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Workers of all countries, unite!

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Theoretical and information journal of Communist and Workers' Parties

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The unfading light of the October Revolution

Todor Zhivkov
First Secretary, CC Bulgarian CP,
Chairman, State Council of the
People's Republic of Bulgaria

It will soon be 60 years since the Great October Socialist Revolution, the first victorious attack on the old world. It opened a new era in the life of mankind, and made a start on the most profound economic, social and political transformations in history. All progressive mankind is preparing to celebrate the anniversary of this crucial event. The celebrations will undoubtedly be the most important political and ideological event of the year.

The glorious jubilee dominates life in the People's Republic of Bulgaria. For the ideas and deeds of October have in these six decades become part and parcel of the Bulgarian People's historical destiny and of the fabric of our society. It was under the banner of these ideas and deeds that we carried out our socialist revolution on September 9, 1944, and are now building a developed socialist society.

Our party regards the jubilee of the Great October Socialist Revolution not just as a ceremonial occasion, but also as a good opportunity to reappraise, in the light of its ideals, accomplishments and experience, the path we have traversed, and to give an accounting of our performance to the Bulgarian people, to the peoples of other countries and to the international communist and working-class movement. We want to report how the precepts of Marx, Engels and Lenin are being realized in Dimitrov's homeland, how we have learned from the experience of the revolution carried out by the workers and peasants of Russia in 1917; how we have benefited from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which inspired, organized and led the revolution. We need to judge how we have practised the principles of internationalism in our relations with the world's first socialist state, the other socialist countries, the communist and workers' parties, and with all the revolutionary forces of our day.

In terms of world history, 60 years is not a long period, but in the content, pace, scope and depth of the changes that have taken place in the world as a result and under the influence of the Great October

Socialist Revolution, it is equivalent to many centuries. The October Revolution — the main event of the 20th century — was the dawn of a new, socialist epoch marking a watershed between mankind's prehistory and its real history.

The October Revolution made the first breach in the citadel of world capitalism. It created a socialist state and heralded the start of the transition from capitalism to socialism not only in Soviet Russia but also on a world scale. Therein lies its abiding epochal importance in world history. The October Revolution does not belong only to the past, for it continues to exert the most profound influence on present-day world development, on every sphere of social life in our own day: ideology, politics, economics, international relations and morality. Nor is there any doubt that all the victories of the great ideas of communism will be scored in the future under the triumphant banner of the October Revolution.

The land of Soviets has traversed a hard but glorious path, marked by selfless struggle, heroic feats of labor, excruciating trials and unparalleled valor in war years, a path of great victories which are of crucial importance for the destiny of mankind. Under the leadership of their party, which was founded by Lenin, the Soviet people have successfully fulfilled the main task of the socialist revolution by establishing a new, socialist society.

Today, 60 years after the triumphant offensive mounted by the workers, peasants and sailors of Russia, the October Revolution lives and develops in the Soviet people's majestic accomplishments, in the great material and spiritual culture of mature socialism created in the vast Soviet Union. It lives in the pioneering activity of Lenin's party and the Soviet state as they tackle the tasks of gradual transition of communism, and in the historic decisions of the 25th CPSU Congress. As I have noted on earlier occasions, it is a true source of happiness for Soviet people, for the Soviet communists, and for the international communist and working-class movement that the CPSU and the Soviet state are headed by Leonid Brezhnev, an outstanding leader of our day, and a warm-hearted and charming man, who has continued to carry on Lenin's great cause.

The Great October Revolution accelerated and filled with a new and rich content the world revolutionary process, giving it unprecedented scope in every part of the globe. The first socialist power, which sprang from the flames of the revolution, has become a reliable bulwark, the hope of, and model for, liberation movements, and the decisive factor in the victory of socialist revolutions in a number of countries in Europe, Asia and Latin America (Cuba). The October Revolution contributed to the disintegration of the colonial system and helped to extend the struggle of the peoples in the newly-free

countries for peace, democracy, social progress and socialism.

The Great October Revolution lives in existing socialism, the main, most essential and aggregate result of the worldwide historical process and class struggle over the past 60 years. Existing socialism today is the world socialist community, whose powerful influence has steadily accelerated social progress and helped to make the people's liberation struggle and their advance toward socialism an irreversible and triumphant historical process.

The world socialist system has been exerting a revolutionary influence on the course of history, above all through the power of the example it has set and the socialist countries' impressive achievements in every sphere of social life and in the solution of the vital problems of human existence, primarily in ensuring a steady rise in the working people's material and cultural standards. The strategy of social development formulated by the 24th and 25th Congresses of the CPSU, by the 10th (1971) and 11th (1976) Congresses of the Bulgarian Communist Party, and the congresses of other ruling parties, is motivated by concern for man and the mustering of all the potentialities and resources of society for the ever fuller realization of the supreme aim of socialism, which is the all-round development of the individual.

The whole world now sees existing socialism as a community of states united by unbreakable bonds of fraternal friendship and all-round and equitable cooperation; a community whose countries have actually realized the ideals by which progressive mankind had been inspired over the centuries, the ideals of social equality, justice, freedom and democracy; a society in which a fundamentally new, socialist way of life is being established as the practical embodiment of humanism and the loftiest ethical standards. It is a realization of Lenin's prophetic view that 'a socialist Soviet Republic in Russia will stand as a living example to the peoples of all countries, and the propaganda and revolutionizing effect of this example will be immense' *(Coll. Works,* vol. 26, p. 448) and that the very existence of the socialist countries and their economic successes is 'a gigantic force and a factor of revolution' (vol. 42, p. 240).

The Great October Revolution lives in the international communist and working-class movement, which in the past 60 years has developed into the vanguard force of the world revolutionary process and the most influential political factor of the epoch. It stimulates the upswing of the working-class movement in the capitalist countries.

The Great October Revolution lives in the victories scored by the national-liberation movement. Striking evidence of its growing contribution to the struggle against imperialism and social oppression comes from recent events like the revolutionary changes in the countries of Indochina, the overthrow of the colonial regimes in the former

Portuguese colonies, the rise of the struggle of the anti-racist movements in Southern Africa, and the growing potentialities for isolating and routing the neo-fascist and fascist regimes in various Latin American countries. Evidence of this also comes from the fact that in many countries which have thrown off the colonial yoke, socialist ideas have struck solid roots, with the revolutionary democratic regimes established there carrying out deep-going socio-economic, political and ideological transformations oriented upon a socialist perspective. The progressive, anti-imperialist content of the policies pursued in the international arena by the non-aligned countries, and also of the struggle for restructuring international economic relations on the principles of equality and justice is being consolidated. These processes confirm Lenin's profoundly scientific forecast that under the impact of the October Revolution the people's struggle for national liberation would inevitably 'turn against capitalism and imperialism' *(Coll. Works,* vol. 32, p. 482), and that the stronger the alliance of world socialism and the national-liberation movement, the more effective this struggle.

The longer the period since the day the peoples of the former Russian Empire carried out their socialist revolution under the leadership of the working class and its revolutionary political vanguard, Lenin's party, the stronger the light of that epochal event. The importance of the October Revolution, of the basic principles and uniformities embodied in it, and of its examples and lessons is also as abiding as the importance of the ideas which inspired that revolution. For the communists of the whole world, the Great October Socialist Revolution has been and will be an inexhaustible source of historical optimism, wisdom, experience and inspiration, and firm resolve steadily to go forward.

The Great October Revolution and the socio-historical practice of the subsequent period have convincingly shown that adoption of the Leninist stand, profound, constructive and innovative comprehension and creative application of Lenin's doctrine in the concrete conditions of the various countries and continents is the crucial condition for the communist and workers' parties fulfilling their historic mission. The communists of all countries have learned and continue to learn from Lenin and the October Revolution the science and art of formulating effective strategies and tactics, taking a creative and thought-out approach to the problems of the revolutionary movement and skillfully pursuing their line. That is precisely why mastery of Leninism has been and continues to be, we believe, of decisive importance in making the communist parties the leading political vanguard in the working people's struggle for the triumph of the new society.

Convincing evidence of this comes, in particular, from the history

and experience of the Bulgarian Communist Party, for which acceptance of Leninism was a necessity painfully realized in the course of the struggle and quest for the most correct ways of achieving final victory.

The Tesnyaki Socialists,* whom Lenin called 'internationalists in deed,' hailed the October Revolution as a great gain for the international proletariat and worldwide progress. They were solidly on the side of Russia's revolutionary forces and worked selflessly to revolutionize the masses in Bulgaria and spread the ideas of the October Revolution among the Bulgarian workers and peasants, doing this honestly, spiritedly and with utter dedication. But the party had yet to adopt the ideas of Leninism or take a clear-cut Leninist stand on various basic issues in relation to the class struggle, revolution, allies of the working class, dictatorship of the proletariat, and so on. That is why it was not always able to make the right decisions called for by concrete situations and guide the working people's revolutionary struggle in such a way as to carry it forward to a natural victorious completion.

However, the logic of the processes going forward in the country, in the working-class movement and the party itself inevitably led to Leninism, and our party successfully carried out this fundamental turn in every sphere and along every line of its activity, adopting as its weapons the time-tested ideas, tactics and strategy of Lenin's doctrine.

First, under the influence of the October Revolution our party came fully to understand the truth that the proletarian revolution and the takeover of power was not a matter of some distant future but an immediate historical task. Somewhat later, it organized and headed the world's first anti-fascist uprising of workers and peasants, the heroic September 1923 uprising, which showed, in particular, that the party, learning from the Bolsheviks, had gradually accepted the idea that the peasantry was an ally of the working class.

