

# **WORLD**

*Problems of*

# **MARXIST**

*Peace and Socialism*

# **REVIEW**

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**Britain / 13**

**Global  
economy / 25**

**The "New  
Internationalism" / 63**

**Portuguese CP  
congress / 49**

**Revolution  
& peace / 5**

**Iran  
Iraq / 71**





# WORLD Problems of MARXIST Peace and Socialism REVIEW

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Javier Perez de CUELLAR (UN). United Nations: the Dynamics of Peacemaking.....	3
Hermann AXEN (GDR). The Imperative of General Human Interests .....	5
Jozef CZYREK (Poland). Security in a Changing World .....	9
Gordon McLENNAN (Great Britain). Who Will Defeat the Tories? .....	13
Yacoub ZAYADIN (Jourdan). We Want Arab Unity.....	17

## INTO THE 21st CENTURY

Dobri DZHUROV (Bulgaria). European Military Balance. Warsaw Treaty Organisation: The Facts .....	20
Mourad GHALEB (AAPSO). Solidarity Movement: Growing Responsibility .....	23
A LOOK AT GLOBAL ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. A Soviet-American Academic Dialogue .....	25
Hector MUJICA (Venezuela). A New Humanism.....	31

## THE SOCIALIST WAY

Tserendashiyn NAMSRAY (Mongolia). The Party Is Responsible for the Fate of Renewal.....	34
CHOE TAE BOK (Korea). The Masses: The Subject of the Revolution.....	38
Natalia MOROZOVA (USSR). Lenin's Contribution to Perestroika .....	40
Sandor SZORCSIK (Hungary). Political Pluralism in Hungary .....	45

## THE PARTY

COMMUNIST CONGRESSES. Humberto VARGAS CARBONELL (Costa Rica). Left Unity Is Open to All. ....	46
Carlos BRITO (Portugal). A New Response to the Challenge of the Times .....	49
Ignacio GALLEGRO, Francisco PALERO (Spain). Healing the Rift.....	54
GRASSROOTS EXPERIENCE. Juan TUTUY (Peru). Tradition Is Not Enough.....	58
MARXISM AND RELIGION. Nguorn TEP (Kampuchea). The Communists and Buddhists in Kampuchea.....	61
INFORMATION. In Brief * From the Press .....	57,60

## FORUM

Antonio RUBBI (Italy). The "New Internationalism": A Drama With a Happy Ending?.....	63
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## COUNTRIES, EVENTS, ANALYSIS

Andimba TOIVO YA TOIVO (SWAPO). Time of Hope.....	69
THE PLANET'S FLASHPOINTS. THE BLOODSHED IS OVER: WHAT NOW? Kadym HABIB (Iraq). The Peace Process Must be Advanced.....	71
Ahmad FARZAN (Iran). A Few Months After the War .....	73
THE WORKING CLASS IN THE COMPUTER AGE. Werner CIESLAK (FRG). Can They Defend Themselves? .....	75
THE MILITARY AND DEMOCRACY. Ernesto Lopez MEYER, Horacio BALLESTER (Argentina). Not to Be Pawns in an Alien Game .....	78
Antonio DIAZ-RUIZ (Cuba). Money Talks.....	81

## THE BOOK SCENE

Mohamed Magdi GAMAL. An Invitation to Consider.....	84
David GREEN. Basic Flaws .....	85
Said Ahmed al-JANAHI. A Candle in the Dark.....	87
NEW BOOKS	

## SURVEYS, EVENTS, ANALYSIS

HISTORY OF THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT: FACTS, PEOPLE, IDEAS. What Kind of Man Was General Sandino? .....	88
Jan GALANDAUER (Czechoslovakia). The Courage of Foresight More About Bohumir Smeral .....	93
FROM OUR MAILBAG. Abdulla KANIMETOV. Despite the Danger .....	95
Alexei VASILIEV. The Krasnoyarsk Radar: What's the Hitch? .....	95
WMR TIES.....	96

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# UNITED NATIONS: THE DYNAMICS OF PEACEMAKING

Javier Perez de CUELLAR  
Secretary General, United Nations

> *What do you think has stimulated improvements in the world political climate, and how has the UN contributed to them?*

Heads of state are abandoning confrontation in favour of dialogue and negotiations for reasons which could be summarised in three words: interest, understanding and prestige.

To begin with, leaders ought to be concerned because wars have never been as costly and pointless as they are today, as is clear from the military deadlocks in all recent conflicts and the heavy burden on all the countries involved. Never has the lack of trust caused such waste as today, and the world's arms spending is proof of that. And finally, never has the lack of cooperation been so grievous, especially at a time when nations are growing increasingly interdependent.

Heads of state ought to realise furthermore that the use of force, the arms race, or an exclusive preoccupation with their own countries' interests are absurd. The UN has contributed to an understanding of this truth by constantly exposing the dangers of confrontation and advocating solutions to conflicts. Opportunities arising from positions of authority must be used to consolidate this understanding and make the requisite political changes.

The leaders of the two superpowers have played the decisive role in the present improvement in the international situation, which many consider to be the most significant in UN history. They initiated a dynamic process towards a stronger peace, which today we see spreading throughout the world, supported by UN efforts towards its practical implementation.

> *What are the greatest UN achievements in the recent period (especially since the UN peace-keeping force has been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize)? What can you say about the possibilities for further progress towards disarmament, detente, the solution of regional and global security problems and stronger peace?*

The UN political achievements last year are common

knowledge: the Geneva accords on Afghanistan, the Iran-Iraq ceasefire, the understanding between Morocco and the POLISARIO Front on peace in the Western Sahara, the resumption of the intercommunal dialogue on Cyprus, and the decision to set in motion on April 1, 1989 a plan to grant independence to Namibia. But these achievements, though important, are just the first steps on the road to a lasting peace in the regions concerned. Patient but resolute steps on the chosen road are needed and there should be no complacency. Nevertheless, we can congratulate ourselves that these successes have added to the prestige of the UN and its role in world affairs.

The award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the UN peacekeeping force is a reflection of the heightened interest in our organisation. It rewarded the efforts of a unique structure which has proved capable of keeping the peace in crisis-stricken zones. Clearly it must be strengthened in the future, so that with contingents from the armed forces of various countries it can contribute more towards the maintenance of order and respect for international law.

More favourable prospects are opening up for progress towards disarmament, and the resolve to achieve it in practice is clearly growing. There is no task, however complex, which the international community cannot accomplish through joint efforts.

> *What is your idea of a greater role for the UN in international affairs and what are the priorities for the organisation?*

The only choice we have in a world in which countries are growing more and more interdependent and in which all the problems are becoming global is one between cooperation and anarchy. We either become masters of our common fate and pool our efforts to overcome common difficulties, or face increasing injustices and dangers. I have absolutely no doubts about the wisdom of the heads of state, and I believe that the United Nations, as the principal instrument of international cooperation, should play a growing role in international affairs.

This interview consists of written replies to WMR's questions.

Politically, the UN should globalise the dialogue and talks between states, as Mikhail Gorbachov rightly noted in his recent memorable address to the UN General Assembly. While contributing towards disarmament and the successful completion of the ongoing talks, the UN should also address two major problems: peace in the Middle East and democracy in South Africa.

Today, political efforts should concentrate more on promoting models of world development that would preserve the environment. Two-thirds of humanity are victims of gross injustice, and the UN cannot remain aloof. Neither can our organisation ignore the risks to the ecological balance from certain types of production and consumption. The Soviet President has made some very interesting proposals here. For example, he has suggested the creation of an emergency ecological relief centre at the UN and the launching of a space lab to monitor the effects of those interdependent spheres, production and consumption, on the environment. This demands urgent priority, as the international commission led by Gro Harlem Brundtland pointed out in its report. The UN should demonstrate its effectiveness in this area.

> *Your personal contribution towards settling international problems and increasing the authority of the UN is well-known.*

*What problems confront you in your responsible position and what new goals are you setting yourself? What does your family think of your work?*

My greatest concern is the financial instability of the UN. Some members take their payments to the UN budget seriously while others do nothing to meet their obligations.

As for my priorities, they are those of the United Nations. With the help of the permanent Security Council members I would like to bring an end to the explosive situation in the Middle East. The present state of affairs cannot be allowed to continue.

What do my family think of the fact that I have so little time left for them? It is difficult to speak for my wife and children, but they always support me in my work and understand my obligations. My wife often accompanies me on foreign trips. For my part I try not to sacrifice my entire personal life to my professional duties, however demanding they might be.

> *What can you say about the significance of the latest, 43rd Session of the UN General Assembly and the consequent proposals and initiatives? Do you agree that today, on the threshold of the 21st century, the world community can enter a new, peaceful period of development, and if you do, what principles should it follow?*

The latest session of the General Assembly strengthened positive tendencies in international relations. Discussions were a reflection of the general interest among all delegates in dialogue and understanding, and their decisions gave a fresh impetus to efforts for peace and the search for a better economic balance. The session unanimously approved many resolutions, particularly on disarmament. There was a further convergence of positions on social and humanitarian problems, with the resultant dialogue on legal issues. The declaration on strengthening the functions of the the UN with regard to the settlement and prevention of conflicts was approved by consensus, and a decision on our budget was worked out.

Apart from that, the General Assembly passed its first unanimous political resolution on Afghanistan. In Geneva the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organisation was given an opportunity publicly to present his views on how to narrow the differences between the parties involved. The Assembly heard other remarkable addresses, first of all that by Mikhail Gorbachov, Chairman of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet. He concentrated on problems of world development and said that we had entered a new era in which progress is measured by the extent to which universal interests are met. I agree wholeheartedly with him on this and I think that if all the leaders shared his analysis, tried to match their words with deeds, and respected the principles of the UN Charter, then we could indeed enter a more peaceful and auspicious period of human history.

I am wary of any ideas to restrict the activities of the UN which may result from the euphoria of some and the scepticism of others, and I am doing what I can to make substantive and irreversible advances towards the settlement of conflicts, disarmament and social and economic progress.

# THE IMPERATIVE OF GENERAL HUMAN INTERESTS

Hermann AXEN

member of the SED CC Political Bureau, CC secretary

We continue our discussion of the connection between class and general human interest in the modern world, which was begun at a WMR symposium on "Revolution and Peace in the Nuclear Age" (No. 2, 1989). Below are Hermann Axen's answers to questions from the WMR Commission on General Theoretical and Global Problems.

> *The international communist and working-class movement, and socialism as a whole, have consistently supported a policy of peace and peaceful coexistence. What is the significance of this policy?*

We have always regarded the struggle for peaceful coexistence between states with different social systems as a strategic policy. It has been demonstrated in theory and in practice that socialism and the working class are deeply committed to peace, a fact stemming from the class nature of the proletariat, and from the structure of contemporary society, where the basic principle is that no class or section has a stake in war, and no one makes money from the arms race. Socialism, says Marx, is based internally on the idea of freedom from exploitation, and this is why it is based externally on the principle of peace.

The Great October Socialist Revolution, which Lenin called the proletariat's first victory, and thus the first victory on the way to eliminating war, for the first time created the state basis for the working class to perform its historical mission, which naturally entails the liberation of the whole of mankind from exploitation and wars. Through Lenin's Decree on Peace, socialism made peace the supreme requirement of its active foreign policy. *Lenin's fundamental concept of peaceful coexistence set out the main line of socialism's behaviour in the world arena: democratisation of international relations in the spirit of peace, security, equality and cooperation between different states.*

The Soviet state consistently pursued this principle in Genoa and at Rapallo, in the League of Nations and in the anti-Hitler coalition. Lenin's doctrine was consistently developed in accordance with the actual course of the international class struggle. After the October Revolution, the struggle for peaceful coexistence was designed mainly to give the young Soviet republic a breathing-space in the face of the rapacious intervention by the imperialist powers, but later on this struggle concentrated on overcoming militarism and wars, excluding force from international relations, and developing a new line in world politics: peaceful coexistence and cooperation between socialism and capitalism.

As the world socialist system took shape, it used its growing strength and influence, in accordance with its vital class interests—hence also with the interests of mankind—to demonstrate to the more aggressive circles of imperialism that the use of armed force against socialism was bound eventually to lead to their own self-destruction. The failure of the imperialist policy of nuclear blackmail and gunboat diplomacy was crucial in enabling the Soviet Union to attain military-strategic parity, first by nullifying the nuclear monopoly and then the strategic invulnerability of the United States, doing so at the cost of tremendous effort and great sacrifice, the effects of which are being felt even today. Imperialism did not dare start a new world war because of the growing political, economic, scientific and technical strength, and moral potential, of the socialist countries,

their consistent peace policy and the dedicated struggle of the communist and workers' parties, the rise of the national liberation movement, and the ever more powerful movement for peace. This is now one of the main factors of our epoch.

> *What new demands are being made on the peaceful coexistence policy in the light of the realities of our day?*

New factors are now of primary significance: the conditions of the nuclear-space age and the effects of the revolutionary development of the productive forces. The new potential for progress produced by the scientific and technological revolution has not been fully used because the hegemonistic, military wing of international monopoly capital has misused the revolutionary development of the productive forces in order to build up its destructive potential and develop newer and more monstrous systems of mass destruction. *It is now perfectly clear that the system of exploitation of man by man has simultaneously become a system for the potential destruction of man by man.* This means that great efforts are required on the part of socialism to ensure international security—at the cost of vast resources diverted from the building of the new society.

On the other hand, this course in world politics tends increasingly to erode the process of reproduction in the United States and other imperialist countries. A nuclear war can no longer be fought, let alone won. Even those who rule the imperialist countries now have to think again about the tangible threat of a further spread of nuclear and chemical weapons and the possibility of nuclear terrorism.

The objective requirements of the nuclear-space age, and the misuse of the productive forces under capitalism, have confronted mankind with problems that can ultimately be solved only *in a common effort*. The highest priority goes to making nuclear war an impossibility. With the rapid development and internationalisation of the productive forces, accompanied by the deepening interdependence of states, it is also important to protect the environment, to solve the daunting ecological problems, and to eliminate hunger, ignorance, underdevelopment, disease, plunder, debt, and inequality between states. Mankind's survival and the future of world civilisation can only be ensured if all countries work together, if both systems cooperate with each other and establish a fair balance of interests. This gives coexistence and relations in the world community a totally new dimension.

The solution of global problems in the interests of all calls for a fundamentally new approach to the international interaction of states and social systems. It was said at the 11th Congress of the SED: "A strong will is needed to get rid of stereotypical thinking with regard to

confrontation and the stubborn drive for military superiority; there is a need for a new approach in order to find new forms and ways in relations between different social systems, states and regions."<sup>1</sup> Mikhail Gorbachev's new proposals at the UN General Assembly on December 7, 1988 provided far-reaching impulses along these lines. Cooperation must proceed in the presence of both opposing world social systems. The new historical situation compels them to engage in struggle and competition without military means, i.e., in accordance with the norms and principles of the policy of peaceful coexistence.

Conditions now being what they are, the peaceful coexistence of socialist and capitalist states is no longer merely one of many possible forms of cohabitation between the states: *it is now the only possible norm.*

> *To what extent are the forces opposing the working class, democracy and socialism interested in peaceful coexistence?*

In a speech at an international scientific conference "Karl Marx and Our day—The Struggle for Peace and Social Progress" (Berlin, April 1983), Erich Honecker said: "The preservation of world peace is everyone's business, including those who do not seek radical social transformations. The aspiration for peace and the readiness to fight for it have, of course, never been anyone's monopoly. Ever since wars began, with their suffering, victims and destruction, the best representatives of the peoples and the various classes and organisations have courageously opposed the threat of aggression. Mankind has never yet been under such a direct mortal threat as it is today, which is why it has never been more committed to peace. Even the making of profit has been made illusory by the prospect of nuclear war. This offers the historic chance of uniting the most diverse forces in the struggle for peace and so giving it unprecedented scope."<sup>2</sup>

The policy of peaceful coexistence is still being opposed by some powerful imperialist circles. At the fourth summit meeting in Moscow, the US administration was more inclined to dismantle medium-range missiles, which had been made potentially ineffective through military counter-measures, than to record in international law its recognition of the principles of peaceful coexistence and non-interference as a norm of relations between socialism and capitalism. However, the new historical perspectives were demonstrated by Gorbachev's proposal, made on January 15, 1986, to eliminate all nuclear weapons by the year 2000, by the results of socialism's foreign policy, and by the growth of the worldwide coalition of reason. Ultimately, this is what is making imperialism realise that its aggressive opposition to mankind's hopes for peace and guaranteed prosperity can no longer be tolerated. After all, the only chance of survival for a social system is provided



by peaceful coexistence, with competition and cooperation as the crucial factor.

> *What is your view of the dialectics of general human and class interests in the struggle by the progressive forces today?*

If general human problems are to be solved in a common effort, one should never forget that there is a close interconnection between imperialism and the emergence or aggravation of global problems. Imperialism, and its military-industrial complex in particular, has produced the threat to life on Earth. The existence of global problems will force the ultra-aggressive circles of imperialism, gradually and in the course of persevering struggle, to abandon the idea of using armed force and the buildup of armaments, and to accept a comprehensive and stable system of international security. These circles are incapable of the new thinking. *There is a need for sustained and resolute struggle for worldwide cooperation between all the peace forces to push back and eventually to contain the most aggressive militaristic groups of monopoly capital.*

The class approach should never be obscured by our concern for general human interests, which spring from the integrity of the modern world, but which never appear in a pure form, so that they can neither be ensured in parallel with class tasks, nor detached from them. Objectively, a neutral class perception of general human interests does not exist. So long as classes exist, general human interests (or the interests of the whole of social development, as Lenin put it more precisely) are reflected, realised or hemmed in, distorted, established as a norm, or jeopardised and trampled upon by these classes. Until the class-free future, classes and their corresponding social systems will remain the crucial subjects of social progress.

Survival is, of course, also in the interests of the monopoly bourgeoisie: it also wants to preserve itself as a class. The proletariat wants to survive as well. But it does not follow that opposite and specific class interests are, therefore, eliminated. *The imperative of survival means that the existence of each class now depends on the prevention of a thermonuclear disaster, on the preservation of peace, and on other conditions vital to social life.*

The extent to which the same interests are consistent and common tends to differ because of the different condition of the two main classes in society today. The capitalist seeks to survive not just as a member of the human race, but as an exploiter. Capital exists to yield a profit, but if the capitalist has to make a profit today, in this nuclear-space age of ours, he must keep in check his urge for armed aggression. This is also compulsory for the economic and social development in the United States and other capitalist countries. The ruling circles of the United States have to reckon with the fact

that the runaway arms race has exceeded the economic and financial potential of even the most powerful imperialist country. It can no longer continue to build up every type of weapon to excess, because further growth in military expenditure tends to undermine its economy and the process of reproduction, to worsen its position as compared with Japan and the EEC in high technology, and to destabilise the world capitalist market and international and monetary relations. The United States, the capitalist world's biggest creditor, has also become its biggest debtor.

Imperialism organically gravitates towards aggression, but the realities of the nuclear age, the international political and military balance of forces, and the trends in the world economy tend to contain it and to force imperialism to display a capacity for peace. There is no doubt that special significance here attaches to the broad interaction of all the peace-loving peoples and states, and the scope and strength of the worldwide coalition of reason and realism.

There is no dichotomy between general human and class interests in the working class. On the contrary, the better the situation in general human terms, the more favourable it is for attaining the goals and fulfilling the tasks of the revolutionary class, since they are completely in keeping with the interests of mankind with respect to preserving peace and solving other global problems.

> *What do you think of the idea that peaceful coexistence is a specific form of class struggle?*

Not long ago, communist and workers' parties held that peaceful coexistence was a specific form of class struggle. Since its origination, the international communist movement has taken a principled stand for peace as a socialist ideal, and as the most favourable form of struggle for social emancipation and national liberation. It is true that, when imperialism imposed war in defiance of the peoples' will and resistance, it was considered necessary to turn it into a revolutionary overthrow of the class which had started the war, thereby ending the war and securing peace as soon as possible. This concept, which was once correct—as the results of two world wars show—is now obsolete because of the new and objective conditions of the nuclear-space age.

It is truer today to say that efforts to avert a nuclear inferno, to ensure peace and to create the conditions for a life of freedom on a planet fit for human beings are a *general democratic and humanistic task meeting the supreme class interests of the international working class and the substance and policy of socialism.* Its fulfilment has become an elementary and basic condition for advancing along the historically shortest, and indeed the only route to attaining the ultimate objectives of the international working-class and liberation movement, i.e.,

the most noble objectives of human society. Every step forward in social progress—the strengthening of socialism and its further development, national liberation and social emancipation, and the defence and extension of democracy in the capitalist countries—implies the prevention of nuclear war. Peace, the paramount human interest, has the most profound social and class content.

> *What is your view of the alliance of forces capable, in the present conditions, of preserving peace, helping civilisation to survive, and encouraging mankind to develop along the way of social progress, democracy and socialism?*

The idea of a worldwide coalition of reason and realism, which Erich Honecker expressed at the 7th Plenary Meeting of the SED CC in November 1983, has evolved into a new and significant factor of world politics. This has been promoted by the successes of the foreign policy of the GDR and the other socialist countries, the acceptance of partnership in security by the SPD and other parties of the Socialist International, the activity of some broadly based bourgeois-liberal forces, the fresh upswing in the world peace movement, the acts by the non-aligned countries, and the initiatives of the six heads of state and government from four continents. The international meeting for nuclear-free zones in Berlin in June 1988 (the biggest meeting of peace forces in world history to date) demonstrated the dynamism, strength and effectiveness of action by the worldwide coalition of reason and realism.

In the efforts to solve global problems, especially to avert a thermonuclear disaster, socialism has led the way for the other social forces and systems, so establishing itself not only as the social alternative to capitalism, but also as the saviour of civilisation. This is a manifestation of the interconnection between the scientific and technical revolution, and the social revolution. Socialism, the social system whose vital principle is the creation and defence of peace, has done most to compel imperialism to the longest period of peace in our century. Socialism has now also manifested itself as the system whose proposals for comprehensive international security and cooperation *pave the way for mankind to solve the most acute problems in a common effort, and thereby for survival and fresh perspectives in social development.*

Clarity on the relations between the class struggle and the struggle for peace, between class interests and

the interests of mankind, shows the way forward for the various forces of progress acting in unequal conditions. Dogmatism could deprive us of potential partners in the struggle for peace, security and the well-being of the peoples, who could even fall prey to the bombastic demagogic utterings of the ultra-aggressive circles of imperialism.

Most people understand that there is no alternative to peaceful coexistence in the nuclear age, and this majority now includes many classes in society, some of them antagonistic, ranging from the proletariat to the monopoly bourgeoisie. However, the struggle between the two social systems is naturally a sustained and unrelenting struggle of ideologies, but one which must not forego the principles of peaceful coexistence, peaceable, equitable and mutually beneficial relations between states. Without them it would be impossible for countries with different social systems to cooperate and to solve common problems.

The socialist states, whose commitment to peace springs from the very essence of their social system, represent the interests of peace on Earth. Their foreign and defence policy serves the cause of peace, which was the first slogan of the Great October Socialist Revolution. Peace must also come from German soil, and that is the state doctrine the GDR has pursued in the 40 years of its existence. *Peace is the imperative, the condition for mankind's survival at the turn of the century. Peace is one of the great ideals of communism.*

We shall carry on our unwavering struggle to assert the policy of peaceful coexistence from the standpoint of our socialist class positions, while elaborating, even more precisely and widely, as said at the latest plenary meeting of the SED CC, the dialectics of internal and external conditions for the development of socialist society, the requirements and consequences of class confrontation and competition between the two opposite systems, and also of the diverse perspectives for international cooperation.

<sup>1</sup> *Protokoll der Verhandlungen des XI. Parteitages der SED 17-21.4.1986*, Dietz-Verlag, Berlin, 1986, p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> *Karl Marx und seine Zeit—der Kampf um Frieden und sozialen Fortschritt. Internationale Wissenschaftliche Konferenz des ZK der SED, Berlin 11-16, April 1983*, Dresden, 1983, p. 22.

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50 YEARS SINCE THE OUTBREAK OF WORLD WAR II

# SECURITY IN A CHANGING WORLD

Jozef CZYREK

Political Bureau member, Central Committee secretary, Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR)

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Fifty years ago this September Hitler invaded Poland and triggered off World War II. Thankfully, much has changed in international relations since then. But the prevention of a new global conflict, this time fraught with man's nuclear self-destruction, remains our prime concern.

The debate about the causes of World War II continues to this day. Historians who researched this subject in good faith have provided valid answers to many questions. But some things remain unclear, and they must be studied and analysed in greater depth. For different reasons, it often takes a long time to arrive at the truth.

The bitter experience of the past is a lesson for the entire international community and for every country that was swept into that tragic vortex. Poland was one of the first to be hit by the fire storm of war.

As former President Urho K. Kekkonen of Finland wrote in one of his books: do not look to make friends afar or enemies nearby. Naturally, we were not looking to make enemies on our doorstep, but establishing friendly relations with Nazi Germany was impossible and pointless. It was not our fault but our tragedy that our age-old neighbour attacked us treacherously yet again. But on the other hand, Poland failed to make full use of the opportunities for concluding agreements with the Soviet Union, which had repeatedly expressed its readiness to resist Hitler's expansionist drive in this part of Europe.

The Polish people, and even the then bourgeois government, accepted the fate of being the first to use armed force to resolutely repulse the aggression launched by the more reactionary imperialist forces. That defensive war of our people marked the beginning of a vigorous struggle against the fascist plague—a heroic struggle which ultimately led to victory and to profound changes in the postwar world.

What about the lessons for the world at large?

The war demonstrated that in a critical situation, a *coalition of countries with different social systems* is possible. An alliance of this kind is all the more imperative today as we struggle to cope with the terrible risks awaiting the human race on the eve of the third millennium.

My impression is that the world is gradually beginning to act on this extremely important lesson taught to us 50 years ago. Witness the recent series of positive international developments, the forms and methods of the Soviet peace offensive, the initiatives of Mikhail Gorbachov and the numerous steps taken by Western leaders. The trend towards the creation of a *broad coalition of general democratic and peace-loving forces* is gaining prominence.

Further to this, I recall the Moscow meeting of left and democratic parties and movements to mark the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution. For all their different social and political affiliations, the participants were unanimous in that prevention of a nuclear catastrophe and the attainment of durable and lasting peace was their international duty and their common humanitarian mission.

Another historical lesson of World War II is that humanity paid a terrible price for the absence of an effective *system of collective security*, something which could have become an insurmountable obstacle to any kind of expansionism.

## RATIONAL CONCEPTS AND RELAPSES OF MILITARISM

A vigorous search is now on for a comprehensive system of international security based on new political thinking and innovative concepts of military policy.

The doctrine of *reasonable defence sufficiency*, advanced and implemented by the Soviet Union and stipulating the renunciation of offensive weapons and the reduction of armed forces to certain limits, is crucially important here. The Soviet Union has unilaterally decided to cut the strength of its armed forces by 500,000 men, substantially reduce conventional armaments, and withdraw part of its troops from the GDR, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland. This historic step is proof that in its international policy the USSR is indeed guided by the concept of reasonable defence sufficiency.

Poland firmly believes in the validity of this doctrine and, for its part, seeks to contribute to its practical realisation. The Defence Committee of the Polish

People's Republic has decided to cut the strength of the national army, and to reduce the military budget by almost 5%. Prior to, and independently of that decision, the well-known Jaruzelski Plan was advanced, containing a number of ideas on disarmament in Central Europe fully consonant with the spirit of the doctrine in question. The plan also featured a proposal on discussing the military doctrines of both blocs so as to act jointly to make them strictly defensive.

Obviously, greater universal security implies that *all parties* show their readiness for it and no one act to promote mistrust or suspicion. However, voices are now frequently raised in NATO calling for a modernisation of nuclear weapons and for moves to "offset" the entry into force of the INF Treaty.

That such trends have surfaced is not surprising. Attaining international relations of a new type will not be easy. The biggest obstacle is posed by the military-industrial complex and other militaristic interests, which are not going to give up without a fight, as well as influential sections of the Western ruling class who are used to viewing the world through a gunsight. They object to the ideological defusing of intergovernmental relations, fearing that the process of disarmament may go too far.

In his time Lenin stressed the importance of paying attention to and making use of the political heterogeneity of monopoly capital, the fact that it comprised a "war party" and a "peace party". Today, we can see the same alignment of forces in the infighting within the NATO countries over international and military issues. At times, one party gains the upper hand in a particular nation, while the other emerges on top elsewhere. This results in disagreement on modernisation, a course which is resisted not only by public opinion but also by many NATO member states.

I prefer to be an optimist and I hope that reason and realism will triumph over the militaristic designs of the more reactionary Western quarters and that dangerous trends will be overcome. After all, modernisation and the so-called compensatory buildup are aimed essentially at nullifying even the first successes of the disarmament process. They run counter to the interests of European security, and they are incompatible with the construction of a common European home.

## TOWARDS A SYSTEM WITHOUT BLOCS

As Victor Hugo said, no army in the world can stop an idea whose time has come. Gorbachov's concept of a *common European home* proved to be very apt and timely, generating worldwide response, interest and discussion. A major issue arising in this connection concerns the ways in which the security of a common

European home shared by countries with opposing sociopolitical systems could be guaranteed.

One should, of course, proceed from the existing realities. The system of our continent's security so far remains rooted in the reality of two opposing military and political blocs—NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organisation. Therefore, the present objective is to imbue them with a quality that would minimise the risks of a European conflict breaking out, let alone its escalation into a global one. The main efforts of the Warsaw Treaty countries are aimed at preventing this.

An opportunity exists to create a common security system in a Europe free of blocs. I believe that part of the political foundation underlying its future structure has already been laid, in the form of the Helsinki Final Act.

The Vienna mandate talks (begun in March) on reducing conventional armaments and imparting a defensive character to them, as well as the parallel talks on confidence-building measures in the military field may lead to a situation in which the dissolution of the two opposing alliances and the switch to a new system of all-European security become viable agenda items. The path will be long and arduous. But I think this prospect is quite feasible. Together with the Soviet Union and our other Warsaw Treaty allies, Poland is prepared to do all it can to make this a reality. My country has demonstrated its commitment by conducting multilateral political dialogue, talks and meetings, taking part in the work of the United Nations, and by pursuing vigorous diplomatic efforts vis-à-vis the European countries, the United States and Canada.

This is borne out by the meeting in Warsaw (sponsored by the Sejm) of the first ever Conference for speakers of parliaments from the European countries, the United States and Canada. Supreme representative bodies were thus integrated into a process ultimately aimed at building a common European home. The speakers decided to continue such meetings and in this way to encourage large-scale support of the all-European idea from authoritative institutions.

Another example of our action along these lines is linked with efforts to secure a tangible change in our relations with the FRG; something which is of added moral and political significance as we prepare to mark the 50th anniversary of Nazi Germany's aggression against Poland. We believe it will be possible for Chancellor Helmut Kohl to visit Warsaw. Our dialogue with France is being stepped up too: Mieszyslaw Rakowski, Chairman of the PPR Council of Ministers, has visited France, and it has been announced that President Mitterrand will come to Poland. An improvement in our relations with Great Britain was demonstrated by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's visit to Poland. We are looking forward to welcoming the presidents of Italy and

Finland in the near future, and I am about to lead a Polish parliamentary delegation on a trip to the United States and Canada.

All this proves our vigorous involvement in the promotion of bilateral intergovernmental relations, which also applies of course to neutral and developing countries; we have long-standing and close ties with many of them.

At the same time Poland is strengthening its links with socialist countries, not only those in Europe but also in Asia and Latin America—specifically, with the People's Republic of China, the DPRK, Vietnam and Cuba.

Obviously, the state and the character of relations between Poland and the USSR and between our parties are of particular importance. It would be no exaggeration to say that they are now better than ever as they continue to develop on the basis of mutual respect, trust and comradely cooperation. That is what relations between fraternal socialist countries and communist parties should be like. I believe that they have risen to a radically higher level in all fields—ideological, political and social—and in person-to-person contacts and ties.

True, we have yet to achieve the required level of economic cooperation both within the CMEA framework and in bilateral relations. The more advanced forms of cooperation have met with certain difficulties, but I think we will soon be able to concentrate our efforts in this area and make our ties more dynamic. I am referring to joint ventures, joint investment, joint licenses, and the creation of a single market—that is, everything that integrates the potential of both sides and increases opportunities for economic progress and for meeting the requirements of our fraternal nations.

Under the final document of the Vienna Meeting, Poland is to host a cultural heritage conference in Krakow. We have taken a responsible attitude to this mission, aware of the very important role culture and the artistic and literary community play in the development of the all-European process.

Let me make the following point. Certainly, the military and economic aspects of the effort to promote security and international cooperation are of prime importance. However, so far they have sometimes generated suspicion, fears and even envy, and therefore have a destructive potential too.

Nevertheless, genuine culture and its profoundly humanistic values display exclusively integrative properties. The advancement of culture in this or that country does not evoke any feelings of fear, enmity or envy. On the contrary, any success in this field (unlike, say, technological advances or inventions which are often used as a tool of confrontation) enriches other nations and universal culture to the benefit of all. One should not, of

course, overestimate the role of culture in international affairs. Its impact on military, political and economic thinking is not all that great. But culture clears the way for new thinking and thus performs an important function in the construction of a common European home and in the tackling of other global problems.

## A CLOSER INTERRELATIONSHIP

The growing interdependence between a country's domestic processes and the international situation is one of the effects of our world's integral nature. However the current situation in Poland differs from that in Afghanistan, the connection is there, discernible in both countries.

The situation in Afghanistan is very complex, contradictory and unpredictable. On the one hand, it confirms the resolve of the Afghan authorities to draw on their own resources in dealing with domestic problems on the basis of national reconciliation, which implies certain compromises in the choice of a social system. It also reflects the consistent Soviet policy of recognising the right of all nations to self-determination, and of seeking to settle regional conflicts by peaceful means.

On the other hand, the United States and Pakistan are displaying what might be called a one-sided attitude to the Geneva accords and to the stance of the Afghan and Soviet governments. This does nothing to further the process of national reconciliation or the course towards ending the fratricidal war within Afghanistan; moreover, it poses a threat to the situation in the region. To my mind, the United States is showing a kind of urge to somehow recoup its defeat in Vietnam. Pakistan, too, has a stake of its own.

Let us hope, however, that general changes in the world situation, including changes in the field of human rights, will lead to an Afghan settlement which will not create a new hotbed of tensions, or conflict.

Turning to the case of Poland, one can say that by working to stabilise the situation and to effectively resolve economic development issues, we are also influencing the situation in Europe. This situation can hardly be healthy if Poland, a nation in the centre of our continent, were to remain "sick".

Poland must be a *healthy component* of Europe, of the socialist community and of the global family of nations. Only then will it be able to contribute constructively to peaceful coexistence and cooperation among nations.

In the early 1980s, when a new round of the Cold War began and the United States proclaimed a "crusade" against the "evil empire", Poland was regarded in secret US plans as a tool to be used in a policy of confrontation to weaken the socialist com-



munity. That danger has been removed. At the same time, we have become aware of the need to shape our domestic affairs in accordance with humanitarian and democratic principles implying respect for human rights, to conduct a dialogue with different social strata, and to take into account the existing diversity of positions and outlooks. We must attain national accord. Naturally, policies based on this principle do not rule out debate or even a struggle. But the paramount objective is to rally the overwhelming majority of Poles around the fundamental interests of the socialist state.

Such is our position at the round table talks launched in February 1989. Our socialist friends understand the purpose of this policy. They want to see Poland attain stability, develop in a balanced way and overcome its present difficulties. Of course, they wish us well. But I think that as the trend favouring peaceful coexistence, dialogue and detente gains ground, the desire to see us achieve national accord is growing in the West, too. One can conclude that this reduces the urge to use Poland as a means of confrontation.

We are pursuing a vigorous policy which consolidates and accelerates this shaping of a *new attitude to Poland*. The Polish government and other political forces have noted, in a number of their statements, that the round table has exerted a positive influence on the situation around Poland, and on the attitude to it and to its socialist renewal.

## THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH

Poland's population is predominantly Catholic and the Church plays an important role in Polish society. So let us admit frankly that the election of a Pole to the Holy See was welcomed warmly by our believers.

One should give credit to Pope John Paul II for his approach to the strengthening of peace and international security. He actively upholds peace, disarmament and non-violent settlement of regional conflicts. These efforts from the Pope deserve respect and recognition—at least that is the response of our people.

As for the Catholic Church in Poland, I see its position on the major domestic issues as particularly important. For all the obvious philosophical and political differences between us and the Church, the latter did not support the extremist forces and those calling for an aggression against Poland when, to combat the threat of a civil war and of destabilisation, we were forced to introduce martial law. At that time the domestic extremists and the external imperialist reactionaries brought considerable pressure to bear on the Church. These quarters went to great lengths to have it confront

the socialist state. One must stress that the Catholic Church did not permit it.

Moreover, in a statement made soon after the imposition of martial law the Primate of Poland called for peace and tranquillity and said Polish problems should not be tackled with the help of stones or bullets. In other words, he did not support the course oriented on confrontation. This led to attacks both on the Church and on the Primate from the more extremist groups at home and abroad. Particular abuse was hurled at him by *Kultura*, a Paris-based Polish-language periodical.

Later, the Catholic Church advocated a speedy restoration of normalcy in Poland, the lifting of martial law and an amnesty for those detained at the time. But it was never party to illegal acts or moves designed to aggravate the situation. On the contrary, it sought to act as an intermediary and arbiter between the sides, and to persuade them to moderate the conflict and reach agreement. The actions taken by certain extremist priests failed to alter this stance.

We duly acknowledged the Church's position because national concord, the consolidation of socialist Poland and its development were indeed our supreme objective. Everything that promotes it is worthy of respect.

Poland's Catholic Church is also playing a positive role in Polish-Byelorussian-Ukrainian-Russian relations. By a twist of history, the Catholic faith used to be a tool of the eastward expansionism of the Polish *szlachta* (gentry). Conversely, the Orthodox Church was a means of tsarist expansionism into Poland. The two religious faiths were caught up in this knot of history, and in the mistrust with which the neighbouring nations viewed each other. The steps taken to stem this undercurrent, and the dialogue begun between the Polish Catholic Church and the Russian Orthodox Church therefore act to eliminate these historical holdovers. Religious denominations must not be used as political tools of expansionism; on the contrary, they can promote good-neighbour relations and mutual respect among nations. In the eyes of believers, they can thus create favourable conditions for closer contacts and stronger friendship. We value this role of the Catholic Church.

Grave political mistakes led to the drama of World War II. The lessons of the past help people avoid making new mistakes, but this experience is no guarantee against their recurrence. In order to completely rule out a nuclear holocaust, it is important to step up the creation of a comprehensive international security system. We hold that this should be the objective of all progressive forces throughout the world.

# WHO WILL DEFEAT THE TORIES?

Gordon McLENNAN

General Secretary, Communist Party of Great Britain

The Conservatives (Tories) led by Margaret Thatcher won three general elections in succession—in 1979, 1983 and 1987—and have been in government in Britain for ten years. The next general election will be held in two to three years. Will the Tories win again, and is the Left doomed to remain in opposition? Or is it possible to defeat the Conservatives and put an end to Thatcherism, which has inflicted so much damage on the people of this country? Communists refute the pessimism and fatalism which can be heard amongst parts of the labour and progressive movements, and are convinced that the Thatcherite menace can be stopped.

The phenomenon of the Conservatives having been in power for ten years is not, of course, explained only by the Prime Minister's personal popularity as against that of opposition party leaders. Or by any special appeal of her party policies. The undemocratic electoral system in our country is a principal factor. Not a single one of the thirteen governments elected in Britain since 1945 has polled a majority of the votes in general elections. Firstly, it should be clear—up to 30 per cent of the electorate do not vote in any of these elections. Of those who did vote in 1979, the Conservatives got 43.9 per cent and formed the government. Similar percentages were recorded in 1983 and 1987, so in each case the Tories did not have a mandate from the majority of the population.

Another vital feature of the British electoral system is this. The outcome of each election is largely determined by the shift in party support of a relatively small percentage of the electorate. The majority of the electorate, broadly speaking, continue to vote for the major party of their choice. It's something like ten per cent of the electorate who shift their party allegiance and along with new voters decisively influence the outcome. So if you shift that kind of percentage in a number of what is called "marginal" seats (where nobody has a big lead in votes), which might be up to a hundred of the over 600 seats in Parliament, then you can get a big parliamentary majority. Without all these consequences of Britain's undemocratic electoral system being clear, it could be concluded from the ten years of Conservative government that the Thatcherites have convinced all or most of the British people of their political policies and positions. The true situation is very different.

Proportional representation, which Communists have advocated for nearly half a century, is a fairer and more accurate reflection of voters' intentions and wishes. Its applica-

tion in Britain would drastically change the present results, in terms of the kind of government we have, of our undemocratic electoral system. We therefore welcome the fact that important sections of the labour movement and other democratic forces and organisations in our country are coming out more strongly than ever in favour of proportional representation.

They recognise, as we do, that we have now had three Tory governments since 1979 on the basis of a minority vote—roughly 42 per cent of those who voted, or 32 per cent of the total electorate. From these figures it is clear that if a government creates policies in what is seen as the interests of about one-third of the electorate, they are laying a strong basis for continued re-election. There is no doubt that Thatcherite social and economic policy has satisfied sections of the electorate with regard to salaries, tax concessions, and meeting consumer demand, the latter sometimes on the basis of extended credit rather than real material, economic and social change. Millions of people who own their homes have also benefited from Tory housing policy because with the housing shortage and high cost of rented property, both created by Tory policy, a house, privately owned, becomes a valuable piece of property and an appreciating investment, though it must be said that Tory economic policies, including high mortgage repayments, have alienated many home owners. By privatizing industries and public services, the Tories made it possible for a substantial number of the electorate to own shares. This means that something like 10 million people, almost one-third of those who vote, might be persuaded to vote Tory, because opposition parties, and especially Labour, might take these industries back into public ownership, so affecting the value of their shares.

These are a few reasons which help to explain the Thatcherite role in Britain for 10 years. But it is also important to understand that the Conservatives have been fighting a *consistent and wide-ranging battle of ideas* against socialist, democratic and humanitarian attitudes, encouraging self-interest rather than social and community concerns, and private gain at the expense of social and community gain. That ideological offensive has not decisively altered the attitude of the majority of the people, but it has maintained and strengthened the relationship of the government with a substantial minority. Tory campaigning against public ownership also strikes a resonant chord with millions of people who have experienced bureaucracy, bad service,

high charges and inefficiency in publicly-owned industries and services and the failure of these industries and services to provide the consumers with the service they deserve for the money they pay. The Tory ideological offensive also involves propagation of divisive, antiworking-class ideas, antidemocratic and antisocial ideas, be they in relation to the trade unions, women's liberation, race relations, civil liberties, community care provision, and so on—and again this offensive has some success with sections of the electorate.

Chauvinistic propaganda is also a powerful weapon in the Tory armoury. When the Conservatives came into office in 1979 there was a widespread feeling that Britain was diminishing in stature and influence as a world power. So they began to exaggerate the importance of Britain and its role in the world. The need to be strong and to retain British nuclear weapons in order to play this role is a constant Thatcherite theme. Another one is, "We need to stand up to the bureaucrats of the European Community. And while we are for closer cooperation and integration with Europe, this must not affect our ability to act independently."

The Conservatives' emphasis on nationalism, to the point of jingoism, reached a peak during the Falklands War in 1982. They portrayed an image of Britain "standing up" to the fascist government of Argentina. There is no doubt that this was a kind of turning point for Margaret Thatcher and the Tories in these last ten years, because their previous decline in popularity was reversed.

The final point I would make in this short survey as to why Tory rule continues in Britain after 10 grim years of Thatcherite attack on working people and long-established democratic rights is the role of the mass media—an immensely powerful influence in the thinking and action of millions in Britain. Television, radio and mass circulation newspapers generally take the Tories' side and support their policies and thinking, rather than that of the labour and democratic movement.

Even with all this, Communists are convinced that, given a greater degree of common purpose between the political parties which oppose Tory policies, the present government can be defeated at the next general election. There is no doubt that the *division of the forces opposed to the Conservatives* is a great factor in strengthening their (the Tories') hand. Opposition forces have failed to coordinate in extraparliamentary actions and contested elections in a way that helped the Right maintain its majority in parliament.

What are the results of all this for the majority of Britain's population? The trebling of unemployment to more than two million. About 15 million live in poverty. Social and public services are deteriorating with very grim consequences for a great many people. Educational opportunities for working-class children are being savagely attacked; national health service provision and the service itself destroyed, and the new poll tax, if implemented, will mean more economic hardship for millions and an attack on everyone's civil liberties and democratic rights.

In terms of the struggle of the working class movement and of the popular forces, not just the erosion but the taking away of long-established democratic rights is a serious problem. Take recent industrial action by a section of the British trade union movement—the seamen at Dover. Reactionary antilabour laws made it very difficult indeed for trade unionists in other trade unions and industries, and even for members of their own union, to give them support.

Under Tory rule, Britain's record in world affairs is reactionary. From "Star Wars" to the provocative shooting down of two Libyan planes by the Americans over the Mediterranean, British policy is pro-American to the point of obsquiousness. And in supporting the racist government and apartheid in South Africa, the British government goes farther than even the US administration. A similar attitude prevails in relation to other national liberation movements.

These are the general, real results for the majority of the population, and the Conservative government only satisfies the social and economic demands of a minority, but maybe ideologically meets the prejudices and views of the majority. Why then has it been possible for them to continue in this way?

