also true that some pressure was brought to bear on us, surreptitiously forcing us at times to review our attitudes. For example, when the PCE began to develop a Spanish road to democracy and socialism, relations with the CPSU cooled, deteriorating even further after the Czechoslovak events of 1968. During the 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s the general idea was that the CPSU was owed the respect of all the other parties. It even went so far as to directly or indirectly support an individual group or current within a party in order to counteract an unsuitable leadership. This also contributed to the split in our party...

However, much has changed for the better in the life of the communist movement over the last few years and to a considerable extent these changes are a corollary of Soviet perestroika. There is now a new, honest, open and comradely atmosphere in our movement. I believe this will soon help rid us of the last vestiges of Stalinism in communist ideology, politics and practice.

1 In the USSR the report was published by the *CPSU Central Committee News* in March 1989.

2 The Russian acronym for the All-Russia Special Commission, set up in December 1917 as a special body to combat counter-revolution and sabotage.—*Ed.*

3 An analysis of the results of the first five-year plan (1928-1932) published by the journal *Kommunist* (No. 18, 1987), reveals that none of the targets for the main types of output (electricity, coal, oil, pig iron, steel, mineral fertilizers, etc.) were met. However, this did not prevent Stalin from announcing, in January 1933, that the five-year plan had been fulfilled ahead of time—in four years and 3 months.—*Ed.*

4 The organ of the board of the Soviet Writers' Union.—*Ed.*

5 F. Claudin—Spanish politician; former member of the PCE; until recently, director of the P. Iglesias Foundation for scientific research which operates under the auspices of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party.—*Ed.*

THEORETICAL DEBATE: IDEAS AND REALITY

CONTROVERSIAL INTERDEPENDENCE: WHAT NEXT?

The idea of our world being interdependent is central to new political thinking. But interdependence is not just the *starting point* for this concept. It is also the *nucleus* of new approaches and theoretical postulates and the fullest and most forceful reflection of the essence of today's controversial realities. It is a *new category* in our philosophy, but not all that unexpected in Marxism.

Some theorists consider new political thinking, based on the idea of an "interdependent world", to be a revision of, a deviation from, or almost a betrayal of Marxism. They could not be further from the truth. They seem to be captive to a one-sided vision in which the world is divided by antagonism, and irreconcilable total confrontation is the dominant trend of world social development. By contrast, the founders of Marxism attached much importance to the "interdependence" of countries and peoples, and thought that no revolutionary theory could evolve without a proper consideration of this factor.

In one of their early works, "The German Ideology", Marx and Engels noted "all-round dependence" as a very important feature of world development, one that could bring people of different nations "into practical connection with the production (including intellectual production) of the whole world and make it possible for them to acquire the capacity to enjoy this all-sided production of the whole earth (the creations of man)".¹ It was not a chance observation: Marx and Engels proposed a solid concept which defined the historical bounds of "all-round dependence" and "universal history", which, as the founders of our philosophy noted, were not the primordial attributes of humanity but a result of development: only under capitalism did the once isolated nations become dependent on one another in every way. They also laid bare the economic (i.e., basis-related) underpinnings of that phenomenon: "...large-scale industry universalised competition..., established means of communication and the modern world market", "it produced world history for the first time, insofar as it made all civilised nations and every individual member of them dependent for the satisfaction of their wants on the whole world, thus destroying the former natural exclusiveness of separate nations".²

That materialistic explanation of the emergence of world interdependence was expounded further in the "Manifesto of the Communist Party", which drew the important conclusion: "In place of the old local and national

seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal inter-dependence of nations".³

The "Manifesto" had the following to say about future "universal history" and its importance in revolutionary theory and practice: "All-round dependence, this primary natural form of the *world-historical* co-operation of individuals, will be transformed by this communist revolution into the control and conscious mastery of these powers, which, born of the action of men on one another, have till now overawed and ruled men as powers completely alien to them".⁴

World interdependence was a major theoretical challenge to Lenin, and the postulate that "we live not only in separate states, but also in a certain *system* of states",⁵ and should therefore think in terms of that *system*, was central to his theory of revolution. In his key work on political economy, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Lenin sought primarily to demonstrate the *complete picture* of the world capitalist economy in the early 20th century. He formulated the general definition of world interdependence, unravelled its structure, and characterised in detail its components and the relationships between them;⁶ apart from everything else, it was an important methodological example of the thoroughness required in analysing the complex and controversial mix of diverse elements comprising integral world development.

So, in expounding their concepts, the theorists of new thinking do not start from scratch but rely on a long and solid *Marxist-Leninist tradition*. Naturally, the concrete forms of interdependence, its components and their controversial relationship are essentially different from what they were in Marx's and Lenin's time. Now the concept of an "interdependent and controversial world" involves an analysis of the co-existence of the two social and political systems at a time of global problems, primarily the risk of nuclear and ecological catastrophes and a crisis of our civilisation, which can be resolved only by the joint efforts of all humanity. At the same time this concept should be expanded to take into account today's tumultuous processes, including the rapid scientific and technological revolution and perestroika. Scientists and philosophers have to explore ways of resolving dangerous controversies in "universal history" and achieving a fundamentally new economic, political and cultural integration between

East and West, North and South, between all the regions of the world.

The relations between the "capitalist centre" and the "developing periphery" figure prominently among these problems. They are discussed below by Rafic SAMHOUN, member of the Political Bureau of the Lebanese Communist Party.

THE PAST AND PRESENT OF DEPENDENCE

- **How accurately does the concept of an "interdependent world" reflect the character and essence of relations between the centre and the periphery of capitalism? Can it be used to evaluate them?**

It certainly can. "Interdependence" is applicable to relations between the centres of capitalism and the developing countries, especially in terms of the search by humanity as a whole for ways of assuring the survival of civilisation, curbing the arms race, averting an ecological catastrophe, and settling regional conflicts which have worldwide implications. A serious theoretical analysis of these problems is needed, but Marxists have tarried. I don't think, however, that the concept represents all the intricacies of relations between capitalist countries and the Third World. The growth of "interdependence" (mostly because of the need to resolve global problems) is closely linked to the increasing "dependence" of the periphery on the imperialist centres in terms of economic and political development, which means a contradictory relationship between "interdependence" at one level and "dependence" at another. I think that "dependence" is the dominant aspect of relations between the periphery and the centre today.

- **But what are the principal forms and aspects of "dependence"?**

To begin with, there are countless covert economic levers operated by omnipotent forces through world financial centres and transnational corporations. These levers make it possible to keep the Third World countries divided, to determine the direction, rate and level of their economic growth, and to control their resources, and in this way to perpetuate dependence, or inequitable interdependence, if you will. Further evidence of this lies in the fact that whenever the merest possibility of rebellion against dependence appears in any country or region, military force or other means of "containment" are brought into play.

- **But what about the development trends? Will the dependence of the periphery on the centres grow (with the resultant exacerbation of the struggle), or will interdependence prevail (and lead to broader cooperation)?**

Last century, describing the initial accumulation of capital, Marx noted that this process had started with the

open plunder of the colonies. Today the gap between the capitalist centres and the periphery is widening and the dependence of the latter on the former growing stronger as a result of the prolonged exploitation of the Third World countries. Certain theorists argue that this gap can be closed within the capitalist system through industrialisation. But they are wrong because *backwardness is qualitative as well as quantitative*. Historically, it is primarily the result of large imbalances in the developing economies. From the outset the rates, volume and pattern of production in them were determined by the parent states, who, naturally, ignored the interests of the dependent peoples. As a consequence, over the years most of the peripheral states developed as monocrop economies.

There is another important qualitative difference between the centres and the periphery: when the industrial revolution destroyed feudalism, a "pure bourgeoisie" rose from the ashes. But in the former colonies the evolution of the bourgeoisie was distorted because of economic deformities. The ruling class in many Third World countries was a symbiosis of feudal lords and the bourgeoisie, but the latter was immature and of a compradore kind, which perfectly suited the West.

What I mean is that with this historical legacy *it is impossible to narrow the gap quickly, to say nothing of catching up with the industrialised powers*. The gap continues to widen geometrically.

- **There are many facts confirming your arguments. But the flow of social progress has influenced the countries of the periphery, though in controversial ways, and questions of their development should therefore be posed differently. Now that the movement of "universal history" has changed course, is it correct to talk of the gap between the centres and the periphery growing geometrically?**

Of course, the international division of labour, once imposed on the dependent countries, is not what it used to be. Capitalism is quick to react to change, and adapts itself instinctively. However, the former parent states also pursued a well-thought-out strategy in the turmoil following the disintegration of the colonial system. That was how a second type of the international division of labour emerged: only those industries whose output was needed by the centres—such as mining and petrochemicals—appeared in developing countries. National industries began to emerge in several countries. But all that did not substantially alter the relations between the centres and the Third World.

These relations today are determined primarily by the expansionistic policies of transnationals, which profit by farming out some types of production, including manufacturing, to the periphery. The reasons are many, including labour costs which are high in the industrialised countries and low in the Third World, new markets in the developing countries, and ecological pressures in the capitalist

centres, which try to shift to the periphery such "dirty" industries as aluminium and steel.

- ***At the same time there emerge newly industrialised states which, judging by a number of indicators, can hardly be classified as backward. Some prospects have opened up before them, and their progress is often attributed to the transnationals' activities. What do you think about the arguments that these corporations' role in the world today is not just to increase the capitalist centres' dominance over the periphery, but also to involve the latter, though with contradictions and conflicts, in the world economy, and to transfer technologies, information and advanced industrial and organisational expertise to those countries?***

In terms of the new international division of labour, one thing is clear, I think: export-oriented industries operate under the terms laid down by the major capitalist markets, while the development of national industries whose output is meant to replace imports still depends on transnationals' policies, foreign credits, and imported technology and knowhow. That is why the developing countries have to open the door to transnationals and agree to their participation in investment programmes, operation on the local market, export policies, etc., even under unfavourable terms.

Several developing countries have created modern industries, but these are not independent or self-sufficient. For example, the industrialisation of Saudi Arabia, the richest Arab country, is fully attuned to transnationals' plans: they take decisions on industrial capacity, the level of technology transfers, the type of output, marketing strategies, etc. In short, *Western corporations fully and continually control industrialisation processes in the Third World in order to further their own interests.*

Of course, new tendencies are generated by the logic of world economic development, the scientific and technological revolution and the struggle of the developing states for a new international economic order. A number of countries have really made economic progress. But the overall dominant trend still is growing dependence, as is forcefully illustrated by the skyrocketing external debt. In 1982, the developing countries' external debt was \$626 billion, and debt servicing amounted to \$131 billion a year. Today, debt has exceeded \$1,000 billion, and debt servicing has almost doubled. *Eventually, debt servicing payments will exceed the Third World's entire earnings.*

You have mentioned the prospects of newly-industrialised countries, such as Brazil and Mexico. For various historical reasons, their development has been different from that of most peripheral states. But I wouldn't overestimate the scope and significance of their achievements. I don't think that they have struck out on a drastically different path. All of them are in the thrall of the same mechanism of dependence, and the levers are manipulated by transnationals and international financial centres.

The burden of external debt is weighing more and more heavily both on the backward nations and on the more industrialised Third World states. *Whether credits are given to "non-industrialised" or "semi-industrialised" states, whether they are used to develop export-oriented or import-substituting industries, the result is the same: most of the surplus product generated in the Third World is taken away by the capitalist centres. The debt bondage guarantees this.*

THE DYNAMICS OF TENDENCIES

- ***But does debt always mean bondage? The "peripheral" countries are not the only ones in the red: the US is the world's biggest debtor. The causes of that economic ailment in industrialised and developing countries and its effects on them differ, of course. Some countries have got into trouble because of their participation in the arms race, others because of the adverse world market situation or incompetent government. Some countries have borrowed just to keep their heads above water, others in a bid to catch up with the leaders, still others in the hope of increasing their lead. In other words, isn't the debt problem something more than merely a manifestation of relations of "bondage"?***

I agree that world debt is a complex and multidimensional problem, and the debts of individual countries should be analysed on a case-by-case basis because not every debt means bondage. But the developing countries unquestionably have a noose around their necks.

Debts incurred by the rich are wholly dissimilar to those incurred by the poor: the former do not feel the pinch, but the latter are heading for bankruptcy. When the dollar drops and interest rates go down, American goods become more competitive, and the assets kept in US banks by the Arab oil-rich countries, for example, tend to depreciate. The developing debtor countries gain from the lowering of debt servicing payments, but lose out from the drop in prices for their exports. In 1986, for example, their gain was \$5.5 billion, but their loss totalled \$43 billion, that is, eight times as much. If the dollar rallies and interest rates go up, American goods become less competitive, the US trade balance and balance of payments worsens, but the debtors to American banks are even more helpless because they have to borrow at higher interest to repay earlier debts. They become even more dependent, while the US gets more capital for new investment projects, which strengthen the American's hand in competition with other developed capitalist countries.

That seesawing of exchange and interest rates is a complex process, but when all is said and done, those who pull the strings always win. The dollar remains the major world currency.

It is even more worrying that *the Third World debt*

resembles a new form of non-equivalent exchange. The increasing discrepancy between prices for goods from the centre and those for goods from the periphery, i.e., non-equivalent exchange, is another means of plundering the Third World countries.

- ***You say that exchange is becoming increasingly unfair. But a number of Marxist scholars disagree. Admittedly, prices for new technology grow and those for raw materials decline according to the logic of the scientific and technological revolution, they say, but on the whole the exchanges of those basically different products are based on the world social costs of production. So there is no "plunder" of the periphery through exchange. What do you say to this?***

All the same, trade relations are unfair. Western protectionism, for example, adversely affects the whole of the Third World.

Then there is technological dependence. In 1975, the industrialised countries held 94% of all patents. The periphery had a mere 6%, but 85% of these were controlled by transnationals. Moreover, when developing countries buy patents, they have to accept a host of restrictive terms with regard to application, duration, etc. Another problem is the "brain drain": the periphery loses more than 25,000 specialists a year.

- ***But isn't it only natural that able people will try to find the best outlets for their talents, particularly since the Third World has far fewer such opportunities today? Don't you think that humanity gains more from this than from unrealised intellectual potential?***

Yes, I read such ideas in the Western press, but I think that the top echelons of international capital rather than humanity as a whole stand to gain from such intellectual "migration". Intellectuals are few and far between in developing countries. Perhaps the capitalist centres can offer them better opportunities today. But should we accept this as predetermined? We would be acknowledging that the West will remain technologically superior forever and that the periphery will remain dependent for as long. The Western powers will go to any lengths to perpetuate such a situation. The influence of the Western financial centres on Third World economies is common knowledge. Before granting credits, they take a detailed "picture" of the economic situation of the recipient country, including its financial, trade, wage and tax policies, the operation of the public and private sectors, etc. Only then is the decision on credit made. The only conclusion is that the *developing countries are being increasingly subordinated to the economic needs of the capitalist centres*, and "brain snatching" is one form of the continued plunder of the Third World by those centres.

In other words, I have no wish to look for any infinitesimal benefits that the policy of oppression pursued

by international capital may or may not yield. I absolutely disagree with those Western authors who argue that, in any case, the capitalist centres help developing countries defend their national sovereignty by supplying them with weapons, or that the economic contacts made by the transnationals' subsidiaries in developing countries promote the latter's rapprochement, and so on. All this is propaganda—the facts are somewhat different.

In the past few years the Persian Gulf countries alone have spent \$400 billion on weapons. Despite these astronomic outlays, none of them can guarantee their own national borders. Why waste huge funds on useless hardware instead of encouraging genuine development? The reason is simple: it is the common interest of the capitalist centres and the governments of the countries in question. The West makes money from the arms trade, and the buyers, who want to consolidate their rule, are the regimes which perfectly suit those centres. Rather than promoting rapprochement between neighbours, such a policy exacerbates contradictions among them, aggravates ethnic, religious and border conflicts, and prevents even the minimum coordination of political and economic efforts which could lead to practical success in development.

TOWARDS EQUAL COOPERATION

- ***Preventing the militarisation of the periphery, abolishing the world arms trade and promoting closer interdependence among the developing states are among those key problems which are crucial to a safe future for humanity. What is the way to achieve this?***

There are two types of development. One consists in the creation of an *independent national economy and the rational overhauling of social and economic structures*. I do not mean that such an economy has to be built on an uninhabited island, as it were; in other words that it has to be immune to external factors and isolate itself from world processes. Such a national economy is part of an "interdependent world", but that interdependence should rest on the principles of greater democracy, fairness and equality.

The other type of development found in today's integral world is drastically different. It is represented by economic models *dependent on the capitalist centres*. But the latter road is dangerous and fraught with risks not just for the Third World but for humanity as a whole because the gap between the centres and the periphery will grow catastrophically. In other words, I don't think that the latter type of development holds any promise.

An independent national economy, could be developed in the following ways: firstly, a drastic revision of the entire complex of existing economic relations, which will involve a long and arduous struggle for a new international economic order; secondly, an equally arduous

struggle for "disarmament for development"; thirdly, a radical change of government in most of the developing countries and the establishment of democratic governments which would speak for most of the people and guarantee their involvement in the making and fulfillment of decisions. Government by the people would be able to regulate domestic accumulation and consumption, husband resources, strengthen the public sector on a new basis, and eventually put an end to national dependence.

■ **Your critics might say that the goal of an "independent national economy" is past history. The national economies are growing increasingly dependent now that the problem is one of building a global survival economy; in other words, the drastic restructuring of the universal technological basis. And don't you think that the weakening of the public sector in several countries is a logical process? The scientific and technological revolution opens up new opportunities for economic management and lays bare the limitations of statist regulation of any economy.**

I said that independent national development fits into world processes. But that way is incompatible with relations of dependence and inequality: there must be a break. It should be integrated into a fairer and more united world. If "disarmament for development" becomes a permanently operating factor, broad opportunities will appear for the establishment of a new international economic order. But this is unimaginable without the creation of independent national economies, which I consider the most important today.

As for the public sector, practice shows that the trouble lies not in it as such, but in those who run it. The public sector can operate efficiently only on new, truly democratic principles which guarantee the mass of the working people control of it.

■ **You've said that the restructuring and democratisation of international economic relations are closely linked with disarmament and the conversion of war industries, primarily in developed countries, to civilian production. But the problem is not that simple, as everyone knows. Conversion will require new investment, and they must be used wisely if "disarmament for development" is to materialise. Have adequate forms and methods of such conversion already been worked out?**

The problem of conversion is very involved, but if a solution is not found soon, it will become incomparably more complex. The more sophisticated war production grows, the more difficult it will be to convert it to civilian production. Many specialists are right to ask: if a warplane can be reequipped as a passenger airliner, what shall we do with a Star Wars laser gun or an atomic-powered submarine? So I think that the forces of social progress, both in the centres and in the periphery, should press for con-

version today rather than for future plans. Everyone, with the exception of the military-industrial complex of course, stands to gain from this.

Much will depend on which forces are going to supervise conversion processes and the application of the resources released through them to benefit the working people, to fight backwardness, etc. This faces us with the problem of government. The bourgeoisie has a record of being unable to lead the peripheral countries onto the road of independent economic development. Even those regimes which, having come to power with the support of the petty and middle bourgeoisie, try at once to put an end to backwardness, soon give up their good intentions and turn into a compradore stratum almost wholly dependent on foreign capital.

Past history also shows that no party can accomplish the tasks of the present stage of development singlehanded. Their fulfillment can be guaranteed only by an *alliance of broad class forces* based on real pluralism and true democracy in intra- and inter-party relations, and involving workers, peasants and the petty and middle bourgeoisie, i.e., the greater part of the population, who suffer from dependent development. It is these forces that can make "disarmament for development" a reality.

■ **What do you think of the latest hypotheses put forward by the West European Left worried about the fate of the Third World? Can their ideas help rid international relations of selfishness, impart a sense of morality to world economic development and create a new world social climate?**

A transition to equal cooperation is hardly conceivable without a broad alliance of the traditional progressive forces and the new democratic and alternative movements in every part of the world, or without the introduction of new thinking into international practice. Many-sided interaction is a must in an "interdependent world", and *new political thinking* is the basis for it. It helps resolve problems which only recently seemed insuperable.

The questions were posed and the answers prepared for publication by WMR staff member Vladimir GAVRILOV.

The Commission on General Theoretical and Global Problems plans to continue the discussion of the Marxist-Leninist concept of the "universality and interdependence of history" and our time.

1 Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 51.

2 Ibid., p. 73.

3 Ibid., Vol. 6, p. 488.

4 Ibid., Vol. 5, pp. 51-52.

5 V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 35, p. 273.

6 See Ibid., Vol. 22, pp. 189, 258-264.

THE READER JOINS THE DISCUSSION

TWO VIEWS ON THE "CRISIS" OF MARXISM

As a basis for discussion, this year's Nos 1 and 2 of WMR carried articles by, respectively, Damian Pretel, "Marx's Philosophy: From a Dogmatic Interpretation to Creative Development", and by Semou Pathe Gueye, "The 'Crisis of Marxism': Myth and Reality". Both pieces have stirred our readers to express their own, often diametrically opposed views on the development of Marxist thought.

IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH MARXISM, BUT WITH ITS REPRESENTATIVES

Dear Comrades,

With a sense of great awkwardness I read in the 2nd issue the article by Semou Pathe Gueye on the "crisis of the methodology of Marxism". This publication disconcerted me in the first instance because it is not constructive and helps little in discussing the issue raised. Essentially, whether the author wants it or not, it limits itself to the introduction into Marxist terminology of the time-worn formula about the crisis of our doctrine. He must know that this has been borrowed from bourgeois scholarship, which for over a century now has been striving to interpret the development of knowledge within the scientific theory of the revolutionary working-class movement in its own spirit—first anti-communist, then anti-Soviet. Naturally, all the supposed "crises" and "flaws" of Marxism have been punctured by the facts of life.

If you miss the subject, there's no use arguing about terms. In order to escape semantic manipulation you should understand the issue more thoroughly. This makes it obvious that the real discourse is not about a "crisis" or the "unworkability" of Marxism, but about the need to develop it creatively and use it on a substantially changed terrain of struggle. Perhaps the most fundamental issue is that of the interdependence that exists between the campaign for peace and the campaign for social progress. In the face of a possible thermonuclear catastrophe, it is not only being raised in an entirely new way, but also involves, at different stages, the accomplishment of specific tasks that meet the concrete historical situation of each particular country.

It would be absurd to search the old recipes for answers to new questions. But it is utterly nonsensical to give up theoretical principles and set aside the Marxist-

Leninist method. If that happens, it is not a "crisis", but merely a departure from Marxism.

As to the interdependence mentioned above (between the fight for peace and social progress), it is the Marxists—and this can be proven with facts in hand—who have turned this issue into a centre of attention for the world community. They have also come up with the initiative to make it a top priority in modern scholarship. It is enough to recall the numerous UNESCO undertakings of the 1970s or the big 1983 Berlin international conference "Karl Marx and Contemporaneity—the Struggle for Peace and Social Progress", attended by representatives of communist, workers', socialist and social-democratic parties and national revolutionary and liberation movements. The conference proved the irresistible vitality and dynamism of Marxism-Leninism. Many speakers there emphasised that the doctrine of Marx, Engels and Lenin remains the right theory for our times. To grasp the importance of this issue for humanity, one has only to reread the forum documents. Subsequent events have borne out their predictions.

This is also the case with other topical problems which have been raised and found certain answers in the documents of communist and workers' parties. Why all this talk about a "crisis" without constructively discussing the practical, political and theoretical questions that life itself is bringing forward? Marxism-Leninism is a creative, developing doctrine. If you can't see this, you shouldn't pass off your lack of understanding as a crisis of theory. It has nothing to do with Marxist science, but with its representatives! Just because a scientific hypothesis is wrong, or a practical experiment fails, doesn't mean we should "abolish" a particular field of human knowledge. Incidentally, the CPSU's merciless criticism of its own past errors is the most convincing reply to this question. I regard this process as a return to Marxism and as a proof of its continuing viability and relevance.