Second, guided by the experience of the October Revolution, the BCP creatively applied the Leninist tactic of merging the struggle for democracy and for socialism in a single stream. Having gradually overcome the sectarian tactic of 'independent action,' it got down to the practical work of setting up a united working-class front in Bulgaria as the basis for a people's general democratic anti-fascist front. Following the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, the BCP secured the alliance of broad democratic and progressive forces in a popular front and, developing the tactic of the united popular anti-fascist

*Until 1919, the Bulgarian workers' revolutionary party was called the Bulgarian Workers' Social Democratic Party (Tesnyaki Socialists), and from 1919, The Bulgarian Communist Party (Tesnyaki Socialists).

front, set up a broad Fatherland Front in the course of armed struggle against capitalism and fascism. Consequently, our experience has confirmed that adoption of the Leninist stand signifies creative comprehension, application and further development of Lenin's theory and tactics and solution of the pressing problems of the revolutionary movement.

Third, the BCP's strategy and tactics in the fight against capitalism and fascism rested on Leninist principles and methods in combining every form of class struggle. Overcoming diverse 'leftist' deviations and mistakes, the BCP followed a flexible but consistently revolutionary line of combining legal and illegal forms of work and struggle, of parliamentary activity and armed action. The communists' skilled activity in parliament and in the course of electoral campaigns, and their organization of rural and urban communes in communities where the communists won electoral victories — and this included Sofia — helped to unite the masses and fortify their confidence in the working class and its party. Displaying a high sense of principle, the party was not guided by any short-term or temporary considerations, and did not go in for unprincipled compromises to the detriment of the vital long-term interests of the working class and of the whole people. Consequently, as a result of its adoption of the Leninist approach, the party acquired the capability of carrying on work along a broad front, making use of diverse forms, and confidently guiding the people's struggle, including the period of armed uprising.

Fourth, the mastery of Leninism was of invaluable importance from the standpoint of the BCP's organizational consolidation. Fresh confirmation was provided in our conditions that the new type of party is not something that is ossified but a living organism, constantly developing on the political, organizational and ideological principles of Leninism.

Of course, the BCP's transition to Leninist positions was neither rapid nor easy: it was attended by both contradictions and temporary retreats. As it overcame them, the party consistently advanced along this path. This played a crucial role in its subsequent successes. The BCP's adoption of Leninism was of momentous historical importance with tremendous consequences for the revolutionary struggle of our country's working people. Our party's experience has confirmed that Leninism is not a 'specifically Russian' phenomenon, nor a 'regional conception' that is inapplicable in other countries, but a doctrine which is of universal significance, and a new stage in the development of Marxism, the Marxism of our epoch.

Our experience has also shown that the adoption of the Leninist stand implied the application of Lenin's ideas in harmonious combination with the creative elaboration of new problems and the use of

the experience of the fraternal parties, the CPSU in the first place. The Bulgarian communists have never stood aloof from the experience of other communist parties. As a result, far from losing anything, the BCP has, in effect, become wiser, more confident, with growing authority at home and within the international communist and working-class movement.

The experience of triumphant socialist revolutions and present-day socio-historical practice both go to confirm that the revolutionary movement has been developing in accordance with the laws discovered by Marxism-Leninism. Of course, the communists of all countries, whether socialist or capitalist, now face new tasks and new problems requiring a creative analysis and approach. Whatever the problem in present-day reality we may consider, its correct solution is possible only with a comprehension and creative application, and development and enrichment of Leninism.

Loyalty to Leninism and creative use of the experience of the Great October Revolution are a necessary condition for the success of our common cause. That is a lesson the Bulgarian communists have learned. It is our conviction that this experience is meaningful today and will continue to be so in the future.

One of the decisive elements in the communist parties' fulfillment of their mission is their ability to combine the national and the international, and the general and the specific in the socialist revolution and in building the new society. This cardinal theoretical, political and ideological problem is in the foreground of the struggle between the Marxist-Leninist ideology and both right-wing and 'left-wing' opportunism.

In analyzing and solving the problem, Marxist-Leninists rely above all on the experience of the October Revolution, and the building of socialism and communism in the Soviet Union. That is quite natural, because the October Revolution led to the actual establishment of the first socialist society. Whatever its specifics, the general uniformities inherent in any socialist-type revolution were necessarily expressed in that revolution. From this follows the international importance of the experience of the October Revolution and the historical inevitability, according to Lenin, of a repetition of an international scale of some of the basic features of the October Revolution (Cf. *Coll. Works*, Vol. 31, p. 21). This experience is an invaluable gain for the whole communist movement, and nothing can minimize its epoch-making importance.

We believe that to deny the international importance of the experience of the October Revolution or to cast doubt on the conclusion concerning the general uniformities of restructuring society on socialist lines is, wittingly or unwittingly, to break with the revolutionary

theory of Marx, Engels and Lenin. Like any other social system, socialism, in whichever country it may have been built, objectively has definite general features and uniformities. Those who ignore or deny this do not and cannot stand the supreme test of the truth, which is the test of social, living practice. Our experience shows that it is impossible to move on from the old to the new society without the leading role of the working class with its Marxist-Leninist vanguard at its head; without winning political power and setting up a socialist state which takes the form of a proletarian dictatorship at the early stages of socialist development; without a restructuring of the economy resulting in the establishment of social property in the means of production and elimination of man's exploitation of man; without performing a cultural revolution, and so on.

The socialist revolution of September 9, 1944, in Bulgaria was a continuation of the cause of the October Revolution, a repetition of basic features, a manifestation and component part of the great worldwide revolutionary transition from capitalism to socialism. The preparation and carrying out of the armed popular uprisings, together with the entry into Bulgaria of Soviet soldiers — the heroes of the October Revolution and their sons, and their decisive assistance — did not merely ensure the victory of the socialist revolution in our country but also gave it broad scope and tremendous creative power.

An analysis of our social development over the 33 years since liberation shows very well that despite the difference in the forms of the struggle carried on by the working class and all working people for power, the pace of the revolutionary process, and so on, he basic principles and uniformities of the socialist revolution and construction of the new society, which had been put to a historical test in the course of the October Revolution and socialist construction in the Soviet Union, were and still are of crucial importance in Bulgaria's conditions as well. That is a lesson of our history, a lesson that has been verified and borne out by the Bulgarian people's real gains.

At the same time, it is impossible correctly to comprehend or guide the revolutionary process when there are stereotypes, inertness and monotony in the approach to its problems and when no account is taken of the concrete national specifics of the country concerned. The course of history has confirmed Lenin's prediction that the greater the number of countries involved in the revolutionary process and the broader its scope, the more diverse the conditions and, consequently, the forms in which it is realized.

That is precisely the approach the Bulgarian communists have always taken to this matter. In the process of the socialist revolution and construction of the new society, the BCP was never guided by dogmata or artificial schemes, but has always used and uses strategy

and tactics in accordance with our country's concrete conditions, traditions and national features. The party has been creatively guided by general uniformities that are, in our view, of fundamental importance for socialism, regardless of where it is being built.

When considering the BCP's creative application of these general uniformities in our country's concrete conditions, the first thing to note is our party's solution of the basic problem of the socialist revolution, the problem of power. In our country, the revolutionary process had a number of distinct features stemming from the concrete historical situation. Thus, the struggle for socialism was closely interlaced with the working people's struggle against the monarchy and fascism, against nazism and war, and with the solution of a broad range of general democratic problems. Accordingly, the party brought to the fore the anti-fascist, democratic tasks and involved in their fulfillment not only the poor peasants but also the middle peasants, the progressive intelligentsia, the patriotic section of the army and some democratically-minded members of the non-fascist bourgeoisie. The advance of the revolutionary processs was marked by a number of specific features, even after September 9. 1944, when, for instance, temporary use was made of some institutions of the old state machine.

However, none of this originality abolished the need for the working people, led by the working class and its Marxist-Leninist vanguard, to take over political power, and to establish a dictatorship of the proletariat, even if in the specific form of a state of people's democracy. Our party, as I have already said, learned its lessons from Lenin, and made temporary use of some old forms, not to reconcile itself with the past, but to convert these into an instrument helping the new, socialist content to win out.

The BCP also took a creative approach to the use of the basic uniformities in the economy. In Bulgaria, the means of production in industry were not socialized through confiscation of capitalist property but through its gradual, stage-by-stage contraction, which culminated in nationalization. Applying Lenin's cooperative plan in Bulgaria, with its traditional small peasant farms and the peasantry's strong attachment to the soil, the party organized a socialist restructuring of the countryside without nationalizing the land. It was socialized through the cooperation of the peasants and their voluntary association in cooperative farms.

In the course of the revolutionary process and socialist transformations, a solution was found for the problem of our society's political system which also met the concrete conditions and the need to ensure broad development of democracy in the interests of the whole people. In the first few years after the victory of the revolution, several other

parties joined the BCP in running the country. In 1948, some of them voluntarily wound up their activity and joined the Patriotic Front, which ceased to be a coalition of many parties and became the biggest mass socio-political organization. The Social-Democratic Party adopted the program of socialist construction put forward by the BCP and merged with it. The Bulgarian Agricultural People's Union has continued its activity, having accepted the aim of building a new, socialist society. Its joint work with the BCP is now an important factor in the further construction of socialism.

With Bulgarian society consisting of friendly classes and social groups and advancing toward complete social homogeneity, and with the achievement of the people's moral and political unity, the reasons for the existence of parties with different, let alone opposite, political platforms have long since disappeared.

The Bulgarian Communist Party, whose leading and guiding role is an objective necessity and a natural requirement in the development of our socialist society, constitutes the core of our political system. Everything the people have achieved in the socialist period is connected with the BCP's multifaceted creative activity.

Our party's urge to seek creative solutions for various problems was vividly embodied in the decisions of the April 1956 Plenary Meeting of the BCP Central Committee which fully restored the Leninist principles and standards of leadership and in the formulation of our program for building a full-scale socialist society adopted by the 10th Congress of the BCP. Starting from Lenin's concept of full-scale socialism (Cf. *Coll. Works,* Vol. 42, pp. 78-79, and Vol. 30, pp. 330-331) and from the CPSU's experience, the program determines the concrete ways and forms in bringing about this higher stage in the development of the first phase of the communist formation, socialism. At this stage, a high degree in the harmonious functioning of the whole social organism is achieved, and the immense advantages of the socialist society ever more fully unfolded. At the same time, as speakers at the 11th Congress of the BCP in 1976 pointed out, the construction of mature socialism is simultaneously a process of creating the conditions for a gradual transition to communism.