The Left, the working-class movement and other democratic forces, including the peace movement, the antiapartheid and antiracist movement, the pensioners' movement, the women's movement, students and churches, all are important organisations and movements and have considerable influence in our country. All of them have, in one form or another, campaigned against Tory policies. In some cases reactionary legislation has been delayed, or antipeople actions limited or curbed to some degree. But overall the onslaught that has been associated with this Conservative government has not been checked because it is a ruthless, undemocratic government which rides roughshod over any opposition, not only from the anti-Tory democratic forces but also from within the Tory party itself. And the large turnover of cabinet ministers is evidence of the attempts to stifle any criticism from within the party.

There are, of course, some demands made and positions taken by the Left that do not have majority support. For example, unilateral nuclear disarmament and a non-nuclear defence policy. Public ownership of certain industries. Wage and salary demands from sections of the trade union movement, and some of the democratic demands of the Left and others. But a great question here is: are these positions taken by the Left fought for by the labour and democratic movement in a way that could win majority support? We don't think so.

A major problem we have is that the mass organisations of the working-class movement, the Labour party and the trade unions, are *heavily influenced, to put it no higher, by a Social-Democratic outlook and not by the ideas of mass class struggle*. This places a very heavy responsibility on Communists and those who acknowledge the vital need for mass class democratic struggle to continually strive to win

the Labour Party and trade union movement for mass campaigning amongst the people and for mass extra-parliamentary action.

Let's take a classic issue at the moment, the poll tax.<sup>1</sup> In our view, and in the view of many on the Left, including people in the Labour Party, this is an issue that could fatally wound the government. Unlike some other areas of Tory legislation and policy, it adversely affects 36 million people in our country, almost the entire electorate. We believe that a broadly based campaign, across political parties, amongst the people on that issue could change the public mood and perception of the government. But to get the Labour Party to conduct that kind of struggle is very difficult. And if it doesn't conduct such struggle, potential opportunities are lost, to the benefit of the Tories.

Nor does the trade union movement make as much of a contribution in this area as it could. Because of the influence of Social-Democratic thinking along the lines that the trade unions should not get involved in political struggle and also because of preoccupation with internal problems, some of which are the result of Tory attacks on the unions, the unions are not playing the role they could in campaigning against the poll tax and other government attacks on the British people.

A few points then on the present situation in the British labour movement. Broadly speaking, there are within it three main political trends. The Right, the broad Left—of which the Communists are a part—and the sectarian Left. A relatively new phenomenon, which I think may be manifest in other capitalist countries, is of a stronger sectarian, ultra-left tendency, which for us has made the winning of broad working-class and progressive unity more difficult than previously, especially where a Thatcherite government, an ideological government, takes advantage of every expression of disunity in the working-class movement and democratic forces.

A key problem in this situation is the absence of sufficiently serious strategic thinking and discussion both within the Left and in the working-class movement as a whole. This is especially marked in the mass organisation of the working-class, the Labour Party, though its present review of policy might make some contribution to overcoming this problem. The actions of the Conservative government, on the other hand, are based on strategic thinking that seeks to bring about a decisive shift in the balance of wealth and power back to a minority, insofar as it ever shifted away from them, and as Thatcher has put it, "to destroy socialism" as a political force in Britain.

In such circumstances it is vital that a *counter-strategy*, a *democratic alternative* to that of the Tories, one that can lead towards social and political change and in the direction of socialism, be developed, discussed and fought for. The Labour Party in its policy review, as indicated above, is attempting in a very limited way to do that. But the outcome of the policy review will not be the allround strategy that the Left

and British politics generally desperately needs at this juncture in the life of the country.

How then do we see the present role of the Communist Party? It is to work for the development of the greatest mass democratic struggle on all the big political issues and to advance immediate policies and a longer-term strategy that if fought and won in our labour and democratic movement can secure the defeat of the Tories at the next general election and put Britain on a very different course from that plotted by Thatcher to the end of the century.

For Communists the development of mass class and democratic struggle on all the major issues must be the starting point of the fight against the Tory government for two reasons: one is to try and stop, delay or defeat particular policies, and the other is to develop social and political consciousness as a result of that action, understanding that that higher social and political consciousness will be effected in many ways in society, including in elections.

As we see it, the *Left is not doomed to be in opposition*. But it will remain in opposition unless it wins millions of people to engage in collective struggle for their interests and unless alternative democratic policies are developed that find a greater resonance among the people than present labour movement policy. But in addition to this the labour movement must in developing struggle and policy make common cause and cooperate with other political parties and movements.

A new initiative seeking common purpose, goals and actions amongst left and progressive forces in Britain is urgently needed if the Tories are to be defeated at the next general election, at which, in the view of the Communists, some forms of electoral agreement may be necessary amongst the opposition parties. We think that an *electoral agreement or pact* between the main opposition forces in order to win an anti-Tory majority in parliament is a feasible option, if it is seen as the result of a process of joint campaigning and policy discussion. Undoubtedly there will be great difficulties in securing the kind of political and electoral agreement we urge, but to retreat in the face of these difficulties is to fail the British people and open the door to a fourth Thatcher term.

In our view, *there is a range of issues and themes on which it should be possible to reach broad agreement*. These include: greater democracy in society; a new foreign policy and a new role for Britain in the world; the expansion and improvement of public services; economic and industrial modernisation; greater equality in society. There is already some measure of agreement in policy declarations between Labour, Democrats, Communists, Greens and the nationalist parties on certain issues: constitutional reform, including the introduction of a system of proportional representation; an economic policy to promote industrial and scientific regeneration and modernisation; equal opportunities and an end to any kind of discrimination; antipoverty measures. For us, the importance of preventing another Tory victory is so great that it should determine the approach

to British politics in 1989 of all political parties and democratic forces who want a different course for Britain.

How can the majority taking shape around major policy issues make its impact on the next general election? The best outcome of the next general election would be a Labour majority, which was what we fought for in 1979, 1983 and 1987. But despite us wanting that outcome, despite the labour movement fighting for that outcome, it did not come to pass. Even if we cannot win a labour majority, a new government in which Labour has the overwhelming majority of the posts, including the prime ministership—even based on some agreement, understanding, with some of the other democratic forces—would be infinitely better than another Thatcherite four- or five-year term.

There are already indications of what might be possible on a British scale. In Scotland, where the Communist Party has a greater influence in general than elsewhere in Britain, particularly in the trade union movement, the Tories have been routed and out of the 71 parliamentary constituencies they now have only ten MP's. It would be wrong to see it simply as a consequence of Scottish national feeling or social and economic deprivation, though both of these are strong contributing factors. Over a long period of time political struggle has been conducted in Scotland in such a way that the decisive section of the Scottish people were won to support the actions and policies of the trade union, working-class and labour movement and of the wider democratic movement. This is the kind of development we aim for in Britain as a whole.

As for international affairs, the Left is deeply concerned and angry about Britain's role, but optimistic about and encouraged by progressive changes on a world scale. This contrast, where Britain is not in the mainstream of progressive world change, is a consequence of ten years of Thatcher government.

Yet the initiatives associated with Mikhail Gorbachov for peace and disarmament, the tackling of other global challenges and the removal of areas of tension on the basis of cooperation between governments and countries with different social systems has met with a warm response in our country.

On the other hand, the politician who the people see as reacting most quickly to the Gorbachov era is Mrs Thatcher. She welcomed him from his first visit to Britain, and her visit to the Soviet Union before the last general election was a very important plus for her in the eyes of the British people. She has thus been able to produce an impression of agreement with President Gorbachov's disarmament initiatives and policies of economic and democratic change within the Soviet Union, and able to win some public support for this stand despite the fact that she determinedly pursues policies in the field of nuclear and conventional weapons that are in direct contradiction to the initiatives of Gorbachov and while he enhances democracy in the Soviet Union, she restricts it in Britain.

Labour's policy of unilateral nuclear disarmament, of non-nuclear defence, of cutting back on arms and so on is very much more in tune with the Gorbachov initiatives than Thatcher's policies. We do not think, however, that Labour and the working-class movement has reacted as quickly and as positively to the Soviet peace initiatives and other initiatives as it could and should have. The reason seems to be that Labour's progressive policies, particularly in the field of disarmament, are only formally supported by the Labour leadership, and to a certain extent have been imposed on them by the rank and file of the labour movement and by the peace movement. Thus they are not fighting for this policy with the kind of commitment that would win them public trust and support. This also holds true for labour positions on the Third World and the socialist countries.

Let me give you an example. The most important expression of labour and democratic views in relation to national liberation, against racism and apartheid, in Britain of recent years was the "Free Mandela" concert in Wembley, which had a mass attendance in Britain and a mass audience in the world. Now Neil Kinnock and others of the Labour leadership were there. But it was not their initiative. And if our labour movement was taking initiatives on that kind of issues, such as solidarity with Nicaragua and other Third World countries, for disarmament, for cooperation with socialist countries, these could have a political effect.

Mikhail Gorbachov's UN speech in December offered a real opportunity to put an end to the cold war in international relations, offered new hope and vision to all on our planet. Britain's role in international affairs could be a contribution to the securing of that vision, by Britain taking unilateral steps in disarmament and other fields of policy, like those taken by the Soviet Union. Britain could also develop dynamic political and economic cooperation with socialist countries, renounce support for racism and apartheid and establish a new relationship with Third World countries. Such a role for Britain depends largely on whether the Tories can be defeated at the next general election and a government take office that will change Britain's course in the opposite direction from that pursued in the past decade.

The Left throughout Western Europe face similar tasks to what we face in Britain. But the challenge is especially sharp and important for us because of Britain's role in the world and the influence of Thatcherism worldwide. The response of the working-class and democratic movement to this challenge must be to build common action, purpose and cooperation among those who want an end to Conservative rule so that the anti-Tory majority in the country be given expression in an anti-Tory majority in the House of Commons.

<sup>1</sup> The poll tax is raised on the basis of every voter making a similar tax contribution to local services regardless of their financial circumstances. —Ed.



# WE WANT ARAB UNITY

Yacoub ZAYADIN

General Secretary, CC, Jordanian Communist Party

What is a nation? What is the difference between a nation and an ethnic group? What is the connection between Arab civilisation and Islam? What are the prospects for Arab unity today?

I feel that it is most important to discuss these problems today, not only because this sheds a critical light on some of the developments in the Arab national liberation movement, but also because a scientific analysis of these categories will help the vanguard forces to comprehend the problems in the struggle ahead. Here is my own view.

*The nation first emerged as an ethnic and social entity* when bourgeois economic relations took shape. The development of capitalism required the economic consolidation and political centralisation of fragmented feudal estates, and nations were formed in the course of fierce struggles between the rising class of the bourgeoisie and the feudal lords. The bourgeoisie came to play what was a more progressive role in social development.

Once-isolated feudal estates, with their own governments, laws, customs regulations, etc., began to shape a larger entity with its own central authority and uniform legislation. Although the bourgeoisie and the proletariat came together within the framework of one nation, each retained its own class interests.

Nations are also created in the struggle for independence. In the latter half of the 18th century, for instance, the 13 colonies of North America were propelled by their objective economic needs into the bourgeois revolution of 1775-1783 against the British crown, forcing them to overcome the separatist trends and to consolidate economic and political ties with each other. The favourable conditions for the development of capitalism in the United States led to the rapid erosion of national distinctions and the formation of the American nation.

The formation of nations was made possible and inevitable by the emergence of a common economic life, and a common territory and language, but there are also other factors, like the nation-state at the precapitalist stage and cultural and psychological identity, which may have a big part to play in shaping the nation, but are not its principal features.

*Common territory is the next factor.* Ethnic and social groups, like nomadic tribes, carry on their activity within definite geographical boundaries. Following a long period of living and producing together on the same territory, there is an interbreeding of the various groups, each of which

develops its own ethnic features. Territory is the material base for the formation of economic ties between peoples and the sphere of their activity and development. National territory is not just something that has been inherited from the past, nor can it be carved out by military conquest alone. Nations secure territorial sovereignty through the efforts of many generations.

*Common language is another factor.* Like common economic life and territory, common language is of especial significance, and the sine qua non of the formation of nations. A nation's language is not necessarily rooted in its origins, as in Latin America, for instance, but the whole point is that no nation can be formed without a single language.

*National culture and national cultural features.* Culture is an intricate and changing phenomenon, a confluence of numerous streams that influence each other as they blend into a single whole. If cultures are to be viable, they must have an influence on each other; any culture that is isolated tends to wane, and its incapacity to enrich itself from contacts with others leads to stagnation and backwardness.

One of the distinctive features of imperialism was the unprecedented violence against the cultures of less developed peoples. Today the danger from a Western "cultural invasion" lies in the fact that there is a tendency to ape Western civilisation and for the national cultural heritage to lose absolute priority. The specific aspects of a culture will be found in its elements: literature, the arts, customs and traditions. Within each national culture there is a democratic culture alongside the reactionary culture.

Islam has had a great influence on Arab civilisation, and its historical formation coincides with the emergence of Islam. Let me say, in this context, that Islamic Arab culture was not created "by the sword", i.e., through conquest and domination. The Tartars and Mongols, for instance, conquered many countries, and ruled some of them for a long time, without creating their own civilisation. The Ottoman Turks held sway over the Balkans for some considerable time, but today there is hardly any trace of Turkish cultural influence, apart perhaps from Turkish cuisine and Turkish baths.

Islam recognises the right of earlier religions to exist and guarantees their followers freedom of worship. This kind of tolerance was the main reason why it was attractive to many peoples with other creeds. Under Islam, scientific research is a religious rule. But for the Koran, Arabic would have gone the way of Latin, which has dissolved into something like ten

languages and several dialects. The voluntary use of Arabic was most indicative among the scholars and thinkers of antiquity: no one forced Avicenna (Abu Ali Ibn Sina), Al Sibawaihi or Al Djardjani to think and write in Arabic, since each of them could have done so equally well in Persian.

We are a nation at the stage of formation, a nation whose sons have long had a supreme vision of *Arab unity*.

*First*, for us, unity is a response to the colonial partition of the Arab world, a response to the plans of imperialism, Zionism and reaction to fragment the countries of the region and to stamp out their independence.

*Second*, unity is an important factor in solving the problem of the all-round development of each Arab country.

*Third*, it is a condition for completing the historical, social and national process in the formation of the Arab nation, with a gradual withering away of the backward forms of tribal and denominational consciousness.

The absence of democracy and the exclusion of the masses from political activity are the main reasons for many of the problems in the Arab countries today. The situation in the region has been developing in an atmosphere of violence. Changes in political positions, and in the policies followed in some countries, are subject to the will and the whims of almost unrestricted rulers. Although the idea of unity is the motor of progress, and the hope and vision of the masses, it is being greatly impeded by the long state of separation, the urge of the regimes to maintain individual state entities, the distinctions between the Arab states in economic and social development levels, and the frequent failures and disappointments resulting from attempts at unification over the past thirty years.

Unity cannot be regarded as the annexation of a given territory, as something done in the interests of the strongest, most populous or poorest country, or as the wiping out of local specifics. In the attainment of unity there is a need to bear in mind the development level of each of the countries. Unity gives them the prospect of entering the modern epoch. This is most important for the Arab nation, which, despite its vast manpower and material resources, rich historical and cultural heritage, and potential as a major participant in international affairs, has yet to consolidate itself and fulfil its promise.

How is a viable, sound and full unity of the new type to be structured? What is the connection between Arab unity and Arab nationalism? Wherein lie the objective conditions, which once led to the creation and then to the disintegration of several inter-state unions? What is the role of the Arab bourgeoisie, the national and international political movements, and Arab Marxists in bringing about unity?

A distinction must be drawn between the nationalism of the oppressor and of the oppressed nations, between the nationalism of the big and the small nation. The nationalism of oppressed peoples is generally democratic and progressive because it is directed against imperialism and serves the cause of the struggle for independence and social

progress. In this context, Arab nationalism has a *general democratic, progressive character* which it is important to preserve and develop. At the same time, Arab society is an aggregation of different classes in constant conflict with each other. Now and again the struggle recedes and assumes peaceful or latent forms, but it never disappears entirely. It will end only when man is no longer exploited by man. Nationalism cannot camouflage class contradictions.

The Arab nationalist movement is inconceivable without the involvement of the broad masses, and in this sense it is the people's weapon in the fight for progress, national liberation, cultural reform, popular unity and human emancipation, but it would be wrong to assume that it is something over and above class. At the present stage, Arab unity would be an act of goodwill and friendship, with all the citizens of the union being equal, regardless of denomination, religious and other distinctions. Relations with other peoples would be based on equality and brotherhood for creating a better world free from exploitation and fanaticism. Arab nationalism contains nothing racist and does not claim superiority over other peoples, or of other peoples over the Arabs.

This unity can be attained in two ways. Firstly, struggle on the general Arab level, and secondly, on the level of each individual country. It is our view that the latter is the only true way, not because it is a matter of preference: it is simply more scientific. Regrettably, many Arab revolutionaries ignore local realities and strive for general Arab unity, forgetting that there can be no general battle without local battles and social struggles in the individual countries.

Another impediment to unity is that some regional state entities are artificial ones, and originated either from the greed of the colonialists, from expansion, or from here-and-now considerations and schemes. Another factor is that when some countries realised that they were in possession of sizable natural resources, they began to reject any formula for unity in the hope that they alone could enjoy the fruits of their wealth.

In the past, national unification was effected in some states through the use of force, while other peoples were united through revolutions which touched every aspect of life. In other states, the unification process occurred in the course of international cataclysms and major wars; in some cases national unity resulted from the free expression of the will of the peoples, i.e., without the use of force.

Historically, potential national entities became a reality in various forms during the emergence of capitalism. These forms are many: from the tightly centralised state to the federation and even the confederation. What may have been the right thing for a people in a certain period may not be feasible or right for another today, especially since a fairly long time has passed since the division of the Arab world. That is why *Arab unity has no final formula*, but it must, in any case, be viable, democratic and open, and must not provide the axis for an alliance aimed against others.

The German and the Italian bourgeoisie each achieved national unity because they were the rising class in their society. The Arab bourgeoisie was unable to do the same thing for two reasons:

Historically, its interests were directly linked to colonialism, so that it inevitably took part in partitioning the Arab world because that was one of the objectives of colonial policy;

In its present state, the Arab bourgeoisie is not a rising class and is unable to move beyond the objective circumstances of its origin under partition.

We think that the progressive forces in the Arab world should seek *new ways and means*. They must work hard to dispel any doubts that could arise over the seeming contradiction between Islam and nationalism. Islam and Arabism have always been closely linked, this being the basis of Arab identity.

A last and very important problem is that of *secularism*, which assumes various forms. In the fight against Turkification under the Ottoman Empire the nationalists took up secularism, which to a certain extent reflected Western ideas. But there were essential distinctions between European and Arab secularism. In Europe, it emerged and gained ground in confrontation with the privileged position, power and great wealth of the Church, and campaigned for the separation of church and state. Secularism in the Arab East was opposed to the Ottoman administration, which used Islam to camouflage its efforts to isolate the Arabs from the other Muslim peoples of the empire, and so it did not campaign for full and clear-cut separation of church and state. Arab secularism may be regarded as a protest against

the inequality of citizens, and as a call to equality and a fair distribution of wealth.

It is important to trace the connection between secularism and democracy. The secular-oriented progressive forces recognise the need for the equality of citizens regardless of religious distinctions or place of birth. *Democracy provides the solution to the problems of racial and religious minorities* originating in undemocratic societies. Minorities are part of society, which means that minority problems are also solved wherever the liberty of the majority is guaranteed.

The economic and social conditions in the Arab countries are not the same, and this has produced diverse political and ideological trends. But there are important elements which determine the state of the Arab world as a whole and the main lines of its development:

the growing anti-imperialist tenor of the popular movement;

the key struggle for social justice and against the exploitation of working people by local and foreign capital;

the pronounced solidarity of the progressive forces in the Arab countries with the liberation movements against imperialism and foreign diktat;

efforts to achieve national unity in every sphere, including democratic Arab unity, as a central element of the mass struggle;

the support for the Palestinian people, which is highly important for bolstering positions in the battle against imperialism, Zionism and reaction, and which is deepening the progressive character of the entire Arab national liberation movement.



### EUROPEAN MILITARY BALANCE

#### WARSAW TREATY ORGANISATION: THE FACTS

In January, 1989 the Committee of the Ministers of Defence of the Warsaw Treaty Member States published a Statement "On the Relative Strength of the Armed Forces and Armaments of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation in Europe and Adjacent Water Areas". General of the Army Dobri DZHUROV, a member of the Political Bureau of the CC of the Bulgarian Communist Party and Minister of National Defence of Bulgaria, offered his assessment of the document in written replies to questions from WMR.

> *How do you explain the timing of the release of that unprecedent document, which put the "military cards" on the table?*

The Statement approved by the defence ministers' committee in Sofia last December is indeed unprecedent. The publication of objective and detailed figures for the joint armed forces of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation (WTO) and our assessment of NATO's conventional potential in Europe gives the European and world public a picture of the real balance of forces between the two alliances, and shows that Western claims of the WTO's "decisive military superiority" and a "Soviet military threat" are blassed and groundless. This explains the immense military and political importance of the document. (See Table on p. 21. *Ed.*)

The alliance decided to show its "military cards" almost three years ago, and this was reflected in the programme for conventional force reductions in Europe, addressed by the Budapest meeting of the Political Consultative Committee to the NATO countries and European states. The proposal was reaffirmed unconditionally by the WTO foreign ministers' committee in Sofia in March 1988. In late May the same year our countries were ready to release the figures both for their armed forces and for our assessment of NATO's conventional potential in Europe.

But for various reasons this was not possible last year,

either at the Warsaw meeting of the Political Consultative Committee in June, or at the Prague meeting of the defence ministers' committee in October:

First, the negative stand of the US administration and the NATO leadership on the issue.

Second, the disappointing experience of the Vienna talks on force reductions in Central Europe, which have lasted more than 15 years and yielded no results because of the pointless discussion over figures that was initiated by the West.

Third, the difficulties created by the NATO member countries during consultations between the 23 countries in Vienna on preparing a mandate for talks on conventional force reductions in Europe and at the Vienna CSCE meeting. There were also fears that a unilateral release of data on conventional arms in Europe by the WTO could aggravate the work of the two forums.

But, having turned down our proposal, the NATO leaders released their own document, "Conventional Forces in Europe: Facts", on November 25, 1988. At a press conference held at the Brussels headquarters of the organisation NATO Secretary General Manfred Woerner described the move as an invitation to the WTO to publish similar information. The reasons for this are transparently obvious, as is NATO's flagrant disregard for what is moral and correct in international relations. The document has been used to step up the ideological campaign against us.

The Committee of the Ministers of Defence of the WTO Member States noted at its meeting in December 1988 that such actions by the NATO countries were evidence of their unwillingness to respect the reasons given for the delay in releasing our figures. In spite of all that, and taking account of the situation, the figures were released on January 30, 1989, after the closure of the Vienna CSCE meeting and on completion of consultations among 23 countries on a mandate for conventional force reductions. This decision is fresh proof of our goodwill, and of our readiness to engage in constructive, frank and honest dialogue with the West on all security, disarmament and arms control issues.

> *What does a comparison between WTO and NATO figures reveal?*

It follows from the Statement of the WTO countries that the military balance in Europe can be characterised as one of rough parity, and that neither side can count on decisive military superiority. At the same time it stresses the need for a drastic cut in the present high concentrations of troops



**TABLE**  
**CORRELATION OF THE ARMED FORCES AND BASIC ARMAMENTS OF THE WTO AND NATO IN EUROPE AND ADJACENT WATER AREAS**

	WTO	Ratio	NATO
<b>I. RELATIVE STRENGTHS OF ARMED FORCES (thousands of men)</b>			
Command and control agencies: general staffs (main headquarters), directorates and departments of ministries of defence	30.2	1 : 1.6	49.47
Ground forces, air-borne troops and army aviation	1,823.5	1 : 1.2	2,115.36
Air defence forces	550.5	4.0 : 1	137.7
Air forces	425.1	1 : 1.1	482.3
Navies	338.0	1 : 2.0	685.0
Units subordinated to the central command and control agencies (intelligence, communications, radio-electronic warfare, higher educational establishments, and others)	225.4	2.3 : 1	96.9
Logistic units and establishments of the armed forces	146.3	1.7 : 1	87.5
Civil (territorial) defence forces	34.1	5.7 : 1	6.0
<b>TOTAL strength of the armed forces in Europe and adjacent water areas</b>	<b>3,573.1</b>	<b>1 : 1</b>	<b>3,660.2</b>
NOTE: The personnel of the ministries of the interior (field gendarmerie) and frontier guards units is not included in the total strength of the WTO and NATO armed forces.			
<b>II. CORRELATION OF BASIC TYPES OF ARMAMENTS</b>			
Tactical combat aircraft of the air forces, air defence forces and navies	7,876	1.1 : 1	7,130
<b>Including:</b>			
tactical combat aircraft of the air forces and air defence forces	5,355	1 : 1	5,450
air interceptors that cannot be employed against ground targets	1,829	36 : 1	50
naval combat aircraft	692	1 : 2.4	1,630
Total number of attack aircraft (bombers, fighter-bombers, ground attack aircraft) in the air force and naval tactical aviation	2,783	1 : 1.5	4,075
Combat helicopters, including those in the navies	2,785	1 : 1.9	5,270
Tactical missile launch systems	1,608	11.8 : 1	136
Tanks	59,470	1.9 : 1	30,690
Anti-tank missile launchers	11,465	1 : 1.6	18,070
Infantry fighting vehicles and armoured personnel carriers	70,330	1.5 : 1	46,900
Multiple launch rocket systems, artillery pieces (75-mm calibre and larger) and mortars (50-mm calibre and larger)	71,560	1.3 : 1	57,060
Submarines (except strategic ballistic missile submarines)	228	1.1 : 1	200
<b>Including nuclear-powered ones</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>1 : 1</b>	<b>76</b>
Large surface ships (aircraft carriers, battleships, cruisers, destroyers, frigates, and amphibious ships with 1,200-ton displacement and over)	102	1 : 5	499
<b>Including:</b>			
ships capable of carrying aircraft, aircraft carriers	2	1 : 7.5	15
cruise missile ships	23	1 : 11.9	274
amphibious ships (1,200-ton displacement and over)	24	1 : 3.5	84



and armaments in Europe in order to ensure stability at a level of reasonable defence sufficiency.

Imbalances and asymmetry are favourite subjects with Western propaganda, which naturally harps on about the superiority of the Warsaw Treaty countries in some weapons, including tactical missile launchers, air defence interceptors, infantry fighting vehicles and armoured personnel carriers, and artillery. But the WTO has never denied the imbalance in some types of armaments. The snag is that the West artificially inflates figures for the Warsaw Treaty forces and understates them for the NATO armies in order to show our alleged superiority. At the same time NATO seems to forget that it has an edge in other armaments: it is far ahead in tactical combat aircraft and naval air strength, in combat helicopters, antitank missile launchers and large surface ships.

The West continues to reject the WTO countries' demand that NATO's navies, a major military zone, be counted in the overall balance of forces.

Contrary to what NATO claims, the correlation of forces in the Balkans and East Mediterranean is very disadvantageous to us, and the geography of the region, from the military point of view, does not favour the deployment of the Warsaw Treaty forces.

> *Does the Statement take account of all the troop contingents affecting security in Europe?*

Yes, it does. Our analysis also includes the navies, but the West argues that under the Vienna mandate they are not covered by the talks.

In reply, we make it clear that we have in mind not the agenda of the talks but the real correlation of the conventional potentials deployed in Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals, including adjacent archipelagoes and water areas. The objective correlation of forces cannot be disregarded because it is crucial to European and world security, and to disarmament and arms control strategies. The world public should have full information about the more important aspects of East-West relations.

> *How do you think the released figures can influence the progress of the Vienna talks on reductions in troops and conventional armaments from the Atlantic to the Urals?*

The figures cited in the Statement give an objective figure of imbalances and asymmetries that have evolved historically, some in favour of the WTO and others of NATO. They constitute a reasonable basis for negotiating deep cuts in the conventional armed forces in order to strengthen European and world stability and security.

Regrettably, the response from some NATO circles shows that they are not going to drop their tendentious and selective approach in assessing the fighting potential of the two alliances. They are likely to continue their attempts to leave outside the talks those components of the armed forces in which they have decisive superiority and concentrate on those in which the WTO is ahead.

Their principal goal clearly is to bend the talks, which began last March, to the West's benefit so as to secure strategic advantage and get the WTO to agree to asymmetrical force reductions.

But let us take an optimistic view: as the mandate for the talks was worked out, considerable progress was achieved in bridging the sides' differences.

> *Several socialist countries have recently taken concrete unilateral steps by reducing their armies and slashing their military budgets. What are the military and political implications of such measures?*

They are very important. The Soviet Union, for example, is going to demobilise a force comprising as many officers and men and twice as many tanks as the West German Bundeswehr has. Overall, the WTO member countries will make very substantial cuts in their armed forces in an important step towards a new historical reality, that is, a turn away from the overkill capacity towards the principle of reasonably sufficient defences.

Such cuts undoubtedly make the policies of the USSR and other socialist countries more credible and effectively improve the overall climate in Europe and the world. They are the key to realising the viable ideas of new political thinking, and to strengthening perestroika in socialist society.

> *What is the thrust of the present-day Warsaw Treaty military doctrine and how is it reflected in the structure and tasks of the Bulgarian armed forces?*

The new doctrine is defensive: the WTO countries have pledged never under any circumstances to launch military operations against any state or alliance of states save in response to an armed attack, and to refrain from the first use of nuclear weapons. We have no territorial claims to any state, nor do we consider any nation to be our enemy. Our priority is to make war impossible.

We think that the way to achieve genuine, equal and universal security is to reduce the degree of armed confrontation to the lowest possible level, to a level of reasonable collective defence sufficiency.

The Bulgarian national army is being developed and trained and the country's defences organised fully in accord with the above principles. Manpower and arms cuts have been announced and the army is being restructured. Operational and combat training, the political education of troops, the system of mobilisation, the development of a military infrastructure and other activities are geared to defensive objectives.

> *But won't such unilateral steps upset military parity and give the advantage to the other side? Don't they undermine the concept of continued military parity?*

As the world community develops, it becomes increasingly obvious that the drive for military superiority is absurd. The high level of strategic parity is a threat to the future of humanity. At the same time the new model of security shifts

the emphasis from military strength to political, scientific, technological, social, intellectual and moral factors.

There is another aspect to the problem: the margin in which change can occur in the balance of forces without affecting stable international peace and security is large enough. So the measures we are taking to give our joint armed forces a purely defensive configuration do not deny

them the ability to guarantee the defences of the Warsaw Treaty member countries.

Cuts in the military budgets, manpower and armaments cannot be unilateral, of course, and the NATO countries should reciprocate adequately. Their response is, perhaps, the most important factor in the dynamics of lowering the level of armed confrontation.

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## SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT: GROWING RESPONSIBILITY

**Mourad GHALEB**  
AAPSO President

The 7th Congress of the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organisation, held in New Delhi late last year, was a major international event. Some 350 delegates from 87 countries and 12 international organisations, representing various public forces, discussed problems of Asia and Africa, ways of achieving world peace and security and promoting disarmament, and also AAPSO's activities. Mahmoud SHOUKEIR, representative of the Communist Party of Palestine on WMR, attended the forum and interviewed the new AAPSO President.

> *Dr Ghaleb, will you please share your impressions of the 7th AAPSO Congress?*

The forum was held against the backdrop of far-reaching changes in the world. Our task was to analyse international developments since the previous, 6th Congress and to draw the right conclusions from the new situation.

The world today is abandoning the cold war and leaving behind the ideas and stereotypes of that period. A new situation has arisen and we must work out how we are going to face the future. Approaches to many international problems have been dramatically transformed. Constraints on the arms race, including the race in nuclear weapons, the scientific and technological revolution's profound impact on military technology, and a changed alignment of forces all necessitate a realistic world view, new political thinking and a transition from confrontation to cooperation.

The prevention of nuclear war and an arms race in outer space is crucially important to the fate of the human race. Mankind is faced with a choice between universal mutual annihilation or peaceful coexistence on the basis of respect for the interests of all countries and nations.

The above holds true not just for the great powers but also for our region, which accounts for a large part of the world's population. New realities call for new approaches, and there is a tendency among the different socioeconomic systems to search for basic principles of peaceful coexistence and to rid themselves of the burden of nuclear weapons, which threaten a universal catastrophe. There is a sharper awareness of the need to settle international conflicts by political means. In short, the world is changing. It has reached the crossroads. Our job is to discuss this new state of affairs and develop the proper response to it.

> *Your organisation can greatly influence the international public. What practical steps is AAPSO planning in that direction?*

Much depends here on the national committees, which are contributing substantially to the development of relations between states and peoples. AAPSO's contacts with other international organisations, including non-governmental ones, are making good progress. But we think it necessary to invigorate these contacts further in order to promote new political thinking. The task is to shape mass consciousness in a way that would correspond to today's realities.

The forum approved as the basic final document a Declaration which calls for the ultimate eradication of the vestiges of colonialism and for struggle against racism, apartheid, Zionism and the imperialist powers' neocolonialist policies, which are undermining the economic and political independence of Afro-Asian states. AAPSO called for a new international economic order and welcomed the dialogue between the USSR and the USA as a contribution towards strengthening peace, promoting disarmament and settling regional conflicts.

- > *Do you see any link between the struggle by the developing countries against imperialism and colonialism, and the struggle for peace?*

Washington's Third World policy has not changed much, and we have to reckon with this fact. World imperialism still views the developing countries as a zone where it has to assert its superiority, and considers influence over them to be the key to world domination. Recently, the concept of "peripheral conflicts" as the main feature of the confrontation between the great powers prevailed, but it has outlived its usefulness, as has the Western theory of the "arc of instability", presumably passing through "flashpoints" in Asia and Africa.

We are living in an interdependent world community. That is an objective reality, and we have to look for new forms of interaction between various social forces, the Asian and African countries themselves, and the socialist world. We also have to conduct a dialogue with the imperialist powers. There are many problems here but the time has come for such exchanges of views.

- > *The tasks tackled by AAPSO are largely similar to those confronting the Latin Americans. Do you tend to coordinate your actions with Latin American solidarity committees?*

We are trying in every way to extend our contacts with the national liberation movement in Latin America, and we hope that solidarity committees in the countries there will cooperate fully with AAPSO. This problem was also discussed at the New Delhi forum.

- > *The developing countries' problem with their external debt is worse than ever. Is there any way of resolving this issue?*

The external debt is one of the most pressing problems for the newly free countries. Some people even view it as a form of warfare waged by the neocolonialist forces against the Third World. Interest payments on external debts sometimes exceed the debts themselves. Far more is being drained from our countries than is received in financial aid: in 1987 alone they lost \$34,000m when the price of raw materials fell sharply, and paid \$15,000m in debt servicing. Clearly, any solutions to the acute economic problems in the Afro-Asian countries, including that of the external debt, are impossible unless the arms race is ended, peace strengthened and regional conflicts settled. It is in this way that decolonisation in the broadest sense of the word can be achieved.

- > *There have been some significant events recently in the Middle East. The Israeli elections, in which the Right consolidated its*

*positions, and the emergency session of the National Council of Palestine, which proclaimed an independent Palestinian state. What is your view of developments in the region?*

The Israeli elections undoubtedly highlighted the increasing role of the right-wing extremists. At the same time the whole world, even the United States, was somewhat guarded on the results. The latest session of the National Council of Palestine was a major step towards a peace settlement in the Middle East, its resolutions generally enjoying the support of world opinion, which backs the Palestinians' lawful rights. The opinion of the world community once played an important role in the settlement of the conflict in Vietnam. The decisions taken by the PLO have prepared the ground for progress on the Palestinian problem. Various political circles in European countries have welcomed the PLO's new policy course, and even the US Jewish community has sharply criticised Yitzhak Shamir and other Israeli leaders for their policies.

The participants in our congress held a special session in support of the Palestinians' just struggle and urged the convocation of an international conference with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the PLO, to achieve an early solution to the Middle East conflict.

- > *You were among the more active opponents of the Camp David accords. Do you believe that today, ten years after their conclusion, appeasement policies still have a decisive influence on the situation in the region?*

The most regrettable consequence of Camp David was that Egypt dropped out of the Arab world, as it were, and found itself in isolation. In Nasser's day Pan-Arab solidarity was virtually all-embracing, but now aggravated domestic contradictions in Middle East countries have exacerbated strife between various political, religious and other forces.

The spirit of Arab solidarity has dropped, and in the past few years narrow national interests have prevailed, the leaders of some countries tending increasingly to bend their policies to the diktat of world imperialism. But recent positive developments, such as the ending of the Iran-Iraq war and steps towards stability in the region, give reason to hope for changes for the better.

- > *And the last point: you are one of your region's foremost peace campaigners. Efforts for peace also are a major policy line of our journal...*

We are regular readers of your journal. We think highly of it and we are always happy to take part in its activities.

# A LOOK AT GLOBAL ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

A Soviet-American Academic Dialogue

**Professor Wassily Leontieff (New York University), author of many books on economics, has been awarded a Nobel Prize for his input-output method which is widely used in many countries, particularly with regard to planning.**

**Professor Stanislav Menshikov, Doctor of Economics and now a *WMR* staff member, worked for the United Nations in the 1970s and, under Wassily Leontieff, took part in the drafting of "The Future of the World Economy", a report that was translated into a dozen languages and published in various countries.**

**We present a condensed transcript of a dialogue they held in the United States.**

*S. Menshikov.* This is a dialogue on some of the global problems and possible solutions to them. The world economy has reached a turning point. The USSR and the United States have started a process of nuclear disarmament. Eventually, this may lead to a substantial decrease in military expenditures, open a new era in the relations existing between socialism and capitalism and help bring about major changes in different parts of the world. Besides, the perestroika drive in the Soviet Union stipulates, among other things, that the Soviet economy will become an integral part of the world economy. Now is a good occasion to try and see what lies ahead and how all this will influence the way global problems will be tackled. We are both economists, so I suggest we concentrate on the economic aspects of the matter. I don't expect the differences in our ideological orientation to stand in the way of a constructive discussion of the issues I intend to raise.

## Cheap and Deadly

*W. Leontieff.* Let's begin with the economic aspects of disarmament. I would like to stress from the outset that in terms of cost, nuclear weapons are among the cheapest. If some types of nuclear weapons are no longer produced, that will have a marginal effect on overall military budgets. So far, conventional armaments cost more than any other types.

*S.M.* What percentage of the US military expenditure goes into the nuclear arsenal?

*W.L.* No more than 10%, I think, and that covers the development of the latest, sophisticated types.

*S.M.* Agreements on nuclear weapons can and must be followed by an accord on conventional armaments. The Soviet Union has taken a step in this direction by announcing its decision to cut back its conventional arms and armed forces unilaterally.

*W.L.* The economic effects of nuclear disarmament are not only financial. The military establishment absorbs some of the most energetic and intelligent people in the nation. Disarmament would channel their energy into peaceful endeavor to advance economic growth, both in the United States and in your country.

*S.M.* Indeed, prior to perestroika the Soviet Union tended to isolate military production from the civilian economy providing the former with practically any resources, including intellectual ones—resources the economy as a whole badly needed. Perestroika is sure to change this.

*W.L.* In the United States and in other industrialized countries some argue that arms expenditure produces useful spinoffs, particularly in the high-tech field. I cannot accept this logic. You can, of course, say that some of our civilian aircraft are a spinoff, but it is quite clear that if there is no arms expenditure, we will simply have more money to spend on developing civilian aircraft and other civilian products. The share of the GNP we funnel into defense is 6 times greater than the percentage Japan spends for these purposes. Hence the huge federal and balance-of-

payments deficits. We are financing military investment from foreign borrowing.

*S.M.* Realistically, how fast can reductions in arms spending proceed?

*W.L.* Since the situation in the United States is more familiar to me, let me take the US case. I think that, initially, we will have a reduction in the growth rate of our arms expenditure and a decline in its GNP percentage. Later on, hopefully, there will be an actual reduction in the production of all these deadly weapons. Then the problem of conversion will arise. Frankly, if you curtail military production drastically, this will affect the economic situation and employment in several regions in the US—in California and the South West. But a sensible government policy can offset these negative trends and further positive ones.

### Managing Conversion

*S.M.* Do you believe that capitalism can adapt to a non-military economy?

*W.L.* Capitalism is very flexible. Naturally, conversion will pose some problems, but this kind of adaptation is, in principle, possible.

*S.M.* About the problems. Apparently, one of them is that you will have to use elements of planning, of government intervention. Conversion can hardly be taken care of by the market alone. But increased government intervention is not a prospect everyone welcomes these days.

*W.L.* I think it will be a combination of both: in part it will be taken care of by the market and in part by the government. For example, the government will have to support those who lose their jobs. Generally, a lot will depend on the overall economic situation. The more favorable it is, the easier conversion will be. But if the economy stagnates, then of course there will be difficulties. It is very difficult to turn the steering wheel when your car is standing still. This applies to the economy too.

*S.M.* There has been an obvious slowdown in the growth of the US, West European and Japanese economies (I am referring to the average growth rates). There is also a slowdown in the socialist countries, and all this has affected the Third World. The car, if not standing still, is moving very slowly, and so are all the other cars on the street. There is too little room for maneuver. What do we do?

*W.L.* Yes, that is quite a problem. But broad public opinion does not favor continued arms expenditure to maintain employment.

*S.M.* I would say you are overoptimistic on that point. The role of public opinion is important, but there is also the

military-industrial complex and the ultraconservatives who want the arms race to continue and to begin new rounds.

*W.L.* There is the matter of profits.

*S.M.* Then the foremost question is whether it is possible to garner high profits in the civilian economy. Can the cause of conversion be furthered if the capital of the big military concerns moves into those civilian fields (such as high technology) where the rate of profit is already known to be quite high?

*W.L.* Some people say "no" so far—but simply because the economy is not booming. The profitability of investment depends on the availability of capital. In our economy it is expensive to borrow capital, and that creates difficulties for economic growth. I have been studying closely the ways in which new technologies are introduced. Modern technology requires a lot of capital, including borrowed capital. Consequently, there is the negative role of expensive credit and the burden of other outlays related to investment in high technology. These outlays are much higher in the United States than in, say, Japan where new technologies are introduced much faster. I think the problem in the Soviet Union is not so much a shortage of capital as the inefficient uses to which it is often put: the more you invest, the more you waste. I hope your reform will change things for the better, and that with the same amount of financial resources your economy will grow faster.

*S.M.* One more point. One of the reasons why the Japanese have a lot of capital for investment is that their military spending is low. In the United States, the military expenditure rate is high, and capital is more expensive. In the Soviet Union, capital—in the form of credits or centralized allocations—has so far cost either enterprises or ministries virtually nothing. Hence the waste, the delays in construction and the abandoned projects. But when we reduce our military expenditure, capital will be even more accessible. It looks like we will have to make it more expensive to enhance the effectiveness of investment.

*W.L.* Here in the United States, it is profitability that counts, not efficiency, which is a rather abstract concept. Modern technology can be profitable if you have enough capital, and the objective is to promote the mechanics of its formation.

*S.M.* It follows that conversion is quite possible under modern capitalism and, with changes in the international climate and with agreements on arms reductions, its prospects will become more realistic than in the past. What do you think?

*W.L.* I agree fully. But let me add that conversion is not only possible but also essential if both the United States and the Soviet Union want to overcome their economic difficulties.



## Why Is the Gap Not Closing?

*S.M.* Greater assistance to Third World countries could be one of the more useful ways of spending the money saved as a result of reductions in arms spending.

*W.L.* I have made special computations. If only 10% of the US arms expenditure is devoted to such assistance, this will certainly enable the less developed countries to at least keep up with the industrialized nations in terms of economic growth.

*S.M.* When we were working on "The Future of the World Economy", I, too, was optimistic. But I have since seen a great deal of resistance to such projects. That is, to a certain degree, understandable: no one has really excessive resources. One must keep tackling various domestic issues. In my country we have recently calculated how much we spend on economic and technical assistance to the less developed countries, both socialist and non-socialist. The figure turned out to be about 1% of our GNP. That is quite a burden. Meanwhile, the developed capitalist countries spend, on average, some 0.3% for these purposes.

*W.L.* Let me try and explain the viewpoint of the average American. He contributes around \$2,000 a year in taxes to our military expenditure. If you ask him whether he wants all this money to be used to help the less developed countries, he will say that his family needs a new car or a new washing machine, or that he has to pay for the education of his children. But if he is told that he will gain \$1,800 and 10% of the total, that is, about \$200, will go to help the Third World, I think he will accept that.

*S.M.* The example you cited coincides with the initiatives the Soviet Union has advanced repeatedly at the UN (about channeling one-tenth of the savings resulting from disarmament into Third World development), and it shows that these are realistic proposals. In "The Future of the World Economy", published in 1977, we spoke about the possibility of halving the gap between developed and developing countries in terms of average per capita incomes. We are at the mid-term juncture now, but the gap remains at about 12:1. In other words, the international community has been marking time in these matters. There has been no progress.

*W.L.* Allow me to object to that. First, I don't think we can lump all Third World countries together. Of more than 200 nations, about 40 are industrially developed. But the rest of them are at substantially different development levels: compare, say, Mali and South Korea. Some of them are still in the 16th century, and others have almost entered the 21st century. I am referring above all to their economic development, not to other aspects.

