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Anniversary
of the Victory
over German
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Militarism**





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features

International Significance of the Soviet Union's Victory in the Great Patriotic War

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THE question of war and peace now preoccupies millions of people, in fact the whole of humanity. The reason for this is that the colossal destructive power of nuclear-missile weaponry threatens civilisation's existence. Considerable strength is still possessed by imperialism, which, as everybody knows, is and has been the source of wars, including two world wars. To this day it remains the principal and most dangerous adversary of peace and social progress and is preparing new wars. That is why the problem of preserving peace has not been removed from the agenda of international politics. To use Lenin's words, peace is a 'burning question, the painful question of the day'.¹

One of the paramount events of the history not only of the 20th century but of the whole of world civilisation occurred 40 years ago: as a result of the defeat of Hitlerite fascism and Japanese militarism the threat of humanity's enslavement by the most reactionary, misanthropic section of imperialism's forces was averted. In May 1945 the Soviet people won a historic victory in the Great Patriotic War against the Nazi aggressors bent on enslavement. Several months later militarist Japan, whose involvement in the war as an ally of Hitler's Germany had begun with aggression against the United States and Great Britain in December 1941, admitted that it had been vanquished. The defeat and unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany and its Japanese ally showed the hollowness, the futility of the hopes that a world war would make it possible to rule the peoples of the world, to subjugate them and force the vicious fascist regime upon humankind.

Today, 40 years later, when imperialism has brought humanity face to face with the threat of sliding into a thermonuclear catastrophe, the historical lessons of the Second World War acquire a special significance in the light of the paramount problem of our day, that of preserving peace and life on earth.

History is not simply the past buried in oblivion. It hands down to new generations of people a tangible socio-political heritage, in which everything of worth and importance serves as the point of departure, as the foundation for resolving the problems of the present and the future. Further, history hands down to new generations a priceless spiritual experience and teaches lessons, whose assimilation

provides the correct bearings for quests for solutions of the new problems that arise at each stage of society's development.

What are the principal results and lessons of the Soviet people's Great Patriotic War and of the entire Second World War?

First. Socialism's viability and invincibility have been proved.

The Soviet Union made the decisive contribution to the defeat of the Hitlerite military machine. More than 600 fascist bloc divisions, i.e., almost three and a half times as many as on the other fronts of World War II, found their end in the fighting with the Soviet Army. On the Eastern Front Germany lost 75 per cent of its military equipment. Moreover, the Soviet Army crushed the largest land force of the Japanese militarists—the Kwantung Army.

The efforts of the peoples and armies of the United States, Great Britain, France and other countries of the anti-Nazi coalition were an important contribution to victory. In the Second World War the fascist invaders were fought courageously also by soldiers of national liberation armies, by the partisan formations and units of Yugoslavia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and Albania. A long and tenacious struggle was waged against Japanese militarism by the peoples of China, Korea, Vietnam and other Asian countries. A considerable role was played in the common Victory by members of the Resistance movement and the anti-fascist underground.

The fact that the Soviet Union made the decisive contribution to the outcome of the war meant that this was not merely a Victory of one coalition of nations over another, but that above all it was a Victory of socialism over the most powerful military coalition of imperialist states.

This Victory showed the socialist social system's superiority over the capitalist system, the advantages of the Soviet economic system and economic war effort, the socio-political unity of the Soviet people, and the solidarity of the Soviet multinational state. Further, socialism's Victory proved the superiority of Soviet military science and military skill. The war brought socialism's indisputable ideological and moral superiority into bold relief. Out of the nobility of socialist ideals there evolved a moral feat by Soviet people. Essentially speaking, two antipodal ideologies came into collision in the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet people against the Nazi aggressors and invaders: genocide and misanthropy, on the one hand, and belief in people, in their free future, in socialism, on the other. Profound ideological commitment, the awareness of the righteousness of the great Leninist cause, and the socialist patriotism of the multinational Soviet people were the inexhaustible source of their moral and political unity around the Leninist Communist Party, which inspired and organised their Victory in the Great Patriotic War. The Communist Party's leading role was the source of the strength and invincibility of the Soviet Armed Forces, of the entire Soviet people, which ensured Victory.

Upon defeating Nazi Germany and its allies, the Soviet Armed Forces fulfilled a mission of liberation that is of epochal significance. The Soviet Army liberated in political and physical terms many peoples who fell into fascist bondage. The Nazis threw eighteen million citizens of different countries into concentration camps. Over 11 million of them were killed. The Soviet Army saved from physical destruction the majority of the seven million survivors in prisons and camps. The victories of the Soviet Army stirred millions of people to action, united the genuinely patriotic forces of many countries, gave a powerful impetus to the Resistance in occupied countries, and fostered the growth of that movement.

This was also a mission of social liberation. The Soviet Army did not impose socialism. But the defeat of fascism led to the abolition of its repressive apparatus, demonstrated the helplessness of the capitalist system to defend the vital interests of nations, and set large masses of people into motion, and this created the objective

external and internal conditions for changes of a revolutionary character, for the independent transition of several countries to the road to socialism. The great Victory of the Soviet Army was one of the cardinal international factors facilitating the commencement of the formation of the world socialist system, of the socialist community of states. It was precisely as a result of the Soviet Union's mission of liberation that the peoples of a number of countries obtained the possibility for a genuinely free expression of will, which cleared the way for the people's democratic system and the building of socialism.

At the same time, it was thanks precisely to the Soviet Army that the victory over fascism created the conditions for the restoration of democratic freedoms that had been abolished by Hitlerism in a number of other countries too, chiefly of Western Europe, liberated from Nazi occupation. The present bourgeois democratic regimes in Austria, France, Italy, the Federal Republic of Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Norway, Finland, Denmark, Luxembourg, and other West European countries were established only after the Soviet Union won decisive victories over the dictatorial German fascist regime. Also, the fact that today the peoples of these countries enjoy democratic rights and freedoms, albeit in their bourgeois variant, is due largely to the Soviet people, who bore the main burden of the struggle against the fascist enslavers. Socialism was thus the factor rejuvenating democracy in Europe in the broadest political and geographical sense.

This was also a mission of national liberation. The ideas of national independence that victorious socialism carried with it and the blow that it struck at the policy and ideology of chauvinism and racism aroused the peoples held in subjection by imperialism and gave a new impulse to the struggle of the peoples of colonies and semi-colonies. In this way there appeared the ideological and political mainsprings of a new and unparalleled spread of the national liberation struggle of peoples, which ultimately led to the total disintegration of imperialism's colonial system.

During and directly after the Second World War top-ranking political leaders of different countries unequivocally acknowledged that the decisive contribution to Victory was made by the Soviet Union. President Franklin D. Roosevelt noted that it was undisputably the Red Army and the Russian people who drove Hitler's armed forces into total defeat, inscribing immortal pages in the history of the struggle against tyranny and oppression. The Supreme Allied Commander in Western Europe Dwight D. Eisenhower wrote in his memoirs that it was pre-eminently the Russians who compelled the Nazis to surrender. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill declared that future generations would regard themselves indebted to the Red Army just as unconditionally was were those who witnessed these splendid feats of valour. The head of Austria's Provisional Government Karl Renner, speaking of Soviet soldiers, said that their actions brought about the overthrow of the accursed regime of fascist bondage and the establishment of lasting peace among the peoples of the whole world.

Ever since then the USSR has not changed in this respect. Its socialist system continues to exist, grow stronger, and develop. The Soviet people continue to be unanimous in approving the policy of the CPSU and the Soviet government, a policy whose underlying principles are lasting and immutable. The functions of the Soviet Army continue to be exclusively defensive. The Soviet Union remains prepared, as it always has been, to promote peaceful coexistence with countries with a different social system and to extend assistance to countries subjected to foreign aggression and interference.

The present vocal allegations about the Soviet Union's 'aggressiveness' and 'expansionism', about it being an 'evil empire' violating human rights are no more than deliberate calumny and slander.

Like their ill-starred predecessors, the present 'crusaders' are trying to put back the

clock, to wreak social revenge on an international scale, and openly proclaiming that it is their purpose to eradicate socialism as a social system. The futility of these attempts has been demonstrated by the experience of history—some seven decades ago and more than 40 years ago. All of imperialism's attempts to resolve the historical dispute with socialism by force of arms are doomed to failure.

Existing socialism's historic achievements are irreversible. There are no forces in the world that can crush socialism. The building, development, and perfecting of existing new society are of decisive significance to the future of all humankind.

Second. The preparations and unleashing of two world wars led not to the strengthening but to the weakening of imperialism's international positions.

—As a result of the First World War there were created the conditions for the triumph of the Great October Socialist Revolution and the emergence of the world's first socialist state. Revolutions took place in Germany and Austria-Hungary and there was a powerful revolutionary upswing in some other countries.

—The Second World War led to the downfall of the capitalist system in 11 countries of Europe and Asia. A world socialist system came into being. Prophetic words spoken by Georgi Dimitrov back in 1939 came true: the imperialists started the war in their own interests, and the working class 'has the mission of putting an end to this war in its own way, in its own interests, in the interests of all working humanity, thereby creating the prerequisites for the uprooting of the basic causes of imperialist wars'.²

—The big wars that colonial powers fought since World War II against the peoples of Algeria, Vietnam and the former Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique ended with the victories of these peoples and with a debilitation of imperialism's international positions.

Reaction's attempts to use military force in order to halt human society's progress towards a more just, democratic, and free system are futile. It is not the 'hand of Moscow', as the apologists of imperialism endlessly maintain, but the objective processes of socio-economic development that lead to revolutions.

Nobody can halt, much less turn back society's onward progress. For millennia on end pharaohs, emperors, kaisers, tsars, presidents, and other rulers tried to stem social changes. All these attempts invariably ended in failure because what matured in the bosom of society, what sprang from the growth of the people's consciousness, from history's objective course was irreversible.

Third. The instigators and organisers of the Second World War, those responsible for the death of millions of people, were the first in history to be sternly punished for their crimes. The aggressor not only suffered defeat but was branded as a war criminal by international justice.

Those who have to this day not abandoned plans for preparing wars of aggression should see a grim warning in the fate of the ringleaders of Hitlerite fascism and Japanese militarism arraigned after the Second World War before international tribunals: in Nuremberg, made up of representatives of the USSR, the USA, Britain and France, and in Tokyo, where a similar tribunal consisted of representatives of many countries of the anti-Hitlerite coalition. The war criminals were sentenced in the name of the peoples. The sinister instigators of the Second World War, those who were responsible for monstrous atrocities got the punishment they merited.

And this means that the days when the powers that be could commit crimes against humankind with impunity have gone never to return. The demons of war should be constantly reminded of this in the world today.

The famous 1950 Stockholm Appeal, signed by nearly 500 million people, contains the words: 'We shall regard as guilty of war crimes and a crime against humanity the government that is the first to use the atomic weapon against any country.'³

In our time, as never before, the policy of war is censured by the conscience of all

humankind. This was expressed in the resolution, tabled by the Soviet Union and passed by the 38th session of the UN General Assembly (1983), condemning nuclear war as conflicting with the human conscience and intelligence, as the most heinous crime against the peoples, as an infringement of the human being's prime right—the right to life.

Earlier, in 1981, the UN General Assembly—also acting on a proposal submitted by the Soviet Union—resolved in its Declaration on Preventing a Nuclear Catastrophe: '1. States and statesmen who are the first to resort to the use of nuclear weapons will be guilty of the most heinous crime against humankind. 2. Those who decide to use nuclear weapons first can never be exonerated or forgiven.'

The present-day anti-war movement can accomplish much on the basis of the principle that war crimes are punishable. It is called upon and is able to show the entire world the face of those who are fanning war hysteria, who are drawing countries and peoples into the arms race and directing developments towards another world war.

Fourth. The ruling circles of Germany, Italy and Japan prepared for the Second World War under the pretext of fighting communism. The so-called anti-Comintern pact signed by them was in fact the formalisation of an aggressive military bloc which had started preparations for war.

The organisers of the Reichstag fire provocation, the Nazi 'judges' who endeavoured to prove that Communists were implicated in this act of arson, and the thousands of fascist orators and newspaper hacks—all joined forces against communism, against the communist parties and other revolutionary forces. Further, Hitler and his clique ascribed to themselves the 'messianic' role of saving the capitalist system from the 'threat of Bolshevism'. Actually, the strident policy of anti-communism was the cover for a guideline aimed at winning world supremacy for the German race, in other words, for German fascism.

Today this tactic is used widely by imperialist reaction, which, under cover of the 'communist threat' bogey, has set its sights on achieving world hegemony, on suppressing liberation movements by force, and on imposing their will on other states. Of course, it is not in anybody's mind to lump fascist regimes together with the political system of bourgeois democracy. This sort of identification was opposed as early as at the Seventh Congress of the comintern. However, the experience of history objectively accentuates some analogies. Indeed:

—then, as now, the stake was on military strength, on attaining military superiority and winning world hegemony;

—then, as now, the policy of aggression was pursued on the pretext of fighting a 'communist threat';

—then, as now, the objective was, above all, to destroy the 'Soviet system' and restore unchallenged capitalist rule throughout the world;

—then, as now, use was made of state terrorism and psychological warfare; subversive actions against sovereign nations, acts of direct aggression were undertaken contrary to all the norms of international law;

—the German fascist doctrine of war for 'living space' has been replaced with a doctrine of war for the 'vital interests of the USA', interests that supposedly extend to all continents.

The experience and lessons of World War II very clearly show how correct Thomas Mann, the German humanist writer, was when he called anti-communism the 'greatest absurdity of the 20th century'.⁴ Resistance to anti-communism, to that corrupting ideology that poisons the minds of people and paves the way for the military preparations of the reactionary forces is a major condition of the struggle against the threat of another world war.

Fifth. The experience of two world wars has demonstrated the need to combat both

the ideological-political and material preparation for war. The arms race is this preparation (before both the First and the Second World Wars the armaments concerns were the chief class bulwark and motor of the policy of preparing for war). The masses are now realising with growing clarity that the struggle to limit and halt the arms race is one of the prime elements of the struggle to preserve peace. They are beginning to see through the specious assertions of imperialist propaganda that the build-up of military strength is the guarantee of peace.

The interests of preserving peace and ensuring the peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems make it imperative to see and to be able to bring to light the actual source of the war threat, to expose the motive forces and reveal to the people the mechanism by which wars are started.

All the preparations for fascist aggression, which led to the Second World War, were conducted by Hitlerism under the slogans of revanchism, of retrieving 'lost provinces', of uniting all the lands inhabited by Germans into a single 'thousand-year Reich'. A tragic and irrefutable lesson of the preparations for the Second World War demonstrates that malicious speculations on slogans of this kind are a cunning way of indoctrinating the public mind. These speculations impress upon that mind the idea that aggression against other states and peoples is 'just'.

This lesson is particularly significant today because the weeds of revanchism and neo-fascism are once again opening their poisoned blossoms on the soil of Western militarist policy. With US medium-range missiles being deployed in Western Europe the threat of war is once again emanating from German soil too, namely, from the territory of the FRG. Once more, to justify this threat, use is made of the ideology of revanchism, of reconsidering the results of the Victory over Hitlerite fascism and also the results of postwar development. The struggle against revanchist ambitions, to cut short and totally uproot them, is a form of the struggle against war.

The facts of international life indicate that the forces of war are inclined to disregard the lessons of history. Soon after its defeat in the First World War German imperialism began preparing for another war and was again defeated. In our day, when the balance of socio-political forces has changed radically in favour of socialism, to the detriment of imperialism, the latter's claims to world supremacy are all the more doomed to failure.

Sixth. Fascism openly proclaimed and during the war put into effect a policy of genocide, of ruthless terror, pillage, and the extermination of whole peoples relegated to the status of so-called inferior races (Slavs, Jews, Gypsies). The outcome of this policy was the savage slaughter of millions of people in the Oswiecim, Treblinka, Buchenwald, Ravensbrück, Mauthausen, and other death camps. Whole towns and villages (Lidice, Oradour, Hatyn, and hundreds of Soviet towns and villages) were cold-bloodedly destroyed together with all their inhabitants. Millions of prisoners-of-war were kept in such horrible conditions that the majority perished.

In our day imperialism's aggressive circles are likewise having recourse to barbarous methods. This has been borne out by the war in Vietnam, a nation the US generals wanted to 'bomb into the Stone Age'. Further evidence is provided by the virulent actions of the Israeli military, who have the backing of the US administration, and by apartheid in South Africa. Lastly, evidence of this lies in the development by the USA and its NATO allies of more and more new means of mass annihilation—nuclear, neutron and chemical—and in the reluctance of the US ruling circles to agree to ban these most inhuman types of weapons. The exposure of imperialism's misanthropic policy is part and parcel of the struggle against the threat of another war, for every person's right to life.

Seventh. Historical experience reaffirms over and over again that war should not and cannot serve as a means of settling international disputes. In their efforts to justify the policy of war preparations, imperialism's ideologues assert that war is

triggered by the existence of different social systems. But the facts refute this evil fabrication. In the First World War the belligerents confronting each other were states that had identical social systems. In the Second World War the anti-Hitlerite coalition consisted of countries with different socio-political systems. They not only won a joint Victory but worked in harmony to draw up the principles of postwar development formulated in the decisions of the Yalta and Potsdam conferences.

What is the political significance of Yalta and Potsdam today?

First of all, that these conferences approved the idea and principle of cooperation between countries with different social systems not only in the war against a common enemy but in the impending postwar period as the prime condition for the preservation and consolidation of peace between peoples—which is the loftiest aspiration of humankind.

Further, that they drew up an indictment of militarism and fascism; the moral and political significance of this act remains as compelling as ever to this day.

Lastly, that compliance with the decisions passed by these conferences on the question of the frontiers between European states continues to play an unfading role in maintaining peace and ensuring security in Europe.

Historical experience strikingly reaffirms that countries with different socio-political systems can cooperate in a struggle that meets with the common interests of all nations, in the struggle for peace and international security.

In its onward march humankind has made unprecedented breakthroughs in science and technology. It has come into possession of new, colossal sources of energy and has broken out into outer space. The imperialist, reactionary circles are seeking to use the greatest attainments of human intelligence and labour for anti-people purposes, for preparations for a world war. The understanding that retaliation is inescapable is an important factor that serves to prevent a nuclear war, which the imperialist forces threaten to launch, from breaking out. In view of the new balance of strength in the world and of the fact that the opposing side has equally powerful nuclear-missile weapons even certain segments of the ruling class of capitalist states are increasingly realising that a world thermonuclear war cannot be a realistic instrument of foreign policy.

In the USA itself there is growing understanding that such a war cannot be permitted. This is natural: for whereas in two world wars the USA was beyond the reach of the enemy's armed forces, the situation has now changed fundamentally. US imperialism can no longer 'sit out' behind an ocean. The monopolists—the instigators of the First and Second World Wars—were able to send millions of people to the slaughter, while they themselves (together with their families and innumerable accomplices) could remain behind the firing lines, in safety. Today, nuclear missiles make it impossible. If a nuclear war is not averted its lethal breath will spare not a single continent, not a single people.

In the nuclear age peaceful coexistence has become an imperative. Peaceful coexistence is the only reasonable alternative to the threat of mutual incineration in a nuclear fire.

Eighth. A lesson of historical experience is that the utmost must be done to strengthen the socialist community, which is the principal anti-war force countering imperialism's aggressive actions and intentions in material, political, and ideological terms, that everything must be done to reliably safeguard the socialist gains of peoples against encroachments by imperialist reaction, and that there must be constant readiness to repulse imperialism's intrigues.

In the period between the First and Second World Wars the Soviet Union conducted a tireless struggle against the aggressive policies of Hitler, Mussolini and the Japanese militarists. But the efforts solely of the Soviet Union were not enough. The ruling circles of capitalist countries, including those that themselves became

victims of aggression, pandered to the instigators of war, counting on channelling aggression against the first socialist country. This was one of the reasons why it did not prove to be possible to avert war.

In the postwar period new socialist countries have joined the Soviet Union in the struggle for peace. This struggle has been joined with increasing vigour by other peace-loving states, among which is a large group of nations that emerged on the ruins of colonial empires. The strengthening of the defence capability of the USSR, which is the principal force of the socialist community, the attainment by the Soviet Union of military-strategic parity with the USA, the consistent policy of peace pursued by the fraternal socialist countries, the social and political changes on the international scene, and the struggle for peace by communist and workers' parties and other anti-war forces—all this, despite various serious complications in the international situation, has made it possible to prevent another world war in the course of 40 years.

The socialist community has made and continues to make the decisive contribution to preventing a nuclear war. While ensuring their own security, the combined military strength of the Warsaw Treaty countries also serves as a dependable bulwark of peace in Europe and the whole world. Precisely existing socialism is the main force fighting to ensure peace for all the peoples of the globe.

The socialist community is making a colossal contribution to social progress, giving effect to fundamentally new forms of society's organisation. By the yardstick of world history, the socialist world is a young, forward-looking community of peoples and states. But already today we have every justification for saying that it is a lasting achievement of humankind's progress, and for speaking of the significant changes that it has brought to life throughout the world, of its proven ability to resolve in the interests of the working people problems before which capitalism is helpless.

The socialist community embodies international relations of a new type based on the principle of socialist internationalism. The growth of its combined potential fosters the development and prosperity of each of its member-states. The relations between the fraternal socialist countries are relations of cooperation and mutual assistance. By its example and by its coordinated actions on the world scene the socialist community is making an invaluable contribution to the struggle to restructure the entire system of international relations on the basis of justice.

The socialist community is the bulwark and hope of peoples fighting for freedom, independence and progress, of the working class, of the working people of capitalist countries. For them it is of immense significance to be aware of the fact that there is in the world a force that is always in solidarity with them, and that this is a powerful force that is working towards the same great aims as they are themselves.

Support for the peace policy of the Soviet Union and other countries of the socialist community is consistent with the vital interests of the peoples of all countries and is a condition for averting a thermonuclear war.

Ninth. During the Second World War the communist parties established themselves as the militant vanguard of the masses and of the Resistance movement. A beginning was laid for the process of turning the international communist movement into the most influential force of modern times.

The Communists were the most militant and in some countries the decisive force of the popular movement to put an end to fascist oppression, achieve national rejuvenation, and restore democratic freedoms.

The communist parties sustained the heaviest casualties in their countries for the sake of victory over fascism. Despite their huge losses, they grew stronger organisationally and won broader influence among the working masses. Whereas prior to the Second World War, in 1939, there were in the world 61 communist parties with four million members, in 1947 there were communist parties in 76 countries and these had 20 million members. Today there are over 80 million Communists. And

there are communist parties in 95 countries.

During the Second World War, acting on the ideas and traditions of the popular front, the communist movement further developed the policy of unity of the anti-fascist forces as a national front policy. Considerable importance was attached to the elaboration by the Communists, in accordance with the conditions prevailing in their countries, of a programme that would facilitate to the maximum the real cohesion in a national front of all the social and political forces pressing for the freedom and independence of their countries.

In the confrontation with fascism the Communists showed that they were the staunchest and most courageous and dedicated fighters for the interests of peoples. The communist parties upheld and developed the stand that solidarity with the Soviet Union in the struggle against world reaction, fascism, and war ultimately helps to assert the genuine national independence of each country and enables each people liberated from fascism to choose the road for its further social development. The outcome of the Second World War strikingly bore this out.

The unity and cohesion of the working class, of all working people, of all democrats remain the key factor in the struggle for peace. Lack of unity obstructs the effective manifestation of the desire of the peoples for peace and plays into the hands of the militarists. The split in the working class movement that eroded the forces of democracy was the principal reason why in the prewar period the anti-war movement of the masses did not achieve the necessary dimension. As a result of the split, the establishment of the Hitlerite dictatorship and the unleashing of another world conflict were not prevented.

Historical experience makes crystal clear the immense significance of joint actions by the Communists and Social Democrats, the trade unions, and the entire working class movement. It is now widely acknowledged that if the leaders of the German Social Democrats of the Weimar period had heeded the calls of the Communists and move towards uniting the forces of the working class, of all working people, for resistance to the Hitlerite clique it would have been possible to prevent war and save the lives of millions of people.

The strengthening of the unity of the communist and workers' parties and the promotion of their interaction with socialist, social democratic, and labour parties, and other political and trade union organisations of the international working class, with the revolutionary democratic parties and the national liberation movements are a paramount condition for turning the massive anti-war movement into a solid barrier against the instigators of military gambles.

The masses are today more and more militantly intervening in the decision of the questions of war and peace. With reliance on the militancy of the masses and the concerted actions of all the peace forces in the struggle against the policies of imperialism's most bellicose circles another world war can be averted.

Tenth. The struggle against the war threat must be unfolded in good time. The CPSU Central Committee's resolution 'On the 40th Anniversary of the Soviet People's Victory in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945' notes the unfading significance of the lessons of that war and stresses: 'The principal of these is that war must be fought before it breaks out. Historical experience teaches that in order to preserve peace there must be united, coordinated, and vigorous actions by all the peace forces against imperialism's aggressive, adventurist policy. It is vital to enhance the vigilance of the people, to safeguard and multiply the gains of socialism.'⁵

It would be hard to overrate the urgency of this conclusion. The history of the 20th century demonstrates that imperialism endeavours to prepare war in secrecy. On the eve of the First World War the peoples were not aware of the war threat hanging over them. Although spokesmen of the revolutionary working class movement warned

that war was being prepared, for the broad masses its outbreak was virtually unexpected.

On the eve of the Second World War the peoples already felt and realised the war threat. But by virtue of a number of reasons this awareness did not evolve into determined joint actions by all the adversaries of war. The blame for this rests with, in particular, the ruling circles of bourgeois-democratic countries: they misinformed international opinion with assurances that the policy of concessions (at the expense of Czechoslovakia, Ethiopia, Spain and Austria) could 'appease' the aggressors and prevent a world war. This policy got its most striking expression in the 1938 Munich deal on the partitioning of Czechoslovakia. It fostered the formation and strengthening of a military bloc of aggressors. As a result, humankind gradually slid into another world war.

Today the situation is different—the peoples know that there is a threat of war. There is now a conscious desire to prevent another world war, which if nuclear weapons are used would threaten the existence of human civilisation.

The influence of the sections of the public dedicated to peace on the drawing up and implementation of the foreign policy of governments has grown dramatically in our day when the basic aims and slogans of the anti-war movement coincide with the foreign policy programmes of the socialist states, that have placed their entire political, economic and defence might in the service of the realisation of these aims.

The dialectics of the development of the present anti-war movement is that having sprung up as the expression of the will of the broad masses, it is itself becoming a factor influencing the mood of the masses, a factor fashioning an anti-war consciousness among ever wider segments of the population. It is mirrored in the stand of various political parties, organised currents, churches of different denominations, and so on.

The Communists were part of the anti-war movement from the very outset and as long as three and a half decades ago, with a clarity that no other political current displayed, drew the attention of the masses to the appearance of the threat of another war. In their documents and at their international meetings the communist parties always gave a realistic assessment of the development trends of international relations: they stressed not only the significance of detente but that it had not become irreversible and that it had powerful adversaries. For that reason today, when developments have borne out these assessments, the masses were not caught unawares, they had been warned by the Communists.

Guided by Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism the Communists are in a better position than anybody else to assess the situation objectively. They understand fully where the source of the war threat lies and expose all the lies on this subject.

On account of developments themselves, the mission of the Communists has today ranged beyond their traditional, class role of fighters against exploitation, for socialism. It now includes the task of saving civilisation, of saving life on earth. The struggle for peace and the struggle for social progress, in defence of the interests of the working people, have blended inextricably.

From the results and lessons of the Second World War the forces of progress and peace draw inspiring incentives for their struggle against the instigators of another world war, against the use of the methods of the 'positions of strength' policy, terrorism, repressions and psychological warfare in the social practice of many countries and in international relations, and against neonazism, revanchism, and racism. The peace forces see that to this day imperialism is trying to assert on the international scene much of what all of the world's decent people fought against in the Second World War.

While the 40th anniversary of the defeat of Hitlerism and Japanese militarism is

encouraging the anti-war forces to uphold the just cause of peace with greater energy than ever before, imperialism is using this anniversary to justify its 'positions of strength' policy, the arms race, and the escalation of tension in the world. In the United States of America and some other NATO countries there are political quarters that are once again trying to revise the results of fascism's defeat and the postwar settlement.

Misrepresentations of the history of the Second World War and a revision of the historical lessons of the victory over Hitlerism and Japanese militarism serve imperialism's current aggressive designs.

The fact that the number of people whose conscious life was affected by the war is diminishing and the fact that more than half of humanity was born and grew up after the war and cannot, from its own experience, judge the wartime horrors and hardships make it all the more important and necessary to stay the hand of the present falsifiers of history, to prevent them from distorting the truth about the past. To make the tragic experience of the war known to the rising generations so that to them it becomes a lesson for the future, and to prevent them from being deluded, and to make a militant struggle against the preparations for another war a vital commitment of all the people in the world means to cut short the designs of imperialist reaction under present-day conditions and help to remove the threat of another war.

The task, set by Lenin, of showing the people the 'secrecy in which war is hatched'⁶ has, in effect, grown into the task of showing to masses the secrecy in which the threat to the existence of nations is hatched. It is hatched from the plans drawn up in minute detail by the general staffs of the NATO countries for building up offensive nuclear armaments and now Star Wars weapons, from the plans for a 'pre-emptive strike' that will allegedly avert a retaliatory strike. These are illusory plans, but they are mortally dangerous to the whole of humankind.

The secrecy in which the threat to the destinies of humankind is hatched is that the social consciousness is being purposefully conditioned to regard nuclear war as an acceptable means of achieving political aims. It is also hatched by the class limited view that 'balancing on the brink of war' can go on endlessly, that it is always possible to stop at the boundary beyond which lies the abyss.

It is common knowledge that the arms race is allowing the capitalist monopolies to make colossal profits, a fact about which imperialist propaganda is silent. But what is kept in secrecy must be made public before the colossal stockpiles of armaments begin to be used.

Every political party and organisation, every person is today confronted, more acutely than ever before, by the question of its or his/her place in the struggle between the two trends in the development of international relations: one is pushing the world into the abyss of a nuclear catastrophe, and the other leads to lasting and just peace.

The masses today have greater possibilities than ever before in history to erect a barrier to imperialism's policy of aggression and safeguard the cause of peace. The further invigoration of the anti-war actions and a steadily broader participation of the masses in the struggle for peace play a huge role in turning the possibilities for preventing war into reality and delivering humankind from a nuclear catastrophe. As they are accepted by the masses, the ideas of peace become a powerful material force. That is why the struggle for the minds of people is also a struggle for peace.

The 40th anniversary of the great Victory is a reminder that the struggle against the threat of war cannot be postponed for a single day, that it has to be waged constantly, perseveringly and with determination.

As Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, stressed at the March 1985 extraordinary plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee, the Soviet Union is prepared 'to participate in continuing the process of fostering peaceful, mutually beneficial cooperation between countries on the basis of

equality, reciprocal respect, and non-interference in internal affairs. The 40th anniversary of the great Victory over Hitlerite fascism and Japanese militarism could be marked worthily with new steps in that direction.⁷

The Soviet Union is doing everything possible and necessary to prevent war, a nuclear war in the first place. Its constructive, peace proposals are widely known. For this purpose it has suggested and is conducting disarmament talks in Geneva.

The historical lessons of the Victory do not belong exclusively to the past. They live on in the memory of nations. The international results of the Second World War are irreversible. The lessons and results of the great Victory must serve as an effective ideological and political weapon in the struggle against the course towards preparations for another war, in the struggle for humankind's future, for peace and social progress.

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 249.

² *The Communist International*, No. 8-9, 1939, p. 36.

³ *Izvestia*, April 1, 1950.

⁴ *Der gegenwärtige Antikommunismus Politik und Ideologie*, Berlin, 1974, p. 8.

⁵ *Pravda*, June 17, 1984.

⁶ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 447.

⁷ *Documents of the Extraordinary Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee of March 11, 1985*, Moscow, 1985, p. 11 (in Russian).

From Liberation to Socialist Advancement

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THE annexation of part of Czechoslovakia by Nazi Germany and then the occupation of the Czech lands and the formation of a vassal Slovak state—although these events in 1938-1939 did not signal the actual outbreak of World War II they were the overture to it. The course of history was such that the last shots of that war in Europe were fired on Czechoslovak soil (where the fighting lasted until May 12, 1945). But we mark the 40th anniversary of liberation not only with reminiscences. For us this is an occasion for summing up our fulfilment of the behests of Czechoslovak patriots and Red Army soldiers who died for our freedom, for replying whether we had used national freedom and state sovereignty to further society's progress and, on the basis of the acquired experience, for drawing conclusions on present-day and future development.

In pondering the past it is vital to consider how the war and its results have influenced Czechoslovakia's history, what factors have determined the development of our national democratic revolution and its growth into a socialist revolution, what highlights the building of the new society, in Czechoslovakia, what tasks confront us, what in our experience is in keeping with the general principles of the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary doctrine, and how the Czechoslovak specific manifested itself.

The quest for serious answers to these questions is not an end in itself; nor should it

be identified with an apologia of what has been achieved. It is of fundamental significance to the participants in socialist transformations, especially for young people and future generations, and for the development of revolutionary theory and analysis of the practice of the international revolutionary movement. Further, it is important to show how thin the ice is on which stand subversive imperialist propaganda and all who criticise our revolution and its outcome—modern, existing socialism. We neither can nor desire to impose upon anybody our views and experience, and we do not depict this experience as the only way for the working class to win political power. However, let nobody take offence and reproach us if we regard as unjustified any belittlement, much less any negation, of this experience, which concretely reaffirms the correctness of the principles of our revolutionary teaching and of their application in our conditions.

1

The Soviet Union bore most of the burden of the war and made the decisive contribution to the defeat of Nazi Germany and its allies.

There was a very powerful response in Czechoslovakia to the development of the operations on the Soviet-German front and the Red Army's victorious advance. Distrust for the participants in the Munich conspiracy, resistance to brutal Nazi oppression, the selflessness with which Soviet people fought, and the USSR's geographical proximity reinforced in our people the conviction that freedom would come from the East and that the Red Army would help to expel the fascist enemy. These hopes grew and became ever more realistic with each passing week and month of the war. It would have been impossible to liberate Czechoslovakia and other occupied countries without smashing the fascist hordes once and for all. Moreover, we appreciated the concrete actions that the USSR took to show that it regarded Czechoslovakia as an equal ally.

It is quite logical that our people identified their sympathy for the Soviet Union with sympathy for socialism. Even if it was not always and in everything expressed clearly, the tendency to see the liberative mission of the USSR from class positions decisively influenced the consciousness of the people, the course and content of the anti-fascist Resistance, and the definition of the aims and, consequently, the character of postwar developments in Czechoslovakia, including the differentiation of the forces on its political scene.

The Soviet Union fulfilled its allied commitments with the liberation of our territory. As soon as the frontline advanced the military command turned the executive authority over to local people's organs and willingly extended the needed assistance to them (that often included food to the population) without in any way interfering with their terms of reference. We shall never forget that a number of operations, even at the cost of heavy casualties, were conducted by the Soviet troops in such a way as to avoid the destruction of towns and industrial facilities and to safeguard the lives of our citizens.

The hopes of the Czechoslovak people came true: at the cost of 140,000 lives, the heroic Soviet Army (with the participation of allied Romanian and Polish troops) liberated our country, and by its bold and lightning operation during the last days of the war saved insurgent Prague from destruction—for this our people justifiably call it the army of liberation.

The Soviet Union fulfilled all its allied obligations stemming from the Treaty of December 12, 1943, including the provisions covering postwar cooperation. This concerned our free life, beginning with its very first hours. We received assistance in restoring our economy and raw materials for our industry. The USSR helped us with supplies of large quantities of grain when we were hit by a catastrophic drought in

1947. It contributed towards the material-technical organisation of our armed forces; German industrial facilities that became Soviet trophies in the course of the war were turned over to Czechoslovakia. The USSR consistently upheld our interests on the international scene, helping to reinforce Czechoslovakia's prestige in the world. *From the historical standpoint the Czechoslovak-Soviet Treaty of Alliance was of key significance to our country's state independence and security: it permitted the Czechoslovak people to exercise their right to self-determination, to the free choice of their socio-political system.* The alliance with the world's first socialist power became a dependable shield for the progressive forces, preventing imperialism from using military strength to interfere in Czechoslovakia's internal affairs.

In the forty postwar years our all-sided fraternal co-operation has expanded many times over and acquired broad dimensions. It has become the cornerstone of the Czechoslovak economy's progress, beneficially influencing the development of many branches of science and giving scope to education and culture. But what our people value most is that the alliance with the USSR, achieved in the joint struggle against fascism, is the guarantee of their country's security and peaceful free life. *This is a new type of alliance founded on reciprocal respect and equality, on fraternal mutual understanding and cooperation between two socialist countries.* Articulating the opinion of the entire party and the bulk of the people Gustáv Husák said at the party's 16th Congress: 'The vital interests and aspirations of our people are embodied in the alliance with the Soviet Union. The Czechoslovak Communists and our peoples highly appreciate the Soviet Union's role as the principal bulwark of socialism, of all that is revolutionary and progressive in the world, as the dependable guarantor of peaceful development, against whose might the attempts of the imperialist and militarist circles to dictate their will to other peoples crumble.'¹

2

In our anti-fascist Resistance, in the course of the national democratic revolution, and during its growth into a *socialist revolution the main responsibility was borne by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia* (in Slovakia—by the Communist Party of Slovakia as a territorial organisation of the integral CPCz). The right-wing forces betrayed national interests, their representatives not merely collaborating with the Nazis but servilely licking their boots, and our people held them in contempt. As regards the bourgeois and reformist parties, which compromised themselves by their passive surrender to the Munich diktat, their participation in the emigre government in London gave their supporters in Czechoslovakia the possibility of joining in the struggle against the fascists to one extent or another. But their influence had declined so far that it no longer conformed to the position that these parties once held in the nation's political life.

Many anti-fascist organisations that were motley in the form and content of their work sprang up during the occupation years. There were many diverse conspiratorial groups that has no contact with each other, no central leadership, and no influence on public opinion worth mentioning. However, our people are grateful to all the anti-fascist fighters. We revere the memory of all who fell at the frontlines or died on Nazi scaffolds or in prisons and concentration camps. We consider that it is unworthy to divide gratitude and the tribute of recognition for the anti-fascist Resistance in accordance with a 'political' attribute, political orientation or party affiliation, although it is a fact that some bourgeois participants in the Resistance later turned against socialism, against their own people.

For all that it is indisputable that in prewar Czechoslovakia the Communists were the only party that on the basis of experience acquired as a result of endless harassment by the bourgeois authorities was able to go underground in an organised manner. This is not a far-fetched apologetic thesis as our enemies allege. The

Communist Party countered fascism with determination from the outset, mobilising patriots against the Munich sellout, which it had rejected from the beginning, and formulating a lucid programme of struggle for national liberation. Throughout the period of the anti-fascist Resistance the party was guided by the directives from its Moscow-based leadership headed by Klement Gottwald.

All this was known to the Czechoslovak people. They had confidence in and supported the Communists. The Nazi repressive agencies (often with the active assistance of Czech and Slovak police, traitors, and informers) regarded the Communist Party as their main target and had every reason to see it as their toughest adversary. The party lost nearly half of its members, but its underground committees—central, regional, and district—were renewed again and again after every Gestapo strike. From leaflets and underground newspapers people learned that the party lived despite the repressions. The Communists worked tirelessly to unite the forces of the anti-fascist underground and coordinate their actions. They organised partisan units, headed the Slovak national uprising, laid the ground for the rising of the Czech people, and set up the anti-fascist National Front and national committees, that became organs of people's power on territory cleared of the enemy.

While advancing topical slogans, the party explained the significance and aims of the anti-fascist Resistance and its own notions about the liberated republic's postwar structure. Underlying the rapid growth of the party's prestige was its unblemished record, its battles for the interests of the working class and the people, its defence of the republic against fascists and capitulationists in the country itself, its concern to strengthen the anti-fascist Resistance, and its clear-cut programme which expressed the aspirations of the majority of the Czech and Slovak peoples. *That is the mainspring of the leading role played by the party, which won wide recognition during the national liberation struggle and its revolutionary climax, and then in the course of postwar development.*

A summation of the Czechoslovak people's experience of the period of the bourgeois republic, including Munich and its aftermath, and the influence of the liberative mission of the Soviet Union and the role played by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia makes it easier to understand the specifics of our national democratic revolution and the features of its growth into a socialist revolution. The CPCz has substantively analysed the objective and subjective conditions of the anti-fascist Resistance. Upon heading the national liberation struggle, the party did not insulate itself against reality and did not check the revolutionary sentiments of the people. However, it did not hurry to advance slogans that could forestall developments and isolate the vanguard from the masses. The situation was made easier by the fact that bourgeois-democratic elements did not venture to demand a simple renewal of prewar practices. In the face of public pressure they manoeuvred and resorted to subterfuges: their actual plans were exposed only by the political struggle after Czechoslovakia's liberation (in 1945-1948).

We regard the Slovak national uprising of August 1944 as the beginning of our national democratic revolution. This was a mass militant action against the fascist military machine and resistance to the clerical-fascist so-called Slovak state. The rising commenced and developed under the slogan of restoring the Czechoslovak republic as a united country with a socially and nationally just structure and oriented on alliance and cooperation with the USSR. From the outset of the national democratic revolution the party made sure that its leader should be the working class as objectively the most progressive force of our peoples. Its class features became increasingly more distinct in the course of the national liberation struggle.

This was seen in the appearance of national committees as organs of people's power on territory involved in the rising and later on territory liberated by the Red Army and its allies. What took place was more than the break-up of the clerical-

fascist state apparatus; the bourgeoisie lost all chances of restoring the pre-Munich state structure. The national committees met the requirements of the uprising and then of the advancing liberators, introduced revolutionary order, and punished fascists and traitors, expropriating their property. By the character of their functions and composition they were genuine local organs of government, working in accordance with the will and desires of the people and championing their interests. All the progressive elements of the Slovak national uprising were continued and developed in the partisan actions and then in the May rising of the Czech people.