Consequently, Bulgaria's experience shows once again that the ability to discern the specific expression of the general uniformities in the course of revolutionary struggle and construction of the new society is of primary importance from the standpoint of the party's elaboration of flexible strategy and tactics and an effective program for practical activity. However, the existence of specific features inherent in this or that country or group of countries does not in any sense invalidate the general uniformities of the revolutionary process and socialist construction. An attempt to set up such features as an

absolute means, in effect, artificial structuring of some kind of autonomous 'regional entities' to whose development the laws of socialism, as the new social system, are allegedly irrelevant.

If one were to ask what the Great October Revolution actually means for our country and our people, we should say: 'Look at modern flourishing socialist Bulgaria and its free and proud people. This Bulgaria is an embodiment of the ideas and cause of the Great October Socialist Revolution.'

Following the example of the October Revolution and relying on the Soviet Union's moral and material support, Bulgaria has fundamentally changed its image and its historical destiny. Once backward and mainly agricultural, it has become an industrial-agrarian country, ranking solidly among states with the highest rates of economic growth. Over the past 20 years, our national income has grown at an average of 8.5 per cent a year, industrial output, at 11.5 per cent, and agricultural output, at 4.3 per cent. Industry, which before the socialist revolution was embryonic, now accounts for over 55 per cent of the national income, with high rates of development in the sectors which are the material basis of scientific and technical progress: electric power, including atomic power, the chemical and oil-refining industries, engineering and electronics. Agriculture, where modern scientific and technological achievements are being broadly applied, turns out 2.5 times more produce than it did in the prewar year of 1939, although it now employs two-thirds less workers.

Our society has long since put an end to exploitation and has abolished every form of social oppression. Conditions have been created for the shaping and further development of the socialist way of life, whose distinctive features are social optimism and confidence in the morrow. Our cultural revolution has led to man's spiritual regeneration; the people's educational standards have gone up; a new system of spiritual requirements and needs among the working people under socialism has taken shape.

Our country's historic successes in the economy, culture and education, and its vigorous and peaceable foreign policy in the Balkans, in Europe and throughout the world, have turned Bulgaria into a state taking an active part in international affairs in which it carries definite weight. Never before has it had so many friends, nor enjoyed such authority and respect in the world.

The Soviet people's triumphant advance under the banner of the October Revolution, its current great endeavors and the still greater plans for transition to communism provide an inexhaustible treasure-trove of practical experience and theoretical generalization, which are of invaluable importance for countries entering the stage of building a full-scale socialist society.

This also apalies to Bulgaria. The 11th Party Congress and its July 1976 CC Plenary Meeting, which concentrated the efforts and attention of the whole party and people on enhancing quality and efficiency in every sphere of life, especially in material production, through an organic combination of the advantages of socialism with the achievements of the scientific and technical revolution are important milestones in the building of a mature socialist society.

Our seventh five-year plan (1976-1980) is being successfully fulfilled. It provides for further accelerated intensification of the economy, a sharp boost in social labor productivity, modernization and remodelling of production facilities, and the raising of the technical and technological levels of production to those of the economically most developed countries. Our party has tackled these complicated problems through an approach to concentration and specialization on the scale of the whole national economy that requires extensive introduction of unification and standardization in production, skillful combination of large and small-batch production, improvement of product quality and rapid renewal of goods.

Important changes are being made in the organization of production and labor and of the remuneration of labor in accordance with the socialist principle of distribution. A program for raising the people's living stardards designed for ever fuller satisfaction of their requirements on the basis of scientifically substantiated norms is being successfully fulfilled; science, education and spiritual culture are being developed at an accelerated pace.

The building of a full-scale socialist society in Bulgaria is being carried on together and in close cooperation with the fraternal socialist countries, the land of the Great October Revolution in the first place. The traditional Bulgarian-Soviet friendship is being raised to a new stage marked by a higher degree and more mature forms and instruments of all-round cooperation, as our two parties and countries draw closer to each other.

This line, which was further advanced during the visit of a Bulgarian party and government delegation to the USSR in late May and early June 1977, meets the vital interests of our two countries and of the whole socialist community and bears out Lenin's brilliant prediction that the world would advance '. . . toward the creation of a single world economy, regulated by the proletariat as an integral whole and according to a common plan. This tendency has already revealed itself quite clearly under capitalism and is bound to be further developed and consummated under socialism' (*Coll. Works*, Vol. 31, p. 147).

Our party seeks to make Bulgaria's present and future relations with the Soviet Union a model of relations between two socialist

states, and an example of socialist internationalism in action. The BCP, loyal to Dimitrov's precepts, and to its own traditions and ideals, starts from the premise that attitude to the CPSU and the Soviet Union continues to be even today the touchstone of proletarian, socialist internationalism, of the true revolutionary spirit, and of loyalty to the principles of the Marxism-Leninism.

We are now witnessing a powerful upswing in the revolutionary movement on every continent. Its development and deepening have quite naturally produced fundamentally new problems, which require a new approach and new theoretical elaborations and propositions. But we are convinced that far from minimizing the role of existing socialism, and of the Soviet Union, the new processes and phenomena, in effect, help further to emphasize their role. Is it, after all, not a fact that over the past 60 years the Soviet Union has been the mainstay of the peoples and of all the revolutionary forces in the struggle for freedom and national independence, for peace, for a better future and socialism? Is there, indeed, the slightest ground for doubting that the USSR and the CPSU continue to carry high the banner of the October Revolution, the banner of proletarian internationalism?

Today, just as 60 years ago, the Soviet Union is in the van of modern social progress, serving as a bastion of world socialism and a bulwark of all the anti-imperialist, revolutionary and peace forces. That is why today, just as six decades ago, the practice of the revolutionary struggle insistently requires, we believe, the cohesion of all the revolutionary forces under the banner of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, and their solidarity with the Soviet Union and Lenin's party. We believe that this is required both by the national and the international interests of each party individually, and by the common goals of the international communist movement.

It is quite obvious to us that attacks on the USSR, on existing socialism are not in the interests of the struggle for the vital aims and ideals which unite all the communists. Our class enemy is well aware why the communist movement is strong, and for that reason all its efforts are directed above all at undermining the communists' unity. We are sure that the pursuit of a truly internationalist line, requires of us communists of all countries purposeful struggle against anti-Sovietism, whatever its form or brand.

History, a strict task-master and an impartial judge, has confirmed the correctness and viability of the ideas of the October Revolution, the ideas of Leninism. One of its chief lessons is that loyalty to the ideas of the October Revolution is an earnest of success for a Communist Party in the fulfillment of its national and international tasks.

For the BCP this lesson of history has become a sacred precept to which it remains loyal and by which it is guided in its multifaceted activity. For us, the cause of the October Revolution is an inexhaustible well-srping of wisdom, experience, optimism and firm resolve to advance to our communist future.

Land of Soviets — 60th year

A SOCIETY THAT BELIEVES IN ITSELF

Jose Soares
Alternate Executive Commission member,
CC, CP of Brazil, its representative on *WMR*

Rodney Öhman
Representative of Left Party —
Communists of Sweden on *WMR*

This article is the result of a study tour we made in the USSR at the invitation of the CPSU Central Committee. Its purpose was to get to know the psychological climate that has formed in Soviet society. We wanted to find out how the historic achievements of existing socialism are reflected in the ordinary life of the average citizen. How Lenin's prediction that socialism would create new, higher forms of community life has worked out. What kind of life people live in the socialist house they have built during the 60 years that the Soviets have been in power.

To investigate these problems we toured Moscow, Minsk and the young Byelorussian city of Novopolotsk. We visited factories, schools, hostels, kindergartens and Young Pioneer houses, sports and cultural centers, factory recreation lodges and Young Pioneer camps. We went to the theatre and were invited home by workers. We met leading officials of the CPSU Central Committee and the Central Committee of the Byelorussian Communist Party, the USSR Central Council of Trade Unions, the State Committee for Labor and Social Questions, the Soviet Women's Committee, the USSR Supreme Court, local party leaders, deputies of the Soviets and managers in various branches of the economy, industrial and office workers, professional people and students, and gathered answers to the questions that arose in our minds during the trip.

We had been to the Soviet Union before. We knew that the reality of socialism had given the Soviet people something that the working

people do not have and cannot have in a capitalist country: social ownership of the means of production, confidence in their today and tomorrow, distribution according to the work done. That it had abolished parasitic consumption, freed the working people of exploitation and unemployment, and established a new, genuine democracy. It had emancipated the women and given them equality. The generation of communists that we represent (they are not so young now) had seen how the working class's cherished aspirations had become a reality in the USSR, how the ideas of Marxism-Leninism had been put into practice, how new moral standards had evolved, standards embodied in the moral code of the builders of communism that forms part of the CPSU program. We had studied the socio-economic program adopted by the 25th Congress of the CPSU, which envisages a further rise in the standard of living, improvement of conditions of work and everyday life, and ever fuller satisfaction of peoples' growing needs and various expectations.

At the same time we realized what a formidable task we were undertaking, how difficult it would be to give a full account of the subject we had chosen. After all, unlike a geographical climate, a psychological climate cannot be measured in precise, comparable figures, such as air temperature, precipitation, number of sunny days, and so forth. The things that characterize the wide range of human values and relations, the standards and principles of morality, culture and philosophy cannot be compared in mathematical terms. Nevertheless they are the things that determine the psychological atmosphere prevailing in a given society.