Marxist-Leninist science is now under particularly

heavy fire from its opponents. Bourgeois ideologues question not only Marxism-Leninism as a whole, but also each of its underlying tenets. Thus, Western falsifiers are now trying to convince the masses that the class struggle has been devalued. In the face of global problems, especially the prevention of a nuclear disaster, they see it as increasingly irrelevant, if not totally anachronistic. In one way or another, due to their overemphasis on the mutually subordinated nature of humankind and class interests, some of our contemporaries rise to the bait. Yes, it is true that global problems affect all human beings on earth, regardless of their social origin. But to infer their class neutrality from this is a dangerous self-deception.

One more point. Gueye's hollow position on a "lag in contemporary Marxist thought" again suggests that he hasn't done his homework. Of course, "we have no reason to be overly complacent" and must be ready to "face facts". But we must face the real facts, not our own subjective imaginings.

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METHOD OF EXISTENCE —DEVELOPMENT

An apparently startling contradiction. Recently, US sociologist Neil Smelser polled leading Western scientists on which social theory had become the most prestigious over the last 20 years; about 80% said Marxism. Yet a well-known figure in the communist movement, Semou Pathe Gueye, Political Bureau member and Secretary of the Central Committee of the Senegal Party of Independence and Labour, now speaks about a "crisis" of Marxist thought in present-day conditions.

But there is no real contradiction. It is because Marxists are so critical toward themselves—and their theory as it stands at present—that they are openly and sharply declaring that its lag behind life is impermissible. Hence Marxism's growing prestige in the academic community.

I welcome Comrade Gueye's bold and constructive article. Yes, we have often read about a "crisis of Marxism" in the publications of bourgeois researchers. They see it as a blind alley, as the "end" of Marx's teaching. Zbigniew Brzezinski's statement that Marxism has revealed its inherent inability to deal with the social problems of the second half of the 20th century is a case in point.

However, Gueye does not identify with Brzezinski or his ilk, writing instead, with biting sarcasm, about certain bourgeois ideologues who "sound as though they are delivering a funeral oration" over the works of Marx.

In his opinion, Marxism is an "indispensable theory", one which is creatively developing and "will enable the Communists to discharge their mission". His whole article, as he himself notes, is imbued with life-assertiveness, it is "a hymn to renewal, like Beethoven's Ninth".

By the "crisis situation" in theory, Gueye does not

mean imminent bankruptcy and decay. On the contrary he suggests that it is about to rise to a new level of development, that it is on the eve of renewal.

Perhaps he was a little too pointed in his use of terms, and should have limited himself to speculation: Marxist theory is on the verge of a new spiral of development, this step forward has to be made, etc. I am convinced that such a moderate, "narrative" tone is not suited to the present day, when many of our former theoretical positions are no longer directly applicable to today's reality and are becoming insufficient for its understanding and consequent transformation in the name of social progress. Gueye's service lies precisely in the fact that by his pointed approach he warns that Marxist theoretical thought is lagging behind the challenges of our time. At the same time he encourages us to search for answers to the new realities.

Gueye, in effect, writes about a *critical juncture* in the development of Marxist theory, pointing out that unless we begin sounding the alarm over its loss of touch with reality, irreparable damage may be caused to the struggle for social progress. And I think he is correct in attributing this theoretical lag to the absence of an exhaustive analysis of the "crisis" and "precrisis" situations in a number of socialist states, and to the serious difficulties being experienced by the communist movement in the capitalist countries.

His call "to face facts and do all that is necessary to renew and update our own theoretical concepts and political actions" is certainly to my liking. I would just stress more emphatically the idea that the development of Marxism cannot rely exclusively on the use of its own, "internal resources", or on the "self-development of ideas", the logical deduction of some categories from others. Marx's teaching moves forward primarily by way of a scrupulous investigation of life, and on the basis of generalisation of practice. I would urge the *WMR*, fully in accordance with the sharp methodological treatment of questions that is present in these articles by Gueye and Pretel, to publish more works in which the reader can find contemporary assessments by Marxists of the new social reality.

It is no secret that in the last third of the 20th century Marxism has encountered large and complex problems. How do we explain that the socialist countries, adhering to this theory, have begun to fall behind the capitalist states in industrial development, in the growth of productivity and in the standard of living? The socialist ideal has begun to lose its value and attraction in people's eyes.

Marxism has also come up against another difficulty. Is it possible today to explain with any degree of clarity why the same capitalism that we invariably saw as a decaying monster lumbering towards inevitable destruction has turned out to be exceptionally tenacious, has advanced its productive forces tremendously and won major victories in scientific and technological progress?

It is worth noting here that Lenin never regarded the crisis of capitalism as stagnation. "It would be a mistake

to believe," he wrote, "that this tendency to decay precludes the rapid growth of capitalism.... On the whole, capitalism is growing far more rapidly than before."¹

The relationship between the two opposed sociopolitical formations in conditions of increasing world interdependence gives rise to very important and, I would add, very complex questions. In order to solve these questions, it is necessary not only to study the topical problems of our time most carefully, but also in many ways to rediscover the enormous theoretical wealth that has been kept in the creative arsenal of Leninism.

When, guided by materialist dialectics, we set about defining late-20th-century socialism, we should see not only the contradictions, but also the link and continuity between social formations. Lenin used to stress that the dialectical opposites are interpenetrating, as well as mutually exclusive. *This also applies to the two social formations, which both negate and penetrate each other.* Leftist dogmatism sees only that they are opposites. Yet Marx and Lenin regarded "communism as something which develops out of capitalism".²

Socialism inherits, takes in, critically reworks, and reconstitutes all that was progressive in preceding formations. Lenin criticised those who "confine themselves to abstractly comparing 'capitalism' with 'socialism'",³ who refused and did not know how to place the achievements of the former at the service of the new society. He wrote: "'We' continue saying now and again that 'capitalism is a bane and socialism is a boon'. But such an argument is wrong."⁴

As the new society rose and developed Lenin attached great importance to a conscious linking of such opposites as socialism and capitalism and socialism and trade. This

is because the opposites, due to their contradictory and heterogeneous nature, contain elements which head objectively in the same direction, and thus temporarily coincide with each other. Thus state capitalism and socialism, though they are opposites, both rest on large-scale production, on the advanced methods of work organisation and on the use of the latest machinery. Lenin proceeded from the premise that it is necessary to make the capitalist methods and forms of production work for socialism. State capitalism under Soviet power, he wrote, is "the threshold of socialism, the condition of its firm victory".⁵

...Yes, we are living in a "watershed" period—a watershed in socialist and capitalist countries and in the Third World. An open acknowledgement of this—the mobilisation of all theoretical resources for a serious and profound study of modern problems—is a guarantee that Marxism was and remains the greatest intellectual and political force of our time. I am convinced that perestroika and new political thinking are the surest sign of a creative development and renovation of Marxism.

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1 V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 300.

2 Ibid., Vol. 25, p. 471.

3 Ibid., Vol. 27, p. 341.

4 Ibid., Vol. 32, p. 350.

5 Ibid., Vol. 27, p. 351.

REFLECTING ON RELIGION AND IRRELIGION

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In Latin America the mass participation of believers in the revolutionary struggle (to use Lenin's phrase, "political protests in religious guise")¹ has over the last few decades become so widespread and obvious that an unbiased interpretation of some long-standing conceptual and terminological stereotypes is in order. An atheism which is elevated into dogma and which humiliates the believers often hinders the fighting unity of the working people. Based on Marx's statements, a leading expert on religion, the Brazilian communist philosopher Dirceu Lindoso here suggests new approaches to the question of religion and irreligion. His article is being published as a matter for discussion.

Atheism, as a philosophical concept and a moral posture, is nothing more than the preliminary phase in the much broader ethico-philosophical system of irreligion. What is today commonly understood by atheism is the negation of divinity, the negative criticism of God. Quite often such views also determine the evolution of theoretical thought. But can we entirely reduce Marxism to an ideological atheism? Revolutionary practice appears to indicate that the identification of Marxism with atheism does not resolve the problem of the relationship between Marxism and religion.

The experience of revolutionary struggle shows that, from the viewpoint of practice, this identification usually leads to a deadlock. The barren atheism of the anarchists, with its intolerance of all religious forms, is a case in point. However, liberation movements in some countries have convincingly demonstrated that Communists and believers can cooperate successfully. We ought to bear this in mind.

The critique of religion in classical Marxism focussed mainly on religious practices and traditional theologies. To simply copy this critique, without taking into consideration the fact that, at least in Christianity, religious practices and a new theology have emerged that stand in opposition to the established pastoral practices and to the traditional theologies, would be a mistake. The revelation of the content of this new theology, and these new practices that have emerged in Christianity, is fundamental to the relationship between Marxism and religion. In his "Critique of the Gotha Programme", Marx not only defended the

German Catholics from Lutheran intolerance, as enshrined in Bismarck's anti-Catholic laws, but also managed a critique of religious chimeras. In other words, while criticising religion itself, Marx was defending the German Catholic communities as they fought for their survival.

Atheism is not a specific feature of Marxism. It goes back to the two-pronged materialist concept of History and Nature. The tradition of materialism is antique, and in 18th-century European culture flourished in the works of the bourgeois materialist philosophers, such as Holbach, La Mettrie and Helvétius. This materialism, according to the Russian revolutionary Plekhanov, then served the interests of the French revolutionary bourgeoisie. The bourgeois revolutionary thought of that epoch was characterised by the preaching of anti-clericalism, anti-monarchism and anti-feudalism. Yet the bourgeois atheism of that century did not question the foundations of the new economic, social and political order that emerged from the ruins of the *ancien regime*. On the contrary, it justified them. In the case of the bourgeois thinkers of the 18th century, the critique of religion did not become a criticism of bourgeois right, but substantiated it.

Atheism has had diverse historical contents. There is antique atheism, like that of the Greek philosopher Democritus of Abdera (460-370 B.C.), of a cosmological nature, who asserted that all sensations were provoked by material images, denied the existence of gods and said that there was no immortal Highest Being (Theos). There is the atheism of the 18th century, maintained by the revolutionary bourgeois philosophers; and there is, finally, the scientific atheism of the 19th and 20th centuries. The question now is, *should Marxism identify itself with atheism or, overcoming this posture, become identified with irreligion?*

Here we have two concepts which are fundamental to Marxist reflection. The first, the concept of atheism, the substance of which is the negative critique of God; the second, the concept of irreligion, which forsakes the negative critique of God and lays an epistemological basis for the scientific criticism of all the religious forms and their content, but at the same time recognises the legitimacy of religious communities, and of co-existence between believers and nonbelievers based on a common project for the emancipation of Man.

The fact is that the categories of Marxism are not exclusive, and that we can use them in the context of religious theories, as do some theoreticians of liberation theology.² In its turn, Marxism has inherited certain atheistic stereotypes from the previous forms of thought which contested the facts of religion. Yet in its theoretical content and practical actions, atheism is usually profoundly aggressive. It forgets that the religious forms are culturally based and that, like everybody else, *Homo religiosus* is a social and political being who needs the same material necessities for survival. Moreover, Marxist irreligiosity cannot be reduced to a negative critique of God, because this stand is insufficiently constructive, as the German

philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach, writing before the Marxists, unambiguously proved.

Unlike atheism, Marxist irreligiosity, as a moral category, has a humanistic content: it recognises that the believer, as an exponent of spirituality and as a custodian of what is sacred in society, also participates, as a worker, in the accumulation of public wealth. The great religious masses, in the cities and in the villages, are formed of ordinary labouring people, that is, factory workers and poor peasants. Public awareness of the exploitation of labour and the desire for social emancipation very often arise from reflections on the religious misery of these exploited populations. As they develop, these liberating ideas may express themselves in religious forms of struggle against capitalist exploitation in the cities and against the exploitation of the latifundistas in the countryside.

This is one of the secrets of the success of liberation theology in Latin America. In their pastoral work, its adherents take into account the real needs of the exploited religious masses, establishing their own conditions of struggle from the viewpoint of Christian grassroots communities, and politicising them by means of a discourse in which they use basic Marxist categories. Although religions may have reactionary components, this does not mean that the masses of believers are naturally reactionary. However, militant atheism prefers to ignore such facts, which appear to us fundamental to any understanding between Marxists and Christians in the course of social struggles and revolution.

Marxism now wants to overcome this aggressive atheism, and to establish in its theory and practice new premises for mutual understanding between religion and the humanism of its irreligion. Of course, as Communists, we scientifically criticise the formal and substantive elements of religion which alienate people from society. But it should not be forgotten that the believer is also a kind of social vessel, preserving religion as the chief condition of hope. For without hope religion is impossible, and socialism even less so.

What unites believers and nonbelievers on the international scene today is an awareness of the fact that our survival depends on this mutual understanding. A world nuclear catastrophe would destroy everybody, religious or not. Marxist theoreticians and new-generation Christian theologians are both equally motivated in the fight for social emancipation and the fight against the exploitation of labour and the miseries of capitalism. But Marxist flags are not the only ones in the campaign for peace and socialism. This is a question of the survival of all humanity, involving the religious, the atheistic, and the irreligious. Irreligious Marxist humanism consists fundamentally in an acknowledgement of the fact that life is a unique treasure that must be saved from the threat of nuclear destruction. We navigate in the same boat in the unexplored expanses of the Cosmos, and nuclear weapons draw no distinction between Marxists, atheists and believers. This is the fun-

damental consciousness of our epoch: we are all in the same boat.

Irreligion and the Marxist critique of religion are rooted in the atheism of Ludwig Feuerbach, one of the representatives of the so-called "Left Hegelians". In his work *Das Wesen des Christentum* (*Essence of Christianity*) (1841), Feuerbach uses Hegel's teaching to establish principles for the criticism of religion, but proceeds from the atheistic and materialist standpoint. Feuerbach wanted to reduce theology to anthropology, but this intellectual operation was not a complete epistemological triumph, and there was no final break with religion. He only succeeded in establishing how religion and knowledge negated each other. By revealing the earthly origin of the religious symbols of Christianity, Feuerbach assisted the theoretical debunking of its mythical, "divine" (transcendental) character. Thus, religious mythology assumes in his eyes a purely mundane countenance; he brings down the gods and "saints" to the level of historical personalities. Rejecting the religious cult, Feuerbach opposed to it the cult of Man—man clothed in the religious mantle of his own deification. By merely replacing one "god" with another the German philosopher set the stage for a critique of religion. His atheism, though, was not a break with religion, but only its negation.

In contrast to Feuerbach, Marx's critique of religion is not content with a negation; it does not limit itself to atheism, but moves on to new terrain, establishing the "world of man", a concept we find in his text of 1844,³ as central to irreligion. In other words, Marx regards Man, or Anthropos, as the chief source of irreligion, whereas Feuerbach's atheism rests on the concept of "God-Man", or Theanthropos ("God is Man, Man is God"). So when Marx analyses the premises for total freedom from religion, he adheres to entirely different positions, rejecting the theoretically limited God-seeking. His critique of religion breaks definitively with any illusions and rejects the "spiritual aroma" of both religion and atheism.

In this text, resplendent with literary brilliance, Marx says: "Religion is only the illusory sun which revolves round man as long as he does not revolve round himself".⁴ Abandoning once and for all the "illusory sun" of religion and criticising the religious misery of his epoch, the founder of Marxism discerns behind it the real misery of class society. He does not fight against religion by negating it, by replacing the mythical with the anthropological, but by means of an absence of any faith. His theoretical approach implies neither the negation of religion, nor the adoption of atheism, because the former would constitute religious hermeneutics,⁵ and the latter atheist hermeneutics. Marx's critique of religion moves away from both terrains, for neither the first, nor the second position helps to eliminate religion as such.

Feuerbach's method is concisely expounded in the preface to the 1843 edition of *Das Wesen des Christentum*, where the expression "Dasein zu enthüllen" ("To unbind existence") appears. In the preface to the first edition of

1841, Feuerbach pointed out that the reduction of theology to anthropology made religion an "object of consciousness", to which the method of Hegel could be applied in a "perfectly just and historically founded" way. He spoke of the objectivity of this method, comparable with analytical chemistry, and attempted on this basis to render intelligible the "language of Oriental images of the Christian religion".

Thus, the criticism of religion by Feuerbach is based on a type of analysis which he classifies, in the preface of 1843, as "*empirico- or historico-philosophical*". In analysing religious facts, Feuerbach proceeds from the object of his study, not from speculative thought. "My principal object," he wrote, "is Christianity, religion, the state of the immediate object, of the immediate essence of Man". Therefore, considering himself an atheist, Ludwig Feuerbach did not consider his views anti-Christian and defined religion as a natural, not a supernatural, phenomenon. For him atheism was an unraveling of the "mysteries" of religion, of the fact that, not by its external manifestations, but by its profound content, not by its pronouncements or imagery, but by its hidden essence, it represents the only faith in the genuineness and divinity of the human being. The philosopher debunked the Trinity and the Scriptures as "Man's self-deception", and as the "illusions of theology".

The expressions "religious illusions" and "religious misery" used by Marx go back to these definitions. Conceptually, however, the latter notion is much broader and deeper than Feuerbach's. Moreover, the difference lies in an epistemological approach to religion. What is it?

According to Feuerbach, *Homo religiosus* is the carrier of a genus *religiosum*; that is, although he is religious, he does not cease to be a conscious being. This distinguishes him from the animal, which is incapable of religious feelings. With this theoretical posture Feuerbach restored to Man the real content of his ideological horizon. In this way, he developed his teaching about the essentiality (*Wesen*) of Christianity and changed the traditional approach to religion, thereby abolishing the illusion of the theologian and the illusion of the philosopher. Feuerbach perceived the theologian's self-deception in that he takes the appearance of religion as reality; and the philosopher's self-deception in that he seeks the object of his study in his own head. From this Feuerbach drew two conclusions: religion's culminating point will be when it is transformed into its opposite, into the negation of religion; and that of philosophy—when the essence of philosophy is transformed into the negation of philosophy. Marx had in mind a critique of this purely intuitive stand in his famous 11th thesis: "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to *change* it".⁶

The core of atheism is negative faith. Since they never go beyond a negation of religion, atheists cannot *overcome all the elements* of religious thinking. Negative faith is not at all the same as a lack of any faith. Atheism still bears the distinct stamp of religious consciousness. Con-

versely, irreligion is not the same as atheism since the negation of God is not its sole component. Religiosity, transposed onto another object (that is, Man—*Ed.*) and finding expression in negative faith, is at the root of the atheist critique.

Atheism does not limit itself to abolishing religion or dissolving its transcendentality. It re-establishes faith, now of an anthropological kind, in the unique form of a negation of God, and it does this simply by supplanting in our reality, undoubtedly still capable of god-making, the Christian "living" God with its own, already-dead God of atheism.

In contrast to this, the *present task of Marxism and the contemporary proletariat is to create theoretical and practical conditions for irreligion, without in the process allowing for the slightest discrimination against believers*. The aims of the revolutionary working class stem from the dialectical-materialist concept as applied to society, nature and history. The future man, by his very essence and without any atheistic propaganda, will become a man of fundamental irreligiosity. In his "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844" Marx wrote, that since for socialist man "the *real existence* of man and nature has become evident in practice, through sense experience", the question about God—"a question which implies the admission of the unreality of nature and of man—has become impossible in practice". "Atheism, as the denial of this unreality," noted Marx, "has no longer any meaning, for atheism is a *negation of God*, and postulates the *existence of man* through this negation; but socialism as socialism no longer stands in any need of such a mediation".⁷

What distinguishes Feuerbach's critique of religion is the positive faith of *Homo religiosus*, considered as an immense subjective satisfaction and as the happiness of the believer. The power of this faith reveals itself in the faith in a power that transcends the believer and frees his subjectivity of objective fetters. That power gives happiness to the believer—a feeling which lurks for a time in the depths of his being. A true Marxist will treat such manifestations of religiosity as natural human emotions, without of course ignoring that faith has its own alienating effects. While being a purely individual matter, faith is not the possession of a single person, because its social base is collective—the community of believers. It is this community which reveals the collective sentiment of religious happiness and satisfaction. Communities of believers help to consolidate society by disseminating religious cultures or the religious forms of cultures.

Faith in divinity is not a component of Marxism, nor intrinsic to the world view of the revolutionary proletariat. However, the broad masses of working people tend to retain elements of religiosity in their social consciousness. This does not prevent them from taking the path of revolution. Indeed, revolutionary practice itself will prompt them to achieve the historical task of their own social emancipation. Only in this struggle can a significant part of the

working people, still imbued with a religious consciousness, arrive at a social consciousness that will lead them to the construction of socialism; in this way, they will absorb the social consciousness of the revolutionary proletariat. They will discover that their subjective faith is not enough to open the way to their emancipation.

Nowadays, therefore, Marxism should offer religious working people a theoretical weapon that enables them to influence reality and to intervene in History. Only by organising themselves in the political struggle for social emancipation can believers, with all their subjectivism, properly exercise this liberatory intervention. Marx considered history a "unique science". When the religious masses learn its lessons and involve themselves in revolutionary practice they will become co-participants in the struggle of the revolutionary proletariat and begin their move towards socialism as a common objective. And so this will change the contemplative position of believers, transforming their new consciousness into a material force.

This is the reason for the origination and spread of liberation theology in the countries of Latin America. Its protagonists speak openly of the real needs of the rural and urban working people, and of the oppressed minorities of Blacks and Indians. They consider the old precepts of traditional theology wholly inadequate in this respect. It is the basic categories of historical materialism which supply the theoretical and analytical backbone of the new theology, revealing the forms and the content of the process of labour exploitation in class society. It is only by adopting Marxist analysis that the new theologians have succeeded in explaining the numerous contradictions of capitalism. Marxist categories no longer frighten the exponents of liberation theology. Indeed, they help them probe the evolution of religious consciousness in societies where labour is exploited and the working masses socially subjugated. Using the categories of Marxism, liberation theologians are not only able to expose the contradictions and antagonisms of the exploitative system, and the social structure of capitalism, but also to reveal

the structural antagonisms and contradictions in their churches. Their participation in the popular struggle encourages a new consciousness under which, as Marx wrote, "the actual pressure must be made more pressing by adding to it consciousness of pressure, the shame must be made more shameful by publicising it".⁸

The objectives and hopes of the revolution are common to believers and nonbelievers, Christians and Marxists alike—such is the reality of our age. They are both working in the same direction, each with their own set of ethics which, at many points, coincide: the Marxists, with their proletarian and revolutionary ethics; the Christians, with their religious ethics placed at the service of radical transformations. And if the construction of a socialist society also interests many Christian believers, this signifies a great victory for the revolutionary masses. We can only thank the new Christians and their theologians for promoting this new consciousness in their churches and among the believers.

From now on, *Marxists and believers are united by the fundamental historic task of our epoch: to struggle against misery and social inequities, to build a new socialist society and to guarantee, both for our own survival and that of the human race, universal peace.* For, in the final instance, socialism is the guarantee of our continued existence.

1 V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 243.

2 For details see Stepan Mamontov, "Christ Was the Name of the Political Prisoner. Liberation Theology and Marxist Ideas", *WMR*, No. 10, 1988, pp. 114-122.

3 Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 175.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 176.

5 Hermeneutics (Greek) is the art of interpreting texts, in this case symbols. — *Ed.*

6 Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 8.

7 *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, pp. 305-306.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 178.





COUNTRIES, EVENTS, ANALYSIS

REFORMS AND SOCIAL PROGRESS

AN INSTRUMENT FOR TRANSFORMING SOCIETY

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What is the role of organised labour in reforms under capitalism? This question is of great concern to us, operating as we do in a country with relatively high living standards and comparatively low unemployment.

An analysis of reforms helps in correcting the picture of society painted by the Social Democrats, who hold power in Sweden and guard the existing order. This image shows an almost ideal society where the small "imperfections" of a highly developed market economy are gradually removed in agreement with the owners of capital.

The reforms have brought about significant changes in Swedish political and economic life. The working week has been reduced, pensionable age lowered, length of leave increased, and a number of safeguards against arbitrary dismissal introduced. A major gain for workers has been the introduction of an overall work pension scheme. A fairly ramified social security system, including the payment of various benefits, child allowances among them, has been set up.