The popular character of the national democratic revolution upset the plans of the emigre government in London. In the situation that took shape it could not return to Czechoslovakia in its initial composition. President Edouard Beneš accepted most of the proposals of the CPCz leadership, which mirrored the sentiments of the people and the realities of the national democratic revolution. The new government was formed on liberated territory. A vital change was the participation in it of Communists, with Klement Gottwald becoming the Deputy-Chairman. The new government's programme, proclaimed in Košice on April 5, 1945, contained all the basic political, social, and national demands, including an alliance and postwar cooperation with the USSR, demands that under Communist leadership the people inscribed on the banners of their national liberation struggle.

The Košice governmental programme was not socialist, but it signified the rise of a qualitatively new situation. It contained some revolutionary elements that ran counter to the views of bourgeois circles and, to a large extent, restricted their space for manoeuvre. These were, above all, the reiteration of the authority of the national committees and, consequently, the abolition of the old bourgeois state apparatus and the closing of all channels for its restoration. This concerned the creation of new security agencies and the build-up of the Czechoslovak Army along the model of the Red Army, the army of liberation, and in cooperation with it, thereby giving the bourgeois police and army officers no opportunity for restoring the old practices. A new element was the recognition of the national equality of Czechs and Slovaks in the liberated state. The demand for the punishment of traitors and collaborationists ruled out the legalisation of their influence on the nation's political life. The decision to confiscate and nationalise their property was, in view of its share of the national economy, not only an anti-fascist but also an anti-capitalist action. The programme for the nationalisation of banks and key industries weakened the economic position and influence of the big bourgeoisie.

The main provisions of the Košice governmental programme signified that the people's democratic revolution had grown beyond the framework of the struggle for national freedom and the restoration of state independence. The people acted against the Nazi invaders, whom they regarded as the most reactionary elements of imperialism. At the same time, they acted for a more just republic, for dependable guarantees of its further existence. For that reason the attitude to the Košice governmental programme and the fulfilment of its individual provisions became the epicentre of the struggle in which were determined the character and further development of the liberated state, the condition in it of the working class and the entire people, and the country's place on the international scene.

In that period the CPCz had not yet advanced the slogan calling for a socialist revolution, but it had already turned the Košice governmental programme into a catalyst of society's development. The 1946 elections to the Constituent National Assembly were of the utmost importance. Although they were held in accordance with the 1920 Constitution, under the usual rules of bourgeois-democratic states, our party won a tremendous victory, becoming the strongest political party in parliament. Its Chairman, Klement Gottwald, was appointed Chairman of the government, whose programme provided for the consistent fulfilment and development of the

Košice programme. The Constituent National Assembly saw its task in drawing up and adopting a new Constitution that would institutionalise the gains of the national democratic revolution.

In this situation the bourgeois politicians went over to obstructionist tactics, believing that postwar economic difficulties would bring about a decline of revolutionary feeling. They wanted to create the conditions for a repetition of what took place in 1918-1920.² They concentrated on underhand dealings in parliament. They revealed their designs at first with circumspection and then more and more openly, hoping for support from the republic's President and assistance from their Western friends. Developments have demonstrated once again that the bourgeoisie will never overstep the boundaries of its 'class shadow', that it has no intention of sharing its political power, that it clings to power under all circumstances, while where it loses power it goes to all lengths to recover it. A situation arose in which, to quote Klement Gottwald, the bourgeoisie could not govern without the Communists and did not want to govern with them.³ In response, the CPCz called for the merging of the struggle in parliament, the government, and the National Front with the mobilisation of the working class and the rest of the working people.

In language understood by the people the policy of the party expressed their interests, and the people supported it. This led to the gradual isolation of the bourgeois politicians. By walking out of the government, the latter believed they could force its resignation, oust the Communists and, seizing power, influence the elections in 1948. But they were not destined to carry out their plans. *The political clash in February 1948 led to the establishment of the power of the working class and its allies; the national democratic revolution evolved into a socialist revolution.* Thanks to the policy pursued by the CPCz, in this was manifested the logic of revolutionary development that proceeded uninterrupted, and for that reason even with the passage of time it is impossible to divide it into separate stages. The most progressive demands of the national democratic revolution contained the embryo of the socialist revolution, and quantity grew into quality.

It may be asked how the world bourgeoisie could respond to this and how it could explain the defeat of its Czechoslovak representatives save by alleging that a 'Soviet model' was imposed upon our country, by claiming that the USSR had forcibly 'exported revolution'. This anti-Soviet cliché, based on fabrications, is still to be found in bourgeois literature. Its creators and apostles not only misrepresent the facts but also brazenly insult the working class and all other working people of Czechoslovakia, arrogantly denying their political maturity, civic consciousness, and ability to choose the road of their social development independently and govern their own country.

We, Czechoslovak Communists, have never made a secret of the fact that we closely study the CPSU's experience and that we take from it and from revolutionary theory what is of universal significance. Unquestionably, the alliance with the USSR protected our internal development, although the Soviet Army withdrew from Czechoslovak territory as early as the autumn of 1945. *But our revolution was the exclusive affair of the Czechoslovak people, of their working class, of the CPCz, and of our society's other progressive forces.* Owing to the fact that the Communists were able to enlist allies of the working class, particularly from among the poor and middle peasants and other strata of the working people, this was a revolution of the *majority*. For precisely that reason there was no violence, no bloodshed: reaction had no opportunity to resort to a violent counter-revolution. Nor was anything changed here by the circumstances that the working class declared that if necessary it was prepared to defend its gains by force.

The political power of the working class—the dictatorship of the proletariat—was established for the first time ever in a relatively industrialised country. As the

expression of the political alliance of the working class and other working people, the National Front system was preserved. The relevant place was occupied in it by public organisations, notably the trade unions and the united youth organisation. In it there were and still are four non-Communist parties. In the new situation it was exceedingly important to restore the ideological and organisational unity of the working class, not by 'liquidating the Social Democratic Party' but by uniting it with the CPCz on the basis of Marxist-Leninist principles, i.e., by its return to its revolutionary designation (in Slovakia this took place during the Slovak national uprising in 1944).

3

The sense and efficacy of a revolution are demonstrated by its economic and social results, by its impact on society's life, the status held by individual classes and strata, and the character of the changes in the relations of production and in the development of the productive forces. In Czechoslovakia the proletarian dictatorship could at once concentrate on the tasks of construction. The whole-hearted support of the majority of the people made it difficult for internal reaction to engage in subversive activities, while the alliance with the USSR protected the nation from world imperialism's conspiracies. This does not mean that enemies abandoned their attempts to restore bourgeois practices, that there was no class struggle. However, its acuteness was determined not by the government of the workers and their allies but by adversaries, and we saw this classic truth on our own experience. We encountered hostile propaganda, which tried to sow uncertainty, economic sabotage, the infiltration of wreckers across the Western frontiers, and the odious assassination of functionaries of the Communist Party and the national committees, and of progressive activists and members of the security agencies. Not for a moment could we neglect the defence of the revolution, especially as at the time the cold war had aggravated international relations.

The 9th CPCz Congress (May 1949), held after the political power of the working class was established, formulated the programme for the building of a socialist society. Planned economic management, socialist industrialisation, and the cooperation of agriculture were the elements that had to ensure the creation of that society's material and technical basis. The organisational abilities of the Communists and the example set by them, and the enthusiasm and skill of the working class and all the working people translated bold plans into reality. The nationalisation of industry, construction, transport, and trade was of fundamental significance. The difficult transition to cooperated large-scale agricultural production was accomplished gradually with the assistance of the working class. The relations of production underwent a qualitative change. The new system put an end to exploitation and created the conditions for the promotion of collective and individual initiative, the utilisation of the talents, zeal, and capability of each and every person, the participation of the working people in the management of production and social affairs, and the establishment of true democracy in society.

Developments in Czechoslovakia fully bore out that the principal objective of the socialist revolution is the well-being of people, the maximum satisfaction of their material and spiritual requirements in accordance with society's potentialities and in direct relationship with the achievements in the economy. The people's living standard began to rise steadfastly. Full employment, disability and old age pensions, allowances to mothers and to large families, and free medical services and education unprecedentedly reinforced the people's social confidence. The democratisation of education opened the doors of schools not only to children and youth; the masses were able to enjoy the benefits of culture. Socialism strikingly demonstrated its advantages over capitalism.

Nevertheless, in 1968, twenty years after the political power of the working class and

all other working people had been established, we had to wage a hard struggle to preserve the gains of the revolution. Czechoslovakia's experience confirmed that as an historical process the socialist revolution is not immune to errors, and this gives world imperialism and the forces of internal reaction a real possibility for attempting to restore capitalist rule. In 'Lessons of the Crisis Development in the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and in Society After the 13th Congress' the CPCz analysed this experience, for which a high price was paid, and the entire National Front, the working class, and broad public opinion agreed with its conclusions.

Life showed that the successful developments of the socialist revolution depends directly on the party's ability to carry out the historic role of the united political vanguard of the working class and all other working people, on its ideological and organisational unity, on unity of action, and on its links with the people. Violations of the principles of democratic centralism and inner-party democracy, subjectivism, intoxication with successes, voluntaristic isolation from reality, the leaping across individual stages of development and the advancement of unrealistic slogans, underestimation of the ideological struggle, and inadequate concern for the promotion of socialist democracy, in short, a departure from the principles of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism pours grist on the mill of the anti-socialist forces.

The assistance extended by the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Treaty countries to socialist Czechoslovakia was evidence of their common responsibility for the cause of socialism and peace. It ruled out the possibility of direct imperialist interference in our internal affairs, and averted the bloodshed in a civil war that might have been triggered by the enemies of socialism. But the struggle with anti-socialist forces, the restoration of Leninist norms in the CPCz, and the return to socialist principles in society's life were the exclusive affair of the Czechoslovak Communists, of our working class and its allies.

The years that have since elapsed have shown the success of this struggle, the efficacy of the chosen *political* methods, and that socialism has sunk deep roots in the minds of the people. The working people value its advantages and are determined to protect it. *As early as 1971 the 14th Congress of the CPCz put forward a comprehensive programme for the building of a developed socialist society, and the fact that this line was correct was demonstrated with the passage of time.* Our people achieved the targets of three five-year plans. Despite the complexity of external conditions and the steadily growing domestic demand, the country's economy developed evenly, undergoing structural changes. Bigger production assignments can now be ensured with relatively smaller outlays of labour, raw and other materials, and energy. Labour productivity is growing. The steady rise of the national income is the cumulative indicator of economic successes. We are making wide use of the advantages held out by the socialist division of labour, by production, scientific, and technological cooperation, and by economic integration with the other CMEA member-states. *Socialist Czechoslovakia has become a highly industrialised country with an advanced modern agriculture; in our country socialism has a solid material and technical basis.*

Economic development allowed pursuing a purposeful social policy. The rise of the people's living standard includes the growth of personal consumption, an improvement of housing and of the equipment of households, and an extension of the opportunities for restoring physical and intellectual strength. Social consumption is likewise growing rapidly, the quality of medical services and education are improving, pensions are increasing, and large-scale demographic measures have been launched. *By all the indicators usually used to measure the living standard Czechoslovakia is among the leading nations in the world.*

Much has been done to democratise society's life, to promote socialist democracy and the working people's active participation in the administration of public affairs.

Citizens are able to state and implement their views through public and independent organisations, political parties, and government agencies. The composition of the national committees conforms to the population's social structure and expresses the leading role of the working class in society and its alliance with the cooperated peasants and all other strata of working people. Legislative organs are ever more actively and on a qualitatively higher level wielding their verification powers relative to executive organs. By forging closer links with electors, they are in practice implementing Lenin's well-known thesis that under socialism it is the people themselves who adopt laws, enforce them, and verify compliance with them.

We see the nation's federalisation as a significant step towards our society's democratisation. This has made it possible to ensure the fulfilment of the guidelines laid down by the CPCz during the national democratic revolution calling for full equality of the two fraternal peoples, Czechs and Slovaks, and for the distinctive development and full civil equality of people of other nationalities. Equal rights and equal responsibility stimulate their socialist initiative and strengthen the unity of our state.

Successful building of developed socialism in Czechoslovakia and pride in what has been achieved do not incline the Communists towards complacency. The CPCz and the Central Committee are directing the building of the new society with a sense of responsibility to the working class and the whole people, and to the international communist and working class movement. The style of our party's work is characterised by a critical, sober approach to what has been achieved, by generalisations of past and present experience, by a striving to analyse society's requirements and potentialities scientifically. While noting the problems that exist, the party mobilises its own forces to resolve them with the active support of the people. This style is seen at all sittings of our Central Committee and influences the decisions that are adopted. We enrich our own knowledge by closely studying the experience and views of fraternal parties, both in socialist and capitalist countries. We are inspired by the CPSU's consistent development of revolutionary theory and by its practice. Its experience is unquestionably the richest and it would be hard to overestimate its significance to all the communist parties. Far from encouraging mechanical imitation, this experience induces creative work.

The building and perfection of developed socialism are an uninterrupted revolutionary process that constantly poses new historical tasks. The problems that have to be tackled in the course of this process include the intensification of the economy and the introduction of new equipment and technology conforming not only to present but also to future requirements and making it possible to achieve the highest labour productivity. This is fostered by quests for increasingly more effective methods of economic planning and management and the creation of the conditions for enhancing the independence of enterprises and, simultaneously, giving them a greater responsibility. Indispensable conditions for making these efforts productive are fair distribution, the application of socialist principles for the remuneration of labour, energetic efforts to weed out harmful levelling, and the use of moral incentives to foster initiative by collectives and by individuals. There is still much to do to clear the way for making the maximum use of socialist democracy's potentials, for deepening this democracy, and for bringing more actively working people into the management of production and the administration of local and state affairs. Fulfilment of the tasks of building and perfecting developed socialism presupposes effective ideological work by the party and the socialist state. For the fulfilment of our plans there must be highly educated and politically conscious people determined to reinforce labour, production, technological, and civil discipline and extirpate all manifestations of social injustice, social passiveness, and parasitism.

The 17th Congress of the CPCz, slated for 1986, will most certainly address all these problems in the order of their urgency.

Forty years of peace in Europe is the result of the Soviet Union's decisive contribution to the defeat of German fascism, the unparalleled growth of the Soviet Union's international standing and economic and defence capability, and its consistently Leninist foreign policy. The preservation of peace has been made possible by the emergence and existence of the world socialist system and by the unity of the countries belonging to the socialist community, which is the bulwark of all the forces of peace and progress.

Under the leadership of their Communist Party, the Czechoslovak people have remained true to the behests of the national democratic revolution. They have transformed it into a socialist revolution and built socialism, for whose perfection peace is vital. This political principle is by no means motivated by fear of capitalism. It stems from the humaneness of the socialist system, from the determination that humankind should go on living. For that reason in international policy we act side by side with the Soviet Union, steadfastly supporting its proposals for the preservation of peace, the easing of tension, and peaceful cooperation of states with different social systems.

Our knowledge of the laws of historical development and the experience we have amassed reinforce our confidence that there is a happy future for socialism, which is prepared, under conditions of peace, to compete with capitalism in economic development, in ensuring the welfare and social confidence of citizens, and in the broad development of education and culture. At the close of the twentieth century we see this competition as a worthy arena that will make clear, for the benefit of humanity, which of the opposing social systems is in fact the best.

¹ XVI. sjezd Komunistické strany Československa, Svoboda, Prague, 1981, p. 55.

² In 1918-1920 the Czechoslovak bourgeoisie used the split in the working class movement to suppress the revolutionary upswing of the people.

³ Klement Gottwald, *Spisy*, Vol. XII, Prague, 1955, p. 21.

'No!' to the Traditions of German Imperialism

Herbert Mies – Chairman, German
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LIKE 1917, the year of 1945 is among the most significant historical milestones in our day, and it is not surprising that the discussions, arguments and differences over the 40th anniversary of the rout of fascism are perhaps more bitter than those on any other issue.

May 8, 1945,¹ put the seal on the attempt by the most reactionary imperialist forces to destroy the Soviet Union, and together with it socialism as an existing social system, to restore the undivided domination of finance capital on the Earth and to

hurl the peoples back into medieval obscurantism and barbarism. It was a day which resulted from the world-wide political changes brought about by the Great October Socialist Revolution, and it marked the starting point for further radical changes in the international balance of forces in favour of social progress. The victory over German fascism led to the formation of the world socialist system, the liberation of the oppressed colonial peoples, and the establishment of a military equilibrium between socialism and imperialism to which Europe owes above all the fact that it has now lived in peace these 40 years.

The rout of Hitlerite fascism had an especially crucial effect on German history. German imperialism lost its great-power status, and was stripped of a sizable part of its former sphere of domination. A socialist German state emerged alongside the capitalist one.

In this context, the attitude of various political circles in the FRG to May 8 is of primary importance, for it helps to identify their place on the political stage and to discern their true intentions, indicating whether or not they have accepted the verdict of history—Nazi Germany's unconditional surrender—whether they have broken with the sinister traditional aggressive line of German imperialism, or whether their schemes are still motivated by the idea of *revanche*.

Federal Chancellor Kohl (CDU) sees May 8 as a day of 'German surrender', and 'the lowest point of our history'.² Chairman of the CDU/CSU group in the Bundestag Dregger regards this 'historical date as one of the greatest, or possibly even the greatest disaster in German and European history'.³ Let us note that he does not mean either January 30, 1933, or September 1, 1939, or even June 22, 1941,⁴ but the day fascism met its well-deserved end. And that is precisely why the attitude of the right-wing forces is so deeply reactionary.

It was the triumph of fascism and the failure of the peace forces of the German and the other European peoples to avert the Second World War that were, in fact, the national disaster. That being so, the military defeat of Nazi Germany became an insistent historical necessity. So that if the day on which that objective was finally attained at the price of millions of lives is characterised by responsible politicians, who cannot be excused on the plea of having no knowledge of the historical facts, as 'the lowest point of history', there remains only one conclusion to be drawn: they do not, in fact, want to break with the traditional expansionist policy of German imperialism and to accept the political results of Hitler's military defeat. It is hardly a coincidence that the forces which regard May 8 as a 'national disaster' have openly cast doubt on the existing European borders, made territorial claims and helped to increase the danger of war by accepting the deployment of US nuclear missiles.

In view of all that there is very good ground to emphasise: it is our good fortune that on German soil there exist the GDR and, in the FRG, anti-fascist, democratic and peace forces—a firm barrier in the way of the adventurist imperialist revenge-seeking plans.

Nowadays, the political divides on the attitude to May 8 and to the war-or-peace issue mainly coincide, as will be seen from the fact that the views of the various forces of the working class movement on the two issues have markedly moved closer together. The press has reported Chairman of the Socialist Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) Willy Brandt as saying: 'I, too, am Germany. I was not defeated. Nazi Germany was defeated.'⁵ Indeed, every anti-fascist, Social Democrat, Communist or Christian could have said the same thing. Anyone making a comparison of the addresses issued by the SPD and the DKP on the 40th anniversary of May 8, 1945, is sure to find differences of content and note shades of clarity in political evaluations, but on two crucial points, at least, the stand of the DKP and the SPD, and also of the trade unions and the Green Party is identical: it is the

characterisation of May 8 as the day of liberation from fascism, and the conclusion that war must never again be started from German soil.

That does not, of course, mark the end of the controversial discussions between the Social Democrats and the Communists over the origins of fascism and war, the lessons that need to be drawn from the victory of the fascist dictatorship in 1933 and of its liquidation in 1945, and on how to work for the working class unity. But the fact that both parties now regard May 8 as essentially a day of peace and liberation is, we feel, a great stride forward.

It creates important prerequisites for cohesion in our current struggle against the right-wing forces and the war danger.

That is the unique meaning of such memorable dates as the 40th anniversary of the rout of fascism, and it must certainly amount to much more than an occasion for 'quiet remembrance'. The democratic and left forces seek to make purposeful use of the day in order to rouse the people and mobilise them for vigorous action to make the lessons of history count in the defence of their interests and of peace and progress. They must take the opportunity to advance the solution of vital problems of our day and the future, and to give the struggle a fresh momentum.

The current ideological skirmishes over the 40th anniversary of the liberation from fascism can be encapsulated in one concise political formula: 'Tell me how you stand on May 8, and I will tell you how you stand on the war-or-peace issue.' After all, the main lesson of that day is that everything must be done to prevent another war.

That lesson is driven home by the more than 50 million dead in the Second World War. A third world war would most probably mean the end of modern civilisation, which is why no task is more important than keeping mankind out of a nuclear inferno.

In the struggle against the fascist warmongers, the peace-loving, democratic forces gained the upper hand only in the course of a protracted and sanguinary war. A tremendous price had to be paid in crushing fascism and restoring peace by force of arms: millions of men and women died, and immense material wealth was destroyed.

But the fact is that it could have all been avoided. The Soviet Union put forward its proposal for a collective security system equally holding out real guarantees to all the European states. But at the time the ruling imperialist circles of the Western powers refused to cooperate with the USSR on security. Their attitude to the idea of a German crusade against existing socialism was far from unfavourable, a piece of political shortsightedness which delayed the establishment of the anti-Hitler coalition for two years, and for which a high price had to be paid.

No one can resurrect the millions of men and women who had to lose their lives for that reason. But today, 40 years after the end of the Second World War, it is, in any case, important to explain the truth that war must be fought against before it has broken out. It also needs to be driven home that in the nuclear age there is no acceptable alternative to the peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems.

Advance towards collective security and cooperation in ensuring it is possible, irrespective of the boundaries dividing the alliances of states and social systems, even in the presence of the existing military alignments. The Warsaw Treaty countries' offer to the NATO countries to conclude a non-aggression agreement renouncing the use of force could provide the basis for a radical swing in that direction. The Soviet Union's initiative in inviting the nuclear powers to agree on the renunciation of the first-use of nuclear weapons, and its unilateral undertaking of such a commitment are equally of fundamental significance. These important steps by the socialist states provide the peace forces of the capitalist countries with broad opportunities for getting their governments to pursue a policy of peaceful coexistence and collective security. Fresh chances are held out by the negotiations on nuclear and space

weapons which have started in Geneva between the USSR and the United States.

The lever should be applied above all where the danger is greatest, namely, the arms race. The fresh round of super-armament, which imperialism, has initiated is immensely more dangerous than any in the past. Many of the newly developed types of weapons are essentially designed for surprise attack, leaving the attacked party less and less 'warning time' for defensive measures, and so forcing it to accelerate its counter-measures accordingly. Washington's planned deployment of space weapons could have an especially destabilising effect on the political and military-strategic situation. The marked increase of influence in the United States of irrational, adventurist forces, with unpredictable behaviour, gives these plans an extremely sinister dimension.

As in many other countries, scientists in the FRG who are conscious of their responsibility have presented convincing facts to show that US governing circles want to build up, with the use of anti-missile and anti-satellite weapons, a potential for 'blinding' the Soviet Union and then suddenly attacking it, while their own territory is essentially shielded against a counter-strike and its consequences.

The hopes that the USSR will be incapable of taking effective counter-measures are sure to collapse, but even if one ignores the vast amounts of money that are to go down the drain of an arms race extended into space, it is clear that once US imperialism is in possession of anti-satellite and anti-missile weapons, it could have ever more dangerous illusions about 'winning' a thermonuclear war against existing socialism, so further increasing the threat of war. That is why all the efforts to avert the militarisation of space before it has gathered full momentum are fully justified, and the way for doing so can be paved by the implementation of the Soviet Union's constructive and radical proposals for banning the use of space for military purposes.

Prevention of an arms race in space has become the key prerequisite for halting the arms race on the Earth. No agreement on disarmament or a limitation of nuclear weapons—strategic and medium-range—can be imagined without a simultaneous end to the US preparations for Star Wars. Our country's overriding interests demand a positive solution of these problems not least importantly because otherwise the FRG's space research potential will be made to serve US space war plans—and the prospect is already there.

As far as the FRG is concerned, it is Pershing II and cruise missiles, whose deployment on our territory was started in December 1983, that are its major problem, since they are clearly designed for a first strike against the Soviet Union, and since their use depends exclusively on the US President. The demand for a removal of US missiles from our country continues to be the central fighting slogan of the West German peace movement. Elimination of the danger of the FRG being turned into a hotbed of another war would also help to realise the proposal on the establishment of zones free from nuclear weapons and toxins in Central Europe, including the territory of the FRG.

Measures to limit military contingents and conventional armaments would be of great significance for our country, and that is one of the primary requirements of security, especially because many of the planned new types of 'precision weapons' are clearly designed for a first strike, being akin in their effects to weapons of mass destruction.

The economic and social aspect of the problem is likewise ever more important. The modern weapons which imperialism already has or intends to have in its arsenals are so costly that their funding tends to transcend the bounds of the possible. According to official estimates, the FRG's real military expenditures over the next decade are expected to go up by 25-30 per cent from the present level, even under the current plans for armaments and strength of armed forces. In current prices, they will total about DM75 billion, and DM100 billion and more in estimated 1990s prices.

Military expenditures will be very much higher if the stepped-up armaments programmes are realised in accordance with the Rogers Plan⁶ and the Air-Land-Battle scenario. The point is not far off at which even a highly developed country like the FRG will be faced with a real threat of economic collapse under the burden of armaments. Add to this the fact that the Bundeswehr leadership is planning to lengthen considerably the period of compulsory military service.

In view of these possible consequences of the current round in the arms race and militarism, the combination of action in defence of peace and the struggle for the masses' social interests tends to acquire altogether new features and prospects. There is a real possibility of involving a much wider circle of members of the working class and other working people, and working, student and other youth in the struggle for peace and disarmament. New prerequisites are being created for even closer cohesion of the working class and the peace movements.

These crucial tasks and objectives in the struggle for peace visually demonstrate how truly acute the war-or-peace issue is today—40 years after the rout of fascism. In this nuclear age of ours, mankind is literally faced with this question: 'to be or not to be?'. The vitality of the peace movement springs above all from the fact that awareness of that truth is steadily gaining ground, overcoming the fatal and demagogic philosophy of the Right, whose substance was recently expressed by Professor Kaltefleiter, a spiritual 'leader' of the CDU/CSU, in the following formula: 'Peace is a very great value, but it turns out to be jeopardised if it is declared to be the supreme value.'⁷

We cannot allow the FRG's policy to be determined by principles of that kind, which is why it is necessary to work for the unity of action by the various forces of the working class movement and alliance of the democratic circles, irrespective of any ideological or political differences. That is precisely the goal we, Communists, have been working for, being mindful of the strategic and tactical requirements of the fight against fascism and war indicated by the 13th Plenary Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Communist International and its Seventh Congress.

The conclusions they then drew were formulated in a situation that undoubtedly differs from the present one in many ways, but even today it is right to say that when reaction seeks ways out of the crisis of the capitalist system by increasingly curbing the people's social and democratic rights and building up armaments for war against socialism, all the forces of the working class movement and all the other democrats must stand together in serried ranks. Here, the world communist movement has a special responsibility for the simultaneous display of principle and flexibility in the struggle for peace, and for the creative application of the lessons in the fight against fascism and war in the present situation on the basis of the most vigorous activity.

Those who want to assess the significance of May 8 must first of all determine their attitude to the USSR and understand that it is not distancing from, to say nothing of confrontation with, the USSR but cooperation with it that can alone help to safeguard the FRG's national aspirations and the interests of peace and security.

Occupation of the Soviet Union and its ultimate conversion into a slave colony, the objective of the Hitlerites and their monopoly-capital backers, was from the outset pivotal to their drive for world domination. The deeply immoral character of the fascist policy of murder and brigandage left its imprint on the war which Hitler started as a crime against all the peoples, including the vital national interests of the German people, which lost over 6 million dead in it.

Germany had every opportunity of maintaining peaceful and friendly relations with the Soviet Union, and the 'spirit of Rapallo' initially led to the development of mutually advantageous political and economic ties between them, so largely helping Germany to overcome the international isolation in which it found itself after the First World War and the Treaty of Versailles.

The swing from peaceful coexistence to confrontation and eventually to war against the Soviet Union gave the German people nothing but calamities. There is no need to argue the truth of that at length. Today it is just as obvious as it was forty years ago.

However, in defiance of the lessons of history, resurgent German imperialism once again launched upon an anti-Soviet line after 1945 in the hope of recouping, in alliance with the Western powers, everything that had been lost as a result of Hitler's gamble. It is true that at that time the strategy of the anti-Soviet crusade did not result in the worst consequences: Adenauer was not strong enough to fight a war against the USSR even with Dulles as an ally. However, those who strove to restore the past still managed to poison international relations and the internal political climate in West Germany for several decades.

That is precisely the kind of policy that had led to the final division of Germany, and Adenauer's successors would do well to get that into their heads as they once again pretend to be champions of 'reunification'. We, Communists, reject the idea of 'the German people's collective guilt'. It is a false idea, because it wishes away the question of the very concrete responsibility of big capital, which engendered both fascism and war, and ignores the fact that 1933-1945 Germany was a country not only of Nazis, but also of anti-fascists, tens of thousands of whom fell in the fight against Hitler and his clique. But every people, including the German people, has to bear the historical responsibility for what is done in its name. As an integral community, it is bound to be responsible for the consequences (including territorial ones) of the criminal wars of aggrandisement, which it had failed to avert in due time.

That may be a bitter truth for many, but it is a truth which holds both for past and future. Applied to our country and its future, it means that the people of the FRG have a responsibility to themselves and to the whole of mankind in making sure that slogans which threaten peace, like 'Silesia remains ours' (a slogan officially adopted at the height of a May 8 discussion by a congress of revanchists with crucial participation by representatives of the ruling CDU and CSU parties),⁸ and acts threatening peace, such as the deployment of missiles, should not one day develop into a catastrophe whose consequences would eclipse those of the Second World War.

There was no complete break with anti-Sovietism in West German foreign and military policy even in the period when governments led by Social Democrats were at the helm in Bonn. Nevertheless there was evidence of an obvious shift in the late 1960s and early 1970s: a swing away from the cold war to detente, and the conclusion of the 'Eastern Treaties' under which the FRG recognised the political and territorial results of the Second World War. It was only through an improvement of its relations with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries that the FRG managed to move away from its role of 'spoil-peace' in the international arena, a role it had had to play when following Adenauer's short-sighted anti-Soviet line. The expansion of trade with the East yielded a major economic advantage. However, the noticeable reduction in the threat of war in Europe and the strengthening of our country's security were the most important outcome of the incipient detente.

It was a great success and a source of profound satisfaction for the opponents of the adventurist policy of revanche, for those who advocated reasonable relations with the socialist states, and they have always included the communists and the other democratic peace forces. Of much importance was the governmental policy of the SPD, with other social and political forces and realistically minded circles of the big bourgeoisie now and again having a positive role to play.

Anyone who wants to know what kind of foreign policy goes to benefit the FRG could just compare the 1970s with the Adenauer period, or the period after the Bonn government's momentous approval of NATO's 'twin-track' missile decision. Those who imagine that the start of the missile deployment had strengthened the FRG's

security (and as much is actually being said by the spokesmen of the incumbent right-wing coalition, and some SPD politicians, notably former Federal Chancellor Schmidt) are clearly blinded by anti-Sovietism, which makes them incapable of seeing the realities of our day.

As in the period of Hitlerite fascism, it was and still is being claimed in the FRG that the anti-Soviet line of state policy 'meets the national interest'. The right-wing forces keep smearing any steps which lead to a development of friendly relations with the Soviet Union as 'anti-national'. But life itself testifies to the very opposite: it is not an anti-Soviet confrontation strategy, but relations with the USSR on the basis of friendship and cooperation that alone enable our people to safeguard its national interests and enable it to live in peace and security. The USSR is always prepared for an honest dialogue. One will get nothing out of it by threatening to use force. What is more, the Soviet Union, the first and most powerful socialist state in the world, is the embodiment of mankind's aspirations for the future. Those who act against the historical forces embodying the future will be unable to gain anything, no matter what kind of alliances they may have.

It is hard for bourgeois politicians to understand this logic from their class standpoint, but they should at least think again why all the anti-Soviet military plans and gambles have failed, eventually turning into boomerangs against their sponsors. It was not the 'mistakes' of the anti-Soviet strategists which could allegedly have been righted, but the inexorable historical uniformities that have been of crucial importance. It is stupid and extremely dangerous to ignore the fact that these uniformities now have a much more solid underpinning than they had 40 years ago.

The historical role which objectively belongs to the Soviet Union in our epoch was most vividly manifested in its liberatory mission during the Second World War. Had the Soviet Union failed to withstand the onslaught of the Hitlerite hordes, the whole of Europe, and possibly the whole world, would have found itself under the fascist yoke. At the price of 20 million human lives, Lenin's land destroyed almost three-quarters of the Hitlerite war potential, so making the most crucial contribution to the victory. It does not minimise the merits of the soldiers, partisans and anti-fascist Resistance fighters of other nations to say that the Soviet Union was mankind's true saviour from the fascist barbarism.

Another point is also important in what concerns our people: there is a need to compare the Soviet policy with respect to Germany and the line of wiping out the population which the fascists conducted on the occupied territory of the USSR. While the fascist troops were still occupying a sizable part of the Soviet land and committing their atrocious crimes, the Soviet Union brushed aside the attempts to equate the Hitler clique, on the one hand, and the German people and the German state, on the other. During the war and after it, the Soviet attitude to Germany was not determined by a sense of revenge, but only by an urge to eradicate fascism and effectively to prevent another war from being started from German soil.

The right-wing forces in West Germany have tried very hard to obscure these facts. While concealing them, they told our people that the USSR was trying to 'enslave' it, and that 'freedom', 'self-determination' and 'national unity' allegedly called for an anti-Soviet policy. That was a betrayal of our vital national interests and brazen slander of the Soviet Union, which had first been treacherously attacked, and then declared to be the 'aggressor'.

It is one of the greatest historical accomplishments of the socialist German state, the German Democratic Republic, that, despite the flood of slander, it made a complete break with every version of anti-Sovietism and began to pursue a consistent policy of peace. Its strategic general line of developing relations of friendship and alliance with the USSR accords with the internationalist principles of the revolutionary working class movement, a line based on the awareness that the

struggle for social progress throughout the world imperatively calls for alliance with the most powerful progressive force of our day. It is a line which springs from the comprehension of the fact that peace and, accordingly, the people's very survival, can be ensured only through friendship with the USSR. The right blend of national interests and internationalism in a communist party's policy requires class cohesion and friendship with the Soviet Union and the CPSU. Struggle against anti-Sovietism and insistence on friendship with the USSR are also an expression of genuine adherence to national interests.

Over the past fifteen years, our country has repeatedly faced responsible decisions. When the right-wingers wanted to torpedo the Moscow Treaty and the treaties with the other socialist states in 1972, their efforts foundered on the will of our people, the great majority of whom have wanted peaceful relations with the countries of existing socialism. When the population of the FRG was stirred by 'Holocaust',⁹ the majority, especially members of the young generation, sided with the anti-fascist democratic forces. The results of the Bundestag elections in March 1983 do nothing to change the fact that the overwhelming majority of FRG citizens have come out against Pershing II and cruise missiles.

All of these events have, in a sense, split the country's population into different camps, with the divisions affecting virtually every family. The heated discussions that followed largely helped to clarify the line of the ideological watershed and have, on the whole, strengthened the positions of the democratic and peace forces.

These skirmishes have now been resumed over May 8. We, Communists, are convinced that the anti-fascist, democratic and peace-loving forces will emerge from the new ideological battles with even greater strength.

RESIST THE TURN TO THE RIGHT

From a DKP Board Resolution

War must never again be started from German soil—such was the unanimous conclusion reached by all the democratic forces in 1945. Today, however, armaments are once again being built up against the Soviet Union, and more aggressively than ever before. US imperialism has deployed on the territory of the Federal Republic first-strike nuclear weapons targeted on Moscow and Leningrad. Once again, 40 years later, a devastating war of incredible proportions may be started from German soil. And the crucial conclusion to be drawn from the lessons of May 8 should be formulated as follows: 'Get nuclear missiles out of our country! Disarmament and continued detente instead of arms build-up, confrontation and anti-communist crusade!'

If, 40 years after liberation from fascism and war, leading CDU/CSU politicians again question the postwar borders and hold forth on a 'German Reich within the 1937 borders', if revanchist associations are rearing their head, if neo-Nazi groups can commit their outrages while Communists are subjected to unconstitutional occupational bans, the purpose of the 40th anniversary of liberation should be to expose the roots of war and fascism and the past and present role of German big capital, especially the military-industrial monopolies.

What is needed is joint action against the right-wing forces, joint action in the struggle for peace, joint action in the struggle for jobs and food!

The main lesson of May 8, 1945, is that when peace is in danger, resistance is imperative. When democracy is curtailed, when revanchism and neo-Nazism are

again on the rise, resistance is imperative. Better resist the turn to the right before it reaches its terrible climax, before its fearsome seeds grow rank!

¹ The act of unconditional surrender of fascist Germany's armed forces was signed by representatives of the German High Command at Karlshorst, a Berlin suburb, on May 8, 1945.—Ed.

² *Unsere Zeit*, December 14, 1984.

³ *Frankfurter Rundschau*, No. 300, 1984.

⁴ The date Hitler took power in Germany; the fascist attack on Poland; the start of the Hitlerite aggression against the Soviet Union.—Ed.

⁵ *Der Spiegel*, No. 52, December 24, 1984, p. 23.

⁶ See J. Daniel, 'The Concept of a New "Blitzkrieg"', *WMR*, No. 3, 1985.

⁷ *Beiträge zur Friedensdiskussion*, Ed by Prof. W. Kaltefleiter, Institut für Sicherheitspolitik an der Christian-Albrechts-Universität, Kiel, p. 29.

⁸ Under public pressure the slogan was amended to 'Silesia remains our future in a Europe of free nations', but that did little to modify its revanchist character.

⁹ A TV film on the annihilation of Jews in Nazi Germany.—Ed.

Turning Point in the Destiny of Oppressed Peoples

Pieter Keuneman—Chairman,
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THE victory over German fascism and Japanese militarism forty years ago consolidated and carried deeper the radical transformation of the world that began with the Great October Socialist Revolution in 1917.

Mankind will always remain profoundly grateful to the Soviet people, their heroic armed forces and their great party, the party of Lenin, for their decisive contribution to this historic victory. Their enormous sacrifices and the tremendous suffering they endured will never be forgotten. Thanks to the Soviet Union and the world socialist system as a whole, conditions were created that have made it possible to avoid another global war for the longest period in this century. Changes in the world balance of class forces led to all the other profound changes on the international scene.

Victory over fascism also paved the way for rapid, dramatic advances in the national liberation movements in colonies and dependencies. It predetermined the collapse of the colonial system and made possible the new, truly equal and mutually beneficial relations that have developed in the last four decades between victorious socialism and the expanding community of newly-free states. Victory provided a powerful spur to the democratisation of international relations by enabling nearly half the world's population, whom imperialism had denied any say in world affairs, to emerge as an independent force contributing in important measure to the fight for peace, liberation and social progress.

These key conclusions can be drawn if we examine the impact of the great victory on the destinies of Asia, the continent where the anti-colonial movement had reached a high point immediately before World War II.

This vast continent had been under foreign domination for several centuries. British, French and Dutch colonisers—with incursions by the Portuguese—had

exploited the hundreds of millions of people living in this continent and plundered their natural resources. In the twentieth century, the USA, too, intruded into this continent. It seized the Philippines, established a colonial order there and began to penetrate into China and adjacent territories.

The October Revolution made the first significant breach in the imperialist domination of Asia. It enabled the peoples of the Central Asian regions of tsarist Russia to begin building, in association with the victorious Russian proletariat, a new life free of national and social oppression. In some parts of the continent, the possibility arose—as Lenin had foreseen—of taking with the assistance of victorious socialism the road of transition from pre-capitalist relations to socialism without passing through the agonies of the capitalist stage of development. But even after the October Revolution, the rest of the immense Asian-Pacific region remained a sphere of the most antiquated forms of colonial and racist oppression.

In the prewar period, Japanese imperialism, too, entered the Asian scene. It first expanded to China. Later it cast covetous eyes southwards, aiming to seize the colonial possessions of Britain, France and the Netherlands. Very soon, it began to claim most of Asia and the Pacific region as its so-called co-prosperity sphere.

The advance of the liberation process in the colonial world was extremely uneven, with high points in India, China and some other countries. In Africa, especially to the south of the Sahara, the anti-colonial movement was only just beginning, with its most vivid expression in some Arab countries like Egypt. The rise of national liberation movements coincided with the appearance of new social classes and strata, such as a proletariat, a national bourgeoisie and an intelligentsia. Their programme demands, and the scope and methods of their struggle depended on which classes or class coalitions assumed leadership.

In a number of Asian countries (India, Sri Lanka, Burma, Indonesia, etc.) the liberation movement was led by the national bourgeoisie or by petty-bourgeois democrats. In the initial stages, their demands were mostly confined to constitutional reforms that would give the national bourgeois forces a bigger share in the control of the state administration and the domestic market. But the demands of the movement became more radical as its social base expanded, involving a wider spectrum of social forces, including the working class and large sections of the peasantry. The growing militancy of the masses hastened and deepened the crisis of the colonial order and made it more and more difficult for the foreign oppressors to buy time for themselves through minor concessions and modest reforms.

In certain other Asian countries (Vietnam, China, the Philippines), popular movements operating under uncompromisingly liberationist and democratic slogans, with the Communists in the lead, assumed important dimensions even before World War II began. As a result, it became possible in these countries during the period of Japanese occupation to form and build up powerful popular resistance forces capable of conducting large-scale struggles against the invader and later to thwart the attempts of their former colonial rulers to stage a comeback.