So in this article we shall not always be able to rely on figures and statistics. At times we shall merely relate what we have seen and felt. Naturally each of us has seen some things differently on this trip because we started from different points, from the far from equal levels of development of the productive forces, social relations and social gains of the working people in our respective countries. At the same time we had never deluded ourselves into thinking that socialism had solved all social problems, that there were no negative phenomena in Soviet society, nobody discontented or disgruntled.

But in contrast to a good many journalists working for the capitalist press we were interested *not in peripheral negative facts* that say practically nothing about the central trends of social development, but in the *main objective factors* that determine these trends, including the trends in the formation of the socio-psychological climate. So we have tried to identify these main, objectively comparable factors which explain the difference in the view of the world and daily life that people have in such different countries as Brazil, Sweden and Soviet Byelorussia. And we feel that the character of the prevailing

social relations, the state's social policy, the dynamics and stability of economic development have a special relevance when considered from this standpoint. What we shall be discussing, then, in this article, is how these factors determine the psychological climate in Soviet society.

Prevailing social relations

In both our countries, whether we take bourgeois-democratic, liberal Sweden, or Brazil with its brutal military fascist dictatorship and inhuman exploitation of the broad mass of the people, the basic form of people's existence in society is that of domination and subordination. This does not necessarily imply the antagonistic relations between the exploiters and exploited. Domination and subordination are (though people may not be fully aware of them) the forms of existence that prevail even inside the class of exploiters itself; they embrace the so-called middle strata and penetrate even into the masses. The pursuit of profit as the absolute law of the capitalist mode of production leads not only to a fierce struggle between capitalists and hired workers and not only to competition between capitalists. Unfortunately, it also, at times, leads to competition between the workers themselves at the door of the labor exchange, to an implacable struggle for existence, for survival. Capitalism implants individualism, it flings people against one another, it opposes manual workers to intellectuals, town dwellers to country folk, the people of one nation to those of another, and so on. These relations assume particularly aggravated forms in the dependent countries, especially those governed by terroristic dictatorships.

This was also the situation in tsarist Russia, the evidence of which is not far to seek in history and literature.

The society we studied in Moscow, Minsk and Novopolotsk is completely free of the conflicts evoked by the class struggle and the pursuit of profit that permeate the capitalist system from top to bottom. Under socialism the relations in the production sphere are not dominated by the motive of private profit. They are characterized by a spirit of cooperation and collectivism. This new socio-psychological factor engendered by socialism has in its turn become one of the powerful levers in further social development and finds expression in the gigantic scope of socialist competition, the movement for a communist attitude to work, and in the active participation of the masses in dealing with vital political, state, economic and cultural affairs.

A characteristic feature of the Soviet way of life is the harmonious blending of planned guidance 'from above' and a powerful surge of creativity, activism and initiative, the labor enthusiasm of millions,

from 'below.' Ninety-two million people took part in discussing the draft Basic Directions of Development of the National Economy of the USSR, 1976-1980. More than a million specific proposals uncovering new reserves and growth potentials were made. The discussion of the new draft Constitution of the USSR provides a no less convincing example. The great majority of the adult population are taking part. The initiative and activism of the masses is again illustrated by the genuinely nationwide character of the socialist competition launched in honor of the 60th Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution. It is in this blending of efforts to reach the common goal from 'above' and 'below' that we discover one of the 'secrets' of existing socialism that allow it to achieve the apparently impossible, thus demonstrating its great vitality and dynamic properties to the world.

During our trip we talked about this with many managers, planners, engineers and workers. At the Polimir Chemical Complex we collected some impressive figures. By reducing the time needed to get the plant properly operating, the work force completed the Ninth Five-Year Plan (1971-75) in three years. And in the process they found that they did not need 1,100 workers. These workers were not dismissed, however, as they probably would have been in a capitalist country: but were given jobs requiring the same standard of skill and just as well paid (the cost of retraining was borne by the factory) on additional new lines and shops that were being put into operation. This made it possible to expand production and increase output for the five-year period by 560 per cent. Such rates, it was explained to us, would have been impossible without socialist competition, mass initiative, and the steady rise in the workers' professional skills and general capabilities. At Polimir the whole staff participates in such competition. One in six workers is either a production rationalizer or an inventor; one in three is taking training in economics. Of the 2,000 young workers only 30 have no secondary education; 560, who have completed secondary school, are continuing their education up to university level at evening classes, and 170 attend technical schools. Groups of volunteers keep an eye on quality of output; there are 37 workers' control groups and several technical-experiment teams engaged in various creative projects. Sixty-five shifts, sectors and teams have earned the right to call themselves work groups.[1]

It seems to us that Polimir offers an example of how the Soviet state's concern for updating work conditions, including easement of women's work, which plays such a large and traditional part in the chemical and textile industries, combines with the work force's own desire to perfect and develop production. The production processes at this plant are almost fully automated. Noise is down to the mini-

mum, the air conditioning and temperature are excellent, and a strict check-up is maintained on workers' health. All this differs radically from the conditions one finds at factories in Brazil and many other capitalist countries, where the bosses are interested in only one thing — maximum profit.

At Polimir we saw something else that would be impossible at a capitalist factory, but which, so it seems to us, is typical of a socialist one. Through the communist-way work groups, through socialist competition, through the various voluntary check-up organizations, the shopfloor meetings and the standing production conferences, through the trade union and, above all, the party organization, the workers participate in the management of production and supervision of its development. This is what makes them tackle the tasks of economic and technical development of the factory as *their own* problems; they take the same approach to solving them as an owner. Polimir's successes are a case in point. They stem from the fact that the work force itself showed an interest in developing production and on its own initiative went over to a new rational system of servicing the equipment by adopting and perfecting the well known Shchekino method.[2] Application of this method enabled them to make the industry's best showing for the five-year plan. These successes did not pass unnoticed. The complex was awarded the Order of Lenin and took possession of the challenge Red Banner of the CPSU Central Committee and USSR Council of Ministers, and 120 members of the staff were decorated. The whole work force is still dedicated to improving the organization of production.

Not only is this socially conscious attitude to work one of the driving forces of economic development. It helps people to show their own abilities and skills, to win the acknowledgement of society.

In the assembly shop of the Minsk Tractor Works we were introduced to Anatoly Patienok, a test driver. In his 20 years at the works he has become a well known figure not only in Byelorussia but throughout the industry. For his performance in socialist competition he has been awarded the gold medal of the USSR National Economic Achievements Exhibition and the title of best worker in his profession. The Ministry of the Tractor and Agricultural Machinery industry has presented him with a car in recognition of his services.

Among the thousands of workers at the Minsk Tractor Works, Anatoly Patienok was the first to fulfill the quota for the first year of the 10th five-year plan and by the end of the year he had tested twice the number of machines he was required to test under the existing norms. No tractor tested by Patienok has even been sent back to the factory. He has a faultless record.

'We have quite a few people like Anatoly Patienok,' the Works

party secretary, Aleksandr Kozlov, told us. 'More than 3,000 of our workers have received government decorations. We can actually see this growth of a conscious, responsible attitude to work, the feeling the workers have of being masters of the factory. Our people have learned by their own experience that the socialist system is *their* system, that socialism gives them every opportunity for work and creativity, and grants them all rights except one — the right to do a shoddy job.'

A conscious, responsible attitude to work, the desire to do more and do it better, at a lower cost, is the first and most striking feature of the production atmosphere at the Minsk Tractor Factory, at the Polimir Complex, and at the Novopolotsk Heat and Power Station No. 2, or in short, everywhere we went. And another striking thing was the mutual understanding that exists between the workers and managers at all these enterprises.

This does not imply a total absence of conflict, an atmosphere of general complacency. There are, of course, conflicts, and some of them are rather sharp. In the workshops we often noticed the prominently displayed wall newspapers and smaller news-sheets and news-flashes put out by the factory's social organizations. Naming names and positions and without any beating about the bush, these newspapers criticized people who had caused bottlenecks, defective output or waste and who took a slipshod attitude to work. There were also rebukes for people who were habitually rude or too fond of the bottle and for parents who were neglecting their children's upbringing.

We attended shopfloor meetings which are held regularly by the trade union organizations. At these meetings the shop managers reported on fulfillment of the plan and the conditions of the collective agreement (between workers and management), and spoke about forthcoming tasks. The workers came readily to their feet to speak, offer suggestions and criticize things that they thought wrong. There were also reports from the management on what had been done about previous proposals and criticisms.

For example, at a meeting of the staff of the electrical shop at the Novopolotsk Heat and Power Station speeches were made by electrician Grigory Belichenko and Nikolai Sikor, electrical assembly worker Nikolai Bureiko, and engineers Yevgeny Trashkovich and Larissa Avdonina. They criticized the way the work in the shop was organized and proposed what they thought would be the best way of making good the promises the workers had given in honor of the 60th Anniversary of the October Revolution. They also had some suggestions for improving work conditions. The management accepted some of these proposals and rejected others, and there was an argument.

But it was not an argument between people speaking from opposed positions. It was between like-minded people seeking the best solutions to their production problems.

We are not specialists in technology and economics and we were interested mainly in the political and moral significance of the atmosphere at these meetings. It was most impressive. As we listened to the speakers, we more than once recalled Lenin's words, 'Communism begins when the *rank-and-file* workers display an enthusiastic concern that is undaunted by arduous toil to increase the productivity of labor, husband *every pod of grain, coal, iron* and other products which do not accrue to the workers personally or to their "close" kith and kin, i.e., to society as a whole . . . ' (*Coll. Works,* vol. 29, p. 427).

What we saw during our trip confirmed that Soviet society differs fundamentally from capitalist society in its socio-psychological atmosphere. The atmosphere of socialist society is determined not by the urge for profit, not by the desire to feather one's own nest no matter at whose expense, but by sincere concern for the development of society, of the country, of the place where one works. by a strong belief in the correctness of the policy of the CPSU, which organically combines the interests of society, the production team and the individual, and readiness to put this policy into effect.