These changes have markedly improved workers' living standards and they have not in any way harmed the capitalists because they have been carried out *on their terms*.

Despite 50 years of social democratic rule (minus a six-year break in 1976-1982), capital has exploited the reforms to increase its own social power and industrial dominance, and to acquire strong positions outside the country.

The growing organisation of the labour movement and the work of political parties and trade unions have been central to the realisation of workers' demands. Those changes would have been impossible if the working class had remained weak and disunited.

We continue our series of articles on the role and place of reforms in the policy of the communist parties and other democratic forces in the struggle for social progress. (See *WMR*, No. 11, 1988, pp. 80-87; No. 12, 1988, pp. 33-39; and No. 2, 1989, pp. 79-83.)

However, the *bourgeoisie* and social democracy—in spite of their dissimilar class positions and seemingly opposite arguments—have essentially been pursuing identical objectives via the policy of reforms.

Capital has received a highly educated and professionally trained workforce. At the same time, workers' living conditions and social security have been gradually improved. Consequently, the movement's original long-term goals of assuming power and the right to determine society's future have been lost behind the smokescreen of reformism.

By contrast, social democracy can point to the indisputable success of the reform policy. This has allowed it to remain the country's political leader for some considerable time. In Sweden, in the 1980s, it has been moving ideologically further to the right, a shift that involves more intensive use of market economy instruments.

The first reforms in workers' favour were introduced at the end of the 19th century in Bismarck's Germany (Prussia). The state leadership realised that an emergent industrial society could not afford to neglect the conditions for the normal reproduction of labour; it was far more advantageous to have a better-fed, well-trained and undemanding working class. Since then bourgeois governments and the capitalists have tended to accept limited reforms within the existing framework.

This was fully in line with Eduard Bernstein's theories and corresponded to the process of turning social democracy into parties which were *for* reforms, but *against* any radical social change.

These days, the bourgeoisie agrees to reforms by inventing various profit-sharing schemes, for example offering employees the chance to buy, individually or through the union, "convertible" obligations that can later be changed into stock. This kind of "participation" helps to distract unions from seeking higher pay or greater workplace democracy, and encourages the workers to be concerned above all with increasing company profits. At the same time their "joint" ownership is kept at a *safe level*.

To be sure, Communists have always worked for improvements in the life of the masses, on the clear understanding, however, that such reforms could not radically transform society. Social democracy, on the other hand, *has lost its long-term objectives*. Bernstein's phrase—"The movement is everything, the ultimate goal is nothing"—makes it obvious why this should be.

Thus Swedish society, despite a long period of social democratic rule, has been moving away from the aim of changing its foundations. Gradually, the political leadership's interests have fused with those of capital. The government's policy of encouraging profits and opposing workers' demands for higher pay throughout the 1980s has provided striking proof of this.

No less indicative has been the policy of social democratic governments in favouring the military-industrial complex and encouraging a transnationalisation of the economy.

The more intensive use of market economy instruments, which I have already mentioned, completes the overall picture in Sweden. Privatisation of part of the public sector is no longer ruled out. The drive for profit is beginning to penetrate areas where it affects social justice. Operation breakdown and the individualisation of labour in production are undermining the workers' collective struggle.

Is capital resisting the reforms or not? This is too simplistic a question. One would do better to analyse which demands come up against resistance and which are accepted, who is for and who against.

The strongest resistance is clearly against the reforms that may threaten capitalism or represent a first step towards the transformation of society.

Because social democracy in Sweden no longer sets itself this aim, it usually teams up with capital and the bourgeois parties to oppose the far-reaching communist demands for more democracy and social change.

As to the Left Party—Communists, it supports reforms which would raise living standards and benefit the working class. Yet better conditions cannot be sought without adhering to a clear-cut ideological standpoint. Otherwise, the system and government will be conserved. They are being legitimised by a reform policy based on a repudiation of labour's long-term objectives. Economic successes are grist to capital's mill. By dispensing "crumbs from the rich man's table" to the masses, it removes the urge for basic social change from the political agenda.

Throughout its existence, our party has been striving to combine economic with ideological struggle. Now that the market economy has taken off in Sweden, too often the Communists find themselves concentrating on the defence of earlier reforms, or counteracting their emasculation. Safeguarding those and determining longer-term aims is the two-pronged task set in VPK policy documents and in the party's day-to-day activities.

The evolution of modern capitalism makes *social change* all the more imperative. This means deciding on which kind of economic growth society should have. The onset of new technology and rapid urbanisation have had a diverse—and not always positive—impact on the environment and on jobs and conditions.

For the working class and its representatives, it is now even more important to use reform policy for the achievement of their long-term objectives. Improvements in people's everyday conditions must lay the groundwork for a better life. At issue is the direction of reform policy as the instrument for social change.

Prosperity is clearly not the only yardstick for living conditions. There are values which money cannot buy. Thus modern industrial society is rapidly depleting irreplaceable natural resources, locally and worldwide.

Here, too, the striving for higher living standards must be accompanied by a proper sense of responsibility. It is becoming easier to awaken this sense in people and to explain the necessity for change in those social relations which allow for the brutal exploitation of man and nature.

Communist and socialist parties and organisations are facing formidable tasks in the field of ecology, but the possibilities for solving them are also great. Independent groups have been quick to act in defence of the environment, and to protest against its destruction. The traditional Swedish parties, with their emphasis on prosperity, have found it harder to appreciate this new, socially explosive phenomenon.

This particularly applies to the Social Democrats. It took them a long time to fit their economic reform plans into the framework of capitalism, so much so that in the course of political debates, they, as well as the Liberals and neo-Liberals, were called the "concrete parties" for their inability to think afresh and adapt quickly to the problems arising in modern society.

Whether under capitalism or socialism, the prospects and forms of economic growth depend largely on the character and scale of the use of resources and on their potential harm to nature.

At the autumn 1988 elections for the Riksdag, the Concrete Parties lost mandates to what newsmen and people generally dubbed the "soft" parties, including the Communists, who had great doubts about the scope of economic growth and the ecological and social cost of prosperity.

The ideological struggle came first since the bourgeois parties had to be stopped from intercepting the new, ecological protest of voters against the Establishment. Bourgeois forces are trying to divert this protest away from capitalism and use it in their own interests.

We are also facing difficult tasks because of the presence of considerable ecological problems in a number of socialist states.

Are the reforms strengthening or weakening capitalism? From the Swedish experience one can say that it has become stronger. This is not simply because the reforms have brought the working class greater prosperity, but also a result of the pervasive influence of bourgeois ideology, which penetrated the working class and was "buttressed" by the fact that the Social Democrats in office essentially pursued a bourgeois policy and defended it with the help of bourgeois arguments.

Nationalising certain capitalist firms does not automatically open a socialist perspective. The chief thing is how power is used in society and production. And this, in turn, depends on the ideological views of governing circles and on the workers' belief in the need for progressive changes.

Such changes are unfeasible and will not pass the Riksdag until there is significant mass pressure.

In Sweden, a neoliberal economic policy is clearly in evidence. Controls over exchange transactions and incomes have been relaxed, and public sector companies'

shares are being floated as a first step to their privatisation. Market rules govern the work of wholly state-owned companies, but their existence does not in itself help in redistributing economic power.

By their policy of belt tightening and scorn for the public sector, the Social Democrats are inviting a wave of privatisation which may sweep in when the wealthy population groups demand still more concessions.

For all this, the *Communists and Social Democrats have a common denominator in the field of reforms: their social responsibility, and the need to defend the interests of the working class and the people in general.*

Although the Social Democrats favour the market economy and intend to develop it further, they are acting on behalf of the "little man". This is where they and the Communists have most in common. Both parties emerged from the working class and rely upon it. But they differ much in their views on capitalism's potential and the need for radical social transformations leading to socialism. Here, the Communists single-handedly face the Social Democrats and capital, who form a united front. True, the Centre and the Green parties have elements of anti-capitalist criticism, but this has not yet found reflection in any of their programmatic documents.

Nevertheless, we are not relaxing our drive for cooperation. In many fields the Social Democrats and the Communists can and should act unitedly, together with certain circles of the Liberals, the Christian Democrats, and the Greens.

Above all, they can fight together for peace and disarmament where constructive endeavours for the common good rather than ideological differences are the main concern. Communists, believers and the various "free" groups are more comfortable here, and a common language is easier to find.

Numerically and organisationally strong, the Social Democrats prefer to hold separate demonstrations and actions. Their tactical party considerations often prevail, which means that joint actions, numerous opportunities for which exist, are blocked.

Experience shows that cooperation is much more difficult when the issues raised touch a nerve in the life of the country or, especially, when they threaten capital's rule.

For as long as the Social Democrats are in power and the interests of the state and capital are being interwoven, any joint actions that would strike at the root of social or economic injustice are impossible.

Nevertheless, we see the value of cooperation with the Social Democrats in that it can *pave the way for a dialogue* that would encourage a re-appraisal in society of many ideas.

On the whole it is clear that the policy of reforms, as it now stands, does not threaten capitalism. Its limits depend on the strength and consciousness of the working class and its organisations.

Therefore, along with the demands for reforms which would ensure greater social justice, our party is seeking to wage an ideological struggle in defence of basic workers' rights and interests, and for profound social change.

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THE TORIES' LEGISLATIVE STICK

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The Conservative Government, elected in 1979 and re-elected twice since, has undertaken the most radical reform of labour law ever seen in the United Kingdom. This has been achieved not by a single all-embracing Act of Parliament but by a step-by-step approach attacking dif-

ferent sections along a broad front.¹ The legislative changes have two functions: the first and most obvious is to directly *inhibit trade union activity by the imposition of legal penalties; the second is to do so by influencing the attitudes and thinking of working people and trade unionists.*

There is no right to strike in UK law. For many years there have been immunities from legal action. These have now been substantially reduced in many ways. All industrial action not preceded by a ballot in favour is *out-lawed*. The balloting provisions are highly complex and further elaborated by a Code of Practice which suggests (amongst other things) that the majority should be substantial on a 70% plus turnout. Individual members can now apply to court for the prohibition of a strike if there has been no ballot. This opens up wide opportunities for

strike breakers. All forms of secondary or sympathetic action are unlawful. Pickets lose all immunity unless picketing their own place of work. They have no protection against any criminal charges.

There are more restrictions on the closed shop system. Members can apply to court for orders to restrain an alleged misapplication of union assets—every union member is entitled to inspect all the union's "accounting records". The legislation also sets up a "Commissioner for the Rights of Trade Union Members" to advise and run such litigation.

The role of this labour legislation in the Tory war of ideas by which they relentlessly pursue their goal of restructuring British society is often underestimated. Their grasp and use of the ideological aspect of the law and their harnessing of its mythology have become their potent weapon.

The Thatcher government exploits the images of the law to *further its political and economic control of labour*. In the field of employment law this exploitation has been remarkably effective. This advance of the Tories' war of ideas is of course facilitated by the huge bourgeois propaganda machine of the British popular newspapers and increasingly government controlled radio and television.

For historical reasons the British are largely in awe of the law, of lawyers and of judges. They are deeply respectful of authority, and the law, the lawyers and the judges are perceived and accepted as being of the highest authority and status. This has given rise to *ideological myths* which the Tories have successfully exploited.

Law is seen as essential for the preservation of order, to protect the weak from the strong, and to save us from anarchy and chaos. The idea serves to justify the Conservatives' anti-trade union policy. Without statutory intervention, the unions supposedly cannot be trusted to be democratic or reflect the wishes of their memberships.

The myth second only to that above, is that the law and the legal system are inherently just, fair and impartial. Such ideas are refuted by politically biased judicial decisions in the course of particular industrial disputes and by experience of corrupt and violent policemen. Thus the incursions of judges (who by training and selection are inherently supportive of the ruling elements) is encouraged by the Tories into all aspects of employment law where working class activism needs be curbed.

Only rarely does the working class or indeed the Labour movement throw off their traditional respect for the law and ignore its magisterial authority. An example has been the defiance of the injunctions in the miners strike of 1984-1985 by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM). More usually the myth prevails and inadequate mobilisation against Michael Hick's imprisonment (one of the leaders of the striking printers in 1986-1987) is but one of countless diverse examples.

The media in Britain has always assiduously en-

deavoured to maintain belief in the impartiality and dignity of the law and legal system. At the same time the "lawless thuggery" of the "Winter of Discontent" of 1979,² a total media fiction, was used to create a public image of unrestrained, undemocratic, autocratic and overpowerful trade unions which required the discipline of the Employment Act 1980. By contrast the violent police excesses against pickets in the miners strike were glossed over or treated as the occasional aberration of single officers under great provocation.

Juxtaposing the individual and the collective has a special role in the Tory war of ideas. English law is fundamentally individualistic. Collective rights, powers and freedoms are limited where they are not ignored. There are no "class actions" for example in English law. The "common law", particularly in the employment field, is based upon individual relationships. The concept of an individual contract of employment based upon a freely negotiated bargain between equal individual bargainers is of course total legal fiction. It has permitted the Tories to emphasise and enhance the legal position of the dissident individual worker at the expense of his collective colleagues. In this light must be seen the protection from "unjustifiable" union discipline for the strike breaker and the removal of protection against unfair dismissal of strikers.

The collective rights of workers who desire a closed shop are undermined by the individual right of the employer to hire who he pleases, and his action such as withholding pay imposed collectively on the workers can only be legally challenged on an individual basis.

The Tories' insistence on individual rights and their ridiculing of collective rights not only fits the existing pattern of labour law and the traditional attitudes of lawyers, it has also moved the ground of public debate about labour law from the collective to the individual. The emphasis on individualised rights has been so successful that many in the trade union movement believe that any emphasis on the extension of collective rights (e.g. to strike or to have closed shops) will alienate potential labour voters. By seeking to individualise labour relations, the Conservatives want to *break traditional collectivism and solidarity*.

As already noted, pre-strike ballots are a chief anti-union device. Having been introduced as a requirement by the Tories in 1971 and failed, they were introduced again in 1984. The insistence on pre-strike ballots is intended to promote the image of unions as undemocratic organisations which ignore their members' views when they bother to consult their members, and whose extremist leaders would, if not prevented, dictatorially lead their members into strikes which damage the public, damage the employer and damage the members. The government promoted this legislation in 1984 under the slogan of giving unions back to their members (curiously opposite to Tory philosophy in the different economic climate of 1971 when the intent was to get union leaders to stop members having "wild cat" strikes).

The idea that the government is interested in democracy is shattered by the fact that under the Employment Act 1988 a strike breaker cannot be disciplined for failing to take strike action even where the strike is lawful and preceded by a statutory pre-strike ballot in favour; even a ballot in which he may have voted with the majority. If democracy does not mean that the minority are bound by the majority decision it does not mean a lot.

The democratic myth attached to pre-strike ballots is also undermined by the fact that the ballot, no matter how overwhelming, is not binding on the employer. If there is no ballot he can sue the union. If the ballot is properly conducted he is not bound in any way by it.

This gross inequality of treatment between capital and labour has been masked by simple acceptance of the legitimacy of legislative intervention. Such acceptance has caused even trade unionists to forget the fundamental value of the autonomy of union constitutions and the internationally recognised requirement (ILO Conventions 87 and 98) that the state should refrain from interference in those constitutions.

Judicial pronouncements on the legality of an industrial action and Court Orders to desist are becoming formidable weapons in the hands of the authorities and employers. Most of the 30 or more injunctions sought (and always granted) against the National Union of Mineworkers and its Area Unions during the Miners' Strike 1984-1985 always began with a prohibition on describing the strike as "official". This was intended to convey to the public at large that this strike was not worthy of support, that it was contrary to the standards of ordinary decent people and that it threatened the very structure of society.

The Tories are also planning an assault on the traditional trade union right to "immunities". Because the law in Britain against trade unions and trade union activity has been created within 100 years by judges, trade union rights established by Parliament under the pressure of the working class franchise in better economic climates have been in the form of "immunities" from the various judge-made laws. This legal form has been exploited to the very limit by the Tories in passing the legislation of 1980-1984 by continual emphasis on the suggestion that trade unions are "above the law" or have "legal privileges" to injure innocent third parties (i.e., all apart from the employers and unionists) in industrial disputes. The restriction of such prerogatives has been presented as a justified measure to protect the interests of society as a whole.

Legal form has itself been exploited in the language of the Tory Acts. Lord Denning, President of the Court of Appeal, described one part of the Employment Act 1980 as "the most tortuous section I have ever come across". Such incomprehensible complexity was not incorporated by accident or because of the inevitably convoluted way lawyers write. The section dealing with the legality of industrial action was deliberately obscure in order to confuse and make uncertain whether any proposed industrial action would be unlawful or not. If the President of the

Court of Appeal found it tortuous what chance would a shop steward have in explaining the ramifications to a diffident and apprehensive workforce?

The Tories have not merely used the myths of the law to effect their changes, they have exploited these myths to *move the legal goal posts to create bigger and bigger no-go areas* where workers' resistance to employer power can be castigated as unlawful, and hence not worthy of the support of honest respectable citizens and indeed trade unionists. It is now the norm that the employer will seek labour injunctions against unions and officials at the outset of any dispute, the lawyer standing at the employers' right hand. Use of injunctions to intimidate workers and undermine public and trade union support is now a prime weapon in the class struggle.

There is no doubt that the labour movement has failed to resist either the Conservative labour legislation or its ideological impact. The Trades Union Congress resolution to have nothing to do with those laws taken at Wembley in 1980 has receded into oblivion. In 1987 the TUC even agreed to accept legislative intervention in trade union balloting. This picture is a marked contrast to the resistance to the Industrial Relations Act 1971 which led to the threat of a general strike and the fall of the Tory government.

The reasons for the present lack of resistance may be summarised (not in any order):

a) The weak economic position of trade unions and their activists due to a chronic growth of mass unemployment; loss of morale after three election defeats by Labour. b) The lack of union access to media to counter the ideological arguments. c) Some aspects of Tory ideology have been widely accepted amongst trade unions, such as the need for pre-strike ballot laws. d) The fact that the changes have been introduced piecemeal rather than as one comprehensive Code easily focussed on. e) The overwhelmingly compliant media which has brought public opinion just far enough to accept each round of changes.

The most fundamental thing to recognise is the fact stated by the great lawyer and human rights campaigner earlier this century, Dennis Pritt, that the *state of the law in a capitalist society is a reflection of the ability of the working class to organise against it*. The law reflects the balance at any moment of time between the power of capitalism and the organised power of labour. It follows therefore that only resistance can hold the line against further depredations and only pressure can advance and improve the position. Concessions and capitulation will only encourage further legal and ideological attack. Indeed mere lack of resistance encourages further attack, as has been seen over these last ten years.

The strategy to be adopted must be underpinned by this realisation. It is also vital that we should not be depressed or downhearted by the catalogue of anti-working class laws described above. Loss of morale not only lessens the capacity to fight, it is also unjustified in the sense that from a legal point of view, labour law now is far

more favourable than it was in the days of our forefathers 100 years ago.

One of the first elements in any strategy must be to put labour law higher up the labour movement's agenda. In countering the Tory legislation, which returns society not to "Victorian values"³ but to Victorian conditions of work and dependency, we can and should draw on our own rich history of resistance to unjust laws. This history encompasses a long period: from the Cambridge Tailors in 1725 to the above-mentioned miners' strike.

Next, resources have to be devoted to *explaining the law and the legal issues* to the nine and a half million trade union members in the country and to the wider working class, the public. We have union journals with potential readerships of millions. We have hundreds of thousands of shop stewards in touch with working people. The formation of the Institute of Employment Rights, a labour law think-tank at the service of the unions is a useful step forward, particularly whilst the TUC has no legal department.

Last but not least, it is crucial to *form a policy for the future*, to establish precisely the laws the unions want. And to set out too the arguments for them, involving economic, social and historical aspects, employing imagery which touches working-class people, and drawing on fundamental concepts of justice and human rights. This means that the unions should not rely exclusively on the Labour Party

but should formulate their own Workers' Charter. The debate round such a Charter should be wide-ranging and take into account issues such as moving towards a more sympathetic judiciary perhaps by the election of judges. Control over the employers' associations needs consideration, and so do education, training, nursery provision, social security, state benefits, etc.

I am convinced that such a programme *would be instantly understood and welcomed by ordinary working-class people* no matter how the media distorted it. It is a matter of taking a leaf from Mrs Thatcher's book and advancing the case forcefully and utilising the imagery which supports it.

1 The main changes have been brought about by the Employment Acts 1980, 1982 and 1988 and the Trade Union Act 1984. Already there is a further Employment Bill before Parliament, a consultative document "Employment for the 1990's", and a draft Code of Practice regulating Industrial Action Ballots.

2 The Conservative victory in May 1979 entailed social spending cuts, higher indirect taxes and prices, and the denationalisation of state enterprises. Increased social contradictions then led to a round of strike activity on the part of workers and TU's which far exceeded that of the previous year. —Ed.

3 Bourgeois historians tend to depict Queen Victoria's long rule in the 19th century as a period of stability and prosperity for Britain. —Ed.

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NORTHERN YEMEN: WORKING WITH UNDIMINISHED VIGOUR

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The political situation in the Yemen Arab Republic is largely shaped by the alignment of forces in the top echelons of power. Since the coup of November 5, 1967,² the country has been controlled by a relatively broad coalition in which the military and civilian bureaucracy has particularly great political weight. It also comprises the

comprador quarters, which dominate the more important sectors of the economy, and the industrial bourgeoisie. Feudal lords and the tribal aristocracy enjoy considerable influence in it.

The functioning of the YAR political system depends not only on domestic but also on external factors: the state is forced to rely in many fields on foreign assistance, which is used not so much to promote development as to maintain the expanding bureaucratic apparatus.

Objectively, the alignment of forces is a product of the country's overall backwardness. The Yemeni social structure has not taken definitive shape yet, and there is no clear-cut division between different classes or strata. This is reflected graphically in the heterogeneous composition of the ruling quarters. Extremist religious activists, very active in the political decision-making, feature prominently. Representatives of the petty bourgeoisie, the middle strata, the patriotic circles, the Septembrists,³ the Liberals and the nationalists also exert a certain degree of variegated influence on politics.

In the political report it submitted to its conference held in the latter half of 1987, the YPUP noted in this regard that "at different stages, some patriotic forces displayed dissimilar attitudes to the ruling alliance. Depending on the severity of the contradictions, they either moved closer to or distanced themselves from it... As the tide of reactionary extremism rose, these forces were docile and uncomplaining, but they became active when internal contradictions mounted within the ruling elite."⁴

While generally approving the government's foreign policy, representatives of the nationalist parties and individual patriotic activists do not support this course fully, advancing instead their own alternative programmes while believing it is too early to publicise them broadly.

The country's leadership clearly comprises two major wings which are in relative balance and agree on the more important issues—the preservation of the existing regime and the attitude to the opposition (particularly the National Democratic Front,⁵ the Nasserites and the YPUP). At the same time, these governing factions differ on many questions connected, among other things, with the country's future course, relations with Saudi Arabia, the demarcation of borders and the meaning and content of the policy of neutrality.

The right wing of the ruling forces is represented by the Moslem Brothers, some feudal clans and the parasitic bourgeoisie. They are hampering socioeconomic renewal and calling for harsher reprisals against the opposition and for a tougher attitude towards the national democratic regime of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen.

The liberal reformist wing advocates capitalist modernisation and a balanced foreign policy based on the independence and neutrality which have always characterised the country's course. This wing uses a variety of methods in its relations with the opposition, from police reprisals, blackmail and bribery, to flirting with individual activists. The liberal bloc advocates a policy of peaceful rivalry with the revolutionary regime in Southern Yemen in the hope of undermining it politically and economically.