Even in the prewar years, the social classes involved in liberation struggles achieved an overall high level of national consciousness in many countries of the region. The ideas of national liberation, disseminated by patriots over many decades, had taken deep root within the anti-colonial movement and shaped the world-view of the social forces involved. Active struggles against the colonial rulers plus the experience gained during the war sharpened this consciousness. This was true in particular of the countries overrun by Japanese imperialism. The British, Dutch and French imperialists, who had boasted of their 'civilising mission' in this part of the world, bolted in the most inglorious manner, leaving its peoples to their fate. Although some sections of these peoples initially entertained the illusion that the Japanese militarists would give them freedom, they soon learnt from bitter

experience that the new conquerors were no better than their predecessors.

The formation of the Berlin-Rome-Toyko Axis and the pincer-like drive of the Nazi hordes from the west and Japanese armies in the direction of the Indian Ocean awakened people in our region to the danger of fascism, which was threatening not only Europe but also Asia. This threat needed to be repulsed by defeating fascism on a global scale. With the entry of the Soviet Union, attacked by Hitler Germany, into the war and in view of the increasingly evident decisive role it played in the anti-fascist military struggle, the peoples of Asia realised more and more that the character of the war had changed, that it could no longer be regarded as one between rival imperialist powers for the redivision of the world, and that it now had powerful liberationist potentialities.

Communists of the region were the first to see this change and bring its significance home to their peoples. Backed by the masses, they organised stubborn struggles aimed at hastening the defeat of the Axis powers, strengthening the movement for political independence, forming national fronts to this end and blocking imperialist attempts to restore their rule after victory over the aggressors. This correct policy subsequently enabled the communist parties of many Asian countries to build up their strength and achieve leading positions in the life of their nations, while new communist parties came into existence in other countries.

The Soviet Union's victories in the European and Asian theatres of war created an entirely new global situation. The imperialist system was considerably weakened both in its centres and on its periphery. German, Italian and Japanese imperialism, or the most reactionary segment of imperialism at the time, received a crushing blow. Even imperialist powers like Britain and France, who had been members of the anti-Hitler coalition, emerged from the war in a noticeably weakened state and were therefore unable to recapture their former positions. The national liberation movement acquired a reliable ally, the increasingly powerful world socialist system.

Hence the upsurge of the national liberation struggle, unprecedented in scope and intensity, first in Asia and then in Africa and other parts of the planet. Colonialism, which had existed for several centuries, was knocked out in slightly more than a decade. The Bandung Conference (1955), whose 30th anniversary is celebrated this year, brought together the heads of state and government of 29 countries most of which had won freedom by then. It signalled the start of a fundamentally new and independent role for the Afro-Asian peoples in world affairs. The importance of this role grew from year to year and found a reflection in the formation of the non-aligned movement, the 'Group of 77',¹ and other groupings of newly-free countries which greatly assist the common struggle for peace, national liberation and social progress.

Friendly cooperation between newly-free states and the world socialist community, and the unselfish support they receive from it in various spheres have made this process irreversible. Lenin's famous scientific forecast to the effect that the formerly downtrodden and exploited colonial peoples would one day play an important part in shaping the destinies of mankind has been brilliantly confirmed.

The advances made by the newly-free countries in the four decades after the defeat of fascism were no simple matter. Some imperialist powers—notably France and the Netherlands—sought to re-establish their lost positions through colonial wars, assisted by US imperialism, which also intervened militarily in Korea. Britain also tried to preserve its rule over Malaya. But all these attempts ended in defeat. In all these instances, the all-round support which the liberation struggles and revolutions were given by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries was a decisive factor for success.

But even those countries that did not experience direct imperialist military intervention in the immediate postwar period faced numerous complicated problems after winning national independence. Most of these problems were a product of the

political, economic and social legacy of colonial rule or were due to incomplete decolonisation.

The most urgent tasks facing the peoples of these newly-free countries had many similarities. The political independence won by them had to be defended and consolidated. Feudal relations and occasional remnants of the prefeudal order had to be ended. Social and political life had to be democratised and statehood and national institutions built up. The newly-free countries had to free themselves from exploitation and from their unequal, subordinate status in economic relations with the capitalist world. The problem was compounded by the fact that, as far as their social organisation was concerned, they represented a vastly diversified conglomeration. They differed greatly in economic and social development, national peculiarities and cultural traditions, political experience and conditions. The paths and methods that they chose in order to solve the essentially similar problems mentioned above differed therefore according to which social class or bloc of classes was ruling the country concerned. This heterogeneity tended to increase due to ongoing social changes, the difficulties attending the formation of anti-imperialist and class consciousness and the peculiarities of the struggle.

The policy of US imperialism was a further obstacle to the effort to solve the enormous problems of development. Emerging from the war relatively unscathed, US imperialism decided to bid for world domination by preparing for a new world war, which meant that it needed the enormous manpower and natural resources as well as the territories of liberated countries. Imperialism as a whole resorted to a neocolonialist counter-strategy to recoup the losses sustained by it as a result of the break-up of colonial empires.

This diversity of complex factors determined the paths that the countries of the national liberation zone have been following over the past forty years. Countries where power was won by a bloc of revolutionary forces opted for a socialist-oriented path of development. The purpose of this orientation is to eliminate the positions of the imperialist monopolies, the local big bourgeoisie and feudal elements, restrict foreign capital, transfer economic control to the state, encourage the cooperative movement in the countryside, develop the productive forces according to a national plan, create a new state administration manned by persons loyal to the people, form a patriotic army, raise the working people's living standard and increase their role in national life. An equally essential component of this progressive orientation is a consistent anti-imperialist foreign policy, friendship and close cooperation with the socialist world.

The socialist-oriented countries are still the most advanced contingent of the national liberation movement, its vanguard. The majority of the newly-free countries still remain within the capitalist economic system and are involved in the international capitalist division of labour. This is the path along which governments representing the interests of the national bourgeoisie are leading their countries. Their orientation and policies are characterised by inconsistency, a tendency to compromise and, in some cases, readiness for collusion with imperialism and neocolonialism.

This attitude is due to class considerations as well as to certain objective factors. Neocolonialism continues through its transnational corporations and financial agencies, such as the IMF or the World Bank, to exploit newly-free countries, making them more and more dependent and plunging them in a still bigger debt. Developing countries are made to devalue their currencies and cut expenditures for the public sector and social welfare. Neocolonialists insist on a free field for foreign investors. All this understandably limits the opportunities of these countries, primarily their national bourgeoisie, for independent development. Secondly and more fundamentally, attempts to develop individual countries on capitalist lines at a time

when capitalism itself is in a profound and inextricable crisis and has begun to pass out of history as a social system cannot be seen as promising.

The main reason *why* capitalist-oriented countries have, despite vacillation and even retreats in some areas, been generally able to maintain independent positions is the many-sided assistance they have repeatedly received from the socialist community, primarily the Soviet Union. This assistance is principled, dependable, and unaffected by passing trends. Many outstanding statesmen of Asia and Africa, including those with bourgeois backgrounds, have acknowledged how important this assistance is to their countries as they grapple with the complex problems of freeing their economies and building a new life. It is safe to say that the stronger the ties of friendship and cooperation with the socialist community, especially the Soviet Union, the more a developing country (even one that remains within the world capitalist economy) is able to follow an independent policy. India is a striking example of this.

Fully aware of this fact, imperialism has been trying in every way to disrupt the steadily growing relations between newly-free countries and the socialist community. It has raised the bogey of a 'Soviet threat' while doing its utmost to divert attention from the growing confrontation between developing countries and imperialism by pretending that the main world contradiction is between 'poor' and 'rich' countries (the so-called North-South conflict). Imperialist agents peddle the notorious doctrine of 'equidistance'. But it has had only a limited effect. Even governments that actively pander to imperialism (Singapore, Sri Lanka) continue to maintain economic, diplomatic, trade and cultural relations with socialist countries. Only in a tiny minority of countries power is still held by reactionary dictatorships or military juntas ready to do international imperialism's bidding without question.

Despite the great diversity within the national liberation movement, its development over the past forty years has passed through definite common stages. Decolonisation was the main aim and result of the first stage. Nearly one hundred of the more than 160 countries of the world achieved political independence after the war. Only around 15 countries—mostly small and scattered—have yet to shake off the colonial yoke. But even there the liberation struggle is on the rise, as recent events in New Caledonia showed.

By the early 1970s, the national liberation movement had begun to exhibit new features, having entered a new stage. The achievements of this new stage were not smaller than those of the first. They were made possible by a combination of external and internal factors, primarily the deepening social content of the liberation process, as was indicated by the rise in the 1970s of a whole group of Afro-Asian countries that opted for a socialist orientation.

Externally, the movement enjoyed increasingly firm support from the socialist community, which was going from strength to strength while imperialism was weakened by numerous crises shaking the capitalist economy. In addition there was the impact of the climate of detente, which was being promoted by the Soviet Union and the socialist community as a whole and which limited imperialism's possibilities of pursuing its policies of ultimatum, diktat, pressure and interference in the affairs of developing countries.

The internal factors for the transition of the liberation struggle included changes in class relations, such as deepened contradictions between the national, the comprador and the bureaucratic sections of the bourgeoisie, the growth of the industrial working class, whose numbers rose to around 50 million in the Afro-Asian region, the increased stratification within the peasantry due to the spread of commodity-money relations in the countryside, and changes within the national intelligentsia. Asian, African and Latin American countries tend to draw closer

together. They have made joint formulated demands intended to loosen the fetters of dependence and step up resistance to neocolonialist policies.

The new stage of the liberation struggle, which began in the 1970s, is continuing. It has seen Asian, African and Latin American countries take numerous political initiatives in the UN, where they are in a majority. The non-aligned summits in Colombo, Havana and Delhi not only registered a substantial increase in membership but also played an important part in organising collective resistance to the war plans of US imperialism and its allies and in furthering the continuing anti-colonial struggle.

The new stage has been marked by a further uptrend in the struggle for economic liberation, by the OPEC countries' use of oil as a political weapon in resisting imperialist policy and by a collective demand on the part of the developing countries for a new international economic order. Although the fight for this demand is still confined mainly to opposition to the effort of capitalist centres to perpetuate the inequality of these countries in financial, trade and other economic relations, its potentialities as a rallying slogan against the entire system of imperialism's economic domination are immense.

Another feature of the new stage of the liberation process is the collapse of military blocs that imperialism had created in an attempt to retain its control over former colonies. SEATO and CENTO are no more, and even ANZUS has now begun to experience severe strains.

In this new stage, the national liberation movement has begun to pay increasing attention to the fight for world peace, especially in order to prevent a nuclear holocaust. The peoples of the developing countries know by experience that an international atmosphere of detente, disarmament and peaceful cooperation is essential if they are to solve the difficult problems they face. They are alarmed at what US imperialism is doing in Western Europe, where it is deploying its nuclear missiles, at the unprecedented arms race being escalated by it, its plans for the militarisation of space and the fact that it is proliferating its bases, increasing the presence of its naval armadas and building up its forces in the Afro-Asian region. While the peace forces demand that this region be made a zone of peace, Washington is rapidly militarising and nuclearising it. In South Asia, Washington is arming Pakistan to the teeth as an undeclared war goes on from the territory of that country against democratic Afghanistan; in Southeast Asia, its subversive activities are spearheaded against the socialist countries of Indochina.

However, actions by peace supporters in our region are gaining in scope and militancy. The 1970s and 1980s have seen the developing countries increase their support for the demand for general and complete disarmament, propose the creation of nuclear-free zones, take a stand against the use of their ports by nuclear-armed ships, and call for other anti-war measures. The arms race is particularly dangerous now, for it not only threatens the very existence of these countries but also deprives them of funds and resources which could otherwise be used for peaceful purposes.

The fight for disarmament and peace is therefore as important to the peoples of the national liberation zone as to the peoples of the rest of the world. There is no doubt that their involvement in anti-war struggles will increase in the remaining years of the present decade.

The peoples of former colonies have not been slow to notice the difference between the socialist community and the governments of the imperialist countries in regard to the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the victory over fascism. While the socialist community and progressive mankind as a whole are commemorating this anniversary in a fitting manner, the ruling quarters in the USA, Britain, and the FRG are trying to minimise its significance as far as possible.

This difference is hardly surprising, primarily because US policy on the world scene

today bears several similarities to that of the fascist regimes of the 1930s and 1940s. They have a common source: international monopoly capital's invariable aspiration to achieve world domination, to plunder and oppress other peoples with impunity, to rob their natural resources and exploit their manpower, and to confuse and mislead them with man-hating, racist and reactionary slogans. Like the former in the past, the latter want to intimidate the socialist world and to deal with it from 'positions of strength'.

Forty years ago the German and Japanese aggressors were taught a historical lesson that holds good for military adventurers to this day, namely, that efforts to achieve world domination, wherever they come from, are doomed to fail.

Never in the postwar era has US imperialism been able to prove the reverse. First to fail was its atomic blackmail against the Soviet Union. Its attempts to restore colonial rule in Asia and Africa by force proved just as fruitless. The desperate efforts of the Reagan administration to accomplish what Hitler could not do are similarly doomed to fall through.

¹ The group comprises over 120 developing countries. It advocates a restructuring of international economic relations on a fair democratic basis.—*Ed.*

The Past: Reminder and Warning

Gilberto Vieira — CC General Secretary,
Colombian Communist Party

THE magnitude of the historic victory over fascism 40 years ago stands out more and more with the passage of time. We Latin Americans know very well that the crushing defeat of Hitler Germany and its allies was an unprecedented success for the forces of democracy, progress and socialism fighting the darkest aggressive forces of imperialist reaction. The decisive contribution was made by the Soviet Union, its heroic Red Army, its selfless workers, collective farmers and intellectuals, its glorious Communist Party, a party loyal to the legacy of its founder, the great Lenin.

It so happened that Latin America was not at the epicentre of the major events of the period. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to affirm, as some bourgeois historians do, that the war bypassed our continent. Numerous facts show this affirmation to be far from correct. We think with legitimate pride of our part in those events. We gained from them experience which gives us a better insight into the challenging socio-political problems of today.

What memories of the war do Latin Americans retain? What lessons have they drawn from history? What is the warning served by the past now that humanity is threatened once again with a world conflagration which could destroy civilisation?

Origins of the War

One of the main lessons of the past is that in our times imperialism with its undisguised policy of aggression, its bid to subdue peoples and hold them in bondage, is the source and prime cause of armed conflicts. It will be recalled that World War II did not begin as a direct confrontation between capitalism and socialism, a conflict between the forces of reaction and those of social progress, but as a battle between

two imperialist alignments aimed at redividing the world and initiated by fascism.

Fascism is a despotic and terroristic anti-labour and anti-democratic system whose mission is to defend the privileges of monopoly capital with fire and sword. As a matter of fact, it is an embodiment of the basest aspirations of racism and an irrational nationalism. Its origins go back to 1922, when Mussolini came to power in Italy. With the seizure of state power in Germany by the Nazis in 1933, that country became the centre of international reaction and the mailed fist of world imperialism. And after Germany, Italy and Japan had signed the so-called Anti-Comintern Pact, fascism and war became a threat to the whole of humankind.

This made the fight against fascism a task of paramount importance requiring the mobilisation of all supporters of democracy and progress.

Great credit is due to the Communist International for uniting the anti-fascist forces; it was the Comintern that coordinated the activity of the communist movement at the time. The nature of the impending danger was made particularly clear by the conclusion of the 13th Plenary Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Comintern describing fascism as '*an open terroristic dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic, most imperialist elements of financial capital*'.¹ The Seventh Comintern Congress (1935), having generalised the experience of the Popular Front in France, recommended to communist parties to use it with due regard to the concrete historical conditions prevailing in their countries.

The thirties saw the formation of broad-based coalitions in some Latin American countries on the initiative of Marxists-Leninists. In Brazil a National Liberation Alliance was set up (1935). In Mexico, the Popular Front Movement became the mainstay of the government under Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940). In Cuba the struggle for the unity of democratic forces was led by the Communists. They brought about the restoration of parliamentary government and on being elected to the Constituent Assembly made an important contribution to the drafting of a new Constitution. In Chile the Popular Front, formed in 1936 with the participation of the Communists, Socialists and Radicals, scored notable successes. Two years later the Front's candidate won parliamentary elections with support from large sections of the population. In Colombia militant action by the working class and other progressive forces brought to power a liberal cabinet under Alfonso López Pumarejo (1934-1938), which effected a series of bourgeois-democratic reforms.

Broad coalitions, a powerful campaign of solidarity with the Spanish Republicans and the participation of many Latin American volunteers in the civil war (1936-1939) on their side, as well as the exposure of the real intentions of the Axis powers and their agents served as a dependable barrier to the spread of the brown plague and played an appreciable role in defeating the schemes of foreign-backed home reaction's attempts to turn countries of the region into bridgeheads for fascist expansion. Without delving into this particular aspect of the problem, since it could be the subject of a special analysis, we would like to note that Latin America held a place of importance in the Reich's plans. Although its turn had not come yet, Nazi occupation of the continent was on the books.

World War II as a conflict between imperialist alignments changed in step with the development of an anti-fascist resistance movement in some countries seized by the invaders, including Yugoslavia, Greece and France. But it acquired a fundamentally new content when, on June 22, 1941, Nazi Germany, which had the military and economic potential of subjugated Europe at its disposal, unexpectedly attacked the Soviet Union without declaring war.

How the Solidarity Movement Developed

The Nazi hordes' treacherous aggression against the USSR deeply angered all working people and the whole of progressive opinion throughout Latin America.

From the Rio Grande to Tierra del Fuego, a powerful solidarity movement began; it identified itself with the world's first socialist state, which came to bear the brunt of the fight against Hitlerism. Vast sections of the population had no doubt that the fate of humanity would be decided on the Soviet-German front. Years later Fidel Castro expressed the thoughts and sentiments of millions of ordinary Latin Americans as follows: ' . . . When fighting and dying beneath the walls of Leningrad, near Moscow, in Stalingrad, in Kursk, in Berlin, Soviet people were also fighting and dying for us. This is why their heroes are also ours. Their sacrifices were also ours. Their blood was also ours.'²

On the very first day of the German invasion of the Soviet Union, the Mexican Communist Party circulated leaflets denouncing the Nazis' treachery and criminal deeds and expressing unshakable confidence that the Soviet Union would defeat Nazism. The Communists of Ecuador released a statement calling for closer solidarity with the Soviet people and for the elimination of the fifth column in their country. On June 23 the Communist Party of Argentina sent out an appeal to the people emphatically protesting against the aggression and expressing confidence that 'the Nazi pigs which have poked their snouts into the Soviet garden will be struck a shattering blow'. A declaration by Cuba's Communists on June 24 described the invasion of the USSR as barbarous, inhuman and unjust. The Communist Party of Venezuela, which was operating underground, published a manifesto urging all compatriots to support the socialist country. Today, said a statement by the Peruvian Communist Party, when fascist hordes laying claim to world domination are trampling Soviet soil, it is more necessary than ever for Peru to take the road of continental cooperation in the struggle against the brown plague and to help the Soviet Union defeat the common enemy of the whole of humanity. The Communist Party of Chile, in turn, pointed out that the chief task was to beat off the fascist bandits' aggression and organise a campaign in defence of the USSR.

The First Congress of our party, which met shortly after the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union, concentrated on the problem of combating fascism. A document approved by it expressed the Colombian Communists' firm conviction that the Soviet people would overcome the invaders. The party started the newspaper *Diario Popular*, which became a militant anti-fascist forum. The paper told the people the truth about World War II and urged them to join in the campaign of solidarity with the Soviet people, with those who were defending the honour and independence of their country in a hard battle with Nazism, fighting at the same time for a radiant future for humanity.³

The activity of Colombia's Communists merged with the efforts of the fraternal parties of other Latin American countries.

Special importance was attached in the given situation to setting up Soviet war relief committees. It was not long before the working people of Latin America formed hundreds of such committees and friendship societies and associations to help the Land of Soviets morally and materially in its life and death struggle with the sworn enemy of humanity. Naturally, Communists and Communist-led trade unions became the life and soul of this solidarity campaign. The Confederation of Workers of Latin America (CWLA), which grouped the militant trade unions of most countries of the region, was very active in supporting the Soviet Union's fight against the fascist bloc. As the war which the Soviet people were carrying on was anti-fascist, the campaign also drew members of diverse classes and parties, leading politicians and other public figures included.

A National Democratic Front for Aid to the Soviet Union was established in Uruguay; there began a nation-wide drive to collect funds, clothes and medicines. An appeal launched by the Communist Party of Chile brought a ready response from the working class: 30,000 workers at the Antofagasta nitre plants proposed to the copper

miners of Chuquicamata working overtime to send the resulting output to the Soviet people as a gift. Many workers contributed part of their modest wages to the Soviet war relief fund. Cuba's anti-fascists did not slacken for a single day their campaign to extend material support to the Soviet Union. In 1942 Cuban democratic and trade union organisations collected 110 tons of various goods for the Red Army, including condensed milk, sugar, tobacco, soap and leather. Late in 1941 the anti-fascist organisations of Argentina shipped 200 tons of food, clothes and medicines to the Soviet people.

By promoting a solidarity campaign, the Communists of our continent were doing their internationalist duty, for they realised the role of the Soviet Union as vanguard of the world-wide liberation struggle. One of the leaders of the Communist Party of Argentina, Victorio Codovilla, said rightly that a united front had come into being in the anti-fascist war, with the first worker-peasant state of the planet at its head; it comprised 'nations and peoples ruled by different systems, men and women advocating different forms of government, holding dissimilar views on cultural and social development and supporting different ideologies and religious creeds, yet united by a common objective: destroying the forces of barbarity and bringing about the victory of the forces of civilisation and progress'.⁴

Communists remained the most consistent patriots fighting for the sovereignty and independence of Latin American republics. The communist parties' struggle against international fascism dovetailed with struggles against home reaction and anti-popular dictatorships in Latin America, with the defence of the working people's class and social interests, with action against capitalist exploitation.

Momentous Turning Point

The Red Army's victories over the German fascist invaders, the movement of solidarity with the Soviet Union that was growing in our countries and the subsequent involvement of the USA in hostilities in Europe necessarily told on the attitude of Latin American regimes.

Even in the difficult first year of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet people, many bourgeois party leaders, noted politicians and statesman of Latin America felt increasingly confident that Hitler's military adventure would fail. Influential members of the ruling classes of the region proved discerning enough to detect in the German attack on the USSR a dangerous claim of the fascist clique to forming a world empire under its aegis and not an action intended to 'save humanity from communism'.

The change in the mood of the rulers of certain Latin American countries led them to revise their position on the place which they should hold in the ongoing gigantic battle between the supporters and opponents of fascism. In January 1942 Cuba, Panama, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic and Haiti severed diplomatic relations with the Axis powers in conformity with a decision of the Third Consultative Conference of the foreign ministers of American states and declared war on them. In May 1942, Mexico did the same. The bravery of the defenders of Moscow and Leningrad, said President Manuel Avila Camacho of Mexico, addressing the Congress, had made it possible to establish a vast front on which the greatest battles in the history of humanity were being fought.

It may be appropriate to note at this point that hostilities on the battlefields of World War II involved not only Allied troops but contingents of the armed forces of Brazil (an expeditionary force in Italy)⁵ and Mexico (an air squadron in the Philippines). As for Colombia, its government declared war on fascist Germany in 1943.

The reorientation of Latin American regimes went hand in hand with measures against numerous fifth columnists, or Nazi agents among the German settlers and pro-German elements in various echelons of power. In Chile the authorities

uncovered and eliminated a spy ring in Valparaiso that had supplied the Nazis with military, economic and political information. Late in 1941 Uruguayan police knocked out a group of fascist agents and seized spying equipment and instructions. The Ecuadoran government closed a subsidiary of the German Transocean agency and banned two newspapers for conducting pro-Axis propaganda. Under public pressure the Brazilian authorities searched the assembly points of fascist hangers-on in several states and made many arrests among them.

In Colombia, too, many an agent of the Reich landed in jail. The issue of the activities of fifth columnists was repeatedly raised in Congress and discussed by the government on Communist initiative. *Diario Popular* carried a list of 15 industrial and trading firms owned by German capital which financed subversive organisations,⁶ and this helped uncover them.

The regimes of the other Latin American countries broke with the Axis powers at the close of the war. Argentina, Venezuela, Uruguay and some other republics of the continent did not join the anti-Hitler coalition until 1945.

The victories and increased prestige of the Soviet Union plus pressure from public opinion induced the governments of many Latin American countries to establish diplomatic relations with the USSR. The bourgeoisie in power was compelled to show political realism. It could not but reckon with the striking changes that had come about in the world with the victory of the anti-fascist forces inspired by the heroism of the Soviet people.

Democrats at a New Stage

The more obvious the inevitable defeat of Hitler Germany became, the wider the democratic, working class and revolutionary movement spread in our region. There began a new stage of struggle against foreign monopoly and home reaction. Class and anti-imperialist battles assumed a particular intense and extensive character.

Popular uprisings occurred in a number of Latin American republics in 1944 and 1945. In May 1944 the brutal Salvadoran regime under Maximiliano Hernández Martínez lost power. A major armed action in Guayaquil, Ecuador, in the same month put an end to the pro-imperialist dictatorship of landed proprietors under Carlos Alberto Arroyo del Río. On October 20, 1944 the dawn of the Guatemalan revolution broke, opening up the prospects of social progress for the country's working people.

In Venezuela the Rómulo Gallegos government, brought to power as a result of parliamentary elections, adopted a new Constitution, the most democratic ever recorded in the nation's history.

The working class made appreciable gains in struggles for its interests and unity. The trade union movement gained in militancy in Cuba, Chile, Ecuador, Brazil, Peru, Uruguay and Colombia. The nearly five-million-strong Confederation of Workers of Latin America won added influence. The working class sought closer international fraternal ties. In August 1943 Havana played host to the anti-fascist trade union assembly of the Western Hemisphere. The meeting discussed steps to strengthen the unity of Latin American trade unions and empowered the CWLA leadership to take the initiative of convening a world trade union forum. A CWLA congress held in Colombia in December 1944 resolved to attend the International Workers' Conference in London, which laid the foundations for the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU). Our continent was represented at the founding congress of the WFTU (Paris, September-October 1945).

Marxists-Leninists were among the foremost champions of the unity of all patriotic forces in a broad anti-imperialist democratic front equal to resisting reaction and fighting for fundamental social and economic changes. This enabled them to

strengthen their ties with the working class and other sections of the population and to build up their own organisations.

In the 1944-1946 period the communist parties of Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela, Paraguay and Peru regained legality. Dozens of Communists won election to parliament or municipalities in Brazil, Venezuela, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Peru, Chile and Ecuador. Communists served as cabinet ministers in Cuba (1943-1944) and Chile (1946-1947).

Here are two figures to illustrate the upsurge in the communist movement in Latin America: whereas the total number of Communists on the continent by the beginning of World War II was 90,000, by 1947 it had risen to 380,000.

The Soviet people's victory in the Great Patriotic War, the defeat of fascism and the gains of democratic forces in Europe and Asia were of tremendous significance to the destiny of our continent; they had a decisive impact on the national liberation movement both immediately after the war and later on. The Cuban revolution (1959) may be described as a distinctive culmination of this process and an indication of its having acquired a new, far more important quality; in turn, the revolution greatly spurred the struggle for social progress in the region.

Remember the Lessons of History

Forty years have passed since World War II. Our planet has changed beyond recognition since then.

A radical change has occurred in the balance of forces in the historical struggle between the old and new social systems. Capitalism is losing ground. Socialism has gone beyond the boundaries of one country and there now exists a strong socialist community. Imperialism's colonial system has collapsed. Many dozens of new states have taken the road of independent development. The non-aligned movement is a powerful factor in contemporary politics.

Deep changes have taken place in Latin America as well. The heroic people of Cuba are the first in the Western Hemisphere to be building a society without exploiters or exploited. In July Nicaragua will celebrate the sixth anniversary of the victory of the Sandinist revolution, which offered the working people of that long-suffering country magnificent opportunities for social progress and freedom. The patriots of El Salvador, who are fighting heroically for real and full independence, are making more and more new gains. Liberation processes are also going on in other parts of the continent; the democratic movement is expanding and the united front against the dominance of US imperialism, which wants to impose its will on our peoples and curb the growing trend in favour of social change, is going from strength to strength.

The reactionary rulers of the USA are doing their utmost to turn back the wheel of history. Having declared the socialist countries the 'focus of evil', they are escalating the arms race to an unprecedented degree and trying to extend it to outer space. The United States anathematises the national liberation forces, provokes border disputes and local conflicts and hatches conspiracies, nor does it stick at outright aggression, such as it used against Grenada.

In these circumstances the lessons of World War II are all the more relevant, for they help Communists take their bearings in today's complicated international situation and choose the right strategy and tactics.

Which of these lessons do we see as particularly important?

To begin with, we must never forget, as we have pointed out, that imperialism, whose nature has not changed, remains the source of war and tension and an enemy of peace and progress. The past imperatively demands that we be vigilant against the intrigues of bellicose groups of international financial capital, expose their dangerous plans with the greatest determination, reveal the falsity of their claim to the role of

peace-makers and mobilise progressive opinion throughout the planet against militarism.

Fascism and reaction as an outgrowth of imperialism can be ended only if all the truly democratic and national patriotic forces achieve unity on a broad basis. This is a further lesson which Latin Americans have learnt very well. Indeed, military dictatorial, repressive, anti-popular regimes in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, and Uruguay have collapsed under the powerful pressure of a united front of workers, peasants, members of the urban and rural middle strata, students and intellectuals as well as patriotic members of the armed forces, the clergy and the domestic bourgeoisie. This is also in store for the Pinochet regime in Chile, which is bursting at the seams, the Stroessner tyranny in Paraguay, where the opposition shows increasing unity and efficiency, the puppet government of El Salvador under Duarte, which is compelled to surrender position after position to the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front and the Revolutionary Democratic Front. Much the same lot is bound to befall all the other regimes of a similar type. All this goes to show that imperialist domination on the continent is in crisis.

Stubborn facts of history attest that the victory of the anti-Hitler coalition made for favourable changes on our continent. On the other hand, the cold war winds that began to blow in the second half of the forties had an adverse effect on liberation processes. A worsened world situation was accompanied in Latin America by a counter-offensive of reaction, by terror and provocation against progressive forces and by anti-communist hysteria. It was in that period that the Guatemalan revolution was strangled and that nearly all communist parties had to go underground again. This is a further, highly important lesson indicating that the struggle for a healthy international climate, detente and the vindication of the principles of peaceful coexistence is a priority task facing all revolutionaries and democrats.

Today as during World War II, Communists are, notwithstanding the spate of lies and calumnies coming from the class enemy, the most consistent supporters of democracy who are also defending 'representative democracy'. At the same time reactionary sections of the bourgeoisie, which has always plumed itself on allegiance to democratic ideals, are actually as willing as ever to trample on these ideals so as to further their selfish interests. In capitalist countries it is to Communists that great credit is due for championing advanced, renewed democracy, whose implementation will pave the way for socialism.

The experience of the past war indicates that doing one's international duty, far from running counter to the fulfilment of national tasks, helps accomplish them. Incontrovertible proof of this is furnished by the deep-going revolutionary, democratic changes (already mentioned in brief) which came about in the socio-political life of many countries of our continent at the close of the battle with fascism and in the early postwar years. For their part, Latin American peoples satisfied themselves of the invigorating power of international proletarian solidarity on more than one occasion when the firm stand and disinterested assistance of the Soviet Union and other socialist community countries became a strong factor in thwarting US imperialist intrigues designed to stem liberation processes.

We know from postwar history that the establishment of diplomatic relations and the promotion of economic, trade, scientific, technological, cultural and sporting relations between Latin American countries and the Soviet Union are in their national interest. These relations fit into the fabric of peaceful coexistence and lend it substance. Needless to add that economic ties with the socialist world help reduce the dependence of republics of the region on international imperialism, primarily its US contingent, on transnationals and the capitalist economy as a whole, now in an extremely deep crisis.

The experience of World War II tells us that political common sense and realism

are not alien to sections of the ruling classes in Latin America's capitalist countries, a fact confirmed by their choice in favour of the anti-Hitler coalition. It is fair to speak of the existence of such sentiments to this day. They have so far found an expression in the Tlatelolco Treaty (1967), which declared the continent a nuclear-free zone, the efforts of the Contadora Group, the 'Message from Four Continents' signed by the presidents of Mexico and Argentina and calling for an end to the arms race and for the prevention of a nuclear disaster, a number of other initiatives, the more active involvement of Latin American countries in the non-aligned movement. This trend has been particularly strong since the Malvinas Crisis, which showed a large body of opinion who their real enemy is and satisfied it that the danger of a nuclear holocaust is also threatening our continent. Experience has shown that the Buenos Aires conference of the communist parties of South America (July 1984) was right in concluding that the most diverse social and class forces can be brought into the struggle against nuclear insanity.

Lastly, there is the lesson suggesting that participation in the general democratic movement does not at all mean that the proletarian party must dissolve in it and lose its identity but implies, on the contrary, its steady ideological, political and organisational consolidation on the unshakable principles of the ever-living theory of Marxism-Leninism. Disregard of this theory is fraught with far-reaching consequences for Communists. We are sternly reminded of this by events of the closing phase of World War II, when some Latin American communist parties, including Colombia's, were corroded by Browderism.⁷ We paid a heavy price for the lesson but we also drew the right conclusions. Combating opportunist ideas, Latin America's Communists overcame their mistakes. Our party, for one, inflicted at its Fifth Congress (1947) a decisive defeat on liquidationism and tailism and moved on to the solid basis of the ideology of scientific socialism.

Such are the main lessons of World War II.

The conference of the communist parties of South America approved a resolution on the 40th anniversary of victory over German fascism.⁸ In deciding to begin preparations in our countries for this noteworthy anniversary, we Communists considered that in this way we will do justice to a heroic past and pay tribute to the memory of the tens of millions, including 20 million Soviet citizens, who gave their lives to save civilisation and ensure the happiness of humankind. It was evident to us that so memorable a day must be celebrated as an occasion for the further mobilisation of forces to resist the danger of a nuclear conflagration, end the arms race and work for detente and peaceful coexistence in order to avert a recurrence of the tragedy of war.

¹ Jorge Dimitrov, *Obras Escogidas*, Vol. 1, 1957, p. 376.

² *Discursos pronunciados por el Comandante en Jefe Fidel Castro Ruz*, Ediciones OR, 1975, April-June, Havana, p. 23.

³ See M. Medina, *Historia del Partido Comunista de Colombia*, Vol. 1, Bogota, 1980, pp. 362-387.

⁴ Quoted from B. Marianetti, *Argentina. Realidad y Perspectivas*, Buenos Aires, 1964, p. 450.

⁵ See Salomão Malina, 'Current Significance of the Struggle Against Fascism', *WMR*, No. 4, 1985.—*Ed.*

⁶ See M. Medina, *op. cit.*, pp. 388-389.

⁷ Earl Browder (General Secretary of the CPUSA from 1930 to 1945) upheld revisionist theses alleging that the character of US imperialism had changed and that antagonistic contradictions had disappeared in capitalist countries. Proceeding from these false premises, he called, in effect, for the self-dissolution of revolutionary organisations of the working class in favour of amorphous non-party associations.—*Ed.*

⁸ See *Nueva era*, No. 17, 1984, pp. 26-27.

For Humankind There is No Other Way

Georg Fuchs – President, International
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IN the Schwarzenbergplatz, located in the centre of Vienna, stands an impressive monument to Soviet soldiers as a reminder of the liberative feat accomplished by the Soviet people, of their great contribution to victory, and their huge sacrifices. For me, a Viennese, this monument is particularly dear. It was the Soviet Army that liberated my city and my republic, and it was because of the Soviet Union that Austria, the first victim of Nazi expansion, was restored to the map of Europe in its old frontiers as a free, independent, democratic, and sovereign neutral state.

When I think of the events that took place four decades ago in my mind's eye I see another monument. It is the monument to the victims of the US first atomic bomb in Hiroshima. For me, a physician and a scholar who was devoted many years to the study of the influence of radioactive radiation on human beings, as for hundreds of other people on our planet, this is lasting testimony of a senseless crime committed by imperialism and a constant warning of what a thermonuclear holocaust can do to our planet.

My Japanese colleagues in Hiroshima and Nagasaki said in emphatic terms that this should never recur. And I should like to believe that the peoples who won the greatest of victories over the forces of fascism and militaristic reaction would never again let another incinerating war break out.

As we look back over the years that have passed since the Victory we have justification for saying that time has demonstrated how difficult the road is to disarmament and lasting peace, but it has also reinforced the hopes and faith of the peoples that there is a realistic possibility of preventing a world thermonuclear catastrophe. Since the war the planet's social make-up has, I would say, changed more rapidly and radically than ever before in its history. The balance of forces in the world arena has changed fundamentally. There has appeared a community of socialist states that bases its foreign policy on the ideals of peace and the principles of peaceful coexistence. The old colonial empires have disintegrated. A movement of non-aligned states has taken shape.

The experience of the period since the war, particularly US imperialism's defeat in Korea and Vietnam, the failure of Israel's aggressive actions in the Middle East, and other developments have shown that under the new balance of strength imperialism is no longer able to win either big regional or local wars. The sphere of its potentialities has shrunk.

However, we should not forget that while imperialism has lost the ability to dictate its will to humankind it has by no means lost the ability to destroy the human race. The explosions of the first atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki were the overture to a dangerous development of the means of warfare. The nuclear arsenals now contain a lethal potential large enough to turn our planet into a lifeless desert. I have written of this in detail in the book *From the Atomic Bomb to a Nuclear Holocaust (Von der Atombombe zum nuklearen Holocaust)*, the second edition of which has just been published in Vienna. The main conclusion that I offer in it is that a nuclear war would threaten life on earth. This squares with the conclusions of other

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scientists who have seriously researched the question of the consequences of a thermonuclear conflagration.

The new, unprecedented spiral of the arms race started by militarist reaction in the 1980s is moving farther away the realisation of the hopes of abolishing weapons of mass destruction, of freezing and limiting the stockpiles of armaments, and achieving disarmament. Meanwhile, the build-up of weaponry and the development by imperialist circles of 'limited', 'protracted' and Star Wars doctrines are accompanied by the spread of all sorts of concepts designed to provide moral justification for and legitimise such wars and the preparations for them.

Having proclaimed that communism is an 'empire of evil', the advocates of a global nuclear Armageddon regard the end of human civilisation as a new, cleansing deluge. It is asserted that the 'pious' will either 'ascend' to heaven or, surviving, lay the beginning for a 'divine kingdom' on an earth reduced to ashes by nuclear flame. To a person with any education at all these views will naturally seem wild, to put it mildly.

Other exponents of humankind's destruction argue that wars are inevitable, that they are the result of inherent human aggressiveness, of an inclination towards fanaticism and violence. Arguments of this kind are supplemented with chauvinistic propaganda about a messianic role of the USA in the whole world or of Israel in the Middle East, and also of all sorts of fantastic visions of 'victorious nuclear wars'. One must do justice to the skill of these advocates as well as to the wide technological potentialities that they have at their disposal—their ideas are winning supporters. The undisguised militarist thrust of US state policy, the upsurge of revanchism in the FRG, and the growth of neofascist movements and groups in some West European countries—all these are dangerous symptoms showing that far from everybody clearly sees the character and the dimension of the mortal danger hanging over mankind with its civilisation, culture, and intelligence.

The mounting threat of war has brought to life an unparalleled anti-war and anti-nuclear movement. It has now been joined by many mass organisations and prominent political, civic, and religious leaders, physicians, and scientists. The breadth and multiformity of this movement are demonstrated also by the results of international meetings of scientists sponsored by our institute. These are attended by scientists representing a wide spectrum of political views and ideologies. Upon stating their views and conceptions in free discussions, they draw general conclusions with scientific objectivity—that nuclear weapons must be banned, that mandatory international rules must be drawn up, and that measures must be taken to consolidate universal peace and security and bridle the arms race. On all continents more and more people are beginning to realise that it is no longer enough to condemn war.

It is necessary to acknowledge that a nuclear war cannot be an alternative to other ways of settling state-to-state relations and resolving social conflicts. It cannot be an instrument for attaining any political, economic, or ideological aim. World developments have confronted each of us with the need to choose between the friends and enemies of peace. This is a question of conscience inducing a person to choose a road in accordance with his moral stand, and today it is the cardinal question facing all of the earth's inhabitants regardless of nationality, citizenship, political persuasion, party affiliation, and worldview.

It is sometimes hard to choose correctly, because the most rabid proponents of militarism are more and more frequently posing as zealous peace-makers. Further it is not easy because clarity of judgement and views is often obstructed by class, estate, national, and other prejudices, atavistic anti-communism, or a philistine striving to shut oneself off from the world.

It seems to me that today it is of particularly great importance to help people to understand the source of the war threat, to see who is a champion of peace and who is its overt or covert enemy, who is aggravating international tension, and who is doing

everything to disperse the clouds of the nuclear threat. Here use must be made of actual facts. Let us recall: at the 38th session of the UN General Assembly the USSR and other Warsaw Treaty states were among the 95 countries that voted for the declaration condemning nuclear war. But the USA and all the other NATO countries, with the exception of Greece, were among the 19 adversaries of this declaration. The USSR was the only nuclear power to respond favourably to the Delhi appeal of the leaders of six nations from four continents for concerted steps to end the arms race. Soon after the new Soviet-American talks on nuclear and space weapons opened in Geneva, the Soviet Union declared a moratorium on the deployment of its medium-range missiles and suspended other counter-measures in Europe. The socialist community declared again and again that the historical dispute between different social systems, as any other disputes and conflicts between states, can and must be settled exclusively by peaceful means. Spokesmen of the USA and other NATO countries, on the contrary, do not conceal their conviction that armaments are being manufactured in order to be used, and are openly planning a 'crusade' against socialism. I would recommend that every person should independently continue this line of comparison in order to see clearly the direction from which the winds of cold war are blowing today and from which the all-destroying hurricane of a hot war may blow tomorrow.

A correct choice is only the beginning. It seems to me that the width of the anti-war movement's political spectrum indicates that there is a need for tireless work on a joint action programme around which people belonging to different social forces and professing different philosophies and political views could unite.