Besides, you mentioned only the optimistic scenario of

our forecast. But there was also a pessimistic one, stipulating that the Third World would even fall back. Our optimistic assumptions were based on the hopes for considerable assistance from the developed countries. That has proved unrealistic. Instead, the developing nations mostly received large credits.

For some time, this borrowed money helped maintain growth rates, but then huge debts piled up, and there was the threat of bankruptcy. New loans were cut off, and the debt servicing became so expensive that it absorbed all the money the developing countries should have invested in their own economies. When that happened, growth rates took a nosedive. Nevertheless, prior to the debt crisis the developing nations were able to absorb large credits, and their growth rates were quite high. Therefore, our optimistic scenario was not all that utopian. It was not armchair theorizing.

*S.M.* I agree, but the debt crisis is not the only explanation of the developing countries' plight. There are also the tariff barriers raised by the developed capitalist countries. Protectionism coupled with an economic slowdown dealt a severe blow to the Third World. Another important point is that the new international economic order envisaged by the UN in 1974 was stymied by the leading Western powers. All this made the terms of trade more, not less inequitable. The export-import price ratio has deteriorated sharply over the past decade as far as the developing countries are concerned, and the trend is not diminishing.

*W.L.* There are other problems too. Modern technology reduces jobs, and that is an additional problem for the Third World. Take textiles, which used to be a pretty labor-intensive industry. For some time it migrated from developed to developing nations, but now it is returning to the industrialized countries, but on a different basis. In Japan I saw a large automated textile mill which employs 15 people, including management. It can compete with Third World factories because, although labor is cheap there, as a rule they cannot afford to switch to modern technology, there is the threat of unemployment and so on. Still, there are exceptions to this rule—Singapore, for example, where the problem of employment is not so acute. One should always remember that each case is distinctive, and there is no universally applicable recipe.

*S.M.* Conditions are indeed different in different countries. In the United States, the steel industry is in crisis, and its production capacity has fallen sharply, while in other countries it is still an industry of the future. China is now producing a lot more steel than 10 or 20 years ago, but it is still hungry for steel. The same is true of India.

*W.L.* There, it is an internal demand. They won't be able to export steel.

*S.M.* Yes, it is an internal demand, but someone has to

meet it. These countries have abundant labor resources and a vast internal market. This makes it possible for them to expand the economy without necessarily resorting to high technology. They may, of course, encounter problems when they decide to export steel: then they will have to switch to new technology and modernize their economies. But it is likely to be two or three decades before they reach that stage.

*W.L.* And then what? The employment situation will deteriorate dramatically, all the more so because the population explosion is still on in the Third World. To allay its effects, living standards will have to be raised. Poor peasant families which are predominant in the developing countries need children as additional labor. The record shows that as per capita incomes rise, population growth diminishes perceptibly.

*S.M.* This is something like a vicious circle. To stop population growth, per capita incomes in the Third World should be increased. But if they are increased, the world's natural resources may not be enough to maintain the living standards we now have in the developed countries.

*W.L.* Don't forget the problem of pollution. If everyone tries to consume as much as the average American now consumes, the world will turn into a huge garbage pile, and the air will be unfit for breathing. It is perfectly clear that the human race will have to change the existing structure of production and consumption radically.

*S.M.* Third World problems are a tangle of economic, social and political contradictions. Because of the protracted structural crisis, these contradictions have been piling up and becoming increasingly explosive. I expect the remaining years of the century to be a very turbulent period there.

### Social Problems and Contrasts

*W.L.* Let me comment on a problem which is sure to become equally acute for the developed countries too. It concerns income redistribution and social contrasts. Many economists don't like to hear me raise it. But no one can deny that high technology reduces jobs. Paradoxically, production capacity increases enormously, while the demand for labor does not expand much and may even diminish. Many people may end up without any income at all. In the Third World, the problem of modernization and employment has no solution so far—although there are certain peculiarities there. In Egypt, for example, there are modern plants using exactly the same technology as in the West but employing three times as many workers. What happens is that the government sometimes forces private entrepreneurs to employ more workers at very low wages because it cannot afford to support the unemployed. But

that again results in low per capita incomes, low labor productivity and so on. You are right, it is a vicious circle which is hard to break.

*S.M.* The future of capitalism in the developing countries is indeed more complex. Take Mexico City with its population of 16 to 17 million, many of them without jobs or housing. That is typical of all major conurbations in the Third World. Why? Because very often capitalist corporations refuse to bear part of the social costs. I think we are in for a decade or two of profound social unrest, political conflicts and the class struggle in its traditional forms in the Third World. It is no accident that revolutionary situations arise, and some developing countries become socialist-oriented.

*W.L.* According to Marx, the correct sequence is, feudalism, capitalism, socialism. But nowadays some say jokingly that in the Third World, feudalism is followed by socialism which paves the way for capitalism.

*S.M.* Seriously, that is a difficult problem. It is very difficult for the developing countries to avoid capitalism: these societies are often unprepared for organized socialist labor. But if capitalism fails to generate the hope that acute problems can be solved, these nations turn to socialism and pin their hopes on it.

*W.L.* I always ridicule those who talk about communist or Soviet conspiracy. Even if you refrain from giving any support to Third World revolutionary movements, they will not disappear, because they are bred by internal factors. When the government is unable to solve the income redistribution problem, you have guerrilla warfare.

*S.M.* We have discussed whether capitalism can do without military production. Now, can it do without neocolonialism, without the exploitation of the developing countries?

*W.L.* I think it can, at the present time. It was different in the past. The exploitation of India by the British is a classic example. But the British developed some industries there, and India was unified.

*S.M.* We were talking about low wages in the Third World. How can capitalism not take advantage of cheap labor? Take South Korea, where TNC subsidiaries hire peasant girls to assemble television sets and computers. They work very intensively for several years, their health deteriorates, and then they are dismissed and replaced. There is neocolonial exploitation for you.

*W.L.* You are right about South Korea. As far as exploitation as such is concerned, it is often pictured very primitively—the capitalist whipping the workers. But it's not like that now.

*S.M.* But you will agree that part of the surplus value, of the profits and of the national income created in the

developing countries is transferred to the developed nations. What is that if not a form of international exploitation?

*W.L.* When a capitalist corporation establishes a plant in a less developed country and takes the profits out instead of reinvesting them there, that can be called exploitation. It would be much better to reinvest them right there. Then there is the large-scale flight of capital from the Third World. Rich people in these countries feel that there is more political security in the United States than, say, in Argentina. So they see my country as a safe deposit box where they can keep their fortunes.

*S.M.* That is so, but there remains the problem of the inequitable economic relations existing between the Third World and the industrialized capitalist countries, and its solution is a long way off. The debt crisis, the unfair terms of trade, the customs barriers raised against the industrial products of most developing countries and the large-scale transfer of profits by the TNCs are facts one cannot ignore. Is modern capitalism prepared to forego these sources of additional profits? You believe it is. But it is hard to say now how this may be accomplished in practical terms.

### Cooperation or Convergence?

*S.M.* Let us now turn to the socialist world, to the prospects for more intensive exchanges between it and the capitalist countries, the economic integration of the two systems and opportunities for their cooperation.

*W.L.* I would phrase it more cautiously—a greater division of labor between the socialist countries and the rest of the world.

*S.M.* We are devising a new concept of foreign trade, establishing direct ties with foreign companies and setting up joint ventures. But this also involves numerous problems. In the past, Soviet enterprises worked almost exclusively for the domestic market. Their international experience is scant, and they are mostly non-competitive in world markets. We have been exporting largely oil and gas to the West. But oil and gas reserves are not inexhaustible, and fuel prices are highly unstable. So we have to think about developing competitive high-tech production and new, promising industries.

*W.L.* The incorporation into the international division of labor may be a protracted process. Sometimes trade followed the flow of capital. In the 19th century, the United States imported a lot not because production costs were lower elsewhere but simply because there was large domestic demand and it was profitable to invest in the United States. My feeling is that in the Soviet Union, too, there are terrific opportunities for profitable foreign investment. Mixed enterprises will produce commodities not only

for export but also for domestic consumption. You will have to borrow capital to purchase equipment and to increase domestic accumulation. The influx of foreign capital will inevitably mean more imports.

*S.M.* One has to pay for loans and capital, and that implies competitive exports.

*W.L.* I think a country as vast and as rich in natural resources as the Soviet Union will be able to continue exporting raw materials for a long time. Some of them are renewable, such as lumber and the like, and you can produce paper and export it too.

*S.M.* Our forests are vast, but paper is in short supply.

*W.L.* So far you are not yet managing your economy efficiently. You don't use the available expertise. If you get down to it in earnest, you can find many profitable export opportunities, including the production of industrial goods no one else has.

*S.M.* That means we have to catch up with the West technologically.

*W.L.* There is the example of Japan. For a long time, the Japanese succeeded without inventing new goods but by updating their industry and by borrowing and adapting foreign technology. Soviet science has a pretty good potential for developing commercially viable options. Besides, with military expenditures reduced, the Soviet Union will be able to manufacture many new, sufficiently sophisticated and competitive high-tech goods.

*S.M.* Do you believe that this may create additional difficulties for the Western economies, making the problem of marketing more acute?

*W.L.* So far the foreign trade of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries is relatively small. Even when it begins to grow, I do not foresee any serious problems in trade with your neighbors in Western Europe or Asia. It is important to keep a close watch on what will happen in Western Europe after 1992. It will be terribly interesting for us in the United States and for you in Eastern Europe. The West European market may become more accessible to Soviet exports.

*S.M.* A lot depends on how perestroika proceeds in the Soviet Union. The dismantling of the centralized command system and the orientation on the market represent a truly revolutionary change in the socialist world, of enormous importance for the future of relations between our systems and for international cooperation generally.

*W.L.* I feel there will be a certain degree of convergence. I know you dislike the term, but let me explain my point. The role of the government in capitalist society will grow, but in socialist society it will diminish, although I am sure the government will remain responsible for the social sphere—for education, health care and the like. We in the

US also need more developed social services which, incidentally, are better in Western Europe.

S.M. I object to the term "convergence" because I cannot see my country dominated by capitalist corporations. I accept less centralized management and planning, but our system will still differ radically from yours.

W.L. I agree. Let us avoid the word "convergence". General terms are always bad. Besides, your goals are quite different. When people ask me whether the Soviet Union is planning to introduce capitalism, certainly not, I reply. Anyone in his right mind should understand it.

### Avoid Making More Mistakes

S.M. Some people in my country argue that for the Soviet Union to really become an organic part of the world economy, our domestic prices should be brought closer to the world level. That is considered to be essential to successful economic development, competitiveness and a convertible ruble. I am suspicious of this because it would mean a revamping of the whole system of social benefits. It would threaten real incomes, particularly those of the less prosperous sections.

W.L. You are quite right. Only widely traded goods, such as grain or standard raw materials, have more or less uniform prices in the world market. But most goods are outside this category, and it is absurd and even dangerous to have their prices "equalized".

S.M. Even within the United States, the prices of the same goods vary from region to region and sometimes even within the same city. If, under the pretext of "equalization", we start to raise the general level of prices, that will increase inflationary trends.

W.L. Exactly. Let me speak now in a strictly personal capacity. I am a technical, practical economist, and I am not much interested in the general theoretical aspects. Instead of talking about equalizing prices, I think the Soviet Union's central planning agencies would do well to examine, with the help of the Academy of Sciences, the overall picture of prices and their interrelationship and decide what commodities it would be useful to export. This cannot be left simply to the market forces. The free play of these forces leads to bankruptcies, unemployment and other terrible things.

S.M. I think it is very important for some of our economists to be not just technocrats, but to pay more attention to social issues, to the issues that underlie social relations. When they say the market will take care of everything, they forget that for a long time, there has been no competition in our economy. The risk is that the economy will misinterpret usual market signals—fluctuations in demand and the like. It will be a long time before market relations develop property and begin to operate as they should.

W.L. I would not want to offer advice from afar, but let me say that Japanese experience deserves attention. That includes their experience with planning, which is very pragmatic but based on in-depth research.

S.M. It is now widely and, I think, justly believed in the Soviet Union that the planning agencies and the ministries should act as experts and play an advisory role, not issue orders.

W.L. Right. Let them give advice and persuade. Well-substantiated recommendations have a stronger impact than any orders.

S.M. Summing up, let me stress that the objective the Soviet Union has set before itself—incorporating our economy into the world economy—poses serious challenges both in theory and in practice. Aside from overcoming the inertia both systems have accumulated, a lot of effort will have to go into developing and devising a specific mechanism for mutually beneficial contacts between enterprises and companies that have so far been isolated from each other. As far as theory is concerned, I think there should be more cooperation between Soviet and US economists and a more lively and effective discussion of practical questions. Let Marxists, Keynesians, monetarists and Leontieff's followers get together and talk. Each can contribute constructive ideas and proposals. Such discussions are useful despite the ideological differences between the participants.

W.L. I am all for polemics when greater clarity is the objective. Only by working creatively and pooling our efforts can we help resolve the acute problems mankind is facing as it is about to enter the 21st century.

<sup>1</sup> See: Wassily Leontieff et al, *The Future of the World Economy*, New York, 1977. The report contained forecasts of economic development prospects up to the year 2000.—Ed.

## A NEW HUMANISM

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In early 1935 the Buenos Aires Free College for Higher Studies launched a series of lectures about Erasmus, author of the still topical *Praise of Folly*. The lecturer was Anibal Ponce<sup>1</sup> and he later wrote a book, published to coincide with the 400th anniversary of the great humanist's death, entitled *From Erasmus to Romain Rolland*.<sup>2</sup>

Curiously—and I am using this word for a reason—the same year Stalin declared that man was the most precious capital, and *Pravda* contrasted proletarian humanism to hypocritical protestations of bourgeois humanism. In actual fact, it was Stalin's claims that were hypocritical, and the distinction drawn so rigidly at the time concealed a gradual erosion of democracy which led to massive repression and lawlessness in the USSR.

We now reject this approach. We see humanism as an indivisible whole. Whether Christian or Marxist, humanism is humanism—despite the fact that the confrontation of the antagonistic social classes continues.

The ideas of humanism, which assert the value of man as an individual, go back a long way. They came into being at the dawn of human history, as is borne out by what has come down to us from the world's first civilizations (Sumerian, Egyptian, Indian and Chinese), from the civilizations of American Indians (Maya, Aztecs and Incas), and from the great humanists in ancient Greece. These ideas were later developed by prominent Arab thinkers. Humanism became particularly important during the Renaissance when it emerged as a broad current of social thought in which the concept of man was emphasised. The principles of Renaissance humanism were set forth in the works of Erasmus, Thomas More, Rabelais, the French Encyclopedists and, later, of Goethe, Zola, Rolland and Barbusse. In Latin America, one should mention Simon Bolivar and Jose Marti, whose cause was taken up by the humanists Alfonso Reyes, Jose Ingenieros, Baldomero Sanin Cano, Joaquin Garcia Monge and the outstanding Puerto Rican journalist and civic activist Eugenio Maria de Hostos. We should also add the names of national revolutionaries—Pedro Albizu Campos, Augusto Cesar Sandino and Farabundo Marti, whose torch has passed to the people fighting an armed struggle for independence.

A new stage in the development of humanism began with the advent of Marxism, which abandoned an abstract,

supraclass approach to human problems, linking them instead with the fight to emancipate man from exploitation. This was why Marx and his followers referred to communism as practical, real humanism.

Humanism is developing constantly, and it keeps reproducing itself as the world changes. Today, we can and must view many things from a different angle than before—from the standpoint of new thinking. The reasons for this are as follows.

Colossal changes are under way in today's world. The revolution in science and technology, the shifts in the structure of social classes, including the international working class, and, above all, the stockpiling of nuclear weapons make it incumbent on Communists in all countries to look for new ways of tackling social problems. There is also an ecological imperative, connected with the irresponsible destruction of the environment. This makes it absolutely necessary to adopt new ethics and new moral categories so as to deliver humanity from an environmental disaster.

Let us also take a look at the development of man himself. On the one hand, progress in science and technology can now be ensured only by creative people, not by "cogs" in the machine of production to which Stalin referred. To work creatively, comprehensively developed abilities are required, and we should therefore activate the "human factor". On the other hand, the advent of powerful means of genetic and psychological manipulation poses an unprecedented threat to the human species, and this calls for urgent steps to be taken too.

All these factors combined have produced a situation where the question of humanism, of realising human energy and asserting man's potential is becoming vitally essential to every nation, and to humanity as a whole.

Without further advancing Marxism-Leninism, we cannot expect to tackle today's complex problems successfully. The development of a new humanism is one of these tasks. Let me try and define its salient features. While remaining, like the humanism of the past, a system of views upholding the value of the individual, the new humanism should be very broad and extensive since it is based on the entire humanistic heritage of all mankind, on the great humanitarian traditions of art, literature and culture. On the other hand, the new humanism expresses universal human interests and abandons prejudices which, in the past, distorted the ideas of socialism and democracy. Finally, the new humanism remains linked with society's realities and champions the working people and all those oppressed and humiliated.

Let us consider these features one by one.

The new humanism is the logical heir to all accomplishments and quests of the past in the defence of human interests and human dignity and in the development of human abilities. It is the logical heir to the ideas of the Renaissance and the early ideas of the French Revolution



which were advanced when the bourgeoisie was a revolutionary class. Using these ideas and rescuing many of them from oblivion is the immediate task.

As it was said at the international conference on human problems held in Moscow in 1988, the CPSU has in fact raised the banner of humanism and is doing all it can to restore the humane image of socialism and the humanitarian thrust of Marxism. This idea has been reflected in the documents adopted by many communist and workers' parties over the past few years.

Another feature of the new humanism concerns its rejection of a one-sided vision of reality and its commitment to embrace the entire dialectical complexity of today's contradictory and interdependent world. In this, we draw on the finest of our forerunners for inspiration too. Let us recall Ponce's finely nuanced description of Erasmus: "Erasmus," he said, "was a man who wrote between the lines, a man of undermeaning, of hints and allusions, of innuendo, of hidden motion, nebulous outlines, nods and winks." Luther even called Erasmus the "king of ambiguity". We do not go that far in our definitions. But a profound understanding of the world's different hues has always been typical of a true humanist.

A person who sees everything in black and white cannot be a humanist: there are shades which are hard to detect, but their detection is what human intellect is for. This is true not only of works of art or literature, but also of politics as an abiding manifestation of man's creative spirit. A politician who repeats dogmas will never become a man of politics in the proper sense of the term, even if he appears to be successful.

At this point I would like to say a few words by way of a bitter confession: I used to be very confused about many things. Today I see them in their proper perspective and, like the great majority of Soviet citizens, I condemn the inhuman obsession with curtailing the rights of the intelligentsia during the cult of Stalin and the years of stagnation. These restrictions were thrown into particularly sharp relief in the CPSU(B) Central Committee resolution of August 14, 1946 on the monthlies *Zvezda* and *Leningrad*.<sup>3</sup> In the words of the Soviet poet Mikhail Dudin, it was a "grave mistake which cast a shadow over the intellectual affairs of our society for many years."<sup>4</sup> On October 20, 1988 the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee repealed this resolution, calling it erroneous. The writers' reputations have been restored and their works reintroduced to the reading public.<sup>5</sup>

We realise, of course, that distortions of the essence of Marxism-Leninism led to losses, denigrated the role of culture and banished whole scientific schools. Many masterpieces by great artists were kept under lock and key. To Stalin's aides such as Zhdanov, "intelligentsia" was a swear word. Fortunately, this grim period is now a thing of

the past—thanks to a revolution within a revolution, that is, perestroika and glasnost in the Soviet Union.

However, a great deal of work still lies ahead, and all of us should contribute to this effort because I do not think that anyone is completely immune to the influence of the past.

I recall visiting a Picasso exhibition at Moscow's Tretyakov Gallery during the 1960s. I was struck by the smirks from people as they looked at some of the pictures by this great 20th-century artist. The meaning was clearly beyond them. That is understandable: when officialdom and the bureaucracy trample art underfoot, an artist can no longer make himself understood. Incidentally, no one could describe Picasso as divorced from social reality: a look at his *Guernica* is enough to prove the opposite.

We must be able to learn from the past and from past mistakes. Mikhail Gorbachov was quite right to say that we should oppose any attempts to shut our eyes to painful chapters of history, to hush them up and pretend that nothing untoward had happened. "This would be disregard for the historical truth," he continued, "disrespect for the memory of those who were innocent victims of lawless and arbitrary actions. Another reason why we cannot agree to this is that a truthful analysis must help us to solve today's problems of democratisation, legality, openness, overcoming bureaucracy, in short, the vital problems of perestroika."<sup>6</sup>

Today, it is particularly important to overcome narrow-minded, mossback attitudes. Now that the world faces a threat to all life, humanism is in fact emerging as the *supreme criterion of social progress*. Some will not agree with this fully, perhaps. But if one really thinks about what is more important today—the various philosophical or ideological differences between dissimilar social forces, or their unity in the struggle for human survival and in the defense of humanism—an honest person would not hesitate to choose.

Among other things, this also refers to cooperation between Marxists and believers. We pay tribute to the representatives of religious humanism because, to us, human happiness on Earth is a much more tangible thing than debate about bliss in heaven. The Communists are conducting a broad dialogue with those churchmen who focus their attention on man. There are no biased or inflexible thought patterns in the attitude of the new humanism to religion. Hence the equally acute question of historical continuity and of a critical analysis of the past. We can benefit from using the valuable contribution of the humanistic religious tradition in our work.

As General Omar Torrijos of Panama, an outstanding leader of the Latin American national revolutionary movement, said, "to be a man is an award, not a gift. Even if God existed, one would have to be a humanist."

The new humanism makes it possible to expand our

cooperation with all peace forces, including those who do not share our philosophical convictions. This will help isolate the far Right and the reactionary, profascist groups. In their joint effort to uphold humanism, people representing different philosophical and ideological currents display as much restraint, goodwill and realism as possible—naturally, without repudiating their own distinctive identity. That is precisely why the new humanism is not in conflict with the ideals of our movement. On the contrary, it helps us attain them.

Man is the maker of history, and contemporary humanism cannot simply repeat the ideas of Erasmus or, say, Diderot. As our century is drawing to a close and we are about to enter the third millenium, we should lay the foundations of a humanism which will reflect the realities of our age. Now, more than ever before, it is important to look for a balance of classes in society, and of countries on the international scene, if we want the human race and all life on Earth to survive.

Therefore, the third, and obviously one of the more important features of the new humanism is its *orientation on people's actual problems and needs*.

The humanism of the past can be described the way the Argentine historian Emilio Troise once described it: "When Lorenzo dei Medici and Marsilio Ficino argued about what supreme happiness was, the prince said, 'will' and the humanist, 'intelligence'. In this way, humanism revealed its limitations: all that talk about 'man' and 'the whole man', coming down simply to a question of intelligence. From Petrarch who, in his own words, preferred the friendship of the dead to the friendship of the living, to Boccaccio who disdained all action so much that his friends nicknamed him John the Serene; from Erasmus, whom one of his disciples described bitterly as *homo pro se*, a 'man unto himself', to Descartes who believed you could move among human beings as though they were trees in a forest—all humanists, from the forerunners to the epigones, took pride in their ability to turn their back on reality."<sup>7</sup>

This contradiction is real, and it is typical of bourgeois humanism too—of humanists of the *homo pro se* type, of those who live for themselves and act behind humanity's back. This contradiction must be overcome by the new humanism which is based on the thought and fruitful action of the masses.

A new humanist takes a sober view of life and is dedicated to his society and his time. He is not a "man unto himself" but a man for others, for everyone. This attitude is distinctive of many modern humanists. Take for instance Charlie Chaplin, that greatest of actors. His view of the

world and of life was expressed in his famous appeal—a veritable plea for deliverance—for the opening of a second front when the Soviet people were shedding their blood in World War II.

A humanist is a true intellectual who, according to the author Alejo Carpentier, believes that we will embrace revolution only when we learn to speak in the first person plural. "I learned this from the Cuban Revolution," he said. But one should not confuse the pronoun "we", which is mandatory in collective action and in the general creative political effort, with the "I" of a creative individual who seeks freedom (why not?), privacy and even seclusion in order to be able to leave his own personal imprint on his work.

In conclusion, let me emphasise that, via the new humanism, we will be able to reach the kingdom of freedom—and the sooner, the better. Perestroika in the USSR is convincing proof that difficulties and obstacles on this way can be overcome.

In the last works that make up his political testament Lenin warned against underrating democracy, because socialism means more democracy for the people. Therefore, it should embody the highest achievements of the human spirit and in this way promote a civilised attitude to others and mutual respect.

The new humanism is heir to all that is good and valuable. It is taking up the torch of the great ideas of the October Revolution (ideas that were consigned to oblivion for decades) and expanding opportunities for the assertion of the creative spirit of every individual who, though a small part of the whole, is as valuable as this whole. One must never underestimate the dialectical interconnection of the singular and the general. Learning, among others, from those who think differently than we do is a major feature of the new humanism.

I submit these ideas for reflection and debate. They cannot, of course, be regarded as the final words of truth. But their discussion will be useful, I think, to all those who want to build a world of humanism and happiness.

<sup>1</sup> A gifted Latin American Marxist scholar who died tragically in Mexico at the age of 40.—*H.M.*

<sup>2</sup> Anibal Ponce, *De Erasmo a Romain Rolland*, Mexico, 1935.

<sup>3</sup> The resolution hurled abuse at the Soviet authors Anna Akhmatova, Mikhail Zoshchenko and others.—*Ed.*

<sup>4</sup> *Literaturnaya gazeta*, October 26, 1988.

<sup>5</sup> *Pravda*, October 21, 1988.

<sup>6</sup> *Information Bulletin*, Special Issue, 1987, p. 19.

<sup>7</sup> Emilio Troise, *Anibal Ponce. Introduccion al estudio de sus obras fundamentales*, Buenos Aires, 1969, p. 264.



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### THE PARTY IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FATE OF RENEWAL

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the MPRP CC

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Pursuant to the decisions of its 19th Congress (1986), the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party, on the basis of a considered analysis of the state of society, has embarked on a major overhaul of political, economic and cultural life in the country. Its aim is to provide the right environment for the all-round development of the individual. But the fate of the changes directly depends on the party's own rejuvenation. It operates from a very broad, essentially transnational mode of thinking. We believe that we shall cope with the reforms if we overcome not only national narrow-mindedness, but also the closed character of our social system.

Although socialism in Mongolia is firmly on its feet and has proved its viability, it has not yet revealed its full potential. This, of course, cannot be explained by the system's comparative youth, nor for that matter, by any such claims as "outdatedness" or "inconsistencies" in the doctrine of Marx, Engels and Lenin. Socialism has not been able to prove its superiority so far because in practice it has run up against many difficulties, and suffered deformations which have nothing in common with its essence.

*Firstly*, Lenin's idea that the new system must demonstrate its advantage over capitalism by outshining it economically through peaceful competition has not been pursued vigorously enough. Instead, we mostly tried to show the "pluses" of socialism by means of agitation and propaganda. This unwittingly distracted attention from our own shortcomings, from the identification, study and timely resolution of the inner contradictions of society.

*Secondly*, we have perhaps been too schematic in our understanding of the complex dialectics involved in con-

verting socialism from theory into reality. After Lenin, dogmatism gradually pervaded Communist thinking. Instead of concentrating on the essence and perspectives of socialism, or revealing the potential capacity of our system for multivariant development, the social sciences tried to force it into the narrow bounds of a single scheme. This largely resulted from a simplistic understanding of the genuinely scientific Leninist concept and from its reduction to the so-called "Lenin plan for the building of socialism".

*Thirdly*, overcentralisation arose in the leadership of society as a result of the personality cult. Command-and-administer methods prevailed in the economy, politics and cultural life. The avenues for the self-realisation of socialism in all its diversity were blocked.

In our opinion, *many tenets of the theory of party development should be revised in the light of new thinking*. At the first stage of socialist transformations in Mongolia, for example, the party was held to be the instrument of proletarian dictatorship, which in turn meant it had the right to assume the functions of the state. By the 1960s and 1970s this "postulate" had gradually become, as we now admit, an equally inaccurate formula which proclaimed the party as the nucleus of the political system of socialist society. The acceptance of such assertions brought about the state's relegation to the back seat, even though that "nucleus" it must be. In practice this led to a serious distortion of the role and place of the party in society: the powers of state authority were now concentrated in its hands. As a result, the distinctions not only between party and economic work, but also between the functions of the party and the state were being ignored.

Another reason for that distortion was the improper or unwise handling of the dialectics of party activity. It is natural that as the guiding force of socialist construction, the MPRP is the ruling party in Mongolian society. But, as practice shows, Communists should operate flexibly, in accordance with the Constitution, within a legal framework, and without substituting for the state. Otherwise a kind of "power trip" emerges. The flawed interaction between the party and the state also rebounded on its dealings with other public organisations. Petty tutelage, meddling in their affairs, administration by fiat and directives became the rule. We now understand that a *distortion of the role of the party also entails a weakening of its role as the political vanguard of society*.

The international aspects of the cult of Stalin, like the personality cult in our party, created a favourable soil for the establishment of command-and-administer methods of leadership in Mongolia. This—along with reprisals—narrowed democracy, undermined the Leninist principle of public openness, and made criticism and self-criticism a formal exercise.

Our party organisations at all levels, from primary branches through to the Central Committee, spent most of their time on current economic matters, occasionally being crushed by this load. As a result, the Communists' attention to pressing economic, social and political issues of a long-term character flagged. We can clearly see now that party organisations cannot be effective political leaders if they simultaneously interfere in the daily affairs of production and administrative units. If the conductor starts playing in the orchestra, he won't be able to conduct.

Administration by fiat in the party went hand in glove with the ingrained command-and-pressure methods of leadership in state institutions. Unnatural and excessive centralisation entailed a bureaucratisation of the work of the executive authorities. The commercial methods of management, and the cultural-educative function of the state were forgotten. The people's representative power was supplanted by the diktat of the executive apparatus.

The command-and-administer method and bureaucratism are, figuratively speaking, Siamese twins. They intertwine with dogmatism in the mind, forming a powerful triple alliance—a "stumbling block" for progressive development. This peculiar triumvirate fettered the creative thought and activity of the masses. The party organisations found themselves pressed by the methods and psychology of command administration, this leading to their dogmatic understanding of the stability of society. A serious retardation of activeness occurred, with party work stricken by apathy towards new, progressive phenomena and by a fear of change.

With the launching of reforms in Mongolia, we primarily need to *revive and consolidate Lenin's interpretation of the role of the party in society*. Even before the Great October Socialist Revolution Lenin pointed out that the party was the workers' movement combined with scientific socialism. For us it is essential to develop and enrich this thesis with fresh content at the present stage of socialist construction. New horizons must be opened up for the creativity of the masses, it must be imbued with a Marxist-Leninist ideology which clearly reflects the contemporary epoch. Only the party is capable of fulfilling this historical mission. And only on the basis of revolutionary thinking can we define anew the role and place of the MPRP in the current reforms.

The chief objective of the MPRP, as we formulate it today, is to ensure the functioning of a genuine people's state and provide the conditions for it to fulfil its direct responsibilities, to expand democracy and intensify

socialist construction on this basis, and to steadily raise the well-being of the people. The 5th Plenum of the party's Central Committee (December 1988), having worked out guidelines for restructuring all the spheres of Mongolian society, designated the main tasks of party organisations. These include, above all, the elaboration of guidelines and prospects for economic, social and cultural development, for which a scientific analysis of the processes occurring in the country should provide the basis. Furthermore, the party will continue to shape domestic and foreign policy, control the implementation of goals, conduct organisational and ideological work among the masses, oversee the selection and education of the cadres, and work with people. It directs politically the activity of state and public organisations. Of course, the range of its duties extends beyond this, but in our view the main functions have been clearly indicated. However, I shall stress once more that *in doing so the party uses political methods only*.

Rethinking the party's role inevitably calls for changes in the style of its work. It is no longer possible to operate with the old methods. While putting into practice the ideas of the 19th Congress, the MPRP reaffirmed the decisive significance of renewing the basic principles on which all inner-party life rests.

The most important thing, we believe, is to create the right climate for the active involvement of each Communist in the work of the party, and to rely on the masses. In the first place we have to refashion the structure and functions of the party apparatus. Considerable distortions crept in here too. For example, the apparatus rose above the elected bodies. This meant that collective leadership was often treated formally, discussions were arranged merely for show, and even then on secondary issues, and the elected bodies themselves were effectively removed from the solution of key problems. Radical changes are now occurring in inner-party life.

In the Central Committee four councils are now being formed from its membership: on party and state building; ideology; social and economic policy; and the development of the *hodon*<sup>1</sup>. Thus, CC members have a chance to discharge their important elective duties and take a more active part in the party's work. The departments of the CC, designed to assist the councils, will function as their apparatus. Reorganisation is also taking place in the aimak, town and district committees of the MPRP. Earlier, the apparatus was arranged on a sectoral basis, duplicating state and economic bodies. After reconstitution it will maximally correlate social and economic problems, and provide the primary branches with the conditions for work by political methods. The apparatus at all levels will shed redundant units, while at the same time retaining efficiency.

The *legal basis* for the functioning of the party is its Rules, which must allow for every opportunity for consistent change in the style and methods of work. Therefore we

have raised the question of their renewal, an obvious necessity since the party has not paid sufficient attention to any improvement in the Rules for over 40 years, limiting itself to occasional insignificant changes and additions. We know that when the clauses fall behind the requirements of theory and principle, then distorted standards and guidelines inevitably appear. The effectiveness of the basic law of the Communists directly depends on how well we succeed in moulding, to use Lenin's phrase, the consciousness of the party. Changes here require a lot of theoretical work. Developed on a solid scientific basis, the norms of the Rules will help to activate the whole of inner-party life.

Correctly selected cadres form the *social basis* for the renewal of the style and methods of work. Therefore we urgently need to consistently democratise our cadre policy.

Thousands of Communists, brought up among the people, became the powerhouse for the transformation of Mongolian society along democratic and socialist lines. Over the last 40-odd years our cadres have grown significantly in number and quality, and a great deal has been done for their better selection, rational placement and reinforcement.

However, we cannot claim that there were no blunders or difficulties here. The former slogan "cadres decide everything" led to the excessive concentration of their selection in the hands of a limited circle of persons from the upper echelons. Due to the secrecy surrounding the arbitrary appointment of leaders, they were completely out-side criticism or control from the masses.

The time is ripe for a *consistent application of democratic principles and public openness* in cadre policy. Naturally, this does not mean that we should let everything take its course. The chief thing for us is real party influence in the promotion of leaders by the collective itself. We are also going to limit the term of office in leading posts, actively promote young people, non-members and women on a competitive basis, and refine the system of cadre induction and training. People with a profound grasp of the need for restructuring, convinced of its correctness, and able to cope with previously unknown tasks, and to think and work in a new way are particularly in demand now.

Serious lessons must be drawn as we overcome such shortcomings as time-serving under the guise of responsiveness to popular opinion, the lack of personal opinion, the persecution of those who dissent, and the use of "labels" for them. The growth of communists' *party and political culture* has an important role here. Red tape, the fuss of meetings, administration by fiat, formalism and filling in for someone else are alien to it. Humanism, trust in the individual, and attention to opinions which may differ from mainstream views are now the order of the day. These requirements apply in equal measure to the organisational

and supervisory, as well as the ideological activity of the party.

The 19th MPRP Congress put forward the task of renovating the style and methods of ideological work. Above all, its goals must be defined correctly. We believe that the most important thing now is to *remould social consciousness*, and the Central Committee's 5th Plenum has reaffirmed the need for this.

Unfortunately, the gap between social consciousness and being, and between ideology and mass psychology still lingers. A discrepancy arose between what the people thought and what the theoreticians said. The embellishment of social reality, the overt or veiled overpraise of the party and state, and the glorification of the leader at the top—all this had a negative effect.

The party's image was also tarnished because it ignored national distinctiveness, and because it attempted consciously to deny it by speculating on general regularities of socialism without taking the specific conditions of the country into account. This led to a misconception of the national pride of our people, of the Mongolian's desire for self-knowledge. The irony of the situation was that even if no one accused us of nationalism, we ourselves zealously sought out and identified "nationalists" in our midst. Some people looked down on their country from the great-power standpoint of other states. This was why even patriotic thinking began to be considered Mongolian chauvinism. This ultimately led, metaphorically speaking, to a search for a non-existent black cat in a dark room. It gave rise to the scholastic idea that an international upbringing necessarily required the erosion of things Mongolian. Under such an approach, the result was at times quite the contrary: the cause of internationalism suffered.

Mongolia's revival itself is inseparably linked with the *development of new relations between nations*. Immediately after the triumph of the people's revolution and in subsequent years the Soviet Union and other fraternal countries lent the MPRP invaluable assistance in the construction of its economy and culture, and they continue to do so. Our people are grateful to these friends for their kindness, and value the fruits and significance of internationalism. At the same time, this does not mean there are no problems in relations between us. But those that exist can be resolved if approached in a considered and unbiased manner.

The MPRP has assumed great responsibility for the fate of restructuring. Its ability to solve the problems that have accumulated, to eradicate the shortcomings and deformations, and to accomplish the complex tasks of society's development largely depends on the unity, purity and the qualitative composition of the Communists, and on their activeness and consistency in the drive for change. At sharp turns in the course of socialist construction, when the masses' interest in the activity of the party grows im-



measurably, the number of those wishing to join its ranks correspondingly increases. We believe that it would be wrong to regard them simply from the point of view of social and class distinctions, better to recognise the personal qualities of the people involved.

Our party emerged as a union of the arats, or cattle breeders, and consistently upheld their vital interests. It led the people's revolution, and handed over state power to the working people. In this sense it was logical to call the MPRP the party of the arats. Today, however, when there is no class struggle in the country, the party, as the political vanguard of society, enjoys the trust of all the classes and sections and represents their common interests. We have neither a political, nor an economic, nor a social basis for the party and state placing the interests of one class above another's. The wise counsel of Lenin's to make our party a mass party and to prevent it from being infested with alien elements is being successfully implemented. We shall unswervingly follow this advice in the future as well.

So there is at present no need to approach the party's composition from the outdated standpoint of "class character". In the conditions of socialist construction (when antagonistic classes are non-existent) the *image of the party is determined not by the quantitative relationships in its ranks, but by its ideology*. To advance towards the heights of socialism, taking guidance from the doctrine of Marxism-Leninism—this is the true expression of its class line. In order to guide the restructuring effectively, the party is consistently developing a socialist pluralism of opinions, democracy and public debate. These features are interrelated, supplement each other and cannot exist separately. Such is the principal mechanism for identifying the views of the different forces in society, providing a real unity of interests, and looking for and implementing the best mutually acceptable solutions.

To extend democracy in Mongolia, we also have to draw on the experience of humanity as a whole. It would seem a good idea to start with the many constructive features in party activity and state building in countries with different social systems. It won't hurt to learn and borrow, and there's really no alternative because both social systems will continue to coexist for a long time to come.

It is no secret that some overcautious persons doubt the expediency of a broad democratisation of our society. Mongolians are comparatively less culturally and educationally advanced than other socialist nations and so the sceptics claim it's both impossible and premature to call for the same measure of democracy as our friends': its "excessive" broadening would lead to chaos and so forth. I shall say unambiguously that *we believe in our people*. What use is waiting passively? It's just a waste of time. And how are you to know at what level of culture you can start democratisation?

Lenin's words that without an awakening of the active-

ness of the broad masses "there could be no question of any revolutionary change"<sup>2</sup> are especially pertinent today.

Let me stress that no benefactor can give a people culture generally, or the culture of democracy in particular. A people wins its own rights. In other words, it has to get right to the heart of the matter and learn from its own social experience. Such is the mainstream of social progress. It is on this basis that peoples make history.

As we see it, restructuring in Mongolia is both a component and a specific part of the radical political and economic changes now occurring in fraternal socialist countries. I must note that this is not a case of simply following fashion, still less blind imitation. The policy of renewal must not be understood as a short-term or ad hoc action. It is an *inexorable demand of life, a deeply conscious long-term strategic line*.

For over six decades the MPRP has been wholly responsible to the people for the destiny of our country. It has started the restructuring with itself, and the party is the initiator and integrating force of the renewal of society as a whole.

Now we understand better that the country's history, and that of the party, was shaped by many factors, at times by the complex circumstances, and in some cases also by grave errors. But the most important thing, in our view, is that, whatever the difficulties and distortions, *they have not shaken the faith of the Mongolian people in its historical choice and in the ideals proclaimed by the people's revolution*. As Jambyn Batmonh, General Secretary of the CC MPRP and Chairman of the Presidium of the People's Great Hural<sup>3</sup>, noted in his report to the Central Committee's 5th Plenum: "We must be clear that in the people's eyes the fate of national development is always linked with the party, and that they give its policy every support and look to it for hope and inspiration".<sup>4</sup>

Keeping pace, as before, with the fraternal parties and our political associates, the MPRP will continue to guide the onward development of society, and to make its contribution to the struggle for progress and the victory of the new system.

<sup>1</sup> The *hudon* means the countryside.—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 210.

<sup>3</sup> The highest body of state authority.—Ed.

<sup>4</sup> *The 5th Plenum of the MPRP CC*, Ulan-Bator, 1988, p.31 (in Russian).

## THE MASSES: THE SUBJECT OF THE REVOLUTION

CHOE TAE BOK

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The outcome of the struggle to build socialism and communism largely depends on the extent to which the popular masses, the subject of the historical process, are involved in revolutionary construction. It is obvious that there can be no social progress without rigorous and committed efforts on the part of the masses for the common good, and so the WPK has been guiding the creative activity of working people here in order to mould a new type of citizen, to better our society and to harness Nature. The paramount idea, therefore, is that it is up to human beings to determine their own destinies.

The environment needs to be transformed in order to create the material conditions for human life and the country's development, while educating the new type of citizen is aimed to make our men and women stronger spiritually and physically. Bettering society means arranging relations within it in accordance with the cultural level, political consciousness and creative capabilities of its individual members.

It is not some single individual, but the united working people that alone have the boundless potential for undertaking this immense task, and this potential will not be realised automatically. Only people who are ideologically aware and organised can take it upon themselves to play a crucial role in revolution and construction. *In this way the might of the masses is infinitely greater than the combined might of individuals acting alone.*

This is one of the basic ideas of the *Juche* philosophy, a set of ideas originated and developed in Korea in the process of asserting and implementing the theoretical and scientific wealth of Marxism-Leninism, which mean that everything depends on human beings, who are the masters of all.

The truth of this is borne out by the experience gained in the revolutionary battles and in socialist construction, and the results they have brought. WPK CC General Secretary Kim Il Sung wrote that "victory in the revolution

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can be won only if the subject of the revolution is strengthened and its role steadily enhanced. This is the invaluable truth of revolution which we came to comprehend in the course of our anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle."<sup>1</sup>

The Korean people's national liberation movement against the colonial domination by Japanese imperialism emerged and gained in strength in the most trying conditions: the invaders, with their large economic potential, their regular and well-equipped army, and their ramified and refined apparatus of violence, brutally put down any resistance. The situation was worsened by the fact that the Communists and members of other avowedly patriotic organisations were out of touch with the people, confusing them with demagogic statements and wasting their strength in internecine fights for the leadership. The revolutionary masses, disunited and lacking an organised leading core, suffered great losses, shedding their blood in vain.

At this point Kim Il Sung joined the revolutionary struggle and drew some important lessons from the reverses suffered at the initial stage of the formation and activity of the Communist Party and the independence movement in Korea. *He realised the need for a totally new political, ideological and organisational basis for uniting party members and winning the battle against the invaders.* The gist of his proposals was to rid the guerrilla contingents and underground groups of the discredited factionalists and bring in young Communists to strengthen the liberation forces. Kim Il Sung worked hard to establish close ties between the vanguard of these forces and the people. He led the way in elaborating the proper military strategy and tactics for the attainment of specific objectives. This helped to unite all the patriotic elements, multiply their combat strength and increase their potential, thus changing the course of history, and gaining an historic victory over the invaders.

Following the country's liberation, the WPK set out to build socialism. The path to furthering the people's power was not a smooth one. South Korea was invaded by the US imperialists, who then started a war against the DPRK. This naturally hindered our advance to the goal we had set ourselves, but it also offered the party an opportunity to look again at the quality of its ranks, to enhance their militancy, and to improve its methods for guiding the masses. Recognising the danger they were in, the Communists and the entire people rallied round the WPK CC, and this made it possible to put the economy on a war footing within a short time, to create a regular army and to rout the aggressor.

The true heroism and dedication of the people of the Republic, who realised that they were masters of their destiny, were also displayed in the postwar rehabilitation and construction. In spite of the economic dislocation, the weak scientific and technical potential, and the need to resist the

ceaseless attacks by internal and external enemies, in four or five years the Korean people had transformed the relations of production on socialist lines and laid the foundations of the new system. Subsequently, we also swiftly transformed the DPRK, once an agrarian country, into a developed state with a modern industry and agriculture.

One could safely say that *everything that has been achieved is the result of a far-sighted policy aimed at improving and enhancing the role of the popular masses in the construction process.*

Our party and people now face tasks that are just as formidable as those in the past: to put the finishing touches to the building of socialism in the DPRK, to nullify the aggressive schemes of imperialism, and to secure the country's reunification. We expect to fulfil these tasks by further strengthening the mass revolutionary forces. If the superiority and advantages of the socialist system are to be fully brought out, a solid material and economic base must be built up, and the methods of economic administration and management improved. But it is much more important, we believe, to foster the new citizen, because it is our men and women who are engaged in production and who carry on the scientific quest in every field of knowledge. It is, of course, a commonplace to say that people do not do it on their own, but collectively, and that is why the process of spiritual, cultural, political and ideological development must encompass every stratum of the population, the whole of society.