THE REGIME AND THE OPPOSITION

Their indecision in the face of the powerful right-wing offensive has made it impossible for the advocates of modernisation to switch from slogans of freedom of action for themselves to liberties and pluralism in politics generally. The most dangerous thing is that the moderates are using the extremists' actions to blackmail the democratic opposition, which they would like to "dissolve" and have serve the regime. The inconsistency and eclecticism of those advocating modernisation is particularly obvious in legislation, where they adapt and eventually succumb to the policy of the reactionaries. For example, it was with the consent of the moderates that the Constituent People's Assembly was established, a kind of parliament which defends the interests of the ruling elite. Within the assembly, those favouring modernisation have failed to uphold

their position, to ensure the enactment of democratic laws or to end corruption and bribe-taking in the state apparatus.

The policy of the ruling alliance is in line with the trends now dominant in the Arab world—trends born of the degradation and stagnation caused by the defeat of the Arabs in the 1967 war and by the collapse of Nasser's experiment in Egypt, when in several Arab countries a period of political, social and national retrogression set in.

CIVIL RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

In Northern Yemen, this retrogression is particularly pronounced as far as civil liberties and democracy are concerned. Politics today in the YAR offers numerous examples of illegality. It is one of the few countries where dissent leads to gross violations of human rights. Under the Constitution, organised political activity is banned, and membership in an opposition party is regarded as a crime punishable by severe penalties, even by death.

There are more than 40 governmental and non-governmental agencies that arbitrarily order arrests and searches. The security services, the heads of provinces and local feudal lords can keep people in detention for years without charge. Political prisoners are subjected to mental and physical torture. No control is exercised over the activities of the punitive agencies. The security services are free to interfere in people's private affairs and to ban persons from employment in various occupations. YAR citizens must produce a certificate of loyalty in order to be hired.

In recent years the authorities have taken further steps which threaten human rights. The government has set up special secret units to deal with the opposition, up to and including the physical elimination of activists. In one of its papers the Arab Organisation for Human Rights has listed some 200 members and supporters of the National Democratic Front who fell foul of the security services in 1982-1986. All are "missing" without trace. They include Colonel Sultan Amin al-Kyrshi, a former cabinet minister in the government of the progressive President Mohammed Ibrahim al-Hamdi⁶; the well-known political activists Abdel Wareth Abdel Kerim, Ali Muthanna Djubran, Ali Khan and Ahmed Ali Zeid; and the engineers (and members of the YPUP Central Committee) Mohammed Abdallah Abdel Qahir and Yahya Mohammed Saleh al-Khazindar.

Moslem Brothers and wahhabite organisations are playing a prominent role in promoting the reign of terror by accusing the artistic and academic community of atheism. A case in point is that of Dr Hamoud al-Awdi of Sana University, who in January 1985 was brought before the Sana religious court after the Moslem Brothers took issue with some of the ideas expressed in his books on social sciences. The court charged him with apostasy and ruled that he was to die by the sword and that his books were to be burned. Dr al-Awdi escaped death by fleeing abroad. The case reverberated throughout the YAR and

the Arab world. Hundreds of scholars, writers and journalists condemned these inquisitorial practices. Telegrams were sent to the President of Northern Yemen protesting the resurgence of medieval obscurantism, the persecution of intellectuals and the absence of freedom of speech and thought.

The policy conducted by the authorities proves the existence of a system aimed at the ideological and cultural suppression of the patriotic national and democratic forces.

Press censorship has recently been intensified. Decrees have been adopted closing several newspapers, specifically *Al-Amal*, which refused to "sing in unison" with the official media. The closure was preceded by the arrest of the paper's editor-in-chief Said al-Djanahi, who had exposed the activities of the Moslem Brothers and their diktat in education, and published articles about religious schools. Scores of groundless charges have been preferred against him, a handful of them enough to sentence him to death.

Of all the political organisations, only the religious ones enjoy political rights. In Sana, they publish a weekly and a monthly which publicise the ideas of the Moslem Brothers without any censorship.

Democracy is gravely threatened by the activity of religious extremists in the General People's Congress⁷ and by their growing influence at the top. Even the Liberals in the government object to this. But they have not managed to challenge the religious groups vigorously enough because they fear an attack from the reactionaries, who brand all opponents "atheists" and "communist sympathisers". The situation is compounded by the stance of Saudi Arabia, which pressures the liberals and keeps interfering in Northern Yemen's internal affairs.

RESPONDING TO CHANGE

The aggravation of the political situation in the region and the decline of the national liberation movement in the Arab countries no doubt make it more difficult for the democratic opposition to wage its struggle. There is also a subjective factor in that the opposition is weak and divided, lacks flexibility and initiative, and cannot respond promptly to the changes that occur.

The efforts of the patriotic and democratic national forces focus on the promotion of urgent popular demands—better conditions; the elimination of poverty, high prices and inequality; and, in the field of foreign policy, the strengthening of the country's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, as well as an end to foreign interference. *It is particularly important to create conditions for the stable coexistence of the two parts of Yemen* and to avert the threat of armed conflicts between them. This is essential to preparing for a peaceful and democratic reunification of Yemen on the basis of the objectives of the September and October Revolutions.⁸

In this context, one can speak about two intercon-

nected objectives—the establishment of a patriotic national alliance (or a broad national front) and the triumph of democracy. The national patriotic circles are working hard to secure such an alliance and to get rid of the vestiges of the past—mutual suspicion, mistrust and the hegemony-seeking attitudes of some groups. This objective can only be attained by recognising everyone's legitimate right to an independent political programme, the preservation of organisational and ideological autonomy, and the refusal to negotiate separately with the ruling regime. In the past, relations between progressive parties and organisations were often overshadowed by the attempts of some of them to make others accept their ideological attitude to various problems or their ideological guidelines. This has led repeatedly to conflict and outright confrontation. The ruling quarters, and reactionaries of every stripe are going to great lengths to foment contradictions within the opposition and to fragment it. Their objective is to seize this opportunity and deal a crushing blow to the opposition by demoralising it completely, tying its hands and, as a result, forcing their opponents to capitulate.

Certain signs of changes for the better have appeared recently on the political scene. Last summer, the first elections to the Advisory Council were held, and our party regarded the results positively, since in the course of the elections, the national bourgeoisie broke with the Moslem Brothers. The fundamentalists won 26% of the seats, but opposing them are the overwhelming majority of Advisory Council members (the President's supporters, representatives of the national patriotic and democratic forces, and others). A degree of rapprochement on individual issues has emerged between the President's group and the independents.

This was clear from the elections of the Advisory Council speakers and Secretary General. The government has secured a "comfortable" majority which can neutralise both the opposition on the left and the far-right wing in pushing through political decisions the government wants. But this is an unstable majority: its composition fluctuates depending on what problems are discussed. In other words, while the right-wing extremists did suffer a relative defeat in the election campaign, they have not lost all their political influence. Their position within and outside the Advisory Council remains sufficiently strong.

Despite the demagoguery of the authorities and the reactionaries, the masses continue to look to the national patriotic and democratic organisations with hope and confidence. The people are ready to welcome these organisations' unification and to rally around them. *The establishment of a broad alliance of all progressive forces remains the foremost imperative.*

* It will take a great deal of sacrifice to attain the objectives of the national democratic revolution proclaimed in the Programme of the Yemeni Popular Unity Party. Democracy and freedom are not a gift: they will have to be won in the course of a hard and stubborn struggle. We are well aware that backwardness and the political situa-

tion make the task much more complicated, but a first step must be taken. Let us act without entertaining illusions. We will be guided by objective realities, and we will not succumb to illusions. The important thing is to keep on fighting!

- 1 Formed in 1979 through the merger of several revolutionary parties and organisations of Northern Yemen. The YPUP has declared its commitment to the ideas of scientific socialism.—*Ed.*
- 2 Power was taken by the conservative quarters, including members of the monarchist opposition.—*Ed.*
- 3 Those among army officers, intellectuals, some of the tribes and other groups who supported the September 26 Revolution of 1962 which made Northern Yemen a republic.—*Ed.*

- 4 "Political Report Submitted to the YPUP All-Party Conference. Latter Half of 1987", p. 2 (in Arabic).
- 5 Established in February 1976 by several parties and organisations, including those that later formed the YPUP.—*Ed.*
- 6 Colonel al-Hamdi became the leader of the YAR Command Council in the summer of 1974 and was killed by unidentified assassins in Sana in the fall of 1977.—*Ed.*
- 7 The regime's political organisation affiliating primarily those loyal to the authorities. Many members of the Congress belong to the Moslem Brothers and other extremist religious groups.—*Ed.*
- 8 The anti-monarchist revolution of September 26, 1962 in Northern Yemen and the beginning of the struggle against British colonial rule in Southern Yemen on October 14, 1963.—*Ed.*

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A LIFE OF DEBT OR "PAKDES 24"?

Satijaya SUDIMAN

member of the leadership, Communist Party of Indonesia;

CPI representative on WMR

There are several reasons for the crisis in the Indonesian economy: lower oil prices on the world market (oil is Indonesia's major export item); shrinking export earnings and the growing cost of imports owing to the decline in the dollar's exchange rate, and the need to pay off the external debt. In 1988 and 1989, budget revenues from the sale of oil and gas came to more than 8.8 trillion rupees, and the debt servicing to 10.6 trillion. (One US dollar equals roughly 1,760 Indonesian rupees.—*Ed.*) The shortfall is covered by the profits from state enterprises.

Faced with this difficult situation, the "new order" regime, as Suharto calls his government, took some rescue measures: it devalued the rupee, sanctioned the sacking of workers, contracted more external loans, and cut back appropriations for some industries and programmes. The transmigration programme (resettlement of Indonesian families in less developed areas), for example, was thereby doomed to failure. This is all the more depressing in view of the vast amounts of money which

had already gone into the programme and the thousands of people who had already moved to the new lands.

The sharp drop in oil and gas revenues led to a policy of "deregulation and debureaucratisation" being introduced in order to stimulate the production and export of oil and oil products from some \$9.054 billion in 1987-1988 to \$11.345 billion in 1988 and 1989. By 1990, the economy is expected to have overcome its dependence on the sale of oil and gas through what is known as the December 24 package (Pakdes 24), which is designed to stimulate the export of oil and oil products but which does not provide for boosting output as a whole or for any change in the banking system, with its very high interest rates, or in the service industries. *Yet national development must be linked not only with foreign exchange revenues, but also with economic progress, the stimulation of the domestic market, job creation and higher living standards.*

Successful foreign trade depends on greater industrial efficiency, and the record shows that boosting exports without boosting production leads to slower economic development rates because most of the products go abroad. The very high bank interest rate is also an impediment to economic revival. The changes which could have a marked influence on the output of oil and oil products have not affected the structure of foreign investments. While Japanese capital in neighbouring countries (Thailand, Singapore, and South Korea, and also Hongkong and Taiwan) has been going into the export-oriented industries, in Indonesia it tends to stimulate imports, which means that our country is still regarded as one where foreign capital is invested in order to expand the market for foreign products.

There are a number of other factors threatening

Another article in our series on developing economies (see Khalid Hammami, "Syria. How to Get Out of the Crisis", WMR No. 5, 1989).

Indonesia's economic development, such as the unfavourable terms of trade on the world capitalist market. It has been estimated that if over the next five years the financial system and economic policy do not assure the structural stability of the economy, and the market condition does not stimulate exports, the growth in oil exports will cease and a *new economic crisis* will be on the cards. Besides exchange-rate instability, the growing external debt, customs barriers, quotas and other protectionist measures used in international trade have also created a major obstacle to Indonesian exports.

Indonesia's foreign debt is a specific problem. Government borrowing is the easiest way to help the economy in the short term, but the growing debt (which now amounts to more than \$40 billion) is a heavy burden both for present and future generations.

The drop in the exchange rate of the US dollar increased Indonesia's debt by \$3 billion, and it has continued to grow: nearly one-half of the country's budget has gone into debt repayment, including the payment of interest. It is perfectly obvious that the *vast borrowing has done nothing to ease the economic difficulties, and has, in fact, created additional hardships*, making Indonesia even more dependent on its creditors. This situation has led to serious discontent throughout society, not least among members of parliament.

A way out of the situation is contained in the demand for radical change in the system of international lending, which would prevent things getting any worse for the debtor countries and enable them to solve their own problems.

In light of this, the warm approval shown by the developing world for Mikhail Gorbachov's proposal, put forward in a speech at the United Nations in December 1988, is understandable: "The Soviet Union is prepared to institute a lengthy moratorium of up to 100 years on debt servicing by the least developed countries and, in quite a few cases to write off the debt altogether.

"As regards *other developing countries*, we invite you to consider the following:

- limiting their official debt servicing payments, depending on the economic performance of each of them or granting them a long period of deferral in the repayment of a major portion of their debt;
- supporting the appeal of the UN Conference on Trade and Development for reducing debts owed to commercial banks;
- guaranteeing government support for market arrangements to assist in Third World debt settlement, including the formation of a specialised international agency that would repurchase debts at a discount.

"The Soviet Union favours a specific discussion on ways to settle the debt crisis at multilateral forums, including UN-sponsored consultations between the heads of government of debtor countries and their creditors."

Indonesia's reactionary circles have clung to an economic policy which benefits not only imperialism but also themselves. It is common knowledge that 30% of the

external loans have gone into the pockets of corrupt senior officials. However, there are many patriotically-minded people who genuinely want to rid the national economy and state policy of external dependence, to free the people from poverty, hunger and social injustice, and to raise the living standards of the working people, so that the country can advance and progress. In conditions of economic and social decline, these are the forces we are pinning our hopes on.

Ours is an agricultural country, with 80% of the population living in the countryside, and 70% employed in *agriculture*. It is quite possible to be self-sufficient in food, including rice, the national staple. Last year, the government claimed that the programme for self-sufficiency in rice was being successfully fulfilled, but the facts tell a different story: 22,000 people in the Belu area, Eastern Nusa Tenggara province, are starving; there is a shortage of food in 7 areas of Eastern Java province, which is officially described as "prosperous". There is a long list of such examples, and they reveal the fact that while the population has grown at a rate of 2.32% a year, rice output has declined by 984,000 tons every year. Since the reports ignore the 10-15% crop losses during transportation and storage, the actual reduction comes to more than 1 million tons a year. There is every indication that the main factors preventing Indonesia from being self-sufficient in rice will remain for many years. Among these factors are the backwardness and social inequality in the countryside, which is still ruled by feudal and semi-feudal relations, the authoritarianism of the local authorities, and land legislation which protects the interests of the exploiter class and neglects those of the bulk of the peasantry.

As a result of the crisis and pressure from foreign capital, the number of bankruptcies among national enterprises, including those in the public sector, has increased, and this has led to the sacking of tens of thousands of people. In some parts of Central Java Province there are 162 applications for every vacancy.¹ Out of a potential workforce of 63.5 million (in a population of almost 170 million), 21.2 million are unemployed, and some 25 million are semi-employed.

Health and safety at work is deplorable: only 30% of enterprises have safety equipment on the shopfloor. Industrial accidents are on the rise: in 1984 and 1985, there were 6,296 accidents, and in 1987 and 1988, more than 10,000.

Our country has fertile lands and vast mineral resources, but most of the population, especially workers, have a very low living standard. That is why, of all the ASEAN countries, Indonesia is said to be the richest in poor people. One newspaper stressed that there is massive impoverishment under way in the country,² adding that this has been caused by the growing discrepancy between the high prices of basic necessities and the low incomes of millions of Indonesians. The process continues: thus, in Vahei area, which is in the north of Ceram Island, the price of copra (the main local product) dropped

to less than 100 rupees per kilogram. Let me say, by way of comparison, that a kilogram of sugar costs 1,000 rupees, and a kilogram of rice, 600 rupees.

Conditions continue to deteriorate. The president of Indonesia has admitted as much, saying: "The situation towards the end of 1988 showed that the horizons of our economy are far from cloudless." Suharto has warned that "the whole people must be prepared for another global economic upheaval, the brunt of which it will have to bear".³

The crisis can only be overcome through radical transformations because the political structure and the regime's policy have impeded any initiatives towards economic and social progress. The main thing is to allow freedom for all

the groups and strata of the population, and for individuals representing various ideological, political and religious trends, to enable them to take an active part in developing the country. The spirit of the times dictates the need for democratic changes that would make our foreign policy impartial; the country must develop extensive ties with all states in order to cooperate economically, commercially and culturally for the sake of social development and peace.

1 *Kompas*, November 30, 1988.

2 *Merdeka*, September 12, 1986.

3 *Tempo*, January 7, 1989.

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PEACE IS RESPECT FOR THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS

Alejandro SOBARZO

Vice-President, Mexican Association for International Studies

The Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) has now been in power in Mexico for 60 years, and its foreign policy has won international recognition. Mexico was the first Latin American country to establish diplomatic relations with the USSR (1924), and was the only country not to break off relations with revolutionary Cuba. Professor of International Law Alejandro Sobarzo, a leading figure in the PRI, was interviewed by WMR staff member, Esteban Oña, who asked him to describe the main features of Mexico's international stand.

■ **Esteban Oña. Mexico's dynamic and open foreign policy is widely known in the world community. What are its basic principles and origins?**

Alejandro Sobarzo. Mexico's international policy has a long tradition behind it, and is so deeply etched into the Mexican people's juridical consciousness that there are virtually no differences over it in the country. What is more,

it is the subject which provokes the least difference of opinion in the Chamber of Deputies, where various political parties are represented. One may well ask why. As Mexicans we are firmly convinced that self-determination, non-intervention, the peaceful settlement of conflicts, international cooperation on development, and the worldwide struggle for peace and detente are indispensable principles for healthy international coexistence. There is, of course, nothing new in all this. In his famous phrase, Benito Juárez¹ defined well the link between internal and foreign policy: "Both between individuals and between nations, peace means respect for the rights of others." This maxim has become a part of the Mexicans' mentality, and they have accepted it as a basic postulate of healthy domestic and international coexistence.

■ **How has Juárez's maxim been applied in the history of Mexican foreign policy?**

At times, Mexico has found itself alone at some international forums because of its desire to stand up for these principles. But by standing fast we have eventually won recognition for them from the republics of our region and from other parts of the world. On occasions, although our stance may have been resented, it has subsequently been accepted because it was a question of principle. It does not matter to us which country may have intervened in a neighbour's affairs, or which has become the victim of intervention: we have always tried to defend the principle of non-intervention, and this has gained wider recognition in Latin America than in any other region.

■ **How has the principle of non-intervention gathered momentum on the continent?**

The first attempt to establish it was made at a regional conference in Havana in 1928, and the second attempt at Montevideo in 1933, but it was supported by only a handful of countries, and with reservations. The principle of non-intervention was accepted without reservations by all Latin American states at a conference in Buenos Aires many years later.² And I must say that this was made possible through Mexico's efforts or, at any rate, largely through its efforts. From then on, special attention was given here to the principle of non-intervention since its observance makes it possible to ensure the basic right in international relations, namely, the right to self-determination.

The Organisation of American States subsequently endorsed yet another basic principle whose recognition implies amendments to its Charter: the principle of ideological pluralism. For years, Mexico had insisted on such an amendment. What is ideological pluralism? It is simply a manifestation of the principle of self-determination, under which each country seeks its own path of economic and social development, without any dictates from outside, and solely through the will of its own people. The relevant proposals for amending the Charter were adopted by a session of the OAS General Assembly at Cartagena (Colombia) in 1985, and we now hope for their ratification. The recognition of this principle in Latin America—and it is basic to good international relations—could set an example to many other peoples of the world.

■ ***Do you think it follows that countries which observe this principle in international relations recognise it at home?***

I certainly think so, but there are cases when a certain domestic pluralism is not carried over into the international arena, and vice versa. That is when efforts should be made to transfer internal pluralism to the international sphere, in accordance with Juárez's concept. Put plainly, this means respecting the diverse forms of thinking not only at home, but also in international relations.

■ ***Is Mexico one of those countries where internal and external pluralism have been harmonised? How impartial and stable is its policy in our rapidly changing world?***

Mexico is certainly one of the countries whose international behaviour is not at odds with its internal political life. I was recently asked whether there would be a change in our foreign policy with the election of a new president. I had no hesitation in saying that it would be exactly the same, and explained why: firstly, when running for president, he made a number of special statements on the matter reflecting the tenets of a man taking a firm stand on national traditions, especially on our long-standing foreign policy traditions. Secondly, my view is borne out by the amendments made to our Constitution two years ago: they oblige any executive power to conduct foreign policy in accordance with a set of firmly established principles, such as the right to self-determination, non-intervention,

the peaceful settlement of conflicts, international cooperation for development, and the struggle for peace and international security. So it is not only traditions that will dictate government policy, but also clearly formulated constitutional provisions, which are sure to be observed by the next president.

■ ***Recognition of definite general principles does not eliminate the question of inevitable differences in Mexico's foreign policy with respect to individual countries or groups of countries, with which it may previously have uneven relations, or clashes. In this context, let me ask this: are there any differences between Mexico's relations with the fraternal Latin American countries, and her relations with the United States, which at one time expropriated almost half of Mexico's national territory?***

I do not think there are any such differences, because we do not stand for any special relations with individual countries. But our Latin American brothers will always enjoy a certain preference owing to our kinship, common origins, etc. But that is something else again. Let me repeat that we support principles, and not countries or groups of countries.

■ ***But what is one to make, say, of pathological cases like the Pinochet regime?***

Like the whole Mexican people, I love the Chileans, but in the circumstances we had to break off relations with their government—and I stress this, with their government—and not with the people. This is a temporary matter, and it does not affect in any way our cordial attitude to them. There is another example: for years, we have had, and still have, very close and truly fraternal relations with Spain, but for almost a third of a century we had relations not with the regime which actually ruled the country, but with the Spanish Republic; however, that did nothing to distance us from the Spanish people, for it is with the Spanish people, and not with the Francoites that we have always had cordial relations.

■ ***Are you saying that the principle of equal and impartial relations is applicable to sovereign peoples, but not to those governments which display dictatorial tendencies, practise repression or commit crimes. In other words, do you believe that relations with peoples are one thing, and with regimes which do not meet international standards, another?***

You have put it very well, that is just what I wanted to say. What is more, when dictatorial regimes leave the historical scene, as was the case in Spain, the excellent relations with the people acquire even greater scope, thanks to those who were temporarily out of office. They are able subsequently to appreciate Mexico's approach, and we continue to feel that we are brothers as in the past.

- **Mexico is traditionally one of the Latin American countries where numerous exiles from politically unstable states in the region and other parts of the world have found refuge. Could you comment on this widely known historical fact?**

The answer is clear enough, and it requires no special comment. One needs only to look at Spain, from which there was a very large, indeed, an exceptional exodus: in 1938 and 1939, large numbers of intellectuals, teachers, scholars, and university lecturers came to Mexico and exerted a strong influence on the development of Mexican social thinking. Among them were lawyers, physicians and engineers, who made a significant contribution to strengthening all kinds of scientific institution, and who were completely assimilated into our society. They are now 100% Mexicans, although they are still aware of their roots and have a profound love for everything Spanish. The fact that there are people living among us who have become a part of our nation is highly beneficial. I myself had the good fortune to be taught by excellent professors from among the Spanish emigres who left a deep imprint on our university life.

After that Mexico received the Chilean exiles. We have also established the friendliest of relations with them. They include people like Popular Unity senators Anselmo Sule and Hugo Miranda, and we have a great affection for Hortensia Bussi de Allende, the President's widow. The Chilean immigration recalls that of the Spanish in the 1930s. The children of many of these people married Mexicans, and some of these Chileans now have their own grandchildren. Following the October 5, 1988 plebiscite, which rejected Pinochet, a complicated situation has arisen: some of the Mexicanised Chileans do not know whether or not to return home. They naturally have ties in our country, with numerous friends and relatives, and married children and grandchildren who were born Mexican. I expect that some of them will stay.

- **What you say shows that Mexico's open and democratic foreign policy over the past half-century has provided its own intellectual and spiritual enrichment, above all through the Spanish and Chilean immigration. What other national groups of immigrants have made a contribution to the development of Mexican culture and social thinking? What was the state of immigration before the 1910-1917 Revolution?**

Before the Revolution, there was no noticeable influx of any category of foreigners into Mexico. That was mainly due to the restrictions on entry into the country, both in the colonial period and later. I should perhaps mention the Italians among the relatively large national groups resident in Mexico.