Early this year I was a member of a delegation from the International Institute for Peace to the Third International Dialogue for Disarmament and Detente in Vienna.¹ This dialogue and the other meetings and innumerable mass actions of the peace fighters in West European states, the USA, and some other countries have shown that the platform of joint actions in the struggle for peace can be based on the following demands.

- that, following the example set by the USSR, all the nuclear powers should solemnly pledge a no-first-use of nuclear weapons;
- that existing nuclear stockpiles should be frozen;
- that the development of space weapons should be halted;
- that the creation of nuclear-free zones should be started in various parts of Europe, which would ultimately be delivered from all types of nuclear weapons;
- that the creation of nuclear-free zones should be started in Asia and other regions and that there should be respect for the sovereign rights of states and peoples banning the deployment of nuclear systems on their territory or the entry of nuclear-armed ships into their ports;
- that all nuclear tests and the manufacture of new types of nuclear armaments should be halted;
- that chemical weapons should be banned, that the production of these weapons should be halted, and their stockpiles should be destroyed;
- that the nuclear powers and, following them, all other countries should go over to limiting and reducing conventional armaments.

Compliance with these demands acquires growing significance because, as was noted by participants in the Vienna dialogue, many scientists in various countries have come to the conclusion that in the event nuclear weapons are used our planet would be plunged into a 'nuclear winter' in which all forms of life would perish.

In its efforts to cast doubt on the need for action to defend peace, militarist propaganda is trying to take the edge off society's anxiety, to make people believe that there is no special cause for alarm: humankind has lived through one cold war, and it will survive another. Arguments of this sort conceal the grasping striving of the

military-industrial complex to continue getting maximum profits at the price of the annihilation, poverty, and suffering of hundreds of millions of people.

I should like to enlarge upon this point. It is beyond dispute—and this is becoming obvious to everybody—that the 700 billion dollars now being spent annually on armaments may bring us death tomorrow. But, regretfully, far from everybody is clear about what these 700 billion dollars are *bringing today*. This question has been discussed at our institute at many meetings of scientists from capitalist, socialist, and developing countries. To sum up the conclusions of experts, we can say that these astronomical expenditures on armaments are bringing:

Unemployment. Although spokesmen of monopoly capital are trying to depict military expenditures as a means of creating new jobs, the facts tell a different story. Even in the USA experts have drawn the conclusion that each billion dollars spent for military purposes signifies a net loss of 9,000 jobs in civilian branches of industry. An even larger cutback of jobs is caused by the transfer of money to the armaments industry from social security, the health services, and education. Every billion dollars taken from schools by the armaments business abolished 51,000 jobs. Economists have estimated that in 1980 alone the escalation of the arms race in the USA brought roughly two million people into the army of the unemployed.

Hunger and disease. A deplorable fact of present-day reality is that hunger and the absence of elementary medical care are annually the cause of the death of between 20 and 30 million people in developing countries. In Africa alone more than 150 million people will be threatened by famine and death from starvation if major socio-economic steps are not taken. There is a shortage of staple foodstuffs in many Latin American and Asian countries. The shadow of famine is hanging, like a Sword of Damocles, over a considerable portion of the planet.

Destruction of the environment. 'Death without war' threatens not only the inhabitants of Asian, African, and Latin American States. At a World Peace Council sitting in Berlin, the deceased Soviet Scientist Academician Yevgeny Fyodorov, whom I knew personally, said that if the world did not cease to throw material resources and money into the bottomless pit of the arms race and did not switch at least part of this money to the solution of the pressing global ecological problems of environmental pollution, we ourselves or, most certainly, our grandchildren would die without war in a poisoned atmosphere, on a planet poisoned and destroyed by irresponsible human activity. The background of ionising radiations and the extent of pollution of the atmosphere and subsoil waters have reached a dangerous level already today. This is the cause of the growing number of crippled children being born. The risk of cancer has risen; scientists estimate that about 20 per cent of the planet's overall disease rate is related to environmental pollution.

As I see it, the call for an end to the arms race thus has not only a humanistic and political but also a practical significance. The reorientation towards long-term scientific and technological programmes for resolving global problems—ecology, energy, transport, public health, agrobiological, the utilisation of oceanic resources, space exploration, and so on and so forth—opens up a wide field for the application of the enormous scientific, technological and production potential now in the possession of the military sector of the economy.

The global character of this problem springs not only from the fact that it affects the vital interests of every person but also from the fact that its solution requires the concerted efforts of an overwhelming majority of nations—capitalist and socialist, of countries with various levels of industrial development. Colossal investments are needed, and these can only come from collective contributions made out of funds released by a halt to the arms race.

A lesson of history is that war must be fought before it breaks out. There is another lesson that comes from the experience of the four decades separating us from the

Victory over fascism: it is that not only war must be outlawed; humankind must outlaw the policy and practice of preparing for war, the criminal, irresponsible dissipation of the world's material and intellectual resources. The threat of our planet's destruction in a nuclear war and the danger of humankind's defeat in the face of the difficult problems being set before civilisation by its own development can only be removed by the joint efforts of all peoples and states.

The Soviet-US talks that have started on a wide range of questions related to reducing nuclear armaments on earth and in outer space are providing the possibility for a serious and productive examination of these questions. Of course, it is not an easy matter to consider and resolve the entire range of such complicated issues simultaneously. But the situation obtaining in the world offers no other alternatives, Humanity must be delivered from the prospects of Star Wars. The only purpose of the USA's plans for developing an all-embracing anti-missile defence system is to have a 'space shield' for delivering a nuclear first strike without the fear of retaliation.² In this connection, the World Peace Council Presidium called, at its recent sitting,² upon the peoples to start a massive campaign against the militarisation of outer space. The stand of the peace fighters is clear: no weapon, neither conventional nor nuclear, nor laser, nor beam, nor any other, should be deployed in outer space. This is the only basis for agreements on ending the arms race, for limiting, reducing and then banning and destroying all nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. This is the only way to release the human and material resources so vitally needed for the development of all countries and peoples, for the progress of humanity.

At the WPC Presidium sitting in March it was noted that the wartime anti-Hitler coalition was a great fraternity of fighters against fascism in different countries. With the blood they shed jointly they cemented the alliance of forces of peace and democracy. They demonstrated that different political systems and distinctions in ideology and political views were not a hindrance to fighting a common threat. This occurred four decades ago and there is more reason that it should hold true today when the danger of a nuclear catastrophe hangs over the human race.

I believe that today it is of the utmost importance that use should be made everywhere of existing opportunities for organising mass actions by friends of peace. We can and should counter political subterfuges aimed at legalising the Star Wars projects and other attempts to upset the existing balance of power in the world with the diplomacy of the peoples demanding that there should be no wars and no build-up of arsenals. The forty years that have elapsed since the Victory over fascism have shown how great the role of the masses is in averting the threat of war and supporting realistic alternatives giving our planet a peaceful future.

May 1985, the 40th anniversary of Victory, be a year of unity and cohesion of all the peace forces in the struggle to avert a nuclear war!

¹ This dialogue was attended by representatives of over 400 political parties, national and international organisations and movements, trade unions, and youth, woman's, and religious organisations in 72 countries of Europe, Asia, Africa, and North and South America.

² Held in March of this year and attended by representatives of peace fighters in 105 countries and of 29 international organisations.

exchange of views, discussion

The Lessons of History Serve Our Day

Special Meeting of the WMR Editorial Council on the 40th Anniversary of the Victory over German Fascism and Japanese Militarism

The Editorial Council of *World Marxist Review* met in Prague on the 40th anniversary of the Victory over fascism to consider the lessons and the experience of the Second World War for our day. There was a discussion of papers presented by **Jose Maria Lanao** (CP Argentina), **Raul Valdez Vivo** (CP Cuba), **Pavel Auersperg** (CP Czechoslovakia), **Roland Bauer** (Socialist Unity Party of Germany), **Efstratios Korakas** (CP Greece), **Sandor Sorczik** (Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party), **Unni Krishnan** (CP India), **Rafic Samhoun** (Lebanese CP), **Badamyn Lhamsuren** (Mongolian Peoples' Revolutionary Party), **Jerzy Waszczuk** (Polish United Workers' Party), **Semou Pate Gueye** (Senegal Party of Independence and Labour), **Vusizwe Seme** (South African CP), **Sergei Tsukasov** (Communist Party of the Soviet Union), **John Pittman** (CPUSA). Among those who took part in the discussion were **Ali Malki** (Socialist Vanguard Party of Algeria), **Gancho Ganev** (Bulgarian CP), **Agamemnon Stavru** (Progressive Party of the Working People of Cyprus—AKEL), **Luis Emilio Veintimilla** (CP Ecuador), **Georg Kwiatowski** (German CP), **Bert Ramelson** (CP Great Britain), **Donald Ramotar** (People's Progressive Party of Guyana), **Randolfo Banegas** (CP Honduras), **Satiyadjaya Sudiman** (CP Indonesia), **Kadym Habib** (Iraqi CP), **Elean Thomas** (Workers' Party of Jamaica), **Salam Khaled** (Jordanian CP), **Naim Ashhab** (Palestinian CP), **Felix Dixon** (People's Party of Panama), **Rojelio Gonzales** (Paraguayan CP), **Cesar Jimenez** (Peruvian CP), **Jaime Barrios** (CP Salvador), **Raja Collure** (CP Sri Lanka), **Ahmed Salim** (CP of the Sudan), **Ali Ileri** (CP Turkey), and **Samuel Bejaq** (CP Uruguay). The statement by **Bruno Furch** (CP Austria) was read out at the meeting.

In the light of the experience and the lessons of the Second World War, which ended with the rout of Hitlerite fascism and Japanese militarism, the participants in the discussion concentrated their attention on what was most important and of abiding significance for the international communist movement, and for all those who are carrying on the fight against various forms of imperialist reaction, and for social emancipation, national liberation, democracy and peace.

Below is a summary of the opinions and assessments expressed in the discussion and grouped by the main problems.

THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF SOCIALISM

In their analysis of the outcome and experience of the Second World War and the four postwar decades, speakers laid special stress on the importance of socialism in the period of the war and in the period of peace. Of course, they noted, the contribution to the victory over fascism was made by all the members of the anti-Hitlerite coalition, the fighters of the national liberation armies, the partisan units and the Resistance movement in the occupied countries, but the keynote of the whole discussion was the idea that the brunt of the struggle fell on the shoulders of the people of the world's first socialist state, which did most to wipe out the fascist plague.

That is a fact, many speakers said, which the opponents of socialism are now trying either to ignore or distort. The question of *who scored the victory, how and to what end* is considered—and the answer stood on its head—in numerous 'works' on its 40th anniversary. A great number of books and articles were written about it in the past but now it is more clear than ever that such publications are designed impudently to distort the historical truth to suit present-day imperialist policy.

The Soviet People's Great Feat

The Soviet people's victory in the Great Patriotic War and its crucial contribution to the outcome of the world-wide anti-fascist battle, speakers said, proved very well that it is a hopeless gamble to conduct any kind of 'strength policy' or 'crusade' against the USSR and the new social system. Since the truth about the war does not suit those who have once again unfurled the banners of bellicose anti-communism, the falsifiers of history have concentrated on minimising the Soviet Union's role in the rout of Nazi Germany and ignoring the importance of its participation in crushing Japanese militarism. They have been trying to sell the idea that it was allegedly the United States, with its economic and military potential, that was mainly instrumental in the victory, suggesting the conclusion that mankind was saved from fascism by the Western 'democracies' led by the United States.

E. Thomas said that in Jamaica, for instance, one will find nothing about the USSR's crucial contribution to the liberation of the peoples of Europe and Asia from the fascist bondage even in school history books, since imperialist historians would simply like to stamp out that fact from the minds of the masses. She emphasised that the Communists have no right to forget about our ideological enemies' anti-Soviet line, and should constantly give reminders about the Soviet people's sacrifices, steadfastness and courage, and the CPSU's great achievement in becoming a fighting party, a true organiser and architect of the victory, the party which welded the country into one great fighting camp.

S. Tsukasov, G. Ganev and **R. Bauer**, among others, cited concrete data confirming the USSR's crucial contribution to the defeat of fascism. *Militarily* that is borne out by the fact that the man battles of the Second World War were fought on the Soviet-German front, where the bulk of the troops and the weapons were involved, and where the Wehrmacht suffered its major defeats and greatest losses.¹

The Soviet Union also made an exceptionally important contribution to the victory over Japanese militarism. **B. Lhamsuren** recalled that in July 1945, i.e., before the USSR declared war on Japan, the Japanese government rejected the surrender ultimatum made on it by the United States, Great Britain and China, for the men in Tokyo were firmly determined to carry on the war, to resist as long as possible, and had large forces at their disposal for doing so. The Soviet Union's entry into the war against Japan sharply sped up the end of military operations, because the Japanese militarists were deprived of their main potential for carrying on the war and were forced to accept the anti-Hitlerite coalition's demand of unconditional surrender following the rout of the Kwangtung Army, an operation in which Mongolia's armed

forces fought shoulder to shoulder with the Soviet armies. As much was admitted at the time by the then Japanese Prime Minister Suzuki, who declared on August 9, 1945, that the Soviet Union's declaration of war put his country in a 'desperate situation and made it impossible to carry on the war'. Those are the facts.

But it was not only in the military field that the USSR exerted the crucial influence on the outcome of the Second World War. Speakers noted the Soviet Union's great *political and social role* when it became the rallying centre for all the forces fighting against fascism. It was the Soviet state that made the main contribution to strengthening and consolidating the anti-Hitlerite coalition, as it tirelessly worked for more vigorous action by the Allies in order to shorten the war, and itself invariably honoured its Allied commitments.

The Nazi attack on the world's first socialist state altered the very character of the Second World War, whose main content now became the fight of the democratic anti-fascist forces against the most reactionary forces of imperialism. The Soviet Union's stand for the cause of all the enslaved and oppressed epitomised mankind's most radiant hopes, which it, in fact, justified. Its devastating blows at the invaders created favourable conditions for successful operations by the Resistance and mass struggles against the aggressors.

L. E. Veintimilla, R. Gonzales, C. Jimenez and S. Bejaq, among others, pointed out that the Soviet people's heroic efforts and the Soviet Army's victories enhanced the influence of the Communists and all the other democratic forces even in countries far away from the main theatres of military operations, and helped to carry on the fight against the hated dictatorships and reaction and for broad democratic transformations. The ground, said **J. Barrios**, shook under the reactionary regimes in Latin America, and the anti-people's government of El Salvador and Guatemala collapsed. Broad and massive campaigns of solidarity with the Soviet Union got under way in all countries of the continent.

The course and outcome of the fighting, speakers said, confirmed Lenin's idea that in modern warfare economic organisation is of decisive importance,² and the advantages of the new social system were most visually demonstrated by the Soviet Union's defeat of the shock forces of imperialism. *Economically*, the USSR's crucial role in the war period was determined by the fact that, despite its heavy territorial and material losses at the initial stage of the military operations, the Soviet economy, which the party restructured on military lines, kept supplying the front and rear with all they needed and ultimately ensured complete superiority over the enemy in the quantity and quality of armaments, the material foundation of the victory.

Consequently, the victory in the Great Patriotic War and the Soviet Union's contribution to the rout of German fascism and Japanese militarism proved the *historical superiority of socialism*, the champion of humanism, freedom and respect for human dignity, over the sinister forces of imperialism and racism. **S. Tsukasov, G. Ganev, R. Banegas, and U. Krishnan**, among others, stressed that it was the second greatest event of the 20th century after the Great October Socialist Revolution, a world-wide historical achievement of the communist-led peoples of the socialist country. It was a triumph for the immortal ideas of Marx, Engels and Lenin, 'a demonstration of the political and moral superiority of the socialist and state system over the system of capitalist exploitation and oppression, a victory which immensely enhanced the authority of socialism among the working people. Indeed, the broadest popular masses on the various continents saw that socialism is the embodiment of historical progress and the guarantee of a peaceful and happy future.'

The Victory over Fascism and Current Development

The rout of fascism and militarism left its mark on the whole subsequent course of world history and brought about deep changes in the international balance of forces.

Far from being destroyed, as imperialist reaction had hoped, speakers said, the new social system actually emerged even stronger from the crucible of war. Socialism spread beyond the boundaries of one country.

A world socialist system took shape to become the main factor of mankind's historical development. The working people's power, which triumphed in a number of countries in Central and Southeastern Europe, demonstrated to mankind—within the lifetime of a single generation—that it was actually possible to wipe out social and national oppression, economic crises, unemployment, indigence and fear of the future. The community of socialist states, united in the common purpose of peaceful construction, became the main obstacle in the way of imperialism's reckless and aggressive plans, and a mighty bulwark of the world's progressive forces. There was a rapid development of the process of national liberation, the imperialist colonial system collapsed, and there was a growth of the authority and influence of the communist and working class movement.

The Soviet forces' victories, **B. Lhamsuren** and **S. Sudiman** said, not only helped to liberate many countries, but also promoted their people's democratic revolutions. When the Soviet Army drove the Japanese invaders from Northeastern China, the country's most developed region, it handed over to the People's Liberation Army of China all the arms and ammunition which it had taken from the Japanese troops. That is precisely the area from which China's PLA began its successful offensive against the Kuomintang troops, which led to the triumph of the people's revolution and the proclamation of the People's Republic of China in 1949. The Soviet Army's rout of the strike forces of Japanese imperialism was of crucial assistance in the national liberation of the Korean people.

The changes in the world balance of forces as a result of the defeat of Hitlerite fascism and Japanese militarism and the overall weakening of the colonial powers' positions accelerated the development of liberation processes, as was also evidenced, in particular, by the August 1945 revolution in Vietnam. Burma, Indonesia, the Philippines and other countries rose to state independence in anti-Japanese armed resistance and persevering struggle against the colonialists.

Socialism's growing international authority and support helped to advance national liberation in the Arab East and in Africa. For Lebanon, for instance, the immediate result of post-war world development, said **R. Samhoun**, was the withdrawal of British troops in October 1946 and French troops in December 1946 from the country. That was achieved by the popular masses' struggle and the Soviet Union's principled stand in exposing the moves of France and Britain, and of the United States, which entered into a compact with these countries. Their conspiracy was thwarted by the USSR, which used its right of veto in the UN Security Council.

The collapse of the imperialist colonial system was an event of outstanding importance and made the people's liberation irreversible. In the forty years since the victory over fascism, the world has changed out of all recognition, **U. Krishnan** emphasised. Hundreds of millions of men and women who had in the epoch of colonial domination been nothing but objects of history came upon the world scene as its subjects and makers. Almost one hundred newly independent states rose from the ruins of the colonial empires.

The rout of fascism and the formation of the world socialist system provided a long-term impetus to the peoples' struggle for national liberation, said **A. Malki**, among others. Henceforth, they came to rely on the socialist community countries' solidarity, and moral, political, material and technical support.

Existing socialism has established a new type of economic relations with the newly liberated countries based on equality, so helping them to advance along the way of independent development. It has readily come to the assistance of peoples forced, like the peoples of North Korea and Indochina, to take up arms in defence of their

independence. The socialist community's visual example in building a new life and its extensive and all-round assistance have enabled a number of newly liberated countries to take the socialist orientation, and to go on from anti-capitalist protests and the propaganda of socialist ideas to realising concrete programmes of political, economic and ideological transformations.

Cooperation with the socialist community countries goes to intensify the anti-imperialist content of the foreign and economic policies even of states developing along the capitalist way, while the steadily growing strength of existing socialism helps to restrain the aggressive aspirations of imperialism and promotes the economic, social and cultural progress of a number of developing countries.

The victory over fascism, the emergence of the world socialist system and the steady development of existing socialism have acted as a powerful accelerator of other definitive processes of social development: the disintegration of the imperialist colonial system, the successes of national liberation, and the rise of new independent states.

Socialism: the Leading Force in the Struggle for Peace

It was said in the course of the discussion that during the war socialism was the crucial factor that ensured the historic victory of the anti-Hitlerite coalition, and that now, in time of peace, it has become the chief factor that has prevented imperialism from implementing its aggressive schemes and starting another world war over the past four decades. Just as forty years ago, when the USSR made the main contribution to the defeat of fascism, it is now the leading force in resisting the US plans for world domination.

Socialism and peace are indivisible, and that is made evident by the facts, ranging from Lenin's Decree on Peace to the well-known initiatives of the recent period designed to achieve disarmament, strengthen security and remove the threat of nuclear war, said **S. Sorczik**. The interconnection and interdependence between socialism and peace serve and have served as the general line of socialist foreign policy.

The experience of the Second World War, in which the socialist Soviet Union and capitalist Great Britain, the United States and France fought together against fascism, showed that Lenin was right when he said that states with different social systems could work together, coexist in peace and cooperate for the common interest, without interfering in each other's internal affairs. That is the line for which the ruling communist and worker's parties of the socialist community countries have opted consciously and as a matter of principle, a line they have invariably striven to implement in practice.

The growing might of the socialist community has now resulted in a military-strategic equilibrium between the two opposite world systems, but imperialism keeps trying to reverse the tide of history, so as to be able once again to carve and recarve the map of the world to its own liking, and to impose its own terms and order on the peoples.

The US administration and its allies have proved to be incapable of learning the lessons of history. In order to bend mankind to their dictates, they have mounted a new anti-communist 'crusade' in an effort to attain military superiority over socialism, said **A. Stavru**. Hence the policy of escalating the arms race, knocking together military blocs and building up military bases.

The 40th anniversary of the great victory over the forces of fascism and aggression gives public opinion in various countries, members of various classes and social strata and people of different nationalities and political persuasions an opportunity to ponder the destinies of the world. In the alarming international situation which has taken shape through the fault of the aggressive imperialist circles, men of goodwill

ask this question: *How is the nuclear threat to be averted? How are the clouds of the war danger to be dispelled?*

Speakers at the Editorial Council meeting stressed that international opinion believes the most clear-cut answer is provided above all by the policy and acts of the Soviet Union and the socialist community as a whole. The peoples met with profound satisfaction the USSR's solemn declaration that it would not be the first to use nuclear weapons. There has been invariable approval everywhere of the proposals made by the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty countries aimed to strengthen peace and security, and their numerous initiatives serving the cause of disarmament, detente and peaceful coexistence and resulting in better understanding and ever wider support by progressive world opinion of their idea that in our day it is not military but peaceful means that can alone help to settle any disputes and conflicts between states, including the historical contest between the two different social systems.

That the USSR's policy is profoundly peaceful and internationalist, said **E. Korakas**, was well demonstrated by the fact that during the Second World War it stood up not only in its own defence, but also in defence of the life of the workers of all countries, of the vital interests of mankind, and of culture against barbarism. Once again, the political, economic and military strength of existing socialism provides the peoples with the most reliable guarantee in face of the mortal danger posed by imperialist reaction. That is why defence of the socialist community—the chief adversary of the bellicose forces—is a most important task for everyone who opposes war.

The peace loving-states and social movements have been taking practical steps to ease international tensions, being aware that they can always rely on the great authority of existing socialism, on its economic, scientific and technical potential and—not least importantly—on its defence capability, which helps to contain the aggressive plans of imperialism.

AS IN THE PAST, IMPERIALISM CONTINUES TO POSE THE THREAT OF WAR

There are a number of fundamentally important facts relating to the Second World War which the capitalist world's governments and mass media have been trying hard to conceal from their peoples. Among these, speakers said, is an understanding of the fact that Hitlerite fascism was fostered by imperialism to pave the way for capital's undivided world domination.

The peoples are being kept in ignorance of the role of US imperialism as a casual force, a creator and prime mover of the conditions which brought about the Second World War, said **J. Pittman**. The efforts of US imperialism objectively helped to establish the Nazi brand of fascism in Germany.

Fascism, a Fostering of World Imperialism

After the First World War, the economic potential of German imperialism and militarism was restored by means of the billions made available to its monopoly capital, with aid also going to the Nazi party from US monopolies and banks, including the Morgan and Rockefeller banks, Standard Oil, International Telephone and Telegraph and many others.

The imperialist circles of the United States, Great Britain and France gave full backing to a united front against the Soviet Union, promoted the establishment of the 'anti-Comintern pact' and brainwashed their peoples into hatred for the Soviet Union and fear of the Communists. They egged Hitler on to attack the USSR in the hope that the two sides would destroy each other in the war. But everyone knows that the

policy of 'appeasement' led Nazi Germany to attack the 'democratic states' of Western Europe even before it launched its aggression against the Soviet Union in an effort to assure itself of a sufficiently deep and economically strong hinterland. Still, even during the war, US, British and French monopolies used secret channels to provide the Nazis with funds and badly needed strategic raw and other materials. The lives of many millions of people were forfeited by the deliberate refusal of US and British imperialism to shorten the war by opening the scheduled second front against Nazi Germany in Western Europe in due time.

The objectives of the policy of imperialism, speakers said, were not destined to be realised. The reactionary forces underestimated the potential of the great socialist states and the great attractive power of socialist ideas. Imperialist reaction was unable to prevent either the rout of fascism or the victory of socialism in a number of countries in Europe and Asia and in Cuba, and the rise of the peoples' anti-imperialist liberation struggle.

US imperialism and its allies are now hatching plans for a thermonuclear war in the hope of winning it, and are preparing to deliver strikes from space against targets on the Earth and to wage chemical warfare, as Ronald Reagan and his entourage have frankly admitted. The facts clearly show where the source of the war threat lies: the militaristic and reactionary circles of the United States have now become international capital's chief 'war party', just as the Hitler regime used to be on the eve of and during the Second World War.

In this context, speakers stressed the especial significance of exposing the aggressive line of the United States and other NATO countries. **R. Valdez Vivo, D. Ramotar, N. Ashhab, K. Habib** and other speakers pointed out that it is US imperialist policy that increase tensions in Central America and the Caribbean, fuels Israel's aggressive Zionist ideology, its genocide against the Palestinian people and the Israeli militarists' crimes in Lebanon, and supports the racist government of South Africa and the dictatorial Latin American regimes, with the result that millions of people have been killed in the more than forty declared and undeclared local and regional wars fought over the past four decades.

Who Benefits from the Arms Race

The struggle to end the arms race was a prominent subject of the discussion. The artillery salvos which announced the rout of the fascist hordes also sounded the prelude to a new era of hope, said **S. P. Gueye**. The radically changed balance of economic and social forces went to create real potentialities for the peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems, a course favouring the rapid advance of the scientific and technical revolution. Nevertheless, mankind is still a long way from living in 'the best of all possible worlds'. The unparalleled danger for civilisation is rooted in the class egoism of capital, which worships only one god—profit. Imperialism wants to develop an ever more destructive military potential in order to go on exploiting the working people and imposing its will on the nations. The arms race leaves man defenceless in the face of the numerous tragedies now being enacted on the globe, such as above all are hunger, poverty and illiteracy, still the lot of many peoples which have to stagnate in economic backwardness.

The Communists, speakers said, believe that the waste of vast resources on the arms race is clear evidence of the selfseeking and irresponsibility of the most aggressive and reactionary circles of the bourgeoisie. The solution of the most complicated economic and social problems which fall as a heavy burden on a sizable part of mankind could have been substantially eased, if only some of the funds going into militarisation were used for the people's welfare and progress.

G. Kwiatowski stressed that the most reactionary versions of imperialist domestic and foreign policy are being framed and implemented by the military-industrial

complexes (MICs), which are relatively new formations in the political and economic structure of the capitalist world. Although the MICs, an interlacing of arms business, military elites and senior civil servants, began to take shape even before the Second World War, they have developed most rapidly over the past forty years, and now have a sinister role. It is the MICs that insist on military solutions to disputes between states, for government contracts assure them of a guaranteed market for their products and exceptionally high profits from the arms race, which are well in excess of profits in the civilian sectors of the economy.

However, the arms race is inhuman not only because it is an obstacle to the progress of the human race. It poses a threat to its very existence. One of the lessons of the Second World War, said V. Seme, is that the threat of a world-wide conflict is sharply intensified when imperialism attains—or has the illusion of attaining—military superiority.

That is why the Communists have made the problems of disarmament central to their efforts to preserve peace. Here a number of fundamental questions tend to arise, such as: how can the masses be organised for the struggle to end the arms race?

Members of some peace movements are known to make the assumption that the United States and the USSR are equally responsible for aggravating the danger of war and that both equally pose the threat of war. Some hold that the Soviet Union should not respond with counter-measures to the deployment of new US missiles in Western Europe. Others say that if the USSR were unilaterally to reduce its nuclear arsenal, it would do much to help the peace movement.

The main flaw in such an approach, it was pointed out, is that it is based on the illusion that bellicose monopoly capital is capable of making a positive response to that kind of step. If the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries failed to ensure a rough military-strategic parity with the United States and NATO as a whole, the Washington hawks would be confirmed in their belief that they could mount a nuclear attack on the socialist world without having to face a crushing retaliatory strike. The US urge for military superiority, many speakers said, poses a threat for all the states, because if imperialism ignites a nuclear conflagration, it is bound to sweep the globe from pole to pole and incinerate mankind.

If the anti-war movement is to be strengthened and successfully developed, peace fighters should be increasingly aware of the need for a correct comprehension of the sources and causes of the arms race and the danger of a thermonuclear war, said G. Kwiatowski, J. Pittman and other speakers, and since comprehension is not spontaneous, the Communists believe that their duty is to work even harder to develop the mass consciousness. That is a task which is not at cross purposes with the communist parties' striving to extend the peace movement by helping to unite all those who oppose the nuclear threat and want detente and disarmament.

ANTI-COMMUNISM: POISONED WEAPON OF REACTION

The Editorial Council meeting analysed at length present-day anti-communism and anti-Sovietism, its concentrate, which constitute the ideological basis of the policy of the most reactionary circles of monopoly capital. It traced the historical development of anti-communism, with speakers emphasising that both before and since the war its main objectives have remained unchanged: to divert the attention of the popular masses from internal social contradictions, to provide propaganda arguments for the preparation of aggressive, predatory wars, to prevent the unity of the anti-war forces and to isolate the socialist states and the Communists, the most consistent and purposeful fighters for peace and the interests of the working people. Meanwhile, the forms and methods in which the main trends of anti-communism are manifested—distortion of Marxism-Leninism, slander of the socialist system, and falsification of

the communist parties' policy and goals—have been continuously modified to fit the objectives of international capital, in the light of the actual balance of forces in the world, the attitudes of the popular masses and, finally, the technical facilities and potentialities at the disposal of the monopolies.

The Many Faces of Anti-Communism

The Second World War, said **R. Valdez Vivo**, gave a tragic demonstration of the kind of catastrophe mankind could be plunged into by anti-communism and anti-Sovietism. Germany, Italy and Japan entered into what they called the 'anti-Comintern pact' in an effort to create the impression that they were opposing only the USSR and the 'Communist menace' generally, though in actual fact their conspiracy was also the platform for preparing a war to wipe out all the bourgeois-democratic regimes and to partition the globe between the fascist and militarist powers.

P. Auersperg, **G. Kwiatowski** and **J. Pittman** pointed out that on the eve of the Second World War, the anti-communist and anti-Soviet stance of the ruling circles of the United States, Great Britain and France had prevented them from accepting the USSR's repeated proposals aimed to isolate and weaken the fascist regimes. The militarists' 'holy alliance' was able to perpetrate its crimes because it had the help of those who were moved by anti-communism and who failed to take effective measures against fascism in due time in the hope that it could be got to destroy the socialist Soviet Union.

Anti-communism has donned various masks at different periods, as it switched from the imperialist circles' 'cordon sanitaire' policy against the USSR in the prewar period to outright aggression against the world's first socialist state, from ideological subversions to cold war and political and economic blockade of socialism.

Anti-communism has always directed the sharpest edge of its hatred against the Soviet Union, said **L. E. Veintimilla** and **A. Ileri**, among others. Imperialist reaction in the United States and its NATO allies use anti-Soviet inventions as a pretext for exporting counter-revolution and meddling in the affairs of other nations.

That was aptly illustrated by participants in the discussion, who recalled that tens of thousands of persons have disappeared in the Latin American countries over the last decade alone as victims of the 'national security doctrine' being practised under the slogans of fighting the 'red spectre' and the 'hand of Moscow'. The US administration has brazenly used anti-communism and anti-Sovietism, said **R. Valdez Vivo**, to justify its support of the Salvadoran dictatorship, its help to the 'contras' in Nicaragua and conservation of Pinochet's fascist regime in Chile. It has used the myth of a 'Soviet threat' to deploy first-strike missiles in Europe and to prepare for Star Wars. Reactionary politicians resort to anti-communism in sponsoring state terrorism against the peoples fighting for their freedom.

The tendency to use anti-communism and anti-Sovietism to fortify US imperialist domination of Latin America and the Caribbean was especially intensified when the Cuban revolution proved that the peoples were capable of liberating themselves in the Western Hemisphere as well. For a quarter century now, Cuba is being subjected to economic blockade, and has to defend itself against direct aggressive acts, subversions and threats from the United States.

One does not have to identify US imperialism and Nazi Germany, said **A. Stavru**, to see that they have something in common in their adventurist anti-Soviet and anti-communist policy. The Nazis tried to justify their aggression by claiming that socialism was a disease similar to a 'malignant growth', while Reagan declares the socialist countries' system to be an 'error of history' as he conducts the same escalation of militarism in our own day. In the present conditions, such a line inevitably poses the threat of annihilation to the whole of mankind, including the US President's own fellow-countrymen. **E. Korakas** and others urged the importance of

not forgetting the tragic lessons of the past, and of implacably fighting anti-communism and anti-Sovietism, wherever and however these may be manifested.

Yalta and Potsdam Decisions Are Inviolable

The anti-communist noises over the outcome of the Second World War have been especially amplified in this year of the 40th anniversary of the Victory, chauvinistic and revanchist emotions are once again being fanned over the postwar realities in Europe, and doubts are being cast on the inviolability of the state borders.

Accordingly, participants in the discussion turned to the historical facts of the past, when the imminent rout of fascism and the liberation of the countries it had enslaved made it necessary to formulate universal principles for international relations in the light of the lessons of the prewar and wartime periods.

At that time, the Soviet Union also acted on Lenin's idea of peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems, whose introduction into the practice of interstate relations was the main line of the USSR's political and diplomatic activity when considering the problems of the postwar order in the world. This line was epitomised by the meeting of the leaders of the anti-Hitlerite coalition at Yalta in February 1945, and their understandings were concretised at the Potsdam Conference in July and August 1945.

It should be recalled, said **J. Waszczuk**, that at Yalta no attempts were made to divide the world into spheres of influence. A repetition of the mistakes of the Treaty of Versailles, which contained within itself the seeds of fresh conflicts and wars, was also avoided. The Yalta and Potsdam agreements were pivoted on the will to establish lasting peace and security, for which the Soviet delegation acted with the greatest purpose.

The Yalta 'Declaration on Liberated Europe', adopted by the governments of the USSR, the United States and Great Britain, announced their intention to eradicate fascism and militarism root and branch and to help the liberated countries and the peoples of the Axis satellite countries to find democratic solutions for their most important political and economic problems. It emphasised the need for the Allied powers' unity both in the conduct of the war and in the establishment of peace, and visually underlined one of the abiding historic lessons of the Second World War, namely, the real possibility of close cooperation between states with different socio-economic systems when they are united in a common purpose. It is cooperation that has to be based on respect for the principles of equality and reciprocity, consideration of the interests of the partners' security, and an honest attitude to one's commitments, an approach that helps to solve complicated problems through negotiation and to avoid dangerous confrontations.

The decisions of the Conference in Security and Cooperation in Europe, which were adopted thirty years later, in a sense actualised the Yalta and Potsdam agreements in the light of the conditions that had changed in the postwar period. In its Final Act, 33 European countries and the United States and Canada recognised the inviolability of the existing European borders, undertook to respect the sovereignty and equality of states, and the right of each freely to determine its political, social, economic and cultural system. The Helsinki Final Act provided an underpinning for the understandings and agreements between the socialist and capitalist states signed in the late 1960s and early 1970s, which went to create the material fabric of the international detente.

However, at the turn of the 1980s, ultra-reactionary and aggressive circles of monopoly capital began to command a greater influence in the main centres of imperialism, notably the United States, and this has brought about a sharpening of the international situation which is possibly the most dangerous one since the war. The leaders of the chief power of the capitalist world switched to a policy of

confrontation. They refused to recognise the principles of equality and mutual respect of interests, and put their stake on force. That is the period in which efforts to undermine the foundations of the political and territorial order determined by the Yalta and Potsdam agreements became an element of imperialist strategy, and official calls to jettison the agreements were also sounded on the eve of the 40th anniversary of the Victory by senior office-holders in the United States, France and Great Britain.

The idea of scrapping these agreements was backed most emphatically by West German reactionary circles and provided the soil for a step-up of revanchist attitudes and attempts to make revanchism a part of state policy, in defiance of the will of the West German public majority.

Postwar Realities

The claim that the Yalta and Potsdam agreements had allegedly determined the class character of the social system in some countries of Southeastern and Central Europe well 'in advance' and in defiance of the will of the peoples provides the starting point for the offensive against these agreements, a claim which is at variance with the historical truth. Many states in the region entered upon the path of revolutionary change because the internal conditions had matured—the main one being the aggravation of the antagonistic social contradictions under the impact of the war.³

The shifts in the balance of class forces resulted from the collapse of the policies of the national bourgeoisie and its imperialist allies. In those conditions, the communist parties of these countries made a creative application of the principles of Marxism-Leninism and formulated programmes for the shaping of broad class alliances setting in motion the strategy of the anti-fascist struggle developing into a struggle for revolutionary change.

External circumstances favouring the triumph of socialist revolutions likewise existed. The fact that the crucial contribution to the rout of fascism had been made by the Soviet Union, a natural ally of the forces of social progress, had a great influence on the development of the political situation. The consistent Soviet political and diplomatic acts safeguarded the revolutions in the countries of the region for direct imperialist intervention and helped their peoples to paralyse internal reaction.

The bourgeois falsifiers of history allege that socialism was brought to the European countries on the Soviet Army's bayonets. However, G. Ganev pointed out, that lie is exploded by the facts of the revolution in Bulgaria. The Bulgarian people's victorious uprising began and ended at a time (September 6 to 9, 1944) when there was not a single Soviet soldier on Bulgarian territory. The old regime was toppled by the forces of the internal anti-fascist resistance, and when the Soviet Army entered Bulgaria, the country was competely run by the new power. The revolutionary struggle was led by the Communists, whose uncompromising but flexible policy won for them great trust among the working class and the toiling peasantry.

Wherever the internal prerequisites for the overthrow of the power of the bourgeoisie did not exist, the capitalist socio-economic system remained, despite the fact that some of these countries, like Austria, were also liberated by the Soviet Army.

B. Furch dealt with the role of the Soviet Union, which had consistently honoured its allied agreements in ensuring a democratic solution for the problems of Europe's postwar order. In October 1943, while the war was still on, Soviet diplomacy got the United States and Great Britain to agree to the adoption of a Soviet-British-US Declaration on Austria, which said that these states regarded as invalid Hitler's annexation of Austria (the so-called Anschluss), and desired to see the country free and sovereign. A little later, the Soviet government flatly rejected the Allies' plan which ran counter to the Declaration to include Austria in a Danubian Confederation

whose other members were to be Hungary and Southern Germany. Following the Soviet Army's liberation of Vienna in April 1945, the USSR government announced that it intended to abide by the letter and spirit of the Declaration on Austria, and that it had taken measures to implement it.

The negotiations on the definitive settlement of the Austrian question were, unfortunately, complicated by the cold war, and the State Treaty between Austria, on the one hand, and the Soviet Union, the United States, Great Britain and France, on the other, was signed only in 1955. Under it, the Austrian parliament adopted a Federal law on Austria's permanent neutrality, which guarantees it genuine independence, has a beneficial effect on its fortunes, and enables it to join other neutral countries in playing a noticeable role in the struggle for an end to the arms race, and for the triumph of the cause of peace, security and the cooperation of nations.

Another example of the positive impact of the observance of Allied commitments on the political situation was given by **P. Auersperg**, who recalled that under the Yalta decisions the military leaders of the USSR and the United States laid down the Karlovy Vary-Plzen Českě Budějovici line as the 'demarcation line' between the Soviet troops driving across Czechoslovakia's territory from the east, and the US troops advancing from the west. At Potsdam, the USSR, the United States and Great Britain agreed on the expulsion from Czechoslovakia of the pro-fascist German minority. In the autumn of 1945, all the Allied troops left the country's territory.

Bourgeois historians now keep saying that the establishment of a 'demarcation line', the withdrawal of the foreign troops, and the resettlement of the Germans resulted from the West's surrender to the Soviet Union. The capitalist West did, indeed, 'lose' Czechoslovakia, but not in consequence of some 'Anglo-American concessions', but as a natural outcome of the Czechoslovak people's liberation struggle, and its disappointment in the 'Western allies', the ruling circles of Great Britain and France, which had cynically betrayed Czechoslovakia at Munich and had allowed Hitler to wipe it off the map of Europe.

To scrap Yalta and Potsdam and rewrite the agreements on the postwar order in Europe is the objective of the forces of the capitalist world which would like to reverse the tide of history, to make the peoples forget the results of the great Victory and to undermine all the progressive developments of the postwar world. That is why the Communists have taken a stand for keeping intact the political and territorial order shaped in Europe since the Second World War, and they are impelled to do so, speakers said, by the memory of the millions of fighters who gave their lives for the freedom of their homelands, who saved the peoples from annihilation, and who safeguarded peace for future generations.

RID THE SOCIETY OF WAR

The sharply stepped-up danger of a new world war being started by imperialism with all its unpredictable catastrophic consequences requires of the Communists an in-depth analysis of the objective and subjective potentialities for averting war and then eliminating it from the society altogether. **R. Bauer** said that the political and social changes brought about by the rout of fascism have created much more favourable conditions—than those before the First and the Second World Wars—for solving this problem, which is of truly historic proportions. That these conditions are more favourable is evident from the longest period of peace in the history of Europe, which argues the reality of the peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems. The forces of peace and social progress are now immensely more powerful and influential than they were half a century ago. Finally, the scientific and technical

revolution has led to the emergence of weapons whose use threatens mankind's with immolation.