It is equally obvious to us that these objectives can be attained only in the presence of a party that is stronger and more united than ever before. Kim Jong Il, Political Bureau Presidium member and CC Secretary of the WPK, has said: "If the subject of the revolution is to be strengthened, the first thing to do is to strengthen the party, which is its core and guiding force."<sup>2</sup> You can't say fairer than that. When the party is equipped and guided by the advanced and realistic doctrine, the ideological level of the people keeps rising, and when the party is a solid organisation, the unity of the masses is also monolithic.

We believe that observance of the principle of the *unity of ideas and leadership* is the primary condition for party construction at the present stage. This means that *all the Communists are guided by the ideas of the Juche philosophy and the instruction of the central party organs*, while the party as a whole firmly abides by the requirements of *democratic centralism* as the main factor in the organisational and ideological unity of its ranks.

There are, in our view, two interlocking components in this principle, neither of which is separable or absolute, for that would lead to all kinds of deviations. Party life must be based on the Communists' right to discuss any matter, and also on their duty to observe and fulfil the adopted

decisions. WPK members are also able to express their views on the depth and character of the existing problems, and on ways of solving these and improving the activity of the committees, the apparatus and the party as a whole. In this way we can develop and consolidate the finer qualities of the primary and higher-standing bodies, strengthen their militant and innovative spirit, and enable them to formulate their tasks and their role in the general advance.

A strong and well-knit party is the most important weapon of the revolution, a powerful instrument in building the new system. But while toughening the core of society, we are also mindful of the masses, the basis of society. The WPK cannot exist or act at a remove from the people, otherwise there would be no progress in building socialism. But if the working people are to become the true subject of the revolution and determine their own future, they must be ideologically and organisationally rallied round the WPK Central Committee. Moreover, the task, as we see it, is to form a single whole, a political and social entity, with the party as its backbone, and the leader as its brain. This kind of unity is exceptionally solid.

It rests on free and equal relations between comrades and partners in the common cause, cherished equally by one and all. The intention to consolidate the alliance between citizens, the party, and the leader, is expressed primarily in the intense efforts to involve workers, peasants, intellectuals and students in the various political and social organisations. They then have the chance to be active in society, to obtain access to cultural and spiritual values, and to increase their knowledge through various forms of education. In this way they realise their independent creative potential and are encouraged to join in running the country and to play a part in its development commensurate with their status as subjects of the revolution. In so doing, the *masses are guided by the ideas of the leader, which embody the general will and wish for happiness.*

It is up to the people themselves to build socialism and communism. The party works to rally and organise the working people for the fulfilment of this great task, and our achievements show how effective its efforts are: these are ever more impressive from year to year, and are attracting the growing attention of world public opinion. But the greatest successes still await democratic Korea in the future. A country where human beings are the masters, where the question of their role and place in socialist construction is properly dealt with, is entitled to expect prosperity.

<sup>1</sup> Kim Il Sung, *Carrying High the Revolutionary Banner of Juche, Let Us Complete the Building of Socialism and Communism. Report at a Ceremonial Meeting to Mark the 40th Anniversary of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea*, September 8, 1988.

<sup>2</sup> Kim Jong Il, "With the Banner of Anti-Imperialist Struggle Raised Higher, Let Us Firmly March Forward Along the Way of Socialism and Communism", *Kenroja*, No. 9, 1988 (in Korean).

## DISCUSSING PUBLIC ISSUES LENIN'S CONTRIBUTION TO PERESTROIKA

Natalia MOROZOVA

Before you read this article, *WMR* would like to introduce its author. Natalia Morozova is not a professional writer, journalist or scholar in the traditional sense of the word. A retired school teacher of music, she has dedicated her life to Lenin's personality and ideals. She has not simply read all his works: she has absorbed them, trying to look at everything from his angle and to check her attitudes against his. But for a long time, this dedication remained unnoticed. No one took Morozova's attitude or world view seriously: who was she to judge the ideas and the cause of the man who led the world's working class, directed the October Revolution and founded the Communist Party and the Soviet state? That was a matter to be tackled by writers, scholars and political figures.

But times changed. The CPSU announced a policy of radically restructuring the social fabric—with and for the Soviet people. This is a cause for everyone—political figures, writers, journalists, scholars and the "man in the street". As a representative of the latter Morozova telephoned the *Pravda* editorial office: "I have written an article I'd like to offer you," she said. "It's about Lenin." There was a longish pause, probably of uncertainty, followed by a brief reply: "Very well, bring it in. We'll take a look at it." So she brought it in. It was read and sent to the printers immediately. In the September 26, 1988 issue it appeared under the title "We Really Need Lenin Today". Letters flooded into the *Pravda* office from readers who wanted to know more about the author: "Who are you? Where are you from? Why did you keep silent for so long? We have been waiting for someone to say the things you have said."

Now Natalia Morozova has written an article specially for *WMR*, reflecting her personal view of the need today to read Lenin's works in a new way. She chose one of Lenin's better-known works—"A Great Beginning"—to prove her point.

Open the volume at this article, subtitled "Heroism of the Workers in the Rear. 'Communist Subbotniks'", and feel the excitement and the joy Lenin felt when he learned that the first bud of *real* communism had finally appeared:

"...The *communist subbotniks* organised by the workers on their own initiative are really of enormous significance. Evidently, this is only a beginning, but it is a beginning of exceptionally great importance" (29, 411)<sup>1</sup>.

Seven decades have elapsed since the first communist subbotnik, and we can say that it was indeed a major landmark. Unpaid voluntary work in the name of the new socialist society we were building was a breakthrough that occurred in people's hearts, minds and scales of values. Obviously, it was marked by revolutionary enthusiasm.

The hard and hungry times will come to an end, the enemy will retreat, the sounds of gunfire will die down, and the country will have to begin a systematic and purposeful constructive effort: That is when we will turn to the lesson of the communist subbotnik—the dedicated labour not of the few who volunteered to repair a much-needed locomotive, but of millions upon millions. This, I believe, sums up the emotional message of "A Great Beginning".

However, in the years that followed, instead of stressing the word "dedicated", we emphasised the word "unpaid", which has a fine ring to it but jars with the fundamental principle of socialism—"from each according to his abilities, to each according to his work". Gradually, subbotniks became mass events scheduled to mark major holidays and anniversaries. What is wrong with that? Nothing, except that they lost the spirit that had inspired Lenin. The trouble is that not only on "red-letter days of labour", as the subbotniks came to be called, but also on regular workdays many people have been increasingly losing what is particularly important—dedication. Not to mention enthusiasm, passionate commitment and often elementary discipline. We distorted Lenin's attitude to the subbotniks. But now that we have launched perestroika, we would do well to return to the source, reread what Lenin wrote and get to the heart of the matter.

A genius not only notices the shoots of radically new phenomena but also analyses and understands them. Think back to November 1905 when, on his way to a Russia swept by revolution, Lenin learned that the industrial workers of St. Petersburg had set up soviets. He was, of course, elated, but he restrained himself, afraid to make a mistaken and exaggerated assessment: "I am speaking as an *onlooker*," he wrote. "I still have to write from that accursed 'afar', from the hateful 'abroad' of an exile. And it is all but impossible for anyone to form a correct opinion of this concrete, practical matter if he has not been in St. Petersburg, if he has never seen the Soviet of Workers' Deputies or exchanged views with comrades on the spot" (10, 19).

Still, Lenin shared his vision with his comrades-in-arms: "I may be wrong, but I believe (on the strength of the incomplete and only 'paper' information at my disposal) that politically the Soviet of Workers' Deputies should be regarded as the embryo of a *provisional revolutionary government*" (10, 21).

Lenin was not wrong. He was correct in identifying the embryo of future Soviet government.

He was equally cautious in assessing the first subbotniks, even though he was evaluating them at home, as an eyewitness, and not "from that accursed a'far". But on the other hand, if the soviets did have a historical precedent—the Paris Commune—the subbotniks were a completely novel phenomenon born of the new social system. These shoots were still small and weak, and they could easily be crushed. So, like an anxious gardener, Lenin rushed to protect them, mainly from various pessimists who maintained, he remarked, that the number of subbotniks was insignificant when compared "with the vast number of cases of thieving, idleness, lower productivity, spoilage of raw materials and finished goods, etc.". These things did indeed occur. But "has it ever happened in history," Lenin asked, "that a new mode of production has taken root immediately, without a long succession of setbacks, blunders and relapses?" (29; 424, 425)

Nevertheless, Lenin did not see this "jeering" from the sceptics as the main danger. The important thing was to make sure that *we ourselves* didn't crush the shoots of our own ideals. "We must carefully study the feeble new shoots," he wrote "we must devote the greatest attention to them, do everything to promote their growth and 'nurse' them" (ibid.).

Another remarkable quality Lenin possessed was that if he called on others to do something, he was the first to act on his own appeal. He wrote "A Great Beginning" on June 28, 1919, six weeks after the first subbotnik. From that moment on he never let the young shoot out of his sight: he analysed press reports about subbotniks, talked avidly with people from areas where they were held and, on August 26, cabled Grigori Zinoviev in Petrograd: "Please collect quickly all the material about subbotniks and send it to me" (44, 278).

Lenin not only analysed this information but also joined the effort to publicise subbotniks. Speaking at the First Congress of Agricultural Communes and Agricultural Artels on December 4, he urged rural commune members to emulate the example of industrial workers. Yes, he said, there was dislocation in the villages after two wars—the imperialist war (WW I—Ed.) and the Civil War. The leader of the party and of the state was aware of that: "With such conditions as now exist in our country, how can one think of any widespread improvement in farming—God grant that we may carry on somehow and not die of starvation" (30, 201). But things were even tougher for the industrial workers, and Lenin reminded the peasants of that: "There can be no doubt that the workers of Moscow are experiencing greater privation and want than the peasants. If you were to acquaint yourselves with their conditions of life and give some thought to the fact that in spite of these incredibly hard conditions they were able to organise subbotniks, you would agree that no reference to arduous conditions

can serve as an excuse for not doing what can be done under any conditions by applying the method of the Moscow workers" (30, 202).

Not everywhere and not overnight, but gradually, people began to take part in subbotniks in rural areas too. Lenin kept raising the subject: in another two weeks he issued a further reminder to Communists at the Moscow Party Conference: "If there is anything communist at all in the prevailing system in Russia, it is only the subbotniks" (30, 286).

Within a year of the first subbotnik a mass movement was launched across the nation, and on May 1, 1920 the first All-Russia May Day Subbotnik was organised. Lenin himself took part in it, then spoke at a rally to mark the founding of a monument to liberated labour, and the next day the *Pervomaisky Subbotnik* (May Day Subbotnik) handbill published his article "From the First Subbotnik on the Moscow-Kazan Railway to the All-Russia May Day Subbotnik".

Lenin was no wishful thinker. Even in that enthusiastic article there was an unmistakable note of caution: "We are not deceiving ourselves in the least about the little that has yet been done and about the infinite amount of work that has yet to be done.... In a single year our subbotniks have made an immense stride forward." But, he adds, "they are still infinitely weak." Nevertheless, he concluded his article on an optimistic note: "We shall work for years and decades practising subbotniks, developing them, spreading them, improving them and converting them into a habit. We shall achieve the victory of communist labour" (31; 123, 125).

Decades have passed. Let us look around.

Item. A child was rushed to a hospital but died in the emergency ward: the surgeon was busy washing windows at a subbotnik.

Item. In one of the schools, children were horsing around with pails, mops and brooms. The crestfallen janitor was watching them sadly: cleaning up after this "subbotnik" would take all night.

Item. The foreman told the workers: "Let those who do not want to come to the subbotnik pay a tenner, and they can stay home." A stack of ten-ruble bills piled up on his desk.

Need I go on? Even when people work hard at a subbotnik—and many do—the organisers sometimes manage to arrange everything so badly and bureaucratically that some people have begun to call them "bleak", not "red-letter", Saturdays.

How could this come to pass? Today we are taking a close look at our history in an effort to understand why revolutionary ideals were abandoned and to pinpoint the historical juncture at which it all began. When reading recently Vassily Grossman's novel *Life and Fate*, I was struck by a remarkably apt and vivid simile: "Krymov no longer saw as implausible the mind-boggling confessions of Bukharin, Rykov, Kamenev and Zinoviev, the trials of the



Trotskyites and of the right-wing/left-wing centres, or the fate of Bubnov, Muralov and Shliapnikov.<sup>2</sup> The revolution was being skinned alive. The new time wanted to don this skin. The bleeding, living flesh, the steaming entrails of the proletarian revolution were being carted off to the dump: the new time had no need of them. What it needed was the skin of the revolution, and this skin was being peeled off living beings. Those who covered themselves with the skin of the revolution spoke its words, mimicked its gestures, but had a different brain, different lungs, a different liver and different eyes."<sup>3</sup>

A few words to extend this simile. Later, after the skin of the revolution, peeled off its living body, had begun to stick to those who donned it, new generations arose who never saw the real image of the revolution. They were easily convinced that the changelings *were* the revolution. Many believed it, and this credibility lasted a long time—until, in 1956, they heard the thunder. The thunderbolt of the 20th CPSU Congress struck hard, but it merely seared the skin of the changelings. They kept patching it up with quotations from Marx, Engels and Lenin. They tried particularly hard to use Lenin as a cover.

Item. "You say the city is drowning in mud, public transport is a shambles and there are food shortages? No problem. Let's erect a monument to Lenin on the main square."

Item. "You say schoolchildren in Uzbekistan are sent to harvest cotton instead of studying? That discontent is growing in Nagorno-Karabakh and Alma-Ata? That many Jews want to emigrate to Israel? No problem. We'll use some high-sounding rhetoric about Lenin's nationalities policy and, to make it sound really convincing, assure them that 'the party is strictly monitoring compliance with these Leninist principles'."

Item. "You say the head of state keeps uttering platitudes without really saying anything? No problem. We'll publish it and call it *Following Lenin's Course*."

That was the "skinning" procedure. Those who donned this skin could not even be called changelings: they no longer made any secret of the fact that for them revolutionary ideals were merely fancy dress.

Today, in Lenin's words, a "fine revolutionary breeze" is blowing again (9, 378). It is the flesh, the soul and the mind of the revolution that we need, not its "skin". What we have lost has been lost irretrievably, and we cannot bring the martyred revolutionaries back to life. Our great teacher is long gone too. But his ideas, his creative heritage remain. Today, we open Lenin's volumes as though drinking thirstily from a refreshing spring, sometimes choking with the abundance of impressions, sometimes confusing ideas of everlasting validity with what was said about some specific circumstances of the day. There are still those who love to manipulate and distort Lenin's quotations. But this is no longer all that dangerous: demagogues, quotation-slingers and "literary riders", as Lenin called them, are having the

ground cut from under their feet. People are tired of listening to gobbledygook, and many want to read for themselves what Lenin wrote. The party's slogan—"more socialism today means more Leninism"—is my slogan too.

True, some say that Lenin can offer little to us realists who are concerned with pragmatic future tasks: Lenin was a utopian, they claim. In his time, he assured the younger generation that it would live under communism, and where is this communism now? But Lenin was not a prophet in the religious sense of the word. His forecasts were *scientific*. It would be the height of folly to sit back and wait for them to come true. If we are told that a melon, not an oak or a birch tree, would grow out of a particular seed, this does not mean that the seed will plant and cultivate itself. The planting and cultivation is our job. Only then will we see a melon grow out of it, not something else. Similarly, any scientific forecast must be acted on, and relevant conditions must be met. We have failed to meet these terms. Why complain that this or that has failed to materialise?

Meanwhile, almost all of the fears Lenin expressed have materialised. We have managed to "translate into reality" much he warned us against. In other words, we acted contrary, not according to, his behests. Who, then, are we to blame? All right, those of his contemporaries who failed to understand the scale of Lenin's genius dismissed many of his warnings in the belief that they themselves were mature enough to cope with any problem. But today, having done so many things tragically wrong, we must understand that you cannot dismiss the ideas of a brilliant thinker.

While on the subject of the subbotniks, let us go back to the time when the buds of communism had just appeared. Let us again leaf through "A Great Beginning", and we will immediately come across his advice—"less political fireworks". One remembers right away the political fireworks that used to deafen us for decades and decades. But let me finish the quotation: "Less political fireworks and more attention to the simplest but living facts of communist construction, taken from and tested by actual life" (29, 419). There you have it: political fireworks may be impressive and loud, but that is merely the outer shell, the "skin" which is often empty. Actual life is what counts; actual work, however modest, is *real*.

This is where the dividing line between the revolutionary and the changeling runs. This lesson is particularly important for leaders, at whatever level. If a leader really cares about our cause and about people, he will pay attention to the "simple, living", even if modest, facts. He will protect and cultivate these shoots. But when there is no commitment to the cause and no concern for the people, when the only motive is to earn a feather in one's cap, then simple facts are ignored in favour of something eye-catching—completing five-year assignments within two years, or reporting that a project has been finished (although it has not) to mark a revolutionary anniversary. All that involves

high-sounding slogans, optimistic quotations and, of course, bonuses, medals and "banners of merit".

Studying what has occurred since Lenin's death, we feel bitter about the fact that so many truly remarkable and promising communist shoots have either perished amidst the noise of political fireworks, or been bureaucratised out of all recognition.

In the course of perestroika we are trying to recover from this chronic malady, turning to Lenin for the remedy—the habit of studying closely the "simple, living" facts of actual life.

In "A Great Beginning" Lenin says: "The 'communist subbotniks' are so important because they were initiated by workers who were by no means placed in exceptionally good conditions, by workers of various specialities, and some with no speciality at all, just unskilled labourers, who are living under *ordinary*, i.e., *exceedingly hard*, conditions" (29, 426). There you have another warning against doing things merely for show. Haven't we ignored this warning too? Just remember how many pseudo-records we set. They were the breeding ground for reports with doctored figures. If the management wanted to top it all with a record set by a particular workteam, "exceptionally good conditions" were created for it quite openly, and even blatantly.

Lenin was convinced that false show can kill even the best of undertakings. Consider the case of the farming communes that sprang up in Russia in the wake of the revolution. Some not-so-well-informed sources are trying to assure us that Lenin was keen on promoting them and that he in fact encouraged the accelerated enrolment of peasants in these communes, thereby setting an example for Stalin with his forced collectivisation. But that is a profoundly mistaken view.

True, Lenin welcomed cases where peasants were beginning to understand the advantages of collective labour. At the First Congress of Agricultural Communes he said: "Of course, from all the activities of the Soviet government you know what tremendous significance we attach to the communes, artels, and all organisations generally that aim at transforming and at gradually assisting the transformation of small, individual peasant farming into socialised, co-operative, or artel farming. You are aware that the Soviet government long ago allotted the sum of one thousand million rubles to assist efforts of this kind" (30, 195). However, this was followed by many "buts": don't forget about the many millions of farms run by individual peasant producers, don't force them to join the communes. They can be recruited "only gradually and cautiously and only by a successful practical example, for the peasants are far too practical" (30, 196). A "successful practical example" means that peasants should be able to see for themselves at least some advantage in communes over private farming—an advantage rooted in the collective forms of tilling the land.

There was another thing Lenin was concerned about. I

am sure you have noted the phrase about the fund of one billion rubles for the communes. It was used to provide credits and subsidies to those peasants who decided to switch to collective methods of farming. It was natural for a socialist government to encourage socialist forms of economic management. But Lenin also saw another, potentially dangerous aspect to this encouragement. "What we must be most careful about," he wrote, "is that the peasants should not say of members of communes, artels and co-operatives that they are state pensioners, that they differ from the peasants only by the fact that they are receiving privileges. If we are to give land and subsidies for building purposes out of the thousand-million-ruble fund, any fool will live somewhat better than the ordinary peasant. What is there communistic here, the peasant will ask, and where is the improvement? What are we to respect them for? If you pick out a few score or a few hundred individuals and give them a thousand million, of course they will work" (30, 198-199). See how wary Lenin was of "Potemkin villages".

Unfortunately, these fears were later fully borne out. Cultivating and caring for tiny shoots is a difficult long-term job. The leadership that came after Lenin decided to cheat history and economics, and—hey presto!—create socialism. Hence the reports alleging 100-percent participation in various campaigns, the pseudo-initiatives and the dubious records. The surprising thing about our people is that even with all this demagoguery and deception, there have been many real initiatives and real records. The changelings obviously failed to completely stifle the nation's revolutionary spirit.

Let us go back to "A Great Beginning" again: "The word 'commune' is being handled much too freely. Any kind of enterprise started by Communists or with their participation is very often at once declared to be a 'commune', it being not infrequently forgotten that this *very honourable title* must be *won* by prolonged and persistent effort, by *practical* achievement in genuine communist development" (29, 431). A few lines further on Lenin sounds even more resolute: "It would be a good thing to eliminate the word 'commune' from *common* use, to prohibit every Tom, Dick and Harry from grabbing at it" (ibid.).

This is a matter in which we not simply acted counter to Lenin's expectations but fared many times worse than he feared we might. We have made the word "communism" so hackneyed that today many refuse to take it seriously. Last year a youth newspaper asked its readers whether they believed in communism. Some replied with a firm "yes", others with a categoric "no", and still others openly vented their frustration. Enough, they said, how much longer are you going to make fools of us? We are fed up with this talk, they said: Look at Moscow, a "communist" city with streets drowning in litter, with lines in shops and theft under the counter. There are "communist labour workteam" pennants displayed by rude and cheating

salesclerks. There have been "communist" construction projects with prisoners working at gunpoint. We also heard that we would reach communism by 1980. Instead, we had stagnation.

You cannot really deny all that. It is the bitter truth and we are only now beginning to understand and discuss it. Moreover, the word "Leninism" was also taken in vain. We had—and we still have—backward collective farms named "Lenin's Path", "Lenin's Behests" and the like. There has also been a host of "loyal Leninists" who in fact did all that could be done to discredit the ideals of communism, the ideals of Lenin, and even his very name.

We know that the value of communist ideals has to a certain degree depreciated not only in the Soviet Union but also abroad. In the eyes of many people in the capitalist world, communist ideas lost their appeal because the way in which they were implemented was far from ideal, and sometimes so awful (Stalin, Mao or Pol Pot) that it killed any thought of communism stone dead.

However, I think public feeling in the Soviet Union is somewhat different. We ourselves have firsthand experience of the horrors of Stalinism, but, unlike observers in the West, the Soviet people have also experienced many upsurges of true communist spirit over the 70 years of our history, and this has helped us to preserve our faith in the ideals of the October Revolution.

The spiritual losses of our society are indeed great. They are particularly obvious against the background of perestroika because people are giving vent to all that has been building up for years. You can hear all kinds of things nowadays: some speakers at rallies and some articles in newspapers and periodicals may even scare you for a moment. But only for a moment: you realise that a struggle is on. Personally, I am grateful to our party leadership for not panicking at the ground swell of criticism and discontent which sometimes goes so far as to negate the socialist principles of our society. Let there be a struggle, I say, but let it be open and honest. Let no one muzzle anyone or impose one's views on others. Let any debate be a clash of ideas and arguments.

We are living in difficult times—difficult yet wonderful. History has again called on communist ideas to assert themselves and prove their superiority over other ideologies. This should not be asserted with the help of political fireworks or endless dogmatic incantations, but the way Lenin taught us—by working to produce tangible results. We are still dedicated to communism, and we say that the potential of communist ideas has not been exhausted, that it has not even been tapped properly. I was delighted to read in Michael O'Riordan's article that "the communist movement remains the only political force offering a realistic alternative to the system based on exploitation."<sup>4</sup>

While striving to grasp Leninism in its unadulterated form, we are against making an icon of Lenin again. As a

human being, Lenin made mistakes, overlooked some things and could take a wrong decision. Acting in his spirit does not mean copying him in everything or searching his works for precise and exhaustive answers to all our current problems. Acting in his spirit means developing Leninism further. But to be able to develop it, we must be well-versed in its fundamentals.

Not all the changelings that have donned the skin of the revolution have been identified. Not all of them have passed away. They have acquired an excellent capacity for mimicry. They are doing their utmost to demonstrate that both outwardly and inwardly they are as communist and as Leninist as possible. But their time is passing. The sooner we purge Leninism of demagoguery and realise that perestroika is the original brainchild of Leninism, the sooner the time of the changelings will pass.

For many years we have been trying to prove the advantages of socialism with the help of political fireworks. Today, we are returning to Lenin's idea that socialism must show its mettle by practical accomplishment. Yet again, let us turn to "A Great Beginning". In it, Lenin discerns palpable proof of the subbotniks' communist nature: "And yet these starving workers, surrounded by the malicious counter-revolutionary agitation of the bourgeoisie, the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries, are organising 'communist subbotniks', working overtime *without any pay*, and achieving *an enormous increase in the productivity of labour* in spite of the fact that they are weary, tormented, and exhausted by malnutrition. Is this not supreme heroism? Is this not the beginning of a change of momentous significance?" (29, 426-427)

Later, when the struggle for a new economic policy began, some Communists were wont to maintain that their very identity as Communists made them incalculably superior to any capitalist. Lenin used a very apt phrase to describe this attitude. He called it "communist conceit". At the 11th congress of the party in 1922, he did his best once again to prove that it was pointless to juggle political slogans: "Here is something we must do now in the economic field. We must win the competition against the ordinary shop assistant, the ordinary capitalist, the merchant, who will go to the peasant without arguing about communism. Just imagine, he will not begin to argue about communism, but will argue in this way—if you want to obtain something, or carry on trade properly, or if you want to build, I will do the building at a high price; the Communists will, perhaps, build at a higher price, perhaps even ten times higher. It is this kind of agitation that is now the crux of the matter; herein lies the root of economics" (33, 275).

It is still hard for us to understand how you can avoid arguing about communism on any subject. There are still critics, unable to assess the actual worth of anything, who rush instead to check whether this or that member of a cooperative might be undermining the foundation of

socialism. Obviously it will take us a long time to cure ourselves of the excessive politicisation of life, something which even led to the outlawing of chromosomes whose only "crime" was to have been discovered by bourgeois, not communist, scientists. We did not find it absurd to argue with chromosomes about communism.

History has punished us severely for our apostasy of Leninism, for the way we spurned Lenin's advice and warnings. Now that we have learned from bitter and often tragic experience, we are turning to Lenin again, eager this time to learn from him, to listen to his wise counsel, his ideas,

behests and warnings. That, I believe, is where the hope of our perestroika lies.

<sup>1</sup> Here and throughout the article, the first figure denotes the volume of Lenin's *Collected Works* and the second, the page. A subbotnik is a day of voluntary unpaid work for the nation first staged on a Saturday, *subbota* in Russian.—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> The names are those of prominent party and government leaders who perished in Stalin's purges.

<sup>3</sup> *Oktyabr*, No.4, 1988, p.128.

<sup>4</sup> *World Marxist Review*, No.11, 1988. p. 8.

## EDITORIAL COUNCIL MEMBERS REPLY TO OUR READERS

# POLITICAL PLURALISM IN HUNGARY

Pluralism is socialist countries' talk-of-the-town now. The Soviet Union and Poland are discussing it. But in Hungary, as far as I know, it is the most acute. This is provoking a mixed reaction. I would like to receive a knowledgeable explanation of Hungarian developments.

V. Arsenyev,  
Moscow, USSR

We are now witnessing the unprecedented livening-up of social life in Hungary. The public is heatedly debating such issues as new political organisations, a multi- or a one-party system, and the drafting of a Law on Parties and a new Constitution. In a nutshell, the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party is endeavouring to replace our 40-year model of socialism with its more perfect form.

Building socialism on a qualitatively new level clearly requires revolutionary changes. These began in May 1988, when the Hungarian Party Conference voted for a radical reform of the political system. Its documents stressed that "socialist pluralism founded on the party's leading role is the premise and means for people's government".

In other words, HSWP expressed its intention to embark on firm constitutionalism as the basis for a rule-of-law state, and to define in law relations between the party, the government and the various sociopolitical movements and organisations.

Hungarian Communists know that there is no social force in the country today, not excluding the HSWP, able to attack the

problem of renewal alone. The new context posits a self-organisation of society under political pluralism, and the cooperation of all progressive, democratic forces, for the accomplishment of such change.

The marked differentiation of Hungarian society—it has various classes, sections, groups and ideological currents—underlies our party's reforms. Consequently, as regards interests this society is divided, but over the course of its development the pluralistic interests will blend and be expressed through the channels in our political system. Political pluralism is an essential precondition for the democratisation of Hungarian society.

The reader may well ask: "Which system, one- or multi-party, is Hungary going to adopt under political pluralism?"

As stressed by the Conference documents, HSWP envisages the construction of socialism within a one-party system, but has not rejected the possibility of socialist society's alternative sociopolitical development.

For example, the party believes that forums held by the Patriotic People's Front give all political movements or organisations a real opportunity to express their in-

terests. The most conspicuous of these groups are the New March Front, the Association of Young Democrats, the Hungarian Democratic Forum, and the Ferenc Münnich Society.

Hungarian Communists are ready to cooperate in a left bloc or in a coalition with alternative movements for a rejuvenated socialism. But we will never join forces with those who want capitalism back or who deny socialism's very right to exist.

It is now obvious that legal guarantees must be given to alternative movements in a one-party system. Not only will this set reference points for their further growth; it will also help them enter the improved political system on legally favourable terms. If passed, the Law on Parties, due before the National Assembly this year, will finally resolve this issue.

The last and perhaps most important point is: what will happen if one of the alternative organisations wants to become a political party? HSWP has no legal right to object. Moreover, the recent Law on Association does not exclude new parties as a basic possibility. Yet an alternative movement can only receive party status after the above Law on Parties has been passed.

HSWP certainly doesn't want to give up political power, but neither does it wish to keep it by force. It is striving to fortify its leading role by steering a firm course for renovation. Still, the Communists must be ready to accept that in the future this role will belong to the party whose policies are more conducive to socialist construction. The February, 1989 Plenum of the HSWP CC has called on the Communists to start preparing for work in a multi-party system.

Our party is aware of the historic implications of this task. Its political priorities will be maintained under the new conditions for work with the masses.

Sandor SZORCSIK,  
HSWP representative on the *WMR*



# COMMUNIST CONGRESSES

## LEFT UNITY IS OPEN TO ALL

**Humberto VARGAS CARBONELL**  
CC General Secretary, People's Vanguard Party of  
Costa Rica (PVP)

There were substantial differences between the 16th Congress of our party, held in September 1988, and the previous one which was devoted to an investigation of the split in the PVP<sup>1</sup>. That congress wanted to find ways to overcome the errors committed and to re-establish unity under new conditions. This congress, in contrast, focussed on the unity of all Left, popular and patriotic forces. We regard the strategy worked out by it as predicated on a profound scientific analysis of Costa Rican reality. The documents approved are a sequel to the prolonged evolution of our political practice and thought.

By tradition congresses are named in honour of party heroes, this one being dedicated to Jose Angel Marchena, a young member of our Central Committee who died heroically in El Salvador fighting in the ranks of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front. He has become a symbol of the international spirit of the PVP.

The 16th Congress analysed the country's socioeconomic situation. It has suffered a sharp fall in living standards and a constant rise in its external debt. Throughout the 1980's the crisis continued to deepen and there is still no sign of an end to it. Under these conditions the oligarchic and imperialist ruling bloc set about establishing a neoliberal model for "structural adjustment", based in essence on agreements with the World Bank, on letters of intention to the IMF, and on innumerable different contracts with the US Agency for International Develop-

ment (AID). Day by day the crippling conditions forced on them further restrict the opportunities for our country's independent development. The oligarchy's 1982 "economic remodelling" came as a response to the failure of the development models which the same party now in power, the National Liberation Party (PLN), applied with so much zeal. As was noted in the CC report to the congress, it involves "a model of dependent capitalism subordinated in the extreme to transnational finance capital, and hallmarked by an unprecedented centralisation and concentration of social wealth, the superexploitation of workers, the liquidation of the economy's state sector and the gradual privatisation of the public services"<sup>2</sup>.

Structural adjustment, aimed basically at the promotion of exports, has not lived up to the promises of its ideologists and the heads of imperialist-dominated financial centres. Its sole beneficiaries have been the members of small groups of oligarchs closely linked to the monopolies.

The inefficacy of adjustment measures is due not only to ad hoc factors, such as the onerous foreign debt and the flight of capital, but also to structural trends in the world capitalist economy. TNC domination in commerce, non-equivalent exchanges, growing protectionism on the US and European markets, and high technology which permits mother countries to produce low-cost substitutes for earlier-imported primary goods impede a significant flow of foreign investment to underdeveloped states and pose considerable difficulties for their export of manufactures.

The oligarchic top stratum, whose interests the PLN and the Social Christian Unity Party (PUSC) express, has refused to direct the economy. It is obediently following the antinational and antipopular plans imposed by imperialism, which, by the way, coincide entirely with its selfish ambitions.

The convergence of interests among local and foreign exploiters has led us, noted the congress, to speak of a ruling oligarchic-imperialist bloc, which must be *replaced with a government formed of a broad coalition of popular*



forces. This approach lets the party develop a more extensive, flexible and single-minded policy of alliances, and surmount opportunistic lapses, such as the concept of an "exclusively anti-imperialist struggle".

At least for our country, the struggle for political, economic and cultural liberation presupposes a direct clash with the oligarchy. Its alliance with imperialism is solid and complex and rests on a wide network of advisers, "private bodies" and "cultural exchanges" set up by Washington and so powerful that recently President Oscar Arias's aide spoke publicly of the existence of a "parallel government". This enslavement mechanism infringes on our sovereignty and dignity and, along with joint ventures, constitutes the sphere of influence of the two components of the oligarchic-imperialist bloc.

Our party had, in its post-foundation years, a minimum programme and on this basis elaborated its electoral platforms. At its 8th Congress in 1952, the PVP formulated a programme which developed—quite mechanistically—the idea of a proletariat-led democratic revolution. The 11th Congress, held in 1971, corrected these ideas and the subsequent forums perfected the concept of a democratic, anti-imperialist revolution which opens the way to socialism.

Having generalised the national experience, the 16th Congress approved a new programme. This offers a response to the crisis, and a project which seeks to improve democracy along revolutionary lines. It establishes the model of society to which we aspire. The document reads: "Popular democracy will take in all the democratic gains won by our people, place them at the working majority's service, and expand the forms of mass participation in the running of the state".<sup>3</sup>

In form and content our revolution must be a *profoundly national process, opening an original, Costa Rican way to socialism*. The best features of Costa Rican statehood, forged since independence and renovated in their content, will cease to be the preserve of a handful of the rich. Through regular elections, a broad and pluralistic coalition of political and social forces will ensure an authentic popular representation in the bodies of legislative and executive power. A new constitution will correspondingly guarantee the full observance of human rights and civil freedoms.

In elaborating this set of ideas, the PVP has been influenced by the historic evolution of its own thought, as well as by the experiences of Popular Unity in Chile and the glorious Sandinist revolution in Nicaragua. We drew on Marxism-Leninism not only as a method of analysis, but also as a *global system of conceptions* with which to ponder our reality. We must tell the people that what is best in our historical legacy will be preserved. Democracy is a reality which lies in the consciousness of each Costa Rican. Not to assimilate the conquests of democracy, anti-

militarism, and tolerance for dissidence means to leave the trumps in the bourgeoisie's hands. Moreover, to defend them is something that matches our convictions and the objective needs of Costa Rican society. The programme calls, in addition, for the observance of social justice in a truly free and sovereign country.

The congress exposed oligarchic-imperialist attempts to whitewash Costa Rica's performance on human rights, and warned that these were under constant threat from the regime. Suffice it to recall that there are political detainees in Costa Rica, that our party has spent 27 out of the last 40 years underground, and that the 1970s and 1980s' main strikes have cost labour dearly. Each time a protest mounts, the government unhesitatingly uses its well-organised repressive machinery.

The congress noted a marked decline in the popular movement from 1982. One reason for this was the imperialist counter-offensive after the Sandinist revolution's triumph, and the division of the People's Vanguard Party and influential mass organisations. The government of Luis Alberto Monge (1982-1986) exploited the situation to attack labour, as when crushing the heroic banana strike of 1984 on the plantations of the United Brands transnational. A chauvinist anti-Nicaraguan campaign was also launched by the media and government which had an impact on broad public sections. Costa Rica became a focus of counterrevolutionary military-ideological activity. A weakened popular movement could not fight back effectively, and this led to the appearance among workers of new forms of organisation dependent on masters, like the so-called "solidarity associations". Only the most advanced forces maintained the struggle.

There are today important signs of a resurgence of activity among the masses, chiefly in the villages and poor city quarters. The majority of these movements tend to protest against government submission to world financial agencies, the main cause of the problems facing the people.

A big popular gain is the Permanent Working People's Council in which all coordination-seeking labour currents meet. The National Farm Union has still greater amplitude: it provides an umbrella for a broad spectrum of organisations—from land-hungry peasants to well-off producers.

The sector most active in the fight against the government's economic policy is actually the peasantry. The plans for economic adjustment disguise an intention on the part of the government to encourage the concentration of wealth, a process that means ruin for the majority of agricultural producers. Those adjustments have led, for example, to Costa Rica importing, not exporting, rice. This makes "food sovereignty" a top priority.

The state is abandoning its part as regulator of the farm products trade; fertiliser and labour implements are being sold at monopoly prices, and bank denationalisation has

rendered credits more expensive and difficult to obtain. All this adds to the farm workers' militancy.

Only the *unity of the left and popular parties, of the trade union, peasant and student movements, and indeed of the whole people* can end the power of bipartisanism. The congress passed a resolution welcoming the steps taken in this direction, as well as the positive attitude on the part of the Party of the Costa Rican People (PPC) and the Broad Democratic Front amongst others.

The resolution says that "our party's pledge is to go on removing the obstacles to consolidation of left unity and the unification of the broad masses"<sup>4</sup>. Any sectarian, hegemony-seeking or exclusivist attitudes are inadmissible in our unitary policy, the congress stressed. *Unity must be open to all the patriots and democrats*, including the Christians and Left Social Democrats.

So we will uproot the old formalist, bureaucratic practice of forging alliances "from above", without prior consultation, without informing party members and the people. Open debate involving voters and ordinary party members is obviously important.

The importance of focussing more on the diversity of opinions in a coalition is beyond doubt. Earlier we used to say that the emphasis should be on "what unites", but this was not enough. We must pay equal attention to what dis-unites if we want to avoid the discord this may bring, frustrating a common stance. Any quest for fresh ideas helps to cement unity.

Representatives of the Left forces and democratic personalities were invited to the congress. The head of the delegation from the Party of the Costa Rican People appealed from the rostrum for speedier work to create an electoral alliance.

There have already been notable successes on the road to unity. But we do not pretend that the credit is ours alone, it belongs to all. In such a grave situation as prevails in Central America, overcoming disagreement is vital. Defending the interests of the people demands of us reason, prudence, and the abandonment of sectarian attitudes.

Our resolutions took note of the fact that a slow and difficult, but *very promising turn towards peace and disarmament* is taking place on a world scale, and that the danger of nuclear war and the aggravation of global problems help to understand more clearly the need to unite the efforts of all humanity to resolve them.

The consistent policy of the USSR and the other socialist states is playing a primary role here. By putting forward realistic proposals they make a decisive contribution to the shaping of a favourable climate for negotiations. The five meetings held between the leaders of the Soviet Union and the United States, and the important agreements reached by them, are testimony to this.

The processes of restructuring that are under way in

several socialist states, above all in the USSR, have been watched by our party with great interest and a feeling of solidarity. This experience will be of tremendous importance both for their own peoples and for the cause of socialism in the entire world. The abandonment of the dogmatic schemes for building the new society that took shape in the Stalin period, and the creative search for original ways and means to improve radically the efficacy of socialism are a guarantee of the happy future of humanity, including the Costa Rican people.

So far there is no firm basis for considering the incipient process of disarmament irreversible. The aggressive essence of imperialism has not changed. It has not abandoned its intentions to destroy socialism or to arrest the processes of national liberation. The peace forces have to intensify the struggle for the creation of a system of international security and cooperation to solve global problems. It is equally necessary to make greater efforts to end the interference of some countries in the internal affairs of others.

Despite the disapprobation shown by world opinion, Washington has been stubbornly pursuing an interventionist policy against Nicaragua. In general, most regional conflicts have their origins in United States policy, which regards the struggle for national liberation, wherever it may occur, as a threat to its interests. In that case imperialism intervenes, either directly, through allies, or using mercenaries.

The peace forces, however, have achieved successes in various negotiations, sometimes with the participation of the UN, a fact very important because it helps raise its influence and prestige.

The People's Vanguard Party has *invariably been on the side of those who are fighting for peace, democracy, independence and socialism*. We support the Sandinist revolution, which we treat as our own, and are sympathetic to the heroic insurgents of El Salvador. Our fraternal ties have also been strengthened with the peoples of Guatemala, Honduras, Panama and other Latin American states. The Costa Rican Communists are solidary and will always strengthen the bonds of friendship with heroic Cuba, the first on the continent to begin building a new society.

We support the quest for negotiated solutions to the problems of Central America, solutions which would clearly not imply any surrender of the revolutionary movements. We have welcomed the efforts of the Contadora and Support Groups on a political solution to the region's problems, and supported the Guatemalan Accords, as well as the talks in Sapoa between the leadership of Nicaragua and the armed opposition. We have also backed certain positive features in the policy of President Arias's government regarding Central America, despite our profound disagreement on most aspects of its course.

A number of innovative conceptions have recently ap-

peared in the international communist movement which have influenced our views and practical approaches to it. Possibilities have emerged for developing *more dynamic and varied relations between the Communists themselves, and also with the non-Communists*. The abandonment of dogmatic schemes breathes new life into the principle of the independence of parties. The PVP has re-established fraternal ties with the Communist Party of China, which were broken off many years ago. We have also improved our relations with the League of Communists of Yugoslavia.

We favour a broader dialogue between the Communists, and consider it worthwhile to hold an international

conference. It must, of course, provide for a free and pluralistic exchange of opinions rather than seek to adopt fundamental declarations on all contemporary problems.

<sup>1</sup> As a result of this division (late 1983=early 1984) the Party of the Costa Rican People (PPC) was formed.

<sup>2</sup> Informe del Comité Central al XVI Congreso (multicopiado). San José, 1988, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Una respuesta patriótica y popular para Costa Rica. Programa y Estatutos del Partido Vanguardia Popular*, San Jose, 1988, p.9.

<sup>4</sup> *Resolución del XVI Congreso del Partido Vanguardia Popular* (multicopiado), San José, 1988, p. 2.

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## A NEW RESPONSE TO THE CHALLENGE OF THE TIMES

Carlos BRITO

CC Political Commission member, Portuguese Communist Party (PCP)

The 12th Congress of the Portuguese Communist Party, held in Porto in December 1988, was a major landmark in the work of the nation's Communists. The congress discussed and approved three documents of great significance—a new Party Programme, a Political Resolution and amendments to the Statutes. These documents prove that the PCP is close to the masses, responds promptly to domestic and international changes, finds new answers to emerging problems and strengthens its essential characteristics.

The congress was the culmination of the extensive preparatory debate in party organisations that had been discussing the Central Committee's drafts for several months. Some 7,000 proposals were submitted in writing, and many of them were incorporated into the documents the congress considered and voted on.

Noting the diversity of the opinions expressed, Alvaro Cunhal said that "Ours is not a party which fails to see the need for a diversity of opinions and of personal views, or to appreciate the role of the individual in a large collective. At

the same time, ours is a party which realises that final assessments and final decisions are produced by the intellectual efforts of each and every one of us." He stressed that the conclusions and decisions of the 12th Congress were the result of the "work of all of us, of the whole of our party collective".

### AN ADVANCED DEMOCRACY

According to the new PCP Programme adopted at the congress, the creation of an *advanced democracy* with socialism as the prospective goal is the foremost objective of the struggle currently waged by the Portuguese people.

The 1965 Programme for an Anti-Fascist, Democratic and National Revolution, even as amended after the overthrow of the dictatorship in 1974, became outdated and was no longer adequate. The April Revolution generated far-reaching changes in the socioeconomic structures and practically throughout the social fabric. The counterrevolutionary process which began 12 years ago has destroyed or neutralised many of these transformations. But the enemies of the revolution have failed to achieve their fundamental objective—the restoration of state-monopoly capitalism in Portugal.

Since late 1987, attempts have been made to revise the Constitution of the Republic and this threatens to undermine the essential aspects of the democratic regime in Portugal. The nation's entry into the Common Market raises the question of the degree of its actual independence.

In responding to this series of new problems, Portuguese Communists proceed from two major considerations: *the values of the April Revolution abide in Portuguese society, and the Portuguese people can, by asserting their will, determination and militancy, implement a democratic*

*project* in spite of a dependence on external factors. It is emphasised in the Programme that the "values of the April Revolution have struck deep roots in Portuguese society" and that they reflect reality and the hopes for a democratic future.

As to external conditions, it is noted in the Programme that the nation's NATO membership, the strong positions of foreign imperialism in our economy, and the entry of Portugal into the EEC call its independence and national sovereignty into question. Therefore, steps are outlined in the Programme towards minimising the adverse effects and using for the benefit of the nation all the opportunities connected with incorporation into the Common Market.