While on the subject of the role of exiles in our history, I must mention the Cuban exiles of the 1950s who began, under Fidel Castro's leadership, to shape the movement

which eventually liberated the "Jewel of the Antilles" from the Batista dictatorship. The Cuban revolutionaries were given considerable support in Mexico, they were well received in various political and university circles, and they enjoyed universal sympathy. One could say that their success was to some extent due to the assistance given to them by many Mexican citizens.

- **Returning to the subject of diplomacy, could you name the countries with which the Mexican government does not, for whatever reason, maintain diplomatic relations?**

The government in Chile is, in fact, the only one with which we do not maintain diplomatic relations.

- **What about other parts of the world?**

No, I don't recall any other country that we might have broken with. There may be countries with which we do not maintain relations on the embassy level, but that is another matter. Chile is a particularly indicative case. Let me stress that Mexico does not accept or encourage the use of such diplomatic concepts as "recognition" or "non-recognition" of a government. It is guided by the practice which took shape in the 1930s, and which is known as the Estrada Doctrine,³ under which it is not a matter of recognition or non-recognition, but simply of the recall of our ambassador from the state concerned. What is the point of this approach? For a long time, recognition of governments was essentially a pretext for blackmail. Recognition or non-recognition of a government depended on definite political conditions at the time of negotiations. Mexicans feel that this kind of approach signifies direct intervention in the affairs of others. Who has the right to say which government is legitimate or not? It implies intervention in the exclusive internal affairs of a state. Mexico usually refrains from passing judgement, and merely recalls its ambassador and asks him to break off relations. It is not our business to criticise other governments. This is a policy we have conducted for a long time in Latin America and in the rest of the world. I think that the Estrada Doctrine is a significant guarantee of self-respect in relations between members of the world community.

- **Here is another pressing problem. Since the 27th Congress of the CPSU, relations between the two great powers of the world, the Soviet Union and the United States, have noticeably improved. As a leader of your country's ruling party, could you comment on this?**

I believe that this is highly positive for the international community. The disarmament process begun by the INF Treaty has not only advanced detente for the benefit of all, but has also raised hopes that the money eventually saved by reduced spending on nuclear and conventional armaments could be used to solve the grave problems of the Third World. How much could be done if only 10% of the huge amounts of money earmarked for the making of

weapons went into education, housing, development of production and public health! I imagine that 30 or 40 years hence future generations will regard the things we now discuss as absurd. They will wonder how we could have spent so much money on arms when all around us people were dying of hunger.

As for perestroika, I am sure it will lead to important changes in the international field. I myself have always felt that the idea of peaceful "coexistence" was somewhat absurd. How can one not "coexist" on this one planet? The plea for coexistence is so elementary that it sounds like empty talk. No, it is not coexistence that one should talk about, but a life of cooperation that is meaningful. It is time to realise that we live in one world, which demands cooperation. After all, you could just as well find yourself "coexisting" with a mugger. We must go on to build a true world community on the clear understanding that we all depend on each other, and I think perestroika is working in this direction.

■ ***The meetings between Mikhail Gorbachov and Ronald Reagan were welcomed by the overwhelming majority of governments, peoples, political trends and parties throughout the world. But could there be some social groups, big or small, which do not like this and which fear the improved Soviet-US relations.***

I believe that each profound political change, without exception, produces some opposition, and no radical change is ever without it.

■ ***What about Latin America, where anti-imperialist sentiment is very strong and where there is a revolutionary process: are there any overt (or covert) opponents of detente?***

I would not like to say anything specific on this point. But there are people everywhere—even in the Soviet

Union—who are opposed to perestroika. They have to pay lip service to it, it is true, and what kind of argument is there against it? I myself see none at all. Everyone, of course, has the right to take a different view, but that is something that I do not understand. In Mexico I have not noticed any opposition to the movement, which is only natural because it comes down to a consistent and persevering search for more democracy.

■ ***Let me be somewhat more specific on this point. What is your view of such political concepts as the "ultra-right" and the "ultra-left"? Do they actually exist, in particular in Latin America, or are they no more than a myth?***

Yes, they do exist. It is the ultraright and the ultraleft tendencies that are the main obstacles to healthy national and international development. There are those of the Right and those of the Left—and essentially there's nothing wrong in that—but extremists of any kind are an obstacle to progress benefitting the whole of mankind, both in individual countries and on the world scale. Globally, I think that a movement like perestroika will have a profound effect on all countries, particularly in Eastern Europe. And, as usually happens, earlier in some countries, and somewhat later in others. It will also have an influence on Western Europe, the American continent, and other countries, which will have a beneficial effect on the development of democracy and individual initiative throughout the world.

1 Benito Juarez (1806-1872), Mexican statesman, political leader and outstanding reformer. President of Mexico from 1861 to 1872.

2 A reference to the Sixth, Seventh, and Third Extraordinary (1967) Inter-American conferences. —Ed.

3 Genaro Estrada, Mexico's foreign minister in the early 1930s. —Ed.

NATIONAL DIGNITY IS NOT FOR SALE

Manuel Antonio NORIEGA

Commander-in-Chief, Defence Forces of Panama

The flagrant US intervention in Panama's internal affairs has made that small Central American republic another centre of tension and military instability. The WMR Commission on Latin America and the Caribbean has asked General Noriega to comment on the causes of the present crisis, on its place amongst other developments in the region, and on the role of the armed forces in the national liberation struggle. The General's answers to the WMR questions were taken down by Editorial Council member Ornel Urriola.

- **What are the real reasons behind Washington's hostile policy towards the people and government of Panama? Is there any relationship between the developments in and around your country and the overall situation in Central America and on the continent?**

There are several reasons behind the White House's hostility towards my country.

Firstly, the United States has a strategic interest in keeping its military bases in Panama after December 31, 1999, the deadline set under the Torrijos-Carter¹ accords for the withdrawal of US troops from our country and for our assumption of the ownership, operation and protection of the interoceanic canal. The continued existence of the South Command, the Pentagon's major arm outside US territory, depends directly on possible changes to the letter and the spirit of the above accords. It is here that an invisible web is being woven to entangle the entire continent, from the Rio Grande to Patagonia, especially Central America, which Washington has always considered its happy hunting ground.

Secondly, there are economic considerations. It will take more than the remaining 10 years to move that whole complex structure elsewhere, and the costs will be high. The US Congress can no longer postpone a debate on the funds needed for this operation, which will cost at least \$20 billion.

Thirdly, from the political point of view, the US govern-

General Manuel Antonio Noriega, b. 1939, was an associate of Omar Torrijos and a leading participant in the military coup of October 11, 1968. For 12 years he headed the G-2 service (state security) before becoming, in August 1983, Commander-in-Chief of the National Guard, later reorganised as the Defence Forces of Panama.—Ed.

ment knows that no Latin American state will agree to play host to the South Command; moreover, no other state is as geographically and geopolitically suitable as Panama.

I have always said that our country is a sort of testing ground: what is happening to us today may happen to any other country in the region that tries to challenge Washington's diktat.

Finally, all this anti-Panamanian hysteria was triggered off by our refusal to withdraw from the Contadora Group and become a pawn in Washington's intrigues against our neighbours. John Poindexter² himself tried to make us turn our Defence Forces against our brothers, the people of Nicaragua. But we turned him down, as we will anyone who would like to involve Panama in crazy plans to isolate and enslave any Third World country. We want peace and life, we are opposed to war and its devastating consequences, and we will never become anyone's puppet.

- **Panama has withstood a blockade, a boycott and other US economic and political sanctions. How has she managed?**

It is very simple: the past and present of the Panamanian people is an example of fervent love for their country. My compatriots have been humiliated by the United States in every way ever since North American troops and marines first entered our country in 1848.³ But the Panamanians have not broken down, in spite of exploitation, oppression and even killings. In short, we have developed an immunity to imperial attacks. The people have proved their talents and staunchness in adjusting to the circumstances and carrying on their struggle.

Washington's intrigues against Panama are part of the same old story. History repeats itself, and so does our ability to resist. The only difference is in who is resisting and which generations are involved in the struggle. Our patriots—soldiers, students, professionals and others—will not be frightened and brought to their knees by hunger, psychological warfare or threats of direct armed intervention. What is at stake is Panama's national dignity, and it is not for sale.

- **What about the domestic opposition and its role in the present crisis? Can it become involved in a programme for national liberation, peace and progress? And aren't elections the best way to achieve this?**

I have always believed that as soon as you grab the oligarchy by the pocket, it begins to scream. As General Torrijos put it, the oligarchy has no nationality, and its only joy is the tinkling of profits. The Panamanian opposition does not so much look after the country's interests as seek power to satisfy its own ambitions. It should be recalled that before the process of transformations initiated on October 11, 1968 the country's political institutions were fully controlled by the economic elite, with just the names of the heads of state changing. Then the oligarchy lost its influence and retreated into business, exploiting the lenien-

cy of the revolution to make vast amounts of money. But as it felt stronger it decided to restore the old state of affairs. The task proved difficult, and the opposition unhesitatingly turned to Washington, which, in return for a revision of the canal accords, promised to overthrow the patriotic regime and return the oligarchy to power under the pretext of restoring democracy—naturally, of the North American brand. That is why the fat cats are going out of their way to arrange an invasion of Panamanian territory by US troops.

Of course, we recognise opposition, but not that which trades off the homeland for power. As for elections, they indeed are the best opportunity for citizens to express themselves for or against our programme of national liberation. The opposition, at least its more far-sighted members, will have to respect the people's will. The patriots will most likely win, and the opposition will have no choice but to contribute towards the fulfillment of the urgent tasks of democratisation, independence and progress.

■ ***Have General Torrijos's behests been written into a concrete programme? What were his key ideas on the democratisation of social life and the state?***

Torrijos created a kinship between the army and the people. Their alliance is unbreakable, and the Defence Forces are its product because they are a part of the people, they are the people in uniform. The best proof of this is the work carried out by soldiers in the poorer and more remote parts of the country. The Panamanian army has no interest in the arms race: we need tractors, shovels, hoes and machetes to harvest sugar cane much more than tanks, guns and rifles. This is the main thrust of our programme, which in no way detracts from the army's responsibility to the nation in accordance with the Constitution and the provisions of the canal accords, and that is why Panama has avoided the carnage which has swept fraternal republics in the subregion.

We stand for democracy, but only the kind under which power really belongs to the majority, and the population as a whole, rather than a privileged elite, controls the natural resources; for a democracy which will give every Panamanian the guaranteed right to health care, education and housing and the chance to raise children who will take over from the present generation and live in the 21st century. We do not believe in any other democracy and don't want to have anything to do with it.

■ ***Is it realistic to form a single front of Latin American countries to resolve the problem of debts and achieve a new international economic order?***

This question would be better addressed to economists, but I must say that I'm in favour of a debtors' "club". The external debt cannot be paid back. It is like a malignant tumour in the living organism of the developing states. As we scrounge around for money to service our debts, numerous domestic problems remain unattended

and society stagnates without natural stimuli to growth. So long as world economic relations rest on the old principles, that is, on inequality, the gap between rich and poor nations will continue to widen. A new international economic order is a task for all states if they do not want major social upheavals in the Third World.

■ ***People in Latin America, as all over the world, are debating whether the military can contribute to the struggle for national liberation or whether they are a force suppressing it. What is your opinion?***

Panama's Defence Forces are fundamentally different from the other Latin American armies. That difference is historical. While most of the other countries' militias, formed to fight against the Spanish crown for independence, were reorganised into permanent state institutions, our army was disbanded. Instead, a token police force was raised, while the defence of territory became the responsibility of North American troops stationed in Panama.⁴ By the time of the 1968 coup the army had lost whatever prestige it had ever had with the people because it had become the oligarchy's tool for suppressing them.

The ascent of General Torrijos to power drastically changed the role of the Panamanian armed forces as the above-mentioned alliance between them and the people was forged. We realised that the struggle of students, workers, teachers and other underprivileged sections of the population, and also Indians, was a just cause. It was as if the blindfold the oligarchy used to prevent us seeing the reality had fallen off.

Our military doctrine is designed to encourage national development. The Defence Forces are working side by side with the government in a determined effort to improve living conditions for the working people. Aware of the need to reorganise the armed forces in order dependably to protect national territory and the canal, we began to upgrade their training, structure and hardware. Today we have a school for junior officers, and also modern military facilities and technology. The troops have embraced new ideas, which is especially important to future change. As a Latin American army, we have inherited the noble traditions and behests of the great heroes and martyrs of the independence struggle, such as Simón Bolívar, José de San Martín, Bernardo O'Higgins, Francisco Miranda and many others. Men in military uniform have an important social role to play on the continent today, and they cannot be confined to their barracks. Close, steady contact with the people helps the Panamanian army to identify with them and better understand their soul and true needs.

■ ***Major shifts are taking place in the world today: confrontation between the two systems is giving way to dialogue and the will to seek negotiated solutions to problems. What is the effect of this new atmosphere on the situation in Latin America, particularly in the Central American region?***

Dialogue is the best way to avoid confrontation. Unless

there is the political will to safeguard peace, humanity will be plunged back into the Stone Age, when only the fittest survived. That is why great power accords for the ultimate elimination of the threat of nuclear suicide are most welcome. But the present improvement in international relations is hardly likely to influence US Latin American policy. So long as hegemonistic ambitions persist in our region, peace and defense are possible only between the major powers. If developed countries do not treat us as their equals, we can hardly be expected to cope with our own problems. Changes in international relations must benefit the entire community of nations and not just a handful of states who will leave mere crumbs for the others. Peace is a guarantee of victory over poverty, backwardness, hunger, ignorance and disease, which are sapping the strength and vitality of the peoples. All the states and

peoples must cooperate seriously in order to overcome these problems.

- 1 The Basic Panama Canal Treaty and the Treaty on the Permanent Neutrality and Operation of the Canal, signed by the then presidents of Panama and the United States on September 7, 1977. — *Ed.*
- 2 Rear Admiral John Poindexter, the US President's National Security Adviser, 1985-86. — *Ed.*
- 3 On December 12, 1846, the US and New Granada, of which Panama was then a part, signed a treaty of peace, friendship, trade and shipping, which allowed North American troops to be sent into the country. — *Ed.*
- 4 The 1903 US-Panamanian Treaty granted the US the right to occupy a part of Panamanian territory "in perpetuity". — *Ed.*

* * *

THE WORLD OF LABOUR IN THE COMPUTER AGE

A ROBOT VS. MARIO

"I blame the system," says an unemployed Italian worker

"There's an Alfa," I was told.

The stream of traffic suddenly ground to a halt, and we found ourselves bumper-to-bumper with a silvery car bearing the colorful insignia familiar from the countless advertising brochures and video clips—a red cross in a white semicircle and a green dragon against a blue background. I recalled the graceful metaphor: "Alfa Romeo is an expensive gardenia in the lapel of FIAT's solid jacket."

It was Alfa Romeo a fellow journalist from Rome was taking me to. The company, long famous for its luxury sports cars but teetering on the brink of crisis, had recently staged a comeback, having been bought up by FIAT two and a half years ago.

"CELEBRATE IT WITH CAUTION"

Signor Ghidella was suave and businesslike. He showed us charts and diagrams. The logic of his figures

was flawless as he proved that Alfa Romeo was now booming. Then we watched an assembly line at work. The robots were real virtuosos, and the cars they manufactured (the word is a bit of a misnomer because no manual labour was involved) looked like shiny toys, again arguing that the factory was on the firm ground of success.

I confess that we did not talk to Vittorio Ghidella, manager of FIAT's automotive division: he is a very busy man. Nor did we really visit an automated assembly line: it is off limits to journalists. But the compensation was quite adequate. The videofilm the management showed us was well-made. You could see all you wanted, and there were people who would explain what you did not understand. After all, there is no one on the shop floor you could ask because the line is manned almost exclusively by robots. To top it all, we were led to the tangible symbol of the company's present-day prosperity—an Alfa-164, the latest model. The management kindly suggested that we "test" it, and we drove around the outskirts of Milan in it. If confirmation is needed, I admit that it is a fine car. But I would refrain from confirming the claim that Alfa Romeo has entered a period of prosperity. The matter is not as simple as it looks.

Three years ago there was a major clash over Alfa Romeo. Ford Motor Company was not averse to plucking the fading flower, but victory in the duel was of particular importance to FIAT since Alfa Romeo remained its last competitor in the Italian auto industry. Having defeated its overseas rival, FIAT cornered the national market and moved to a leading position in Europe. The comment of a French journalist was, "FIAT's only problem now is not to show its glee".

Ironical remarks aside, Alfa indeed staged a fast comeback, although not without problems. Due credit should, of course, go to the management of the concern who restrained their glee while demonstrating yet again what the Italians call the FIAT style—an ability to chart a precise strategy and to use the latest advances in science and technology, as well as an excellent knowledge of the market.

Signor Ghidella explained to us (from the TV screen) how rational FIAT's present structure was. He listed the functions of the autonomous units and let us glimpse the information systems underlying managerial operations. We "visited" the research centre and learned that the automotive division had invested more than \$1 billion into R&D (about 18.5% of Italy's total industrial R&D investment) and that FIAT owned half the robots operating in the nation. At the Cassino factory, where the world's latest car body assembly line has been installed, they number more than 400. The Termoli factory uses equipment of such high precision that it now produces engines and transmissions with no defects at all.

All this now applies to Alfa too. Actually, the factory is being geared comprehensively for 1992, which threatens a new outbreak of "car wars". The main battles are being waged in the field of car quality. As the management told us, he who knows how to invest in advanced science and technology wins. FIAT does know how to do it. Robots, lasers and computers are not all there is to it. There is also the organisation of the labour process. As soon as FIAT assumed control of Alfa, Cesare Romiti, a top executive, announced that in order to bring the company up to date, "a great deal of work will have to be done as far as the workforce is concerned".

That is an aspect in which the programme launched by the management is far from indisputable. A line from an article in *Il Giornale* springs to mind: "Aside from the FIAT style, there is also the FIAT arrogance". The loaded title was, "Celebrate It Cautiously".

We met one of those who celebrated it with considerable caution—Ernes Riva, secretary of the city branch of the metalworkers' union affiliated to the General Confederation of Italian Workers (CGIL). Ernes is 39. After graduating from school and serving in the army, he got a job on the Alfa assembly line and worked together with young Communists in the Milan federation of the Italian Communist Party. He has been a trade union activist for the past ten years.

"There's no Do Not Disturb sign on the door," he warned us from the start. "I have no set hours for receiving people. They come when they want me."

The door remained open, and people drifted in and out all the time, sometimes in groups. Some settled an urgent issue and left, others pulled up a chair, listened to what was being said and joined the conversation.

"In itself, the plan to revive the factory encountered no objections. But the attitude to the employees and workers was another matter. We realised right away that there were

two key objectives in the FIAT programme—to change the established structure of shopfloor organisation and to limit the influence of the trade unions. Previously, workers formed shopfloor groups, and they were the ones who assigned different people to different assembly line operations. The work was not so monotonous, and the pressure was distributed evenly. But the important thing is that we had a small measure of autonomy. There were at least some things we could decide on. People felt that their fellow workers cared about them. Do you realise what the management wants to do? It wants to split our collective."

The secretary believes that the pyramidal management structure which rules out any collective autonomy is designed to provoke a split. Every single worker is now forced to become autonomous because his assembly line functions are assigned from on high.

Selective pay rises were the next step the new management took, something it was entitled to do. But the catch is that the increases only went to those who "heeded good advice" and dropped out of the trade union. Many did.

Within a single year, the workforce shrank from 14,500 to 12,000. Some were pensioned off, others took early retirement, and still others accepted a lump-sum as compensation. New workers are being hired now as the factory is retooled and expanded. All are under 29, and their contract is for two years only. Each newcomer is sure to try and secure a longer contract, and it is clear what terms the management will impose.

"People are leaving the trade union in the hope of winning stability and security in exchange. But there is no stability to speak of, even with regard to draughtsmen, researchers and designers. Many of them are already employed outside their line of specialisation, as 'gofers', because FIAT's R&D is so centralised. And what will the management offer them tomorrow, now that they have forgone trade union protection? Within a decade of robotisation, the workforce of the FIAT automotive division has been almost halved. It would be naive to think that Alfa will be an exception."

One cannot really argue with the secretary. What he says is true. But it is also true that while trade union activists state facts and assess them correctly, these facts keep occurring with monotonous regularity. The union has failed to counter the tough policy of the management with a clear-cut programme of its own. Although opposing the overintensification of labour, it has signed a contract which virtually gives the management a free hand.

"We signed it with a heavy heart," Ernes said, frowning. "We tried to preserve trade union unity."

However, concessions and compromise have failed to ensure concerted action on the part of the three trade unions active at the factory.¹ Union leaders could not agree on a common position when continued payment of unemployment benefits to several hundred workers was at issue; as a result, the management dictated its own terms. A dispute about overtime on Saturdays was also

won by the management because the unions did not coordinate their efforts.

We had a memorable conversation with a middle-aged assembly line worker. We asked him what union he belonged to.

"To the metalworkers' federation," he replied.

"Wait a minute. We thought the federation was defunct. There are three trade unions...."

"That's right. I am a member of that defunct federation."

It turned out that some 200 workers at the plant regarded themselves as members of a federation that no longer existed. Apparently, this was their peculiar way of expressing their attitude to the three existing unions.

THE ORIGINS OF THE COBAS

The situation at the Alfa Romeo plant reflects the acute problems Italian society is now facing.

In Rome, we saw the locked door of some office with a notice saying the employees were on strike. It was signed "COBAS". Later, as we talked to different people, this unfamiliar word kept cropping up. COBAS stands for "grassroots trade union committees", which announced their emergence by way of numerous "wildcat" strikes. Transport, municipal services and government offices were affected. COBAS committees mushroomed, nurtured by the discontent with the economic policy of the authorities on the one hand and with the course of the trade union confederations on the other. According to the COBAS, the CGIL, the CISL and the UIL have entered a period of decline and no longer represent the views of the working people.

That, I think, is an exaggeration. To counter it, I can cite a different opinion from an authoritative source. Luciano Lama, a former Secretary General of the General Union of Italian Workers, who devoted 40 years of his life to it, offered an optimistic assessment of the confederations' future in one of his interviews: "They are like a cat, always landing on its feet. It may injure a leg and limp, but it always recovers."

We talked to Varenò Cucini, CGIL secretary for Toscana. He said:

"I would not talk about a 'crisis', let alone a 'decline'. But it is true that the trade union cat is limping badly."

Varenò became an activist of the trade union movement during its powerful upswing in the early 1970s. At that time, Italy's trade unions were winning victory after victory in their struggle for better conditions and higher wages.

"In those years, there was complete agreement among the confederations," he recalled. "Ours was a united front. For instance, when we chemical industry workers had to negotiate with the employers, we formed a single delegation of the three trade unions. We knew exactly what the workers wanted. But the situation has changed radically over the past decade. New occupations have emerged, each category with its own interests, which often clash with others'. We failed to spot these changes in time, and we

did not respond to them promptly enough. Hence the dissatisfaction with the 'official confederations' and the rise of the new trade unions."

So far, there has been no noticeable drain on the CGIL membership in Toscana. But it is clear to trade union leaders that the confederation can no longer accommodate all the interests that have surfaced, and that this may soon affect its numerical strength. As a CGIL congress stated, the trade unions need a drastic overhaul. Cucini believes that the first thing to do is to reach out to different social groups and learn to represent their interests.

THE "ATYPICAL" MARIO

As he stirred his coffee, he watched a boy engaged in air or naval combat. The boy kept feeding coins into the slot machine. The battle over, the kid smiled broadly at Mario, who winked back. Somehow, the two hit it off from the start. I thought about how great it would be for children to grow up with the affable Mario at their side. But Mario has no children of his own. He and Antonia wanted very much to have children, he said, but they did not have the courage.