The Growth and Strengthening of the Peace Forces

The general line of developments now warrants the assumption that world history is in the final stages of a protracted epoch in which the ruling exploiter class was capable of attaining its political objectives with the aid of armed force and war. But that fact, speakers said, must not in itself be regarded as an absolutely reliable guarantee against aggressive, predatory wars and a world-wide armed conflict, for they can be averted only if a definite balance of forces exists. Now this balance is radically different from that before the Second World War. The forces of the socialist world no longer consist of the Soviet Union alone: in Europe, Asia and the Western Hemisphere there are socialist states with a population adding up to about a third, and an industrial output, to more than 40 per cent of the world's.

The socialist community has formulated and is putting through an effective foreign policy line designed for world peace and the settlement of all outstanding issues through negotiation. Its policy on security rests on a powerful defence potential ensuring a rough military equilibrium, which means the possibility of arranging relations with the imperialist powers on the principles of equality and equal security. The Soviet Union and the other Warsaw Treaty countries have repeatedly provided convincing demonstrations of their economic, scientific and technical potentialities in preventing the imperialist forces from achieving military-strategic preponderance.

The non-aligned movement, with its 101 sovereign states, is an important factor helping to consolidate the cause of peace, it was stressed in the course of the discussion. With all the differences in their political orientation and level of economic and social development, the overwhelming majority of these countries take a resolute stand for peace, international security, detente, disarmament and peaceful coexistence.

The fact that Reagan's line of confrontation and arms race keeps producing doubts and now and again even resistance among the ruling circles of some capitalist states is also a part of the political realities of the 1980s. There are signs of disagreement in some of these states, including those which are members of NATO, with the US administration's adventurism. More and more realistically-minded spokesmen of the bourgeoisie have come out against the confrontation and arms race, because, either out of a sense of self-preservation or for other reasons, they want peaceful coexistence with the socialist countries and are unwilling to give up the economic and other advantages which their countries have garnered from the international detente.

The peace movement has been growing on every continent. Its diverse forms of struggle and action undoubtedly make it the most all-round movement, and the diverse intentions, motivations and objectives of its participants, and their differing social, ideological and political make-up, the most differentiated, wideranging and massive public movement of our day (in Europe, at any rate). It is already a force with which the imperialists have to reckon, and it could acquire even greater weight in the future and put up successful resistance to Washington's line of arms race and confrontation. The communist parties seek to preserve world peace by establishing and strengthening ties with soberminded political circles, above all Socialists and Social Democrats, and also with religious, pacifist and other bodies. The trade union, youth and women's movements have markedly increased their numerical strength and have, as a rule, become more active politically.

What mankind needs today, said **R. Bauer**, is a world-wide coalition of reason and realism in order to avert a nuclear catastrophe. There is a favourable opportunity for forming a peaceable community of people of all classes and strata, of every colour, world-view and creed, united by a common sense of responsibility. The Communists'

historical optimism and their conviction that war is not fatally inevitable, **F. Dixon, S. Khaled** and other speakers emphasised, rest not only on their highly humanistic urge to save mankind from destruction and ensure the possibility of social progress, but also on the solid basis of present-day realities.

Dialectics of Peace and National Liberation

The national liberation movement, whose participants are becoming increasingly aware of the dialectical interdependence between success in their struggle and success in averting a world war, is an important reserve of the peace forces.

All the peoples are faced with the threat of being annihilated in a nuclear cataclysm, said **J. M. Lanao**. Gone are the days when world wars, even when fought over extensive territories, left many countries and entire regions directly unaffected. It is now even more absurd to expect a state to obtain some advantage from a global confrontation. As Argentina, for instance, did in the 1940s with its sizable surpluses of farm produce, which it profitably exported to starving Europe.

At the present stage of history, speakers said, the very threat of a nuclear disaster goes to compound the difficulties faced by the developing countries in their national and social progress. Conversely, every step towards ensuring peace carries within itself a powerful impetus to the peoples' liberation struggle. For their part, the successes of the national liberation movement go to strengthen the anti-imperialist and so also the anti-war front.

R. Collure, A. Salim and other speakers pointed out that the growing militancy and purposefulness of the anti-war movements in the Third World countries largely depend on the masses' comprehension of that close interconnection, which is why it is so important to expose the ideas being implanted into the mass consciousness by bourgeois propaganda by means of which imperialism seeks to contain the peoples of the former colonies within the narrow framework of their domestic problems and away from anti-war action. Communists in developing countries are taking an active part in their peoples' liberation struggle, while vigorously working for peace and the peaceful coexistence of all the states.

The Arab countries' experience, said **R. Samhoun**, shows that the global international detente of the early 1970s went to create a favourable situation for the national liberation movement in the Middle East region, helped to score substantial political, social and economic gains and ensured broader possibilities for averting local wars.

By contrast, every sharpening of international tensions and step-up of the arms race led to heavy imperialist blows at the national liberation movement. It was in just such a period that Washington managed dangerously to tilt the balance of forces in the Middle East region, to wrench Egypt from Arab unity and to get the then President Anwar Sadat to sign the capitulationist Camp David accord and then to go kowtowing to Jerusalem. That is just the kind of situation in which a civil war was once again provoked in Lebanon and was instantly used as a pretext for the Israeli-US-NATO intervention. The sharpening of the international situation enabled imperialism to set up some new military bases in the Middle East (notably in Egypt, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the Sudan), while the military presence of the United States and other NATO countries has been markedly intensified in the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean.

S. Sudiman pointed to similar trends in the Pacific and Indian Ocean area, including the further militarisation of Japan, and drew attention to the fact that action in defence of peace in the region, the ASEAN countries in particular, was still not vigorous enough despite the dangerous situation. An understanding of the hazards arising from the deployment of US nuclear missiles, the holding of joint exercises

with the United States by some countries, and the stationing of US troops has not yet penetrated the mass consciousness.

Bourgeois propaganda has been trying very hard to obscure the interconnection between the build-up of military preparations and the dwindling possibilities of satisfying the working people's wants. The ruling circles of most ASEAN countries keep proclaiming an 'independent' foreign policy, while in fact supporting the US policy and aggressive acts, which increase international tensions.

Speakers in the discussion accentuated the great danger of local wars, and not only for the developing countries, but also for world peace. It is part and parcel of the strategy of imperialism, especially of such of its manifestation as neocolonialism, zionism, fascism and apartheid, to ignite intra-regional conflicts, said **K. Habib, V. Seme** and others. Local wars not only slow down national development, destroy the national economy and cause loss of human life, but also tend to produce 'hotspots' jeopardising international security and world peace. Flare-ups of local wars between states, such as the Iran-Iraq war, provide the imperialist powers with a pretext for intervening in the affairs of the belligerents, help the imperialists to impose their will, and create the conditions for putting down the democratic aspirations of the popular masses.

The need was simultaneously pointed out not to lose sight of the imperialist circles' broader objectives in fanning local, including undeclared, wars, involving Third World countries in the arms race, creating new and fortifying old military-political blocs, and declaring vast regions of the developing world zones of their 'vital interests'. The ultimate aim of such a line, speakers said, is to upset the global military-strategic equilibrium between socialism and capitalism, with all the consequences that it entails for international security and for the cause of national liberation.

In this context, the meeting considered the question of just liberation wars which fighters for freedom and independence have to wage. The peoples do not take up arms because of some inclination to violence, said **B. Ramelson, J. Barrios** and **F. Dixon**, but because they are forced to do so by ruthless imperialist policy. They respond with armed struggle to the violence and fight back against the aggressors, whose victims they have become, and against the bondage, plunder, expansion and 'pacification' imposed on them by force. The Communists regard such wars of liberation as legitimate and support the forces standing up for the cause of freedom, national independence and sovereignty. The communist and workers' parties have always been on the side of the peoples defending their inalienable democratic rights and have given them every possible political, ideological and material assistance.

Strengthening International Solidarity

Members of the Editorial Council analysed the factors which enabled the Nazis to start the Second World War, and listed among these the lack of unity of the anti-war, anti-fascist democratic forces, including unity within the international working class movement. Many of the anti-fascists who shunned cooperation with the Communists before the war came to realise their mistake when it was much too late—in the Nazi concentration camps and on the scaffold, as they were being executed alongside the Communists. The lessons of that period also carry a message for our own day, especially since the potentialities for uniting the broad anti-fascist forces became fully evident even while the Second World War was still on. That, said **E. Korakas**, was vividly demonstrated, for instance, by the Resistance in Greece. The overwhelming majority of the people supported the Communist Party's call to unite for struggle against the invaders, and Communists and anti-fascists from various countries fought shoulder to shoulder with the Greek partisans, while Greek patriots took part in fighting on the other fronts of the battle against fascism.

The alarming situation today makes it imperative that all those who oppose war should take vigorous solidarity action in order to translate into life the peoples' main demand, which is to live in peace. It was repeatedly stressed in the course of the discussion that the Communists are prepared for active cooperation with all the public forces for peace and with all the contingents of the working class and democratic movement, including the parties affiliated to the Socialist International, which, in virtue of their political weight and influence in many countries of the capitalist world, could do much to improve the international situation, to end the arms race, and make a tangible contribution to saving mankind from nuclear disaster.

The Communists' internationalist solidarity has a special role to play in the establishment of an anti-war front, speakers said. The imperialist circles have repeatedly had to realise the unifying power of proletarian internationalism, which is why they tried very hard to divide the communist ranks.

In the present, extremely acute and dangerous international situation, said **A. Ileri**, there can be no justification even for the slightest neglect of the primary task of shaping a world-wide peace front, and that would, quite naturally, be largely promoted by more active cooperation between the fraternal parties and exchanges of experience in the anti-imperialist and anti-war struggle.

Historical practice shows that the militaristic maniacs can be kept in check only by the unity of the anti-war forces, **S. Sudiman** emphasised, and the Communists' unity is the main factor ensuring the broader unity. The CP Indonesia believes that its duty is to work to strengthen the solidarity of all the fraternal parties on the principles of proletarian internationalism.

Concerted actions by the fraternal parties against the danger of war enhances the authority of the international communist movement and promotes the success of the cause of peace and social progress. That is why, said **E. Korakas**, the CP Greece does not share the scepticism of some Communists concerning the usefulness of their international meetings. Refusal to have such meetings is even more illogical considering that, despite the serious contradictions dividing the capitalist countries, international reaction keeps trying hard to fortify its unity both on the governmental level and on the level of political parties which express the interests of the bourgeoisie. That being so, **R. Samhoun** added, it is all the more necessary for the fraternal parties to exchange revolutionary experience and coordinate their struggle on a regional and international scale.

The Editorial Council discussion, involving the representatives of 36 communist and workers' parties from countries with different socio-economic systems, provided further confirmation of the great importance for the Communists to be aware of the experience of history. That is especially true when it comes to the lessons of such an epochal event as the rout of Hitlerite fascism and its allies, which ushered in a new stage in mankind's historical development.

The fraternal parties representatives relied in the analysis of the multifaceted consequences of the great Victory on the fundamental formulations of the Marxist-Leninist theory, and exchanged opinion on some basic issues relating to the further struggle to avert the imperialist-generated danger of mankind's incineration in the flames of another world war, and to ensure a radiant future for coming generations. It was said that:

The Soviet Union's crucial role in defeating fascism turned the 1945 military victory into a triumph of the new social system and demonstrated its incontestable economic, social, political and ideological advantages. That predetermined the radical change in the balance of forces on the international arena in favour of peace, social progress, and national independence, and ensured the further rise of the communist and working class movement. The socialist community, which emerged in the postwar period, became a reliable bulwark for the peoples fighting for complete liberation

from every form of imperialist oppression. Socialism's foreign and defence policy erects a solid barrier in the way of those who want to start another war.

Imperialism, notably US imperialism, is the main source of war, the vehicle of the main threat to world peace, which is clearly embodied in the aggressive military political line of the ruling circles of the United States and its closest NATO allies, the legitimising of state terrorism, the fanning of anti-communism and anti-Sovietism, the build-up of nuclear arsenals and the preparation of Star Wars.

Mankind now has the potentialities for eliminating world wars from the life of the human community. Global armed conflicts are no longer fatally inevitable, because of these basic factors: the socialist community's mighty political, economic, scientific and defence potential, the development of the international communist and working class movement, the sweep of the liberation, anti-imperialism struggle of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America, the development and strengthening of the mass movement for peace, and the growing unity of all the anti-war forces.

The most consistent stand against the imperialist-generated danger of another world war, and against revanchism, neofascism, neocolonialism, racism, Zionism and apartheid is being taken by the communist and workers' parties. The Communists have always been fighters against man's oppressions and exploitations of man, and today they are also fighting for man's right to life, and to save the human civilisation.

Historical experience teaches that war needs to be fought against before it has broken out. That, it was emphasised in the discussion, is the most important lesson of the Second World War. No task is now more important for the Communists and all the other advocates of peace than to bring about a halt to the arms race on the Earth and to prevent its transfer into space, and to do everything for a start to be made on the limitation and reduction of nuclear arsenals down to the complete and universal liquidation of nuclear weapons. If there is to be social progress, and if the cause of national liberation and of mankind's entire future development is to triumph, an all-annihilating war must be averted, and peace preserved throughout the world.

¹ For details see 'World War II: Facts and Figures' in this issue.

² See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 360.

³ For details see 'The Social Revolutions of the 1940s', *WMR*, No. 7, 1984.

the party

Fidelity to Resistance Ideals

A broad people's Resistance movement was active during the Second World War in the European countries subjugated by Nazism. It acquired various forms, drawing into its ranks people from different strata of the population. From the very outbreak of the war to the day the Nazi invaders were crushed the Communists were the movement's soul, its mobilising and organising force. Three resistance veterans in Poland, Greece and France describe the struggle of the Communists, the links of their glorious past to the present.

Those 1,859 Days

Bohdan Czeszko — Polish writer

IN my memory the war against fascism in Poland is a period of grim experiences. They are brought to mind by each of those 1,859 days. Mortal danger lurked not only for underground militants, of whom I was one, but for all the inhabitants of occupied Warsaw. The atrocities committed by the Nazis peaked in 1943 and early 1944. Scores of hostages were shot every day in Warsaw's ghetto and simply in the streets. There sometimes were several of these executions in the course of a single day. Thousands of people picked at random waited with unbearable trepidation for the door of their prison cell to be opened and to be led to death.

These greatest of tragedies passed me by. Having escaped concentration camps and Gestapo tortures I consider my lot as not of the unhappiest in the period of the occupation. Yet there is an episode that engrained itself deep in my memory—there was nothing heroic about it but the horror of it still gives me nightmares.

It was late in the autumn of 1943. The dreary street was lit by the dim light of street lamps painted blue against air raids. In the sleeves of my father's old, hand-sewn padded coat I had packets of leaflets that I was to circulate in the neighbourhood. The

During the years of the Nazi occupation the Communist Bohdan Czeszko, a leading party and civic personality and one of the most popular writers in Poland today, was a member of the youth organisation of the Polish Workers' Party and belonged to the armed forces of the Resistance—Gwardia Ludowa and then Armia Ludowa—that operated under the leadership of the PWP. He took part in the Warsaw rising.—*Ed.*

curfew was drawing near and the street was deserted. I walked past a turnpike and was only about 150 steps away from my house. At this moment I saw a Nazi patrol on my side of the street. There they were—some moving along the walls of the houses, and others along the edge of the pavement. The thought that in my pocket I had an identity card issued by the occupation authorities and other documents gave me the creeps for it meant that if I were taken into custody they would torture my mother, take her to the Gestapo, and shoot her as they had so many others. I had no fear for myself for I had made up my mind to run and die from bullets. With my back hunched I walked between the two rows of soldiers. I forced myself to walk slowly, expecting to hear the sinister order to halt. But nothing happened, and within a minute I was in the entrance.

During the Nazi occupation a person felt more confident if he had at least a pistol in his hands. But despite widespread belief, neither the Communist Party nor the Gwardia Ludowa got supplies from without, especially at the early phase of the war. The Warsaw underground militants got their weapons in clashes with the enemy, and sometimes weapons came from the partisans operating in the forests. But they were always in much too little supply, although during the rising it was found that units of the Armia Ludowa were better armed than any others, a fact that indicates not how well they were armed but how poorly the Armia Krajowa was equipped.¹

There were quite a few difficulties of a political order as well. Members of the emigre government based in London—possibly even against the wishes of its head, General Wladyslaw Sikorski, who had signed a treaty with the Soviet Union and had to take into account the effects of this alliance in Poland itself—pursued a frankly anti-communist policy. The 2nd Department of the Armia Krajowa headquarters drew up lists of Communists, which included my humble self. The old trained police spies of sanitation times² continued their work during the occupation. They operated primarily in order to make it easier to deal summarily with us in the future. But imagine what would have happened if the Gestapo had gotten its hands on these lists.

Today, many years later, there is a tendency to gloss over the acute ideological and political conflicts of the Resistance period, the usual picture offered being that of a Polish people united in the struggle against the invaders. But this picture, in my view, would be justified if we made sweeping generalisations.

For all that, it remains true that the friendship and fighting alliance with the USSR were in those years the factor reinforcing people's consciousness, vitalising the actions of members of the Resistance, just as the sense of their patriotic duty to the Polish nation. The Communists were the principal proponents of this spirit.

The Polish Workers' Party was practically the only organisation of the anti-fascist underground that had a consistent and lucid programme of action for the duration of the occupation and the changes after liberation. Those who carried on a conspiratorial struggle under the leadership of the Armia Krajowa postponed the settlement of the question of the postwar arrangement in Poland to a misty future and wanted to 'limit' the Resistance so as to avoid 'provoking the enemy'.

The absurdity of this 'motivation' was that, first, the Nazi terror did not have to be provoked—it raged all the time—and, second, the Nazi plans relative to the Polish nation, contained in documents that were by no means secret, envisioned its annihilation with the exception of a specified number of servile slaves shorn of all sense of national identity.

The Polish Communists had a two-fold role. On the one hand, the propagation of the party's programme, which covered the state system that was to be established after the war. On the other hand, the armed struggle which grew steadily in power with the appearance of the first groups of the Gwardia Ludowa and then with the formation of the Armia Ludowa, that subsequently became part of the Wojsko Polskoje.

Throughout the occupation units of the partisan Armia Ludowa derailed trains and decimated the enemy in countless armed clashes. In opposition to the slogan 'Wait with arms at the ready' advanced by the London-based government in exile, the PWP called for immediate resistance to the invaders with all available means. This policy of the Polish Communists found expression in a selfless struggle, in which many thousands of my comrades lost their lives.

The complex problems arising from the participation of diverse political forces in the battle against Hitlerism continue to be exploited by our ideological adversaries. Historians who see the war from the standpoint of the Armia Krajowa pursue the objective of belittling the role played in the Resistance by the Communists. And they are doing this with the persistence of all anti-communists.

The picture changes when we have honest works before us. I recently read Wladyslaw Bartoszewsky's *Warsaw's 1,859 Days*, which is the product of this Catholic scholar's competence and industry. Conventional decency on the part of a witness and researcher of Warsaw's occupation and scientific conscientiousness sufficed to relate the actual history of the operations of those days by the Gwardia Ludowa and Armia Ludowa.

It is amazing that all the opponents of communism and even the dialogue with the Communists were characterised during the sanitation days, in the period of the occupation, and after the war by an inability to construct anything approaching a realistic prospect for Poland's social and overall domestic policy. They were driven by one and only one passion, and this was to seize power. These are the types that have made and are still making attempts to misrepresent history.

As regards the Polish Communists, they have, especially in the past decade, made serious efforts to produce an objective analysis, which they regard as a useful instrument of cognition. The Polish United Workers' Party is utilising the lessons and traditions of the anti-fascist Resistance in the ideological struggle for national concord, because this is a constantly topical issue. For us the period of struggle with the Nazi invaders and the party's rejuvenation during the war are glorious pages of the history of the Polish working class movement.

¹ These units acted under the aegis of the London-based Polish government in exile.—*Ed.*

² The sanitation slogan was put forward in prewar Poland by the bourgeois-dictatorial regime of Marshal Jozef Pilsudski.—*Ed.*

Rallying All Patriots

Vasilis Venetsanopoulos — CC member,
Communist Party of Greece (CPG)

THESE days Communists and other fighters of the Greek Resistance recall the past to assess with legitimate pride yet without the least self-satisfaction their people's contribution to the struggle against a common enemy, fascism.

The Communist Party of Greece pointed from 1935 onwards to the danger of fascist aggression, in particular against our country. This danger was also stressed in

The author, a regular officer, served in the years of the Resistance in the operations section of the General Headquarters of the Greek Popular Liberation Army (ELAS) and then, during the fight against British armed intervention, was commander of an ELAS regiment in the eastern sector of Athens. He is a Bureau member of the International Federation of Resistance Movements.

theses for the Sixth Party Congress based on the historic decisions of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern and in subsequent party documents. But attempts to stave off war failed at the time and Greece was drawn into it five years later.

On October 28, 1940, fascist Italy invaded Greece after it had served an ultimatum demanding acceptance of the invasion. On November 2 of the same year the CPG, whose ideological and political line was clear-cut from the outset, called on the people to fight for their freedom, honour and national independence. This call was made in an open letter of the Central Committee signed by the then General Secretary N. Zachariades, whom the Metaxas dictatorship ruling the country was holding in prison. Greece rejected the fascist ultimatum. The people and the army rose to fight the aggressor; he was pushed back into Albania, losing 20,000 killed and 60,000 wounded.

On April 6, 1941, following the failure of the Italian invasion, troops of Hitler Germany attacked Greece. Greek troops offered the enemy staunch resistance and inflicted telling losses upon him. In the battle of Crete alone (May 20 to 30), the Germans lost about 5,000 killed and 170 planes. The battle involved numerous groups of armed peasants and townspeople, who killed a particularly large number of paratroopers. But the forces were unequal. With the seizure of Crete the whole of Greece found itself under the invaders' heel.

In September 1941 the CPG and three small patriotic parties called for the formation of a National Liberation Front (EAM). Ultimately the EAM was joined by 1,600 Greeks (our country had a population of seven million by then). The CPG and EAM roused virtually the entire people to struggle against the invaders and formed ELAS. By the autumn of 1944 ELAS was 140,000 strong (90,000 on active service and 50,000 in reserve).

The occupation period was marked by the practical absence of administrative bodies, for the successive collaborationist governments lacked authority. This gap was closed by the system of people's rule established under the leadership of the CPG and EAM. Early in March 1944 a Political Committee for National Liberation was set up and a National Assembly elected in the liberated areas (they added up to two-thirds of national territory by the summer); the former was the people's government of highland regions and the latter, the people's parliament of free Greece. In the autumn of that year we liberated the whole country, using the opportunities provided by the swift advance of the Soviet Army in the Balkans.

This brief retrospect shows the contribution made by the Greek people and their national Resistance to the common victory over fascism. They tied down a sizable Italian force in the mountains of Albania for six months and compelled Germany to intervene, with the result that its attack on the Soviet Union was delayed for four to five weeks.¹ The patriotic forces foiled the attempt at mobilisation made by the Nazis and prevented them from sending a single Greek to the front against the Soviet Union or to factories in Germany. The Wehrmacht had to keep from 8 to 12 divisions in Greece on a permanent basis and lost 22,000 killed.

It must be noted that operating abroad during the war were Greek armed forces, which in the autumn and winter of 1942 took part in fighting against the Rommel corps on the African front, at El Alamein and elsewhere. Afterwards they offered to join ELAS. But London found this 'harmful' to British interests and so had 20,000 Greek fighters disarmed and sent to concentration camps in the Middle East and Africa; they were not set free until late 1945. This was a grave act against the alliance.

The teams of Greek merchant vessels were another appreciable force which fought the fascists. They served in convoys carrying arms and ammunition to major Allied ports, including Murmansk and Archangel. Over 1,500 of seamen (they totalled 10,000) died a hero's death at sea, where their ships were attacked by German submarines or cruisers.

ELAS' contribution to the military operations of the anti-fascist coalition could have been still greater but for the fact that in 1944 the British Ally prohibited three divisions and one cavalry brigade of ELAS to pursue retreating German troops on Yugoslav territory, as our headquarters had planned with the consent of the Yugoslav command. This unwarranted prohibition was contrary to the Allies' common interests.

Gen. Ronald Scobie of Britain, who ordered the prohibition, was commander-in-chief of the Allied forces in Greece, including ELAS. He proceeded from a plan made by London and intended to neutralise the Greek fighters; he actually used it in December 1944, when the British pitted tens of thousands of their troops recalled from the Italian theatre of war (in addition to troops of Greek reaction) against ELAS in various parts of the country, especially Athens. This was a further act of British treachery against the alliance.

That armed intervention robbed the people of the fruits of their victory. The fact that in the autumn of 1944 Greek patriots freed the country by themselves and established people's democratic rule nearly all over its territory alarmed the Anglo-American imperialists. They wanted to use Greece as a bridgehead for realising their evil intentions in regard to Balkan countries and the Soviet Union. As a result of the British Ally's attack, our movement was defeated and power was taken by collaborationists and other reactionaries. Imperialist dependence was forcibly imposed on Greece. National Resistance fighters were brutally persecuted. The Communist Party, which had fully recovered from the blows of the dictatorship and had over 400,000 members, was banned. It did not regain legality until 1974.

One of the main reasons why the British imperialists succeeded in realising their plan for a treacherous strike at the Greek popular movement—a plan long kept secret—was that our leadership failed to discern in time the contradictory aspects of the anti-fascist alliance: Britain and the USA, while fighting against the Axis powers, refused to give up their intention to establish their rule in the postwar world to the detriment of its peoples. To this end they tried, among other things, to restore a reactionary regime in Greece, which implied primarily eliminating the EAM and ELAS.

The sacrifices made by the Greek people in the interests of national freedom and victory over fascism were great indeed. They lost over 400,000 of their sons and daughters in the national liberation struggle. Our country also suffered an enormous loss of property as a result of destruction and plunder on the part of the invaders.

Major popular actions are taking place all over Greece on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of victory over fascism; they are aimed at preserving peace and averting a new devastating war which would be nuclear this time and which threatens humanity due to the insane militarist policy of the US imperialists and their NATO allies. The slogans 'No more fascism' and 'No more war' enjoy tremendous popularity.

The valuable experience gained by the CPG and EAM in rallying the healthy forces of the nation during the glorious anti-fascist Resistance helps us today in the struggle for goals that were not attained after victory. They are contained in the CPG programme for real change and consist above all in freeing the country from foreign dependence, removing the US military bases from its soil, withdrawing from NATO and the EEC and adopting a policy of friendship and cooperation with all nations.

¹ See *Istoria Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny Sovetskogo Soyuza*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1960, p. 356.

So the Rising Generations Would Know

André Tollet – French historian

HISTORY is a compound of collective experience that should serve the peoples. Revolutionaries and all other progressive people address the past for the sake of the present and the future. The French bourgeoisie, too, has learned this lesson, but it has done so in its own way. Characteristically, after World War II ended its spokesmen urged commemorating memorable dates in silence so as 'not to dilute with words' the homage paid to those who died in the war.

However, the names of those who fell indicate very clearly who made the greatest sacrifices. On the memorial plaques at factories and offices are the names of workers, office employees, and engineers executed by punitive agencies or tortured to death in concentration camps. On none of these plaques have I seen the name of a factory owner or a highly-paid executive. Hence the suggestion by the capitalists and reactionary deputies that people should limit themselves to a minute's silence.

Later, counting on the failing memory of elderly people and on the ignorance of the rising generation, the spokesmen of the social strata that in no way distinguished themselves in the nation-wide struggle against fascism, repeatedly mounted foul attacks on the historical truth. Naturally, the Communists became the principal targets of these attacks. The smear-mongers claim that the Communists joined the Resistance only after Germany invaded the USSR.

The quarters orchestrating this campaign are endeavouring to erase the memory of the anti-fascist struggle which the French Communist Party waged from the moment Hitler came to power, exposing his imperialist ambitions; they want people to forget the Munich sellout to Hitler and Mussolini signed by the rulers of France and Britain, who thereby left Czechoslovakia to the tender mercies of the Nazis.

The bourgeoisie wants to hide the fact of its cowardice in the face of Hitler; it wants people to forget the notorious joint declaration of the governments of France and Germany of December 6, 1938 that amounted to a non-aggression pact and gave the Nazis a free hand in the East; they are out to camouflage the attempts to reach anti-Soviet understandings, attempts that brought about the phoney war.¹

The falsifiers of history are determined to erase the memory of words such as 'Unity of the French People Against Hitlerism' carried by *l'Humanité* and other communist press media in 1939 before the FCP was outlawed, or the words of Gaston Monmousseau in *La Vie Ouvrière* to the effect that a government which fears its own people is bound to be defeated.

The slanderers would like to bury in oblivion the fact that preoccupied with the defence of France the Communists in the French parliament voted for credits for defence, but that notwithstanding this the party was harassed and the FCP deputies imprisoned.

The Communists never disputed the significance of de Gaulle's appeal of June 18, 1940, although they noted that it urged not so much Resistance in France itself as the formation of an army in Britain and the constitution of a French representative body. For their part, the anti-communists rejected or gave a slanted interpretation of the Manifesto of July 10, 1940 signed by Secretaries of the FCP Central Committee Jacques Duclos and Maurice Thorez.

¹ André Tollet, a Communist, was a worker. He was active in the trade union and youth movements, heading the Paris Liberation Committee during the war and then the Provisional Greater Paris Administrative Committee. He has written several books, including the major work *The Working Class in the Resistance Movement*.

In that period the FCP was the sole political force in France in opposition to the invaders and their lackeys. This was acknowledged by, among others, *The Daily Telegraph* of London, which wrote bluntly in 1940 that only one party, the Communist, existed in France, albeit illegally.

Precisely because the French Communist Party stuck to its post, the only political party, it was able to act as a uniting force that aroused France against the invaders. The Communists are far from denying the participation and services of other patriots in the Resistance. However, it must be recognised that even when it was operating underground the FCP had an important advantage—it held strong positions at the factories where the working class labours and fights. And the working class, as the author François Mauriac accurately noted, was the only class that 'in its mass remained true to the profaned motherland'.²

Let me recall that beginning in August 1940 groups of Communists organised popular committees at industrial facilities—these replaced the trade unions that the authorities had placed under control or which lost their members. By December there was a hundred of these committees in the Paris steel mills alone. Many of their organisers were arrested in October 1940 and later shot.

In September and October 1940 the Communists proceeded to collect weapons. This work was directed by, among others, Marcel Paul.³ Then followed mass actions, such as the miners' strike in the department of Nord in 1941 in which the determining role was played by the Communists.

In the meantime, other patriots looked for opportunities to act, in most cases organising the sending of intelligence to Britain. They formed groups within their own milieu, in the circle of their friends, and in accordance with political and social affinities. These groups later set up organisations that had their newspapers.

In order to make the joint struggle more effective the FCP sought to unite all patriots. But anti-communism was still strong. The movements and their participants split into Gaullists and Communists, although with the passage of time this formulation of the question underwent a change. In the prevailing conditions it was imperative, above all, to transcend the animosities dividing those who were fighting for France.

A milestone was the sending of FCP Central Committee member Fernand Grenier⁴ to London in January 1943 for a meeting with de Gaulle. This was a significant political act as was the follow-up—de Gaulle's letter to the Communist Party paying tribute to its struggle and the courage of its militants in the battles against Hitlerism. The obstacles separating Communists and Gaullists were gradually removed.

To establish contact with all the Resistance forces and assert the status of the French Committee for National Liberation,⁵ which was at first denied recognition by the British and the Americans, General de Gaulle sent Jean Moulin to occupied France. He succeeded in uniting people of different political currents in the National Council of the Resistance.

The NCR programme was then drawn up. Reflecting the role of the popular movement, it proclaimed the principles of an independent France envisioning broader freedoms and social justice. The programme recommended removing the financial and economic oligarchy from the management of the national economy, nationalising the basic means of production, guaranteeing an honest press independent of the financial magnates, and taking steps to protect the interests of the working people.

The actions of the FCP had important repercussions after the war. The Communists had always been in the front ranks and suffered the largest losses. The FCP's influence had soared: it had the respect of all patriots, even of those who did not subscribe to its stand. It proved to be hard to prevent its participation in the

government, especially as the majority of the Resistance fighters supported its intention to implement the NCR programme and restore the national economy, France's industry.

In this situation the Communists were able to benefit the nation considerably. Marcel Paul, who was in charge of industry, initiated the nationalisation of the electrical power and gas industries. Maurice Thorez elaborated the status of civil employees. Ambroise Croizat, who headed the Ministry of Labour, introduced an efficient system of social insurance. Factory committees of working people were instituted, the four biggest banks were nationalised, and the Renault firm was confiscated. Women were granted suffrage.

These attainments reinforced the militancy of the working class and served as the foundation for extending the rights of working people at enterprises and promoting the trade unions as a revolutionary force. They remain an example for the present-day struggle as well. They show what may be achieved when the masses are mobilised. The radical reforms enforced after Liberation substantially changed the conditions of life and people's way of thinking, and stirred the whole of society. There was a powerful demand for development, welfare, and progress. In the mid-1950s the question arose of France's socialist transformation.

The dimension of the class struggle after Liberation, the role played by the Communists and the losses sustained by them, for which the FCP was justly called the 'party of the executed', explain the stand maintained by the reactionary forces throughout the period from the Victory to the present. First the silence, which it was hoped would mute memories, and then the follow-up with misrepresentations of history.

As they have always done, the Communists are upholding the historical truth, commemorating memorable dates, demanding their correct presentation in curricula, and exchanging views with historians of various political affiliation. In this battle of ideas and scientific debates we have scored important successes. For instance, nothing came of the attempts to discredit the Communists by attributing to them an intention to seize power by force after Liberation. Wide recognition was given to the fact that the Manifesto of Jacques Duclos and Maurice Thorez of July 10, 1940 was a patriotic action, to the significance of the strike movement that unfolded immediately after France was occupied, and to much else.

However, the imagination of the slanderers goes on feeding the ideological attacks against our party from the right and the 'left'. One of their latest despicable acts has been the accusation against Marcel Paul, alleging that he sent non-communist prisoners to their death. This malevolent lie, too, was refuted by the testimony of those who knew him personally—the Reverend Father Riquet, the Gaullists Terrenoire and Sudreau, and the Socialist Pineau, all of whom protested against these odious insinuations.

Thus, the unceasing struggle to restore the truth about the Resistance movement and the role played in it by the Communists serves the cause of democracy and France's national interests. The anti-communist onslaughts are directed, it should be borne in mind, against the Resistance movement in the first place. That this is understood is demonstrated by the fact that a growing number of people are denouncing this slander campaign.

As the Liberation commemoration functions of the past few years have shown, reaction is seeking to belittle the significance of the people's movement that led to the victorious Paris rising of August 1944. It wants to consign this fact to oblivion while accentuating the operations of the army. There is no denying that the army played its role, but only at the last stage, in suppressing the few pockets of enemy resistance, when the city and its suburbs were already in the hands of the triumphant people.

In order to uphold the truth serious efforts are necessary on the part of the

Communists and others who were in the Resistance. Many of them are participating in the discussions that are being held in elementary and secondary schools, delivering public lectures, and helping to pinpoint the shortcomings of official school curricula: this is very important. The study that has recently been conducted by the Society of History Teachers (incidentally, the history course is being constantly shortened) showed that schoolchildren believe that in World War II the USA played practically the principal role. Quite recently a secondary-school pupil declared that the atomic bomb that hit Hiroshima was dropped by the Soviet Union. The boy actually believed this. Obviously, these omissions in education are perniciously influencing the public mind and they have to be combated.

The restoration of the truth about the Resistance period is part and parcel of our ideological work. There is a lofty civic significance to it because belittlement of the role of the people does not in any way awaken a desire to be involved in society's life and does not reinforce people's faith in the future. Moreover, this work is a contribution to the defence of national independence. Lastly, it spells out direct support for the struggle for peace, especially at a time when the revanchists aspiring to revise postwar frontiers are growing vocal.

In France, as in many other countries, the 40th anniversary of Victory over fascism is being marked as a memorable historical date. It concerns not only veterans of the battles for Liberation but also all other French people, two generations of whom have no memories of the war. That is why we feel it is very important to describe the events of the past to a wide audience, notably to young people.

This purpose will also be served by the National Museum of the Resistance. The Communists made a large contribution towards its creation. The exhibits will trace the development of the Resistance as a whole with all its manifestations and currents. The museum will show the rising generations how important profound commitment and unity of action are in the people's struggle for a better life. There are to be exhibits showing the role played by anti-fascist immigrants and also by people of other nationalities, including Germans. This will help to expose racism and xenophobia and make it clear that fascism is a manifestation of class oppression.

The work that the creation of the National Museum of the Resistance entailed was an ideologico-political battle in itself. The fact of its appearance is not to everybody's liking: to some because it is a reminder of the shameful role played by the monopolies and big businessmen; to others because their own anti-communism prevented them from showing their mettle in the battles against Hitlerism. The struggle for historical veracity continues in memorial functions and in the educational system. Here much depends on the energy and purposefulness of the Communists.

¹ This is the period, when despite the French and British declarations of war against Germany of September 3, 1939, the French ruling circles in fact did their best to avoid hostilities right up to the moment the Wehrmacht invaded France in the summer of 1940.—*Ed.*

² François Mauriac, *Le Cahier Noir*, Paris, 1947, p. 18.

³ He was subsequently one of the leaders of the Resistance in the Buchenwald concentration camp, and after Liberation he was a Communist Minister.

⁴ Later he became a minister in the provisional government of the French Republic in Algeria.

⁵ From the outset the Soviet government insisted on the recognition of the French Committee for National Liberation, which was set up in June 1943 in Algeria. In August of the same year the Committee received recognition simultaneously from the three powers of the anti-Hitler coalition.—*Ed.*

Against Repression and Persecution

STOP TERROR

THE Israeli aggressors have mounted an unprecedented campaign of terror and brutality against the civilian population of the South Lebanon and the western part of Bekaa Valley. The campaign, called Operation 'Iron Fist', was launched when the Lebanese patriots' increasingly strong blows compelled Israel to begin the first phase of troop withdrawal from the seized areas of Lebanon, a sovereign state.

The liberation of Saida and Az-Zahrani was a major victory for the heroic Lebanese national resistance, for all the progressive patriotic forces of the country. It was won thanks to the alliance with the revolutionary forces in the Palestinian national movement and with fraternal Syria, whose firm political stand and determined support for the struggle of the Lebanese played a most important part in achieving success, and to all-round assistance and support from the Soviet Union and other socialist countries.

In pulling out of Saida and Az-Zahrani, the aggressors expected to provoke riots there, to foment internecine strife, in order to nullify the role of this area as a base of the national struggle against occupation and destabilise the situation all over the country. Those criminal designs encountered the growing activity of the Lebanese national resistance and were rebuffed by all patriots. The invaders then tried to get their direct agents from the Kata'eb party again to unleash a civil war in the country and resorted to a campaign of brutal repression against the population of the areas still held by them, a campaign reminiscent of Nazi crimes.

In a letter to fraternal and friendly parties and of Arab and international organisations, George Hawi, CC General Secretary of the Lebanese Communist Party, describes the punitive operation undertaken by the Israeli aggressors. They shell communities, using heavy guns, blockade and storm them, making ample use of military hardware. Inhabitants are turned out of their homes, manhandled and massacred. They are subjected to physical and mental tortures, either together, or severally. They are forced to stay night and day on village squares or out in the fields, and hundreds of them are arrested and taken away to an unknown destination. The wounded are barred from hospital. Neither women, old people, nor children escape humiliation, torture or even death. The invaders blow up or bulldoze homes and public buildings without sparing places of worship, schools or medical institutions. They destroy fields and gardens. No food or medicines are allowed to be delivered to blockaded communities.

All these atrocities are perpetrated with the full and direct complicity of Washington. Within the framework of 'strategic cooperation', it gives Israel political protection by vetoing any decision of the UN Security Council condemning the invaders' conduct. The USA increases economic and financial aid to Tel Aviv and supplies the Israeli military with sophisticated weapons which are used against Lebanese civilians.

Operation 'Iron Fist' is a preventive measure intended to guarantee the realisation of subsequent stages of the invaders' plan, which provides, in particular, for continued control of the border area through Israeli agents. To this end the Israelis are going to expel as many civilians as possible from there and from other areas involved in punitive operations.

On behalf of the Communists and other progressive patriotic forces of Lebanon and the population of the occupied areas, George Hawi calls on democratic world opinion to identify itself still more with our people, who are carrying on a just

struggle, and to work everywhere for the exposure and condemnation of the barbarities of the Israeli military. Terror must be stopped. The invaders must get unconditionally out of the lands seized by them.

Rafic Samhoun
CC Political Bureau member,
Lebanese Communist Party

new experience

Our Interviews Militarism Will Not Be Beaten Without Mobilising the People

André Rauber – Political Bureau
member, Swiss Party of Labour

—The bourgeois mass media are depicting Switzerland as a country that has no room for broad socio-political movements, including a mass struggle against the nuclear war threat. Would you comment?

Although this stereotype has been created, Swiss reality is a far cry from it. In Switzerland the outset of the 1980s witnessed an unprecedented growth of anti-war sentiments. Very many people saw the deployment of US nuclear missiles in Europe as a terrible menace to international security, including the security of our country, which is situated in the very heartland of Europe. In parallel, people have become very much more vocal in their protests against the policy line of Swiss conservative quarters, that are drawing the nation into the arms race. The people's way of thinking is strongly influenced by the gigantic scale of the anti-missile actions in neighbouring countries, notably the FRG.

The present public movement in Switzerland is the largest and broadest for half a century. People in our country are still talking about the massive anti-war demonstration that took place in Berne in November 1983 and drew 50,000 participants from all parts of the nation. They protested against the missile deployment plan of the USA and NATO, called for Europe's conversion into a nuclear-free zone, and demanded that the government drop its policy for the country's 'superarmament' and make a more active contribution to strengthening peace and international security. In the period from 1981 to 1984 as many as 170,000 citizens signed the Swiss Appeal for Peace, against nuclear death.