There was nothing ascetic or hypocritical about the Soviet people we met. They like to earn good wages, wear good clothes, live in comfortable, well-appointed flats, and enjoy all the benefits of modern technology. But unlike a considerable number of people brought up under capitalism, they usually see the road to their personal well-being not in success won at the expense of others, but in the personal contribution they can make to raising the general level of the country's economy and the welfare of society, that is to say, to the benefit of all.

The party's social policy and the state

In the course of a succession of party congresses and five-year plans, new methods of guiding the development of the economy and culture, the new social policy of the CPSU and the Soviet state, and also the methods of realizing this policy, have been evolved and become established in the life of the USSR.

One of the authors of this article visited the USSR in the days when the Soviet people were carrying out their first five-year plan (1929-1933). A comparison of this first national economic plan with the grandiose program of socio-economic development charted by the 25th Congress of the CPSU and to be fulfilled under the 10th five-year (1976-1980) plan gives one an idea not only of the unprecedented rate of development but also of the changed scale and character of the

social targets set by the party at the new stage in socialist construction.

The main and most urgent thing at the time of the first five-year plan was to build up the country's industrial muscle, to develop its ability to withstand capitalist encirclement, to overcome technical and economic backwardness. A characteristic target was that of reducing unemployment from 1,500,000 to 511,000. This quota over-fulfilled. One of the basic cultural targets of the first five-year plan was to abolish illiteracy and introduce universal elementary education. For a country in which generations of working people had never seen the inside of a school this meant a tremendous leap forward. At the same time the first plan had no specific proposals for improving material well-being, housing, development of the health service, and so on, although everything possible was done to develop these spheres.

In setting the targets of the 10th five-year plan, the Soviet communists write that its main objective is 'to consistently implement the Communist Party's policy of promoting the people's living standards and cultural level on the basis of a dynamic and balanced development of social production and enhancement of its efficiency, the acceleration of scientific and technological progress, the growth of labor productivity and the utmost improvement of the quality of the work in every sector of the national economy.'[3]

The results achieved through consistent application of the social policy of the CPSU and the Soviet state are to be seen everywhere.

Since 1931 there has been no question of unemployment. In our countries, admittedly, it is often said there is no unemployment in the USSR because of the low productivity. If productivity were higher, we are told, there would be unemployment in the Soviet Union too. But first, although the average productivity of labor in the USSR is as yet lower than in the USA and some other developed capitalist countries, it is certainly not lower than in many other countries of the capitalist world, where there is unemployment. And second, productivity in the USSR is steadily rising. Under the Ninth five-year plan, for instance, 84 per cent of the increment in industrial output came from increased productivity of labor, and the 10th five-year plan envisages an increment of 90 per cent. But this increase has not sparked off a wave of unemployment as it usually does in the capitalist countries. With so many vast projects on hand and such a rapid pace of industrial development, the country is actually short of labor, we were told by B.M. Sukharevsky, Deputy Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers State Committee for Labor and Social Questions.

The time when people used to talk about spreading elementary education is long past. Today secondary education is universal and

compulsory in the USSR. At the State Committee for Labor and Social Questions we were given the following figures. In 1939 there were only 84 per 1,000 workers with a secondary of higher education. By 1956 the figure had risen to 365, and by 1976, to 715. Characteristically, education has become not only a right but also, as stated in the new draft Constitution of the USSR, a *duty* of every Soviet citizen.

Under the 10th five-year plan, 550 million square metres of living space are to be made available, the average earnings of blue- and white-collar workers are to rise 16-18 per cent and payments and benefits from the social consumption funds are also to increase,[4] the minimum pension rate will be set at a higher level, and so on. The targets for increasing material well-being, improving living conditions and developing education and the health service are a vital part of the state plans.

It may well be asked why, despite the huge annual investments and the vast scale of construction, is there still a shortage of housing, kindergartens, sports centers, and other facilities.

To answer that question one has to remember that all six decades of socialism's development have been decades in which every step forward was a step into the unknown, a step involving great difficulties and sometimes actual fighting. Socialist society has not been advancing to its goal along a well paved motorway. Take housing, for instance. There is a housing shortage. But the Soviets had to restore not only the destruction wrought by the civil war, and the far greater devastation caused by Hitler's armies. They also had to house more than a 100 million new citizens — such is the growth in the Soviet population over the past 60 years. Old housing had to be renovated and modernized, a task that has still not been completed. Decent accommodation had to be provided for workers' families from the slums. The millions of peasants that had poured into the cities to become workers had to be accommodated, and those who remained in the villages had to be accustomed to a new, modern type of housing (and the houses themselves had to be built). The building workers, technicians, engineers, planners and architects had to be trained. The construction industry and construction materials industry had to be set up. And as in so many other cases, everything had to be started from rock bottom. The Soviet comrades we met reminded us that, as Lenin had put it, whereas the bourgeoisie on coming to power received a well tested carriage and a proper road, the Soviet working class that had won power inherited neither a carriage nor a road, nothing that had been previously tested. Sometimes they had to take decisions dictated by circumstances; sometimes there were miscalculations and mistakes. In short, the road was a hard one, but the results achieved are extremely significant.

We found a striking example of the realization of the Soviet Communist Party's social policy in the young city of Novopolotsk. We stress the fact that it is young, that it became a city only a little more than ten years ago. But even young cities differ. The splendid young capital of Brazil, which its founders had conceived as the embodiment of architectural modernity, has in the course of a few years acquired a patina of *favellas* (slums), where poverty and overcrowding are rife. In some capitalist countries there are still young cities that remind one of the days of the gold rush and the wild west: temporary dwellings, no social amenities, everything calculated purely for reaping a fat profit from nature's riches and human labor. When these are exhausted, the place can be left derelict. There are some young industrial cities that could be called machine cities. The people there are mere servants of technology, spiritless elements in the production process. And finally, in both young and old cities of many of the most developed capitalist countries slums, inadequate sanitation, appalling overcrowding and hardship in the poor areas exist side by side with empty houses and flats with all conveniences. They stand empty not because there is an overabundance of housing, but because the rents or prices are too high for the working man's pocket.

Novopolotsk is a young *socialist city*. Right from the drawing board everything was subordinated to the chief aim of making this a *city for people*. Along the banks of the Western Dvina run broad open streets lined with five-, seven-, and nine-story houses. For the 60,000 population of today 15,000 well appointed flats have already been built, and every year an additional 70,000 square metres of living space (about 2,000 flats) are added.

'Where are the factories?' we asked. 'Why can't we see them? Where do people work?' The reply was to drive us out of town through a belt of bronze-trunked pine, white birch-trees and broad-branched firs. Beyond the woodland, about seven kilometres away was the industrial district, linked with the city by a high-speed tram service. An oil refinery, the Polimir chemical works, the heat and power station and, still under construction, a factory for producing synthetic protein-vitamin concentrates. No one lives there; people only go there to work. In the town itself there is not a single factory chimney and if you leave your hotel window open at night you can wipe the windowsill with your handkerchief in the morning and it will still be perfectly clean.

In the morning the streets of Novopolotsk are full of children; its seven schools have 10,000 pupils.

Students can be seen hurrying to the polytechnical institute (it has an enrolment of 3,000), to the oil industry training school and other industrial training schools.

In the evening people go to the Palaces of Culture, the cinemas, and the libraries (there are 100 of them). Novopolotsk has two sports centers and three indoor swimming pools, open from six in the morning till midnight, a sports stadium, a Young Pioneer palace, a splendidly equipped municipal polyclinic and two factory polyclinics. There are three preventive treatment centers and the surrounding forests and lakes offer dozens of recreation lodges belonging to factories.[5] For the 1,130 babies that are born in the city every year there is always room in the 25 kindergartens and creches. And finally there is an up-to-date shopping precinct comprising 31 shops (total staff 507) and 79 restaurants and cafés.

Are the city's amenities available to everyone?

We visited a young Novopolotsk family.

Vladimir Podesetnikov, a senior operator at the oil refinery, his wife Larissa, an engineer at the same factory and their six-month-old son Andrei live in a two-room apartment in a new well appointed block of flats. They received the flat free when they married and pay a rent (which includes heating and lighting) of 12 roubles a month — less than 3 per cent of their total wage (425 roubles a month). After the birth of their child, Larissa was given the usual paid maternity leave. When the son is one year old she will be able to put him into a crèche. The cost of the family will be approximately 100 roubles a year, the state paying the remaining 500.

The couple use the local library and go to the Palace of Culture regularly. Vladimir plays for the city volleyball team and is finishing a technical course at evening school. After that he intends to go on to higher training. Larissa is with him on this, though it will mean more domestic worry for her. She herself is a member of the standing production conference at the refinery. When she is busy with this commitment Vladimir runs the house himself. There is no division of duties. They both do everything when they have time — housework, cooking, and son on. (On the whole, we noticed, young urban couples seem to have got away from the traditional division of 'men's' and 'women's' work, but it still exists among the older generation and young people who have recently moved into town.)

We also visited the hostel at the Polimir Chemical Complex. Most of the people living there are young and unmarried, aged 17 to 27. One block is reserved for men, the other for women. The rooms are either single or double and the rent, including laundry and cleaning, is 3 roubles a month. Besides the city's usual social and cultural amenities, the young people have their own clubs at the hostels, various amateur groups and rooms for studying. There is a café at the hostel. More than half of those staying there are studying at the technical schools or higher educational establishments, evening universities or

attending courses. As everywhere in the USSR, tuition is free. Some of the girls from the hostel told us that they regard getting a good education not only as a guarantee of interesting work that would be useful to society, but also as a prerequisite of actual equality in their future family life.

The streets of the city bear such names as Lenin — in honor of the founder of the Soviet state; Youth and Komsomolskaya — in honor of the construction workers who came to build the city from all parts of the Soviet Union on assignments from the Komsomol (Young Communist League); Oleg Kotarov — in honor of the first director of the oil refinery; Pyotr Blokhin — in honor of one of the best work-team leaders on the site, and so on. The lives of workers, managers, party organizers Soviet officials and teachers form an interlocking pattern rather like the streets named after them.