"We're correcting the population explosion," Mario said and smiled shyly, even a bit guiltily—as if he was to blame for the fact that, in the euphoria of the "economic miracle", Italy's birth rate topped one million a year in the early 1960s and that several years ago this demographic tide hit the labour market. Today, three million people are unemployed in Italy, and the country has set an EEC record.

Mario is one of these three million. Here is his story. Born into the family of a mason, he finished eight years of school at 15 and began to work wherever he could find even a temporary job. Then he completed a course in metallurgy and got a steady job at an aluminum mill. That was where he joined the Communist Party and became a trade union activist. When mass layoffs due to automation began at FIAT's Cassino branch, the union sent Mario there as its representative. The workers picketed the plant for 35 days and nights, but in vain. Back at his mill, Mario saw the same thing he witnessed at Cassino, and he himself received the pink slip. Two years later his unemployment benefits were cut off. In the seven years since then Mario and Antonia have had only temporary jobs. Mario is registered with the employment office and, if all goes well, he will get a job—in the year 2000.

"Seeking consolation in this prospect," Mario said, "is like trusting those economists who try to soothe us by promising that the demographic tide will recede and the pressure on the labour market will ease. As if unemployment is a product of demographic trends, not of the system! They say that the changes in the social structure have been brought about by the revolution in science and technology. All right. But take my case. I have been left high and dry. Who am I to blame? Science and technology? No thanks. I blame the system under which all objective

problems are directed against the worker. Why do I become superfluous to society as soon as I am made redundant? Is that technology's fault too?"

Mario fell silent and again smiled his special smile, as though apologising for the state of things, for not being able to blame his problems on population dynamics or technology, or for the fact that he did not fit the statistical image of the average Italian without a job, for the fact that he stood out like a sore thumb.

His case is indeed special. Today's unemployed worker, I read in *Mondo Economico*, is usually single (three-quarters of the unemployed are young people, many of them looking for their first jobs). But this average unmarried person tends to live with the family, which usually has several sources of income. Assistance from the family enables him or her to keep looking for a job while retaining the standard of living he or she is used to.

But Mario is married (Antonia's chances of finding a job are even slimmer than her husband's), and he has no well-to-do relatives. Even if he had, he would never agree at 43 to sponge on anyone. So they mostly earn a living by doing "low-grade" work—that is, without any labour safety guarantees, pension fund or medical insurance payments. According to official sources, hundreds of thousands of Italians are in a similar position. This led us to ask Mario about the relations existing between the trade unions and this category of people.

"The last thing I would want to do," he replied, "is to cite my own experience. I am not typical in this respect: even though I was ousted from my worker collective years ago, I remain a CGIL activist. To me, party and trade union work is essential as the only opportunity for preserving my class identity. I know that many regard this as a romantic delusion. So let's not talk about me. Let's talk about the majority. Trade union links with the unemployed are collapsing."

"Is it that the unemployed are unorganised, and the unions are simply physically unable to maintain contact with each of them individually?"

"Why should the union 'maintain contact' with me personally? I'm not sick. No, we need a different thing. The union should represent the interests of the unemployed and have a programme for combating unemployment. A few years ago the CGIL leadership did take a step in this direction, and an action committee for the unemployed was set up in Rome. But there was no follow-up. The trade union proved unprepared to act beyond the factory gate. Putting it bluntly, the confederations no longer represent people like myself, to say nothing of the more than two million young people without steady jobs."

Mario holds that the crisis of the trade union confederations was brought about primarily by the unexpected decrease in the numerical strength of the working class which began in the 1980s after many years of uninterrupted growth.

"When I found myself shut out of the factory, my sole intention and thought was to fight—to fight against layoffs

as such. I did not really think about the serious processes that had begun in our society."

While the number of workers at major industrial enterprises, the traditional base of the trade unions, decreased by an average 5% a year, employment increased in the trade and service sector, in small workshops and at small factories. Enterprise was booming so fast that the press literally waxed poetic about it: "The Italians are emerging not only as a nation of saints and seafarers but also as a nation of entrepreneurs."

The business community may have achieved things it can now take pride in, but it is common knowledge that many autonomous enterprises are run arbitrarily. There, the collective labour contracts concluded at the national level are not honoured, labour safety standards are violated, and generally accepted wage rates are ignored. Layoffs are virtually uncontrolled, and when an enterprise goes bankrupt, the workers get no compensation. This army of workers is practically outside the unions' field of vision too.

The little boy finally won all his battles and, leaving the cafe together with his father, smiled at Mario for the last time. Meanwhile, Mario was still stirring his by now cold coffee, thinking either about my last question or, yet again, about the price of "correcting the population explosion".

"The problem," he finally said, "is not whether we should restore prestige to the traditional confederations or opt for the COBAS and grant them all possible rights. I think we should try and create a new trade union movement geared to the requirements of a society which has indeed become wealthier—but also more fragmented and more individualistic."

LEARNING TO SWIM ON YOUR OWN

Statistically atypical, Mario was typical in his ideas and conclusions. I realised this when I talked to different people in Milan, Florence and Rome. Italian society has changed, and yesterday's yardsticks no longer apply to today's labour relations. But what should the new approaches be like?

The trade unions are not the only ones facing this question. The search for an answer was part of the pre-congress work of the Communist Party in developing a new political course. We must understand what has happened and what is happening in Italian society and in Italian politics, PCI General Secretary Achille Occhetto said at a plenary meeting of the Central Committee and the Central Executive Committee. It is imperative, he said, to understand the new phenomena, born of technological innovations and an evolution of thought patterns, which prompt us to regard labour as an increasingly integral process both objectively and subjectively, despite the simultaneous differentiation, disunity and fragmentation.

Michele Magno, at the time of our conversation deputy chief of the PCI Central Committee labour commission,

told us about a conference, sponsored by the commission, to which all trade union confederations were invited.

"We did that to develop a dialogue not only with our 'privileged' partner (the CGIL), but also with the CISL and the UIL, and to express our views of the trade union's present role and their relations with the PCI as the party of the working people."

The neoliberal policies of the government, Magno explained, are fragmenting the labour market. Conditions are different at different levels. Not everyone is entitled to medical insurance or to "integration" benefits, and there is no equality between men and women. In other words, differentiation has set in, and a kind of hierarchy is taking shape. The Communist Party has advanced the objective of defending the interests of all working people and securing the same rights for all.

But "for all" means for every category and every social group. Reaching out to all means reaching out to everyone. And so, while during the past decade the PCI was connected with industrial workers mostly through the CGIL unions and was even under a degree of CGIL influence in devising its policy, today the emphasis is on the principle of autonomy: the party and the trade union are operating independently, each using its own distinctive methods. The union must not be dominated by the party.

This brings us to two conclusions. The first concerns the CGIL and its structure. The Communists believe that there should be no division of candidates into those representing the PCI or the Socialist Party in the elections to the CGIL governing bodies, all the more so because most CGIL members belong to neither party.

Previously, the Communist Party saw its relations with the Socialists within the CGIL as aimed at the development of a political alternative and of the two parties' possible alliance in running the country. We have not abandoned the objective of achieving unity with the Socialists, Magno said. But we no longer believe it right to assess our attitude to the trade unions from this angle, artificially restricting our contacts with the other trade union confederations or with the movement of the working people in general.

In Florence, I asked the trade union activists Roberto Gianetti and Giovanni Forconi what they thought about the suggested restructuring and the effort to change trade union work. They backed the PCI's opinion:

"We should work to overcome the general attitude to the CGIL as a 'communist trade union'. Naturally, its communist members will remain Communists, and they will be guided by the party line. But following the party line is one thing, and acting on party directives in all matters is quite another. On tactical questions, Communists who are trade union members cannot be bound hand and foot by party decisions. Each side, the party and the trade union, must learn to swim on its own in our changed society."

The second conclusion (I am returning to my conversation with Magno) concerns party work and its methods. The course aimed at autonomy means that the party should be better represented at places of work. More than

60 new PCI branches have been recently established at major industrial enterprises. A national advisory council comprising representatives of large party branches has been set up under the PCI Central Committee. It is a mirror reflecting the response of the working people to the party's overall policy. The council will also conduct preliminary discussions and examinations of all major decisions.

An awareness of the need to create a trade union representing the world of hired labour in all its diversity and to achieve the unity of different trade unions, not just unity within a single union, grew in the CGIL perhaps faster than in the other confederations. It is in the CGIL that practical action on this issue took particularly dramatic forms, aggravating the differences within the leadership to the limit, to breaking point.

"A cat always lands on its feet." Many people maintain that today's situation is a repetition of what happened in the industrially developed countries 60 years ago, as they switched to new organisational forms of mass manufacture. At that time, dire prophecies about the imminent collapse of the trade unions were uttered too, but the structural overhaul ultimately produced a powerful rise in the movement of the working people.

How justified such analogies are is another matter. But whatever conclusion one may reach, the question that arose in our conversation with the unemployed Mario remains valid: will the trade unions inevitably find themselves forced again and again to catch up with developments? Is this really preordained? A sophisticated computer helps Signor Agnelli, president of FIAT, calculate everything so precisely that he can do without Mario the worker tomorrow and the day after. But Mario has a legitimate question: where is the trade union "computer" which would allow us a glimpse into the future, making it possible to anticipate the moves of the employers?

"Answers must be given to the increasingly pressing questions raised by many factors, primarily by the vast and rapidly changing world of labour—questions concerning the role and place of the trade union in the alignment of the nation's social and political forces. The answer also largely relates to the general struggle for transforming the nation, to the economic, social and cultural processes under way in it, and to its political system."² That was how Achille Occhetto defined a prime task of the left and progressive forces on the eve of the party congress. I took the liberty of adding emphasis to only one word in this quotation.

Boris BATARCHUK
WMR staff member

¹ Each of Italy's three trade union confederations—the CGIL, the Italian Confederation of Workers' Trade Unions (CISL) and the Italian Labour Union (UIL)—maintains a local branch at the Alfa Romeo plant.

² *Rinascita*, October 22, 1988.



THIRTY KILOMETRES OF SHELF SPACE...

Eric FISCHER

Director, International Institute of Social History (IISH)

Diamonds and Rembrandt's priceless paintings are not the only things the Dutch capital is famous for. Besides the art galleries, there is a treasure house in Amsterdam away from the tourists' beaten track. Kabelweg, an ordinary-looking street on the city's industrial outskirts, is where the International Institute of Social History is located—one of the world's biggest repositories of manuscripts written by Marx, Engels and other prominent figures of the working-class movement. Dr. Eric Fischer, director of the institute, received a WMR staff member and told him about the activities of this unique institution.

■ ***There are many research centres in the world that study the history of the working-class movement and Marxist thought. What place does the IISH hold among them and what is distinctive about it?***

All centres similar to ours, whether national or international, are, in one way or another—organisationally or politically—connected with particular parties or trade unions. But ours is an independent academic establishment, although Professor N.W. Posthumus, its founder, was a Dutch Social Democrat.

Very few research centres can equal ours in the size of their archives—I think the Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the CPSU Central Committee in Moscow and the California-based Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace are the only ones I could name. Our archives on the history of the organised working-class movement take up some five kilometres of shelf space and printed matter, some 25 kilometres. We have also amassed half a million books and pamphlets, 60,000 periodicals and a vast collection of leaflets, other printed matter, grammophone records, tape recordings, banners and badges. We have 30,000 posters, a hundred thousand valuable

photographs and about 12,000 political cartoons.

But quantity is not all that matters. We do not collect indiscriminately but concentrate on several main lines. First and foremost, these are documents connected with Marx and Engels. *Over 75% of all their manuscript heritage is stored within these walls.* Besides, we have what may be the best collection of firsthand sources on the history of Trotskyism and Menshevism, and the world's most complete collection of papers on anarchism. The socialist movement of the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy and France is represented extensively too. We are the official depository of the Socialist International. We have also set up a department for documents of the Turkish working-class movement. This is particularly important given the harsh reprisals against it by the authorities.

■ ***How did all this come to be concentrated in Amsterdam?***

I think a few words about the establishment of our institute are in order here. In the 1920s Posthumus began to collect documents on the history of working-class organisations, not only those in the Netherlands. At first he was not very successful because, in a way, the ground had

already been covered by another competent collector—David Ryazanov, director of the Moscow Marx/Engels Institute (MEI), who had conducted a very vigorous search all over Europe for material on the history of Marxism. Simultaneously, Boris Nikolayevsky was also working in this field at the same time. A Russian Menshevik, he emigrated in 1922 and was a foreign correspondent for the MEI from 1924 to 1931. After the Nazis' rise to power he played a role in the transfer of the German social democratic archives to Paris. Posthumus and his assistant Annie Scheltema interested the banker Nehemia de Lieme in their ideas, secured the necessary funds and, in November 1935, founded the IISH in a school building given them by the city council. Soon a Paris branch was opened under Nikolayevsky.

The institute plunged into collecting, publishing and research. It was racing against time: the conditions of working-class organisations' activities in Europe began to deteriorate in the mid-1930s, and many archives were in danger. Sometimes the rescue operations of IISH staff members took unexpected turns, resembling scenes from detective stories.

After the *Anschluss* of Austria, the IISH had to do some undercover work to secure the more valuable part of the famous "Bakunin Archives" collected by Max Nettlau, a well-known historian of anarchism. After many adventures in the occupied Austrian capital, Scheltema succeeded in bringing the remaining part of the Nettlau collection to the Dutch Embassy, evading three curious policemen on the way. The ambassador, who became her enthusiastic assistant, helped her gradually transfer to the embassy the valuable collection of Robert Danneberg, an Austrian Marxist who had already been arrested by then. Together with his servant girl, she travelled fifty times from Danneberg's place to the embassy, carrying about ten "explosive" books in two shopping bags on each trip. Returning to the Netherlands on the Orient Express,

she concealed Bakunin's papers on her person, and only the diplomatic ID issued to her at the embassy saved her from inspection at the border.

Many other archives arrived at the IISH in similar ways during the prewar years. But unexpected things also happened to documents which the institute received in what may be called the conventional way. For example, after the IISH acquired the famous Kashnor Library of documents on the socioeconomic history of Great Britain (in some areas, more complete than that of the British Museum itself), questions were asked in the House of Commons. In 1936, an incident involving our institute reverberated internationally. It was the disappearance from our Paris branch of a part of Trotsky's archives deposited there by his son. The leader of the Fourth International referred to it tentatively as "Lenin's Correspondence with Trotsky". On the night of November 6, 1936 three unidentified persons entered the Rue Michelet house and stole 50 full envelopes. Since Nikolayevsky announced at the time that "should they fall into the hands of Trotsky's enemies, they could be used as a weapon against his friends", one can easily assume that the operation was carried out by Stalin's agents.

■ Bukharin tried to obtain the extensive archives of Marx and Engels during a trip he made to several West European countries for this purpose in the spring of 1936. How did they end up at your institute?

Bukharin and two fellow members of his purchasing committee visited Amsterdam and Copenhagen and conducted talks with a view to buying the manuscripts. They succeeded in pushing the price down from 2.5 million to 300,000 florins. Nikolayevsky was the middleman between the Russian delegation and the leaders of the Labour and Socialist International. This is what he wrote Friedrich Adler in a letter which we have: "Bukharin and his colleagues exceeded their powers, and their terms were disavowed" by Moscow. After the talks between the German social democratic leaders and the Soviet delegation were cut off, our institute acquired these ar-

chives in 1938, including correspondence between Marx and Engels, several thousand letters addressed to them, and several manuscripts of Marx' economic works (including *Capital*). The archives also contain the writings of Joseph Weydemeyer, a prominent figure in the Communist League, and of the famous "revisionist" Eduard Bernstein. Subsequently, Karl Kautsky's papers and Wilhelm Liebknecht's correspondence were added to this collection.

■ What you have listed is more than enough to confirm the IISH's status as a major repository of documents on the history of the working-class movement.

Add to that the archives of Jules Guesde, the documents of the Paris Commune, the Russian Social-Revolutionaries, the Mensheviks and the Bund, the Boris Savinkov collection and the files of the Spanish republicans. Between 1935 and 1940 our institute saved dozens of such collections.

■ During World War II the Netherlands was overrun by the Nazis. How did you manage to preserve your acquisitions?

After the Munich Agreement (concluded in September 1938) the managers of the institute realised that war was imminent and that the Netherlands would not escape the consequences. The IISH managed to transfer the more valuable part of our documents, including the manuscripts of Marx and Engels, to Oxford. Some of the printed matter remained here, however, and the Nazis got hold of it. Soon after Amsterdam was occupied, the German authorities closed the institute and handed our records over to the office of Reichsleiter Alfred Rosenberg, the Nazi ideologist who planned to use the captured archives "in the struggle against Marxists, anarchists, Jews, Freemasons and other antinational elements". The Nazis tried to transform the institute into a "museum of depraved art". When it became clear that Germany faced defeat, the captured archives were taken to East Germany and Poland.

After Germany surrendered, Scheltema returned to the institute. Bare walls were what she saw. It was not until April

1946 that the first sizable part of the stolen collections was found on board two barges which had got stuck west of Hanover. We have photographs to show the pitiable shape and total disorder these papers were in. The rest were found in Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland. In 1947 everything deposited at Oxford was brought back, and in 1956 the Polish government returned to us the 270 cases of documents discovered in the Krakow University Library. Finally, a battered suitcase (containing unique documents of the General Council of the First International) arrived from the United States where it had waited out the war in the US Library of Congress. The locks had been ripped off, and it was held together by a piece of string.

Many valuable papers were lost during the war, but the surprising thing is that so much was salvaged.

■ You usually find documents related to Marxism being dealt with either by its advocates (such as the IML under the CC CPSU) or by its dedicated opponents (the Hoover Institution is a graphic example). Your institute describes itself as independent and non-partisan. What is your methodology, as it were? Can your research be objective when the subject is so political?

Generally speaking, the establishment of the institute pursued a political objective: fascism was on the offensive, and the founder of the institute saw his mission as saving the archives of the working-class movement from destruction or preventing them from being used to the detriment of specific persons or organisations. The IISH has preserved its "rescue function" ever since: we are particularly active in countries where the working-class movement is subjected to severe reprisals.

But the institute is not a political establishment. "Collecting and Preserving for the Future" is its *raison d'être*. We are guided by our conviction that the working-class movement is part of human civilisation, and its history is the heritage of all mankind, not only of left parties and organisations.

Our staff is not homogeneous in the

ideological sense of the term. Our 15 or so researchers are completely free as far as their convictions are concerned. Some regard themselves as Marxists, others do not. As far as I know their political views could be described as between the left and the centre. There are Trotskyites, Social Democrats, Liberals and so on.

■ What about anti-communists?

I don't think so. Naturally, some Social Democrats are vigorous opponents of Marxism and Marxists. But I don't discuss these things with them. If you are a skilled and honest researcher—that is, if you do not allow any falsification of the sources—you can work with us.

The strictly neutral and independent status of the IISH has won us the special trust of widely different currents of the working-class movement. We see ourselves as a depository open to all, both Communists and conservatives. There are two exceptions to this general rule. Firstly, the express wishes of donors: some of whom have included special provisions in their contracts concerning, for example, time limits on access. Secondly, we impose restrictions on representatives from organisations that bar us from their own archives.

Generally, the accessibility of any archive is a highly sensitive matter. For example, we are now following very closely the declassification of the Comintern's excellent archives in Moscow. We can see that, as always, this involves numerous complications.

■ The papers of Marx and Engels are over 100 years old. How do you combine your "open-door" policy with the task of preserving extremely valuable manuscripts?

All the Marx and Engels manuscripts have been microfilmed. We allow the originals to be used on special occasions only. Besides, we never hand out a document in full, but only page by specific page. Otherwise, we fully trust the integrity of the researchers.

Strange as it may sound, the manuscripts of Marx and Engels are in pretty good condition. The reason is that they used high-quality writing paper and ink, not the case, I am afraid to say, with some publications, particularly

newspapers. Newsprint is very brittle, and preserving it is difficult and very expensive.

Of course, there are certain technical conditions that must be observed in storing manuscripts: we keep a close watch over the temperature, humidity and lighting. All our rooms are equipped with the same devices you find in art galleries. We have smoke detectors, sensitive even to pipe-smoke, as well as fire extinguishers and hoses.

■ Your Institute is called International. What does this signify?

Firstly, our archives are international. Secondly, the staff are from various countries, not only Dutch personnel, but also people from Russia (mostly with a Menshevik background), Eastern Europe, Belgium, Germany and so on. When we invite someone to join us, we look at their professional competence as a researcher, not at their nationality or political affiliation.

Naturally, we maintain close ties with communist research centres, primarily those in Moscow and Berlin. These contacts have been developing particularly intensively since the 1960s. We are also in contact with West European centres—from the Institute for Marxist Studies in Paris to the Ebert Foundation in the FRG. The secretariat of the International Association of Institutes for the History of the Working-Class Movement has its headquarters here and through it we maintain ties with more than 100 research establishments—from far-left, Trotskyist and anarchist to the so-called centrist ones.

We could be said to "specialise in specialists": scholars from all over the world come to work here—from Japan, the United States, the FRG, the GDR, the USSR and France. And when the many high-school students who have developed an interest in Marxism come to us, our reply is, "Go to the library and read Marx."

50 YEARS SINCE THE OUTBREAK OF WORLD WAR II

A CONTEMPORARY LOOK AT HISTORICAL FACTS

Ulrich PERZINGER

Central Committee member,
Communist Party of Austria

The German soldiers who invaded Poland on September 1, 1939 were not fighting for the interests of their nation or even for Hitler. They overran foreign countries and sowed death and destruction in order to secure profits for Germany's big capital. The Nazi army was clearing the way for the Krupps, the Thyssens and others like them whose agents were only a step behind the advancing troops. Every square inch of occupied territory was used to make money for the German industrial concerns. The Nazis, the generals, the bankers and the industrialists kept this up for five and a half years. It was only after more than 50 million people had perished and almost half

the world had been devastated that Hitler committed suicide, and Allied troops occupied Germany.

Late at night on May 8, 1945 Germany's unconditional surrender was signed at the Soviet headquarters at Karlshorst. Europe breathed a sigh of relief. The battle against the fascist monster was over.

Who had started up the infernal engines of war?

When Hindenburg, the decrepit President, appointed Hitler as Chancellor on January 30, 1933, drunken Nazi thugs staged a torch-lit procession in front of Berlin's Brandenburg Gate, singing, "Today, Germany; tomorrow, the world."

But it was not just a song. It was the programme of German monopoly capital.

Another quotation (not from a song) sheds light on the deeper and more obscure causes of World War II—and World War I, too: "We need a free hand in the East and Southeast in order to secure for the German race the vitally necessary conditions in which it can assert its strength and its potential even if, as a result, inferior nations such as the Czechs, the Slovenes and the Slovaks, who insist on national principles, cease to exist, for their existence is useless to civilization." The quotation is not from Hitler's *Mein Kampf* but from an 1894 issue of *Alldeutsche Blätter*, a periodical of the Pan-Germanic Union.¹

A latecomer to the territorial partition of the world and therefore a poor relation as far as colonies and spheres of influence were concerned, newborn German imperialism exhibited a particularly aggressive spirit from the very beginning of the 20th century. In 1914, it attempted for the first time to "correct history" and "set things straight" in Europe and beyond. Naturally, both then and a quarter of a century later the monopoly bourgeoisie sent German soldiers out to kill and be killed without admitting that this was being done for the sake of plunder, in order to secure new sources of raw materials and new markets. The big lie was used to hoodwink people into believing that their country was in danger and must be defended.

One must admit for fairness' sake that the then leaders of the German and Austrian working-class movement also fell for this idea. Unable to rise to the challenge, they shelved the antiwar resolutions adopted by the Second International prior to 1914 and concluded a "civil peace" with the bourgeoisie, thus nipping in the bud any working-class resolve to oppose the imperialist blood-bath.

One of the results was that during World War I the consistent socialists broke with the Social Democrats. After the establishment of communist parties, they returned to the doctrine of Marx and Engels and to a policy of genuine struggle for peace and socialism.