By its purposeful actions our party has done much to foster a growth of the movement. It is endeavouring to make as many Swiss citizens aware of a truth that is still incomprehensible to many, namely, that a nuclear war will destroy entire nations and, possibly, the whole human race. The need for an active defence of peace is being impressed upon the public by the Communists through their press organs,¹ through discussions on radio and television, to which we are sometimes invited, through meetings of representatives of democratic public opinion, and through the annual

festivals of the newspaper *Voix Ouvrière* held every autumn in Geneva with the attendance of large numbers of people. Our party's activists were among the principal organisers of anti-war actions and the Swiss Appeal for Peace and were largely responsible for their success (especially in the German-speaking part of the country). Due to the efforts of the party groups in the localities, the ranks of demonstrators have been reinforced by the inhabitants of many towns and communities which are often situated hundreds of kilometres from the venue of those actions.

Of course, the fact that after all that was done it did not prove possible to prevent the deployment of US missiles in Western Europe influenced the peace forces in our country, generating a mood of disenchantment and causing some decline of militant activity. But the movement has not disintegrated by any means. All the indications are that it has become a constant factor of the nation's political life. Quite large actions continue to take place, for instance, in Basle, where annual Easter peace marches are sponsored jointly with anti-war organisations in the FRG and France. These international demonstrations invariably draw thousands of participants.

Diverse political and social forces cooperate in the anti-war protests: the Swiss Peace Movement, which is affiliated to the World Peace Council; Christian groups such as the Martin Luther King Centre and the Pax Christi; the Swiss Council of Peace Organisations, which pursues a social democratic orientation; and the large Women for Peace association.

Young people have become very militant. In most cases they act independently of political parties. A visible role is played by young Christians, for example, the Youth for Life group, which has held several hunger strikes to protest against the growing threat of nuclear war (these have attracted public attention). Many young men and women are enlisting in the peace movement, spontaneously joining demonstrations. It is an indicator, for example, that although the Social Democratic Party and the trade unions influenced by it are so far giving little support to anti-war actions, young Socialists and trade union activists take part in them individually.

This movement has unquestionably helped to politicise the masses. Many people have begun to give more serious thought to various aspects of international life and to our country's socio-economic development. In the frequent discussions of questions related to the defence of peace the Communists have been able to draw participants of these discussions into debates on other, including political, problems, while the anti-war actions have given us the opportunity to come into contact with people who formerly showed no interest in social activity.

—You have noted that one of the demands of the peace movement is that an end should be put to Switzerland's 'superarmament'. What caused this question to be raised in a country that traditionally abides by the principles of neutrality in foreign policy?

The point is that in recent years there has been a growth of militarisation. This is in keeping with the aspirations of some forces that want our country's covert association with NATO, and also with the interests of those bourgeois quarters that hope to find a way out of the economic crisis by increasing the manufacture of armaments. In per capita terms, Switzerland's military expenditures are among the highest in the world—accounting to 4,000 million francs,² which is nearly one-fourth of the national budget. Switzerland purchases 45 per cent of its armaments, chiefly tanks and aircraft, in NATO countries, with the result that it is becoming increasingly dependent on that bloc.

I'll give just one example. About two years ago the government purchased Tiger aircraft. There are no airfields in our country for training flights for these aircraft, and for this purpose the Swiss Air Force uses the NATO base on Sardinia. Is this not a breach of the principles of neutrality? Our party constantly speaks, in parliament

among other places, against the tendency of the Swiss Armed Forces command to expand its contacts with the armed forces of the NATO countries, and demands the Swiss government's strict compliance with neutrality in foreign policy and a drastic cut in military spending.

Another essential point is that bourgeois propaganda is trying to make people believe that an enlargement of arms production and the export of armaments are a way of improving the situation in the economy and preserving jobs. This deceit is believed, and it is one of the main reasons why the bulk of the working class is so far keeping aloof from the struggle for peace. The Communists reject claims of this sort and expose not only the political but also the economic effects of the growth of the expenditures on armaments, explaining to the working people why armaments plants should be converted to the manufacture of civilian products.

The militarisation process signifies growing interference by military circles in the nation's life, the strengthening of their links to finance capital, and the intensification of authoritarian tendencies. This has been pointed out time and again by the Communists. On the pretext of 'fighting terrorism', the authorities have been planning to establish in Berne a computer with information on several million citizens.³ Attempts have also been made to set up a special federal security police force with authority to act throughout the nation.⁴ Some other projects of a similar nature are in the works. In a number of cantons it is intended to harden operating anti-communist legislation, and Berufsverbot on the FRG model is practised in the German-speaking part of Switzerland. All this goes to confirm that the struggle against militarism is closely linked to the defence of democratic rights and freedoms.

—There is not a single capitalist country where reactionary circles are not conducting a savage ideological and political campaign against the peace forces. What are the main features of this campaign in Switzerland?

The big, particularly banking, bourgeoisie is apprehensive that the mass anti-war movement might undermine the West's image of a politically stable and conservative Switzerland that was largely responsible for turning it into one of the capitalist world's leading financial centres. The attacks against the peace forces are for that reason especially ferocious.

Reaction is going to all lengths to isolate the peace fighters, to give the impression that they are being 'manipulated by the Soviet Union'. All means are used, including undisguised provocation. The so-called Novosti Agency affair was fabricated in May 1983. Two Swiss citizens employed by the APN Berne bureau and active in the Swiss peace movement were charged with being 'Soviet agents'. Right-wing elements wanted to use this 'affair', trumped up out of unmitigated slander, to compromise one of the most militant peace organisations and the entire peace movement with it. However, this attempt failed: exactly six months later the largest-ever Swiss anti-war demonstration was held in Berne.

The bourgeoisie is trying to utilise the movement's social and ideological heterogeneity, the fact that the forces comprising it abide by widely differing political views. While charging the Communists and other consistently militant peace fighters with maintaining 'links to Moscow', the mass media write highly of organisations that take an anti-communist stand and attack the 'two super-powers' or solely the USSR. This propaganda gimmick has some effect: members of individual groups in the movement believe that they will cease to be attacked from the right and win greater prestige if they dissociate themselves from the Communists and criticise Soviet foreign policy. These are, of course, illusory calculations. They play into the hands solely of the reactionaries, who are going to all lengths to get the movement to adopt a pro-imperialist stand, which would spell out its demise.

Special mention must be made of the role played by extreme leftist and anarchist groups. These are out to use the anti-war actions for their own purposes and earn political capital by joining in them. It is indicative, for example, that former Maoists are particularly adept at this: they are now vowing fidelity to the ideals of the peace fighters with the same zeal that they had formerly propounded bellicose theories.

In short, the peace struggle in Switzerland is developing in a very complex ideological situation. I should like to stress that the overwhelming majority of its participants hold progressive, left-wing views. Already now it is clear that the conservative forces as well as some groups (chiefly the ex-Maoists and the Trotskyites) have failed in their attempts to expel the Communists from the movement. Distinguished by their dedicated work, initiative, and organisational ability, the Communists continue to enjoy wide recognition and prestige in the peace movement. Contrary to the assertions of bourgeois propaganda, we are not trying to dominate the movement. We are working to ensure productive and effective cooperation with the other forces in it.

—What do you see as the movement's priority tasks of the present stage?

The main thing is to sustain the thrust of the anti-war struggle, to halt the certain decline, which I have mentioned. This decline has aggravated disagreement in the movement. Some organisations and groups are urging the renunciation of mass actions in favour of small operations in individual towns and communities, exhorting a halt to public activity and concentration on analysis of the existing situation.

A sharp discussion unfolded over these problems at the peace forum in Geneva in October 1984. It was attended by 350 delegates from various organisations. The Communists did not deny the expediency of making an in-depth analysis of the state and aims of the movement, which would take into account the new aspects of the international situation. However, they insisted that positive changes would not take place of themselves either on the world scene or in Switzerland itself, that these changes could be made only by enlisting ever larger numbers of people into the struggle against militarism and the threat of war. This is how the question is put in the resolution of the SPL's latest, Twelfth Congress (May 1983).

Of course, the efforts of the peace fighters in our small country do not have a decisive influence on the course of this struggle globally. However, their significance should not be underrated. The Communists and all other democratic forces believe that as a neutral nation that does not belong to military blocs Switzerland can do much more than hitherto to consolidate international security, for instance, to create nuclear-free zones. To achieve this turn in the nation's policy is the mission of the Swiss peace forces, who are part of the broad popular movement that can change developments on our planet.

¹ In addition to the French-language weekly *Voix Ouvrière*, the SPL prints the newspaper *Vorwärts* (in German) and *Il Lavoratore* (in Italian).—Ed.

² At the March 1985 exchange rate 100 Swiss francs equalled roughly 37 US dollars.—Ed.

³ Switzerland has 6,500,000 inhabitants.—Ed.

⁴ Police activity is currently ensured at the level of the cantons, which in Switzerland have a large measure of political and administrative autonomy.—Ed.

Despite Repressions

Matiur Rahman – CC Secretary,
Communist Party of Bangladesh

—*Ekota* (Unity), the weekly newspaper of the Bangladesh Communists, has been coming off the press for almost 15 years. How would you assess its role and place in the nation's political life?

To begin with, I should like to mention that during the past decade we have had martial law in Bangladesh. Throughout that period the government has repeatedly banned the Communist Party of Bangladesh, together with other political parties, and placed many of its leaders and members under arrest. There has been strict press censorship, which persists to this day.

On the other hand, over the past two years a strong mass movement has been sweeping across the country demanding the lifting of martial law, the restoration of democratic rights, and the transfer of power to the lawfully elected representatives of the people. This movement is gathering momentum. As a result, the military regime has had to retreat on several issues and it has been possible to restore some democratic rights. Urban working people, farm labourers, peasants, students, and women are growing increasingly more militant in demanding their rights.

Ever since its was founded our newspaper has been issued whenever the least possibility for this presented itself, even in the most unfavourable conditions. It now plays a militant role in the democratic movement. By giving full coverage to the grievances and actions of the working people, providing guidance for their actions, and keeping them informed of the political situation in the country and the world at large, *Ekota* has won recognition among large sections of the population. It has, for example, printed a series of articles exposing a clique of wealthy people who are pillaging and squandering Bangladesh's national wealth. These articles created a sensation and attracted considerable attention in democratic circles. To some extent *Ekota* has thereby helped to promote the struggle on a national scale.

The newspaper takes a clear-cut anti-imperialist stand. It has recently given publicity and drawn international attention to US subversive plans relative to Bangladesh. Further, the weekly is doing much to disseminate the principles of internationalism and devotes much attention to the problem of preserving peace and to Soviet initiatives in the struggle for disarmament and the consolidation of international security.

Thanks to *Ekota's* emphatic stand in support of democracy, social progress, and the working people's interests its circulation and prestige are growing. It is very significant that the newspaper is highly appreciated not only by democratic and progressive circles close to the Communists but also by people who do not share our views. An example is how the public commemorated our newspaper's anniversary in 1984.

Leading journalists, writers, and poets contributed to the anniversary issue of *Ekota*. The anniversary poster, distributed nation-wide, was designed by one of our most prominent artists. We received warm congratulations from various organisations, and an anniversary meeting was held in the National Press Club in Dacca with the participation of the leaders of the Journalists' Union of Bangladesh, prominent statesmen and civic leaders, and many of our readers.

During the past five years *Ekota's* circulation has more than doubled and now exceeds 22,000 copies. It is sold not only at news-stands along with most of the other publications. Through the efforts of our party members and sympathisers *Ekota* reaches the remotest parts of Bangladesh, which is very unusual for a national weekly

newspaper. We have made a special effort to have the newspaper circulated among factory workers, farm labourers, and people belonging to the urban middle classes.

The work of our newspaper is being made difficult by the uncertain and unstable political situation in the country. Moreover, US reactionary circles are bringing growing political, economic, and ideological influences to bear on Bangladesh. The national radio and television networks and also the press are constantly under pressure from 'information imperialism', with Western propaganda increasingly poisoning the minds of the people. We are thus being drawn into an unequal struggle. But we are not laying down our arms. On the contrary, the Communist Party of Bangladesh considers that one of its main political objectives is to strengthen the position held by the newspaper *Ekota*, which brings people the truth and advocates unity among all of the nation's democratic forces.

In the Mirror of the Press

Trybuna Ludu

ONGOING PROCESS OF CONSOLIDATION

The central press organ of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party carried an article devoted to party enlistment, declaring that despite continued difficulties in this area, the drop in party membership has stopped and that the consolidation of the party ranks is going on. In 1984 the party admitted over 35,000 probationary members, this number adding up to about 1.5 per cent of its total membership. Of these 53.7 per cent are young people up to age 30, and almost half are workers.

This, the newspaper writes, is not a very significant growth considering that there are about 100,000 primary party organisations in the country. But it should also be borne in mind that in the period between December 1981 and November 1982 only 6,570 people applied for party membership. The tendency now is increasingly more favourable: the influx into the party is growing steadily with the proportion of workers rising.

In rural localities, the newspaper notes, party building still encounters serious difficulties. Last year only 5.3 per cent of the new party members were peasants. *Trybuna Ludu* stresses that additional aid from the party authorities is required if the rural party organisations are to tackle their tasks effectively.

l'Unità

ALONG THE ROAD OF RENEWAL

This central press organ of the Italian Communist Party has given wide coverage to the fusion of the Party of Proletarian Unity with the ICP.

The decision to merge with the ICP, *l'Unità* reports, was adopted at a PPU

Conference at the close of November 1984, with 90 per cent of the delegates voting in favour. In turn the ICP Central Committee and Central Control Commission unanimously approved the merger and sent heartfelt fraternal greetings to the PPU comrades who have joined the ICP and accepted its political line, Programme, and Rules.

This, the newspaper notes, is an important step in the context of the overall political prospect opening up for the left-wing forces fighting for a democratic restructuring of Italian society and its institutions.

Lately, the PPU showed that while it was numerically small it had a political identity that advantageously distinguished it from some other parties. Communist ideals underlay its activities and in recent years it has made a tangible contribution to the struggle for peace, civil rights and freedoms, the settlement of youth problems, and so on.

Speaking of the significance of the merger, the newspaper quotes the ICP General Secretary Alessandro Natta as saying that it does not at all mean that the Communists see the unity of the left-wing forces solely within the framework of the Communist Party. Further, they do not consider that the successful implementation of the democratic alternative is the exclusive prerogative of the ICP. The merger should be regarded in the light of the active quest for means of renewing policy undertaken by the Communists in response to the changes taking place in society and in the thinking of citizens, *l'Unità* writes.

The Story Behind the Fact

A REVIEW OF THE MILITANCY OF PARTY CELLS

Last January the CC Political Bureau of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party passed a resolution on the results of a review of the militancy of primary party organisations. Gotovyn Chingel, MPRP Central Committee member and head of the Department of Party Organs of the MPRP Central Committee, speaks below of the aims and results of this major socio-political campaign.

The purpose of the review, conducted under the guidance of our party's CC at the close of last year, was to facilitate the attainment of the targets set the primary organisations by the 18th MPRP Congress in 1981 and by subsequent plenary meetings of the party's CC, generalise the experience of their work, and ensure support for an the dissemination of their finest initiatives.

The MPRP now has over 3,000 primary organisations with over 85,000 members. The primary party organisations are playing a steadily bigger role in society's life and the number of these organisations is growing with the extension and complication of the tasks of socialist construction, the development of the economy, the appearance of new work collectives, and the expansion of the party ranks. These grassroots links function in the thick of the people, conduct the party's policy among the working people, and mobilise the latter for the implementation of the party's general line.

The preparations for the review involved not only Communists: hundreds of organisations and work collectives reported on their successes in production and their fulfilment of plan assignments. There has been a visible improvement of the work of lower party organisations. Much has been done to reinforce the party's ranks and influence among the people. In 1984 enrolment into the party was 13.7 per cent up on the previous year. The proportion of workers and peasants among the new members has increased by 2.4 per cent, and there has been a growth of the number of young people joining the party.

The review covered 75.5 per cent of the primary party committees, 55.9 per cent of the party cells, and 41.7 per cent of the party groups.¹ A principled and all-sided evaluation was made of each of them by the MPRP aimak, town, or district committee concerned.

To quote the relevant resolution of the CC Political Bureau, the lower party organisations are honourably fulfilling the role of the people's political leaders and organisers and are constantly improving their inner-party work. The activity of 95.7 per cent of the reviewed primary organisations was assessed positively. Good results are being received from the steps taken to enhance the responsibility and discipline of cadres and the educational impact of party meetings. The experience of the CPSU and other fraternal parties is used creatively. It is becoming a practice to appoint party organisers in collectives that have no Communists and to conduct political education days and also open letter days to analyse and generalise recommendations and criticism from the working people.

Further, the review has shown that the work of individual party organisation still falls short of requirements. The resolution defines steps to remove shortcomings, especially in the style and methods of leadership, and make part work more effective.

The tasks being set the primary organisations are to prepare party meetings more thoroughly, to use these meetings for a discussion of the most topical issues facing the given enterprise or work collective, and pass decisions with a specific time limit for carrying them out. It is stressed that much depends on the correct use of cadres, on appointing Communists to key sectors of production. It is important to give party members assignments in accordance with the specifics of the work of each of them, and to hear reports regularly from them at meetings on how they have met the requirements of the party Rules. Unity of ideological and organisational work is the factor giving shape to effectively close-knit, operative collectives, steadfastly displaying efficiency. Aimak and town committees of the MPRP have been instructed to consider the reports of primary organisations and, where necessary, review the militancy of these organisations. The CC departments concerned with party organs and with ideological work have been instructed to ensure the coverage of the advanced experience of primary organisations in the mass media.

We consider that the success of the review is largely due to the fact that questions related to improving the forms and methods of the leadership of primary organisations are constantly in the focus of attention of party organs. The CC regularly discusses the reports of party organisations functioning in the most diverse branches of the economy. Zonal conferences of secretaries and party group organisers have discussed advanced experience and charted ways and means of resolving new problems. The composition of the leadership of primary organisations is being improved qualitatively. Suffice it to note that most of the secretaries have a higher education. The CC Higher Party School and special courses play a large part in training and retraining such cadres. Some of them continue their training in the Soviet Union within the framework of cooperation with the CPSU.

The party organisations and all Communists are now preparing for the 19th Congress of the MPRP. We feel that it is important that the summing up of the review of militancy should not be turned into a shortlived campaign. Much remains to be

done by local party organs to reinforce the successes that have been achieved, extend tangible assistance to party cells and regularly monitor the quality of their work. This will ensure a further enhancement of the efficacy of this work and reinforce the party's leading role in all sectors of economic and cultural construction.

¹ In accordance with the MPRP Rules, party cells function at industrial enterprises and offices that have more than eight party members, while where the number of Communists is not less than three there are party groups. Primary party committees are formed at agricultural associations and state farms that have over 60 full and probationary party members, and at industrial facilities, offices and educational institutions where the party organisations have more than 150 members.—*Ed.*

In Brief

CANADA

The Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Canada has issued a statement in connection with the growing danger of the nation's involvement in the US Star Wars programme. The Conservative government, the statement says, essentially supports this programme which endangers Canada's sovereignty and national security. The document exposes plans of further cooperation with the United States within NATO and under the NORAD Command.

DENMARK

The Communist Party has sponsored a week of solidarity with the anti-imperialist struggle Asian, African and Latin American peoples are waging to uphold their right to freedom, independence and a development path of their own choice.

GDR

An academic conference on 'The Historical Significance of the Soviet Victory over Hitler's Fascism and Its Lessons Today' was held in the Berlin-based Karl Marx Higher Party School under the SED Central Committee. Attending it together with scholars and party workers were veterans of the anti-fascist Resistance movement and socialist construction activists.

GREECE

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Greece has called for cooperation among all progressive forces ready to fight against the schemes to establish a two-party system in Greece. Under this system, the Greek Communists emphasise, the two parties will take turns at the helm of government; meanwhile, acute socio-economic problems will remain unsolved. The broadest possible mobilisation of the popular masses, the Central Committee says in the appeal, will make it possible to frustrate the anti-democratic schemes and will result in the establishment of a

socio-political front capable of forming a government that would work for genuine change in Greece.

ITALY

The leadership of the Italian Communist Party has published a paper on issues of peace to stress that the current situation calls for new efforts in the struggle for detente and disarmament. Noting that a very broad bloc of different forces is involved in the peace movement that has become widespread in recent years, the ICP leadership urges party organisations to do everything in their power to expand the scope of the movement and enhance vigorous participation in it.

SENEGAL

The Central Committee of the Senegal Party of Independence and Labour has called on all mass political organisations, women's and youth associations and religious figures to organise a broad and powerful movement. The aim is to frustrate the attempts at dragging the country into the aggressive machinery of the North Atlantic bloc and to prevent Senegal's transformation into a beachhead of imperialist struggle against African peoples and national liberation forces.

URUGUAY

The new civilian government has legalised the Communist Party of Uruguay, outlawed, together with other left parties, after the 1973 military coup. All political prisoners have been released. Referring to the significance of the lifting of the ban on communist activities, Rodney Arismendi, First Secretary of the CPU Central Committee, has stressed that it is a major victory of the nation's democratic forces and of the entire Uruguayan people.

viewpoints

Fighting Falsification With Truth

Professor *Dimitr Sirkov* – Doctor of
History, deputy director of the Bulgarian
Communist Party Institute of Historical Studies

THE history of World War II is a major field of acute ideological struggle.* Its course generally depends on the state of international relations and on the dynamics of the contention between the two social systems. As a rule, imperialist efforts to aggravate international tensions are accompanied by a wave of old and new falsifications of the causes, course, results and lessons of the war. The ruling quarters of the United States and West European countries used occasions such as the 35th anniversary of NATO, the 40th anniversary of the Second Front and the like to increase the psychological pressure brought to bear on the Soviet Union and other countries of the socialist community and to foment anti-communism.

In his speech at the official ceremony held in France to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Allied landing in Normandy, Ronald Reagan presented the United States as a champion of 'European democracy'. The words the US President uttered to the effect that the former wartime enemies were now members of a 'great alliance serving freedom, prosperity and peace' sounded not only tendentious but also viciously instigative. He pictured the USSR as a nation posing a threat to peace and called on West European countries to arm themselves.¹ In marking the 40th anniversary of the defeat of Nazi Germany, imperialist propaganda acts in the same spirit and foments anti-Sovietism, in a bid to justify, by citing historical references, the 'mortal right' of the United States to destroy the basis of the postwar international realities and to interfere in other nations' internal affairs.

The incessant reactionary attempts to distort the history of the war are rooted in a simple but significant fact—that the truth about the war is contrary to the aggressive course imperialism currently pursues on the international scene and to the claims US reactionary quarters lay to world 'leadership'. Let us illustrate this point by several typical examples.

Bourgeois historiography claims that the Soviet Union and Germany were 'equally responsible' for World War II. It is alleged that the German-Soviet non-aggression pact of 1939 enabled Hitler to attack Poland and 'made war a certainty'.² This is obviously an attempt to exonerate imperialism or at least free it from part of the blame for unleashing the most terrible bloodbath in human history. The notion

*This is another instalment in our series of articles exposing bourgeois falsification of the history of World War II. See P. Zhilin, 'The War and Falsifiers of its History'. *WMMR*, No. 4, 1985.

planted is that the capitalist system has nothing to do with either the causes of the past war or the threat of a new global conflict.

Meanwhile, it was precisely US and European monopolies who helped German imperialism to revive and expand its military capability in the prewar period. The then bourgeois governments studiously ignored the rapid arming of Nazi Germany, hoping to direct its aggression eastward, against the Soviet Union. This policy led to the infamous Munich pact Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy concluded in September 1938. 'To save peace', Daladier and Chamberlain betrayed and sacrificed Czechoslovakia to Hitler, thus giving him the go-ahead to launch a world war.

In these conditions, the Soviet Union continued to work for collective security. In the summer of 1939 British-French-Soviet negotiations were held in Moscow on a mutual assistance agreement to curb fascist aggression. Those who make the claims I referred to say nothing about why the Moscow talk failed. The reason—and this is clear from numerous research papers based on a wealth of documentary evidence³—was British and French willingness to conclude an effective and equitable agreement with the USSR. Britain and France were concerned not with collective efforts undertaken jointly with the Soviet Union to prevent world war, but with encouraging German aggression against the USSR. According to the American journalist Drew Middleton, certain quarters in London and Paris regarded the impending war between the Anglo-French and the German-Italian groups as an 'unnecessary diversion from the main task of defeating communism'.⁴

Blinded by anti-communism and anti-Sovietism, the ruling quarters in London and Paris refused to see that Nazi Germany had no intention of acting out the Anglo-French script, that its schemes and plans of world domination envisaged destruction not only of the Soviet Union but also of its Western capitalist competitors. Given the extreme gravity of the situation that resulted from this, the Soviet government was forced to conclude a non-aggression pact with Germany so as to put off the terrible threat.

It is a widespread claim of bourgeois historiography that the Anglo-Americans played the decisive role in the defeat of the fascist bloc. It follows that since they decided the outcome of the war, today they are the ones entitled to shape and reshape the postwar world. While in Great Britain references are still made to the USSR playing an 'equally important' role, most American authors argue that the United States was the 'architect of victory', the 'dominant force' and 'belligerent number one'. The importance of the principal, Soviet-German, front, is played down. Conversely, the operations conducted by the Anglo-American forces are presented as 'decisive battles' and 'turning points' in the war against Germany and Japan. Another assiduously publicised notion is that the Second Front, opened in June 1944, was as important as the Soviet-German front and even that it was the major theatre of war where the outcome of the struggle was decided. Meanwhile, the Soviet role in the defeat of Japanese imperialism is usually ignored completely.

The Soviet-German front was decisive in all principled aspects of importance—the strength of the troops and material thrown into action, territorial scope, intensity of the fighting, as well as political strategic military results.⁵ The Battle of Moscow which wrecked Hitler's Blitzkrieg plan was a clash of 2.8 million troops. The Battle of the Volga was fought over an area of 100,000 square kilometres and a frontline 400 to 850 kilometres. There, the Nazis lost 1,500,000 officers and men (more than 25 per cent of all their troops fighting in the Soviet-German front), over 3,000 tanks, 4,400 planes and 12,000 artillery pieces. Franklin Roosevelt called the victory at Stalingrad the 'turning point of the war of the Allied nations against the forces of aggression'.⁶

Meanwhile, in the Battle of El Alamein (October and November 1942) which, according to bourgeois historians, was the point at which the tide of the war began to turn, 230,000 British troops took on 80,000 Italians and Germans.

An overwhelmingly bigger part of the armed forces of the fascist bloc was concentrated on the Soviet-German front. Even after the Second Front was opened, the Soviet Army engaged more than half the number of the Wehrmacht divisions and the Western Allies, about one-third. The German Army suffered almost 75 per cent of its casualties (those killed, wounded and missing) in battles with the Soviet Army.

The falsifiers of history misrepresent the liberation by Soviet troops of many European countries from fascism as direct or indirect interference in their internal affairs, as 'export of revolution' and 'expansionism'. They are thus trying to malign the mission of liberation accomplished by the USSR and at the same time, to deny that the peoples of Southeast and Central Europe chose the socialist path of their own free will.

The impression is that those who make these allegations know nothing about the popular anti-fascist struggle in European countries. The importance of the national liberation struggle is played down, the social conditions and the development of the confrontation between the classes are ignored, and nothing is said about the fact that the then bourgeois governments proved unable to safeguard the national independence of the countries from the fascist invaders—the task undertaken by the anti-fascist Resistance movement, inspired by the victories of the Soviet Army. The role the USSR played in the victory of the anti-fascist uprisings and people's democratic revolutions was above all in the fact that its army demolished the main obstacles to national freedom and imminent revolution—the Nazi armies and the regimes of occupation.

Those who claim that the Soviet Union imposed political and social arrangements on the East European countries cannot, however, cite a single case of interference by Soviet troops in the internal affairs of these peoples. Such cases are simply non-existent. The Soviet Army entered the Nazi-occupied countries in accordance with agreements concluded with the respective anti-fascist organisations which led their peoples' struggle for liberation. Under the agreements of the Soviet High Command with the leaders of Czechoslovakia in May 1944, of Poland in July 1944 and of Yugoslavia in September 1944, the presence of the Soviet Army on these countries' soil was confined to military operations against the Nazi armed forces. The tackling of civil, administrative and economic questions was left to the authorities of the respective countries. There were no objectives such as violation of territorial integrity or change of social system.

The USSR also respected the national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the countries which were satellite states of Germany and with which it was in a state of war. After the Bucharest uprising in August 1944 the Soviet Union declared that if the Romanian troops ceased hostilities against the Red Army, 'it will not disarm them and allow them to retain all their weapons'.⁷ Together with the Soviet Armed Forces, the Romanian Army took part in the liberation of the rest of Romania and in operations against the Nazis beyond the country's borders.

Having declared, on September 5, 1944, that it was in a state of war with Bulgaria, the USSR granted the Bulgarian people the opportunity of pulling their country out of the fascist bloc themselves. Not a single shot was exchanged between Bulgarian and Soviet troops on Bulgarian soil. Launched on September 6, the Bulgarian anti-fascist uprising triumphed on September 9, and the anti-fascist Resistance established popular government in the nation. The new government declared war on Germany. 'Only a people in a state of covert and open war with the ruling bourgeois class could welcome the Soviet declaration of war on Bulgaria as an expression of support for the popular struggle and, in a powerful blow, crush the hated bourgeois government.'⁸ Under an agreement between the Soviet and Bulgarian governments, the Bulgarian Army, retaining its structure and independent status and operating

under the Third Ukrainian Front Command, took part in the final stage of the war against Germany.

Conversely, the governments of Great Britain and the United States were striving to use the national liberation struggle to their own selfish ends. They resorted to political and economic pressure and to direct interference in the internal affairs of other countries. In relation to the countries of Central and Southeast Europe, the United States and Great Britain pursued a policy which seriously hampered genuine democratisation and encouraged reactionary forces. For example, they made the admission of Finland, Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary to the United Nations conditional on an immediate reorganisation of their governments in an anti-democratic spirit. 'We shall be unable to resume diplomatic relations with these governments until they are organised in the way we consider necessary,' Truman insisted in Potsdam.⁹ With the help of right-wing emigre quarters, the United States and Great Britain tried to take power away from the consistently democratic and progressive forces in Yugoslavia and Poland. *Le Monde* of Paris notes that while they conducted an offensive in France in the summer of 1944, the Americans delayed recognition of the anti-fascist Resistance as a political force and brought in their train their own 'mayors' and other officials for French towns and cities.¹⁰

The results of the victory over fascism were politically and legally recorded and formalised in the decisions of the Yalta and Potsdam Conference, where the fundamental principles of the postwar arrangements were agreed upon—elimination of fascism and democratisation of the defeated countries, just borders in Europe, and promotion of postwar cooperation.

However, the democratic international order mapped out in Yalta and Potsdam did not square with the pursuit of hegemony by US imperialism. Nor did it satisfy a considerable part of the West European reactionary bourgeoisie whose positions were weakened by the war. As early as the late 1940s and early 1950s concerted and repeated efforts were undertaken to distort the meaning of the decisions agreed upon: this was to provide ideological justification for a course aimed at their revision. Yalta and Potsdam began to be pictured as 'Western surrender to the Soviet threat'. Bourgeois authors asserted that at the close of the war 'the path was cleared for a Bolshevik advance', and that this was the result of a 'major mistake' made by Franklin Roosevelt. Other bourgeois historians argue that the anti-Nazi coalition was 'unnatural', thus hinting at the impossibility of practical cooperation between countries with different social systems in strengthening peace on the basis of decisions agreed upon during and after the war.

Despite minor differences among them, the bourgeois critics of Yalta and Potsdam are unanimous in their general conclusion that the agreements reached there allegedly favoured only the Soviet Union. The connection between these views and the claim that *detente* is a 'one-way street' and that it serves only the interests of socialism is easy to spot.

The Soviet Union and the other socialist countries have invariably and consistently advocated adherence to the Yalta and Potsdam accords and consolidation of the democratic results of the victory over fascism. Their efforts resulted in the treaties concluded since the early 1970s between the USSR and the United States, the USSR and the FRG, Czechoslovakia and the FRG, Poland and the FRG, etc. These treaties, and especially the Final Act of the 1975 Helsinki Conference, consolidated the results of World War II.

The supporters of the policy of greater confrontation with the socialist community approach the Helsinki Act in the same way they view the Yalta and Potsdam accords. Voices are raised maintaining that only the West made concessions in Helsinki, that the Final Act is nothing short of a 'second Munich', a 'smokescreen' behind which the USSR continued to build up its strength, a move which 'encourages Communists to

threaten the world'. Bourgeois propaganda denies that the Helsinki accords can be implemented because the interests of the participants in the Helsinki Conference are purportedly incompatible. It claims that the agreements of Yalta and Potsdam 'sealed the partition of the continent' and that 'the Helsinki accords legalised this partition'. The advocates of international tensions hold forth to the effect that it is time for the West to denounce the 'Yalta fraud' and repudiate the Helsinki Final Act too.¹¹

Biased allegations and efforts to distort and falsify the results of World War II display an ever-present common feature—a striving to inflate the 'Soviet Threat' myth. But this threat has never existed. It has been demonstrated repeatedly that bourgeois estimates of Soviet armaments are exaggerated.¹² Former US President Jimmy Carter admits in his memoirs that each time the issue of new military spending was broached, the Pentagon leaders raised a hue and cry over the 'Soviet military threat' and said that the United States 'lagged behind' the Soviet Union in armaments. According to Carter, these claims are untrue and are a serious distortion of facts.¹³

Facts prove that the Soviet Union which imperialist propaganda works hard to picture as posing a 'threat to peace' is making great efforts to preserve it. The peace policy pursued by the USSR and the other countries of the socialist community has a salutary effect on international developments. Since the end of the war, the Soviet Union has invariably advocated disarmament. Over the past 15 years more than 30 bilateral and multilateral treaties and agreements have been concluded on Soviet initiatives, aimed at curbing the arms race. At the 39th session of the UN General Assembly held in 1984 the socialist countries proposed and co-sponsored a total of 30 major initiatives. The USSR is the only nuclear power which has solemnly pledged not to be the first to use nuclear weapons.

World War II has shown that imperialism is unable to decide the historical contention with socialism by force of arms. The reactionary quarters in the West would dearly love all this to be forgotten because they are again banking on armed force in this contention. The doctrine of a struggle against 'international communism' and appeals for a 'crusade' against the socialist countries and the nations upholding their freedom are aimed at revising not only the results of World War II but also the victory of the October Revolution and the entire subsequent process of world-wide transition from capitalism to socialism. It is an attempt at a global social revanche, directed against the USSR, other socialist countries, against the nations that have thrown off the colonial yoke and decided to become masters of their own destiny, and against social progress throughout the world.

Denial of the historical fact that the Soviet Union played the decisive role in delivering mankind from fascist tyranny is connected with attempts to present the United States as the 'savior' of the West from the 'communist threat'. Efforts to depict the world's first socialist country as an 'expansionist force' allegedly threatening peace and freedom in the world provide ideological camouflage for a policy of anti-Soviet aggression. Moves to discredit the highest and most fruitful points of cooperation within the anti-Nazi coalition serve the interests of those who dismiss proposals of cooperation between capitalist and socialist countries on the basis of peaceful coexistence as 'harmful' to the West.

The task of highlighting the historical truth about the war and the lessons of the defeat of fascism is an integral part of today's struggle to preserve peace.

¹ *Le Monde*, June 7, 1984, p. 13.

² F. Maclean, *Holy Russia. An Historical Companion to European Russia*, New York, 1979, p. 162.

³ For a critique of falsifications of the history of World War II, see Ye. Kulkov, O. Rzheshesvsky, I. Chelyshev, *Pravda i lozh o vtoroi mirovoi voine* (Truth and Lies About World War II), Moscow, 1983; P. Zhilin, A. Yakushevsky, Ye. Kulkov, *Kritika osnovnykh kontseptsii burzhuaznoi istoriografii vtoroi mirovoi voyny* (A Critique of the Principal Conceptions in the Bourgeois Historiography of World War II), Moscow, 1983.

⁴ *The New York Times Magazine*, September 2, 1979.

⁶ For more details, see 'World War II. Facts and Figures' in this issue of *WMR*.

⁸ *Perepiska predsedatela Soveta Ministrov SSSR s prezidentami SShA i premijer-ministrami Velikobritanii vo vremia Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny* (Correspondence of the Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers with the Presidents of the United States and Prime Ministers of Great Britain during the Great Patriotic War), Vol. 2, Moscow, 1976, p. 317.

⁷ *Vneshnyaya politika Sovetskogo Soyuza v period Otechestvennoi voiny* (Soviet Foreign Policy in the patriotic War), Vol. II, Moscow, 1946, p. 172.

⁸ Todor Zhivkov, *Selected Works*, Vol. 23, Sofia, 1976, p. 256 (in Bulgarian).

⁹ *Tegeran. Yalta. Potsdam. Sbornik dokumentov* (Tehran. Yalta. Potsdam. A Collection of Documents), Second Edition, Moscow, 1970, p. 308.

¹⁰ *Le Monde*, Supplement, June 3-4, 1984.

¹¹ *The International Herald Tribune*, January 5-6, 1985.

¹² See *Whence the Threat to Peace*, Military Publishing House, Moscow, 1982, p. 6.

¹³ Jimmy Carter, *Keeping Faith*, New York, 1982.

A Political Report To Defend Peace is to Work for Peace

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Editorial Council

Noé Gertel – Central Committee member,
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Our journal has featured a story about the civil movement for peace in the Soviet Union.¹ On request from readers interested to learn about this movement in other socialist countries, we offer a report from the German Democratic Republic and Czechoslovakia.

THE character, motives and forms of the civic movements for peace in the countries of existing socialism are glossed over or distorted in the part of the world where capital rules. The bourgeois mass media go to great lengths to have people believe that these movements are completely subordinated to the government and the ruling party, that they do not reflect the emotions and moods of 'average people'. These allegations exert a degree of influence on the participants in anti-war action in capitalist countries and hamper the development of cooperation and concerted action of peace forces on the international scale—cooperation and joint action that, today, are imperative as never before.

To us Communists, the very fact that this question of 'subordination' is raised is either a sign of a mistake of the ill-informed or a malicious distortion of truth. Those who take an unbiased view of the foreign policy pursued by the ruling parties and the governments of the socialist community cannot doubt that they are themselves a vigorous element of the peace forces and constantly advance initiatives aimed at strengthening international security, curbing the arms race and restoring a climate of detente. Under these circumstances, to demand that the public protest against the

government (the way it happens in NATO countries) would essentially mean a demand for advocating war preparations.

However, since doubts concerning the authenticity of peace movements do exist and, objectively, hamper the cause of peace, we gladly accepted an invitation from the Central Committees of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) and of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia to tour the GDR and the CSSR. The trip enabled us to gain first-hand knowledge of the attitude there to the well-known military measures taken by the Warsaw Treaty member nations in response to the deployment of new US first-strike missiles in Western Europe—a question bourgeois propaganda also tries to manipulate to further its own ends.

During the tour we met people from different social strata, young and old, Communists and members of allied parties, activists of mass organisations, as well as Protestant and Catholic clergymen. We talked to them on the factory shop floor and in schools, in the headquarters of parties and organisations, as well as right in the streets and squares where anti-war action was held.

The Voice of a Worker from Halle

In terms of population and area the Halle Region is, respectively, the GDR's second and fourth biggest. Industrial workers make up more than half its population of two million. Leading here are the chemical, mining and steel industries. Over the 40 postwar years, industrial production has increased sixfold in the region. Much has also been done in the social field and to protect the environment. Housing is being constructed on a vast scale. During the years of popular government, more housing has been built than in the entire previous history.

We had read about all this in a brochure for tourists before leaving Berlin. After a while, streaking past us in the our window were the factories, densely packed residential blocks and church steeples of the region's chief city, and finally we reached Marktplatz, the central square. We were told that it had been the site of a rally staged as part of the UN-designated Disarmament Week and sponsored by the regional Peace Council. The rally was attended by more than 100,000 people who filled the square and the adjacent streets. Speaking from the rostrum were an elderly leader of a team of construction workers, a young nurse from the city hospital, the secretary of the regional committee of the SED and a theologian. They represented different social strata, but they were all united in their indignation at the course pursued by the US administration and the ruling quarters of other NATO countries to step up the arms race and prevent nations from living and working in peace. All speakers expressed appreciation of the peace policy conducted by the German state of workers and peasants and by its allies; all supported moves to strengthen the economic and defence potential of the socialist countries.

We saw impressive photographs and newspaper reports about this demonstration. True, sometimes people say that a speech at a rally is one thing, and one's real feelings are another. Such hints at 'hypocrisy at rallies' are totally absurd.

What can he who creates all material and spiritual values expect to gain from high-sounding phrases? Still, to ascertain the sincerity of the anti-war feelings, we decided to talk to workers directly in a factory.

The factory we visited is part of the Mansfeldkombinat Associated People's Enterprise, specialising in the manufacture of non-ferrous metals. Here, industrial silver, copper, zinc and sulphuric acid are produced.

In the rolling shop, we met Peter Beyer, a 45-year-old team leader. He has spent all his working life at the factory. In 1975 the workers sent Peter to attend a session of the GDR Peace Council in Berlin. Soon he was elected to the Council. Today, he is also a member of the World Peace Council. We asked him about the duties that entailed. To explain the topical slogans and decisions of the peace movement, he said, to make

the work record of his team an example of what it takes to uphold peace, to express the views of his countrymen at major international public forums.