On the morning of April 16, the All-Union Communist Voluntary Work Day (subbotnik) we saw officials of the City Soviet Executive Committee led by its chairman, Vladimir Bachinin, load a lorry with spades and rakes and drive out to the building sites to plant trees, hoe flowerbeds, and clear away building rubbish. The other volunteers included students and professors from the polytechnical institute, workers and engineers from the refinery and the chemical complex, doctors and nurses from the city polyclinic. They live in similar apartment houses in various parts of the city. Their children go to the same crèches, kindergartens and schools, and to the Young Pioneer Palace. They meet at sessions of the City Soviet and during the subbotniks, and when they are taking their holidays or enjoying themselves at the various holiday resorts and recreation lodges. One finds their names together on Boards of Honor and in the city museum of labor valor. In short, this city has no 'upper crust' and no underdogs, no 'cream of society' and no 'lower depths.'[6]

We also want to mention some of the things you won't find in this city.

There are no conflicts based on nationality, although the population includes Byelorussians, Russians, Ukrainians, Tartars, Poles, Jews — 46 ethnic groups all told. There is no rift of misunderstanding between the students and the industrial workers. What is more, the Polimir complex presented the Polytechnical Institute with their hostel buildings. And Galina Frolenko, secretary of the Novopolotsk City Party Committee, who accompanied us on our trip, related that no one could imagine the city's social and cultural life without the students and professors.

There are no slums, wooden huts, shanties, temporary buildings of any kind — except one.

The city has kept the single-story building of the first hostel built in

1958 by the city's first construction workers. No one lives there today. The city's first house has now been turned into a museum of labor valor.

There is no mugging, no street violence, so people are not afraid to go out at night, take walks in the park or the woods. A comparatively small force of militia guards the peace; in the four days we spent in the city we saw only three militiamen (in what the anti-Sovieteers call a 'police state'!). Many of their functions are performed by volunteer public order squads, by the comrade courts, and the institution of tutors at factories, offices, and so on.[7] This work is yielding good results.

And finally, this city has no school leavers or college graduates searching vainly for jobs. There is plenty of work on the construction sites, at the factories, in the schools, institutes, and cultural centers, in the shops and service facilities, and so on.

In short, during our visit to Novopolotsk we saw none of the social ills so characteristic of the capitalist world and its cities. On the contrary, we were convinced yet again that the *social policy of socialism evolved by Soviet communists creates all the conditions for a person's all-round development as a creative individual.*

This social policy that is being pursued under the leadership of the CPSU encourages social optimism, a quality that sharply distinguishes the psychological climate in the USSR from the atmosphere in the capitalist world today.

The source of social confidence

Millions of working people in the capitalist world live in a state of anxiety about life as it is and as it may be in future.

Elderly workers are afraid they will be the first to be made redundant. Young people leaving school run the risk of never finding a profession and remaining unemployed. Parents are worried about their children's future and children lack faith in the soundness of their parents' social position. A constant sense of anxiety is a characteristic feature of the socio-psychological atmosphere of capitalist society.

As we have seen, this feeling is absent in the socio-psychological climate of Soviet society. Not only has socialism given everyone constitutional guarantees of the right to work, rest and recreation, education and social security, not only does it protect him as an individual from all harm and injury and ensure his civil and political rights. Optimism and confidence in the present and future are growing thanks to the steady upward development of the economy, culture and the standard of living. All this provides the material basis for the formation of the socio-psychological climate, and particularly such a new element as the sense of social confidence.

During discussions in the Propaganda Department of the CPSU Central Committee for Labor and Social Questions, and at the Central Council of Trade Unions we were given some figures illustrating the dynamics of the growth and development of the USSR. Between 1971 and 1975 the country's total industrial output more than doubled compared with that of 1961 to 1965. Investment, utilization of fixed assets, retail trade, and money incomes also increased by more than a 100 per cent. Payments and benefits from the social consumption funds increased by 125 per cent. If we take a longer period, in the almost 60 years of the existence of Soviet power, of which two decades were taken up by war and restoration of the destruction caused to the national economy, the economic potential created means that today:

Soviet industry produces as much in two and a half days as tsarist Russia before the First World War produced in a year;

— every two years more housing is constructed than all the cities of tsarist Russia put together ever possessed;

— the real incomes of the working people double approximately every 15 years. Compared with the pre-revolution level, the workers' real wages have grown 10 times, that of the peasants, 14 times, and the country's national income as a whole 65 times.

The close connection between the building up of the socialist economy and realization of the Soviet state's social policy is vividly illustrated by the example of the development of Byelorussia. We were told about this in a discussion with V.S. Shevelukha, a secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of this Republic.

V.S. Shevelukha. Before the revolution Byelorussia was considered to be one of the most backward outlying areas of the Russian Empire. Per capita industrial output was nearly five times less than in Russia as a whole, electricity production 15 times less. There were no institutions of higher education, no theatres and a shortage of hospitals and schools. There were only two doctors per thousand of the population and four-fifths of the population were illiterate. The peasants had a particularly hard life. Harvests were so poor that a peasant could lay in a stock of grain for only two or three months of the year. Before the revolution more than 1.5 million Byelorussians emigrated in search of food and work.

The Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917, the formation of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1919 and its entry into the USSR in 1922 were turning points in the life of the Byelorussian people. Already, during the years of the first five-year plans Byelorussia became a republic of developed industry and collectivized agriculture. Heavy engineering and metal working took the

lead in industrial production and by 1940 overall industrial output was eight times that of 1913.

Today industrial output is 21 times the 1940 figure. Byelorussia's economy incorporates 100 industries and over 1,700 major enterprises.

In assessing all this it should not be forgotten that during the war the hitlerites destroyed more than half of Byelorussia's national wealth. Industry was thrown back to the 1913 level. We lost 2,200,000 lives, a quarter of our population; 209 cities and district centers, including Minsk, and 9,200 villages were destroyed by the fascists; and 692 villages were burned together wtih their inhabitants. Only thanks to the advantages of the socialist system, the fraternal help of all the peoples of the Soviet Union, the heroic efforts of the working people, guiding and directed by the Communist Party, were we able in a comparatively short period not only to heal the wounds of war but to forge ahead at a faster pace than before.

Question. Up to now we have been talking about production, about the economy. Some capitalist countries in years when the market was favorable also achieved high rates of economic growth, but they did not launch social policies in the interests of the mass of the working people. How do you link up the development of the economy with the development of social policy?

V.S. Shevelukha. I would stress that the paramount aim of socialism's socio-economic policy is to increase production specifically for the purpose of giving people more of what they need and want in the material, cultural and intellectual spheres. It is economic development that has enabled the Soviet state to conduct a broad and comprehensive social program embracing all aspects of the working peoples' lives.

Take just this one fact. During the years of Soviet power the average expectation of life has considerably increased. Before the October Revolution, in Byelorussia it was only 37 years; now it is 72. Sixty years ago 80 per cent of the population were illiterate; today 3.5 million people are taking some form of education. Universal secondary education has been introduced. There are 8,500 general education schools, 187 polytechnical schools, and 133 specialized secondary schools. The 31 higher educational institutions have an enrollment of 165,000 students.

Science is making good progress. The Byelorussian Academy of Sciences' 180 scientific institutions are staffed by 32,000 scientists, and science and higher education as a whole employ nearly 60,000 people, including 9,500 Doctors and Masters of Science.

Byelorussian culture, which is socialist in content and national in form, has bloomed. The republic has 14 professional and more than

40 amateur theatres. More than 500,000 industrial workers, collective farmers and intellectuals take part in amateur art activities of some kind; 180 newspapers, 179 journals and other periodicals are published; 2,332 book titles in printings totalling 30 million copies came off the presses in 1976.

Of course, man cannot live by bread alone, but nor can he live without it. The steady rise in the working people's standard of living is also based on stable economic growth.

During the period of the Ninth Five-Year Plan alone the working people's real income increased by approximately 30 per cent; the wages of blue- and white-collar workers increased by 18.4 per cent and the incomes of collective farmers, from their collecctive farms, by more than a third. In per capita terms the social consumption funds grew from 230 roubles in 1970 to 320 roubles in 1975. This has provided increased minimum pensions for blue- and white-collar workers, collective-farmers and the war or work disabled; benefits for the families of those who died in defense of the Motherland have been raised, as have the grants for students in higher and specialized secondary educational institutions; the positions of large families has been materially improved and society is spending more on child care and education.

Last year nearly one in five of the population moved into a new home. Since the war a total of about 100 million square metres of living space have been built and the rate of housing construction is mounting. In 1976 alone apartment blocks with a total living space of 4 million square metres were put up. This is equal to about 100,000 average-sized apartments.

Health protection is another big field of activity. The republic has 1,000 hospitals and 48 health centers. For every thousand of the population there are 31 doctors, 93 medical personnel with a secondary education, and 118 hospital beds.

'Of course,' Comrade Shevelukha told us in conclusion, 'Byelorussia does experience difficulties in carrying out the plans. They are connected with the war, which though long since over still has its effects (specifically, on the age structure of the population), with the natural conditions, which are by no means the best, and with the international situation, which does not allow us to concentrate all our efforts on internal development, and with our own miscalculations and failures. But *Soviet people are sparing no effort to realize the party's program of socio-economic development based on dynamic and balanced development of social production, on raising its efficiency, accelerating scientific and technical progress and the growth of labor productivity.*

'The successes achieved in carrying out this program give us con-

fidence in the future, without which there can be no social confidence.'

We fully agree with this conclusion.

Summing up

When we starting summing up what we had seen, we found that we could single out a number of features of the socio-psychological climate that are characteristic of socialist society. While not claiming to cover everything, we should like to put these features on record:

— the profound belief in the correctness of the CPSU line, readiness to carry it out in practice, concern for the development and welfare of one's country, city, factory;

— the spirit of cooperation and collectivism that prevails in production relations; relations of cooperation and equality in everyday life and the family;

— society's concern for people's all-round development and the strong urge that the people themselves feel for spiritual and physical perfection;

— social optimism and social confidence.