The predatory war of German capital

ended in its defeat in 1918. But the owners of coal mines, steel mills and munitions factories (the more aggressive part of the German bourgeoisie) still nurtured a dream of revenge. Without losing sight of their earlier objectives, the more influential industrialists placed their bets on Hitler and his Nazi Party in the early 1930s. In the elections to the Reichstag held on September 14, 1930 the Nazis caused a sensation by increasing the number of their seats from 12 to 107. Poverty and mass unemployment in the cities, and the bankruptcies among many small businesses, craftsmen and peasants plunged millions into despair and made them (above all, the petty and the middle bourgeoisie) responsive to the national socialist rhetoric of the Nazi Party, which was covertly receiving steadily growing financial, political and organizational support from the big industrialists.

Cheques for large sums made out to the Nazi party were signed by the steel barons Flick, Vöglér, Thyssen and other tycoons. Gold also flowed into Hitler's coffers from abroad—from Henry Ford, America's automobile king, from Sir Henry Deterding, head of Royal Dutch Shell, who hoped to recover the oilfields his company lost in the Soviet Union, and from other multimillionaires.

Here is what the banker Kurt von Schröder, former liaison man between the Nazi Party and the industrialists, said at the Nuremberg Trial of the chief Nazi war criminals in 1947: "Influential forces in the economy sought a strong leader as head of state, a leader capable of forming a government that would remain in office for a long time... Fear of Bolshevism was common to them... They also had a common stake in the implementation of Hitler's programme... One of its major provisions envisaged the abrogation of the Versailles Treaty and the rebirth of a militarily and politically strong Germany." This programme, firmly supported by the pillars of high finance, signified that the country was preparing for war. In 1932, Ernst Thälmann, Chairman of the Communist Party of Germany, warned that "*voting for Hitler means voting for war.*"

That year the worldwide economic crisis had already passed its lowest point, and tentative signs of a recovery were beginning to appear. In the November

elections the Nazis lost two million votes, while working-class parties—the Social Democrats and the Communists—gained more seats: their total outnumbered those held by the Nazis. The financial oligarchy had to use all its political clout to propel the Nazis to power and destroy the bourgeois parliamentary democracy.

On November 19, 1932 the big industrialists, bankers and landowners sent a message to Hindenburg urging him to appoint Hitler as Chancellor. It worked, and a little over two months later Hitler was asked to form a government. On February 1, 1933 the Reichstag was dissolved, and several weeks later the Nazis set fire to the building. This provocation was used as a pretext for antidemocratic moves and reprisals, first and foremost against Communists. New elections were scheduled for March 5, but they could no longer change the course of events. The "election campaign" was a campaign of terror against all democrats, particularly Communists. On March 24, Hitler succeeded in having the new Reichstag pass the infamous Enabling Act, which gave him emergency powers. Now he could eliminate the democratic opposition and quickly switch to the "open terrorist dictatorship of the more reactionary, chauvinistic and imperialistic factions of finance capital".²

Speaking before representatives of the financial and industrial elite, Hitler let it be known that his policy was aimed at preparing for war. He said that "employment measures should be taken only inasmuch as they contribute to our military economy."

In July 1933, a General Council for the German Economy was formed. The 16 members of this "supergovernment" included nine industrialists, four bankers and two major landowners. In December 1937, 400 chief corporate executives were made "captains of the war economy". In early 1938, a Military Economic Council was established, packed with big business figures.

Several weeks later—in the early hours of March 12—Nazi troops invaded Austria. German capital was again trying to impose a "new order" on Europe.

The close interconnection between monopoly capital, fascism and aggression is confirmed by many historical docu-

ments. World War II was primarily a *clash between the German monopolies and their imperialist competitors over markets and sources of raw materials. The stakes were higher only with regard to the Soviet Union*—apart from the objective of seizing the coal of Donbass and the oil of Baku, looting the Soviet economy and turning the Soviet people into slaves, the overriding goal was to *destroy the first socialist state in history*; in Nazi jargon, to suppress the “worldwide Jewish-Bolshevik conspiracy”.

Could World War II have been prevented? It could—if fascism had been stopped at home and if its expansionist drive had been blocked. However, an analysis of the situation prevailing in Germany during the 1930s indicates that the social forces capable of defending the bourgeois democratic system failed in this task. Moreover, while some Germans did have their doubts about the Nazis, these hesitations were swept aside by blatant nationalism and anticommunism. In this connection the role and the stance of the church is worth recalling.

In the spring of 1933, when Nazi terror had become routine, Otto Dibelius, one of the top Evangelical clergymen, delivered a sermon at the Potsdam garrison church in connection with the opening of the Reichstag. He prayed “that the gracious hand of the Almighty build a dome over our state to which our free people could look up. Germany again and forever: one Reich, one nation, one God.” Pastors in Catholic parishes read out a message from their pulpits, saying that “nothing prevents us Catholics ... from hailing the new and strong authority in the German state ... or from submitting to it”.

This “submission” was easy not only for the Catholic organizations but also for the bourgeois parties, whose membership largely defected to the Nazis. Having voted in the Reichstag for the Enabling Act (that is, for the abolition of a democratic constitutional system), they soon dissolved.

Only the working-class movement had the strength to effectively block fascism. But it was divided.

Bourgeois researchers and social democratic historians still cite the Comintern’s mistaken ideas about social-

fascism³ as the reason for there having been no united antifascist front among the Social Democrats, the Communists and the trade unions. Those ideas undoubtedly did cause a great deal of harm and hampered a joint struggle by both working-class parties against the Nazi threat.

As far back as 1924 Stalin had declared social democracy to be “objectively, fascism’s moderate wing”. The Comintern corrected this mistake only in 1935, at its 7th Congress. But by then it was too late (despite the fact that the Communist Party of Germany had not been guided by this attitude in trying to create an antifascist front before Hitler’s rise to power).

The Central Committee of the Communist Party was self-critical in its message to the German people to mark the end of the war: “We the Communists of Germany acknowledge our feelings of guilt because, despite our great sacrifices and the loss of many of our finest comrades, our own mistakes prevented us from forging a united antifascist front of workers, peasants and intellectuals against our common enemy.”⁴

On the other hand, one cannot ignore the fact that the leaders of social democracy were opposed to unity in the working-class movement. There is ample evidence that the SPD leaders relied on collaboration with the bourgeoisie and attached greater importance to the struggle against the Communists than to rebuffing fascism. In 1918-1919 they had aligned themselves with the ultrareactionaries in order to suppress the revolutionary movement; in 1931 SPD Chairman Otto Wels said at a congress in Leipzig that “Bolshevism and fascism are brothers.”⁵ In its election message in the spring of 1932 the SPD urged voters to block Hitler by supporting the candidacy of Hindenburg for President—but he was the one who would soon appoint Hitler Chancellor. Until the Nazis came to power, the social democratic leadership rejected all KPD proposals for joint action. Even after the bloody anticommunist terror of the March 1933 elections, Friedrich Stampfer, who served as editor-in-chief of *Vorwärts* for many years, could say to the Nazis: “All you should do is form a

legitimate government, and we, naturally, will be a legal opposition.”⁶

The social democratic leaders of trade unions also assured Hitler of their loyalty in a memorandum of March 20 and, a month later, called on their union members to take part in the May Day rallies staged by the Nazis. Finally, *Gewerkschaftszeitung*, the SPD’s official newspaper, said in its April 29, 1933 issue: “We should not be ‘stunned’ by the recognition of the fact that, although national socialism has triumphed over a party which, in our view, was guided by socialist ideas, its victory is also our victory.”

The Nazis obviously benefited from such kowtowing. However, after staging the demagogic 1933 May Day rallies, they began to persecute the trade union centres. Like the Communist Party, they and the SPD were banned.

One cannot ignore such facts. But today, it is hardly worth delving into the issue of which part of the working-class movement was more to blame for the absence of so vital a united antifascist front. This would divert attention from the fact that *German monopoly capital was the principal culprit responsible for the rise of fascism and for the war*. It would also denigrate the 12 years of heroic struggle waged against Nazism by Communists, Social Democrats and Christians, even though the German people and, particularly, the German working class ultimately proved incapable of overthrowing the fascist dictatorship on their own.

Delivering the world from the fascist plague and ending the war emerged as the task of the anti-Nazi coalition. In this area, many critical reappraisals are in order, not least in reference to the policy of the British government, which sabotaged the creation of a collective security system for all those threatened by fascist aggression. The Soviet Union was putting forward similar proposals as far back as December 1933, and continued to do so for several years. However, anticommunism and anti-Sovietism were at least as strong as the fear of Hitler (if not stronger). The top echelons of British and French finance capital secretly expected a “historic clash” between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. They were dreaming of social revenge because

they could never "forgive" the October Revolution.

This explains the stubborn policy of "appeasement" and "noninterference" which, among other things, encouraged Hitler in his intervention against the Spanish Republic. The USSR was the only state to denounce the occupation of Austria. By signing the Munich Agreement of 1938, the governments of Neville Chamberlain and Edouard Daladier authorized the seizure of part of Czechoslovakia, thus objectively abetting the expansionist drive of Hitler and his behind-the-scenes sponsors. In other words, everything was done to direct the Nazi aggression eastward.

This was the prime reason why in 1939 the Western powers at first delayed and then simply sabotaged the talks with the Kremlin on a mutual assistance pact which could have curbed the Nazi aggressors. This stance forced the Soviet Union to conclude a non-aggression pact with Germany in August 1939 (Winston Churchill later confirmed this in his memoirs). At that critical juncture the USSR, having

repulsed militarist forays in the Far East, was seeking to develop socialism in peace and prevent an attack by Nazi Germany—a threat that was already perfectly obvious.

Had Britain and France concluded a mutual assistance pact with the Soviet Union in 1933-1939, the course of history may well have been changed. Playing thoughtlessly with fire, the Western powers helped bring about a disaster. Only when it became clear that Nazi Germany, together with Italy and Japan, posed a direct threat to Britain and the United States, was the anti-Nazi coalition formed. Within its framework, the contribution of the Soviet people to the liberation of Europe from fascism was undoubtedly decisive.

Fifty years after the outbreak of World War II, the arduous path that had to be traversed before the anti-Nazi coalition was formed prompts the following conclusion: since, in spite of all the ideological and political differences, it was possible then to create an alliance against fascism as a "global threat", such an al-

liance is all the more feasible now given the present favourable international situation. We should be a lot quicker about it this time because no one will be left alive after a nuclear war. This imperative is more categorical than the last one.

- 1 The Pan-Germanic Union (Alldeutscher Verband) was an influential propaganda organization set up by the owners of heavy industry on the initiative of Alfred Hugenberg, an adviser to the government who later became chairman of the board of the Krupp concern.
- 2 This was how Georgi Dimitrov defined German fascism at the 7th Congress of the Comintern.
- 3 For a more detailed treatment of the subject, see *WMR* No. 1, 1989, pp.52-57; *Grundriss der Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1963, pp. 149, 157, 174-178.—Ed.
- 4 *Dokumente der KPD 1945-1956*, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1965, p. 3.
- 5 *Die Zerstörung der Weimarer Republik*, Kühn/Hardach (Hrsg.), Cologne, 1977, p. 265.
- 6 Josef Schleifstein, *Die "Sozialfaschismus"-These*, Frankfurt on the Main, 1980, p. 77.

EDITORIAL COUNCIL MEMBERS REPLY TO OUR READERS

A NEW CONSTITUTION FOR ALGERIA

I would like to know more about the new Algerian Constitution. How consonant is it with the popular demands for more democracy so forcefully expressed during mass actions in the country last autumn?

Atef EL-GHIBALI
textile worker, Mahalla
al-Kubra, Egypt

The new Constitution, the third since Algeria regained its national independence in July 1962, was approved in a referendum on February 23, 1989, with 73% of the votes.

The adoption of a new Constitution was brought about by the tragic events of October 1988.¹ After hegemonic rule by

the sole official party, the National Liberation Front (FLN),² a political thaw has set in. But many complex social and economic problems remain. Neither the FLN, nor nonofficial parties and currents have produced any adequate solution to them.

It is already clear, however, that all

public forces, including this Constitution's architects, sense the need to expand democracy in order to benefit social progress and the national interest.

In appealing for a "yes" vote, the Party of the Socialist Vanguard of Algeria (PAGS) was relying on an objective assessment of its draft, which it considered to be a reflection of present-day economic, social and political conditions and the alignment of class forces in Algerian society. As a relative compromise between different political forces, the new Fundamental Law provides a legal guarantee of accomplishing national democratic tasks at this stage, i.e., the socioeconomic, scientific and cultural development of the country.

Comprising 4 Sections and 167 Articles, the new Constitution marks a real democratic advance. It does not refer to the National Charter of 1986, the FLN's official platform which was imposed on society and served exclusively to justify the actions of governing circles. Nor does it mention the socialist option.³ This thesis, originally popular, eventually

turned into some sort of mystification by which the regime infringed on the democratic, social and economic rights of the popular masses.

In contrast, the new Constitution proclaims as an ultimate goal "the protection of the fundamental civil liberties of the citizen and the social and cultural efflorescence of the nation; the abolition of the exploitation of man by man" (Article 8). It accords much significance to implementing concrete national democratic tasks, with the emphasis on a peaceful, non-violent solution to social conflicts within a circumscribed legal framework.

The Constitution's positive provisions open the way to real progress on basic freedoms, and so to democracy as the core of national independence and an engine of economic development. It is very important that the document confirms individual and group political rights. All citizens are equal before the law, without any discrimination. It guarantees freedoms of opinion, conscience, expression, association and assembly, and fixes the procedure for supervision over their observance. It also grants rights to health protection, education, work, etc.

Article 40 of the Constitution is the key democratic gain. It reads: "*The right to create associations of a political character is recognised.* It cannot, however, be invoked to encroach on fundamental liberties, national unity, territorial integrity, the independence of the country and the sovereignty of the people." As we see, this Article implies a multiparty system and hence the right to create political parties.

A law on "associations of a political character" will fix the scope and procedure for the application of these provisions. But we can already say that this Article has put an end to the one-party system, the political monopoly and the hegemonism that have existed in Algeria since 1962. So far, however, it only reflects the socioeconomic realities of Algeria, where 25 years of social differentiation have produced an array of classes and social groups with divergent and conflicting interests.

"Associations of a political character" have already taken shape—for example, the Assembly for Culture and

Democracy, the Islamic Salvation Front and the Union of Democratic Forces. Others may soon follow.

PAGS—the successor to the Algerian Communist Party—was created in January 1966. Not recognised officially because of the then one-party system, it constantly, and publicly, reaffirmed its character as a working-class party, loyal to Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism. The new Constitution should therefore confirm the legalisation of the party and its organ, *Saout ash-Shaab* (The Voice of the People), and this also meets the national interest.

Another advance is the right of every citizen to trade union membership and the right to strike, to be exercised within the framework of the law. This is a great victory for labour. Even assuming restrictions that the law on strikes might impose, these can be minimised. By withdrawing from the official trade unions several years ago, workers were rejecting their methods in practice since those unions had become a "transmission belt" for the sole official party. The task now is to bring workers together to use these new rights by creating a strong united trade union based on democratic principles and able to defend their class interests.

With regard to *state institutions*, the new Constitution enshrines the separation of executive, legislative and judicial powers, defines in a relatively more balanced manner the prerogatives of the Republic's president and the head of government, enlarges the role and the responsibilities of the National People's Assembly (Parliament), and fixes the independence of the judiciary.

The president does still have wide powers. He is responsible for national defence, sets and conducts foreign policy, appoints and removes the head of government, decides on referendums, concludes and ratifies international treaties, etc... From this point of view, one can say that the regime remains of a presidential type. But the cabinet chief also has real prerogatives; notably, he draws up the government programme and submits it for consideration by the Parliament, to which he is accountable.

Greater National People's Assembly legislative and supervisory powers (it can

censure the government) mean that, from now on, elections, if they truly become democratic, will play a much more important role in the life of society.

An innovation in the field of state institutions is the creation of a Constitutional Council as a watchdog on compliance with the Fundamental Law, on referendums and legislative elections, etc. and of a Comptrollers' Court to check the financial expenditures of state agencies and the local bodies of self-government. The procedure for the functioning of the state and its institutions has been defined, as have measures to be taken in the event of crisis situations or Parliament's recess.

The Constitution fixes the *main principles for Algerian foreign policy*: peace, solidarity, cooperation in the spirit of our times and in line with the interests of humanity. These principles serve to protect national sovereignty and territorial integrity, and to promote friendship among the peoples, notably in the Arab Maghreb. Here also, democracy—the basis for popular involvement and mobilisation, for the unity in action and the cohesion of patriotic forces—is an essential precondition for the successful implementation of these principles.

Along with these obvious positive aspects, there are also *certain retreats* in comparison with the previous Constitution. Thus, the provision for state ownership in industry, agriculture and the services has disappeared. The state's disengagement from certain social domains is confirmed. The National People's Army, once a prominent contributor to civil engineering, is now confined to the classic role of national defence. There is no reference to the Berbers—an integral part of our national distinctiveness and culture. We hope that as democracy unfolds, these gaps—including the issue of the Berber language—will be eliminated.

The new Constitution is thus a *move towards a rule-of-law state in Algeria*. Its provisions facilitate the struggle for the accomplishment of national democratic tasks, and reinforce the foundations for a broad democratic union, which in turn may facilitate the progress towards socialism.

The process of democratisation is

seen by social and political forces in the country as a necessity since they are all aware that *none of them can ensure social progress single-handed*. Long years of struggle in the most diverse forms led to this awareness. The threat of destabilisation hung over the country. There were angry outbursts among the public and there were great sacrifices. International solidarity grew with the democratic movement in Algeria.

Of course, the value of a constitution, however advanced its provisions may be, lies not in declarations but in their consistent application. That is why the PAGS called and is calling upon the working people and all patriots and democrats to

be vigilant, to unite and make still greater efforts to ensure that the principles of the Fundamental Law are not distorted but realised in the spirit of democracy, progress and social justice.

Unity is even more necessary than ever before as many inside and outside the country seek to divide the patriotic forces. Aware of this danger, the PAGS is appealing for the creation of a democratic front on the basis of a common programme, with a view to implementing national democratic tasks.

Ali MALKI

Party of the Socialist Vanguard of Algeria, representative on the WMR

1 The social explosion that occurred in Algeria in early October 1988 had no equal in intensity since independence. Popular demonstrations and riots forced the authorities to impose a state of siege. Only the President's appeal to the nation with a promise of political reforms helped to relax the tension that threatened the country with civil war.—*Ed.*

2 The National Liberation Front was created in 1954 and reconstituted in 1964 as the Party of the FLN, until the adoption of the 1989 Constitution the sole legal party in the country. Its 6th Congress, in November 1988, decided to give it back its original name—the National Liberation Front.—*Ed.*

3 As compared with the Constitution of 1976.—*Ed.*

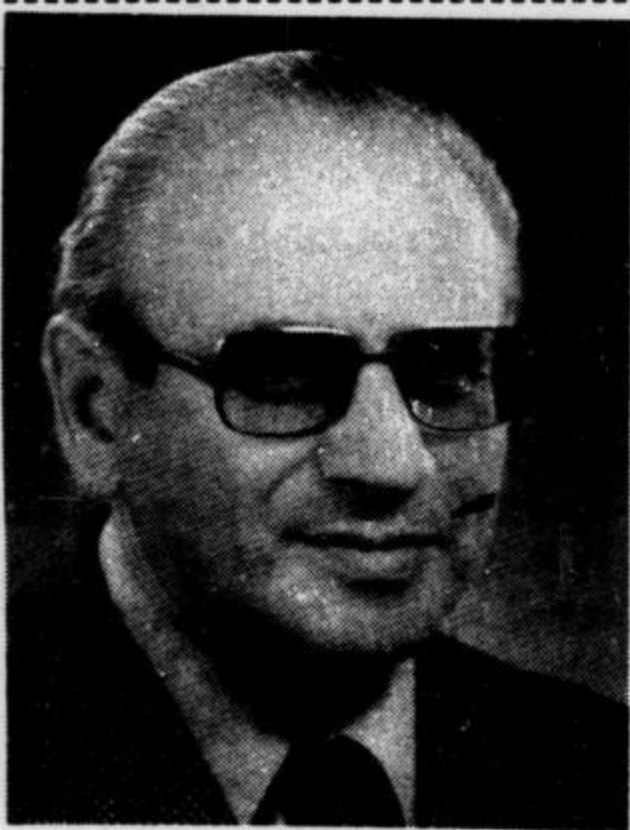
IN MEMORY OF HORST SCHMITT

Horst Schmitt, Chairman of the Socialist Unity Party of West Berlin, who devoted his life to the struggle for the interests of the working people, for peace, democracy and socialism, died on April 22, aged 63.

Born into a Berlin working-class family in 1925, he was persecuted by the Nazis in his early years and sentenced to forced labour. After the defeat of Nazism, he joined the struggle waged by the antifascist and democratic forces. He was admitted to the party of the working class in 1946 and subsequently held many responsible posts, serving on the Board of the party ever since the First Congress of the SEW. In 1976 he became Deputy Chairman and, in 1978, Chairman of the party.

Guided by the theory of scientific socialism, he worked steadily to strengthen the party's ranks

and to promote its unity and influence, paying unflinching attention to joint working-class action and advocating a broad alliance



of all champions of peace, democracy and social progress. His activities as SEW Chairman did much to help the party cre-

atively apply Marxism-Leninism to the struggle for the interests of the working people in the distinctive conditions of West Berlin. A dedicated internationalist brought up in the spirit of Ernst Thälmann, he felt it was his duty to enhance friendship with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, with the country of Lenin and with the first socialist state on German soil.

Comrade Schmitt collaborated vigorously with WMR, contributing articles on topical issues and in support of the "common European home" idea, as well as taking part in exchanges of experience, joint actions by fraternal parties and the development of proletarian internationalism.

Communists the world over will forever remember Comrade Horst Schmitt with great affection.

FROM OUR MAILBAG * * * * *

READERS' RESPONSES, PROPOSALS, CRITICISMS

MAJOR CONCERN

Presently our party is going through a period of discussions on various issues of great concern to our party, and I assume to other parties around the world.

One of the issues concerns the nature of the basic unit of the party: the club. At present, our party is organised in clubs on college and university campuses, area where one lives, industry where one works and language communities. I would like to pose a question to those parties which have clubs in other areas such as peace, environment and women's club... What is the experience of those clubs? Are they successful in bringing the party's position to their constituency? How do they overcome the inherent narrowness of the club? Are the comrades too specialised in one area? Do they recruit from the working class? Can you initiate a discussion of the *WMR* editorial board on this issue?

Pance Stojkovski
Toronto, Canada

IMPORTANT TO WRITE

WMR has enabled me to understand a lot, particularly, about bourgeois propaganda's intrigues and falsifications with regard to Marxist-Leninist theory. Sectarianism, opportunism and reformism oppose it vehemently. It is essential to write about this, especially now that socialist and communist ideals are again winning over people in our society. Supporting the journal's revolutionary thrust, I am confident that it will continue to serve peace and progress.

Plas MAURICE
Brive-la-Gaillarde, France

FROM THE EDITORS. *WMR* regularly publishes articles on the issues of concern to the reader from Canada. In particular, this year's January issue carries a report on the proceedings of an international symposium held in West Germany: "Are Factories Alone Our Strongholds?". A new section "In the Primary Organisations" begins in the April edition of the journal. Forthcoming issues will contain materials from a round-table discussion on democratic centralism in which some aspects of the activity of grassroots party units will also be covered. We would be happy to share readers' experiences of primary organisations, cells or clubs.

WMR TIES * * * * *

- * A meeting with Abdel Razzak al-Safi, Politbureau member of the Central Committee of the Iraqi Communist Party, took place at the *WMR* offices. During the conversation he spoke about the situation in the country and about the decisions of the March, 1989 Plenum of the ICP CC.
- * Schafik Jorge Handal, General Secretary of the Central

Committee of the Communist Party of El Salvador and a member of the Chief Command of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front, visited the *WMR* offices. Addressing the Editorial Council, he described the internal political situation in the country after presidential elections and talked about the prospects of the Salvadorean patriots' struggle at this stage.