"Some spokesmen of the anti-war movement in capitalist countries," Beyer told us, "call on the socialist nations to give up their efforts to restore and maintain strategic military parity. One of the reasons cited is that these moves cause concern and consternation among the public in their countries. But the GDR, too, has a public opinion which is also concerned. Historical experience has taught our people that fine speeches are not enough to curb militarists. A socialism that is strong in all its aspects is the main obstacle in their path. The SED and the government do not hide the truth from the people—the whole truth, no matter what it is. In this case the truth is that it takes a Pershing II no more than one minute to enter GDR airspace, and so the only thing to do is to neutralise these first-strike missiles. And the people are fully aware of the complexity of the situation and of the urgent need for effective counter-measures."

Our next question is: 'If there is such unanimity between the government and the people, their mass organisations, if government policy enjoys full understanding and support, what is the use of a civic movement for peace, a movement in which you are active?'

"True," Peter agrees, "today you don't have to argue to persuade our people to support peace. I think that peace is the goal of all working people throughout the world. But it is important for everyone to realise that peace has to be fought for and to grasp how one can contribute personally to its consolidation. Our movement in the GDR was not brought about by an administrative decree; it is an expression of a genuine hatred of war, of a profound desire to live in peace and shape our happiness. Commitment to peace mobilises people to conscientious and even selfless work for their own sake and for the sake of the country."

"Our foreign friends sometimes say, you speak all the time about successes in production, about the enthusiasm of the workers, but what does it have to do with peace? I answer that it has a lot to do with peace; we know that if socialism is not strong, we won't be able to preserve peace, and if Europe has done without war for 40 years, most of the credit goes to the working people of the Soviet Union, of the GDR and other socialist countries."

"Of great importance are international contacts among peace champions," Peter Beyer continued. "They help us and our partners who live under a different social system to better understand each other, to dispel prejudice and to work for understanding and trust. For example, the GDR Peace Council maintains continuous contacts with anti-war organisations in 130 countries. A comprehensive effort to explain the peaceful essence of socialism is also a contribution to the cause of peace."

In the same ship, we spoke to workers about the current international situation. Some of the views expressed were, 'To neutralise the Pershings is our duty'; 'Why do Britain and France possess missiles and refuse that they be taken into account as part of the total, while bourgeois propaganda raises such an outcry over our counter-measures?' 'Each new Pershing is money out of the pocket of workers—not only in the United States and the FRG but in our country too', 'Under socialism, no quarters profit from the manufacture of armaments'. All this was consonant with the slogans painted on strips of cloth stretching across the shop: 'It is not enough to be concerned about peace, peace has to be worked for' and 'Each ton of copper is a building block in the edifice of peace, a blow to the militarists'.

Later, in Berlin, Fritz Rösel, secretary of the Confederation of Free German Trade Unions,² explained that all work collectives in the GDR are profoundly unanimous in their conviction that to work well, to master scientific and technological advances, that is, to strengthen the socialist economy means to uphold peace by work. Besides, he added, the country's citizens—industrial and office workers, and intellectuals—

make, of their own free will, regular financial contributions to a special trade union fund used to provide humanitarian assistance to other nations, to finance actions of solidarity, including various peace forums and initiatives. The industrial workers of the German socialist state call on their class brothers in other countries to pool their peace efforts. For example, this appeal was made at a conference the industrial workers of the Baltic countries held in Rostock in 1984. The theme was 'Responsibility of trade union members in the removal of the nuclear war threat in Europe'.

Taught to Hate War

In a bid to confuse members of the world anti-war movement, the enemies of socialism disseminate the fraudulent contention that in Eastern Europe, the ruling parties, contrary to their own protestations of peace, foster an obsession with things military even in children and create a thoroughly militarist atmosphere.

What can one say about these allegations? Neither in the GDR nor in Czechoslovakia did we see children playing 'star wars' games so widespread in the capitalist countries where, incidentally, the sinister enemy is usually 'Red'. These games are not a feature of socialist society. Here, children are taught to value and cherish peace, to see through disguises and denounce those who threaten it, to hate fascism, imperialism and racism. And, when young people are taught to respect their people's army, its role as the defender of peaceful work and of national sovereignty is stressed from the very beginning.

We visited a senior level school in Vršovice, a working class neighbourhood of Prague, with students 14 to 18 years old. We entered a classroom and asked what they thought about the struggle for peace. Here are a few of the answers summed up:

'In the history class we learned how Hitler gobbled up Czechoslovakia and launched war in Europe. It is obvious that a war threat increases when the aggressor builds up superiority in strength and is not curbed. History helps us understand much in today's world too, now that the Soviet Union and our country have to face a similar threat again, even though we have to pay a price for these efforts.'

'The words "struggle for peace" mean very much to us. It's action against US missiles in Europe, it's the struggle to repel the invaders in Lebanon, it's the fortitude of the people of Nicaragua. It's also books about what terrible consequences a nuclear catastrophe may bring.'

Blanka Štyrsóvá, the principal, offered to show us the school curricula. Questions of war and peace are an integral part of courses in social sciences, history and literature. For example, students in their third year could choose from the following topics for their test essays: 'Man and War in Czech Literature', 'Peace-Making Efforts in Human History' and 'Preservation of Peace as Today's Most Urgent Task'.

"The Czech and Slovak peoples," the principal said, "have suffered a great deal over their long history. Many European wars rolled through our land, bringing death, destruction and woe. And so our striving for peace can be traced many centuries into the past. For example, we tell our school students that as early as 1464 Jiří z Poděbrad, a Bohemian king, submitted to the then European rulers his draft Treaty to Establish Peace in which he wrote: 'Let he who joins one violating peace be punished as a criminal.' Ideas of peace permeate our modern books, our manuals and curricula."

Such talks—and they were many—have led us to completely reject the 'militarist spirit' accusation. On the contrary—and we are profoundly convinced that this is true—in Czechoslovakia, as in other socialist countries, children are brought up to hate war and to realise the great importance of peace. This systematic and very earnest effort is pursued along all lines—in party, government and social work. In Prague, we were shown an interesting pamphlet, a teaching manual for peace

education of youth. We learned that such publications are numerous. They are prepared by experts working for ministries and research centres and by volunteers from civic organisations. Peace activists select different approaches to address elementary school pupils, students and young workers. But the objective remains the same—to teach them to cherish peace and fight for it.

Take this report in the Prague press about the results of the 15th annual artistic contest 'Children, Peace and Art'. The theme was, 'Our Love of Life Leads Us to Defend Peace'. As many as 700,000 children, teenagers and youths took part. A representative jury named the winners in different fields; 68 literary entries and 135 drawings and sculptures were selected for an exposition which was sent on a tour of the nation and for which the best halls are set aside in cities, towns and villages.

We saw a similar picture in the GDR too. For example, hundreds of thousands of women, many of them with children in tow, took part in the peace rallies and marches called by the Democratic Women's League of Germany on March 8. We also met prominent scientists who were activists of constituent organisations of the peace movement, such as the Committee on the Scientific Aspects of Peace and Disarmament under the GDR Academy of Sciences and the GDR Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War. They see it as a priority socio-political mission to be always in contact with the younger generation and to explain to young people the authoritative scientific view of the consequences of modern nuclear warfare and the need to devote every effort to the dual task of strengthening socialism and defending peace.

You would not find any apocalyptic science fiction films about the horrors of a possible nuclear holocaust in the film theatres of Prague or Berlin. After talking to scientists, authors and performers we realised that they do not see it as their task to drive people into despair.

"An effect of this sort cuts both ways," said Professor Günther Drefahl, chairman of the GDR Peace Council and representative of the Kulturbund (Cultural Workers' Association) in the People's Chamber, the country's parliament. "It does generate hatred of war, but it may also lead one to become apathetic and resigned to the fact that the 'end of the world' is inevitable. The foremost goal of the numerous films, television shows, scholarly publications and newspaper articles is to generate concern over the war threat and, most importantly, to help the ideas of peace capture the masses and become a material force, to help them mobilise people to the struggle aimed at preventing nuclear catastrophe."

'Enclosed Please Find . . .'

Having witnessed several specific expressions of the civic movement for peace in the GDR and Czechoslovakia, having felt the ideological and political pulse of the life of the working class, intellectuals and young people, we were able to ask for more detailed answers to some of our questions at meetings with high-level activists of the two countries' different parties and organisations.

The first was Tomáš Trávníček, deputy chairman of the Central Committee of the CSSR National Front, a man one cannot fail to respect for the ordeals he had to struggle through. A medical student at Charles University, he was arrested by the Gestapo in 1939 and spent long years in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. After breaking free, he continued the struggle in the anti-fascist underground. Today Professor Trávníček, M.D., is a member of the CPCz Central Committee and of the CSSR Federal Assembly.

"Debates are still going on among democratic quarters in capitalist countries about the counter-measures of the Warsaw Treaty nations," we said at the beginning of our talk. "How do the people of Czechoslovakia whom this question concerns in the most direct way view these measures?"

"Of course," Tomáš Trávníček told us, "no one is happy—either in our country or, I am sure, in the USSR or the GDR—about the new round in the race involving nuclear missiles. We prefer a path of limitation and reduction of military capabilities, a way that leads to a nuclear-free Europe, to a renunciation of all weapons of mass destruction. But progress towards these goals is possible only if there is goodwill on both sides, if the principle of equality and equal security is observed. Strategic military parity between the USSR and the United States, between NATO and the Warsaw Treaty is a historic accomplishment of socialism. The people of Czechoslovakia are aware of this. Their attitude to the counter-measures is rooted in their profound desire to live in peace and to uphold it by every means at their disposal."

Our talks with Professor Trávníček went far beyond the topic of our question and yielded a wealth of interesting information some of which we would like to share with our readers. We learned that the National Front is an essentially pluralist entity, although not in the bourgeois sense of the term. It comprises the CPCz, four allied non-communist parties³ and all civic organisations of the country. Each enjoys broad political and social rights. Under the rules and charters of all constituent elements of the Front, support and struggle for peace is mandatory for each member. Members of the Front advance their own independent initiatives which require no consultation with or approval by the government. This is true of their activity both within the country and on the international scene. For example, an association of physicians proposed that Czechoslovak delegates to the World Health Organisation sponsor a joint report about the effects of nuclear warfare on human health. The proposal was followed up, and our Czech friends presented us with a copy of the report.

A mansion on Panska Street in downtown Prague is the headquarters of the Czechoslovak Peace Council, an organisation which is part of the National Front but which plays a special role in it as coordinator of all peace efforts undertaken by Czechoslovak society. We were received by Bedřich Švestka, chairman of the Council and member of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, well known not only for his academic and civic work but also for the fact that, while he was head of Prague's Charles University, he made it compulsory for all students to study the final Act of the Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Aside from the federal Peace Council, there are peace councils in each of the two constituent—Czech and Slovak—republics, in regions and districts. All of them operate in close contact with organisations of the National Front—trade unions and youth, women's and artistic associations. Many work teams at industrial factories, construction projects, offices and agricultural cooperatives have earned the honorary title of 'peace collective', annually awarded by the Czechoslovak Peace Council for vigorous anti-war activities and accomplishment in peaceful labour. This is yet another case of the interrelationship which is typical of socialist countries and which Peter Beyer from Halle summed up simply and succinctly.

When precautions were under way for the World Assembly 'For Peace and Life, Against Nuclear War' (Prague, June 1983), the National Front appealed to each citizen to help to the best of his ability. Had the Prague newspapers tried to publish all letters, resolutions and statements which flooded their offices and which were accompanied by money orders addressed to the Peace and Solidarity Fund,⁴ they would have had to increase their format many times over. 'Enclosed please find a contribution of 50 crowns each of us is making to support the peace movement and in honour of the Assembly. We want to express our attitude to the drive to preserve peace and to ensure a happy life for us and our children in our beautiful socialist country by honest work,' went one of the letters, written by four women employed in the Communications Department cafeteria in the town of České Budějovice. Such letters are kept as documents of an era, and we think that is only right. It is a fact that

the Assembly did not cost the government a single heller.⁵ The delegates of 132 countries, of almost 2,000 national and international peace organisations truly stayed in Prague as guests of the entire Czechoslovak people.

New deeds are being added to the fine record of the peace activists. We saw representatives of peace movements from the European socialist countries, from the FRG, Austria and Switzerland gather in the town of Znojmo on the Czechoslovak-Austrian border. A rally held in Freedom Square, in the centre of Znojmo, was attended by the 43,000 people living in that small town. We were especially moved to see several women from the village of Mutěnice, located 120 kilometres from Znojmo, come up to foreign delegates and present them with souvenirs they had made themselves, of their own free will.

Where Do Ghosts Come From?

One of the questions we wanted to clear up in our contacts with the anti-war movement in Czechoslovakia and the GDR was connected with the 'independent peace champions'. Our ideological opponents often use this question to malign socialism and confuse world public opinion.

For example, during the 1983 World Assembly the bourgeois mass media in many countries extolled the so-called Czechoslovak Chartists (dissidents) and claimed that they staged a 'demonstration of true peace champions' in Prague. We were present there, and we can say that this is a blatant lie. Two of us took part in the real anti-war demonstration held at that time. Hundreds of thousands of people of this ancient city joined foreign delegations in the Old Town Square. The rally was followed by a concert given by the republic's best performers. The concert lasted into the night, and many people did not want to leave at once, impressed with what they saw and heard on that unforgettable day. That was when several tipsy youngsters tried to attract attention to them by noisy shenanigans. But what did that have to do with the struggle for peace?

We neither saw nor heard anything about the much-advertised 'genuine peace fighters' at mass anti-war rallies, on the shop floor or at colleges or universities either in Czechoslovakia or in the GDR. And so we asked about it.

"Indeed," Bedřich Švestka told us, "there is a handful of people in our country who call themselves 'Chartists' (after 'Charter 77', a document they published in the Western press). It is perfectly natural that you have neither seen any of them nor heard anything about them. They are ghosts, ghosts who are afraid of daylight because they have expelled themselves from society. The 'Chartists' are looking for every possible pretext to slander the peace-oriented foreign policy of socialism."

In the GDR, these 'fighters' are extremely few too. They try to play on the striving for peace, to use, for their own purposes, some clergymen who view the struggle against the war threat in a light that differs from the communist approach. But the scheme is an obvious failure. We realised that after lengthy and open talks with people who represented both the principal religious denominations and the Socialist Unity Party of Germany.

Karl Ordnung, regional secretary of the Christian Peace Conference, and Egbert Brock, editor of the *Begegnung* (Encounter) monthly, belong, respectively, to the Protestant Church (the biggest church in the GDR) and to the Catholic Church. Christine Wiewnk, presidium and secretariat member of the GDR Peace Council, represents the Christian Democratic Union party which unites 125,000 believers. Ordnung, Brock and Wiewnk each reiterated a fundamental precept of their churches—to act not against, and even not parallel with, but within society, that is, within socialism. Christians, they told us, fully approve of the peace-oriented policy of the SED and the government. The difference is that a part of the church hierarchy rejects military training for young people. At the same time, following the behests on

Martin Luther who held that the government and the church should each keep to its own affairs, the church does not question the right of the government to strengthen the country's defences.

This constructive spirit is present in the constant dialogue between the SED and the church hierarchy. The dialogue is based on unanimity about the irreversible nature of socialist gains and about the GDR's membership in the socialist community. There is also complete unanimity about the fact that today, it is important to exert every effort and use every opportunity to consolidate peace. The church makes wide use of both its influence with believers and of its international contacts to further this goal.

We also met with representatives of parties friendly to the SED.⁶ They enjoy great prestige with the people. For example, 10,000 Liberal Democrats have been elected to posts in people's representative bodies at all levels, 200 members of the party are mayors and 4,000 serve in the judicial system. Each party has a base in certain strata of the population, but all of them are loyal to the oath sworn 40 years ago—to do everything so that war would never again be launched from German soil.

Cooperation in conditions of a democratic dialogue is how today's political forces in the GDR define their relations. It is also the principle underlying the activities of the Peace Council which was established even before the German state of workers and peasants was formed. Today, the Council includes representatives of all parties and civic organisations, people holding a wide variety of views, outstanding figures of the artistic and academic community, as well as prominent theologians. The Council truly expresses the people's striving for peace.

Wherever we went in the GDR, the push of a button was all it took to switch to a West German radio or television programme. Over most of the republic's territory, the population is constantly subjected to bourgeois propaganda. There was a time, we were told, when YCL members went from door to door and changed the position of television aerials that pointed westward. But it soon became clear that we must change not the direction of the aerials but the way of thinking. That, of course, is more difficult. But that is an indispensable, and the only, way to prevail in the ideological confrontation.

We asked how, given the conditions obtaining today, the party educated the masses in the spirit of a class approach to issues of war and peace.

"There really are problems," Manfred Feist, chief of the international information department in the SED Central Committee, told us. "The struggle for peace is always primarily an ideological struggle. It calls for patient efforts to explain things to people. You have seen for yourself that on the whole, people have a correct understanding of the state of affairs and of the party's policy. But occasionally, people are swayed by the sometimes very sophisticated and insidious arguments of our ideological opponents. With these people, Communists and members of the Free German Youth organisation conduct a dialogue, and when one succeeds in finding more convincing arguments than those proffered by the other side, success is a foregone conclusion."

Where, then do the 'independent champions of peace' come from, the ones the bourgeois press raises such a hue and cry over? As we concluded from the talks we had in the GDR and Czechoslovakia, it would be more to the point to speak about individuals holding anti-socialist views and striving to fight against the system of popular government, not to engage in ideological debate. They try to wage this struggle under different slogans. Today they believe that an 'independent peace movement' is in vogue. But 'independent' of what—of the people? The thing which unites this handful of 'champions' is that they are instigated from abroad and used by our external enemies to try and discredit socialism.

In preparing our report we saw with our own eyes that no matter where they work

or what party they belong to, activists of the anti-war movement in the GDR and Czechoslovakia are profoundly concerned over the future of their country and of other peoples. Their efforts—which, quite naturally, differ substantially from the way peace champions work under capitalism—yield good results: in the socialist countries, people are firmly committed to peace and ready to defend it and work for it resolutely. They call on all people of goodwill to rally together before it is too late, to block a new war and curb the nuclear threat.

¹ See Jerzy Wasczuk, Domingos Lopes, Rafic Samhoun, 'Guardians of Memory, Sentinels of Peace', *WMR*, No. 11, 1984, p. 98.

² The CFGTU unites 97 per cent of all working people in the GDR. The Communists are its leading force, but 72 per cent of its members do not belong to any party.—*Ed.*

³ The Slovak Reconstruction Party, the Freedom Party, the Czechoslovak People's Party and the Czechoslovak Socialist Party. Each is also represented in the Federal Assembly (parliament) of Czechoslovakia and in other elected bodies; each has its own newspaper.—*Ed.*

⁴ A civic organisation which collects and distributes voluntary contributions from individuals and work collectives to extend humanitarian assistance to other nations and to stage anti-war action.

⁵ 100 hellers make one Czechoslovak crown.—*Ed.*

⁶ The Democratic Peasants' Party of Germany, the Christian Democratic Union, the Liberal Democratic Party of Germany and the National Democratic Party of Germany each have 10.4 per cent of the seats in the People's Chamber, with the SED holding 25.4 per cent.—*Ed.*

The Legacy of the Anti-Fascist Coalition

William Stewart—Central Executive
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ONE day this writer, a veteran of World War II, had the disquieting experience, on addressing a group of history students at high school graduating level in a Canadian classroom, to be asked: 'How do you, a Communist, reconcile your fighting in the Canadian Army against the Soviet Union in World War II?' When I answered that Canada had fought alongside the Soviet Union and told about the Red Army's contribution to the victory over fascism, my remarks were greeted with a combination of astonishment and disbelief.

The teachers were horrified at the distorted image among their students and assured me that it was contrary to what they had been taught in their classrooms. On deeper questioning, it transpired that the teachers' response was only part of the truth of the matter. While they had actually said nothing in the classroom to give rise to such notions about World War II, neither had they said enough to contradict them as a product of anti-communist propaganda. The mass media daily tell Canadians myths about the 'hostility' of the Soviet Union and the 'impossibility' of cooperating with it. After all, even government quarters are reluctant to recall the lessons of the battle with fascism. Revealingly, the day set aside to pay homage to the dead in World Wars I and II in Canada is the anniversary of the conclusion of World War I and not II.

Ignorance of history among youth has assumed dangerous proportions in other capitalist countries as well. A survey in the USA amongst students showed many of them believed that during World War II the Soviet Union was their country's enemy. Since the conclusion of the war, bourgeois historiographers have set themselves the

less than honourable task of obscuring the nature of the anti-fascist coalition and the decisive role of the Red Army in the victory over fascism while exaggerating the contribution of the United States and Great Britain. Needless to say, war veterans and democratic opinion refuse to be reconciled to this falsification of history.

The anti-fascist coalition, aside from defeating Hitler fascism and its drive for world conquest, provided important lessons for today's generations. One of them is that the policies of the world's first socialist state, the Soviet Union, and the action taken by the working class and democratic forces of other countries proved stronger than the anti-communist and anti-Soviet urge of imperialism to forge a common front against the Soviet Union. Sharp contradictions within the imperialist camp were a further factor. Imperialism failed with its alternative plan to set Germany and the Soviet Union against each other, so that the USA and Britain, standing by, might take advantage of both.

Ultimately countries of the two opposing social systems joined hands to defeat fascism militarily and politically. This was a materialisation of the Leninist principle of constructive cooperation between states of different social systems in the interests of peace, security and resistance to aggression.

The victory of the Allies produced the Yalta and Potsdam agreements establishing historically just frontiers in Europe, which had been the launching pad for two world wars. The anti-fascist coalition laid the groundwork for the United Nations, an international forum intended to help the peoples of the world combat imperialism's bellicose schemes and eliminate economic and social inequality.

The road to the anti-Hitler coalition was arduous and contradictory. Repeated attempts by the Soviet Union to create an alliance with France, Britain, the United States and other countries against the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo Axis and bring about a collective security pact were arrogantly spurned by the leading imperialist powers.

When German and Italian troops invaded Spain, the Soviet Union called for collective counter-measures in defence of the new republic, but the Western powers preferred to allow this brazen intervention. Moscow's call for collective action was rejected even when Hitler annexed Austria. In the days of the infamous Munich deal which delivered Czechoslovakia to Hitler Germany without a shot being fired, the Soviet Union pleaded for a pact between European powers to stop and reverse fascist Germany's expansion. But British and French politicians, urged on by the USA, treated negotiations with the Soviet Union at best as a 'necessary evil' and gave no serious thought to the call for an anti-Hitler coalition. Even with the larger part of Europe under Hitler's domination, reactionary forces in capitalist countries, blinded by their hatred for communism and the Soviet Union, continued to wager on a war between it and Germany, which they expected to use for their own interests.

However, hard as the Chamberlains and the Daladiers tried to tone down inter-imperialist contradictions and 'appease' the aggressor on an anti-Soviet basis, Britain and France could not stay out of the growing world conflict after Hitler's invasion of Poland in 1939. The warnings served by the Soviet Union at the League of Nations since 1934 and irresponsibly ignored in West European capitals proved prophetic. The Wehrmacht quickly rolled across Europe to the French shores of the English Channel and on June 22, 1941, attacked the Soviet Union.

The anti-fascist coalition was born when World War II could not be stopped. Even so, the formation of this military and political alliance at that crucial moment was highly important for saving mankind from Nazi slavery.

And yet Britain and the USA did not join actively in military operations until after Japan launched a massive sneak attack on the US naval base at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Subsequently they stalled in various ways on meeting their obligation to open a second front in Europe, although it was essential to help the Red Army, confronted by the bulk of German troops. The second front was promised for

1942 but was not opened until 1944. This delay prolonged the war and added to the already immense losses of the Soviet Union in lives and property. It also extended the misery and suffering of all Europe.

When the Allies landed finally in Normandy, the Red Army was routing the Wehrmacht and events had taken such a turn that Churchill himself said a second front might prove unnecessary. During the German counter-offensive in the Ardennes, it was prompt action by Soviet armies in Poland, responding to an urgent request from its Allies, that headed off a disaster similar to the Dunkerque debacle.¹ We do not minimise the significance of the Allied landing in Northern France, operations in Africa and Sicily or the convoys of legendary fame that made their way to Murmansk; still, any reasonably objective analyst will admit that the Soviet Union was the main force of the anti-Hitler coalition.

A vast popular movement against Nazism and for a collective security system which could stop fascist aggression sprang up and grew as far back as the 1930s, when bourgeois governments were trying to strike a bargain with Hitler behind the backs of their people. Communist parties and trade unions played a leading role in the movement. Following the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, which approved Georgi Dimitrov's report about the need for a united Popular Front against war and fascism, the international communist movement concentrated on preventing war and defending democracy and freedom. Unfortunately, the social democratic parties turned a deaf ear to the Communist call for unity of action. Thus the division of the working people continued and prevented the labour movement and democrats from stopping the brown plague.

The consistent peace policies of the Soviet Union were supported by mass actions of the people in Europe, the United States, Canada and elsewhere. The governments could not fully disregard this and so, without desisting from manoeuvres behind the scenes, they paraded unqualified opposition to Nazism and support for peace. After Germany's attack on the Soviet Union, pressure from the people and reality itself prompted realistic-minded British and US politicians to agree to the formation of a coalition. All the hatred, lies and disinformation spread about the Soviet Union proved powerless in the face of the need for a common front against Hitler fascism. The natural desire of the people for peace, their hatred for fascism and their solidarity with the heroic fight of the Red Army strengthened the bond between the homeland of October and the working people of various continents. The demand for a second front in Europe became a demand of millions, a slogan of mass rallies and demonstrations, a key subject of the press and the main point of diverse petitions. Once again the policies of the Soviet Union, which met the people's interests, merged with the actions of the working class and democratic forces in capitalist countries.

By the time Germany attacked the Soviet Union, the Communist Party of Canada had been illegalised. Many members of our party, who had led the struggle in Canada for a world anti-fascist front, were sent to internment camps. Others were forced to operate in conditions of clandestinity.

All that changed almost overnight. I remember a public meeting in January 1942 in Montreal attended by thousands of people. The warmth and admiration for the heroic actions of the Red Army and the entire Soviet people in defence of their country were universal. Finally the beast that had ravaged Europe had met its match. At that meeting I announced along with two dozen other Communists that I was joining the Canadian Army.

I found myself in the British Isles and then in Africa. On the Italian front, where injuries ended my army life, fellow-soldiers regularly gathered around my cot. Here was a map on the wall marked with pins that followed the situation on the Soviet fronts. We heatedly discussed the ebbs and flows of the battles, regarding Soviet soldiers as our comrades-in-arms. We could only wonder at their military operations

on the Eastern Front because nothing in our experience could even approximate them. Had my fellow-soldiers had any idea of the double role our governments were playing by delaying effective assistance to the Soviet Union, they would surely have rebelled in their totality. It was in those days that the basis of friendship between the Canadian and Soviet peoples and their common aspiration for peace and disarmament was strengthened.

A valuable legacy of the joint struggle against Hitler Germany is a deep-seated awareness of the danger of fascism among ordinary people and their determination to prevent its revival. It is revealing that despite fierce propaganda, reaction has been unable to develop any mass base for the dissemination of right extremist, neofascist views.

This is particularly important, for deliberate attempts have been made to turn Canada into a refuge for surviving Nazis of every description. Frequently at peace demonstrations, small gangs of Ukrainian, Croatian, Lithuanian and now South Vietnamese fascist thugs can be seen off the side chanting pro-imperialist slogans full of hatred for everything progressive. At the beginning of the cold war, the government began to bring into Canada well-known Nazis, Bandera nationalists and death camp operators. It opened the door for counter-revolutionaries from East European countries to use this reactionary scum as a club against the labour movement and the Communist Party. These elements are still provided with hundreds and thousands of dollars to support their groups, some of which are the mainstay of neofascist organisations. We are certain that without the backing of the state and the CIA, these bands would have disappeared from the political scene long ago.

Behind attempts to spread fascist ideology in a Canadian garb is a virulent racism directed against the Jews, the Blacks, national minorities and Canadian Native peoples. It foments hatred for the trade unions and the Communist Party and uses these masks to undermine the civil liberties won by the people over many decades. However, our people refuse to give up their historical achievements, which they defended within the anti-fascist coalition, in the struggle against fascism.

The lessons of World War II are indelibly stamped on the consciousness of progressive mankind. In Canada they act as a powerful factor for peace and democracy. This is why, despite the most intense efforts by governments and the media, it has been impossible to stoke up the flames of the cold war in Canada. Certainly, it would be wrong to claim that the barrage of slander and lies against the Soviet Union has not at all coloured the views and attitudes of many Canadians. This is not to say, however, that the Canadian people come at things from an anti-Soviet stance. Anti-Sovietism and anti-communism have not become a worldview for Canadians. Their position on the Soviet Union and Marxism is often debatable but it is not what determines the sentiments of the majority of our people.

Recent provincial trade union congresses across Canada showed practically no anti-communist or anti-Soviet trends. There is a growing understanding in the Canadian labour movement that to foment hatred for communism and the Soviet Union is to disunite the working people and serve monopoly. The base for this understanding was largely laid in the years when we cooperated with the Soviet people to defeat the Nazis. It is no accident that most peace supporters in Canada reject the theory of 'equal responsibility' for the arms race because they have come to realise the treacherous aim of this theory. No sensible person in the labour, democratic or peace movement would ever affirm that the Soviet Union wants war. The lessons of the struggle against fascism show up the utter absurdity of affirmations of this kind. More and more people, however, question US imperialism's so-called commitment to peace. History has provided people with a vision which allows them to distinguish friend from foe and fact from fiction.

World War II was drawing to a close when the United States, without consulting its Allies, dropped atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, with the result that hundreds of thousands of people were killed or subjected to life in agony. The real purpose of this monstrous action was the subject of a pamphlet, *Atomic Blackmail*, issued shortly after by the Canadian Communist Party. Hitler fascism had been defeated but US leaders wanted to use their 'atomic monopoly' and the weaknesses of their rivals as well as the heavy losses suffered by the Soviet Union in the struggle against fascism to dictate their will to the world.

World War II, which had claimed tens of millions of lives, was hardly dry on the books of history when the 'land of freedom' began to brandish the nuclear big stick. For the past 40 years, mankind has been threatened with its use. Generations of youth have grown up under the menace of extinction. This is a negative factor in the attitude of many young men and women to their social responsibility. 'What's the use,' some people in the capitalist countries argue. 'The whole world is going to be blown up anyway.' To be sure, the nuclear threat is regrettably growing and has advanced from atom bombs to hydrogen bombs to cruise missiles to neutron warheads to 'star wars'. Still, also for 40 years, there has been no world war. This has nothing to do with the sense or responsibility of imperialist strategists but is a result of combined actions of the peoples of the world and the consistent peace policy of the socialist states.

Beginning with the Stockholm Appeal in the 1950s, when signatures were collected on the streets, door to door, in factories and offices, in work places, the people began taking the cause of peace into their own hands. I cannot recall a single month in the last 40 years when the CPC was not engaged in one anti-war action or another. By now the struggle for peace has become a mighty movement, the largest and most important movement in the history of man. It embraces people from all walks of life, and whatever their political views, religion or social position, they have a common concern: preventing a third world war. No one can win it. An anti-nuclear coalition of nations can and must be forged before the irreparable begins. People are speaking out with increasing determination to make the leaders of the imperialist powers bend to the will of mankind and listen to reason. Also, people are learning that they have a true and reliable ally in the Soviet Union and the socialist community. Life will corroborate this truth more and more. Thus a mighty united front for peace is shaping up, a front involving the peoples of all countries and different social systems.

There are lessons for the leaders of European imperialist powers and my own country, Canada. To count on a military conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union is suicidal. There are signs that some 'partners' of Washington are less than happy about its foolhardy, heedless ventures. Furthermore, their people, including Canadians, are up in arms against being drawn into these ventures.

In Canada the 40th anniversary of victory over fascism will be acknowledged by the vast majority of the people as a great historical occasion. It will be celebrated on the background of the increasingly widespread peace movement and will help us isolate the forces on the right and 'left' who use anti-Sovietism in seeking to split the ranks of fighters against the war danger. The anniversary will also provide an opportunity to end confusion among those from whom the real history of World War II has been concealed.

We will celebrate the 40th anniversary by exchange visits between sister cities of Canada and the Soviet Union, exchanges of delegations of trade unionists, of peace activists, of women, of youth, of veterans of World War II. There will be mass meetings, lectures, film nights, mutual visits by musical groups. A large delegation of Canadian youth will take part in the World Festival of Youth and Students in Moscow this summer. The anniversary will be celebrated in associations of war veterans, who will hoist one to the great common victory.

However, we will observe the anniversary primarily by mass demonstrations across

the country for an end to cruise missile tests on Canadian territory, for making Canada a nuclear-free zone, non-militarisation of space, and firm actions towards universal disarmament, permanent detente and cooperation between countries of the two world social systems.

History is a stubborn thing. Although bourgeois historians distort it being guided by political considerations, it asserts itself in the end. So it is with the history of World War II. Events of the past 40 years have shown more than once that mankind remembers the chief lesson of the war: another world war would destroy the human race.

Only those who draw lessons from the past can influence the course of events and avert a recurrence of past tragedies. This is what the memory of the exploits accomplished by soldiers of the anti-Hitler coalition demands from us. Their legacy is aptly expressed, we think, in the following poem by John McCrea, a Canadian:

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below . . .
Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

Such is the sacred will of the dead. We cannot break faith with the millions of men and women who died to make World War II the last war in human history.

¹ In 1940 Anglo-French troops retreating under the onslaught of Nazi forces were hastily evacuated from the Dunkerque area (Northern France).—*Ed.*

A Comment Tantamount to Complicity

THIS year, when paying homage to the heroes who 40 years ago crushed Hitler's Reich, mankind reverently recalls the victims of fascism, the name of the Italian town of Marzabotto is quoted widely in newspapers, periodicals and records of parliamentary proceedings.

On September 29, 1944, the 16th Battalion of an SS division arrived in Marzabotto. Commanding the punitive raid was Major Walter Reder. Within a week, 1,830 townspeople, including pregnant women, children and defenceless old people were butchered. After the war, in 1951, an Italian court sentenced the SS officer to life imprisonment for this inhuman crime. But the butcher had protectors and defenders; their efforts caused the sentence to be mitigated in 1980, and Reder was to be released

on July 15, 1985. The indulgence shown to the criminal emboldened his covert and open supporters in Austria¹ and other countries. They launched a literal barrage of messages addressed to the Italian authorities and press. In the messages, hypocritical calls for a 'humanitarian' approach and 'mercy' alternated with blasphemous claims that there was no massacre in Marzabotto, that it was an 'invention of the Red town council' allegedly concocted to 'attract tourists to the area'.

In a referendum held in December 1984, the people of the brutalised town expressed their virtually unanimous opposition to any 'mercy' to the murderer. However, the authorities ignored this opinion because more powerful quarters interceded on his behalf. Specifically, Pope John Paul II stooped to ask for a pardon for a man whose hands were stained with the blood of innocent Italian Catholics. In the name of 'humanitarian considerations', Reder was released ahead of time, on January 24, 1985. Austrian Defence Minister Freidhelm Frischenschlager himself gave him a hero's welcome on the border and accompanied him on board an Air Force helicopter to the health resort of Baden where medical care was lavished on the murderer. The Austrian government decreed that from the moment of his arrival in the country, Reder was to be treated not as a criminal but as a 'repatriated prisoner of war'. For their part, neofascist quarters and organisations announced celebrations to honour the butcher of Marzabotto.

Reder's release and welcome of honour caused a wave of indignation in the democratic quarters of Austria, Italy and other countries. Protesting were war veterans and former prisoners of fascism, honest people of different views and convictions. On behalf of the relatives of those murdered at Marzabotto, its mayor Dante Cruicchi, a Communist, declared that the tragedy of those killed in the explosion of the Naples-Milan express train on Christmas Eve 1984 was as terrible as the drama of the people who died at the hands of Reder's henchmen in 1944: 'It's the same barbaric hand, the same human suffering.'² Those holding fascist views can only rub their hands in glee seeing Reder, Mengele and hundreds of other war criminals go about their business unmolested, protected by US spy agencies and reactionary politicians, some of them even receiving government pensions.

Disdain of the principles of Nuremberg cannot be viewed in isolation from the facts which highlight the increased activity of revanchist associations in the FRG, where Reder's spiritual brothers foment, under the indulgent eye of the authorities, hatred and mistrust of other peoples and urge revision of European postwar realities.

The influential forces which secured 'leniency' towards Reder also took care to keep Frischenschlager and other advocates of Nazi criminals from harm and in their offices despite public protests. "All this has come to pass," Comrade Franz Muhri, Chairman of the Communist Party of Austria, noted, "precisely because in our country, some people are yet to learn their lessons of the past. The pernicious ideological, moral and political consequences of the sway of Hitler's fascist dictatorship have proved to be no less grave than the material losses the Austrian people suffered under Hitler. . . . On the other hand, the broad criticism of his 'act of repatriation', the protest movement and the lively discussion within the Socialist Party show that attempts to confuse the anti-fascist consciousness of the Austrian people, of youth have failed, that it lives on. Together with other anti-fascist forces, our party has made a substantial positive contribution to it. We will continue to advocate greater and more vigorous unity of anti-fascist action, a ban on all neofascist organisations and their propaganda, anti-fascist education in schools and in the mass media, and full compliance with the anti-fascist provisions of our Fundamental Law."³

It is not revenge that moves Communists and all democrats to uphold the inevitability of punishment of war criminals. They hold that to pardon the butchers of

Marzabotto, Lidice, Oradour, of many villages and towns in the Soviet Union means not only to insult the memory of the victims but is also tantamount to complicity with later-day Reders who are ready to sow death and destruction suppressing freedom and national independence.

**Antonio Boffi,
Georg Lenker**

¹ Reder was born in Austria.—*Ed.*

² *l'Unità*, January 27, 1985.

³ *Volksstimme*, February 23, 1985.

the book scene

A Story Told by La Pasionaria

Dolores Ibárruri, *Memorias de Pasionaria, 1939-1977* (Memoirs of Pasionaria), Editorial Planeta, Barcelona, 1984, 235 pp.

The name of Dolores Ibárruri, also called Pasionaria (Fiery), an outstanding daughter of the Spanish people, a courageous Communist and an ardent champion of working people, is well known throughout the world. In the 1930s she was the vice-president of the Republican Cortes, then a member of the Secretariat of the Communist International, the General Secretary and now President of the Communist Party of Spain, and member of the leadership of several international mass organisations.

The first edition of Dolores Ibárruri's *Memoirs of Pasionaria, 1939-1977* was sold out almost on the day the book was delivered to the bookstores. The second edition sold out quickly too—and that in a country where, for various reasons, people do not read much. The reason why such great interest is shown in this book, written by a woman Communist who personifies the revolutionary struggle in Spain, is easy to understand. A glance through the contents, featuring the names of the more prominent Communist leaders of our time, is enough to hook the reader who literally cannot put the book down.

In the introduction, the journalist Vázquez Montalbán justly emphasises that the memoirs 'are valuable as living history and are therefore of scientific interest both today and tomorrow' (p. 12).

The new book begins where Dolores Ibárruri's famous autobiography *The Only Way* left off—Pasionaria's departure from Spain upon conclusion of a glorious but tragic chapter in Spanish history (the National Revolutionary War of 1936-1939).

This is what she recalls about it now: 'We were overwhelmed immediately by the tension we had lived through in these last days, the sleepless nights, the excruciating pain of separation from all you hold dear, from one's country, the concern for the comrades who stayed behind in Spain. . . . But the conviction that our cause would triumph made us strong' (p. 18).

Dolores Ibárruri writes with tenderness about Moscow where she happily rejoined her children Rubén and Amaya, about the Spanish exiles who found a generous and fraternal welcome in the Soviet Union. In the Secretariat of the Communist International Dolores Ibárruri worked side by side with prominent leaders of the international communist and workers' movement, drawing on their rich experience.

One of them was Georgi Dimitrov, who turned the Leipzig Trial into an indictment of fascism. The experience he had gained in Germany he used to combat sectarian mistakes and to develop new tactics of a single popular front approved by the Seventh Congress of the Communist International.

The author recalls interesting things when she writes about Palmiro Togliatti, known as Comrade Alfredo, who was directly involved in the selfless struggle of the Spanish people when the Republic fell on hard times. 'During the years of trial of World War II we lived and worked together in the Soviet Union, in the remote city of Ufa. Every night we went together to speak to our peoples via the miracle of the radio which carried our voices to homes in far-off cities' (p. 36).

The gallery of images painted in the book includes Wilhelm Pieck who, together with Ernst Thaelmann co-founded the Communist Party of Germany and later became the first president of the GDR; Maurice Thorez, 'tireless fighter against the policy of non-intervention and for comprehensive assistance to the fighting Spanish people'; Jacques Duclos 'who came to Spain to offer us his aid, correcting our sectarian excesses at that time of "revolutionary infantilism", when we believed that the revolution was "around the corner" '; Ho Chi Minh, Uncle Ho 'whom I will always remember firm and staunch in the revolutionary struggle but who looked fragile and was affectionate and tender with his comrades'; Clement Gottwald, a prominent leader of the Czechoslovak Communists who became Chairman of the Government and then President of Czechoslovakia and 'in whose beautiful country we Spanish Communists held meetings and congresses'; Otto Kuusinen, Finnish revolutionary with a rich and interesting biography of a fighter, a man of great erudition; André Marty, 'a very controversial figure, a "Black Sea sailor" who, during the French intervention against the newborn Soviet Republic, came over to the side of the Bolsheviks' (see pp. 40-49).

When the Nazis attacked the Soviet Union, Dolores Ibárruri was in charge of Radio Independent Spain, well known as Pirenaica, a radio station that played an important role as a source of prompt and valuable anti-fascist information for the Spanish people. Paying homage to the great struggle of the Soviet people, the author also notes the heroism of the more than 200 Spanish Communists who sacrificed their lives in the battles against Nazism on the Soviet-German front: 'It was only a drop in the sea of blood of the twenty million Soviet people killed in World War II, but an important share, given the modest number of Spanish exiles in the USSR' (p. 58). At Stalingrad Pasionaria's son Rubén was killed, a Hero of the Soviet Union. 'That was a harsh blow which could not have been more painful; I suffered as a mother who had lost her son. Besides, he was my only son. Only Amaya was left—one of the six children I had brought into the world' (p. 66).