We should particularly like to stress such organic, fundamentally important features of the Soviet people as their patriotism and internationalism.

While we were working on our notes after returning from the USSR, Czechoslovak television showed some pictures of rallies of the *Landsmanschaften* and neo-nazis in Austria and the FRG. It was like the past looking at us from the screen. Marches that ought to have been dead long ago blared out of loudspeakers and the veterans of Hitler's campaigns decorated with swastikas and medals goose-stepped along on their gouty legs.

But much more alarming was the fact that there were some young people also goose-stepping behind the old men.

At that moment we recalled, with a fresh sense of urgency, the village of Khatyn.

There used to be a village of that name in Byelorussia. Just an ordinary village amid rolling hills, fields of rye and barley, with long well-sweeps and a small of baked bread floating up from the cottage chimneys of a morning, the sound of children's voices and the tinkle of cowbells as the herd came in from pasture.

In 1943 the hitlerites burned Khatyn and drove its inhabitants into an empty barn and burned them too: women, children and old men, 189 people. By a miracle one survived, the village blacksmith. He carried his 12-year-old son out of the flames, but the boy died.

Today a monument showing the father carrying his dying child in his arms meets anyone who comes to Khatyn. And where the peasant

houses used to stand there are obelisks, shaped like cottage stoves, bearing the names of the victims. Every half minute the bells toll and their mournful sound drifts over the Khatyn hills, over the stove-shaped memorials, over this unusual mass grave, where the ashes of the Soviet cities and villages burned by the hitlerites are also buried, over a wall reminding us of those who died in the death camps. The bells seem to say, 'People, be vigilant!'

Naturally most of the population of the capitalist countries want to live in peace. But one cannot close one's eyes to the fact that certain imperialist circles (and also, unfortunately, reformist, leftist forces in the working-class movement itself) are trying to infect the socio-political atmosphere with a spirit of extreme nationalism, revenge, militant hatred of other countries, and particularly the USSR and the countries of the socialist community. So recalling again and again what we saw in Khatyn, we cannot help feeling a bitter sadness and anger at the fact that in our countries, and in the capitalist world as a whole, they try to black out or belittle not only the Soviet Union's decisive contribution to victory over the hitlerites, but also the sacrifices that the Soviet people made. Quite often people who know about Buchenwald and Dachau, for example, have no idea that in Byelorussia alone there were more than 260 fascist death camps.

But it is essential to know the truth about these things. Not only does it show us the danger of the revival of fascism and help us to fight it. It gives us a better understanding of the Soviet people's spirit, the strength of their class and internationalist view of the world, the feeling of class brotherhood of the working people, of international solidarity and friendship.

After the incredible horrors they endured in the war, Soviet people specially value their freedom, their achievements, their peaceful life, and peace for everyone on earth. In the USSR we did not encounter any signs of chauvinism or bellicose propaganda. On the contrary, everywhere we found evidence of international friendship. In Secondary School No. 4 in Novopolotsk, the boys and girls spoke of their pen friendships with children in Hungary, the GDR, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Cuba, of how they met children from other countries and themselves visited Poland and the GDR. At the Polimir Chemical Complex we were told how a new apparatus had been designed and installed jointly by specialists and workers from the fraternal countries. At the Minsk Tractor Works we were told about the factory's commercial connections and the friendly relations stemming from these ties with various factories in other parts of the world. At the All-Union Council of Trade Unions and the Soviet Women's Committee we heard about the growing contacts between Soviet working

people and the working people and their organizations in all the continents of the globe.

A profound belief that people of toil in different countries have common interests and are prepared to defend them jointly, that international unity of the working class and all the working people and the oppressed, all the forces of progress and democracy are capable of establishing a happy, free and peaceful life for humankind — this is yet another source of Soviet people's social confidence and social optimism.

We were inspired by what we saw in the USSR during our journey. We don't know whether we have succeeded in conveying this feeling, but we can state openly as communists, as members of a great international brotherhood, what we have noted with pride and satisfaction. We were deeply impressed by the people's increasing well-being in all spheres, by the free education and medical attention, the low rents, the low cost of transport, the right that all working people have to low-cost trips to holiday and health resorts. We were particularly moved by society's care for children, young people and mothers. On its road to communism Soviet society continues to show the working people of the whole world that only socialism and communism can give the working people material and spiritual well-being, social confidence and expanding horizons, something that capitalism will never give them.

1. This title is awarded to groups that besides achieving high output rates also show a high degree of communist awareness in their attitude to work and build their relationships with other people on the principles of communist morality, in short, learn to live as well as work in the communist way. — *Authors*.

2. Method of securing optimal operation first applied at the Shchekino Chemical Complex near Tula and based on participation of the whole work force in the search for hidden production and productivity reserves making possible a reduction in the work force itself. Most of the funds economized in this way are placed at the disposal of the work force and used for raising wages and improving social and cultural amenities. — *Authors*.

3. A.N. Kosygin. *Guidelines, Development of National Economy. USSR,* NPA Publishing House, Moscow, 1976, p. 14.

4. *Social consumption fund* in the USSR is the part of the national income allocated for satisfying the needs of the members of socialist society that is not included in wages. Through this fund the socialist state exerts a planned influence on the structure of consumption and toward evening out of the economic differentials between various social groups, strata and classes. Payments and benefits from the social consumption fund are made both in the form of expenditures from the state budget and at the expense of the enterprise itself. They are used for education, health protection, mother and child care, social security, and so on. — *Authors*.

5. We have used several terms here that may be unfamiliar or not quite clear to readers in the capitalist world. As we ourselves had to learn what they actually mean during the trip, we append the following explanations.

Preventive treatment centers (prophylactoria) — medical establishments where any *working* person can take a sanatorium-type course with the necessary medicines,

physiotherapy and diet, while still going to work. Eighty per cent of the cost of such a course (about 100 roubles a month) is borne by the factory and the trade union and only 20, by the person involved.

Palace of Culture — center where working people and members of their families can follow up their cultural interests, engage in creative activities, develop their hobbies, abilities and talents. At the construction workers' Palace of Culture in Novopolotsk, for instance, there are 24 different amateur groups catering for ballet, the drama, ball-room dancing, singing, fine arts, etc., attended by over 600 people.

Young Pioneer Palace, similar to a Palace of Culture, but designed for children and with special attention to their interests. In one way or another the whole adult population of the city took part in building the Novopolotsk Young Pioneer Palace. The children now have a splendid building on the bank of the river with a fine entrance hall, theatre, studios, winter garden, and 73 rooms for the various groups to work in.

Factory recreation lodges — out-of-town centers built on factory and trade union funds in some picturesque spot, in woodland, on a lake or river. Usually with camping facilities for weekending or even family holidays. — *Authors*.

6. Typically, most of the party and Soviet officials, managers and intellectuals we met came from working class or peasant families. The present chairman of the Executive Committee of the Minsk City Soviet of Working People's Deputies, Gennady Bartashevich, began his working career in 1950 as a turner. Stepan Lukashevich, secretary of the Minsk City Committee of the Byelorussian Communist Party, was a construction worker; Vladimir Bachinin, chairman of the Novopolotsk City Executive Committee, was an apparatus assembler at the oil refinery, Alexei Khutornoi, director of Technical School No. 94, was a turner. Incidentially, 110 trainees from this school, which prepares workers for the engineering industry, now hold managerial posts at the Minsk Tractor Works, and among the current batch who have decided to take up industrial trades there are many children of engineers, doctors, teachers and other white-collar workers. — *Authors*.

7. Some more terms requiring explanation.

Public Order Squad (narodnaya druzhina) — voluntary group of working people who undertake to guard the peace in their town or village. The squads are set up at factories, offices and institutes on a voluntary basis. Only the best, the most disciplined and socially conscious workers, professional people and students may join them; they spend a few hours per month of their free time patrolling the streets and public places (they are not armed and have only identification bands on their sleeves). The squads work in cooperation with the militia and their activities are permanently supervised by party, trade union and Komsomol organizations.

Comrade court, a body elected at trade union meetings and meetings of residents of a neighborhood. The work is voluntary and involves passing judgment in minor cases of breaches of public order and discipline. The hearings are public. Penalties and preventive measures are mainly moral — issuing public reprimands, for example, publicly condemning anti-social behavior.

Tutors. These are experienced and skilled workers who undertake the responsibility of helping to train young workers and educate them in the spirit of the best traditions of the working class. — *Authors*.

On socialist orientation

Abdel Fattah Ismail
General Secretary,
CC United Political Organization —
the National Front, and
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People's Democratic Republic of Yemen

Progressive changes in favor of the forces of liberation, progress, socialism and peace and to the detriment of imperialism, Zionism, reaction and racism are characteristic of the present international situation. They have been possible mainly thanks to the socialist world system, the magnetic center, unifying core and main support of the world revolutionary movement.

The positive changes in various parts of the world are inseparable from the policy of peaceful coexistence and détente. The détente process is both an impressive achievement of the whole of progressive humankind and the result of the consistent peace policy pursued by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. But we know that progress in détente does not mean cessation of the struggle between the socialist and capitalist world systems. Only the forms of that struggle change. In the present international situation the ideological struggle has assumed unprecedented sharpness and scope. The forces of imperialism are desparately trying to halt the powerful spread of the ideas of scientific socialism and are investing tremendous effort and money in the systematic campaign of slander and misrepresentation of various aspects of life in the socialist countries. This underscores the vast importance of effective action to counter all attempts at sabotage, of aggressive exposure of anti-socialist fabrications of every type and shade, and of spreading to every corner of the world the ideas of scientific socialism.