An *advanced democracy* stipulates the simultaneous development of political, economic, social and cultural democracy. It calls for the attainment of six major objectives—a regime of liberty, with the people deciding their own future; a modern and efficient representative democratic state based on popular participation; the development of a modern and dynamic mixed economy serving the people and the country; a social policy to guarantee better living standards; a cultural policy assuring general access to creative pursuits and the fruits of culture; and the country's independence and sovereignty, allied to a policy of peace, friendship and cooperation with all nations.

The Programme underscores the importance of political democracy which, together with democracy in the economic and social dimensions, has its own intrinsic value, and stresses the importance of freedom, of which the Portuguese people had been deprived for almost 50 years: "The freedom of the people and of the individual is a basic and essential element of an advanced democracy". The main elements of a regime based on freedom are listed in the Programme. They are: the recognition of, and effective guarantees for, civil rights and liberties; democratic, pluralistic and responsible mass media; and democratic elections that assure a genuine expression of the people's will and their decisive participation in the choice of government officials and in the shaping of the nation's policy.

In an advanced democracy, the structure and the functions of the state should meet the interests and needs of the people in strict conformity with the democratic rule of law.

The organisation of *political power* should be based on periodic, general and direct elections by secret ballot to the higher state bodies; permanent popular participation in government; decentralised, deconcentrated, debureaucratised and open public administration; essential public services guaranteed by the state; democratic, generally accessible and prompt justice; the armed forces serving the country's independence, national sovereignty and territorial integrity; and security and public order maintained so as to respect and effectively guarantee the rights and freedoms of individuals and of all working people.

## CLEAR GUIDELINES

In relation to *economic development*, the objectives outlined in the Programme include higher living standards and a better quality of life, full employment, better satisfaction of the people's needs, as well as just and balanced distribution of the nation's wealth. Economic progress typical of an advanced democracy should be rooted in a mixed economy not dominated by the monopolies and incorporating diversified and mutually complementary sectors of property—a state sector (nationalised public industries and enterprises with government or mixed capital); a private sector (comprising enterprises of different sizes); collective/cooperative production units created within the framework of the agrarian reform; and a cooperative sector (mutual assistance cooperatives, self-governing units and agricultural and other family enterprises).

The Programme attaches great importance to the state sector as the basic element of a mixed economy. It is essential to economic development, to political control over economic power and to the protection of the national economy against foreign domination.

Implementation of the Programme will make it possible to attain material and cultural *living standards* in line with the potential created by the development of the contemporary productive forces. Citizens must be assured fundamental social rights—to employment, to social security, to health care, to education and training, to culture and sports, to housing, to a healthy and balanced environment. Women must be equal with men. Young people should be entitled to personal and occupational fulfillment; children, to harmonious development; the aged and the pensioners, to dignity; the disabled, to integration in society; and the emigres, to the protection of their essential interests.

Issues of *culture* feature prominently in an advanced democracy. A cultural policy has to promote the creative participation of our people and their organisations in different social spheres; it has to help enhance democratic values. The main demands include access for all to the benefits of culture and to cultural activities; the shaping of a progressive social consciousness; recognition of the important social function performed by those working in the field of culture and by their organisations; support for the free development of popular art forms, of artistic associations and of cultural activities; material and spiritual conditions essential to a rise in the creation, production, dissemination and enjoyment of cultural values.

The Programme is clear about the outlines of a *foreign policy of peace, friendship and cooperation* with all nations—relations with the EEC countries on the basis of mutual benefit and the defence of national interests and of national sovereignty; traditional relations with the other West European countries and the United States; privileged relations of friendship and cooperation with Angola,

Mozambique, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Brazil; relations of friendship and cooperation with the socialist and Third World countries; active solidarity with the embattled nations and full discharge of our obligations to the people of East Timor to ensure their self-determination and independence; a vigorous role in international organisations, particularly the UN; support for the establishment of a new international economic order; and vigorous efforts to contribute to detente, disarmament and to security and cooperation in Europe.

One must stress that many components of an advanced democracy contain *elements of socialism*, the PCP's objective for Portugal. The issue of Portugal's "socialist future" is examined in considerable detail in the new Programme. The elimination of capitalist exploitation, and the general and effective abolition of discrimination and social inequality are described as a historic task only a socialist revolution can accomplish. Dedicated to its ideal, the PCP regards the development of socialism and communism in Portugal as its policy goal. It has emphasised that on the eve of the 21st century, the road to socialism leads through the deepening of democracy.

Noting that the world is advancing towards socialism, the Programme touches on certain questions relating to existing socialism: "Although it is proceeding amid immense internal and external difficulties and is at times affected by the grave mistakes made at the highest government level, the new socioeconomic system has proved its superiority over capitalism and emerged as a decisive factor of the world's evolution and of the defence of peace."

The Programme reaffirms the idea, repeatedly stressed by the PCP, that there is no "universally" applicable model of socialism. At the same time, socialist construction in different countries proves that some basic common characteristics do exist.

Proceeding therefore from Portuguese realities and the Portuguese revolutionary experience, and drawing on the world's revolutionary record, the new Programme defines the salient features of the socialist society the PCP wants to build in Portugal. Naturally, in the course of its specific realisation, this process will display aspects distinctive to our country.

### **AN ANTI-MONOPOLY FRONT**

The Political Resolution of the congress takes stock of the party's work over the past five years, analyses the nation's internal and external situation and charts objectives and tasks in all fields of party work.

In assessing the domestic situation, the congress examined its major aspects—the aggravation of the counter-revolutionary process, changes in the political situation, the popular struggle to defend the gains of the April Revolution, problems related to the entry into the EEC, the ideological

struggle, prospects before the mass social movements, and the activities of mass organisations.

The counterrevolutionary process under way in Portugal has been boosted by the results of the latest elections to the legislature in which the right-wingers won a majority. The counterrevolutionaries' strategic objective is to undermine and eliminate the regime secured as a result of the April Revolution and, among other things, to revise the Constitution of the Republic. At the economic level they seek to restore state-monopoly capitalism; at the social level, to reinforce the exploitation of the workers and of all working sections and strata; and at the political level, to perpetuate the power of big capital, which is connected with foreign capital, of big landowners and of the right-wing parties which represent these interests politically.

The resolution analyses the emergence of large economic groups of capitalists linked with foreign capital and the restoration of big landed estates, the impact of this process on the economic situation (pressing problems become aggravated instead of being resolved), on the social situation (social conditions are deteriorating) and on the political situation (the offensive against democracy is growing).

Special attention is paid to the *people's struggle in defence of revolutionary gains*, emphasising the mass action which the PCP continues to view as its decisive form. This does not mean that we underestimate the importance of other forms, particularly participation in the activities of various representative institutions: a time may come (during elections or in parliament) when this will become the main avenue of our struggle.

As the congress stressed in its resolution, the failure of the counterrevolutionary process (directed by those in positions of political power) to eliminate the gains of the April Revolution and restore state-monopoly capitalism is a reflection of the strength of the working people, the democrats and the Communist Party. These subversive schemes have been frustrated thanks mostly to the vigorous and firm resistance of the popular masses.

Having examined the questions related to Portugal's entry into the EEC, the congress concluded that the party was right to fight against that entry and to explain its adverse effects and the dangers involved. Now that the situation has changed, we are working to alleviate these negative consequences. The resolution features a 25-point PCP plan for 1992, outlining the response to the challenge posed by the creation of the Community's single internal market.

The congress accorded particular attention to *broad social movements and mass organisations* and to their prominent role at the present stage. The resolution stresses that "the objective political stance of millions of Portuguese who are involved in broad social movements and mass organisations differs from the attitude which they assume



during elections and which is reflected in their party affiliation". Therefore, the struggle of the class forces manifests itself on two planes—on the one hand, in social movements and mass organisations, and on the other, within parties and during elections. The congress considered issues connected with the trade union movement; the activities of the workers' commissions; the agrarian reform movement; the peasants', cooperative, youth and women's movements; the associations of professionals and technicians; small and medium entrepreneurs; pensioners, and the disabled; community organisations; and the peace movement. The congress concluded that, in terms of their character, class composition and scope, these social movements and mass organisations objectively made up a powerful anti-monopolist social front.

The results of this analysis have a direct bearing on our policy of alliances. All working people, small and medium farmers, intellectuals, small and medium commercial and industrial businessmen, craftsmen and all the social sectors whose interests are affected by the policies of big capital, big landowners and imperialism are today allied with the working class in the struggle against the right-wingers to defend the gains of the democratic regime born on April 25 and to support an advanced democracy.

The counterrevolutionary process is clashing increasingly with the interests not only of the working class and the working people but also of the middle classes and strata. As they converge, their mobilisation in defence of their distinctive objectives is leading to a broad social alliance, and implies the creation of an anti-monopolist social front capable of decisively influencing the nation's life.

An analysis of political developments highlights the acute contradiction existing between the policies of the right-wing cabinet and the interests of the vast majority of the Portuguese, including many of those who voted for the ruling party in the latest elections. As a result, the social base of the government is contracting, and its support by the electorate is diminishing.

The congress noted the considerable lag that had developed in the establishment of political and party alliances. The difficulties in this field are seriously compounded by the capitulationist stand of the Socialist Party, which has aligned itself with the right-wingers—witness its agreement with the ruling Social Democratic Party about revising the Constitution as demanded by big capital and big landowners.

Proceeding from this analysis, the congress made clear the avenues for promoting and strengthening social alliances and for bringing together and uniting the democratic forces. It addressed an ardent appeal for dialogue and rapprochement to the Socialists and all democrats so as to attain understanding and unity, frustrate right-wing policies and implement a democratic alternative.

Portugal's Communists believe that the 12th Congress

and its documents and conclusions, particularly the proposal about transforming the nation into an advanced democracy, are important not only for the PCP but also for all left and democratic forces in Portugal, since this enables them to add to their experience and to see the prospects of their struggle more clearly.

### THE MAIN FORCE FOR DEMOCRACY

The deliberations of the congress bore out fully the role played by our party in Portuguese society. The PCP has struck deep roots in it, acting vigorously to organise the struggle of the working and popular masses, promoting their unity, helping actively to find constructive solutions to acute problems, and firmly defending the democratic regime.

No other party has fought as hard as the PCP for the convergence and unity of the democratic forces. It is a major left party, the most consistent, resolute and steadfast champion of the struggle against right-wing policies, and the chief obstacle in the path of the counterrevolutionary process. That explains the unprecedentedly vicious campaign of misinformation, lies and slander launched against our party. However, this campaign has failed to achieve the objectives set by its right-wing and reformist architects. It has been rebuffed energetically.

In a spirit of criticism and self-criticism, the congress examined in detail the *main aspects of party affairs*. It dealt with the role of the PCP in society, its political orientation, its ties with the masses, the rights of its members and factionalist activities, the methods of party leadership, personnel policy, ideological work, information and public relations, funds, and international activities.

Of great importance are the amendments to the PCP Statutes approved by the congress. They now present a more precise definition of the creative and anti-dogmatic character of Marxism-Leninism and democratic centralism. They contain more profound provisions on internal democracy based on collective principles, on the decentralisation of powers, on enhancing the rights of party members and a more exacting attitude to the reports of governing bodies. There are provisions on protecting the unity of the party and making its organisational structure more diversified and flexible.

There was firm rejection of proposals aimed at institutionalising special trends within the party and of other suggestions incompatible with the basic principles of democratic centralism, which run counter to our experience and to the tried and tested standards of the party's internal affairs.

The congress reflected the general sentiment and the strong determination, in the words of Alvaro Cunhal, "not to transform the PCP into a party divided into several parties". It remains a collective of Communists fraternally united in

the struggle for common ideals and objectives, for the implementation of our programme.

The *social composition* of the congress was quite indicative. Wage and salary earners accounted for 71.2% of the total (of these, 41.9% were industrial and agricultural workers), thus confirming the PCP's character as a party of the working class and all working people. Intellectuals and technical experts were also widely represented (16%). More than 50% of the delegates were under 40 and 13.6%, under 30. The congress noted the insufficient representation of women—only 18% of the delegates, although their overall membership share is 22.9%.

The congress helped reinforce the PCP's essential features as a vanguard, Marxist-Leninist, patriotic and internationalist party of the working class and all working people, a party of profound internal democracy.

### **INTERNATIONALIST SPIRIT**

The international situation and issues involved in the effort to promote peace and enhance the national liberation struggle were an important item on the agenda of the congress. These questions were reflected in the main documents adopted there and in the presence of 73 foreign delegations.

The Portuguese Communists noted that the peace-loving policy of the socialist countries and the innovative initiatives of the Soviet Union, inseparable from *perestroika*, were essential to the changes for the better in the international situation. These factors are closely linked with the national liberation struggle, with the broad social movements and with the universal commitment to peace.

The congress heard some 40 statements by heads of foreign delegations, listening with great interest to what they said about the issues of socialist construction, *perestroika* and various processes under way in the socialist countries. There, the situation is being assessed objectively, earlier precepts are being largely revised, and lags, grave mistakes, shortcomings and authoritarian and bureaucratic

distortions are being brought to light and criticised. Portugal's Communists see this as proof that, on the one hand, the creation of socialist society is a more complex and more protracted process than previously envisaged and, on the other, that the historical gains of socialism are enormous and so is its potential for social change.

There was an enthusiastic response and expressions of solidarity whenever mention was made of the struggle waged by the peoples of Angola, Mozambique, East Timor, Palestine, South Africa, Chile and all those confronting imperialist aggression, fascist oppression and apartheid.

The Political Resolution includes an assessment of the situation in the *international communist movement*. Our party wants its unity to grow stronger and favours greater dynamism in its various initiatives, cooperation and joint action. The PCP believes it is time the communist parties developed relevant forms of coordination for their international activities.

This does not mean that we underrate the importance of a dialogue with the Socialists, Social Democrats and other democratic forces. We hold that, today, cooperation and joint action with them are an imperative. Our congress was a powerful manifestation of the internationalist spirit and revolutionary solidarity of the Portuguese Communists and their friends throughout the world.

The congress formed a Central Committee with newly elected members accounting for 27% of its membership. At its first session the Central Committee re-elected Alvaro Cunhal as the party's General Secretary. It also elected its executive bodies—a Political Commission, a Central Committee Secretariat and a Central Commission for Control and Cadres (a new entity envisaged in the amendments to the Statutes). The Political Commission elected its Executive.

The new composition of the Central Committee and of the executive bodies, particularly the Political Commission, reflects a rejuvenation of the party's central leadership and an expansion of the number of comrades serving on it.

## HEALING THE RIFT

**Ignacio GALLEGO**

member of the CC Political Commission, Communist Party of Spain (PCE)

**Francisco PALERO**

member of the Political Commission and Secretariat of the PCE CC

**As reported in the WMR March issue, Spanish Communists' Madrid congress of unity decided on January 14 to merge the Communist Party of Spain and a group led by Ignacio Gallego from the PCPE or Communist Party of the Peoples of Spain, whose chairman he was. The party's historical name has been preserved. We offer below an interview on the causes of the split and on how it was overcome.**

> *In order for the reader to better understand the Communist Party of Spain's road to recovery, could you give us your diagnosis of the affliction which struck it in the late 1970s and early 1980s.*

*Ignacio Gallego.* The split was only able to widen and deepen within the party because the party itself had already been enfeebled by Communist infighting on many important issues, both domestic and international. The controversy arose after the 9th PCE Congress (1978) and continued for several years. We argued endlessly with one another and got so carried away that we failed to notice as the party began to lose its influence. The fact that we received 1 million fewer votes during the 1982 general election came as a shock. Everyone began to wonder just what was going on. Explanations varied. I for one thought the root of the problem lay in our neglect of the principles of Marxism-Leninism and a party policy identifiable with Eurocommunism, and I said so publicly. But it was not simply a question of terminology.

None of us, myself included, can boast of having chosen the best solution. But emotions often prevailed, disagreements became less ideological and more personal. I had to decide whether to leave or remain with the party. I was eventually stung into action by the expulsion of many leaders and members in Catalonia and elsewhere. The split had begun.

Another major factor was that I had come out decisively against Santiago Carrillo's group's policies towards the Soviet Union and some other socialist countries. Their ac-

cusations were made in such an unacceptable form that the critics appeared utterly bereft of common sense, even though some of what they said had an element of truth. Many people were indeed concerned about the negative phenomena apparent in the socialist countries, but I have to admit that I viewed this critique of the imperfections in socialist development as support for the class enemy, and as a betrayal of our old ties with the USSR. I was so outspoken in my condemnation of this line that I think I will be known as "pro-Soviet" for life. Yet I was and remain simply a Communist with neither "pro-Soviet", nor "anti-Soviet" tendencies.

In retrospect, it sometimes appears that we in the PCE did not use all the means at our disposal, including discussion, to find a way out of the crisis. However, as later events have shown, the controversy did not end with our withdrawal, and soon another big group left with Carrillo. I would define the whole process as a crisis—within the party and peculiar to it—which was caused, above all, by a lack of proper polemics.

*Francisco Palero.* The split was not wholly unexpected. A process of stratification had begun in 1977. Communists started to leave, dissatisfied with the abnormal situation in the party. The problem was that methods were used at that time which allowed of no debate and which ignored the principles of democratic centralism. What's more, they encouraged the worst kind of bureaucratic centralism. In practice this meant that any disagreement with the leading group's views automatically led to expulsion. This kind of thing inevitably weakened the PCE and prompted the formation of another communist organisation. Later we analysed these methods, and noted their negative aspects: the legitimatised diktat "from above", isolation from the masses and the party's theoretical weakness.

The crisis was further aggravated by international factors, in particular the situation within the communist movement. Comrade Gallego is right in saying that our critique of the socialist states then was often too acerbic and categorical, and usually incorrect. But then such intolerance was in varying degrees characteristic of much of the international communist movement. There was an implicit preference for a certain socialist model: dissenters were anathematised and whole parties "excommunicated".

Recently I came across a document adopted by the PCE CC in June 1977 on the initiative of the so-called "Moscow Spaniards", a group which, incidentally, included Dolores Ibarruri and Gallego. In response to remarks made by *New Times* and circulated by TASS,<sup>1</sup> the document protested against the meddling by the CPSU in our party's affairs, and upheld its right to its own vision of a democratic socialist road for Spain. Imagine our joy when years later Mikhail Gorbachov said on his visit to Yugoslavia that there was no single standard socialist model and that each party must act on the basis of national specifics.

We shall someday examine more thoroughly the cir-

We continue our series on the reasons behind and remedies for national-level splits in the communist movement. See *WMR*, No. 2, 1989.

cumstances surrounding the split and all the reasons for the diminished influence and reduced ranks of the PCE. But the overriding concern at present is to establish a firm awareness of something I believe we should never have forgotten—that for all our differences on specific issues, we Spanish Communists can all remain in one party and act together.

> *What effect did a divided Spanish communist movement have on the situation in the country, labour struggles, and the social influence of the Communists?*

I. G. The consequences were dire indeed. To be sure, it was tempting to blame the workers for all the bad things, or shift some of the responsibility onto the Socialist Party. But the fact remains that because of the split in the PCE many progressives, together with the millions of Spaniards who longed for major social change and democratic reforms, not only lost their trust in us, but were also left without a real left alternative.

F. P. The division had a very adverse effect on working people and on Spanish society as a whole. It enabled the Gonzalez government to pursue an otherwise inconceivable rightist policy.

And what happened to the PCE's influence? The party was the main organised force of opposition in the closing period of Franco's dictatorship and received almost 2 million votes and 23 deputies' mandates in the 1979 parliamentary elections. However, at the next election 3 years later it suffered a heavy defeat, retaining only 4 seats in parliament. Over the last 4 or 5 years we have probably wasted about 90% of our energy on futile discussions and confrontations, creating an ideal nutrient medium for right-wing policies and for people who foresaw the imminent demise of our movement in Spain. Looking at it objectively, we really were on the edge of the abyss and the Right were free to do whatever they wished.

I. G. I would add that for many people the split delayed or even halted their rapprochement with the Communists. The atmosphere in the party being what it was they refused to join and sat on the fence. In Spain they went instead to the Workers' Commissions or other organisations where the Communists were noticeably active. In addition many PCE members failed to fulfil their duties properly and just waited for things to clear up.

F. P. Let me illustrate this by giving you an example of how things are now changing for the better. In the drive for unity at Madrid University we doubled our ranks by recruiting those who felt themselves Communists but saw the division as an obstacle to PCE membership.

> *In the end the wish to restore unity overwhelmed the centrifugal tendencies. What difficulties were there on the path to unity and how were they overcome?*

I. G. Any disunity among Communists inevitably tends to perpetuate itself. When old ties and friendships are broken, new habits develop and arguments are used to try and justify the split. Everyone is consumed with hostility

and suspicion, wanting to see the "foe" even where there is none. Naturally this does nothing to further unity. In one way or another we all expressed a desire for unity in our policy statements, but everyone understood it differently, each expecting to "swallow" the hostile grouping, reinforce his "fortress" and become stronger than the other.

The consequences of the split were not, at least as I perceive it, all bad. For a while it also gave us some satisfaction because we knew we now had like-minded comrades around us. But we still cared for the party's destiny. It was no mere accident that right at the start, when the demarcation lines were being drawn, we called for a congress of unity and spoke of reviving the party on a Marxist-Leninist basis. Even so, confrontation continued until the moment finally arrived for positions to converge on a political issue, by which I mean the establishment of a United Left coalition when both parties began to campaign together.<sup>2</sup> We fought elections jointly and came to know each other better in this new climate, developing an ever greater awareness of both the potential and the need for unity. The people's influence was also being felt. While the split persisted in the PCE the labour movement was evolving the stronger unity which working people required and this in turn helped us all tremendously. It is no exaggeration to say that the goal of immediate unity was put forward by the working class, by labour as a whole, and by the popular movement.

F. P. I would also emphasise that the unitary tendency reflected not only the will of unity-seeking Communists, but also the exigencies of Spanish reality. The masses urged us to unite in a society with strong progressive traditions and a promising left potential.

There were two different ways to end the split. One lay in reaching agreement at the top through a sharing of posts in the governing bodies. The other involved far greater hurdles. It called for an effort towards real unity at every level and in all fields. We chose the second path. The desire for unity began to be expressed in joint trade union activity, in addressing issues of political, economic and social theory, and through United Left cooperation in the elections to the Cortes, the municipalities and the Europarlament. Daily contact and constant practice led to the unanimous conclusion that organisational unity was possible.

> *It is known that the so-called "document of unity", adopted at the January congress, has become the ideological and political platform of the unitary process. What do you think is the basic significance of this document?*

F. P. It's the product and synthesis of intense work by both parties' representatives over three years. After a very wide discussion following its submission by the drafting committee the PCE CC approved it with only one vote "against". We've not had such results from the Central Committee in recent years. This shows that the document mirrors nearly all our conceptions and concrete ideas. There must have been Communists who did not agree on

specific points, but to hope for unanimity sometimes means to want the impossible.

The most important thing is, I believe, the creativity shown by this charter of unity, reflecting as it does the Communists' thoughts about modern Spanish society, the working class and, to a lesser extent, about ourselves. The party is not an end in itself, but a means to social transformation. The document reaffirms that we are Communists, and therefore act as heirs to the theoretical ideas of Marx, Engels, Lenin and other revolutionary thinkers. The Communist Party should not forsake its traditions or historical roots. On the contrary, it must retain its distinctiveness, creatively absorbing all that's best in the experience of the international communist movement. At the same time we would like to stress our intimate links with perestroika in the USSR and the reform in several other socialist countries; to dissect the new trends in capitalist Europe; and to urge a policy of alliances to enable Communists, specifically the PCE, to break out of the "ghetto" and advance a state and public alternative which they could then devote themselves to by becoming a government force.

We shall obviously continue to engage in heated debates and clashes of opinion in the future; these will no longer involve any discord between the pre-January 14 blocks of PCPE and PCE followers, but simply divergent positions taken by various members of a *single communist party*. Only life and theoretical debate will show us where to seek the truth.

I. G. I would especially like to note the constructive spirit of the discussions in which this document originated. The most poignant issues for Spanish Communists, such as Marxism, Leninism and the October Revolution, were examined with unprecedented rigorousness. Not that long ago, each looked on his own case as perfect, and his words as an absolute truth. Now the debate is truly amicable, no longer a quarrel but a *joint quest for rational lines of policy* on specific issues.

Let me also note that, in addition to the main document, many others were endorsed—in the localities, provinces, and regions. The organisations at virtually all levels developed their unity platforms, and I can safely say that most of the Communists saw the congress-approved document as having resulted from their own thoughts and debates.

> *According to you, the international factor—the unfavourable situation in the communist movement at the beginning of the 1980s—left its own mark on the evolution of the crisis in the PCE. But much has changed for the better since. Has this affected the unitary process?*

I. G. The clashes which occurred in the international communist movement really did affect the situation in the PCE, even if they were not the root cause of our division. But the character of the external factor's influence began to change noticeably with the start of perestroika in the USSR.

Bold reforms and important world initiatives undertaken by the CPSU and other ruling fraternal parties helped us to take heart at a time when Spain's Communists had all but split into "pro-Soviet" and "anti-Soviet" factions (although we never used those labels ourselves). We had waited a long time for this opportunity and, in the best traditions of the Spanish people, feelings of sympathy towards socialism were forcefully revived. Of course, this created more favourable conditions for links between the PCE and the PCPE and did a great deal to resolve international-policy differences. In short, we have felt the positive effect of what is called perestroika.

This does not mean, though, that the problems have been solved or that new ones have not arisen. Spaniards were once inclined to regard the Soviet Union as an undemocratic country. I hotly denied this, claiming that the Soviet system was the most democratic in the world. Now we see that democracy there was not full enough, since they currently need so much effort to expand it.

Here, in Spain, the realisation of our ideas will receive a boost as long as the socialist states not only strengthen political factors, but also raise people's living standards. Our great hope is that perestroika, as it reaches its objectives, will also make radical changes in this sphere.

F. P. Briefly, the new climate in the world communist movement strengthens the *independence of each party*, which in turn helps us find the best ways to solve Spanish problems. It also promotes more active *cooperation* among the communist parties. In conditions of tolerance and good relations we will be able to work out a scheme for the most effective interaction and joint work.

> *The unity congress already belongs to history. Was it a destination or a starting point for the PCE? What about the future of the unitary process, since many Communists remain outside the party with Carrillo or continue to act under the banner of the PCPE?*

I. G. One can view this congress as both a destination and a starting point. A destination because it marks the end of a very important stage in restoring our unity; a starting point because we're now into a qualitatively new phase and we don't need to hold such party forums any more.

The post-congress situation cannot be termed perfect or absolute unity. Some groups of Communists remain outside the PCE, even small organisations which feel that the conditions for unification are not yet ripe. But we shall go on working to ensure that all those who have stayed in the PCPE or who have backed Carrillo may join us should they wish to do so. To assert now that there's no environment for communist unity in Spain means to show an obvious political myopia.

F. P. I wouldn't characterise the congress as either a destination or a starting point. A geometrical definition is more relevant: the highest point of a parabola. The process began some time ago, culminated in the decision taken on January 14, but is now rolling on. I must definitely say there



can be no other congress of unity. Otherwise the Spanish people will no longer take us seriously.

After the congress the party's doors are open to Communists who are still outside the PCE. In it each can find his place depending on his abilities, experience and knowledge and I'm confident they will join us sooner or later. There's room for all in the party, even for Carrillo if he wants. But on joining the party one should remember that the party will follow the strategies set by the congress.

We also reckon that, internationally, the congress has put an end to a situation we endured for years, namely the

simultaneous recognition of several communist parties in Spain. We believe things have now returned to normal here, and we hope that all the parties in the world communist movement will act with regard for the changed conditions.

<sup>1</sup> Reference to the *New Times* magazine's reaction to the publication of Santiago Carrillo's book *Eurocommunism and the State*.—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> Before the 1989 unity congress the coalition included PCE, PCPE, the Socialist Action Party and the Republican Left.—Ed.

\*\*\*\*\* In Brief

**BRAZIL** A plenary meeting of the Brazilian Communist Party's Central Committee discussed preparations for the next presidential elections due in November. The Party's electoral programme is aimed at promoting democratic change, protecting the working people's vital interests, dealing with the economic difficulties and strengthening national sovereignty. Roberto Freire, BCP deputy chairman and head of the party group in parliament, was nominated to run for president.

The plenum decided to call the next BCP Congress, the 9th, in the first half of 1990.

**CHINA** China will speed up its political reform programme through better CPC-led multiparty cooperation and consultations, CPC CC General Secretary Zhao Ziyang announced. Cooperation and consultations between political parties had proved effective. But, he said, it was necessary to formalise the involvement by various democratic parties in running the country's political affairs.

**COSTA RICA** Costa Rica's newly-formed open Patriotic Front, comprising the Popular Vanguard Party, the Party of the Costa-Rican People, the

Broad Democratic Front, and many prominent politicians, leaders of mass organisations and professionals, will participate in the forthcoming general elections.

**GDR** Statistics available for January 1, 1989, indicate that the Socialist Unity Party of Germany has almost 2,261,000 members and over 64,000 are on the waiting list to join. Since the 11th Congress (1986) membership has grown by approximately 21,000. There are more than 59,000 grassroots organisations, with close to 58% of the Communists being industrial workers, less than 5% cooperative farmers (the GDR has the Democratic Farmers' Party), and over 22% professionals. Over 53% attended various party schools. More than 17% are university-trained and more than 23% have had vocational training.

**GREECE** Establishing Radio Left in Athens has been a major success for the Greek left forces, including the Communist Party of Greece (KKE), in their drive to oppose the monopolisation of the mass media. KKE CC General Secretary Harilaos Florakis said that as a mouthpiece for the left forces, the station would help towards their greater cohesion and

speaking on behalf of the people, articulating their hopes and interests.

**POLAND** The Polish United Workers' Party is in the process of overhauling its entire apparatus both locally and in the centre. It is phasing out its voivodship committee departments, while setting up commissions on specific matters in a bid to give more say to the elected party bodies. The Central Committee is being broken up into 15 commissions headed by full or alternate Politbureau members, or by CC secretaries, with the CC staff likely to be cut by 45%.

**SPAIN** A national conference of the Communist Party of Spain (PCE), attended by the United Left Coalition and EC communist parties, has endorsed a PCE programme with respect to the EC, which gives prominence to the protection of working people's social and economic interests, civic and political rights, as well as to the promotion of peace and disarmament. The conference suggested creating a European forum to discuss East-West cooperation and the gradual elimination of nuclear weapons in Europe, accompanied by cuts in armed forces and conventional armaments.

## GRASSROOTS EXPERIENCE

# TRADITION IS NOT ENOUGH

Juan TUTUY

Central Committee member, Peruvian Communist Party (PCP)

**"Are Factories Alone Our Strongholds?" was the theme of an international symposium sponsored by WMR in the FRG.<sup>1</sup> Its participants noted that WMR should provide wider coverage on a more regular basis of the grassroots experience accumulated by fraternal parties in non-socialist countries—on the shop floor, in the community, and mass democratic movements. Similar recommendations have been made by our readers. We are therefore launching a series of articles entitled "Grassroots Experience".**

It is obviously useful to exchange grassroots experience. The ultimate objective of the Peruvian Communists' political activities is to take power. They should therefore work daily to expand their influence. In order to be an effective force instead of an abstract "entity expressing working-class interests", the party should be aware of everything that occurs among the people. Just as the overall state of the human organism affects its different organs, so social practice influences the structure of an organisation, educating and enriching all its members.

Our party operates within the complex and heterogeneous structure of Peruvian society, which belongs to the system of dependent capitalism with its typically uneven and lop-sided development. The existing classes and strata and their dissimilar concepts, lifestyles, cultural traditions, aspirations and interests, naturally affect the social composition and the internal activities of the PCP, positively influencing some aspects and adversely, others.

As noted by Marx, the stratification of classes does not appear in its pure form. It always implies that "middle and intermediate strata ... obliterate lines of demarcation everywhere". This stratification is the "infinite fragmentation of interest and rank into which the division of social labour splits labourers as well as capitalists and landlords".<sup>2</sup>

The complexity of the socioeconomic structure not only influences the party's composition but also calls for diversity in the organisational forms of its struggle—mothers' clubs, "glass of milk" committees (these work to secure dairy products for children, pregnant women and old

people), peasant patrol groups, Christian communities, the defence fronts created in big cities to uphold local demands alongside national slogans, and youth organisations (particularly student associations). There is also the steadily growing influence of the Unified Left (IU) coalition which has a ramified structure comprising hundreds of local branches.

Decentralisation is an acute issue in the nation and in the party. Peru's lop-sided capitalist development has concentrated two-thirds of our industry and much of the population in the capital. The PCP, too, was forced to shift most of its activities to Lima. This creates difficulties for the provincial committees and infringes on the autonomy of the party's local organisations. Frequently, *the absence of day-to-day contacts with the centre interferes with grassroots organisations' exercise of their statutory right to take part in the development of party policy* in addition to publicising and defending it. We are also thinking about ways of *decentralising our organisational structures and making them more democratic.*

The best way to see life and its problems is from the grassroots level. It is within grassroots organisations that Communists win people's hearts and minds.

Traditionally, the PCP's grassroots organisations are organised along territorial and industrial lines. There was a time when their emergence was affected by different class factors and when the main aspects of their work were not clearly defined. Today, their structure is determined by where and among whom the party members work. Grassroots organisations are set up where working people are particularly numerous—among industrial workers, government employees, teachers, professionals, in neighbourhoods, etc.

A party organisation is usually led by a secretariat of three. At the district level there are commissions that coordinate the activities of organisations with a similar social composition. Meetings of activists or party meetings are held to discuss specific tasks (strikes, protests and community meetings), to examine local problems and to draw up plans of action.

Active among the working class, the urban middle strata, marginal groups, women and youth, we in our grassroots organisations seek to devise for every social category a specific programme of work based on its distinctive demands and to have these demands met within the mainstream of overall party policy.

We are following Lenin's advice and working among the masses, using our party meetings to reach them. Non-Communists are invited and questions are discussed that directly affect their interests. We distribute printed items which deal with the activities of our party and of Communists in other countries, and which highlight the more pressing problems of Peru and of the region. At such meetings, a representative of a higher-level committee often tells Communists and the invited non-members about the

decisions of the party's governing bodies, and the overall political situation in the nation.

The rapidly changing situation in social and other spheres prompts us to adjust and alter our policy and the tactics of our struggle. Since they are closest to the masses and to all current developments, it is only the grassroots organisations that can help the party's governing bodies devise the right mode of action. Their experience makes it possible to *achieve the best forms of contact with mass movements and organisations, including the establishment of party organisations within them.*

Let me cite the experience we Communists accumulated in the city of Huancayo, where I served as mayor for several years. Once a godforsaken Indian village in the Central Andes, it is now a major commercial and industrial centre with a population of 400,000. There are many textile factories and banks there. Huancayo is facing the same problems as those plaguing other Peruvian cities—overpopulation due to migration from rural areas, unemployment, difficulties with drinking water and electric power, and inadequate public transport.

The Peruvian Communist Party has a regional committee in Huancayo to which some 25 local committees report. Ten of them are active in urban neighbourhoods and the rest in the mass movements. Each local committee coordinates the work of 3 to 5 grassroots organisations.

One of these, named in honour of Lenin, unites 14 employees of different banks. Most of them are secondary school graduates, while some have received a higher education. Aged 20 to 40, practically all of them have done mass political work, and they have been assigned permanent party tasks.

These Communists are doing a great deal to overcome the persisting attitudes of economism and paternalism displayed by the leadership of the trade union. Working within it, our party members seek to make it more militant, hold debates to convince and persuade people, and try to be tolerant and flexible.

The combination of trade union and party work is a salient feature of this grassroots organisation, which is based on industrial principles. In pursuing the party's general policy, its members accord priority to the defence of workers' rights. It is therefore particularly important for this organisation to overcome the "craft union" approach and to deal with the general concerns of the city and the province by maintaining constant contact and staging joint action with mass workers' organisations in neighbourhoods and with the traditional and new social movements.

Thanks to their firm orientation on work among the masses, many PCP grassroots organisations, and the party as a whole, have emerged as the leading force of the popular struggle—not because this vanguard role is proclaimed in our theory or the party's statute but as a result of day-to-day practical work. But a leading role is not something you are granted for life: it must be reasserted again and again. Past

achievements do not count, and tradition is not enough. Success depends on the tireless everyday work, and the methods used must be honest. Incidentally, this is a PCP quality which particularly appeals to people.

Our party has to combat sectarianism, hegemonism and Bonapartism within its own ranks. The PCP's political allies are equally, if not more, vulnerable to these dangers. We Communists have had to display a lot of flexibility in our relations with our allies. One can say that the *practice of mutual excommunication current during the 1960s is now a thing of the past. The left forces are mutually tolerant, and they are overcoming their differences and deep-rooted prejudices.* That was why we were able to create a powerful Unified Left coalition, one of the biggest and most influential Marxist-Leninist political alliances in Latin America. PCP grassroots organisations are working successfully within provincial IU branches.

The first national congress of the Unified Left was held from January 19 to 23, 1989. It was attended by some 3,500 delegates representing the local branches of the alliance and its 7 political parties, including the PCP. The congress approved Unified Left charter, programme and political guidelines, which had previously been discussed extensively at the grassroots level and then at conferences in the provinces and departments. The governing bodies of the coalition were formed, and Jorge del Prado, General Secretary of the PCP Central Committee, was unanimously elected Chairman of the IU National Executive.

*Municipal and community bodies* are among the more important and promising spheres of communist activities. From my own experience I can say that we do not seek to make them subordinate to our party's interests: within them, we cooperate with parties of a social democratic orientation and even with right-wing organisations.

Work within local government bodies helps the PCP dispel myths about the allegedly negative attitude of Communists to religion and to small-scale private property. On the other hand, it helps our comrades to get rid of rigid and sectarian thought patterns and train capable political activists and real leaders of the masses.

In Huancayo we tried to put an end to bureaucratic methods and to bring our work closer to the demands and needs of the people. We also sought to reduce the dependence of local bodies on the central government and to be free in tackling the city's pressing problems. With this end in view we turned to the Front for the Defence of the People's Interests, an umbrella association of the city's mass organisations. All political parties, including the PCP, which has set up organisations of its own within the municipal council, are represented on the governing bodies of the Front.

I believe we withstood this trial, continuing to uphold the masses' specific demands and interests. As a result, we succeeded in creating party organisations where they had never existed before—for example, among those without

permanent jobs. Others who joined the PCP included those who, side by side with Communists, did volunteer work to promote community projects, build housing, roads and bridges and take part in "Red-Letter Saturdays".

Municipal activities have also turned the spotlight on our weaknesses and shortcomings—the tenacity of sectarianism, the shortage of well-trained cadres, and the weak links existing between the Communists elected to local government bodies and those building the party. On the whole, however, we can assess the results positively: a new impetus was given to greater mass activity in the social sphere, and the party's grassroots organisations have become more vigorous.

Terrorism, the militarisation of society and the reactionaries' efforts to erode the democratic gains of the people and suppress the political activity of mass organisations are major problems which are adversely affecting the development of our party. The PCP, IU and the CGPT are under attack both from the pro-Pentagon top brass and the Sendero Luminoso group patterned after Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the imposition of martial law, attempts continue in Huancayo to blow up the building of the PCP regional committee and assassinate its members. Leaders of party organisations are threatened with violence. Jorge del Prado was attacked twice by the police and by Sendero Luminoso activists, in March 1984 and in January 1988.

How do our party organisations cope with this challenge? Naturally, many argue that we should emphasise security. It has been suggested that Communists work in the open but the structure of the party be clandestine. The party and the organisations in which Communists are represented have adopted the slogan of popular self-defence—a justified and credible objective. We will continue to uphold the freedoms we have won and to strengthen mass movements in response to enemy provocations.

<sup>1</sup> See WMR, No. 1, 1989. — Ed.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Marx, *Capital*, Moscow, 1962, Vol. III, pp. 862-863.

<sup>3</sup> For more details, see: Juan Tutuy, "Violence Continues in Peru", WMR, No. 2, 1989. — Ed.

From the Press \* \* \* \* \*

# BORN OF GLASNOST

Publication of CC CPSU News Resumed

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) has launched a new periodical—CC CPSU News. It says on the cover that the News was published in 1919-1929 and that its publication was resumed in 1989. The periodical owes its rebirth to perestroika and to the revival of Leninist standards of democracy and glasnost in party affairs.

The first issue, welcomed by the public with interest, carried a message to the readers from Mikhail Gorbachov. "Resuming the publication of its journal," he said, "the Central Committee strives to strengthen the ties existing between the party leadership and millions of rank-and-file party members and all working people, who are the main driving force of perestroika. These ties were

seriously damaged in previous years when the administrative command system took its decisions behind closed doors... I believe that CC CPSU News is called upon to help party organisations, Communists and non-members assess, on the basis of accurate information and authentic documents, the great amount of complex and difficult work performed by the party's higher bodies in directing the policy of perestroika. But the most important aim of the journal is, we think, to actively shape public opinion, help working people participate more vigorously in formulating and carrying out party policy and commit the efforts of the working class, farmers and intellectuals to the lofty cause of perestroika."

"At the CPSU Central Committee" is the most representative section of the News, featuring resolutions and other documents dealing with the way the party is restructuring its activities, its apparatus and its style and methods of work. The journal has started publishing biographical notes about CPSU leaders. The resolutions reproduced in the News

are accompanied by various CC departments' analytical annotations, as well as by other documents.

"The CC CPSU Mailbag" section features prominently in the journal. Last year, the Central Committee received more than one million letters from people offering suggestions, criticisms, advice and views on virtually all aspects of party policy. A review of this correspondence has already been published (it was submitted to the delegates of the 19th National Party Conference), as have several important letters studied by Central Committee secretaries.

"From the Party Archives" is another prominent section which will appear regularly. The first issues reproduced newly-discovered papers written by Lenin, a chronicle of events and of the Central Committee's work during the revolutionary days of 1917, letters from prominent writers, scientists, and public figures to party leaders in different years, as well as other items.

A special section is devoted to the CPSU's international ties.

Marxism and Religion

## THE COMMUNISTS AND BUDDHISTS IN KAMPUCHEA

Nguorn TEP

Director, Ponleu Raksmei (Light of Revolution)  
Publishing House of the CC of the People's Revolutionary Party of Kampuchea (PRPK)

**Practice shows that a Marxist-Leninist party coming to power cannot disregard the church, which is a real sociopolitical force. The success of the Communists' policy will depend in large measure on how they shape their relations with believers. The interview below deals with this factor in Kampuchea.**

> *Will you outline the situation in which the People's Revolutionary Party of Kampuchea is working today?*

For perhaps the first time in the past nine years, there are real opportunities to deal with the problems which the country has inherited from the past. The political situation within the country and outside it has noticeably improved since the course of national reconciliation was proclaimed. The Kampuchean people's trust in the PRPK as the leading force in the rebirth of the homeland and in defending the gains of the revolution has grown.

At the same time, admittedly, the people's power does not yet have a sufficient edge over the reactionary forces to secure ultimate victory. Also, the party has to build a firm base among the people in a country where religion is an important if not the paramount factor in everyday life.

> *What is the influence of religion on the people and how do you explain it?*

Over millennia religion was the only ideology, so to speak, to which the Khmers were exposed. All this time Buddhist monasteries and monks, the *bhikkhus*, have been moulding the Kampuchean's worldview and effectively organising his life. Their role increased, especially after the country had lost its independence in 1863. Many monasteries became strongholds of resistance to the French colonialists, centres of national self-awareness and shrines of national culture. For example, almost all the rural schools set up under colonial rule were built either by monks themselves or on their initiative. Most of the teachers in those schools were also monks. The situation

was the same in the early years of independence, when the republic lacked teachers.

One more point: over the millennia religion had become part and parcel of the Khmers' self-awareness and during the rule of the Pol Pot clique it remained at the core of their spiritual life. Marxism-Leninism, meanwhile, was introduced to Kampuchea just a few decades ago, and the Khmer Rouge, moreover, badly discredited it in the people's eyes.

After the bloodthirsty regime fell in 1979, certain difficulties inevitably arose out of all that, particularly with regard to the mistrust of the party by the bulk of peasantry.

> *What are the PRPK's positions today?*

The Pol Pot followers distorted the party doctrine beyond recognition. Moreover, they killed thousands of party members who were true Marxist-Leninists. When the country was liberated, the PRPK had just 62 members. Two and a half years later, delegates from a membership of 4,000 attended the 4th party congress. In fact, for a long time we were merely functionaries, out of touch with the provinces. Contacts are just beginning to be established. The party has yet to become a real organising and guiding force. Today we have 20,000 Communists out of a population of 8 million.

But for all that we have done a great deal in the past nine years. More than 2,000 party cells are working in individual townships and communities, and what we call "activists' groups" of more conscientious peasants and artisans are being set up in the provinces. The latter number more than 50,000 members today. It is these people, most of them young men and women under 30, who will build a new society.

> *Is there any guarantee that young people will follow the party's lead rather than embrace the Buddhist views of the ideal society?*

As I see it, the idea of social equality as it is preached by the monks will always remain nothing more than an ideal, lofty and alluring but unattainable. Essentially, Buddhism, like any other religion for that matter, is directed in large measure at perpetuating traditional social institutions and relations.

The Buddhist doctrine of universal happiness is illusory and untenable because it is contradicted by the practice of religion itself. The monks have even made the accessibility of religious and other spiritual values dependent on the social status of believers. The caste principle plays a major part in the internal organisation of the monks' community as well. But then, what is the way to universal well-being that the monks suggest? It is withdrawal from reality and self-immersion.