In 1942, after a grave illness cut short the heroic life of José Díaz, General Secretary of the CPS, the leadership of the Communist Party nominated Dolores Ibárruri for this high office.

Before leaving the Soviet Union when the outcome of World War II was a foregone conclusion, Dolores Ibárruri wanted to bid farewell to J. V. Stalin. It was a cordial meeting.

'We knew that the defeat of Hitler would lead to the downfall of Franco, but not automatically. We needed international assistance, both political and of all other kinds.

'Stalin listened to us attentively. He would get up and walk to and fro with his inevitable pipe in his hand. Then he would again sit down across from us.

' "Comrade Dolores," he said, "rest assured that, as always, we are ready to extend to you the necessary assistance. You can count on us. The Spanish fighters against fascism are our allies" ' (pp. 89-90).

From the Soviet Union, Pasionaria embarked on a long journey which took her to

Iran and to Egypt where she hoped to find some way of getting to France. She boarded a ship in Alexandria and, when it passed the Strait of Gibraltar, experienced a feeling of closeness to and separation from her native land.

Dolores Ibárruri celebrated Victory Day in Paris, but in her mind's eye she saw Spain, still languishing under the Francoist yoke, her people still in chains.

Then followed the years of vigorous activity by the CPS to broaden the struggle of working people against the Francoist dictatorship. At that time, Pasionaria took part in major demonstrations of international solidarity with the Spanish democrats.

In 1975 she turned 80. The Communist Party decided to hold two celebrations—in Rome and in Moscow.

'All those who know me,' Dolores Ibárruri confesses, 'are well aware that I am an enemy of all celebrations. That is the way I am—I am afraid of hyperbole.

'To be frank, my eighty years were not too great a burden. . . . I recalled Georgi Dimitrov who maintained that your age did not depend on the years but on the state of your soul, on the spirit of a fighter, on your rebellious heart' (p. 202).

Pasionaria was surprised and moved when, on entering the huge Palace of Sports in Rome, she saw 20,000 friends welcome her. That was on December 14, 1975. Franco was dead. All Spain was in motion. Still, ahead were battles that had yet to be won. Dolores Ibárruri concluded her speech by saying, 'Comrades, friends, I am not saying goodbye but, "Till we meet again soon, in Madrid"' (p. 205).

And, at the celebration in Moscow, expressing her gratitude to the CPSU Central Committee and to the Soviet government for awarding her with the October Revolution medal, Pasionaria said that Spain would eliminate the last vestiges of the brutal Francoist regime and attain freedom.

On April 9, 1977 the Communist Party of Spain was legalised, and Dolores Ibárruri immediately left for Madrid. 'At long last I will walk my native soil, again join my people, the working people of my country' (p. 216).

On June 15, 1977 the workers of Asturias elected her to the Cortes for the second time, after an interval of over 40 years.

The book's conclusion is a vibrant affirmation of the author's conviction that her class position is right: 'The path I chose has been long and arduous but also fascinating. . . . To be a Communist means a great demand on our relations with our people, with the working class, with all progressive forces of Spain. As Communists, we proclaim our boundless internationalism, our solidarity with the Communists and working class of all countris, with the peoples fighting for their freedom. We affirm our sincere and heartfelt friendship with the socialist countries, with the Soviet Union where, under the leadership of the Communist Party guided by Lenin, the power of capitalism was destroyed once and for all and the way to socialism was opened for all peoples. Our sincere friendship does not, obviously, rule out differences in opinions and evaluations of this or that problem which the struggle for democracy and socialism produces in this or that country.

'Today, the issue of peace emerges as the gravest problem for all nations. What could be my most fervent wish now that I am over eighty? Without any hesitation, it is a world of peace. Elimination of military blocs, destruction of nuclear weapons. To prevent a nuclear holocaust at all costs, to fight for the survival of mankind.'

Ramon Mendezona

surveys, information and mail

World War II. Facts and Figures

World War II was unprecedented in its scope, intensity, loss of life and material costs. The greatest military conflict in history, it was a product and the gravest crime of imperialism against humanity. At the same time, World War II led to a history-making victory of socialism, democracy and progress over the forces of extreme imperialist reaction. Following is a statistical survey* highlighting this by a collection of facts and figures.

The Scope of the War

Geography. The hostilities spread to most of Europe and were also conducted in Asia and Africa, as well as over large areas and on the archipelagos and islands of the Pacific, Atlantic, Arctic and Indian Oceans and the Mediterranean, Baltic, Black and many other seas. The total area of the theatres of operations (TOs) was over 22 million square kilometres, 5.5 times greater than during World War I.

The principal political and strategic tasks of the war were tackled on mainland TOs. In *Europe*, military operations were conducted on the territories of 19 countries—Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, the USSR and Yugoslavia. The largest masses of troops and the greatest amount of materiel were committed in the European TO, which also accounted for the greatest losses in human and material resources.

Military operations in *Asia* were conducted in Burma, China, India, Indochina, Japan, Korea, Malaya, the Netherlands East Indies, the Philippines and Thailand. In *Africa*, battles were fought in Algeria, British Somaliland, Egypt, Ethiopia, Italian Somaliland, Kenya, Libya, Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia. Both in Asia and in Africa, the hostilities were mostly confined to narrow strips of land (along the seacoast and inland communication routes) or to isolated areas: the scale of the use of personnel and materiel was much lower than in Europe.

The entire *American* continent remained outside the scope of the hostilities. Of the 22 American countries that declared war on the Axis powers, participating in it directly (i.e., committing their armed forces) and to different degrees were only the United States, Canada, Mexico and Brazil.

Armed Forces. The war of 1939-1945 was a clash of mass, multimillion-strong armies and of large air and naval forces. Over 110 million people were drafted into

* Prepared by the WMR Commission on Scientific Information and Documentation on the basis of *A History of World War II. 1939-1945*, Vol. 12, Moscow, 1982 (in Russian) and other sources.

military service—50 per cent more than in World War I. The operational strength of the armed forces grew steadily, especially after the German attack against the Soviet Union, the entry of the United States into the war and the formation of the anti-Nazi coalition. While in 1939-1940 the armies and navies of European belligerents numbered 10 to 13 million men, by 1945 the combined strength of the armed forces on both sides exceeded 50 million.

Among the countries of the anti-Nazi coalition the largest armed forces were those of the USSR, the United States, Great Britain and China; among the axis powers, Germany, Japan and Italy.

TABLE 1
Armed Forces of Major Belligerents on Both Sides
 (in millions of men)

| Countries | By the outbreak of the hostilities ¹ | At the close of the hostilities |
|---|---|---------------------------------|
| | Anti-Nazi Coalition | |
| USSR | 5.4 | 11.4 |
| United States | 2.0 | 12.1 |
| British Empire (Great Britain alone) | 1.7 (1.3) | 9.3 (5.1) |
| China | 2.4 to 5.7 | |
| France | 2.7 | about 1 |
| | Axis Powers | |
| Germany | 4.6 | about 10 ² |
| Japan | 2.4 | 7.2 |
| Italy | 2.3 | about 4.6 ³ |

¹ August 1939 for Great Britain, France and Germany; June 1940 for Italy; June 1941 for the USSR; December 1941 for the United States and Japan. The figures for China represent the range within which the strength of its armed forces fluctuated throughout the war.

² In 1943, less auxiliary forces. Over the two following years all-out mobilisation failed to offset the Wehrmacht's heavy losses, especially on the Soviet-German front, and its strength declined steadily.

³ As of August 1943, including 'national security' forces.

The degree to which the armed forces of different countries were committed differed on different fronts and TOs. In the anti-Nazi coalition, the armed forces of the USSR bore the brunt of the fighting. Conversely, the military capabilities of the United States and Great Britain were not used to the degree the interests of the nations fighting for freedom demanded: up to 1944, only about one-third of these powers' armed forces were deployed along the active fronts; most of their troops remained outside the TOs and consequently did not exert any direct influence on the course of the struggle. The strength of operational US and British troops increased perceptibly only after the Wehrmacht sustained crushing defeats on the Soviet-German front.

Loss of life and material costs. World War II, into which 80 per cent of the world population were dragged, took the heaviest toll of life in human history. Launched by the imperialists, the juggernaut of war was on a rampage of mass murder in different regions for six years.

TABLE 2
Casualties
(in thousands of men)

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------|---------------------|
| Europe | | about 40,000 |
| including: | | |
| USSR | | over 20,000 |
| Germany | | 6,500 |
| Poland | | 6,000 |
| Yugoslavia | | 1,700 |
| France | | 600 |
| Italy | | 500 |
| Romania | | 460 |
| Hungary | | 420 |
| Greece | | over 400 |
| Great Britain | | 370 |
| Czechoslovakia | | 360 |
| Asia | | over 7,500 |
| including: | | |
| China | | over 5,000 |
| Japan | | 2,500 |
| America | | about 450 |
| including: | | |
| United States ¹ | | over 400 |
| Canada ¹ | | over 30 |
| Australia (plus New Zealand) | | over 40 |

¹ See *The World Almanac and Book of Facts 1985*, New York, pp. 340, 704.

The total of those killed exceeded 50 million. Scores of millions were wounded and disabled. Almost half the casualties were sustained by the civilian population (five per cent in World War I).

European nations suffered the greatest losses. Half the 40 million people killed there were citizens of the USSR. The reason is above all that the Soviet Union long remained essentially the only opponent of the Axis powers in Europe. The aggressor pursued a particularly brutal policy of mass extermination on occupied Soviet territory.

The differences in human losses are explained, on the one hand, by the character and degree of direct participation by different countries and groups of countries in the armed struggle and, on the other, by the class and political objectives of different belligerents which resulted in different treatment of prisoners of war and enemy civilians. Millions of civilians and hundreds of thousands of prisoners of war were exterminated on territories overrun by the Nazi and Japanese invaders. The Nazis practised large-scale deportation of civilians who were either used for forced labour or exterminated in concentration camps. Of the 18 million people imprisoned in the concentration camps of Nazi Germany, over 11 million died. Meanwhile, although their armed forces were routed and forced to surrender, the aggressors themselves sustained fewer losses due to the humanitarian treatment of prisoners of war and civilians on the part of the victors, especially the USSR.

The war demanded enormous material expenditures and caused destruction on a vast scale. The material costs of preparing for, waging and rehabilitating after all wars fought in the first half of the twentieth century totalled an astronomical sum of 4,700 billion dollars. World War II accounted for 85 per cent of this figure—four thousand billion dollars.

A large part of the material losses was connected with destruction of property. Operations of Nazi troops inflicted great damage on the Soviet national economy—almost 41 per cent of the combined material losses of all belligerents. In the Soviet Union, the invaders completely or partially destroyed 1,710 cities and towns, over 70,000 villages, about 32,000 industrial enterprises, 65,000 kilometres of railroad tracks, 98,000 collective farms, about 1,900 state farms and 2,900 machinery and tractor stations. Over the war years, the USSR lost some 30 per cent of its national wealth.

Several other countries also incurred heavy material losses. Poland lost almost 40 per cent of its national wealth; there, two-thirds of big and medium-size industrial enterprises sustained various degrees of damage, and railroads and agriculture suffered heavy losses. In Yugoslavia, some 40 per cent of all industrial enterprises were destroyed and almost 300,000 farmsteads were devastated.

The United States virtually avoided any material losses. Their figure was only 1,267 million dollars—less than 0.5 per cent of the total material losses suffered by all belligerents.

Economic Potentials and Their Use

World War II demonstrated that the results of military operations by the armed forces were shaped—alongside political, social and moral factors—by the economic potential of the parties to the war.

TABLE 3
Major Aspects of Wartime Economic Potential (Output)

| | Electric power (bln kwt/h) | Coal (mln tons) | Oil and petroleum products (mln tons) | Steel (mln tons) | Grain (mln tons) |
|--|-------------------------------|----------------------|--|---------------------|---------------------|
| I. Anti-Nazi Coalition (1939-1945) | 2,275.8 | 6,121.9 | 1,658.2 | 704.5 | 1,233.4 |
| including: | | | | | |
| USSR | 282.4 | 902.9 | 172.1 | 93.6 | 307.0 ¹ |
| United States | 1,678.3 | 3,754.6 | 1,392.6 | 511.7 | 837.0 ² |
| Great Britain (including deliveries from colonies and imports) | 315.1 | 1,464.4 | 93.5 | 99.2 | 89.4 ² |
| II. Axis Powers (including deliveries from occupied countries and colonies and imports) | 780.1 | 3,947.5 | 73.1 | 249.1 | 353.1 |
| including: | | | | | |
| Germany | 414.1 ³ | 3,455.0 ³ | 46.2 | 187.7 | 169.5 ² |
| Italy ⁴ | 123.1 | 81.0 | 6.5 | 13.4 | 72.5 ² |
| Japan | 242.9 | 411.5 | 20.4 | 48.0 | 111.1 ² |
| Ratio between I and II | 2.9 to 1 | 1.6 to 1 | 22.7 to 1 | 2.8 to 1 | 3.5 to 1 |

¹ 1940-1945.

² Less leguminous crops.

³ Less 1945.

⁴ 1939-1943.

The figures show that the combined economic potential of the major nations of the anti-Nazi coalition considerably exceeded that of the Axis powers. Besides, of great importance was the ability and degree of mobilising the economy for the war effort. The Soviet Union displayed the highest such ability and degree. The socialist system, public property in the means of production and planning enabled it to switch the economy to the war effort within a very short period of about one year. Over the latter half of 1941, straining itself to the utmost and working in extremely harsh conditions, the Soviet Union relocated almost 2,600 industrial enterprises, the capacity equal to that of a whole industrial nation, from threatened areas eastward. Within an average period of six to eight weeks, the evacuated factories resumed production and began to supply the army with the necessary items.

All this highlighted the great mobilising capacity of a socialist economy. *While German output of basic industrial items exceeded that of the Soviet Union throughout the war* (in the production of electric power by 80 per cent, of coal by 380 per cent and of steel by 160 per cent), *the USSR was greatly superior to a very strong enemy in the production of war materiel*. From June 1941 to August 1945 the Soviet defence industry produced 834,000 artillery pieces and mortars, 102,800 tanks and self-propelled guns and howitzers and 112,100 combat planes, while German output from September 1939 to April 1945 was, respectively, 398,700, 46,300 and 89,500.

From the latter half of 1942 onward the scope of the Soviet industrial war effort increasingly surpassed the level of the losses, and the supply of domestically produced materiel to the Soviet Army grew steadily, enhancing the material base necessary for the complete rout of the aggressor.

The economic resources of *the United States and Great Britain*, the leading bourgeois countries of the anti-Nazi coalition, played an important role in attaining victory over the fascist militarist bloc. Production build-up in the major heavy industries considerably strengthened their military and economic positions in the confrontation with the enemy. For example, in 1944 the United States and Great Britain produced 290 per cent more steel than Germany and Japan.

In terms of the industrial war effort, the United States was in a better position than all other belligerents: it possessed vast reserves of production capacities, manpower (9.5 million people unemployed in 1939) and raw materials. The factor of geographical safety—the fact that the United States was far from the major theatres of operations—was also important. Over four wartime years, US industrial production more than doubled. In 1942, 55 per cent of its output went to the war effort (22 per cent in 1941). The highest level in the production of artillery pieces, tanks and combat vessels was reached in 1943 and of combat planes, in 1944.

The position of Great Britain was less favourable than that of the United States, although vastly better than that of the Soviet Union. British industry experienced a certain shortage of manpower; the supply of raw materials, liquid fuels and food was directly dependent on the state of the sea routes. In the latter half of 1940 and the beginning of 1941, the nation's industrial centres were subjected to massive bombing raids. The industrial switch to the war footing took several years: most industries attained the highest level of wartime production in 1943.

Table 4 provides an overall picture of military production in the major belligerent countries.

TABLE 4

Production of Materiel in the Major Belligerent Countries
(in thousands of pieces for lines 1 through 7)

| | Anti-Nazi Coalition | | | | Axis Powers | | | | Total | Ratio |
|--|-----------------------------------|---|--|----------|---|--|------------------------------------|----------|----------|-------|
| | USSR July 1941- August 1945 | USA December 1941- August 1945 | Great Britain September 1939- August 1945 | Total | Germany September 1939- April 1945 | Japan September 1939- August 1945 | Italy June 1940- August 1943 | Total | | |
| 1. Rifles and carbines | 12,139.3 | 12,330.0 | 2,457.1 | 26,926.4 | 10,327.8 | 3,569.5 | 3,200 | 17,097.3 | 1.6 to 1 | |
| 2. Sub-machineguns | 6,173.9 | 1,933.3 | 3,919.9 | 12,027.1 | 1,256.8 | 8.0 | — | 1,264.8 | 9.5 to 1 | |
| 3. Machineguns of all types | 1,515.9 | 2,614.3 | 938.6 | 5,068.8 | 1,175.5 | 449.5 | 107.8 | 1,732.8 | 2.9 to 1 | |
| 4. Artillery pieces of all types and calibres | 484.2 | 548.9 | 389.7 | 1,420.8 | 319.9 | 160.1 | 18.2 | 498.2 | 2.9 to 1 | |
| 5. Mortars | 351.8 | 102.1 | 100.9 | 554.8 | 78.8 | 7.8 | 13.9 | 100.5 | 5.5 to 1 | |
| 6. Tanks and self-propelled assault pieces | 102.8 | 99.5 | 29.3 | 231.6 | 46.3 | 4.8 | 1.9 | 53.0 | 4.4 to 1 | |
| 7. Combat planes | 112.1 | 192.0 | 94.6 | 398.7 | 89.5 | 55.1 | 7.6 | 152.2 | 2.6 to 1 | |
| 8. Combat vessels of major types | 70 | 738 | 441 | 1,249 | 1,151 | 244 | 56 | 1,451 | 1 to 1.2 | |

The United States and Great Britain were considerably inferior to the Soviet Union in terms of the degree to which economic potential was used for the earliest possible defeat of the Axis powers. This is clear from a comparison of certain aspects of the Allied economic potential and military production (see Tables 5 and 6).

TABLE 5

Percentage of Each Major Allied Power in the Combined Production of Certain Basic Industrial Items During the War

| | USSR | United States | Great Britain |
|----------------|------|---------------|---------------|
| Electric power | 12.4 | 73.8 | 13.8 |
| Coal | 14.7 | 61.3 | 24.0 |
| Steel | 13.3 | 72.6 | 14.1 |

Calculated from Table 3.

TABLE 6

Percentage of Each Major Allied Power in the Combined Production of Certain Types of Materiel¹ During the War

| | USSR | United States | Great Britain |
|---|------|---------------|---------------|
| Artillery pieces of all types and calibres | 34.0 | 38.6 | 27.4 |
| Tanks and self-propelled guns and howitzers | 44.4 | 42.9 | 12.7 |
| Combat planes | 28.1 | 48.2 | 23.7 |

¹ Types of armaments particularly important for mainland TOs where the outcome of the war was mostly decided.

Calculated from Table 4.

A simple comparison of these figures shows that the Soviet economic war effort was much more intensive than that of the bourgeois countries, especially the United States. The importance of this conclusion increases when one recalls that major industrial and agricultural zones of the Soviet Union (which, before the war, accounted for one-third of all industrial output, 63 per cent of the coal, 71 per cent of the pig iron and 58 per cent of the steel produced, about 50 per cent of all cultivated land and almost 45 per cent of the cattle) were overrun by the Nazis.

The US and British economic war effort reached its peak when the Soviet people and their army had already turned the tide of the war. The US and British superiority in armaments was realised only after the Axis powers had irretrievably lost the strategic initiative. The mountains of US and British weapons and ammunition sat there idly because of the delay in the opening of the Second Front.

Of course, contributing to the creation of the material basis for the defeat of the common enemy was military and economic cooperation of the Allied countries, specifically US lend-lease deliveries. However, their importance for the Soviet Union was far from what is claimed in the West. Throughout the war years, their volume did not exceed four per cent of Soviet industrial production. Besides, most of the materiel began to reach the Soviet Union only from the end of 1943, after the turning point in the war had been attained. In 1941 and 1942, the hardest years, lend-lease deliveries were quite modest. Over the war years, the Soviet Union received a total of

9,600 artillery pieces, 10,800 tanks and 18,700 planes (respectively, about 2, 10.5 and about 16.7 per cent of the Soviet output). These were mostly obsolescent types of materiel. Food deliveries were not decisive either. For example, the average annual volume of grain deliveries was only 2.8 per cent of the average annual volume of grain procured in the Soviet Union.

The Role of the USSR in the Defeat of the Axis Powers

The principal result of World War II hostilities was the defeat of the armies and navies of the Axis powers and their unconditional surrender on all fronts. However, the role and the significance of the fronts were different. The decisive role in the destruction of the aggressors' war machine was played by the armed forces of the Soviet Union.

The main efforts of Germany, the most powerful member of the fascist militarist bloc, were spearheaded against the socialist Soviet Union. Striking against the USSR was the biggest invasion army in history: 190 divisions and four air fleets of 5.5 million men, over 47,000 artillery pieces and mortars, about 4,300 tanks and assault pieces and almost 5,000 combat planes.

Throughout the war, the bulk of the more combat-effective troops of Germany and its European allies was deployed on the Soviet-German front (see Table 7). It follows that this was where the course and the outcome of the armed struggle were decided.

TABLE 7

Deployment of Ground Troops of Nazi Germany and Its European Allies by Fronts in 1941-1945 (in rated divisions)

| Time | Fronts | | Ratio |
|---------------|---------------|--------|-----------|
| | Soviet-German | Others | |
| June 22, 1941 | 190 | 9 | 21 to 1 |
| April 1942 | 219 | 11 | 20 to 1 |
| November 1942 | 266 | 12.5 | 21 to 1 |
| April 1943 | 233 | 14.5 | 16 to 1 |
| January 1944 | 245 | 21 | 11.7 to 1 |
| June 1944 | 239.5 | 85 | 2.8 to 1 |
| January 1945 | 195.5 | 107 | 1.8 to 1 |

Up to the summer of 1944 the number of Nazi Germany's and its European allies' troops on the Soviet-German front was 15 to 20 times that of their forces deployed on other fronts (in North Africa and Italy). Later, the strength of the Wehrmacht units fighting against the Anglo-US-French forces in the European TO increased substantially, but even then it was 1.8 to 2.8 times less than on the Soviet-German front.

In the course of the struggle against the fascist aggressor, the operational army of the Soviet Union grew steadily—from 2.9 million men in June 1941 to 6.7 million. In terms of strength, amount of materiel and effectiveness in combat it became the most powerful among the armies of all belligerents.

At different stages of the war, 8 to 12.8 million men, 84,000 to 163,000 artillery pieces and mortars, 5,700 to 20,000 tanks and self-propelled assault guns (SPAGs), 6,500 to 18,800 planes were massed on both sides of the Soviet-German front—an unprecedented concentration of armed forces. Active operations accounted for 93 per cent of the time the front existed. On no other front was the struggle as intense. This is borne out by the figures in the tables 8, 9 and 10.

TABLE 8
Breakdown of Armed Forces in Major Offensive Operations
on the Soviet-German Front in 1941-1945

| Operations* | Strength in thousands of men | | Artillery pieces and mortars in thousands | | Tanks and SPAGs in thousands | | Combat planes in thousands | |
|--|------------------------------|-------------|---|-------------|------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| | USSR | Axis powers | USSR | Axis powers | USSR | Axis powers | USSR | Axis powers |
| Soviet counter-offensive at Moscow (1941-1942) | 1,100 | 1,708 | 7.65 | 13.5 | 0.77 | 1.17 | 1.0 | 0.61 |
| Counter-offensive at Stalingrad (1942-1943) | 1,106 | 1,011 | 15.5 | 10.3 | 1.5 | 0.7 | 1.3 | 1.2 |
| Counter-offensive at Kurst (1943): | | | | | | | | |
| Orel | 1,286 | 600 | 21.0 | 7.0 | 2.4 | 1.2 | 3.0 | 1.1 |
| Belgorod-Kharkov Operations | 980 | 300 | 12.0 | 3.0 | 2.4 | 0.6 | 1.3 | 1.0 |
| Byelorussia Operation (1944) | 2,400 | 1,200 | 36.4 | 9.5 | 5.2 | 0.9 | 5.3 | 1.3 |
| Yassy-Kishinev Operation (1944) | 1,250 | 900 | 16.0 | 7.6 | 1.9 | 0.4 | 2.2 | 0.8 |
| Berlin Operation (1945) | 2,500 | 1,000 | 41.6 | 10.4 | 6.2 | 1.5 | 7.5 | 3.3 |

* Whole numbers as of the start of operation.

TABLE 9
Breakdown of Armed Forces in Major Operations
in North Africa and Italy

| Operations* | Strength in thousands of men | | Artillery pieces and mortars in thousands | | Tanks in thousands | | Combat planes in thousands | |
|---|------------------------------|----------------|---|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|----------------------------|----------------|
| | British and US troops | Fascist troops | British and US troops | Fascist troops | British and US troops | Fascist troops | British and US troops | Fascist troops |
| British offensive in North Africa (November 1941) | 118 | about 100 | 0.8 | 0.5 | 0.9 | 0.5 | 1.1 | 0.3 |
| Battle of El Alamein (1942)** | 230 | about 80 | 2.3 | 1.2 | 1.4 | 0.5 | 1.5 | 0.3 |
| Sicilian Operation (1943) | 478 | 255 | 1.8 | — | 0.6 | about 0.2 | more than 4.0 | about 0.6 |
| Allied offensive in Italy (June 1944) | 1,339 | 441 | 8.5 | 4.1 | 2.5 | 0.4 | 4.0 | 0.3 |

* Figures as of the start of operation.

** British troops only.

TABLE 10

Ratio of Concentration of Forces on Both Sides in Certain
Major Operations on the Soviet-German and Other Fronts

| Operations | Personnel | Artillery pieces and mortars | Tanks | Planes |
|---|-----------|------------------------------------|----------|----------|
| Moscow (1941/1942) to North Africa (November 1941) | 12.9 to 1 | 16.5 to 1 | 1.3 to 1 | 1.1 to 1 |
| Stalingrad (1942/1943) to El Alamein (1942) | 6.8 to 1 | 7.3 to 1 | 1.1 to 1 | 1.4 to 1 |
| Byelorussia (1944) to offensive in Italy (June 1944) | 2 to 1 | 3.6 to 1 | 2.1 to 1 | 1.5 to 1 |

Calculated from Tables 8 and 9.

Three-quarters of all German losses in personnel occurred on the Eastern Front. This was where the Wehrmacht, the strongest army of the capitalist world, was actually routed. The scale of operations in North Africa and Italy could not be even remotely compared to the magnitude and intensity of the fighting in the East European theatre of operations. From 1940 to 1945 the Wehrmacht lost some 550,000 men killed, wounded, captured and missing there—much less than in any one campaign on the Soviet-German front.

The Allies launched a much more large-scale offensive on the West European (Second) front. However, it started when the tide of the war had already turned in favour of the anti-Nazi coalition and Nazi Germany was exhausted. The Anglo-American armies were many times stronger than the enemy. Confronting them were 56 to 75 German divisions of less than full combat efficiency—a number that was several times less than that in the East European TO. A large part of the German troops preferred to surrender.¹

It is equally untenable to inflate, the way it is done in the West, the efficiency of the so-called air offensive of the Allies against Germany. Military production statistics show that strategic bombing raids failed to substantially reduce Germany's economic capacity. Hit hardest by the 'air offensive' was the population of large cities, not industrial objects.

Naval operations along sea and ocean routes, especially in the Atlantic, were, of course, an important part of World War II. The struggle against German submarines was a serious strain on the Allies, especially on Great Britain which was largely dependent on the deliveries of raw materials, food and other products. However, here, too, the course of the struggle was shaped not only by the sides engaged in naval warfare but also by the development of the strategic situation in all theatres of operations, above all in Eastern Europe.

The defeat of Nazi Germany and the complete failure of her strategic plans predetermined and brought closer the defeat of militarist Japan, militarily and economically the second strongest Axis power.

Throughout the war, the Japanese maintained a powerful concentration of ground troops along the Soviet Far Eastern borders. It was the Kwantung Army which in strength (over one million men) and materiel (over 6,600 artillery pieces and mortars, more than 1,200 tanks and almost 2,000 combat planes) was much greater than the Japanese troops deployed on the islands in the Pacific. The outcome of military operations in this theatre was instrumental in the victorious conclusion of the war against Japan.

The crushing blows delivered by the Soviet armed forces along a front of over 5,000

kilometres in August 1945 completely routed the Kwantung Army and dramatically changed the military and political situation in the Far East. Significantly, the leaders of the United States and Great Britain did not expect to attain final victory over Japan prior to 1946, expecting losses in the millions after invasion of Japanese territory. But, with the Kwantung Army rendered inoperative, Japan surrendered. Japanese troops laid down their arms on all fronts. World War II was over.

* * *

Victory over the fascist militarist bloc was won by the joint efforts of the anti-Nazi coalition, of all freedom-loving peoples. At the same time, the Soviet people and their armed forces bore the brunt of the struggle. The Soviet Union made the decisive contribution to the defeat of the aggressors.

¹ In an April 3, 1945, message to President Roosevelt on the inadmissibility of separate negotiations between the Anglo-American command and the Nazi command, J. V. Stalin noted that 'on the Western Front, the Germans have in fact ceased their hostilities against Britain and America' and that 'the Anglo-American troops are able to advance deep into Germany almost unresisted'.

Letters from Veterans Never Again!

On the eve of the 40th anniversary of Victory over Hitler's fascism and Japanese militarism *WMR* is receiving letters from World War II veterans, those who fought in the army and in the Resistance. The letters we feature in this issue are our readers' reflections on their concerns, on the lessons of the joint struggle nations were waging for freedom, democracy and social progress, on how a peaceful future can be ensured for all mankind.

For Unity in the Name of Peace

All honest people want peace, but I think I have good reason to say that it is a particularly fervent wish of those who fought in World War II. They have first-hand knowledge of what war means. This I say as a veteran of the Slovak National Uprising, as a man with a 40-year record of army service. Some may be baffled by the fact that a career army officer is for peace—after all, they hold, his very profession is pointless without war. Wrong! We servicemen of the socialist community countries have always seen our mission in helping to preserve world peace, not in promoting armed conflicts. For socialism *is* peace. By contributing to its consolidation, we reduce the possibility of any outbreaks of armed conflicts and enable people to live and work in peace.

Peace champions differ greatly in their nationalities, occupations and convictions. And so, to succeed in attaining their noble goal, it is especially important for them to achieve unity despite all their differences. And here, good knowledge of the experience gained in the struggle against fascism is instrumental. In those days, opponents of the Nazis also differed greatly, but they had a common goal that brought them together—to eliminate an inhuman, ultra-reactionary regime. And they found the path of unity, and they won. We realised what internationalism really meant in the course of the struggle against fascism that, directly antipodal to internationalism, was extreme nationalism. In this, it was virtually the same as the clerical-fascist regime of the then Slovak puppet 'state' which, with the approval of

the Nazis, seceded from the crushed Czechoslovak Republic. And we, those whom, from the very beginning, different paths led to join the Slovak National Uprising (I, for example, deserted from the Slovak Army), were then and remain today dedicated internationalists.

I fought in the First Guerrilla Brigade named after Milan Štefanik. Commanding the brigade was First Lieutenant P. Velichko. He was the first Soviet citizen I met. Later, I became friends with people of many different nationalities. Our brigade included 889 Slovaks, 183 Russians, 92 Ukrainians, 27 Byelorussians, 228 Frenchmen and 27 people from other countries. Taking part in the uprising were Hungarians, Jews and German anti-fascists who escaped from concentration camps and forced labour. In late 1944 we faced severe trials when the Slovak nationalists, led by the fascists' henchmen under the clergyman Jozef Tiso, asked the Nazis for help to crush the uprising. The Nazis unleashed brutal reprisals. Still, the final victory was ours. We Resistance fighters, assisted vigorously by the Red Army, prevailed.

I am convinced that nationalists are fated to lose and internationalists, to win. I remember Victory Day. I celebrated it in the Slovak town of Poprad near the Tatras, having been released from a hospital. Here I think it should be stressed that our guerrilla brigade was among the first to come out in favour of restoration of the Czechoslovak Republic. As early as August 21, 1944 we raised the flag of our united country in the village of Sklabaňa near Martin, the site of our brigade headquarters. At the victory parade in Poprad on May 9, 1945 we wanted the local band to play the Czechoslovak anthem which, by that time, had not been heard for six years. The musicians were so overwhelmed by emotion that they could not play. And so the soldiers, all of us, sang it. We remembered the words. The first part of our anthem is Czech, the second is Slovak, about lightning flashing over the Tatras. And when we sang this part, the Tatras mountain tops towering over Poprad were shining over us. It was an unforgettable experience.

I work in the Czechoslovak Union of Fighters Against Fascism. We members help peace champions to rally together: we impart our striving for peace to the younger generation and strengthen the internationalist solidarity of the European Veterans' Federation. Many former servicemen—not only from the socialist countries—are active in the struggle against war preparations. Taking part in the 1983 World Assembly 'For Peace and Life, Against Nuclear War' held in Prague were, together with me, retired NATO generals who fully supported the assembly's theme. We have no differences of opinion with them on these matters.

But I cannot say that the same spirit permeated the 1984 celebrations which I also attended and which marked the anniversary of the Allied land in Normandy. A great deal was said about the Second Front which had had been opened after long delays, but no references were made to the fighting in the principal theatre of operations, in Eastern and Central Europe. Not far from me, among the guests of honour, a US general was standing. I knew that he was in charge of the deployment of new missiles in Europe. The hushing up of the truth, the arms race, frenzied war cries against the new social system, the national liberation movement and even internationalism (Washington leaders refer to this noble word as so-called) could hardly be interpreted as loyalty to the Allied principles which led us to victory over Hitler. I think it would have been natural for former Allies to have a better memory of the losses they suffered together in the war, and the purpose is not to stress whose losses were greater, because all those who died have earned our profound reverence. I am doing that because the memory of the dead must unite us in a striving for peace. So let us remain loyal to this memory.

Lt-Gen František Šádek
deputy chairman, Federal Committee, Czechoslovak
Union of Fighters Against Fascism

In the Ranks of the Peace Movement

In the 1930s, we Communist workers of London were following the spread of fascism in Germany with alarm and indignation. Hitler's rise to power, Nazi atrocities, the persecution of the Jews, the murder of Communists and Social Democrats in concentration camps—all this could not fail to make us deeply angry. But to us, fascism was not something completely foreign. Mosley, the leader of the British Union of Fascists, also tried to terrorise and smash his way into working class districts. His army of thugs in military uniforms beat up, without mercy, any who dared protest at his creed of hate.

Our concern at the spread of fascism in the world sharpened when the reactionary Spanish generals and big landowners staged a rebellion against the democratically elected government and immediately received large-scale assistance from Hitler and Mussolini, the fascist dictators. Together with volunteers from all over the world I joined the International Brigade to help the Spanish people in their struggle against fascism.

The ruins of Madrid, Belchite and Brunete and the Nazi bombs raining on women and children brought home the truth that fascism is synonymous with war. German and Italian troops daily perfected their armaments and tactics, preparing for new aggression. Over the three years of the struggle in Spain I learnt, as did millions of people in other countries, that durable peace could only be won if fascism was defeated and eradicated.

But we learnt another essential lesson from the Spanish experience: even a poorly armed people, when united and with vision, displays unheard-of courage and determination. Fascism is not invincible, but it can only be defeated in a joint struggle waged by all progressive forces.

Six months after the brutal suppression of the Spanish Republic, Hitler and Mussolini launched a new aggression. And, as German bombs began to fall on British cities, I reflected often and ruefully on the slogan from Spain, 'Stop the bombs on Madrid and Barcelona or they will fall on London and Paris'. The British people were paying for the Chamberlain government's policy of 'appeasing' the Axis powers and for its rejection of the offers of the Soviet Union which, even at that late stage, may have halted the fascist drive to war.

Fighting in the British Army in North Africa, Italy, France and Germany I experienced all the horrors of war. The bestial character of fascism will be forever engraved in my consciousness. I shall never forget the day my unit overran a Nazi concentration camp near Lubeck with its instruments of torture and the corpses piled high with methodical efficiency.

In our difficult battles we understood and valued the advances and victories of the Red Army. We knew from our own experience in battle the quality of their efforts and the price they must be paying. We sensed that our return home to our families, to a life in peace was not far away. We were enthusiastic when we learnt of the Yalta Conference with the agreement between the leaders of the USA, Soviet Union and Britain to continue the friendship and cooperation until final victory. The decisions to eliminate German militarism and fascism and extirpate its roots were cheered by everyone in the Forces and our families at home.

With the defeat of Japan soon after I got rid of my uniform and fondly hoped to live in a world at peace. We hoped that fascism and militarism were destroyed forever. However, reality proved different in many respects. The friendship between the Soviet Union and Britain was attacked and undermined. Militarism and reaction were not uprooted in West Germany. The agreements of Yalta and Potsdam are being maligned, and attempts are being made to question their validity. We see the development of increasingly sophisticated nuclear weapons; their numbers and destructive power, already more than sufficient for annihilating all civilisation, are

growing. Yet influential politicians dare claim that there can be victors in a nuclear war, that it is 'winnable'.

My experiences in two wars were bad—I still have troubled dreams from time to time—but a nuclear war would transcend all the horror, suffering, death and destruction of 40 years ago.

It is a logical consequence of my experience in two anti-fascist wars that today I am active in the peace movement and support the demands that Britain be freed from all nuclear stockpiles and that US bases be removed. We advocate serious negotiations to halt the race in new armaments and so lift the threat of a nuclear holocaust. Many war veterans with experiences like my own have joined the peace movement in many countries.

I have met and talked to young freedom fighters from El Salvador and Nicaragua. I have been to Greenham Common and admired the women besieging the US cruise missile base there. I have marched with hundreds of thousands of young people in many peace demonstrations. I know that young people today can display the same understanding, the same courage and conviction that marked the anti-fascist fighters of my youth. Let the lessons we learnt from our joint struggle against fascism help to check and defeat those who dream of world domination in our nuclear age.

William Alexander

Captain, British Army (1941-1946),
Commander, British Battalion, International
Brigade, Spain (1936-1938)

Against a Dangerous Evolution

Our country, Belgium, was among the first victims of Hitler's aggression. To the Belgian people, the Nazi 'new order' brought 'death trains' to the Mauthausen and Neuengamme concentration camps, torture and executions, and violations of national and human dignity. At the hands of the Nazis, one out of every four Communists were killed. The brutal raids in which German V-2 rocket bombs rained on Antwerp's civilian districts will never be forgotten.

At that time we Resistance fighters, guerrillas and underground activists, people of different political views were unanimous in our striving to bring the day of liberation closer and to prevent any recurrence of a world-wide conflagration. In May 1945 we believed that war would never again be launched from German soil, that the peace that came would be durable and just. The Yalta and Potsdam agreements, the purposes and principles of the United Nations stipulated extirpation of Nazism and destruction of those economic and militarist forces that had given it nourishment. All that was clearly aimed at nipping in the bud any revival of German revanchism.

Forty years later we are forced to state with alarm that many of our hopes have failed to materialise. Today, voices are still heard in the FRG calling for a restoration of Germany's 1937 borders—as though the Nuremberg Trials never took place. Despite the resistance and protests on the part of peace champions and in violation of the Potsdam accords, West Germany has been turned into a major military-industrial force. The role it plays in shaping NATO's aggressive strategy is growing increasingly prominent.

After the Western European Union (WEU) lifted all restrictions on the manufacture of armaments in the FRG, this country was given a free hand to build up its assault capability. Last year Bernard Rogers, NATO's Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, put his deputy Hans-Joachim Mack, a general of the Bundeswehr, in charge of issues concerning the nuclear weapons of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. For the first time in the history of the bloc, a West German general was given access to the management of its nuclear arsenals. Today he also monitors naval forces, the infrastructure, everything involved in 'push-button'

warfare, compliance with orders and selection of targets. He directs work on nuclear programmes. A man representing the Bundeswehr, he has a hand in the use of the five strategic submarines of the US Navy in the Mediterranean, of the nuclear submarine-based weapons of Great Britain, of the cruise and Pershing II missiles—in short, of all nuclear forces of the NATO countries with the exception of France.

Evidently, this promotion became possible only upon authorisation by President Reagan. The enhanced role of the Bundeswehr in NATO has been paid for by the zeal of the government of the FRG displays before Washington in following up the 'two-track' decision of the NATO countries of December 12, 1979. Specifically, this concerns the docile deployment of Pershing II missiles in the FRG, the approval by the ruling Christian-Liberal coalition of the US arms build-up strategy and the support for Reagan's Star Wars plans. The Bonn strategists, who have long vied for the right to have a say in NATO's major decisions, are no doubt profoundly satisfied with the change in the manning table.

The rise of the West German general is yet another alarming symptom of the increase in the influence the Bundeswehr wields in the North Atlantic bloc. Upon deployment of 108 Pershing II and 96 cruise missiles in the FRG, it will become the strongest bridgehead of the United States in Europe. Bonn already has the biggest army in Western Europe; based in the Federal Republic are substantial conventional and nuclear capabilities, including Pershing IB and Lance missiles and many other short-range systems, as well as a huge stock of chemical ammunition and modern fighter-bombers of the Tornado and Phantom types. Besides, the FRG government plans to increase, within the next six years, its share in the financing of NATO by about 1.36 billion marks. This would be in complete accordance with the offensive US strategy of Airland Battle.¹ There can be no doubt that the conservative, militarist quarters in the FRG will exert all their influence to prevent arms reduction and disarmament in Europe.

We hold that all democrats, all champions of peace must respond to this dangerous evolution.

André de Smet
Veteran of the Belgian Resistance
(1940-1944)

¹ See *WMR*, No. 7, 1983, pp. 118-123.—*Ed.*



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