THE BOOK SCENE



AN AUTHOR'S VIEW

"FORGET NOT EITHER THE GOOD OR THE EVIL"

The Fate of the Heroes in Julius Fucik's *Report*

Of all the books written about the heroism, courage and sheer bravery of Communists, about their outstanding feats in the struggle against Nazism, *Report From the Gallows* is surely one of the most remarkable. First published in 1945, the *Report* has run to more than 300 editions in 88 languages and is popular the world over. Its author, journalist and writer Julius Fucik (1903-1943), a Czechoslovak national hero, was an organiser and member of the underground leadership of the CPCz during the Nazi occupation. He was arrested by the Gestapo in April 1942, and executed in Berlin's Plötzensee jail in September 1943. The book is made up of the notes he smuggled out while under investigation in the Pankraci jail in Prague. In 1950, the book won the first ever International Peace Prize.

In the early 1980s, an expanded edition of the *Report* came out in Prague, Bratislava and Moscow (in Czech, Slovak and Russian, respectively). Its afterword, by the Czechoslovak journalist Zdenek Hrabica and his Soviet colleague Viktor Andriyanov, formed a documentary piece in its own right. Entitled "People from the *Report*", it traced the fates of several Resistance fighters mentioned by Fucik.

The story stirred up much interest: its authors were awarded the Fucik Prize by the Czechoslovak Union of Journalists, and it was made into a 13-part TV film in Czechoslovakia. The authors have continued their research, and are now preparing a new, enlarged edition.

■ **What new material have you incorporated in your book?**

Zdenek Hrabica. In his book Fucik mentioned the names of about a hundred people, "friends and enemies, big men and little", as he himself put it. They were not fictional characters but real people. When we began our research, we managed to trace the lives of more than 20 of them, but the list has grown considerably.

There is the story of Jaroslav Hora. Although he served in the police force, he was a true patriot. Together with Adolf Kolincky, a warden who supervised the Czech political prisoners in the Pankraci jail, Hora helped preserve Fucik's prison notes. Six months after Fucik's execution, Hora was arrested and thrown into the Nazi death camp Buchenwald. When he returned home after the war, he took up a job as a train driver. But just like Kolincky, he was treated with suspicion and mistrust by the people around...

Viktor Andriyanov. Fucik mentions an underground group led by Jiri Stricker, Arnost Lorenz and Oldrich Stancl. We have learned that they manufactured explosives, reproduced and distributed copies of the Czechoslovak Communists' underground newspaper, *Rude Pravo*, printed leaflets and published a bulletin, *The World Versus Hitler*. In November 1941, Stricker and group members Otakar Runa, Emil Kobrle and Bogumil Kuchar were executed.

In the archives and in the families of those patriots we found their letters and photographs, and notes about them taken after the war. We have met people who knew them personally. The Resistance heroes came from different social backgrounds: Stancl, a workshop owner, was not a party member, nor was Kobrle, a worker, whereas Runa, a qualified engineer, was a Communist. Even under torture those courageous men did not reveal the names of their comrades to the Gestapo.

■ **Could you tell us more about at least one of them?**

V.A. Otakar Runa was the soul and brain of the group. The son of a railwayman, he graduated from a polytechnic before the war. He had a talent for research and a broad range of

interests. He even corresponded with Romain Rolland. Runa freely gave his time to helping young workers, preparing them for school graduation exams.

Z.H. As we studied the stories of people mentioned by Fucik, we found out that some names which had figured in the first edition had been deleted from successive ones. Specifically, they were Resistance fighters Vaclav Rezek, Josef Teringl and Josef Bervida. We established that the former two names had been dropped because of later suspicions about their underground records, and that of Bervida because his name appeared in the same sentence as the other two.

Documents give the lie to those suspicions.

As factory workers, Rezek and Teringl took part in strikes, fighting for their basic rights, such as the right to work in order to earn a living. "It is not a strike, but a war," Fucik wrote about events in the country's northern mining area in the autumn of 1929. "Miners are waging full-scale and fierce struggle, standing firm, determined and unflinching in the face of treachery and terror." Fucik first met Rezek on miners' picket lines taking on strike-breakers. During the prewar years the miners' leader became a well-known party worker, and in late 1938, with the party already banned, the CPCz Central Committee summoned Rezek to Prague and put him in charge of underground work in the Prague area.

The summons to the capital meant that Rezek was trusted by the underground Central Committee. Working under Jan Zika, he was to put together underground party structures in the area. The well-known historian Alena Hajkova, herself a veteran Resistance fighter, entitled a chapter "The Rezek Period" in her monograph *Prague and Communist Resistance*. She describes how Novak (Rezek's alias), a "determined and courageous man", planned sabotage in Prague factories and organised underground party printshops.

Fucik saw Rezek and Teringl at a Gestapo prison and testified in his notes that they had not wavered. But after the war history was "corrected", and the names of these two Resistance fighters failed to appear in subsequent reprints of the *Report*.

After the war Rezek and Teringl had to fight to clear their names. We tell their story in our book, and we hope that historical truth will be restored and their names will be reinstated in the *Report*.

V.A. Why were Fucik's notes "corrected"? For what reason? These questions are not new. When we began our research a little more than ten years ago we talked to Gusta Fucikova about this. She said that the *Report* should be as it had been written by Fucik, without arbitrary omissions or expedient corrections which incite rumours and political speculation.

Z.H. Today it is hard, even impossible, to find out who censored the text, but the *Report* should be restored to its original form. It is our duty to Fucik, to his comrades-in-arms, both dead and alive, and to all those for whom the book is a weapon in the struggle for justice.

■ **What has brought together a Soviet and a Czechoslovak author?**

V.A. The heroes of the antifascist struggle belong not just to their own countries and parties but to the whole of humanity.

■ **How was the book conceived?**

Z.H. You could say that Fucik himself gave us the idea. Looking to future generations, he wrote: "Only one thing I ask of those who survive these times: do not forget anything. Forget

not either the good or the evil. Assiduously collect evidence about those who laid down their lives for themselves and for you... Whole generations of heroes have fallen. Give your love to at least one of them, as sons and daughters should, and be proud of him as of a great man who lived for the sake of the future." At this point the author parts with his heroes. Following his call, we began a painstaking investigation into the history of those who died and those who survived.

■ **Zdenek is editor-in-chief of the magazine *Svet v obrazech* of the Czech Union of Journalists, and Viktor, until recently a member of the editorial board of the newspaper *Sotsialisticheskaya Industriya*, published by the CPSU Central Committee, is a party official. You must have a lot of work to do. How did you manage to find time to conduct your investigations?**

Z.H. We began to cooperate ten years ago, when Viktor was *Komsomolskaya pravda's* correspondent in Prague. And one can always find time for what one does with interest and love.

V.A. It was a tough job, looking up evidence in the archives, meeting people and trying to discover the truth after so many years. But we were carried away by our investigation and felt personally involved in the life stories of those who were with Fucik in a time of trial. Of course, it took all our free time, and even created problems in the family...

■ **You must have gathered a great deal of documents, photographs and letters. What are you going to do with them?**

Z.H. We do indeed have a lot of material. When the first part of our job was over, we wanted to pass it on to the Fucik Museum—but there was no such museum at the time. It opened in Prague in February 1988, on the eve of the 85th anniversary of his birth and we have given over to it a part of our collection. The museum will eventually receive all our materials.

■ **And when will the next book on the themes of Fucik's *Report* appear?**

V.A. It will come out this autumn in Moscow.

Z.H. Printing will take longer in Prague, and the book will appear in a year or so.

HOW WE WANT TO WORK TOMORROW

Mensch und Technik 2000,
Nachrichten, Frankfurt/Main, 1988, 326 pp.

This book, *Man and Technology 2000*, tries to answer the questions that probably face each West German employee today. Is my job threatened by new technology? Can I earn enough to live well? Can I cope with my new duties? Millions of people in other industrialised capitalist countries are also asking themselves these sorts of questions.

A seminar on the subject of "Man and Technology 2000", held in Frankfurt am Main last spring, investigated these vital

problems. It is from its proceedings, supplemented with other information, that this collection, bearing the same title, has been compiled. Its main theme—the social implications of scientific and technological progress and the corresponding trade union demands—is viewed from a general scientific perspective with a practical analysis of concrete situations.

Trade union leaders in the capitalist world don't always define their policy by starting from the main contradiction between wage labour and capital. As the book notes, the history of the trade unions' attitude to the introduction of new technology attests to this. True, changes for the better have been observed here recently, since in the atmosphere of the crisis, and capital's onslaught on wages and social rights, the labour movement now focuses more on the problems resulting from the large-scale use of new technologies. The seminar described this as the "consideration of social factors" and the insistence on "democratising labour" (see p. 82).

In the conditions of the scientific and technological revolution (STR), the defence of the vital interests of the working people presupposes a new dimension to their participation—directly or through the trade unions—in the management of production. It is a question of influence on the economy, technological policy, research and ecology, all of which go beyond the enterprise—to the level of concerns, industrial sectors, and state agencies. Naturally, employers' unions and bourgeois governments reject such democratisation as "incompatible with free enterprise", thus reaffirming that "the antithesis of interests between labour and capital is the sharpest in work organisation and technology" (see p. 90).

How do we want to work and live tomorrow? What shall we produce? These twin questions have long been part of labour's programmes of action and demands for reform. Are they illusory?

Envisioning a "different future", militant trade union leaders focus their policy to the workplace as the main "junction" between labour and capital, where it is easier to feel both the limits and opportunities of the policy of reforms (see p. 241). Of course, this requires the shedding of a persistent "taboo" in trade union policy: the recognition of the employers' monopoly with regard to defining the character of output and the technological processes.

The book gives the lie to claims that a humanisation of labour is possible under current property relations. According to a number of authors, today's changes in the social structure of the working class under the influence of the STR are creating new opportunities for solidarity in the labour movement and for its politicisation. A key priority here is the active enlistment for struggle in labour's ranks of engineering personnel, considerable members of whom are increasingly feeling the effects of a proletarianisation of their work.

It is not new technology, but the vested interests and policy behind it that pose a threat to the working people. Trade unions must fully overcome their uncritical approach to the social implications of technological progress. Their previous stance was mostly defensive, whereas now, says one of the authors, "we are questioning the right of employers to introduce new technologies unilaterally" (p. 287). Three demands are being put forward:

- * the right to reject new technologies until their effect on workers' social gains is clear;
- * the right not to handle any equipment or materials for which there is no proof of their harmlessness;

* a ban on technical means designed to collect, amass and use information on individuals.

The use of new technology, and its influence on the world of labour and the environment, are a reality which is not limited to capitalism. This makes the piece on the GDR trade unions' approach to these problems, and on the prospects for more democratic decision-making within socialist production relations, an organic part of the book. Such a comparison can only benefit the working people on both sides of the border. And it gives the reader additional cause to reflect on the pressing issues described.

Hubert SCHMIEDBAUER

trade union editor of the Austrian newspaper
Volksstimme

WHEN THE RICH GROW RICHER

Esteban Rosario, *Los Dueños de la República Dominicana*, Editora Buho, Santo Domingo, 1988, 240 pp.

"The Dominican Republic is a rich country of poor people"—thus Esteban Rosario opens his book *Masters of the Dominican Republic*. And although this "journalistic reportage", to use his phrase, suffers from a somewhat loose style and a certain disorder in presentation, its extensive factual material convincingly reveals the causes of our people's poverty.

The book contains an appreciable body of information on the origin and extent of the fortunes amassed by the country's wealthiest people. Rosario also gives short biographical sketches of these 20 families, disclosing their old and close business ties with the state apparatus.

Of the 1,937 enterprises registered in the country they own 452 of the largest (see p. 175) and are represented in all government economic bodies.

This is confirmed by a lot of data, in particular the book's extensive list of members of the Monetary Council and the board of the Central Bank, which play a decisive role in taxation policy.

Oligarchic control over the economy goes back to 1961, when Trujillo's dictatorship fell. Over three decades he accumulated fabulous riches, which after his death passed into the hands of the state.

Having been "curbed" by Trujillo, the oligarchy now began to penetrate the main official institutions, and to strengthen its links with the top bureaucrats and army command, waiting for an opportunity to use these funds for a speedy rise.

The moment came in 1969, when the state launched a programme of broad support for private industry. Between 1966 and 1985 it loaned this sector "a total of over 1,291 million pesos" (p. 176).¹

However, the author notes that "this type of industrialisation, based on the so-called import-substitution principle, has brought about a hypertrophied internal market... without lowering the demand for imported goods" (ibid). Between 1980 and 1986 imports soared to \$9,276 million, while exports only came to half this sum!

Naturally, as the economy became more import-dependent, transnational capital began to play an ever-increasing role in it. Unfortunately, the book reveals this dependence and the foreign-corporate connection of the leading family clans, in a perfunctory way and offers little new information.

The chapters on the concentration of land are significantly fuller. In effect, as other researchers have noted, the forms of land tenure are the most important cause of Latin American underdevelopment. In the Dominican Republic, too, the monopolisation of farmlands and pastures has been going on for decades. In 1981 about 0.3% of its landholders, or 163 families, owned 36% of the best lands (see p. 90).

Meanwhile, 300,000 peasants have no land at all.

Dominican agriculture has been worst hit by the social and structural crisis affecting the country. The inequalities in land tenure are causing a mass exodus to the cities and, paradoxically, the emergence of an agro-export industry closely linked to foreign capital is further aggravating the situation. Unemployment among the rural population is approaching 50%, and there is a growing shortage of goods on the domestic market.

The character of property relations determines the age-old poverty and backwardness of most Dominican peasants. Farm product sales, especially cocoa and coffee, remain in corporate hands, and peasants' labour is poorly rewarded. The rich grow richer, the poor poorer.

The author does not limit himself to economic problems, and devotes interesting pages to the control this oligarchy exercises over so-called nonprofit associations and private universities.

The associations offer public services, and at their head is a narrow circle of people who have monopolised this sphere. Rosario also shows the mechanism of such control.

With regard to the private universities, he maintains that the oligarchic groups are not only present on their executive councils, but also receive financial support from a number of US agencies and foundations. In this way they can send the best students to the United States, who then become their "organic intellectuals".

Rosario examines the oligarchy's domination of the mass media, and notes the special role of radio in a country with an illiteracy level of 30%. In 1985, there were 160 radios per 1,000 families, with 205 stations serving a population of 6.5 million. Oligarchy can thus condition the population ideologically.

Rosario sets all this information against vivid descriptions of the misery endured by most Dominicans, 36% of whom live well below the poverty line.

"For Dominican democracy to survive," he concludes, "income must be redistributed. Otherwise, the Dominican people will look for new political paths."

Sully SANEUX

Dominican Communist Party representative on WMR

1 Until the mid-1980s, the peso was equivalent to the US dollar.

THE CAUSES OF VIOLENCE IN PERU

Violencia y Crisis de Valores en el Peru, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, Fundación Tinker, Lima, 1987, 396 pp.

In Peru it has become more obvious than ever before that, for a multi-ethnic, multilingual country of 22 million people, the model of dependent capitalism, with its accompanying backwardness, poverty and spiritual degradation, is absolutely inviable.

The present structural crisis is ripping apart the entire fabric of Peruvian society. The economy, education, almost all government institutions—parliament, the judiciary, the police and the army—are feeling the effects, and the situation has provoked an unprecedented wave of violence and given rise to immense public anxiety.

Christian political trends are playing a noticeable role in the life of Peru. How do they assess the causes of the present situation, and what is their vision of the future? The answer is provided in research carried out by the humanities department of the Catholic University, the results of which comprise this book, *Violence and the Crisis of Moral Values in Peru*.

It points out that many of Peru's current problems stem from the 16th century, when the European conquest of South America began. The colonialists exploited local differences for their own purposes of colonial rule, fracturing not only economic and social structures, but also long-established inter-tribal ties.

By the 1860s, class divisions, racial discrimination and regional backwardness had become characteristic of Peruvian society. At the turn of the century our economy was already an appendage to foreign capital. Later, through a model of import-substitution production—ostensibly to invigorate economic growth—our country became even more dependent, giving rise to sharper social distinctions and intense rivalry between Western and traditional indigenous cultures.

The Peruvians have had to pay for the aftermath of colonial exploitation. There is much bitterness and anger in their hearts. The land where Tupac Amaru¹ and Jose Carlos Mariategui² fought has become a social volcano. It is showing all the signs of a prerevolutionary situation.

A study by the philosopher Rosemary Rizo-Patron de Lerner opens the book. To her, the present crisis and violence in Peru derive from Western society, which "destroyed thousands of years of Andean culture" and which was behind "the rejection and gradual depreciation of the autochthonous in favour of European 'rationalism'" (see p. 26).

The historian Jeffrey Klaiber examines such characteristics of colonial society as paternalism and authoritarianism and condemns the corporative nature, isolation and elitism of its leaders. These features are particularly striking against a backdrop of growing mass poverty. The division of society into classes, races and estates has been responsible for the way of thinking and overall morality which prevails in the country.

The philosopher Ludolfo Ojeda y Ojeda expands on relations between Western and local cultures, and traces the dynamics of their clash, establishing violence as its consequence. The historian Liliana Regalado de Murtado also affirms that

"violence characterised Indian-Spanish relations" and that this marked a "disjunction between the Andean and the Western" (see p. 170).

Sociologists Clemencia Sarmiento y Marcela Chueca investigate the socioeconomic reasons for terror and violence in Peru.³

With a huge external debt of 17 billion dollars and an unfavourable balance of payments the government has not succeeded in halting inflation. Over two-thirds of the active population is fully or partially unemployed.

These and other factors go a long way towards explaining the explosion of violence in the country. Right-wing squads, the authorities and the Sendero Luminoso are terrorising the healthy forces of the nation.

Significant space is given in the book to attempts to show a way out of the present predicament. Patron, for example, suggests the Peruvians adopt an idealistic "ethic of responsibility", one that would defend the "right to life" and to a "worthwhile existence" (see p. 86).

An equally unrealistic proposal comes from the philosopher Hernan Silva-Santisteban Larco. The nation only has to adopt his "ethic of solidarity" in order to overcome the "egoistical will that breeds violence" (see p. 142).

Both these schemes are naive in assuming that Peruvian society can be reconciled by appealing to national feelings and the evangelical precept: "Love thy neighbour".

The other researchers take a more realistic approach, Klaiber being the most radical. He impugns the "corporative ethic" and calls for an end to state bureaucracy, careerism and the enormous socioeconomic and cultural inequalities that divide the Peruvians into antagonistic groups. This would help remove poverty and cultural backwardness, the breeding grounds for violence.

Education and awareness have a major role to play in shaping a civic consciousness among the Peruvians. Francisca Bartra Gros, a psychologist, believes that an upbringing based on ideals

of justice, peace and solidarity would eliminate the "spirit of struggle and rivalry that still lingers in school" (see p. 303).

Jorge Capella Riera, a teaching specialist, maintains that "in itself, education cannot change society. At the same time, real change in society is impossible without the support and inspiration of education." He believes a national system of education is necessary and that it would encourage spiritual renewal and progressive change in society.

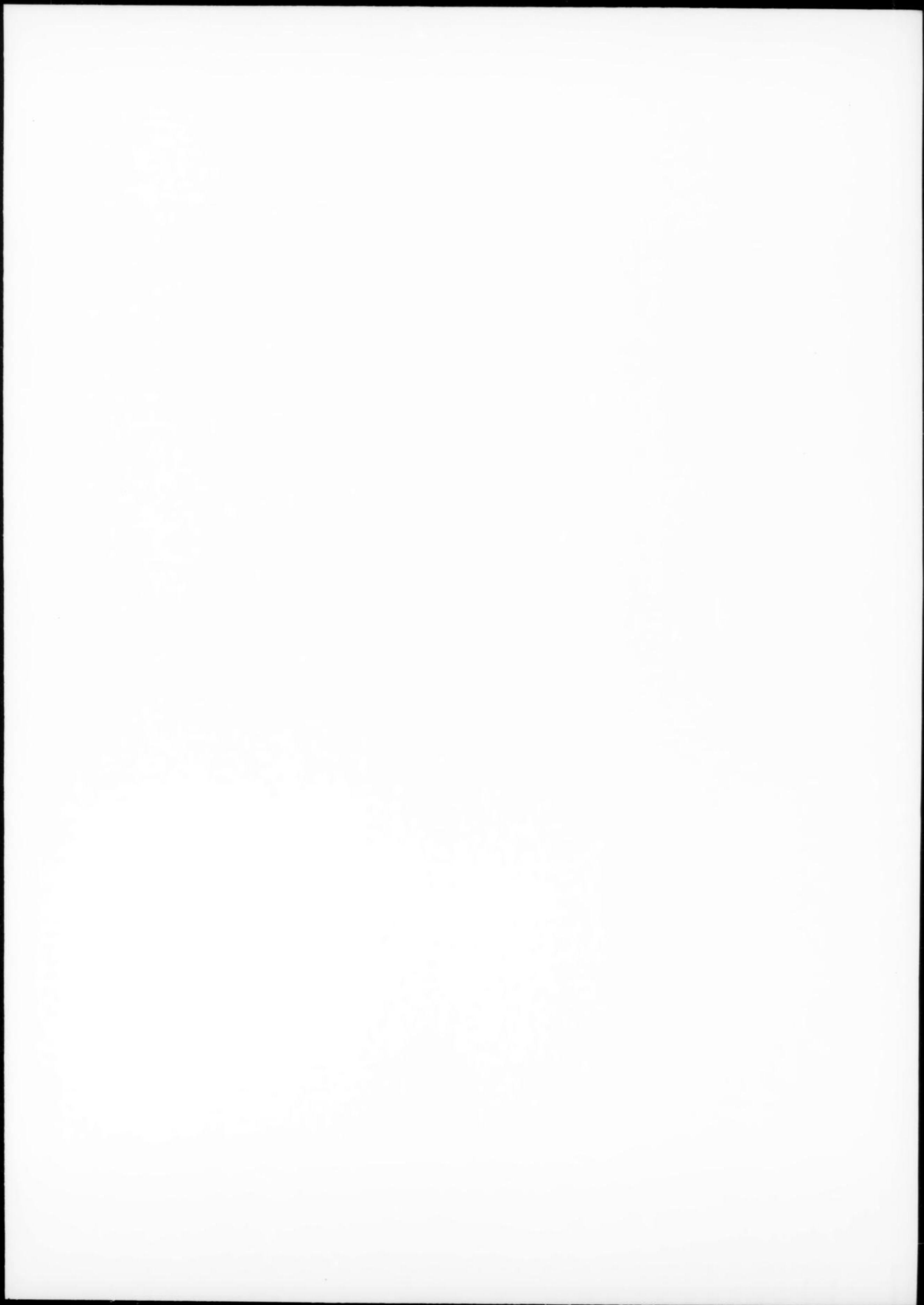
The researchers, however, conclude their work with what is, from the Peruvian Communists' point of view, an inviable proposition. Namely, the union of all the antagonistic classes for the sake of a "new national consensus" which would rid us of terror and violence. This kind of approach to one of the country's major problems signifies their adherence to Christian dogma.

Nevertheless, the panorama of Peru they unfold is broad enough to show the danger lying in the accumulated "inflammable material".

Mauro GOMEZ
Peruvian Journalist

- 1 Tupac Amaru (1544?-1572)—a leader of the Peruvian Indians' movement against the Spanish conquerors. His name became the symbol of the struggle for independence and was used by the leaders of many Indian uprisings in the Andean countries up to 1923.—*Ed.*
- 2 Jose Carlos Mariategui (1895-1930)—a figure in the Peruvian and Latin American working-class and communist movement, a theoretician and populariser of Marxism-Leninism, the founder of the Peruvian Communist Party.—*Ed.*
- 3 According to data from the Centre for the Study and Encouragement of Peruvian Development, between April 1980 and February 1988 some 12,000 terrorist acts were carried out in Peru.—*Ed.*







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