As for our, Marxist way to social justice and prosperity, it is difficult but realistic, involving far-reaching social, economic and cultural change within society. It is, of course, far from easy to lead the people on that road: what



we need is not just an understanding of theory but also the ability to apply it in practice, and sometimes we are not very good at that.

> *Why do you think that is so?*

First of all, the membership is not yet up to the mark.

The desire to increase the numerical strength of the party, which is quite understandable, often prevents us from being sufficiently discriminating and exacting in recruiting new members. People who are immature politically and ideologically and even downright crooks still find their way into the party.

One more drawback of ours is that a healing, sobering-up atmosphere of criticism and self-criticism has not yet been created in the party. What we have in most cases is complacency and self-indulgence. Party organisations and local government bodies in some parts of the country have surrendered the ideological initiative to the clergy and are just drifting along.

The party leadership is taking measures to do away with these negative tendencies.

> *Are any of the measures you are planning designed to turn people away from religion?*

We do not formulate our task in this way. Our party respects freedom of conscience, which is written into the Constitution of the republic. It would have been naive to work for such a goal. The materialist worldview should enter public consciousness naturally, as socioeconomic reform makes progress in society. It is a long and arduous road. Moreover, many of my countrymen continue to relate very closely national cultural development to Buddhist spiritual values.

We are not going to scare people away by forbidding them to live in the way they are accustomed to. Neither do we wish to lose touch with those monks who have already become honest allies of the people's power.

There are all sorts of monks, broad- or narrow-minded, some of whom are completely honest about their ethical mission while others just go through the motions. Their political views differ as well. But that is not the main point today. *Bhikkhus* are quite loyal to the people's power because it saved them from the regime under which Buddhism was banned and temples destroyed or converted into barracks or even jails. The Pol Pot men didn't spare clergymen either, imprisoning and killing them indiscriminately. The Khmers Rouge massacred 75,000 out of 80,000 Buddhist monks. The surviving *bhikkhus* keep reminding their parishioners of the fact. Many of them also explain to people the policy of the PRPK and the Kampuchean United Front for National Construction and Defence.

> *Do you mean to say that the monks help the party?*

Yes, and many of our party members could be called

believers. I am one of them. My party comrades and I do not perform religious rites or go to temples, of course, but we respect the traditions and culture of our people and in everyday life behave largely as we have been brought up by the family and society. What is important to the party is that we pursue its policy among the people and work vigorously to accomplish the tasks set by it.

Naturally, the PRPK Central Committee aims at fostering a truly materialistic worldview among its members. Functionaries are sent to study at the higher schools of fraternal parties, where they are trained also in political, organisational and managerial work. That task is all the more important and urgent since not just monks and party members, but also the nation's intelligentsia were exterminated under the Pol Pot regime. One of our priorities is the recreation of an intelligentsia.

> *What steps have been taken to resolve that problem?*

We have to start from scratch, that is, the organisation of elementary and secondary education. The Conference of the National Committee for the Eradication of Illiteracy and the Development of Secondary Education, held in February 1988, set the task of completely eradicating illiteracy, and of ensuring universal elementary education by the year 1990.

That goal, I think, is quite realistic, because more than 93% of our former illiterates have already learned their ABC and 14 out of the 21 municipalities have become totally literate.

As for secondary education, first it should become the norm for all the cadre workers and party and People's Revolutionary Youth League members.

> *How do the clergy help the party in this work?*

I should say they are doing what they can. To begin with, *bhikkhus*, as I've already said, are giving moral support to all our social reforms. They also readily give material aid, although their own resources are rather limited since their only source of income is the parishioners' donations. Some of those contributions, including money and food, are handed to the authorities to be shipped to the army and hospitals or distributed to the needy. *Bhikkhus* also give money to build schools and organise tuition.

We are thankful to them for the contribution they make to the normalisation of life in the country, by supporting the government's policy of national reconciliation. This does not mean, however, that contradictions don't exist between us Marxists and clergymen. We recognise those contradictions, and bear them in mind, but we don't see them as an obstacle to cooperation. This attitude explains the fundamental involvement of the Khmer *bhikkhus* in building a society of true justice, and their contribution to the progress of the nation.



Discussing Theory: Ideas and Their Record

## THE "NEW INTERNATIONALISM": A DRAMA WITH A HAPPY ENDING?

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The development of a social science is always a drama, a conflict, a plot with unexpected twists.

The development of theory is a clash of ideas, with traditional, well-established and familiar notions running into new concepts that appear out of place, upset the habitual balance and call not simply for the adjustment of this or that precept but, very often, for an overhaul of the entire system of views.

As theory develops, passions run high: the formulas of social science are not mathematical equations or chemical formulas waiting patiently to be discovered; they are patterns and slogans shaping the way people act. They reflect different and sometimes sharply conflicting social interests.

In the realm of theory, innovation always means a conflict of academic schools and political groups vying for leadership and trying to influence society. Finally, it is a conflict of personalities, some competing honestly in search of the truth and others simply seeking to defeat their rival in a no-holds-barred scuffle. It is only in old-fashioned didactic plays that the protagonists were wholly good or wholly evil. In real life, the human beings who clash over issues of theory have their own social motivation, their own academic likes and dislikes, and their pride.

We are therefore dealing with dramatic and emotionally charged conflicts. But that is as it should be. It is perfectly normal and natural for social and academic contradictions to be resolved in this way. I recall Lenin's reaction to the remarks of a participant in the Second Congress of the RSDLP who complained about an "oppressive atmosphere", "bitter infighting" and "biting controversy". "What a splendid thing our Congress is," Lenin replied. "A free and open struggle. Opinions have been stated. The shades have been revealed."<sup>1</sup> It was indeed a splendid congress which gave a powerful impetus to fruitful and constructive

reflection and encouraged everyone to work jointly on the strategy for the future.

We should not be overprotective towards innovation or shield it from criticism. It is not supposed to be a knight in shining armor, assured of victory. Besides, new ideas are not necessarily right. There have been many "innovators" who thought they made short work of Marxism—like Eugen Duhring. Frederick Engels subjected Duhring's ideas to devastating criticism and, in fact, today he is remembered only thanks to Engels' famous book with its ironic subtitle—"Herr Eugen Duhring's Revolution in Science".

New ideas must be tested unsparingly, otherwise it would be too easy to set new records of scientific knowledge. In other words, dramatic conflict in science is inevitable.

The level of civilisation attained by a large part of the human race implies, in Hegel's words, an ability to "withstand the pressure of a contradiction" and find "intelligent ways" of resolving it. The unfolding drama must follow the logic of honest and selfless thought, without twists brought about by the malignity of an iago, tragic misunderstanding or the poisoned dagger. The process of scientific knowledge should not be driven by *ungovernable* emotion. The important thing is to grasp the logic, the meaning and the laws of this process and learn to direct it in a democratic and civilised way towards scientific and social progress—towards progress of thought and being.

This is all the more important because recent decades have made it clear that many Communists do not really know how to advance theoretical research, formulate new ideas or treat them as they deserve. As a result, our theory lost its lustre and lagged behind reality. Marxism, once a turbulent and swiftly flowing stream, got increasingly bogged down in the mire of dogmatism.

We are now aware that this gap must be closed. That does not mean that we should give up the foundations of Marxism: they possess sufficient heuristic strength and flexibility for us to understand the world's new realities according to the revolutionary philosophical tradition. It is not Marxism that is at fault but our inadequate ability to develop it. That is something we can and must learn how to do. This learning will be made easier by an analysis of what has happened over the past few decades: we should examine both the positive and negative aspects of this experience, of the way new theoretical ideas arose, developed and were discussed. For example, we should trace the genesis of the ideas related to "new thinking", "national reconciliation", the "economics of peace", "antimilitarist democracy", "socialist pluralism", the "interdependent and contradictory world", the "democratic alternative", the "strategy of the Euro-Left" and the like. "Ideas and Their Record" is a new series of theoretical discussions we are launching to analyse the essence and the development of new ideas, as well as the debate over them.

The dialogue we present in this issue is the first instalment. The subject is the concept of the "new internationalism" Italian Communists advanced during the 1970s. It was a major theoretical idea. Connected with a new interpretation of important aspects of the world revolutionary process, it called for a number of substantive adjustments to be introduced into the strategy of our struggle and our policy of alliances. It competed with the principle of "proletarian internationalism", a fundamental precept of our theory.

The fate of this idea and the related experience in the field of theoretical research are the subject of the dialogue between *Antonio Rubbi*, member of the leadership of the Italian Communist Party,<sup>2</sup> and *Professor Grigory Vodolazov* (Communist Party of the Soviet Union), author of this Introduction.

## NEW FACTS VS. OLD FORMULAS

*G. Vodolazov.* Any advancement of theory begins with the birth of a new idea. The circumstances of its birth (the strength of its roots, the scope of its theoretical precepts and the validity of its scientific substantiation) largely shape its subsequent fate. Can you recall how the concept of the "new internationalism" was born? What prompted the Italian Communists to put it forward? What was the prime motive?

*A. Rubbi.* It was not something armchair theoreticians invented. It was rooted in existing contradictions. By the end of the 1960s we felt increasingly that several theoretical formulas and precepts underlying the attitudes of communist parties throughout the world were losing their erstwhile effectiveness. The Communists saw the struggle for socialism as their urgent and immediate task and

naturally oriented their work on the forces that had a direct stake in socialism—first and foremost, the working class and its closest allies, national and international working-class unity and close cooperation among communist parties. All that was reflected in the concept of "proletarian internationalism". But it was becoming increasingly clear to us that reality and the practical aspects of social struggle highlighted the flaws in a formula which only emphasised the unity of proletarian, communist forces.

Priority shifted to the preservation of peace, human survival, closing the gap between developed and underdeveloped countries, the population explosion, the spread of hunger, environmental protection etc.—away from socialism as the immediate objective. That was the thrust of "The New Internationalism", an article I wrote 12 years ago.

*G. V.* Let us stress a very important point: the clash of new facts and old theoretical formulas is what gives rise to new ideas. Another conclusion is that we should acknowledge such a contradiction clearly and unambiguously instead of glossing over it, quibbling to obscure it, or pretending that everything remains as it was and that only minor corrections are in order. Recognition is the only way to make new ideas capable of developing rapidly. To get back to our case, it was a contradiction between new facts and old ideological precepts. How was it resolved?

*A. R.* When you come across new facts that do not fit well-known theoretical patterns, you often begin by questioning the fundamentally novel nature of these facts because you are loath to part with tried and tested scientific formulas. Sometimes the new facts are not all that new, and there is no reason to abandon the existing theoretical ideas. But things can also be different, and one cannot say that we should either favour new facts or give preference to the old theory. Everything depends on the specific situation, on specific analysis. But in our case, the evidence that realities were changing was overwhelming, the theoretical lag was obvious, and we could no longer delay the adoption of new attitudes.

*G. V.* You said the awareness that the order of priorities was different changed your understanding of the forces capable of attaining these objectives and of the forms and methods of struggle.

*A. R.* The connection is organic and unavoidable. If socialism is the immediate objective, then, naturally, the working class and its closest allies are the foremost makers of change. But what if peace, survival, environmental protection, a new International economic order, etc. are the priority tasks of our struggle at the current stage? To accomplish them, we obviously need a much more diverse and broader alliance comprising, on an equal footing, the socialist countries, communist parties, the vast forces oriented on the Socialists and the Social Democrats, as well as Christian, national liberation and many other democratic and peace-loving movements.

Since the objectives and the forces are new, so are the forms of their organisation and struggle. We held that two principles were particularly important here. First, programmes for international action should not exist outside or above national programmes but in organic unity with the latter. Second, the independence and autonomy of all participating forces is essential to the effectiveness of the new international solidarity.

G. V. The idea of the "new internationalism" was to formulate major new tasks, define the new structure of the forces that were the makers of social change, and devise new methods and forms of struggle. Can we assume that this idea was born in January 1977, when your article appeared in *WMR*?

A. R. Yes and no. The birth of new theoretical ideas is not a process you can tie to any one date. The germ of this idea could be discerned at the 1969 Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties in Moscow: there, not only shades of meaning but also differences materialised as far as a new interpretation of internationalism was concerned. But the idea was more pronounced at the 1976 Conference of European Communist and Workers' Parties in Berlin: the traditional notion of "proletarian internationalism" was not mentioned in the document adopted there.

G. V. Did you believe that its absence meant general acceptance of the new attitudes?

A. R. We hoped it did. We thought that Berlin was the beginning of an effort to develop new priorities and objectives, that the point of departure had been found and recorded. Unfortunately, as soon as the participants returned home, many lapsed into the language of the old formulas. They spoke in muffled tones about new forms of international solidarity, and loudly and pointedly about international proletarian unity. That was when we decided to set forth our position in detail in *WMR*. The objective was for other comrades to present their views on the matter with greater clarity, and for us to stress the novelty of the situation once again, showing the need for new assessments and attitudes. A constructive and integrated discussion of the problem could thus begin.

G. V. I am convinced that discussion can be constructive and really fruitful only if the new ideas have been outlined as precisely as possible. But we are not always outspoken in defining the old formulas to be rejected. As Hegel once said, the truth shines so blindingly that it should be covered with a gray cloth. Lenin opposed anything that might veil the essence of any idea. It is perfectly natural, he remarked repeatedly, for some precepts of theory to become obsolete: theory must go through renewal and development. The important thing is to say what is outdated and why, and what is suggested to replace it.

A. R. I would say that in this case, we followed Lenin's recommendation. "We believe," I said in "The New Internationalism", "that the definition of Internationalism as

'proletarian' has become restrictive and does not accord with the new social reality".

G. V. Weren't you politically, or even simply psychologically wary of questioning one of the key principles the Communists were so used to?

A. R. You've got to be bold in such things, of course. But to a certain extent, our party was prepared for the emergence of the new concept because the latter had deep ideological and theoretical roots.

G. V. That is a very important point, and I would like to stress that no serious idea is born overnight, it must have time to germinate. But you were speaking about its theoretical roots.

A. R. I would begin with Palmiro Togliatti's idea of "ensuring unity in diversity" (he presented it in particular detail in his "Memorandum" of 1964). Then there were the concepts of Luigi Longo. Regrettably, his contribution is seldom recalled now, although some of the notions he put forward advanced the CPI's theoretical thought. Specifically, I would note Longo's idea that the boundaries of socialism cannot be identified with the territorial boundaries of the socialist countries, or that the need, the "demand" for socialism can arise and develop even in the minds of religious believers, or that socialism cannot be linked narrowly-mindedly and rigidly to the class interest of the proletariat alone. Finally, Enrico Berlinguer arrived at the concept of the "new internationalism". He developed it guided by our party's theoretical tradition. Nor did we forget an international slogan popular in Lenin's lifetime—"Workers and the oppressed peoples of the world, unite!" It was much broader than the slogan of only *proletarian* solidarity. We also remembered the innovative conclusions of the 7th Congress of the Comintern (1935) and its idea of international solidarity comprising a very wide range of social forces. To sum up, the idea of the "new internationalism" was a logical result of our intellectual development.

## AN ORDEAL BY THEORY AND PRACTICE

G. V. What kind of response did your article generate? What was the reaction of Communists and of those you saw as allies in the "new internationalism"—Social Democrats and progressive forces in the Third World?

A. R. Far from all communist parties responded with understanding. The article was discussed at *World Marxist Review*. My comrades and I were bitterly upset when we read the verbatim record of that meeting. Many speakers used old clichés, afraid to analyse really topical problems or to take decisions on them. Then followed articles in the press organs of several communist parties. It is still painful for me to recall the accusations: we were charged with "losing our class-based positions", "undermining the foundation" and "succumbing to revisionism".

It was not the harsh criticism that distressed us. A critical analysis of new theoretical views is natural and necessary, all the more so because there were elements of bias and inaccuracies in our presentation, as well as delays and mistakes in our practical work. What distressed us was the complete rejection of our proposals and the fact that the criticism sounded like a dressing-down. The critics did not seek to treat the matter constructively or meaningfully, to find out what our strong and weak points were, or to promote a creative theoretical quest. We were in fact urged to stand still on "infallible" positions. But if life rushes past and you stand still, your position soon ceases to be "infallible". There were also Communists who responded in a constructive way, with interest, but the negative reaction was dominant. We were also ostracised for the specific practical steps we took within the framework of our new ideas. For example, when we restored our ties with the Communist Party of China in 1980, the then leaders of the CPSU said we were "playing into the hands of imperialism". That was a strange and sad thing to hear because we were convinced that the opposite was true—that, among other things, this would help improve relations among the world's Communists.

The criticism expressed by the communist parties and other progressive forces in the developing countries was largely constructive. Our attention was drawn to the Eurocentrically restricted nature of our position. We analysed this description carefully and concluded that it was, to a considerable degree, valid. Indeed, we focussed more on East-West relations and ignored some of the problems of North-South ties, the contradiction between the rapid population growth and the inadequate material opportunities for meeting the requirements of the population in the Third World, and the growing imbalances between developed and developing nations.

After we heard this criticism, we had to work hard to gradually arrive at a document we now regard as a landmark that enriched our concept. It was the "Charter of Peace and Development", published in *l'Unita* on November 8, 1981. In it the concepts of "peace" and "development" were treated as an integral whole. We showed that resolving the North-South problem was of immense importance for surmounting the overall crisis of the contemporary world. Another novel idea the paper contained was that the "more enlightened bourgeois quarters", aware of the threat to human survival could become major allies of the international forces fighting to prevent nuclear war, preserve civilisation and solve the problem of underdevelopment. The charter evoked a highly positive response among the progressive forces in a number of countries—for example, in Argentina, Mexico and India.

G. V. What you have just said is very important for understanding the salient features of the present stage in the development of Marxist theory. "Communists must not

stew in their own juice," Lenin said.<sup>3</sup> This principle is becoming particularly significant in relation to our broad and pluralistic alliances. I think it is our duty to learn the art of finding ideas for development not only in our classics but also in the intellectual treasure houses of our allies, of using the creative impulses coming from other sections of human civilisation.

A. R. That's right. In formulating our new ideas, we tried to do away with sectarian conceit. For example, in recent years we have noted that there is a certain similarity between the ways some problems are treated by us and by several socialist and social democratic parties in Europe. I do not claim that it was we who prompted them to assume new positions. We seem to have worked in parallel and influenced each other. Much depends on cooperation between Communists and Social Democrats in the domain of theory. I fully share the idea of Vadim Medvedev, CC CPSU secretary, that "conditions are emerging for the gradual establishment of a dialogue and cooperation between Communists and Social Democrats, each of these political currents retaining its independence and distinctive identity. A theoretical analysis of reality, forecasts concerning probable avenues of development and steps to attract the attention of international public opinion to urgent problems are an important area where such joint action is quite possible and necessary."<sup>4</sup> I subscribe to every word of that.

G. V. How did the potential allies in the new democratic movements to whom your new ideas were addressed react to your article?

A. R. On the whole, Italy's democratic sections responded positively. But I must mention the striking criticism part of the Left offered. They did not criticise us for "innovation" but, on the contrary, for dragging our feet, for not advancing new ideas promptly enough. For the most part, that was meaningful criticism. It was not aimed at "discrediting" Communists, "undermining our influence" or anything of the sort. We saw it as an honest attempt to share their own experience with us, and we did draw on it—naturally, while remaining true to our own identity as Marxists and Communists and advancing a programme around which all could rally. Our objective was to help advance a broad front, not just the PCI. At first, however, our plan was not understood properly. Apparently, our failure to explain it well enough was one of the reasons. So we had to work to improve our new formulas so that those we addressed could understand them properly.

## TWELVE YEARS LATER

G.V. It has been 12 years since your article was published. Looking back, what aspects of your idea have been confirmed? Has reality enriched or specified your concept?

A.R. I would say that with regard to the fundamental meaning of our idea, the practical record has borne it out. I



hold that we rightly grasped the trends we referred to and that the need for the new internationalism is now even more obvious. But theory has advanced so much since (particularly over the past three to four years) and has developed so many new and important ideas that the concept of the "new internationalism" had to reflect the overall thrust of scientific progress.

In this connection I would like to make special mention of the concept of the interdependent world, developed primarily by the CPSU, and of the practical policies pursued by the Soviet Union on this basis. This concept is the biggest stride made by Marxist theory during the 1980s. It identifies a substantive and in-depth aspect of today's social reality. The idea of the "new internationalism" fits organically into this concept and should be enriched with conclusions based on a comprehensive understanding of today's global problems whose scope we could not previously imagine.

Take, for example, the North-South imbalances. They were not so great in the 1970s. But today this is perhaps the world's most dramatic contradiction. Helmut Schmidt, former Chancellor of the FRG, has called it a mine under the foundations of the global edifice. I think it really is such a mine. Besides, this problem has a lot of different aspects. Some have been covered widely—the debt crisis or the hunger that kills hundreds of thousands of people. But there are also many factors not yet researched theoretically in sufficient depth. For example, the problem of migration: we are still unclear about what its effects will be in the 21st century. It is an interpenetration, a merging of nations; the process will be quite intensive 20, 30 and 50 years from now, when the world population totals 6 to 8 billion. This "merging" will entail not only social but also cultural difficulties, with different languages, customs and religions, as well as different races. We should not delay a comparison of our positions and a common search for solutions to these problems.

The question of the *forces* participating in the struggle for social change also differs greatly now from what it was previously. Side by side with the traditional movements, new ones have emerged; besides, the traditional forces are acting in a new way too. National consciousness has risen explosively in all social systems and in different regions. Religious thinking is showing considerable potential. The strong influence of the Catholic faith and the spread of Islam are also factors of great social importance which must be taken into account in the contemporary theory of international cooperation involving the forces of peace and progress.

There is another important aspect of the change concerning the makers of social progress. When in the mid-1970s Enrico Berlinguer raised the "women's question" as a major issue for the first time in the history of our party and predicted that it would develop into a veritable revolution by

the end of the century, many (regrettably, myself included) refused to take it seriously and even smiled ironically to ourselves. But now we can see the great scope this problem is acquiring. It is not simply the traditional women's lib slogans about equal rights for men and women. We are discovering that the very existence of the two different sexes leads inevitably to numerous inequalities in their physical, physiological and psychological potential and in their functions related to household duties, the raising of children, etc. All this calls for an overhaul of all our social, political and spiritual attitudes, and it will emerge as a major and truly global problem very soon.

Or take today's environmentalist movement. Not too long ago, we would hardly have expected it to become a powerful and worldwide current of universal human importance. That was why the original projects of the "new internationalism" did not accord it its proper place.

G. V. Could it be that the original conceptual framework of the "new internationalism" is becoming too narrow for accommodating the substantive additional values theory has produced? Should we perhaps speak about a still "newer" internationalism?

A. R. The concept of "new political thinking", which surfaced during the 1980s and which Mikhail Gorbachov is promoting vigorously is, of course, broader than the "new internationalism". It offers an innovative view not only of today's forces of social progress but also of international relations, the interdependence of the opposite systems, and peaceful coexistence (which, as Soviet scholars justly point out today, is not a form of the class struggle on the international scene). The ideas of the "new internationalism" fit into the concept of "new thinking" and, somewhat updated, can become an integral part of the latter.

G. V. Do you regret that the passage of time limits, as it were, the scope of the "new internationalism" and projects it onto a broader plane?

A. R. No, I don't regret it, particularly because, in my opinion, the fruitfulness and the heuristic strength of this idea made it possible for our party to discern realities you could not have noticed from the previous angle. The "new internationalism" is indeed becoming "newer" as an organic element of a broader system of views.

## SOCIALISM IS A PROCESS

G. V. One sometimes hears that the idea of the "new internationalism" is important in the drive for peace and for the solution of global problems, but that it is far removed from the struggle for socialism, from revolution. It is argued that the party that adopts it asserts its role as a party of peace and humanitarian ideas but ceases to be a revolutionary party of socialism.

A. R. Yes, I've come across such views myself. I think

they are profoundly untenable for the following reason: the "new internationalism" arose, from our view, not only of the contemporary world and of its global problems but also of socialism and of the ways leading to it. The old form of internationalism was firmly linked with the idea of copying the "Soviet model" in different countries. But we are resolutely opposed to any and all models. We seek to restore the meaning of socialism as a process, a process that negates the society of exploitation and alienation. This process unfolds differently in different countries, depending on the historical juncture from which social renewal begins, on national traditions and on a nation's cultural identity.

Naturally, socialism does have its distinctive and definite qualities. In our view, these are not a sum total of "generally common features", but "universal values"—for example, democracy (broad, complete, "carried to perfection"), individual and collective rights and freedoms, the transformation of man from a means to an end of historical development, etc.

The "new internationalism" in fact represents a commitment to advance to these "universal values". There is nothing in it that could be interpreted as a wish to abandon socialism. We also remain a revolutionary party in full measure—it is just that the interpretation of this revolutionary character should differ somewhat from the way it was seen, say, in the early 20th century. Today, most Marxists recognise the struggle for human survival, against militarism, for a new international economic order, for development through disarmament and for environmental protection—the objective of the "new internationalism"—as an essentially revolutionary task. The same is true of the struggle for reform, for far-reaching structural change in the developed capitalist countries, for a "democratic shift" and a "democratic alternative".

Today, revolutionary action also includes the perestroika drive which is under way in the USSR and which is based on new thinking. Our Soviet comrades describe both the process of domestic change and their foreign policy as revolutionary, and I think the description is fully justified. Unfortunately, the strategy rooted in new political thinking and in the priority of universal human values is not accepted unanimously in the international communist and liberation movement. Some believe that it implies a renunciation of the class struggle in theoretical and practical terms. Our opinion is, of course, different. We hold that peace, detente and international cooperation in

the political and cultural fields offer the best opportunity for fighting for social progress, and eventually for socialism throughout the world.

Some people tend to assess today's realities with the help of "revolutionary" formulas developed a very long time ago, and to describe new political thinking as revisionism. But I believe we have every right to say that we are creatively developing revolutionary Marxist ideas in relation to the world situation today.

G. V. Where would you draw the dividing line between "creative development" and revisionism? After all, to develop means to work out new concepts and reappraise obsolete ones. One can easily be branded a "revisionist".

A. R. I think the term "revisionism" implies a renunciation of the need for socialism and of its potential. There are many theoreticians in the West who describe themselves as progressive but claim that the idea of socialism has proved historically untenable, that it should be abandoned and that mankind should look for different ways of progressive development. I am convinced that they are wrong. It is simply that certain forms and methods of implementing the socialist idea have not proved credible. That is why we should look for new and better ways of translating it into reality. We need profound and constructive criticism of past mistakes and failures. If in the course of such a search we question some of the previous theoretical precepts and revise many past assessments, this kind of "revision" is useful. In this highest and noble sense of the word, Lenin was a great "revisionist". I would say the same about Gorbachov, who suggests a critical reappraisal of earlier views and the development of unconventional ideas. He seeks to enlist the world's intellectual forces in the effort to examine the issues of new thinking and to test it in practice. That is his way of urging a creative development of Marxism.

G. V. To conclude, can we sum up your story about the development of the idea of the "new internationalism" as a "drama with a happy ending"?

A. R. We can, to a degree. More precisely though, it is a "drama with the ending yet to be written".

<sup>1</sup> V.I.Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 347.

<sup>2</sup> See his article "The New Internationalism" in *WMR*, No.1, 1977.

<sup>3</sup> V.I.Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 333.

<sup>4</sup> *Kommunist*, No.2, 1988, p.17 (in Russian).



### TIME OF HOPE

#### *Andimba TOIVO YA TOIVO*

Secretary General, South-West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO)

The tripartite agreements between Angola, Cuba and South Africa have given the world community the new hope that the people of Namibia will at long last attain independence, which they have fought heroically and suffered for. A standing commission to monitor compliance with the tripartite agreement on a settlement in Namibia was established in New York in late January 1989.

The Namibian people are turning over a new leaf in the history of their homeland, and much will now depend on the South African authorities.

Below, SWAPO's Secretary General shares his ideas for a future Namibia.

> *What do you think of the tripartite agreement between Angola, Cuba and South Africa?*

The 1988 agreement is a step forward in the right direction, and will bring about the independence of Namibia, if South Africa respects its commitments. All the earlier accords were thwarted by Pretoria. For example, in 1978 the UN Security Council approved Resolution 435, which was accepted by South Africa, and it was hoped that at the end of that year Namibia would be independent. Now it is ten years since UNSC 435 was adopted, but our country is not free. Then there was a 1984 accord between South Africa and Mozambique. Mozambique has fulfilled its obligations, but not the apartheid Botha regime. There was the Lusaka accord between Angola and South Africa, which the latter did not fulfil either. All these are concrete evidence that South Africa cannot be trusted.

But there are now new factors which have never existed before, such as the defeat of South African troops by the Angolan FAPLA forces, Cuban internationalists and the SWAPO forces at Kwito Kwanovale. The pressure exerted by the international community and the armed struggle waged by SWAPO's military wing, PLAN, have also played their role in forcing South Africa to enter into such an agree-

ment. And we hope that it will not play tricks this time. We are just waiting to see if by April 1 South Africa will fulfil what she has undertaken. As a human being and an individual, not as the Secretary General of SWAPO, I will be convinced of success only when I hear that the UN forces are in Namibia. I believe that we are moving in the right direction.

> *The sides have agreed to begin fulfilling Resolution 435 on April 1, 1989. Will there be free and fair elections under UN supervision in Namibia and are you ready to contest them?*

We don't know yet how elections will be organised. The Administrator General, with the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General, will be in charge of them. But we are quite prepared for the new developments and we think that when UN-supervised elections are held, SWAPO will win with 85%.

> *What is SWAPO's political concept?*

We have accepted the philosophy of Marx, Engels and Lenin, but it is not easy to implement their ideas fully. We have to go slowly, guided by the prevailing conditions at the particular time. We cannot jump to a conclusion and say that tomorrow we are going to declare the socialist system. If we do that we will just commit suicide. The political conception of our programme is that we are looking forward to having a socialist system. But as I have said, it is a long process, and a difficult one, because our economy is tied up to the capitalist system and it will take us a long time to rid ourselves of these fetters.

> *What is your programme when you have won the elections?*

Immediately after independence we will have a democratic government in Namibia, where all the Namibian people will be represented in government irrespective of the colour of their skin. I must note here that there are some minority groups who want to be treated separately and demand the so-called privileges of the minorities. What they must have forgotten is that now, when that minority is ruling, there are no provisions for the majority rights. That is why I don't see the point of such demands for minority privileges under majority rule. All the Namibian people will be equally represented in the new government on the basis of law.

As for the economic programme, our economy is very much tied to that of racist South Africa and we cannot just cut it off abruptly. We will have to work together, cooperate with South Africa, but not have our arms twisted because of this. We'll have to rely on our comrades and friends who

stand by us, and with their assistance we hope to become economically independent of South Africa.

SWAPO believes that the way to ensure economic growth and reach a certain stage of economic progress is to have a mixed economy, including public, cooperative and private ownership and mixed capital. As for those transnational corporations which have been exploiting our natural resources to the detriment of our people, they are a special matter. Some of them have come to Namibia in defiance of Decree No.1 adopted by the United Nations Council for Namibia, which stipulated that all foreign companies wishing to operate in Namibia must secure the consent of the UN Council for Namibia. But those transnationals have defied it and, together with South African corporations, are robbing us.

In independent Namibia, the SWAPO government will enter into new agreements with those companies; we will request that they train our people as a reparation for what they have done in the past. We will not make them pay but we want them to train our technicians, who will run the mines and plants afterwards. And we will also tax the corporations<sup>1</sup> as a form of reparation, and a large share of their profits will go to benefit the Namibian people. The government will take, say, 75% and the corporations 25%. If they agree, we'll go ahead, and when we reach a certain stage, we will offer new agreements, which they can accept or reject. If they reject these, only then we will say, fine, so it is better to pack up and go, because we now have our own trained people to run the mines.

In agriculture we are planning agrarian reforms to redistribute the land, because white farmers have 60% of the arable land and because almost one-half of the owners of livestock-breeding farms are foreigners. They will receive compensation.

When we are independent of the South African economy, we can follow the road mapped out by SWAPO, the road of building a socialist system. It is perhaps even a more long-term project than the struggle for political independence, but we have no doubts that with the assistance of our comrades and friends we will reach our goal.

> *And what are your social plans?*

We are concerned with uplifting workers and peasants. These are the people who have fought in the liberation struggle, and our objectives are to improve the living conditions, to have schools, hospitals, better housing, etc.

> *Who will you rely upon in pursuit of your programme? What role will the national bourgeoisie play?*

We will rely on workers and peasants, who have made

SWAPO the political leader of the nation and won for it broad international recognition. Our power stems from the people, the main treasure of Namibia, who have stood their ground against the enemies and sacrificed the lives of their sons and daughters. SWAPO will always rely on the people.

And the national bourgeoisie is welcome provided they are prepared to cooperate and to vote for us. They also are Namibian people, and they play an important role in the economy. They will go on as usual and nobody is going to bother them.

> *Judging by your programme, SWAPO takes account of the experience of newly free developing countries. What do you think of the failure of some socialist-oriented countries to achieve their stated objectives?*

It is a warning to us. As we begin to build socialism, we will tread cautiously and check our course against the experience of brothers and friends who have encountered difficulties. But we will not be scared by such setbacks: we have our own convictions and confidence in doing whatever we have set ourselves to do.

In 1966, when we launched our armed struggle, even some of our friends in Africa doubted that SWAPO's little unit could challenge the military power of South Africa. But we did it. South Africa itself was saying that we were just a bunch of terrorists which its security forces would wipe out in a matter of a few weeks or months. But 22 years have passed and we are still there.

All those who want their homeland liberated follow SWAPO's lead. Although the freedom fighters do not have sophisticated weapons like those in the hands of racist mercenaries, their strength lies in that they are fighting for a just cause. If one takes the South African statistics of the SWAPO combatants killed in action, the figure exceeds the entire Namibian population. But the fact is that we have grown stronger and are prepared to go on fighting, if need be.

<sup>1</sup> More than 50 types of mineral resources have been found in Namibia. Today the mining industry generates 80% of the country's total exports. The major extracting operations include those of the Consolidated Diamond Mines of Southwest Africa, a subsidiary of South Africa's De Beers corporation; the Rossing Uranium Ltd., controlled by the British Rio Tinto Zinc Corporation; the Tsumeb Corporation, controlled by the Newmont Mining Corporation and the British Consolidated Gold Fields through its subsidiary, the Gold Fields of South Africa. Namibian capital has no stake in any of those mining corporations, which take most of the raw materials and profits out of the country.—Ed.

The Planet's Flashpoints

## THE BLOODSHED IS OVER: WHAT NOW?

The war between Iran and Iraq finally came to an end last year. What are the obstacles to a more secure peace, and what needs to be done to attain it?

### THE PEACE PROCESS MUST BE ADVANCED

Kadym HABIB

representative of the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) on  
WMR

The war is over. After 2,885 days of bloodshed and grief, the barbarous and inane shellings of each other's towns and attacks on merchant shipping have ceased and all is quiet on the Iraq-Iran front. Everyone heaved a sigh of relief. Following unjustified and irresponsible delays, which led to additional loss of human life and economic damage, Tehran finally announced its acceptance of UN Security Council Resolution 598 on July 18, 1988. The will of the peoples in the neighbouring countries, in other countries of the region, and of the entire world community for an end to the massacre had triumphed, with the United Nations and Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar making a significant contribution.

Not unexpectedly, neither side managed to attain its sordid expansionist objectives: neither Iraq, which started the war, nor Iran, which stubbornly carried it on. The peoples on either side gained nothing but hundreds of thousands killed, an even greater number of wounded and crippled, about 100,000 prisoners of war (including thousands of Egyptian mercenaries who served in the Iraqi army), material losses running to hundreds of billions of dollars, spiralling debts, terrible devastation, and a great many economic, social, political and psychological problems.

Frightening new weapons, including chemical agents prohibited by international law and medium-range missiles, were used in this, the longest war of the 20th century. Urban populations in both countries were subjected to ferocious shellings and bombings, economic and social facilities were destroyed, and other countries' shipping was attacked in neutral waters. There were even threats that bacteriological weapons might be used.

It has become perfectly obvious that *war cannot be a means of settling conflicts between states, that it merely worsens the situation and compounds the difficulties. Once war breaks out, it is impossible to anticipate how long it will last, the consequences for the countries involved, or the scale on which other states will be drawn into the conflict and universal security jeopardised. The only way to settle international and regional conflicts today is by negotiation, with restraint and dialogue and without the use of force.*

The two peoples, and mankind as a whole, are now faced with the task of turning the fragile cease-fire agreement into a lasting, just and democratic peace, and of preserving and advancing the process, seeking understandings for the sake of both peoples, and for security in the region and throughout the world. In other words, the international community has to prevent any resumption of warfare, further economic devastation and more bloodshed and tears. For their part, Baghdad and Tehran have a duty to follow the UN Security Council Resolution to the letter.

The negative effect produced by the statements and mutual threats on the part of the leaders of Iraq and Iran will be understood by those who know the nature of the two regimes and the origin and the extent of tensions between them, and those between the peoples and the progressive patriotic forces of the two countries. The continuing cold war does nothing to help normalise the situation either. More than 2 million soldiers are still on the alert in camps along the former frontline, unable to take part in



the development of their countries. Industries continue to operate under war-time regulations.

A state of "neither war, nor peace", suits *both* regimes, and this is their common aim at the present stage. They are fearful of an explosion of the internal contradictions resulting from the campaign of terror and violence being conducted against the Iraqi and Iranian peoples, and from the deteriorating economic situation, notably the soaring prices. These regimes are afraid of the ever louder demands of those who want to know why Baghdad began the war in the first place, and why the Iranian leadership stubbornly refused for years to heed demands to end it. The people will also want to know who is responsible for the tragedy, and will want the guilty to be punished.

That is where one will find the reasons for the unjustifiably slow pace of the negotiations—even on such a humanitarian issue as the exchange of wounded and crippled prisoners of war. There are regular breaches of the cease-fire agreement, which go hand in hand with provocative statements, psychological warfare and shows of force.

While we are aware of the difficulties in reaching a settlement, we believe that the United Nations could break the deadlock by putting forward practical proposals for a step-by-step advance towards a peace agreement. UN mediation could play an effective role in creating the right climate for negotiations. Accordingly, the ICP believes that it is imperative, in particular:

1) *To demand that all the states should refrain from making arms deliveries to Iraq and Iran*, since this would remove a formidable obstacle in the way of a peace settlement. The crimes perpetrated "on behalf of the people" with the use of foreign weapons, and with weapons produced in abundance at home, boggle the mind. There should also be a ban on the acquisition of the components for making chemical weapons. World opinion must condemn states and corporations which have sold these substances well aware that they would be used for military purposes.

2) *To oblige both sides to halve their armed forces* as a sign of goodwill and the desire for a peaceful settlement.

3) *To withdraw all foreign naval forces from the Persian Gulf*, to make international efforts to clear it of mines, and to establish a demilitarised zone in its waters.

4) *For both sides to cease making statements which do not in essence express an urge to continue negotiations, and also statements which could complicate the situation.* The Iraqi President Saddam Hussain and other leaders recently issued threatening statements, saying Iraq had long-range missiles capable of reaching the most distant towns in Iran. Very soon, the speaker of the Majlis (Parliament) Hashemi Rafsanjani responded from Tehran with claims that his country had new types of powerful weapons capable of reducing Iraqi towns to ruins; the command would continue to dispatch volunteers to the front area.

There are many other signs that both sides have been trying hard to build up their arsenals of modern weapons.

5) *To link international economic aid for the belligerent countries to their attitude to a peaceful settlement* and concrete steps towards it (especially to an urgent solution of the humanitarian problem involving an exchange of POWs and a mutual troop withdrawal to internationally recognised boundaries).

6) *To end each side's interference in the other's internal affairs, to respect each other's national sovereignty and to abide by UN principles in relations with each other.*

The negotiations could be accelerated at the present stage if there is respect for Resolution 598, and if the most acceptable formulas are found for its consistent implementations, or if problems requiring additional discussion are duly isolated. We believe that the *first stage* of negotiations could include the following range of issues:

exchange of prisoners of war;

stationing of UN observers in the troop disengagement zone to supervise the withdrawal of forces on both sides to the prewar borders;

clearing of the Shatt-al-Arab waterway, and its use for international shipping under UN supervision irrespective of both sides' positions on sovereignty over this key route;

the return of hundreds of thousands of Iraqis who fled to Iran from persecution by the regime and who are suffering abroad;

re-establishment of the psychological climate distorted by the mutual occupation of territory.

At the *second stage* of the negotiations, it would be a good idea to:

review the 1975 Algiers agreement in the light of earlier international agreements on sovereignty over the Shatt-al-Arab waterway, to remove the differences and to reach a final demarcation of the borders;

identify those who started the war and those who insisted on its continuation (despite the favourable opportunities for ending it and in defiance of the will of world public opinion);

settle the issue of mutual compensation and of the distribution of international aid.

The world community, notably the UN General Assembly, the UN Human Rights Commission, and other international organisations, could do much for the protection of human rights in Iraq and Iran. It is common knowledge that for years the peoples of these two countries have suffered from oppression and arbitrary acts by the dictatorships in the absence of democracy and legality. The prisons are packed with people incarcerated for their political, national and religious convictions. They are subjected to

physical and psychological torture, which often results in death. Many are executed without due process of law or the right to speak in their own defence. Thousands of patriots have been killed in torture-chambers, and many more go in fear of their lives. The intelligence and secret services even harass citizens in their homes, spreading fear and terror.

We have no doubt that any progress on human rights will help to promote peace. Accordingly, the progressive forces of Iran and Iraq have issued calls to link the struggle against war and dictatorship to the struggle for peace and democratic development. During the war, these forces used to call mainly for its cessation, but now they make the following demand: "End the state of war, and end the dictatorship—for peace and democracy!". The peoples of both countries not only want to see the Arab-Persian Gulf (if it can be so called) turned into a Gulf of Peace, they also want democracy and basic human rights. Despite official statements from Baghdad and Tehran on a "general amnesty", "satisfaction" of these rights and "good treatment" of prisoners, the facts still show that the situation has worsened and that honest people are being subjected to even greater terror and persecution.

While stressing the need for a just and lasting peace between Iraq and Iran, our party has not relaxed its struggle for the solution of its own people's basic problems, including genuine autonomy for the Kurds, and for the elimination of the consequences of the war of attrition which the dictatorial Baghdad regime has been waging against its own people.

The international community is faced with the responsible and noble task of maintaining the momentum of the peace process through the general positive shifts now under way. These are having an influence on all states and political forces, thereby helping to improve relations between them on the one hand, and protecting basic human rights and freedoms on the other. These changes should help to protect the long-suffering Iraqi and Iranian peoples.

Regional tensions can be reduced, an international conference for a Middle East settlement set up, and other problems carried closer to solution if the knotty issues in the peace talks between the two countries are untangled quickly. Primarily, it will enable the Palestinian people to establish an independent state of their own in their homeland, and to end Israel's occupation of the Lebanese and Syrian territories. Successes in the development of the Palestinian national movement, and the readiness of the United States to hold direct talks with the PLO—the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people—will in turn help to solve the problems now facing Iraq and Iran. The new situation is sure to help the peoples of both countries to win democratic rights and freedoms and to advance along the way of social progress.

## A FEW MONTHS AFTER THE WAR

Ahmad FARZAN

member of the leadership, People's Party of Iran (Tudeh)

It has taken years of national disaster and thousands of human lives to expose the true face of the Khomeini regime, but the time of the "religious autocracy", which has nothing in common with the beliefs of the masses, has passed, and its mask of hypocrisy has been torn off.

The "war, war until victory" policy, which Khomeini conducted with more zeal than any of his men, has not only resulted in enormous losses of life, but has also eroded the economic and social structure of the country, now in a state of deep crisis.

While peace has yet to be firmly established after the devastations of the eight-year Iran-Iraq conflict, the end to the fighting has opened up new political prospects for our society under a changing balance of social forces. The mounting popular discontent over the economic hardships, and the flare-ups of spontaneous struggle on the home front reverberated all the way to the frontlines and eventually became one of the crucial factors behind the regime's retreat and its decision to accept a cease-fire. That is, of course, the first and most important lesson Khomeini was taught by the popular masses, which are sure to increase their pressure and demands for democratic rights in various ways and forms.

*In their right struggle for stopping the bloody and destructive war, the masses have been and are looking for life.* Economic and social revival is so long overdue that economic reconstruction has become a high political priority for the authorities too, sparking off widespread discussion and throwing up various opinions, especially among the ruling circles.

Iran, with a population of more than 50 million, is attractive to the transnational corporations vying with each other for the high ground in this lucrative market. The Shah's economic policy, which Khomeini continued, made Iran's industry so dependent upon imports of spare parts, semi-manufactures, and raw materials, that the national economy can no longer function without them. Iranian forces (mainly the big commercial bourgeoisie and landlords) looking to make deals with the most reactionary imperialist circles have been trying to bolster the system of "dependent capitalism". In practice, this means both inordinate expansion of the country's private sector for the purposes of profit, and utmost support for more diverse relations with the imperialist powers. These forces, known in the West as

"moderate" or "conservative", insist, on the pretext of trying to find the means for postwar rehabilitation, that Iran has no option but to seek loans and "aid" from the United States and other capitalist powers, and this ultimately means opening the door to the transnationals.

Meanwhile, other social groups, known as "radicals" and mainly representing the petty bourgeoisie, small and middle clergy, some part of intelligentsia and the civil servants, refuse to accept unconditional "aid" from the West, in some cases rejecting foreign capital out of hand, and call for the building up of the state sector. They urge further Islamisation within the country and the export of Islamic revolution abroad and fear that aid, even from the capitalist countries, will tie their hands for ideological and religious expansion. That is why, on the issue of rehabilitation, the "radicals" incline to economic independence.

Although the antagonism between the supporters of the various approaches to postwar reconstruction is clad in religious catchwords and slogans, the gist of it is a *struggle between the social groups for their own socioeconomic interests and for undivided political power*. The radicals are aware that they cannot do without backing from the broad masses in their opposition to big capital and the landed estates, and to any deals with imperialism, and that is why they seek to adapt some aspects of their policy to the people's demands. As these forces do not believe in democracy, they cannot receive so much support from the masses.

The regime of "religious autocracy", which has run into a political, social and economic impasse, is trying to escape final collapse, and because its every existence is threatened, it seeks to secure the confidence of world imperialism and the forces within the country whose interests are interlaced with those of the "moderates" in the bourgeois circles. Khomeini has been letting off some of the steam by making various promises, including the promise of political freedoms.

It is more vigorous action by the progressive and revolutionary forces that the authorities fear most of all in the postwar process set off by the popular movement and by the urgent need to democratise society. That is why they have set various preliminary conditions for the resumption of political party activity. But most of all their fear was evident in a new wave of mass killings of political prisoners.

In this context, a statement issued by the Tudeh Party CC on November 30, 1988, says: "There are several underlying motivations and causes behind this brutal bloodshed. One of the main reasons for the summary mass executions of political prisoners is the victory of the people, of the revolutionary and democratic forces, which compelled an end to the war and which deepened the economic and social crisis, led to disastrous military, ideological and political defeats, and unprecedented indignation among the people, and also to the adoption of UN

Security Council Resolution 598, together with the acceptance of the cease-fire and peace talks... The killing of political prisoners, especially of members of the Tudeh Party, was revenge against the forces fighting for peace and freedom. By means of these horrible crimes, in a growing atmosphere of fear, hopelessness and bereavement, Khomeini and his followers are trying to deprive the people of happiness and hope, and to kill their militant spirit... Another important cause (of the mass executions.—Ed.) is the regime's attempt to blaze a bloody trail in implementing the 'strategy of forging close ties with the West' and obtaining support from the imperialist powers and the transnational monopolies. The regime annihilated the political prisoners by way of preparing the 'necessary' preliminary conditions for announcing what it calls 'freedom for parties and associations' and a 'general amnesty'."

Despite their differences on economic issues, the "moderates" and the "radicals" see eye to eye in stepping up terror and repression against all dissenters, regardless of their political views. The Tudeh Party has repeatedly warned that terror and repression in the form of mass executions are rapidly spreading to members of the opposition who support the Islamic Republic. The biggest blunder made by the political and religious circles grouped round those in power was in collaborating with them in suppressing non-religious opposition forces. These circles did not believe that their turn would come next. It has come already. Many Muslim leaders who do not want fully to accept the power of the religious autocracy have been imprisoned, and many of them have been executed. But that is only the beginning. The Khomeini regime will not tolerate any dissent, which it regards as a threat to itself. *The religious autocracy is in obvious conflict with the ideas of freedom. That is why our programme gives priority to tireless demands for democratic freedoms as a form of class struggle.*

The January 1988 Plenary Meeting of the Tudeh Party CC examined developments in the country and called for the establishment of a broad front of various social forces under the slogan of peace and freedom. In this context, we have repeatedly expressed our readiness to listen to the views of any party or organisation. For us, the establishment of a united front has always been an important factor in the fight for democracy, and *we recall with bitterness that the recent abortive attempt to find common ground with, and achieve unity of action among, the revolutionary and democratic forces ended in bloodshed.*

We believe that the ruling regime is politically unstable. The social contradictions in Iran ten years after the revolution remain unsolved and have, in fact, grown deeper for various reasons, especially because of the medieval despotism and the ruinous eight-year war. Although the various factions within the ruling circles operate under the same capitalist system and are by nature quite identical, the "religious autocracy" regime is incapable of covering

up the basic contradiction: *neither itself nor its administration are in any way up to the requirements of progress in the society's productive forces.*

For ten years now, the country's rulers have been promising the benefits of the "Islamic economy", but it has led to capitalist exploitation and the workings of its laws have inflicted immense suffering and dire poverty and continuous privation on the working masses. The regime has no programme for escaping the mounting crisis. The situation is being worsened by the rapid population growth (3.6% a year). Iran now ranks among the poorest countries in the world. A situation like this cannot continue for ever.

Since it is the existing medieval system of power that has generated most of the acute problems and contradictions, one should not expect any lessening of the confrontation of interests within the ruling circles either. The record shows that the "moderates" are trying to gain the upper hand over the "radicals", something that can perhaps be done only with the use of armed force.

One could say in conclusion that Iran is going through a painful and fateful period *on the eve of unpredictable changes.* We have repeatedly emphasised that the revolutionary and democratic forces can and must influence development by acting together. If the current trends continue, the growing protest movement could be the hardest hit. *We believe that all the forces opposing the medieval despotism—the left, national and democratic organisations, individuals, the clergy, and those who reject "religious autocracy" and recognise the right of other parties and organisations to free political activity—will unite in a popular front to overthrow the existing regime.*

We believe that it is the duty of everyone who sides with the working people not only to remove the subjective barriers in the way of unity, but also to take a realistic stand for unity. The regime will certainly be forced to retreat if the struggle for freedom and democracy in Iran evolves from its present spontaneous forms into an organised movement.

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## THE WORKING CLASS IN THE COMPUTER AGE

### CAN THEY DEFEND THEMSELVES?

Werner CIESLAK

member of the Board,  
German Communist Party (DKP)

Times are hard for the West German labour movement. It now finds itself having to adapt to a new kind of class struggle, one born of the profound economic and political changes in the FRG. What is required is a thorough theoretical reappraisal of the problems connected with the changes taking place in production and in society. We know from past experience how difficult it is to recognise the new elements in the reactionary policies devised by big capital and a subservient government. Although their attacks on workers' rights and gains have met with resistance, there was little realisation that these embodied the monopolies' strategy on class relations between labour and capital. In order to counter this strategy labour needs a coherent policy of its own.

Above all monopoly capital wants to influence the labour sphere, and this is as supremely important for the working class in the FRG as it is for international labour. The implications of "flexible working time and the deregulation of labour relations and work conditions" are now well understood by the West German working class. They

embody management's intention to use labour so flexibly as to harness it under capitalism to the new exigencies of scientific and technological progress and growing productive forces.

The introduction of new technology, robots and computers into production, and the spread of informatics in management and services are changing the nature of work and demanding more of workers. Essentially the pivotal question is again, who will bear the *production and social costs of technological progress under capitalism?*

Monopoly capital is trying to adopt modern productive forces in its own way by pursuing several aims. Firstly, to trim living labour to create a "leaner" and more efficient staff. Secondly, to give production greater mobility and respond to changing market and business conditions more rapidly. And thirdly, to limit workers' hard-won gains and potential labour retaliation.

Acting in concert, monopoly associations and the state rely on a strategy of "flexibility and deregulation" to dismember labour. Flexibilisation is meant to subordinate workers to the rhythm of production. And state-level deregulation would more or less narrow labour's rights. Politically the corporations and government are out to weaken the unions, and make them accept social partnership, the conditions for which would be mainly dictated by capital.

In the FRG, such corporate strategy is still in its initial phase. The "20-Point Programme", advanced by the Federation of German Employers' Associations in 1986, reflects the monopolies' stand. It reads in part: "A long-term strategy based on economic growth, greater flexibility and mobility, and the consistent use of technological progress is the key to more competitive jobs. The labour market

needs to be freed of ossified forms, and labour itself should more quickly adapt to market requirements."

The coalition Bonn government is supportive of the employers' aims. Leading CDU figures offer appropriate social-development prospects. For example, "mass trade unions, the usual collective bargaining, the workers' struggle directed from a single centre, and common tariff agreements will soon disappear". Such plans undoubtedly meet the monopolies' wishes. But one wonders by what visions of the future do the conservatives intend to win new voters and keep the old ones? The slogan "Freedom Instead of Regimentation" actually views *any restrictions on capital's freedom of action and expansion as a violation of freedom in general.*

What is particularly dangerous is that some Social Democrats, including leading ones, here agree with the theory and practice of the conservatives to a certain extent. Thus, SPD deputy chairman Oskar Lafontaine is for a shorter working week without a full wage. This suits those who advocate a "flexible wage policy" and an end to collective union power. Lafontaine maintains that "non-acceptance of flexible work schedules is tantamount to an additional rise in unemployment". In contrast, the last SPD congress announced: "We reject the 'flexibility' demanded by employers and conservatives who count on today's level of production capacity use."

The Communist Party sees normal labour relations (permanent employment, a full working day) as becoming a *focal point for labour-capital struggle* in our country. It will develop on three levels: at enterprises; among affiliated trade unions and employers' associations; and on the scale of labour's clashes with the conservative Bonn government. In the DKP's opinion the trade unions must defend the interests of the workers they represent against the negative effects of flexitime and rationalisation by means of collective bargaining.

Labour now has to try and avert a new round of retrogressive legislation on labour relations, above all a new government bill on working time which contains provisions far worse than any that have gone before. It would mean a 10-hour day and a 60-hour week maximum and a lifting of the ban on women's night shifts, and give employers more leeway to use workers on Sundays. Tougher provisions like these would hamper unity trade unions'<sup>1</sup> defence of workers' interests.

There is growing public resistance to the planned legislation and to worsening conditions in the social sphere. Mass demonstrations have been held in several cities with up to 100,000 workers, employees and public servants taking part. This pressure has not yet been sufficient to force the conservative government to alter its policy and so the DKP is lending its support to labour calls for a *united protest movement.*

Part-time and temporary employment, which does not protect social rights has spread over recent years, now ac-

counting for nearly 25% of all jobs. The shift to this kind of work was facilitated by legislative moves. The number of timers and temporaries has risen from 900,000 two years ago to 1.9 million. According to labour statistics no fewer than 300,000 permanent jobs have become temporary, and half the number of new workers are temps. This practice extends to those on training schemes who often receive work for one year or even less, and particularly affects those sectors with a high percentage of women like the retail trade and the textile and garments industries. About 3.5 million people work part-time, of whom some 1.5 million earn a low income without having any legal protection.

For Communists the *struggle against fixed-term labour relations is now paramount.* They must not be allowed to spread further in industry. We want to ensure that such hire contracts regain some normality. Here it is essential to strive for joint staff resistance to any forms of socially unprotected labour relations. Part-timers and temporaries should have the same job security as those employed permanently and should be given a full-time job in the first place, the Communists insist. Even more importantly, staffs should be free to decide on work schedules on temporary or part-time basis.

Technological progress is opening up increasingly important new areas of class struggle. But while it lightens and uplifts work, it obeys the capitalist logic of easy profit. The new technologies are being used on a wider scale to dominate labour relations by reducing jobs, increasing exploitation and control, and by manipulating worker consciousness.

Organised labour must counter the monopolies' drive with its own policy on new technologies, because even under capitalism a purposeful struggle may *restrict their abuse and gear them to progressive ends.* Their previous participation in management having been rendered obsolete, a new democratisation of the economy must give workers full parity with management. A guarantee of qualified and useful work, professional growth and advancement must be the yardstick of worker control and influence on personnel and business matters. All this should figure in the planning and introduction of new technologies, job creation, and the definition of work content. Obviously, the voice of the workers assumes no less weight on job safety, health and the environment, and in fixing the policy of investment and job provision.

To defend workers' interests more effectively, influence should extend to other spheres, for example legislation or state technological and structural policy. *Economic and social councils,* with unions and other social and democratic movements as their powerhouse, would meet this requirement. Such councils with a consultative voice and a right to legislative initiative could prefigure an economy-wide mechanism for control and investment management.

The policy of flexibilisation and deregulation will take on a *new dimension* with the creation of the EEC's single



domestic market in 1992. Many legislative changes are due for completion by 1990, giving the Common Market countries at least two years to pass the respective national laws.

The Commission of the European Communities has itself noted that the market's formation signifies the greatest deregulation in economic history. In principle it involves unifying national law in such a way as to restrict state economic intervention in the member countries and to minimise social rights. The President of the Confederation of German Trade Unions (DGB), Ernst Breit, who also heads the European Trade Unions Confederation, has warned against a possible campaign to scrap workers' social protection under the pretext of creating a single internal market. This concerns not only labour and social legislation. A policy of privatisation is being pursued under the slogan of deregulation, and plans are being nurtured to either limit or nullify the right of workers and unions to participate in management and in economic decision-making.

So far this process has not met with strong enough resistance. The European Trade Union Confederation insists on creating a "European social space" where employment and social issues would be the top priority. The European Parliament has taken up the idea and has decided to make recommendations concerning partial or temporary employment on a voluntary basis, work-time reduction, and the safeguarding of workers' rights.

The single internal market's creation now depends only on national government decisions. Labour, whose vital interests are directly affected here, has not yet rallied. The DKP thinks it imperative to *draw up a common list of demands and seek EC-wide labour action*. This primarily concerns unions, but, of course, in no way prevents the Communists in various member states from closer cooperation among themselves and with the Social Democrats, Socialists and other Left and democratic forces.

We are convinced that the new acute problems necessitate broader labour cooperation than within the European Trade Unions Confederation. That the largest workers' associations in France, Spain and Portugal are barred from joint debate and action is an anachronism. The Confederation of German Trade Unions has been resisting such cooperation but the country's labour movement shows a growing desire for joint action that cuts across ideologies and national boundaries. Therefore we look forward with confidence to removing any obstacles to this through union debate.

The experience amassed from almost 40 years of West German unity trade unions opens up new opportunities here. Together with the DGB the Communists regard the unity trade unions, which date from the anti-Nazi Resistance, as a great achievement to be defended against any attacks. We are at one with the Metal Workers' Union which at its 14th Congress in 1983 rejected any attempts to split

its ranks by stating: "In the Metal Workers' Union there is room for various ideological and political labour currents—for example, the Social Democrats, Christians and Communists." A truth that must obviously also apply *internationally*.

The creation of unity trade unions was an important, if not the most important prerequisite for West German labour's successful defence and advancement of its gains in the years of crisis for capitalism. The movement today exhibits combative optimism, rather than any symptoms of paralysis. This stems from the fact that after 1945 Social Democrats, Communists and Christians jointly established the unions and later consolidated them. As members of the DKP we regard ourselves not as a marginal group, but as *part and parcel of their active nucleus*. Other labour figures are beginning to recognise this, and a number of affiliated unions have accepted it as a matter of fact. Behind such developments is our policy, thought out over decades. The CP came out decisively against any factionalisation of the unity trade unions, believing that this would only benefit their opponents, a capital-government coalition. We have always favoured open debate in trade union bodies, joint decisions and their common implementation.

The firm basis for this policy and appropriate decisions is *workers' interests, not any eagerness to please a political party*. It was not easy for West German unity labour, with its very strong Social Democratic bias, to take this path. But now the DGB and affiliated unions have the benefit of experience. They reject both the Bonn coalition parties' conservative policy and the conservatism of social democracy. In particular, the views of SPD deputy chairman Lafontaine and others have come under heavy fire from the unions. This criticism comes from an understanding of the significance of the unity of unions and their interests as outlined above.

Communists have done much to further these developments. Vigorous ideological, political, and organisational support for union work in industry, in the regions and across the country is an important field of DKP policy, and we focus primarily on cooperation with our SPD and CDU colleagues. At the same time we discuss labour's current problems and long-term goals with the union Left (the Greens, for example). On the one hand we're doing all we can to strengthen workers' unity, and on the other we're emphasising the need for labour and other social movements to act in greater unison. As well as thwarting the reactionary policy of capital and the right-wing government, this also involves joint action on global issues, especially peace, disarmament and ecology. There is a growing public awareness of the need for combined efforts within and without the labour movement, efforts that augur well in the campaign for peace, the right to work, democracy, and social justice.

<sup>1</sup> *Einheitsgewerkschaften*, trade unions, independent of the political parties and the Church.—Ed.

## THE MILITARY AND DEMOCRACY

## NOT TO BE PAWNS IN AN ALIEN GAME

This interview took place in Buenos Aires between Ret. Gen. Ernesto Lopez Meyer and Ret. Col. Horacio Ballester, leaders of the Centre of the Military for Democracy in Argentina (CEMIDA), and Orel Viciani, a member of the *WMR* Editorial Council and representative of the Communist Party of Chile.

*Orel Viciani.* Please tell us about the organisation you head: its composition, aims, and role in contemporary Argentine society.

*E. Lopez Meyer.* The Centre of the Military for Democracy in Argentina unites retired officers from the army, air force, navy, and the security forces (national gendarmerie and maritime prefecture)—from generals to NCOs. They are all retired because military law prohibits any involvement in politics by officers on active duty under pain of strict sanctions.

Our organisation came into being after the Malvinas conflict of 1982. A group of officers and NCOs, perturbed by what had happened and by how military operations had been planned and directed, began to get together, discuss problems and try to define their position, particularly in the period after the unsuccessful war when the dictatorship, which had been in power since 1976, collapsed. It was then that we decided to create this Centre in support of the restoration of democracy in the country.

After the election of the new government under Raul Alfonsin, leader of the Radicals, we officially proclaimed our Centre, elected a steering committee and established ourselves in a hotel in the heart of Buenos Aires. About two weeks later, a powerful bomb exploded at our headquarters. Members of the organisation believe that this assassination attempt was the handiwork of the army's intelligence services, who had more than once threatened us and distributed slanderous leaflets. The campaign of psychological pressure continues: we are called the enemies of the armed forces, the underlings of an extra-continental power, Communists and left-wingers. All this invective aims at denigrating the CEMIDA in the servicemen's eyes. The armed forces' command is incensed by our prin-

This interview continues the series of *WMR* publications on the military and the democratic process in Latin America. See Nos. 10 and 12 for 1988, and No. 3 for 1989.

cipled criticism of the crimes perpetrated in the "anti-subversion war", and of the disastrous conduct of the operations in the South Atlantic. They have used sanctions against several of our members, including myself; I was even exiled on one occasion. Colonels Ballester, Garcia, and others have suffered in the same way.

Despite everything, the CEMIDA has not capitulated and continues to warn against new coup attempts. This has won it great respect both at home and abroad. Many European and US newspapers and magazines have published interviews with members of the Centre, and informed the public about its activities. Ours is a multiparty organisation, comprising people of divergent views: Peronists, Radicals, Intransigents, Centrists, and Christian Democrats.

*O. V.* The political history of Argentina could be compared to a pendulum swinging between constitutional government and dictatorship. Since the CEMIDA has been created to protect and extend democracy, I wonder what you think about the prospects for the constitutional system in the country.

*E. L. M.* I shall express a personal opinion. But first I ought to remind you that officially our Centre wants to see the democratic process follow its normal course. In December 1989 President Alfonsin is to transfer power to the new President, whether Radical or Peronist. The next government must act by respecting civil freedoms, strengthening them in accordance with the principles of the representative system.

Our flawed democracy does still provide certain political guarantees and freedoms, but it falls short in the socioeconomic field. I would call the existing regime a "dependent" or "limited" democracy. Why? Our government reports to the IMF on every detail of its economic policy. Such dependence has serious consequences—the growth of poverty, unemployment, pauperism. Such a situation makes the appearance of yet another "saviour of the nation" all the more likely. This is becoming a permanent threat, and we are always aware of it in our activities.

*Horacio Ballester.* At present many in the Argentine military would like to stage a coup. The propaganda from the intelligence services (which serve the interests of the oligarchy) tries to present the Alfonsin government as pro-communist. The people behind this propaganda are former "anti-subversionists" and active collaborators with the military dictatorship.

Yet there is no immediate prospect of a coup. For the military always play the part of "useful idiots" in such an act. They just carry out orders, being, so to speak, the figurehead, whilst somebody else holds the rudder. In every dictatorship officers have held representative posts in the government—interior ministers, police chiefs and so on. But they have not been represented where the country's fate is decided: at the economics and foreign

ministries, and the universities. Here plans are drawn up that will seriously affect future generations. And here it is civilians, representing quite definite social circles, who have been in charge. The military, as a rule, are excluded. After each coup in Argentina the post of minister of the economy went to a representative of the oligarchy, who acts in the interests of international capital and the "transnational Western economy".

The United States after its failures in Cuba, Iran and Nicaragua has realised that dictators are not always a good bet. Tyrants antagonise their peoples, and the problem of succession usually forces the situation in a country out of control. To avoid such problems, Washington now prefers "tame" constitutional regimes, with military dictatorships only as alternative possibilities.

Now in Argentina, for example, when the government faces an important decision, the President, or a minister, or a secretary of state goes to the United States for "consultation". Sometimes a Washington emissary comes to Buenos Aires with directives. No coup is possible under such circumstances. In taking such a risk the military would need civilians: to deal with ideology, and fill the key posts in the bureaucratic hierarchy. And these people, who always work for transnationals, if not directly for the Central Intelligence Agency or other Washington bodies, already have those jobs in Argentina.

**O. V. The foreign debt appears to have become a very grave problem for Argentina, just as for other countries of the region.**

*E. L. M.* We call this debt "immoral", and favour a refusal to pay the interest on it, since Argentina can't even meet internal needs. It's impossible to go on transferring \$3.5-4 billions to creditors each year, when you can't give people jobs and expand production. Treat the foreign debt as a political issue, we insist—don't service it until the country is better able to do so. Debt servicing is asphyxiating the Latin American states.

**O. V. Unfortunately, this is now a general problem throughout Latin America. It directly relates to the prospects for democracy. Foreign debt repayments have strained the economies to breaking point, and are forcing the masses into action. Repression increases in response, and this once again poses a real threat to elementary human rights.**

*E. L. M.* The foreign debt is but one aspect of dependence. Another is the doctrine of so-called national security. Essentially, it subordinates the Latin Americans to US "national defence" interests in its conflict with the East. The continent's armed forces were initially used in the power struggle within our states as the direct striking force. As a result, people have realised what this doctrine is. It has evolved into a concept of "democracy and security", and the foreign debt is a much better tool of enslavement than the army, condemning millions to want and hunger and

depriving them of a future. Undoubtedly this represents a far more sophisticated system of domination, which serves the interests of the United States.

**O. V. It now appears that Washington, unable to sustain military dictatorships, has shifted its attentions to "democratic regimes".**

*E. L. M.* Yes, Washington has realised that dictatorships can be too costly. Moreover, they may become unmanageable. Now it relies on obedient civilian regimes held in check by the foreign debt and the drive against drug trafficking. The latest conferences of the American armies have all discussed the narcotics business. There is a move afoot to transform the armies into occupation forces in their own countries under the pretext of combating the drugs trade. Strictly speaking, this is not a job for the armed forces, but for the police...

Let us refer to history. Upon signing the inter-American treaty on defence, the USA committed itself to protect the continent from an external enemy. (By the way, during the Malvinas conflict it failed to do so, since its NATO ally was the aggressor.) Argentina itself was to create a navy and coastal defences. The army would keep an eye on their own people, nipping any "internal disorders" in the bud, that is, preventing the appearance of a new Cuba, Nicaragua or Panama.

**O. V. You have mentioned the Malvinas conflict several times during our conversation. In your opinion, what have the consequences been of the events in the South Atlantic in 1982?**

*H. B.* If we had learnt the right lessons the consequences could have become positive, not least for the Republic's armed forces. As it is, little or nothing has been learnt.

What do I mean? The military command of that time, who also stood at the political helm, made a grievous error by assuming that the United States would remain neutral in the conflict. After all, in 1848 the USA had annexed half of Mexico's territory, and always pursued an expansionist policy. The present borders of the "Northern colossus" are largely the result of conquest. Naturally it wasn't going to agree to a Third World country trying to regain the territories seized by colonialists 150 years ago. Not only did Washington fail to support Argentina or honour the Inter-American Treaty on Mutual Assistance; it also directly helped Britain. In particular, the USA gave Britain information on our fleet gathered during the joint annual manoeuvres between the two navies.

You might think that such a treacherous "ally" would have been rejected by our armed forces. In fact the opposite has occurred—an unprecedented rapprochement. The secretary of the Argentine army general staff and the defence minister have paid visits to the United States. In turn, senior Washington officials—the chief of the US army

general staff, the secretary for international relations and many others—have visited Buenos Aires.

To cap it all, our constitutional government, represented by the President and the Congress, have publicly expressed support for North American interventionism in the military sphere, as well as in the economy. Law 23551—the law on defence—has been passed. The sponsor group of deputies had argued that their aim was to put an end to the doctrine of national security. The reverse has happened: this notorious doctrine has become law.

I suppose I could be labelled a "terrible Communist" for condemning the United States. But I do not share Communist ideology, I am simply speaking out against the imperialism that oppresses my country.

**O. V. With the recent major peace efforts, a growing tide of anti-nuclear opposition and several Gorbachov-Reagan summit meetings, do you consider a world without wars, or at least without nuclear weapons, possible?**

*H. B.* I believe that such a prospect is realistic. There are have been positive shifts—a groundswell of European support for peace, for example. East or West, the people want to understand and trust each other. Encouraging signs already exist, such as the initiative on establishing a nuclear-free corridor in Central Europe. I would like to believe that both blocs have serious intentions.

What I shall say now may be taken as a bias against the United States. This is not so. I spent a year in the USA and I am familiar with the kindness and hospitality of Americans. Regrettably, however, the rulers in Washington are not in-

vested with this same kind-heartedness, which at times borders on naivety. And when the monstrous machine for Star Wars—or the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI)—is ready, will all humanity become a hostage to Pax Americana? Will the US government think itself the master of the world beneath its antimissile shield and with the strategic capacity to reach the remotest corners of the planet? This is why I think that the peace and nuclear disarmament campaign and the strengthening of mutual confidence must necessarily be accompanied by an abandonment of SDI.

**O. V. Regional conflicts have become one of the threats to world peace. What do you think about the prospects for a political solution to the Central American problem?**

*H. B.* One mustn't forget that the five countries of this area were once a single state and that their present constitutions envisage the restoration of a Central American Republic in the future. A peaceful settlement is undoubtedly possible, but on one condition—that the region's peoples should be left in peace. They can then use their natural wealth for their own benefit, and find their own solutions to their own problems. While outsiders continue to meddle and prescriptions are imposed, the situation will remain threatening.

In conclusion, I would like to say that, in spite of Pinochet and the last Argentine military dictatorship, and people like them, the concept of a cold war and "ideological frontiers" is steadily receding into the past here in Latin America.

## MONEY TALKS

Antonio DIAZ-RUIZ

Representative of the Communist Party of Cuba on  
WMR

We Cuban Communists often wonder why the vast majority of North Americans are critical of our revolution, a genuinely humane process which has indubitably benefitted the people both materially and spiritually, and why many of them even approve of the aggressive measures successive Washington administrations have taken against our country.

What do North Americans know about developments in Cuba, or in the world as a whole for that matter? Before answering that question, let us probe the historical, economic and social factors underlying the role of the US mass media.

The development of capitalism gave rise to the popular press, at the same time creating the illusion that the legally guaranteed freedom of the press ensured the free propagation of news, made information accessible to everyone and enabled people to draw their own conclusions. The myth of the "free" press, radio, cinema and television is still alive.

An objective analysis of the US bourgeois mass media shows, however, that they have always manipulated the tastes, needs and political mentality of people at home and abroad for the benefit of the monopolistic bourgeoisie.

The press, radio, television, cinema and especially the news agencies of the imperialist powers undoubtedly possess superior technologies, and are able to draw on more than 100 years of experience. Although the USSR and other socialist countries have made good progress in communications, the gap between them and the capitalist world is still large.

For example, the United States with 5% of the world population, controls one-third of the world's communications. The North American news agencies AP and UPI, together with Reuters of Britain and France Presse, handle 80% of the world's information, determining its volume, character and meaning, and targeting it at various national audiences.

In the United States itself, according to the well-known US political scientist Michael Parenti, 10 corporations control the 3 major broadcasting networks (NBC, CBS and ABC), 34 affiliated TV stations, 201 cable television systems, 59 magazines, including *Time* and *Newsweek*, 58 newspapers, among them *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *Los Angeles Times*, 41 publishing firms, and various film companies, including Columbia Pictures and Twentieth Century Fox.<sup>1</sup>

The broadcasting machine advertising imperialist

policies and "the American way of life" incorporates thousands of transmitters all over the world. The United States Information Agency (USIA) employs several thousand people in 129 countries and has an annual budget of around \$1 billion.

The mammoth potential of that propaganda machine does not serve to educate and inform, nor to report objectively on developments in the world and in the United States, as is clear not just from the class character and monopolisation of mass communications and their links with big capital interests, but also from the subtle methods used to manipulate public opinion and control behaviour.

It would be pointless to deny the professional qualifications of the top US mediemen, or their keen instincts, independence and initiative. Credit must be given to the reporters who portrayed the horrors of the Vietnam War or investigated the Watergate scandal that led to President Nixon's resignation.

At the same time, one should bear in mind the relationship between the mass media on the one hand, and major monopolistic corporations and the Washington Administration, represented by such institutions as the Pentagon and the CIA, on the other. The Cuban researcher Julio Garcia Luis has noted, for example, that "the links between them are intricate and contradictory. There are privately-owned media with a great degree of autonomy, and official media, which report directly to the government. But the former, which play the most important role in shaping public opinion, may have a close relationship with political power centres, and even with the CIA. The revelation a few years ago that 400 of the more famous 'independent' journalists wrote columns and articles on orders from the CIA and even put their signatures to material supplied by the Agency did not provoke an outcry."

The initiative and independence of the mediemen are relative: the content of the press, radio and TV programmes, and films are determined mostly by the class interests of the private media owners. Journalists in capitalist countries have only relative independence, which is suppressed as soon as their work begins to threaten the dominant classes.

Enjoying a monopoly of mass communications and using advances in general and social psychology, psychiatry and sociology, bourgeois propaganda has been able to refine its methods of attracting public attention, persuading, and directing mass behaviour.

Commercial advertising, for example, shapes public tastes and creates false values which are a far cry from reality. Products advertised as "exclusive" eventually come to be associated with influence, prestige and prosperity.

Much the same happens to political ideas and ideology in general. A cleverly devised system of ideological stereotypes, thought patterns and behavioural standards increasingly denies the common people in capitalist countries their independence even in the supposedly



private sphere of spiritual life. The sensual and emotional prevails over the rational in those false stereotypes, which makes it possible to manipulate mass consciousness and distract people from the more urgent problems of our time. The public is force-fed a simplistic, facile interpretation of social phenomena so as to preempt any evaluations that may be contrary to the interests of the ruling classes. The purpose of bourgeois propaganda is to impede any understanding of present-day cause-and-effect relationships, features and contradictions, and to divert public attention to the secondary, superficial and ephemeral aspects of developments. As a result audiences absorb only the most spectacular, sensational and emotionally stimulating fare.

The main difference between consumer-oriented stereotypes and the purely political and ideological ones is that the latter are far more stable and very difficult to alter. Here are a few examples.

In a speech in Santiago de Cuba three years after the victorious revolution, Fidel Castro recounted his conversations with peasants. Asked if they approved the agrarian reform, the cancellation of the land rent and tenancy payments, the nationalisation of the foreign businesses and banks, lower housing rents and the arming of the people, they replied unanimously in the affirmative. But those same people adamantly rejected socialism. They supported all the steps taken by the new regime, most of them socialist in character, but being under the influence of imperialist propaganda, which had for years fostered reactionary stereotypes, they shied away from socialism.

Such entrenched stereotypes make themselves felt even more forcefully in the United States. In his book *Angola: The End of the Myth of Mercenaries*, Raul Valdes Vivo analyses the thought patterns of some of the US mercenaries taken prisoner. One of them, Daniel Francis Gearhart, said that he had come to Angola, "like the others, to make some money and to fight communism". Asked by the journalist, "And what do you think communism is?", the mercenary replied: "My, I'm curious. I think like my countrymen. I'm not clear about it. But frankly, I see in communism—well, I don't mean anyone in particular—someone like a North Korean... Look here, I have nothing against Asians. I was in Vietnam and I don't hate the Vietnamese, believe me. I repeat, no offence meant... North Koreans, well ... I don't like them. And I don't like communism."<sup>2</sup>

The monopoly of mass communications and the increasingly sophisticated methods of influencing people's minds are creating an atmosphere which has nothing to do with the much-touted "freedom of expression". Objective information is measured out in doses so as not to harm the fabricated images or the interests of the establishment. That is why, besides providing a regular barrage of reactionary propaganda and glorifying racism and "the American way of life", the press occasionally reports real problems, such as the crimes and barbarity of the Nicaraguan contras, the killings, disappearances and

bombings in El Salvador, and the massacres in Palestinian refugee camps. That screened and measured out information is a dressing, as it were, intended to help people swallow reactionary and false propaganda. Undoubtedly, the common interpretation of events in the US mass media meets the interests of Big Business. In effect, then, it is an imperialist interpretation.

Some of the bourgeois mass media openly identify with the more conservative circles of the ruling classes. *The Wall Street Journal* and *Newsweek*, for example, backed the arch-rightist course of the Reagan Administration in Central America, the Middle East and Southern Africa. Other periodicals, such as *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, are more critical of official policies and tend to take liberal positions. But their criticism never goes to the heart of problems, let alone challenges the system. The US mass media are trying hard to meet the needs of the ruling classes. Yesterday they lauded Carter's "human rights" rhetoric, then backed Reagan's policies, and tomorrow they will whistle the new tune from the White House.

Television is the main distorter and concealer of truth in the US today. The medium is controlled by the above-mentioned three major networks, and cable television systems, growing from one day to the next, are used to bring viewers films, news, sports and entertainment. The US is now able to broadcast direct to any part of the world, including socialist countries, via communication satellites. The Direct Broadcasting System (DBS) sends a signal to its multi-channel satellite positioned over the equator. By 1990, the company will have around 5 million subscribers.

Television has become the most powerful shaper of beliefs, opinions and attitudes in the US, and its negative impact on audiences is noted by many specialists. More and more people in the country realise that the programming content is determined by the interests of big monopolies, which are the leading advertisers.

Professor Everett M. Rogers of the Institute of Communication Research, Stanford University, believes that North American viewers who depend on television for international news coverage tend to misconceive what is going on in the world. He says that US television supplies far less foreign news than the BBC does. Moreover, only a quarter of roughly 20 stories making up a regular 30-minute programme deal with developments in other countries. The scarce information about the Third World is usually limited to reports on assassinations, kidnappings, natural disasters and coups d'état, which seems to explain North Americans' elementary ignorance of what is happening there.

For example, 20% of the 200 students polled at the University of Nevada, Reno, could not find El Salvador on the map: 39 of them thought it was in Africa, and 166 said that it was at war with its neighbours. One of them confessed: "I really don't know where El Salvador is. It seems to be somewhere in the Middle East. I remember hearing

the name in history classes but I can't recall anything else". A 19-year-old undergraduate said: "It's in Africa. As far as I know, someone wants changes there. The guerrillas, I think. We are involved because people wanting change may fall for communism."

Regular public opinion polls indicate that this is a general picture: many in the United States do not even know where this small Central American republic is.

A few years ago the Soviet journalist Vitaly Kobysh interviewed the CBS commentator Walter Cronkite, considered one of the 12 most influential personalities in the country. Below is a telling excerpt from their conversation:

"V. K. You know better than I that Americans spend almost half their leisure time watching TV. One would expect them to be exposed to unbelievable amounts of information, but the mysterious thing is that they are wholly ignorant of some problems, particularly international ones. I am not likely to forget your compatriots' amazement at hearing about developments in Angola. It turned out that they had never suspected that the change of government in Angola was a natural outcome of the defeat of the Portuguese colonialists and the victory of the national liberation movement.

"W. C. There were no sensations, so we did not even mention Angola.

"V. K. What about the Vietnam War?

"W. C. Vietnam was altogether different. The war was reported, and in detail. Later it turned out that Americans had been duped both about the character and the progress of the war. People did not know that it was an act of aggression on our part and that we had lost out in Vietnam.

"V. K. This sounds strange coming from you: Aren't you responsible in large measure for informing your countrymen?

"W. C. I repeat, don't overestimate the opportunities I have. When I select news items and comment on them I have to remember that CBS has strong competition. Don't forget that our company is a commercial venture, fully dependent on advertisers".<sup>3</sup>

George Gerbner, Dean of the Communications School, University of Pennsylvania, draws attention to another characteristic feature of US television. As a leading authority on the social implications of television, he has spent 15 years studying the content of 1,600 programmes and their impact on 15,000 viewers. His main conclusion is that TV viewers are offered a grossly distorted picture of the world, but tend to consider it more real than reality itself.

Privileged social groups, such as businessmen, industrialists, bankers and leading professionals, are lauded and even lionized while "blue collars", that is, manual workers, are discriminated against and portrayed as stupid, incompetent and prone to alcohol abuse. Even, prostitutes figure on TV 12 times as often as workers do.

Generally speaking, women are shown on television in

a bad light: they are weak, timid, passive and subordinate to "strong and energetic males". Blacks appear as inferior human beings, almost invariably subordinate to or assisting the white hero. Old folks are mistreated and vilified, and presented as stupid and obstinate.

Violence is another indispensable characteristic of US television. Ten times as many crimes are committed on screen as in real life, although the latter figure is high as well. But the worst thing is that crimes are justified inasmuch as the victims—women, the elderly, foreigners and the "inferior classes"—are portrayed as "second-rate" citizens.

The "social narcotic" effect of television consists in that it offers fast and easy solutions to complex problems, and fosters a facile and stereotypical approach to them. The use of force is shown as a means of resolving problems and this influences viewers' behaviour. Specialists estimate that at least 85,000 crimes are committed under the influence of television. Many researchers are of the opinion that by "selling" consumer goods, US television also sells "the American way of life" and encourages social conformism, alienation, violence, racism, elitism and conservatism.

The US mass media have contributed decisively to the distorted world view most Americans have. The deliberate misrepresentation of socialist Cuba is a good example. The US mass media only mention our country when something happens that provides another pretext for attacking it, such as the defection of some traitor, a statement by some renegade, the publication of a counter-revolutionary pamphlet or a report by a journalist serving imperialism.

The more important events in Cuba's life are never mentioned. Our campaign to eradicate illiteracy, the nationalisation of the sugar industry, the progress in health care (infant mortality is 14 per 1,000 and life expectancy 74 years), and the 50 million copies of books published every year are not considered newsworthy. Nor is the development of socialist democracy or the approval of the Constitution by 96% of our voters. Small wonder that many North Americans are stunned by a visit to Cuba: they simply don't know anything about it.

The mass media may be able to impede and retard the political and ideological maturity of North Americans, but they cannot stop the historical processes or eliminate the objective conditions which make millions all over the world strive for revolutionary change.

<sup>1</sup> See Michael Parenti, *Inventing Reality. The Politics of the Mass Media*, New York, 1986.

<sup>2</sup> R. Valdes Vivo, *Angola: fin del mito de los mercenarios*, La Habana, 1978, pp. 68-69.

<sup>3</sup> Vitaly Kobysh, *Echoes of Swift Changes*, Moscow, 1982, pp. 266-267 (in Russian).



### AN INVITATION TO CONSIDER

All over the world there has been a rush to publish translations of Mikhail Gorbachov's book *Perestroika. New Thinking for Our Country and the World*, not least in the Arab East, and in Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt in particular.

In Jordan it was the Committee of Graduates from Soviet Institutions of Higher Learning, part of the Jordanian-Soviet Friendship Society, that did the translation, which was then put out by Dar El Karmal publishers. The public was already acquainted with part two of the book, *New Thinking and the World*, from instalments published by *Al-Dustour*, a daily newspaper.

The foreword to the Jordanian edition says: "Gorbachov invites us to a constant and frank dialogue, to be held openly, not behind closed doors. He admits he's got no ready recipes to offer, but notes the vast energy of human thought that has fostered new thinking in the world."

In Lebanon the job of translation and publication was taken up by Dar Al Farabi, a publishing company in Beirut whose work over the last thirty years has earned them a high reputation throughout the Arab world.

In Egypt *Perestroika* has been printed by Dar ash-Shorouk, whose owner and director Muhammad el-Moalim checked the translation himself. The country's major book publishing company is closely cooperating with Saudi Arabia, where it distributes its mainly religious publications. It also has a branch in Great Britain. The first edition of Gorbachov's work sold out very quickly and was soon reprinted.

*Perestroika* is accompanied by a preface in the shape of a separate 20-page booklet. The liberal intellectual who wrote it, Hazim Al Bablawi, a professor of economics at Alexandria University, points out: "It is an important book, not only because its author is the major figure in a great power, the Soviet Union, but also because he looks at the foundations of his country's system without cutting corners... The value of Mikhail Gorbachov's book is determined not by the changes it may trigger in the USSR itself. If the ideas suggested in this work find success, they are bound to exert a major impact on many states, and even the form and nature of world relations may change under their influence."

Al Bablawi stresses that the Soviet leader follows the Marxist method and the Leninist traditions in expounding his thoughts, and goes on to say that the cornerstone of *perestroika* consists in a basic concern for the long-term interests of society, which may involve getting rid of certain precepts. Central to these interests is the desire to advance and refine society.

The preface attempts to reveal the main aim of Gorbachov's book, defining it as a call to grasp the realities

of our time and look to the future. Not only does the Soviet leader recognise war's inadmissibility, but also argues for pooled efforts by states to tackle numerous global problems.

Hazim Al Bablawi says that difficulties in the management of the Soviet economy are examined in the book with boldness rare in a person occupying such a high office, "and the more so in a one-party state". What are the causes of those difficulties? Marx and Engels predicted that capitalism was bound to evolve towards socialism, but they could not foresee the situation after a socialist revolution. According to the Egyptian professor, socialists were unprepared to manage the economy and obviously lacked a scientific basis, adding that their negative attitudes to bourgeois economic thought prevented them from taking advantage of many kinds of modern economic analysis.

Economic reform, he continues, is inseparable from democracy or pluralism. Any discussion on the role of bureaucrats in economic management inevitably involves questions on the system of decision-making and the extent to which bureaucrats take part in it. Hence Gorbachov's demand in the book that all facets of Soviet society should be broadly democratised—the very essence of perestroika.

Stressing that the issues raised by changes in the USSR are among the most talked-about these days, the professor says: "Gorbachov offers none of his own opinions or proposals as ultimate solutions. Rather, he raises issues and invites us to consider."

In conclusion, Hazim Al Bablawi asks whether Gorbachov's efforts will be successful, or whether we shall see yet another well-intentioned plan going astray. "Time alone will tell. But Gorbachov has already added new words to the political lexicon. The words *perestroika* and *glasnost* are known the world over, joining the other Russian words that have entered our consciousness... But perestroika is not simply a lexicographical addition. Today, more than ever before, international relations need to be restructured, as do those relations characteristic of the Arab world. How much we need an Arab perestroika!"

In late 1988 another Egyptian publishing house, Dar Al Moustakbal Al Arabi, issued its own translation of *Perestroika*. It was done by Fouad Balboa, Egypt's master translator. This company's output is much in demand among progressives. Muhammad Faiiek, its proprietor, was a minister of national orientation under Nasser, and now belongs to the top circles of the Arab Socialist Nasserite Party. Unlike those that went before, this new edition includes Mikhail Gorbachov's speech at the 19th All-Union CPSU Conference.

Other translations of *Perestroika* have also appeared in the Arab press. For example, the Tunisian newspaper *Al-Tariq al-Jadid* published the book in consecutive issues.

The events taking place in the Soviet Union are of enor-

mous interest to the Arab peoples and they are regularly commented upon by press, radio and television.

Mohamed Magdi  
CAMAL

## BASIC FLAWS

Scott Lash and John Urry, *THE END OF ORGANISED CAPITALISM*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1987, 383 pp.

This book bravely tackles a vast theme. Scott and Urry's thesis is that capitalism has entered a new era. "Organised capitalism", in which the concentration and centralisation of industrial, banking and commercial capital was a central feature, has been transformed into "disorganised capitalism" in which the growth of the world market has meant that national markets have become less regulated by nationally-based corporations. Capital, they argue, has been effectively de-concentrated. Regulation by national states is now less important and less effective. At the same time the class formation of the advanced industrial capitalist states has been transformed with a dramatic decline in the size of the manual working class. Culture has become fragmented and more pluralistic, as have politics.

The authors, sociologists working from the University of Lancaster in Britain, base their thesis on comparative studies of the political economy and cultures of France, Britain, the Federal Republic of Germany, Sweden and the United States. They argue that the implications of the changes they identify are profound. For example, the era of "corporatism" in which the state plays an important part in fixing wages alongside national employers' federations and trade unions is finished. There is no real potential for social democratic reform using nationalised, mass-producing corporations and Keynesian techniques of demand management. Above all, the authors argue that "the reconstruction of a viable left political culture cannot proceed via the condescension of the 'new' social forces to class forces, but must proceed through genuine dialogue" (p. 312).

Many of the authors' observations about advanced, industrial capitalist societies are accurate if not novel. The most interesting aspect of their work is the attempt to link cultural changes with social and economic transformations. They argue that "post-modern" cultural forms are both caused by and contribute to the reality of everyday life of consumerism in these societies.

There are, however, fundamental flaws in the analysis and conception of this book which make it of only limited use. A major limitation is their failure to probe the process

of the internationalisation of capital which they themselves argue is central to the new era of disorganised capitalism.

It is, for example, simply not possible to understand the development of modern capitalism without referring to Japan. Japan is of truly global political and economic significance. It is in Japan that new production methods have been pioneered and applied on a mass scale. It is Japan which has been the great challenger of US economic power. Today, there is serious discussion about the "Japanisation" of industry in Western Europe. Japan plays a crucial role in world equity and money markets. The Japanese government has a great say in the international monetary system and in trade agreements.

But, Japan simply does not feature in the book. This rather typical failure of Western European cultural chauvinism undermines many of the book's claims. Japan is a more highly regulated society than any of those analysed. Cooperation between the state- and privately-owned capital has been intimate and intense. The fruits of such cooperation have formed a central part of the challenge to the United States' economic hegemony. This important reality lies outside the authors' framework and so it is simply not analysed. This is most unsatisfactory.

The references to international economic questions are unsatisfactory in other ways as well. For example, we live in an era of great and continuing economic exploitation of the peoples of the developing nations by banks and industrial corporations based in the industrial capitalist countries. But this reality is overlooked by the authors. Instead, relations between the industrial capitalist countries and the Third World are reduced to "the export of the jobs of part of the First World proletariat" and the "export of labour intensive activities to 'world market factories' in the Third World".

The role of the long-term decline in the relative prices of commodities in helping capital accumulation in Japan, Western Europe and the United States is overlooked. The international debt crisis and the role of the IMF in the last six years is mistakenly assessed.

The debt crisis that erupted in 1982 marked the end of a period in which industrial country based banks lent to developing country governments as if there were no tomorrow, nor any serious form of bank regulation. Since then, the single most striking feature in the evolution of the debt crisis has been the ability of the banks to cooperate together to avert major losses or serious disruption to their main financial markets. The ability of the banks in concert with the IMF to pass on the costs of the debt crisis to the peoples of the indebted developing countries has been breathtaking. It has shown a highly developed practice of cooperation and effective self-regulation under IMF supervision.

The capitalist world's financial system has certainly been rapidly internationalised and de-regulated. But the ability of the industrialised country governments, banks and supranational institutions to cooperate together has also grown. This crucially important phenomenon is not seriously tackled by the authors. Yet its importance is such that it undermines their central thesis that the capitalist world is moving into an era of "disorganised capitalism".

The ability of the key institutions within capitalist societies to cooperate effectively together at times of crisis has been highlighted by three key tests in the late 1970s and 1980s, each of which could have seriously disrupted capitalist rule in the advanced industrial countries—none of which did. These are, firstly, the response to the oil price rise of 1979 where a period of recession combined with the efforts of the advanced industrial states led to a great weakening of OPEC and a major fall in oil prices. Secondly, in the response to the international debt crisis where concerted action has ensured that this crisis has been visited on the peoples of the developing countries, not on the banks or other core institutions of industrial capitalism. Thirdly, in response to the world stock market crash of October 1987 in which concerted government action has ensured that there has been no dramatic depression. Yet in the previous era of "organised capitalism" described by the authors it was precisely the inability of capitalist states and institutions to cooperate which meant that the 1929 stock market crash heralded a severe virtually worldwide depression.

I have other criticisms as well. The discussion of class is rather crude. There is no real analysis of the emergence of an "underclass" which is an important phenomenon in Britain today as well as an established feature of United States society. The authors have remarkably little to say about the response of the Right to the changes they identify and yet it has often been the Right in the advanced industrial countries which has responded rapidly to many of the features of modern social development which are correctly identified.

This is a tantalising book. It addresses issues of great importance, has many valid observations and makes interesting comparisons. However, the theoretical model of disorganised capitalism that it uses is flawed, and this means that important contemporary realities are simply not tackled or are defined away. Perhaps this is why the concluding chapter is so disappointing. It is also a shame that the fairly inaccessible language often used will ensure that only academic professionals and a few dedicated students will actually read the whole book.

**David GREEN,**  
Political Committee Member, EC,  
Communist Party of Great Britain



# A CANDLE IN THE DARK

Muhammad Said Abdullah (Muhsin), *ADEN: THE PEOPLE'S STRUGGLE AND THE EMPIRE'S DEFEAT*, Ibn Hal-dun and al-Amal, Aden, 1988, 368 pp. (in Arabic).

This book, written by a Yemen Socialist Party Political Bureau member and CC secretary, looks at a previously unexplored theme—guerrilla activity in South Yemen's freedom fight against the British colonialists in 1964-1967.

As the historian S. A. Mukbil notes in the foreword, it is a documentary account, and the author himself was among the heroes who organised the guerrillas (p.17). As such he is able accurately to place the events in time and space and describes with careful objectivity the preparations for and conduct of battles.

In the 1960s our port city Aden was a British war base. From here in 1956 British ships set out to take part in the triple aggression against Egypt, a country then in the throes of revolutionary change. The base was also used to quell other freedom movements in the region and to protect the interests of imperialism.

On September 26, 1962 a revolution in North Yemen toppled the monarchy and established the Arabian Peninsula's first national patriotic, republican system.

A year later, on October 14, 1963, in the mountain area of Radfan, National Front-led revolutionary forces started a national armed struggle to free South Yemen from British occupation (p.49).

This is the focus of the first section, which also describes the events in Aden itself, where the guerrillas, led by Abd al-Fattah Ismail, operated in extremely difficult conditions. In analysing the political, military and socioeconomic factors behind the patriotic struggle, the author views it as a current in the Arab people's liberation movement. It was the support of the people that enabled the *fedayeen* to make Aden, then the British command headquarters in the Middle East, a hell for the British (see p. 26).

In summer 1967 the revolutionaries freed the city's old part—Crater<sup>1</sup>—and held it for more than two weeks. This was a turning point in the revolution. Village after village was liberated as committees of popular power were set up.

The next section reveals for the first time a number of party documents on organisation, politics and armed struggle, and gives a list of Aden freedom and guerrilla leaders, even those who in later years disavowed the revolution or changed their positions. It also gives examples of bulletins and leaflets issued by the National Front—before independence they were the main vehicle for spreading patriotic information.

Other important documents include the plans of such big guerrilla operations as the attack on Al-Mansura Prison. The minutes of the talks between the NF and Great Britain in Geneva, crowned with a Declaration of Independence, make compelling reading.

These last documents, which signify the final victory in the battle for Yemeni freedom, deserve special mention. It was the success of our patriotic forces that largely determined the course of the talks. As a result the Declaration accords said that:

Arabia's South would receive independence on November 30, 1967, to be known thereafter as Independence Day; all the territories of South Yemen, to be evacuated by British troops by Independence Day, would become part of a People's Republic of South Yemen.<sup>2</sup> Independence day was to be confirmed by an official decision of the political organisation, the National Front, which, representing the people and controlling the territory of the new Republic, would form the government;

Great Britain would take steps to evacuate its forces from the territory of the Republic and end the occupation by Independence Day.

Beside these major provisions, the Declaration contains a number of other clauses which spell out the decision (pp. 211-239). Again, all these documents are being published for the first time, and will serve as an important source for researchers.

The third and last section comprises a selection of reports and communiques from the period of the armed struggle for independence. These Arab press materials give an idea not only of revolutionary events, but of the very atmosphere of the people's liberation war. They reflect the diversity of opinions and political tendencies of the time, both in Yemen and in Great Britain.

Work on the book took a great deal of effort, and the author himself allows for omissions and failures. He asks anyone interested in historical accuracy to send their own accounts of events in order to correct any mistakes. Students of our revolution will then be better able to document this period and determine the historical truth.

As noted in the introduction, by sharing his experience of guerrilla struggle, the author of the book renders Yemeni national culture a patriotic service and makes a real stride towards an in-depth study of this important period in Yemen's history. "For it's better to light a candle than simply curse the darkness" (p.20).

**Said Ahmed al-Janahi,  
Yemeni journalist**

<sup>1</sup> This part of Aden is located in the crater of an extinct volcano. —Ed.

<sup>2</sup> On November 30, 1970 the country was renamed People's Democratic Republic of Yemen.—Ed.



## HISTORY OF THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT: FACTS, PEOPLE, IDEAS

### WHAT KIND OF MAN WAS GENERAL SANDINO?

We have been rereading many pages from the history of the international revolutionary and communist movement for various reasons: some have been forgotten, others given the wrong interpretation, and still others have had the seal of secrecy on them for decades. The archives of the Third Communist International have also been closed to the public for years. Now, by agreement between the parties, the restrictions have been lifted and historians are able to read hitherto inaccessible documents.

The *WMR* Commission on Scientific Information and Documentation intends to acquaint readers with the results of current research. The first set of documents in this series, set out below, throws fresh light on one of the most remarkable figures in the history of the international liberation movement, Augusto César Sandino.

Many books have been written about Sandino's life and work, but they contain little about his relations with the Communists. It is hardly surprising then that discussions continue as to whether he had any contacts with the Communists at all, and whether he accepted the Marxist view. Now and again, these discussions amount to a theoretical and political assessment of Sandinism. Some recall what Sandino said in reply to a question from the Argentinian journalist Ramon de Belausteguigoitia in February

1933 on whether the Sandinistas were Communists: "Repeated attempts have been made to push our movement away from the path of national defence and to give it ... a social character. I have tried hard to resist this. Our movement is national and has an anti-imperialist orientation."<sup>1</sup> The temptation here is to divorce Sandino and the Communists, and even to range them ideologically and politically against each other. Wherein lies the truth? The value of the documents published below lies in the fact that they provide a historically authentic, if not simple or exhaustive, answer to this question.

In this context, special interest attaches to a letter from the Latin American Secretariat of the Comintern's Executive Committee to the Central Committee of the Mexican Communist Party on June 24, 1930, a copy of which was also sent to the CPUSA, the International Anti-Imperialist League, and the South American Secretariat of the Comintern's Executive Committee. It reflects the contradictory attitude of the Comintern to the anti-imperialist movements as a whole. It seems to contain two opposing elements: on the one hand the urge of the international centre of the communist movement to force the liberation struggle of the peoples generally, and of the Nicaraguan people in particular, into a Procrustean bed of theoretical schemes by which the governing bodies of the Comintern were then held captive; and on the other the realism of practical advice and recommendations which derived from a sincere desire to help the Sandinistas and to support the struggle of the insurgents.

It is no longer worth determining where exactly in these documents the Comintern was right and where it was wrong. Our sole purpose is to draw attention to the facts in order to help restore historical truth and the substance of the events connected with Sandino's activity and with the assessment of his struggle by the Communists.

Sandino never considered himself a Marxist, and he probably never was one. But as an honest patriot and revolutionary democrat, as a man of the working people, he regarded the workers and the peasants as the mainstay of

These documents have been prepared for the press by Leonid Babichenko and Svetlana Rosental of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism under the CPSU CC. The introductory commentary was written by Natalia Smirnova, Cand. Sc. (Hist.).

his movement. But that did not deprive Sandino of a unique quality rarely to be found among prominent leaders, including those in the revolutionary movement—when it was a question of the basic interests of the liberation struggle and the need to involve in it the greatest number of allies he was not allergic to the social and political backgrounds of others. For a long time the Salvadoran Communist Farabundo Martí was a close associate of Sandino's. They remained friends even after the break which was caused by their political differences. But then, Sandino did not disavow contacts and even cooperation with those who were in the opposite camp, those who had anti-communist views, whenever this was required by the conditions and tasks of the struggle. Nor was this any kind of political conformism or lack of principle. He valued highly the ideas of social emancipation and national liberation, even more so the concrete steps leading to their realisation. That is why Sandino consciously entered into negotiations with President Juan Bautista Sacasa of Nicaragua, a typical liberal bourgeois politician, when it became possible and necessary to establish civil peace in the country following the expulsion of the US marines.

In Sandino's personal documents, discovered in the archives of the Comintern, we find confirmation of the fact that he did not reject concrete assistance from the Communists, but displayed initiative in the search for contacts in order to organise joint action, and heard out their assessments of the revolutionary processes on the continent.

Below are two of his letters to the General Secretary of the Mexican Communist Party Hernan Laborde which recreate the atmosphere of comradely relations between the Sandinistas and the Mexican Communists. These and other documents presented below show the extent of the mutual respect and trust which existed between the members of the various revolutionary movements at the end of the 1920s.

These documents are also interesting for another reason: they show an important episode in Sandino's political biography. *The Chronology of the Sandinista Resistance* by Carlos Fonseca, the founder of the Sandinista National Liberation Front, records the fact that in early April 1930, the International Anti-Imperialist League made public the facts about the "completely false" charges against Sandino alleging that he had accepted \$60,000 in exchange for agreeing to end the armed struggle.<sup>2</sup>

Further evidence was only discovered recently, and we can now add to the picture showing what kind of man Augusto César Sandino, "the free people's general", was.

The archive documents presented below were handed over by the Institute of Marxism-Leninism under the CPSU CC to the Institute of History in Managua. *WWR* expresses its gratitude to Bayardo Altamirano, the Ambassador of the Republic of Nicaragua in Czechoslovakia, for his assistance in preparing these documents for publication.

**DOCUMENT No. 1. Letter from the Latin American Secretariat of the Comintern Executive Committee to the Central Committee of the Mexican Communist Party on the need for the Communists to support the national liberation movement led by Augusto César Sandino**

Moscow, June 24, 1930

**Central Committee,  
Mexican Communist Party  
Copies to: CPUSA, International Anti-Imperialist League and South American Secretariat, Comintern Executive Committee**

Comrades,

The Political Secretariat of the Comintern Executive Committee, having found out from your material about Sandino and his differences with you, and also about his ties with the Mexican government, has decided to inform you of its opinion on the tactics conducted (by your) party and on further policy with respect to Sandino.

With regard to the question of the Communists' attitude to Sandino there arises the problem of your attitude to the revolutionary, anti-imperialist movements generally; to movements originating and developing under the direction of liberal petty-bourgeois leaders.

The events in Nicaragua are not isolated from the events in Haiti and Santo Domingo, which are now the scene of military operations, and of a mass struggle against imperialism led by liberal politicians who are agreeing to compromises with Washington, thereby becoming new agents of imperialism. A similar situation may take shape tomorrow in Cuba and in other countries of Latin America.

How should the Communists relate to these movements, which spring from the discontent of the masses and their uprising against imperialism; to movements headed by petty-bourgeois leaders who often have no other purpose than to seize power and set up a dictatorship of the class they represent, thereby serving the interests of imperialism instead of continuing the struggle against it? We should not present these leaders of the national revolutionary movement as heroes of the workers' and peasants' revolution, nor regard them and depict them to the masses as Communists and consistent revolutionaries capable of carrying the anti-imperialist struggle through to its consummation, or of sharing our views and understanding of the prospects for the anti-imperialist struggle.

The mistake you have made with respect to Sandino in the past and in your conversation with him,<sup>3</sup> was that you (tried to) represent him as a leader capable of carrying the struggle to the end and of setting up a workers' and peasants' government in Nicaragua. The mistake also consisted in your wish to see him act as a Communist and issue statements against the government of Mexico, that is, to see

him conduct a consistent communist or revolutionary policy, instead of regarding him such as he is and such as he always has been—a liberal leader seeking power and so having to carry on an armed struggle against Yankee imperialism and its present agents in Nicaragua. This armed struggle against the Imperialist forces in the present international situation is objectively an aspect of the world proletarian revolution, constituting a component part of the resistance of the colonial and semi-colonial peoples to imperialism, shaking and undermining colonial exploitation and spreading among the oppressed peoples the idea of armed revolutionary struggle and uprising against the colonial regime.

Our task with respect to this struggle—as it is with respect to any armed struggle against imperialism, even if it is headed by liberal leaders who tomorrow may well seek a compromise with imperialism and put themselves at its service, though they may now be fighting inconsistently, striving to contain the pressure of the masses and to subordinate it to their own purposes—our task is to support this struggle against imperialism and to assist it with all the means at our disposal; as far as we can, openly to criticise the inconsistent, opportunistic and capitulationist agreements by the leaders of this revolutionary movement in order to explain to the stirring masses the mistakes of their leaders and to indicate the ways of consistent struggle.

Despite the rupture in relations between us, Sandino received weapons from the Mexican government in order to return to Nicaragua and resume the struggle against the Yankee marines and the troops of the Nicaraguan government, a puppet of Washington's. Cables received in the last few days show that he has taken up arms. Mounting a campaign against him in these conditions for his having removed his Communist secretary<sup>4</sup> and broken off relations with us would be a serious mistake, a direct betrayal (of the cause) of the revolutionary anti-imperialist struggle, and would play into the hands of Yankee imperialism...

Sandino has taken up arms, and he must have the support of the Communists and all the other working people in the struggle against Yankee imperialism. We must assist him by agitating, collecting funds, offering technical aid, etc., while criticising his position, representing him as he actually is, giving a clear and precise assessment of his struggle, and pointing out his inconsistency, which was expressed in his differences with the sole international revolutionary force<sup>5</sup> just when he intends to continue the struggle against the strongest and craftiest contingent of the imperialists. We must reaffirm that despite his disagreements with us, we support his struggle in view of its general historical significance. Whether he likes it or not, it is our struggle more than it is his, a struggle of the exploited masses against imperialism.

If we had forces and a communist party in Nicaragua, its role would also consist in taking part in this struggle, instead

of tagging along in the wake of developments, and in carrying on political agitation among the toiling masses which follow Sandino, and within his army, so as to realise their aspirations with the utmost consistency, mounting a struggle for the workers' and peasants' power and resolutely leading them away from the influence of the liberal leader, thereby ensuring the authority of the party of the proletariat. Since there is no communist party in Nicaragua, our task is to make efforts to establish one, and to support Sandino by our participation in the struggle, assisting him with technical means and promoting the conduct of correct political work. In Cuba, where there is a communist party, which has a great influence on the proletariat, its role is to wrest the peasant and petty-bourgeois masses from under the influence of the Nationalist Union, something that will not make it impossible tomorrow, when the hour of the revolutionary struggle against Machado<sup>6</sup> and imperialism strikes, to set up a united front with the nationalists who will take up arms; a united front in which we shall fight for hegemony and the leadership of the masses.

If, as your statement suggests, the anti-imperialist struggle can be carried on only by the communist party, the International Anti-Imperialist League will become nothing but a copy of the Comintern. However, it must be much broader in order to encompass movements like the Sandino movement and help them in every way. Consistent struggle can, of course, be carried to the ultimate goal only by the workers' and peasants' masses under the leadership of the Communists. This is an elementary truth which does not, however, contain within itself the conclusion that it is the Communists alone who can start such a struggle or that it is only a struggle led by the Communists that is revolutionary and anti-imperialist.

Your argument—that Sandino cannot fight against the United States with the aid of weapons received from the Mexican government, an agent of Washington's—appears to be oversimplified. It is absolutely true that the government of Mexico has capitulated to Yankee imperialism, but that does not rule out the existence of contradictions in which it got entangled as it sought to maintain its influence on the masses of workers and peasants by wearing a revolutionary mask. There is no doubt that it would be highly undesirable for Sandino to issue a statement against the Mexican government. Having given Sandino definite aid and secured his silence in return, the government has compensated Washington with another concession. Political life tends to abound in such contradictions, which mock the most clear-cut logical schemes.

Sandino has broken with us, but, in spite of this, we must support his armed struggle against imperialism so as not to give aid, albeit unwittingly, to imperialism. We must give him support and criticise him, showing that his is a revolutionary struggle, even if it is not always consistent. We should support within it all that is revolutionary, and criticise all that is

inconsistent, turning our criticism—and in the present circumstances it must be highly delicate—into assistance, into support for the struggle started by Sandino, and not into a rejection of Sandino, which would only be of service to the Washington government.

Those are the contradictions which dictate to us the need to tie in the political problems facing us with the dialectics of Marx and not with some abstract scholastic logic.

That is why the Political Secretariat of the Communist International Executive Committee invites you to review the political line recorded in your statement of April 30<sup>7</sup> in accordance with the recommendations of these directives.

With friendly greeting,

Latin American Secretariat,  
Communist International

*DOCUMENT No. 2. Augusto César Sandino's letter to Hernan Laborde on his agreement with the assessment of the anti-imperialist movement, and the general situation in Latin America, by the Central Committee of the Mexican Communist Party*

The Army, the Defender of  
Nicaragua's National  
Sovereignty

Merida, Yucatan State,  
Mexico, March 7, 1930

**Comrade Hernan Laborde, General Secretary,  
Mexican Communist Party, A Section of the  
Communist International, Mexico**

Dear Comrade,

We have received your highly valuable communication of February 27, inst., which you, as the General Secretary of the Mexican Communist Party, sent us together with the resolution of your party's Central Committee, which was adopted, according to your letter, on February 22. The resolution deals with the situation in Mexico, the anti-imperialist struggle in this republic, and also in Nicaragua and on the continent.<sup>8</sup>

We fully agree with the view set forth in the resolution adopted by your Central Committee on the present state of the anti-imperialist movement generally, in Mexico, Nicaragua, and on the continent as a whole. In the light of the propositions of this resolution, by which we intend to abide, we, like your Central Committee, consider it necessary urgently to formulate a statement and to circulate it in accordance with the resolution.

We send you this letter to inform you that we have received the resolution and are preparing a statement. We append to this letter our address to the working people of town and country in Nicaragua and Latin America.<sup>9</sup>

In anticipation of your kind reply, we remain fraternally yours,

Homeland and Liberty!

**Augusto César Sandino**

*DOCUMENT No. 3. August César Sandino's letter to Hernan Laborde, General Secretary of the Mexican CP CC requesting assistance in refuting bourgeois press libel against him and in coordinating the efforts of anti-imperialist organisations in the fight for Nicaragua's liberation*

The Army, the Defender of  
Nicaragua's National  
Sovereignty

Merida, Yucatan State,  
Mexico, January 8, 1930

**Citizen Hernan Laborde, General Secretary,  
Mexican Communist Party (A Section of the  
Communist International)**

I have the honour to address you in connection with the clippings from *La Prensa* and *The New York Times* of December 26, 1929, which I have received from New York. These, like some periodicals in Central America, contain a report with reference to an item in *El Universal*,<sup>10</sup> which is published in the federal capital, alleging that I agreed to withdraw from Segovia<sup>11</sup> in return for an offer of \$60,000. The report also says that your party, like the Anti-Imperialist League of America<sup>12</sup> and the Hands Off Nicaragua Committee,<sup>13</sup> are investigating this report, which we naturally declare to be libellous. The report contains hints that "a prominent leader of these organisations" told a reporter of *El Universal* that the persons investigating (this information) are in possession of a photograph of the cheque paid to Sandino. But because the investigation is secret, he was allegedly not able to see a copy of the cheque.

We are not aware of the final decision taken by the Hands Off Nicaragua Committee on the agreement concluded in Veracruz with citizens Federico Bach and Salvador de la Plaza<sup>14</sup> on the merger of this committee with the Anti-Imperialist League of the Americas in order to avoid a dispersal of forces. Nevertheless, we do not believe that the above-mentioned report has come from any of these three organisations. We assume that this is nothing but a lie concocted by the villainous agents of the Yankee pirates. That is why we urgently request information on the measures being taken by the three organisations to expose those who engage in libellous inventions such as that which appeared in the form of a report by the *El Universal* correspondent. The very form in which this libel has been published shows that its author is totally unaware of the firmness of our spirit and of our clear understanding of the responsibility falling on us, and that Sandino and his courageous and fair-minded fellow-fighters, who are of worker and peasant origin, will not be tempted by any price to betray the blood of martyrs who have fallen in the struggle for the liberation of the oppressed...

We repeat that we cannot even entertain the idea that your organisations will remain indifferent to what has been



said. We request an urgent reply and we shall immediately dispatch our representatives to the capital (Mexico.—Ed.) with instructions to take part in investigating the matter, and also to establish close mutual understanding with the anti-imperialist organisations on problems relating to our struggle for Nicaragua's national sovereignty.

This struggle, we reiterate, continues. And it is only some strategic considerations that demand we stay in this fraternal republic<sup>15</sup> for another few days.

On behalf of the army and myself, with a sense of deep gratitude,

Homeland and Liberty!

Augusto César Sandino

*DOCUMENT No. 4. From a statement by the International Secretariat of the Anti-Imperialist League<sup>16</sup> concerning the libel against Augusto César Sandino spread by imperialist propaganda*

Berlin, April 11, 1930

**The libel against General Sandino.**

General Augusto César Sandino, a member of the Executive Committee of the International Anti-Imperialist League, which has carried on a tireless struggle against Yankee imperialism in Nicaragua, was recently the object of grave charges and libel being spread by Wall Street imperialism. These reports allege that General Sandino received the sum of \$60,000 from the United States on condition that he withdraw from the territory of Nicaragua and end the struggle against the US marines and the Moncada government,<sup>17</sup> an agent of imperialism in Nicaragua.

The International Secretariat immediately authorised the Continental Committee of the Anti-Imperialist League of the Americas to carry out an urgent and thorough investigation of these charges, beginning from the time Sandino became a member of the Executive Committee of the International Anti-Imperialist League. The League of Struggle Against Imperialism and For National Independence is politically a non-party organisation. It cannot, of course, be connected with anyone who deliberately weakens or ends the struggle against imperialism. If Sandino agreed to a compromise with US imperialism, he would not only be unfit to perform high functions in the League, but even to remain as a member.

The International Secretariat firmly declares that the investigation carried out by the Continental Committee in Mexico shows that all the accusations recently made against General Sandino are groundless. These accusations were fabricated and circulated by Yankee imperialists with the intention of discrediting in the eyes of the worker and peasant masses in Latin America and the whole world a man who has led the liberation army in Nicaragua and has boldly stood up to the powerful forces of Yankee imperialism...

General Sandino himself has personally investigated

these libellous inventions and has reached the same conclusions as we have. He had openly declared his intention not only to carry on the struggle against US imperialism, but also against all the governments and tyrannies in Latin America that are the instruments of imperialism, including the government of Mexico, which has become patently counterrevolutionary....

The enslaved peoples regard him (Sandino) not just as a Nicaraguan guerrilla fighting the invaders of his native soil, but as a comrade who is true to the programme of the International Anti-Imperialist League, an international organisation of whose Executive Committee he is a member.

**League of Struggle Against Imperialism,  
for National Independence  
International Secretariat**

Willy Münzenberg, Virendranath Chattopadhyaya<sup>18</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sergio Ramírez, *El Pensamiento Vivo de Sandino*, Managua, 1981, p. 471.

<sup>2</sup> See Carlos Fonseca, *Obras*, Vol. 2, Managua, p. 121.

<sup>3</sup> A joint meeting, on February 3, 1930, of representatives of the Mexican Communist Party, the Anti-Imperialist League of the Americas, and the Hands Off Nicaragua Committee with Sandino, Farabundo Martí and other officers of the Sandinista Army headquarters.

<sup>4</sup> A reference to Farabundo Martí, who was in disagreement with Sandino in early 1930 on the prospects of the struggle against the US invaders. Sandino and his immediate associates held that the main objective of the struggle was to liberate Nicaragua from the foreign invaders, while Martí also wanted radical economic and social changes in the country.

<sup>5</sup> i.e., the Communist International

<sup>6</sup> Gerardo Machado y Morales (1871-1939), president of Cuba from 1925 to 1933, who set up a brutal dictatorship and was overthrown in the general strike in 1933.

<sup>7</sup> This statement by the Central Committee of the Mexican Communist Party condemned Sandino for having received aid from the Mexican authorities.

<sup>8</sup> On February 22, 1930, the Central Committee of the Mexican Communist Party adopted a resolution whose draft had been agreed with Sandino. It contained criticism of the Mexican government, which then, under US pressure, broke off diplomatic relations with the USSR and stepped up its persecution of the Mexican Communist Party, the trade unions and other progressive organisations. In accordance with the resolution Sandino expressed readiness to issue a public statement censuring the policy of the Mexican government with respect to the liberation struggle in Nicaragua and the anti-imperialist movement on the continent.

<sup>9</sup> A reference to Sandino's address of February 26, 1930, to the working people of Nicaragua and the continent, calling on them to join the revolutionary Hispano-American Trade Union Confederation.

<sup>10</sup> *El Universal*, a Mexican bourgeois newspaper.

<sup>11</sup> Las Segovias, the collective name for several departments in the north of Nicaragua where Sandino's contingents were concentrated.

<sup>12</sup> A reference to the All-America, or Continental Anti-Imperialist League of the Americas set up in January 1925. Its governing body was headquartered in Mexico.

<sup>13</sup> The Hands Off Nicaragua Committee operated from January 1928 to February 1930 at the head of the movement of solidarity with the Nicaraguan people's struggle against the US invaders.

<sup>14</sup> Federico Bach and Salvador de la Plaza, representatives of the Hands Off Nicaragua Committee. The former was a Swiss Communist and a representative of the International Secretariat of the

Anti-Imperialist League, and the latter, a Venezuelan Communist, a lawyer and secretary of the Anti-Imperialist League of the Americas. On Sandino's initiative, they reached an agreement with him in June 1929 on the merger of the Committee with the Anti-Imperialist League of the Americas.

<sup>15</sup> Refers to Sandino's stay in Mexico from June 1929 to April 1930 in an effort to obtain weapons from the Mexican government.

<sup>16</sup> Anti-Imperialist League (1927-1935), a broad non-party organisation of the united anti-imperialist front of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America, with Communists, among others, on its leadership.

<sup>17</sup> Jose Maria Moncada (1872-1945), Nicaraguan general and politician who, in his capacity as commander of the liberal party's army, enabled the United States to continue its occupation of the country.

<sup>18</sup> Willy Münzenberg (1889-1940), a leader of the German and international working-class movement, a secretary of the Anti-Imperialist League from 1927.

Virendranath Chattopadhyaya (1880-1940), Indian Communist and a secretary of the Anti-Imperialist League.

## THE COURAGE OF FORESIGHT

*More about Bohumir Smeral*

B. Tserendorzh from Mongolia wrote to the editors: "I learned from Vladimír Kunovjaneč's article 'Policy Makers, Not Commentators' in *WMR* No. 9, 1988, that a new textbook on CPCz history is going to be published in Czechoslovakia. Kunovjaneč says, *Inter alia*: 'We also want to give an account of the Communists whose role was not always fully appreciated in the past. Among them, for example, is Bohumir Smeral,<sup>1</sup> one of the founders of our party who worked in the Communist International, and some other figures'. Could *WMR* publish something about Bohumir Smeral before the new textbook appears?' Below is an article by Ph. D. Jan Galandauer of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the CPCz Central Committee.

On November 15, 1938, Bohumir Smeral took a plane from Prague's Ruzyně Airport for Paris. But Paris was just a stopover: Smeral was going to the Comintern in Moscow. The 58-year-old politician was leaving Czechoslovakia, which, after the shameful Munich deal, had been left by the Western allies to fend for herself against the Nazi juggernaut. His heart was heavy: would he ever return and see his family and friends? Hardly likely: physicians made no secret of his grave illness...

There seemed to be little hope as he left his homeland at her time of trial. Everything Smeral believed in and had been working for was doomed. All hope for a collective security system in Europe had evaporated, a broad popular antifascist front in Czechoslovakia had never materialised, and the

government had capitulated to Hitler. Smeral keenly felt the tragedy, but he was not broken and did not give in to despair or panic.

This outstanding Czechoslovak Communist wrote in a commentary on the occasion of the Comintern's 20th anniversary (written most probably for Radio Moscow's foreign service): "I am writing this two months after Czechoslovakia was overrun by Hitler and I had to leave my homeland, where I had been born and with which my work inextricably bound me. I am writing this on the very day I heard the news from Catalonia...<sup>2</sup> Setbacks are painful in every clash. But it is not isolated battles but 'the final conflict' that is crucial in these immense historical and social upheavals. It isn't an exaggeration to say, even today, in view of the main domestic tendencies in the fascist states and in the capitalist world as a whole, that the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia, Italy's and Germany's intervention in Spain and Japan's aggression against China are another step to the fall of world fascism rather than the road to victory".

Smeral grieved deeply over the situation, when it seemed that "the time is out of joint", as Shakespeare put it. As a man, a Communist and a Czechoslovak patriot, he well understood the tragedy, but also realised that the train of dismal events of 1938-1939 held some hope for the future: fascist aggression called for the establishment of a broad antifascist front on a supranational, universal level. The betrayal of the British and French leaders dispelled many illusions, and the oppressed and doomed peoples turned their eyes to the Soviet Union.

With his scientific foresight Smeral was able to discern against the dark and dismal background the outlines of a powerful antifascist coalition which was to defeat Nazism and bring freedom to the peoples.

Smeral felt deeply for his beleaguered homeland. He presented a desolate picture of the Nazi enslavement of the Czech people in his article "A Colony in the Heart of Europe" published by the magazine *Svetový rozhled* (View of the World). The author forcefully demonstrated that the very existence of the Czech people was in jeopardy and concluded his article, replete with examples of Nazi terror, violence and genocide, with a far-sighted optimistic prediction: "History has already seen 'successes' leading into the abyss. The Czech people's struggle for national rebirth and independence will play an enormous role at the decisive stage of the great battle against fascism. The power of the Soviet state in the east and the strength of the democratic masses in the west of Europe and in America are a guarantee that the Czech people will not be alone in their *just struggle for liberation*."

Among Smeral's later works, a piece written in German under the title "Help the Persecuted Jews!" deserves special mention. It is not known whether a manifesto of this kind was ever published; it was most probably meant to be broadcast by Radio Moscow to Germany. He displayed remarkable in-

sight in that text. We know that Western, especially British and American politicians and public opinion did not believe the Nazis capable of such massive and atrocious crimes against humanity, not only in 1940 but throughout the war, when genocide against the Jews reached unheard-of proportions. The scope of the tragedy became clear only after films and photographs showing thousands of corpses and cremation furnaces in concentration camps had been publicly shown.

Smeral's perspicacity was particularly impressive in those circumstances. He wrote as if he had already seen Oswięcim, Majdanek, Germany lying in ruins and the Nuremberg Trial. "I am a Czech, we are a small people. My country also groans under the Prussian invader's heavy boot. My suffering people also cry for help. But we understand the depth of the suffering of others precisely because we ourselves suffer. Our own pain makes us understand that of all the peoples enslaved by Nazism, the Jews are the most oppressed... Let there be no delusions on that score. It is absolutely clear that what Nazism is doing to the Jews today, will tomorrow (if it keeps power, of course) fall to the lot of other peoples, counted by the Nazis among the 'inferior races'."

Smeral formulated and substantiated the preconditions for the development of a liberation movement. He wrote a *Textbook of the People's War of Liberation* on the theoretical basis of Lenin's *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*. He drew the conclusion that the Czech and the Slovak working class should lead a revolution of national liberation and thus pave the way for its transformation into a socialist revolution. He also formulated a programme for the rebirth of the Czechoslovak Republic, although that goal seemed dim at the time: after Munich and March 15, 1939 not only the Nazis but also senior politicians in many West European states thought that our country had been erased from the geopolitical map and that the Czech lands had forever become part of Germany. Even Czech bourgeois emigres were sceptical about the prospects for the restoration of Czechoslovakia as an independent state.

Smeral stressed specifically in his plan for the rebirth of the Czechoslovak Republic that it should be really new—that is, have a new social base—so that the road which had led to Munich should never be repeated. He wrote: "The Czechoslovak people themselves, who have borne the brunt of the struggle and won victory, will decide on the state

organisation of a new Czechoslovak Republic. The renewal of Czechoslovak democracy will be different from that of 1918. The clearer we define our programme of national resistance, the greater energy the masses will put into their struggle, and the nearer our victory will be. The broadest possible, truly popular front should be organised to fight Hitler."

Working on theory, Smeral gradually worked out the basic principles for a broad political popular front, which was eventually established, thanks largely to the efforts of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. Smeral propounded his theoretical views at a time when there was not even an inkling of a worldwide antifascist coalition, when the Nazis were yet to attack the Soviet Union. Many people in our country thought at the time that Germany would not turn against the Soviet Union at all, and even the gloomiest pessimists could not foresee the deaths of millions upon millions of people, particularly in the Soviet Union, or the spread of fascism, the deep rift in the resistance movement in the Czech lands and Slovakia, and the impossibility of a common approach among the bourgeoisie and the Communists in the antifascist struggle. Smeral, however, envisioned all that. He looked as far ahead as the grim June of 1941, and the glorious May of 1945. In the spring of 1941 he died in a Moscow hospital after a long illness.

History proved the theoretical profundity and perspicacity of Bohumir Smeral, a Communist of courageous foresight such as few people possess today.

Jan GALANDAUER  
Czechoslovak historian

<sup>1</sup> Bohumir Smeral (October 25, 1880 - May 8, 1941), a Czech politician, journalist and writer, one of the founders of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and a notable figure in the Czechoslovak and international communist movement, was a lawyer by training. Joined the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Workers' Party in 1896 and in 1916-1917 chaired its Executive Committee. Left the party over differences with right-wingers. Contributed to the establishment of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, was a member of the CPCz Central Committee and its Political Bureau. Was active in bringing the CPCz to the Communist International in 1921, and from 1926 on worked permanently in its various bodies. Left for Moscow in 1938, and until his death was a member of the foreign commission of the Communist International and participated in the Moscow leadership of the CPCz.

<sup>2</sup> During the Civil War in Spain, Catalonia was the Republicans' main stronghold. Smeral means the upheaval of March 1938, caused by the Francoists' advance on the western front with Germany's and Italy's support. —J.G.

## From Our Mailbag

## DESPITE THE DANGER

I've been a regular reader of *WWR* for over 30 years, that is, throughout its existence. It was a delight to find the column "Readers as Coauthors" in No.1 for 1989. I don't know how it is for other people who write to you, but it never occurred to me that writing letters, making enquiries or offering suggestions were not the only way of communicating with you, or that you welcome personal views on different modern problems and accounts of events your readers were involved in. I think this sort of participation will make the journal more varied and reader-oriented.

A few words about myself. I am a lecturer in history at the university of Frunze, Kirghizia. In 1987, I received my doctorate. I consider teaching my life's work and so I am doing my best to give young students the benefit of my experience and that of my friends who helped me to become an educated man and a Communist.

Communists Ivan and Klavdia Bashkirtsev are among the fine people I have met over the years. They were active in the October Revolution and fought in two subsequent wars, the Civil War and WW II. I made their acquaintance in Moscow where, as a young man, I came to enrol in the university.

The high point in our long friendship came when they gave me, almost as a bequest, a unique book which I still cherish to this day. The book, *Over the Great Grave*, is a collection of material from Lenin's funeral: orations by his comrades-in-arms, writers, scientists, cultural figures, workers and peasants, rare photographs and reprints from papers and magazines. It appeared as a limited edition several days after the event.

There was a time when possession of this book, containing as it does the names of Lenin's close associates who were killed in the Stalin-era purges, took considerable personal courage and a profound conviction

that Lenin's cause would survive repressions and slander. The Bashkirtsevs told me how in the late 1930s their house had been searched for the book. The men in charge had shown them a list of those who owned copies of the book (the entire print-run had been mailed to a specified number of persons) and threatened severe punishment. Yet my old friend, who in his student years had become well-versed in clandestine party work, managed to preserve it. "As far as I know," Bashkirtsev reminisced, "of all the people who received a copy of *Over the Great Grave* I am the sole survivor. They wanted to destroy the book too, but I saved by copy."

When Uncle Vanya Bashkirtsev, as I called him, was gone, his wife, Klavdia Filippovna, came to see me in Frunze and brought along the book. There was a dedication written inside the front cover: "To young Communist Abdulla Kanimetov. Keep this book... You need it as a historian."

Never in my life had I received a more precious or more welcome present. The collection, and the story of the people who saved it, have been of immense help to me both as a scientist and as a human being. It has taught me to work hard and to try and contribute something, however small. I sincerely believe that Lenin's ideas and principles are the inspiration behind the radical restructuring of social life initiated here by the party.

Abdulla Kanimetov  
Frunze, USSR

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## THE KRASNOYARSK RADAR: WHAT'S THE HITCH?

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**Even after the Soviet Union proposed the creation of an international cooperation centre for space exploration at the Krasnoyarsk radar base, debate about its purpose still continues in the West, my country included. One hears that its construction runs counter to obligations undertaken in accordance with international treaties. I would appreciate an explanation of the matter by a competent expert.**

Juste FONTAINE  
Liège, Belgium

The West does indeed claim that the construction of a major radar near Krasnoyarsk is in violation of the Soviet-American ABM Treaty signed in 1972. It is argued that the radar is located not at the national border but 500 kilometres from it, and is facing inward instead of outward, as stipulated under the Treaty. Let us try and see whether these charges are tenable.

Let us begin with the Treaty itself. Under its provisions, each party undertakes not to provide a base for an ABM defence of the territory of its country. Therefore, the Treaty restricts

the deployment of ABM systems or their components, including radars, to small areas. There are also exceptions to these limitations. First, under Article 6(b), each side can deploy early warning radars (which, because of their technical characteristics, could be used for ABM defence) only at locations along the periphery of its national territory and oriented outward. Second, these limitations are spelled out in addenda to the treaty (Joint Statement F in this case); specifically, it is indicated that the term "components" covers large phased-array

radars (over 3 million watts per square meter). The limitations imposed under the Treaty do not apply to space tracking stations or to national technical verification means.

Those who drafted the Treaty were right in assuming that satellite tracking radars would possess certain characteristics making their use during a nuclear missile attack impossible. The yardstick in this case is the degree to which the radar is protected against nuclear or conventional attack. It is common knowledge that the Krasnoyarsk radar is absolutely defenseless. Another indication of its peaceful functions is that its frequency range is virtually useless for ABM purposes, considering the high degree of absorption of meter-frequency radio waves by the polluted and ionised atmosphere that would exist in conditions of nuclear conflict. On the other hand, when completed, the Krasnoyarsk radar could become an effective channel of communication with space vehicles. Besides, its power comes not from a military but from a civilian grid maintained by the USSR Ministry of Power Generation.

The first reports that construction of this radar had begun appeared in the Western press in July 1983, four months after President Reagan's well-known Star Wars speech (March 23, 1983). Attacks had already been made on the ABM Treaty under the pretext that it restricted US military plans. Only objections from Congress, the allies and the public forced the US administration to give up its intention of abrogating the 1972 Treaty as an obstacle to SDI.<sup>1</sup>

Washington then changed its tactics and accused the USSR of violating the ABM Treaty. The list of "violations" changed many times, but the Krasnoyarsk radar invariably featured in it, although the Soviet Union stated repeatedly that the radar was being built to track satellites.

For its part, Moscow pointed to certain US moves that called into question America's willingness to observe the Treaty—specifically, the US Cobra Dane radar on Shemya Island in the Aleutians, which comprised ABM-tested elements.

I am not trying to start a new round of recriminations. The important thing is the lesson we should draw from this. Apparently, the USSR failed to act promptly or effectively to explain publicly the purposes for which the Krasnoyarsk radar was being built, or to offer convincing proof that its construction was in line with the Treaty provisions. This was a godsend to those who organised the campaign charging the Soviet Union with Treaty violations; their aim was to advance, amid the ensuing hue and cry, work on SDI and gravely affect the Soviet-American talks on strategic arms reductions in general and the ABM Treaty in particular.

We have changed our attitude now. In 1987 a group of US Congressmen was invited to visit the Krasnoyarsk radar. The USSR expressed its readiness to open the station's equipment for inspection if agreement was reached on compliance with the ABM Treaty. As of October 1987, a freeze was imposed on all work at that site. In September 1988 the Soviet Union suggested that an international cooperation centre for space exploration and exploitation be established at the Krasnoyarsk radar base. The centre could be incorporated into a world space organisation, the establishment of which we have repeatedly suggested. It has been decided to hand over the radar to the USSR Academy of Sciences. As Mikhail Gorbachov noted, Soviet scientists are prepared to discuss with foreign colleagues how to turn it into an international centre for peaceful cooperation by dismantling or altering various components and adding other necessary equipment.

The new facility could operate under the auspices of the UN. These moves are designed to dispel any US suspicions about the purposes of the station and make it possible for foreign experts to visit it.

The Soviet Union has also expressed its readiness to scrap the radar elements dismantled at the Sary-Shagan test range in order to allay anxiety in Washington. These elements, located near Gomel and near Moscow, were supposed to be used in the civilian economy—an option that does not run counter to the ABM Treaty. However, the Soviet Union again demonstrated its goodwill so as to facilitate constructive settlement of international disputes.

But one is alarmed by the US Senate resolution, adopted after the Soviet initiatives were advanced, which describes the Krasnoyarsk radar as a violation of the ABM Treaty and as a "major obstacle" to future arms control agreements. Obviously, Washington is still trying to cling to an obstructionist stand which can in no way help overcome the impasse.

Alexei VASILIEV  
D. Sc. (Hist.), chief,  
department of military and political  
research,  
Institute for US and Canadian  
Studies under the USSR  
Academy of Sciences

<sup>1</sup> US administration spokesmen claimed in January 1982 that the extension of the ABM Treaty beyond 1982 was "not automatic". The same point was made by the White House in its memo on the strategic arms modernisation programme. In Congress, a prominent administration official declared that the "preclusion of strategic defense as that (ABM) treaty entails it is, in my judgment, destabilising. It was a mistake in 1972, and the sooner we face up to the implications of recognizing that mistake the better".

**WMR TIES** \* \* \* \* \*

- Pierre Beauvois of the Communist Party of Belgium CC Politbureau, political director of *Le Drapeau Rouge*, visited the WMR offices to discuss prospects for relations between the two periodicals.

- A WMR delegation attended an international theoretical seminar on the theme "The Democratic Alternative in Latin American Countries: Reality and Prospects" held in Moscow at the Institute of Social Sciences under the CPSU Central Committee.







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28

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