The ideological struggle of the two mutually-opposed social systems is becoming sharper. For many millions in all the capitalist world, and for a large group of states, namely, the developing countries, the course and result of this clash of antagonistic ideologies is intimately linked with the choice of social development path. In the eyes of the vast majority of the population of the developing countries, capitalism has been effectively discredited by long years of brutal colonial exploitation. It left these countries in a state of social

and economic backwardness. However, the discrediting of capitalism does not automatically replace its ideological conceptions and norms in the public mind by socialist ideological conceptions and norms. This is a process requiring not only a complex of econonic, social and cultural transformations, but also purposeful activity to instill socialist ideology in the developing countries and win acceptance of the theory of scientific socialism as the alternative to capitalist ideology.

But we know that many liberation movements in the developing countries, and the political organizations that direct them, have advanced differing concepts and hold differing positions on the theory of scientific socialism. Some leading social and political groups in the Afro-Asian world are often oriented on 'special' varieties of regional or national socialism — 'African,' 'Asian,' 'Arab,' and so on. To one or another degree they represent a change of views, and a striving for a non-exploitive social system. But these concepts are evidence also of an ambiguous attitude to scientific socialism. The result is that many revolutions that have won political independence have proved incapable of protecting their countries against neo-colonialism. Revolutionary slogans sometimes degenerate into appeals that mislead the masses or concentrate their attention on minor issues. We believe that many setbacks and failures of liberation movements and national revolutions that have won through to independence are to a certain extent due to this ambiguous attitude to the theory of scientific socialism.

It should be stressed that there is only one theory of scientific socialism, and the use of different methods to achieve the revolutionary transformations it prescribes does not imply a 'multiplicity' of socialist doctrines. Variety of methods does not violate the general principles of preparing the transition to socialism and socialist development. On the other hand, scientific socialism rejects ossified formulas and presupposes creative application of these principles in different concrete situations.

'Experimental' ideological 'correctives' of the theory of scientific socialism have their origins both in right-wing opportunism of the pragmatic variety, and in equally dangerous left opportunism. The very existence of the two is evidence of the intricate class-political character of the national liberation movements in developing countries. Any serious analysis must take into account the political and ideological positions of the revolutionary democrats and the interaction of the progressive forces. This is a key problem requiring much theoretical effort.

We know that there are what might be described as two categories of revolutionary democrats. The first are coming progressively closer to the fundamentals of scientific socialism, and this finds expression in

their patriotic and internationalist world outlook and in their concrete policies. The second likewise accept revolutionary slogans, but their actions lead to results that are anything but revolutionary. The experience of social development in the liberated countries is the most reliable criterion of our attitude to the various revolutionary-democratic groups and to appraising their practical work. And this experience leads to the conclusion that the underlying problem of some national-democratic revolutions is linked with Left-opportunist tendencies in the policies of their leaders. For others it is right-wing opportunism, which leads the revolution to a dead end and throws it into the arms of neo-colonialism.

Our own experience in Democratic Yemen suggests that only scientific socialism gives the revolution a clear vision of its main social-development problems and provides correct strategic and tactical decisions in home and foreign policy. We understand strategy to mean primarily defining one's position on the chief factor of our epoch, namely, confrontation of the two world systems. In our view, any 'neutral' policy in this struggle is bound to be false, demagogic and doomed to failure. For one cannot simultaneously hold capitalist and socialist positions. In our age, the correct position for revolutionaries is firm acceptance of the struggle against imperialism, Zionism, reaction and racism, a firm position in the mainstream of the revolutionary process, relying on, and contributing to, the international solidarity of the progressive forces.

The main strategic element of the revolution in every developing country is the substance and form of its solution of the question of power. The victory of the national democratic revolution and implementation of the necessary social transformations require complete dismantling of the government machine inherited from the feudal and colonial days and its replacement by a new system corresponding to the material and spiritual interests of the laboring people, the majority of the population. The character of the old power structure — including its military and civil institutions — must be changed fundamentally to establish a genuinely democratic regime relying on the broad masses and bringing them into the work of building the new life.

Our own experience (and that of others) shows that a radical solution of the question of power, one that is in the interests of the people, is a decisive factor in strengthening political independence and emancipating and developing the national economy. Overcoming economic dependence on the capitalist world system entails abolishing the old pattern of economic relations, substituting for the anarchy of the capitalist mode of production scientific planning of social and economic development which reacts both on the basis and the superstructure. The appropriate measures — nationalization of

major foreign and local assets, organization of a state economic sector, solution of the land question, establishment of cooperative and state farms — are becoming components of the socialist orientation. This finds expression also in other areas, viz., education, culture, health, public services, social maintenance, etc. And whereas the question of power is central and basic to domestic politics, the creative choice of practical methods to resolve political, economic and other development problems assures the transition from pre-capitalist to socialist society. That is how we understand our policy of socialist orientation.

This policy finds expression also in foreign affairs. In this age of the struggle between socialism and capitalism, no movement aimed at a social renaissance can succeed without close ties and interaction with the world revolutionary process and its three main forces — the socialist system, the international working-class movement and the national-liberation movement. And there is a wealth of experience to show that this is facilitated by strengthening the principles of peaceful coexistence of countries with different social systems. Application of these principles assures optimal conditions for the revolutionary forces, especially in developing countries.

The development of the revolution in Democratic Yemen and its socialist orientation are encountering resistance from opponents of our policy. That can be clearly seen in the endless conspiracies and subversion against our Republic, including the economic blockade and the elaborate propaganda campaign to distort our principles and aims. The revolutionary transformations for which the Yemenese people have fought for such a long time, are causing the imperialists and reactionaries a good deal of disquiet, for they fear that Democratic Yemen will exert and 'undesirable' influence on certain other countries.

Another and no less important reason for their disquiet was our ability to bring together the country's revolutionary forces at the 1975 unity congress. There is no overestimating the significance of this event, unprecedented not only in the Arab East. For it is no secret that many democratic and progressive contingents in the developing countries are still disunited, with secondary contradictions and conflicts prevailing over contradictions and conflicts with the main enemy. This gives the imperialists and reactionaries many opportunities to pursue their aggressive and subversive designs and retain their positions and interests.

What do we see in the Arab world today? An intensified offensive by imperialism and reaction and their growing influence in many countries. Following its defeat in Vietnam and the whole of Indochina, U.S. imperialism is concentrating on the Middle East, and

more particularly its Arab regions. The clearest evidence of that is the continued occupation of Arab territory and the unceasing attempts to break the Palestinian people's will to liberation. The bloodbath in the Lebanon, unleashed against the Palestine Resistance and the Lebanese national-democratic forces, is but part of an imperialist plot to divide the forces of the Arab national-liberation movement,[1] especially those that follow a progressive policy.

And so, imperialism and its allies persist in their attempts to crush the revolutionary and democratic forces in the Arab world. This can plainly be seen in the conspiracies against the Oman revolution which is led by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman. Aggression by the Iranian armed forces has created a very real danger not only to the people of Oman, but to peace throughout our region. The imperialists and reactionary forces also persist in their fight against Democratic Yemen, as evidenced, in particular, by their encouragement of attempts to knock together blocs involving Iran and other reactionary regimes on the spurious pretext of assuring the 'security' of the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea.

Attempts to hold back the spread of revolutionary processes in the young states are not, of course, confined to the Middle East. Imperialist and reactionary plots go much farther, to Africa in particular, where in recent years the national liberation movement has scored splendid victories, due in part to the emergence of independent socialist-oriented states in the former Portuguese colonies. Leaning on certain African regimes, their factual allies, the imperialists, are doing everything to halt and reverse the process of national and social emancipation,[2] of which the revolutions in Ethiopia and Somalia are an inalienable and important element. And it is only natural that the imperialists should try to exploit, incite and aggravate contradictions between the two countries in order to provoke a more serious clash between the two revolutions and, in the end, suppress both.

That could have grave consequences not only for the people of these countries, but also for the entire African national-liberation movement. That is why the forces of progress, democracy and socialism are doing everything they can to achieve a positive settlement of the differences between Ethiopia and Somalia and thus thwart the imperialist plot against them. That is why it is imperative to achieve unity of revolutionaries everywhere, in all countries and regions.

One proof that this is feasible is the unity achieved by the revolutionary forces of Democratic Yemen and their firm policy of building a united vanguard party. Our experience and that of the international communist and workers' movements indicates that revolutionaries sharing identical or closely-related political and ideological positions

should not find it hard to unite against their enemies, the imperialists and reactionaries.

We are fully aware of the specific character of our revolution. And we appreciate the fact that the complexity of our conditions, plus imperialist and reactionary activity against us, narrow our opportunities to help other revolutions. But we are convinced that, all the difficulties notwithstanding, we will defeat the imperialist and reactionary conspiracies and strengthen our solidarity with the forces fighting for peace, democracy, and progress throughout the world.

1. The latest example — attempts to inflate the conflict between Libya and Egypt. — *Ed.*
2. Particularly in Southern Africa. — *Ed.*

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Socialist parliament: an instrument of people's rule

Alois Indra
Presidium member, CC CPCz,
and Chairman, Federal
Assembly of Czechoslovakia

It is fair to say that the tremendous effort of the communist and workers' parties of the fraternal socialist countries to perfect democratic forms and institutions is a prominent aspect of political life under existing socialism. This effort is by no means a passing phenomenon but is prompted by the very nature of the new system, for the steadfast promotion of democracy is a decisive requisite of the progress of socialist society, whose highest goal is the all-round development of the individual. The growing scope of the economy, the increasing complexity of managing it, the deepening interconnection of social and economic policies, the rising educational and cultural standards of the population, its mounting activity and the experience gained in drawing the working people into production management are among the main reasons for the prime importance of furthering socialist democracy.

On the other hand, the issue of socialist democracy has lately been in the center of the worldwide ideological struggle, which encompasses all problems ranging from individual rights and freedoms to key political institutions of socialist society. Enemies of Marxism-Leninism, anti-communists, allege that the communists 'reject' democracy because they see the only road to socialism in the use of armed force and 'scorn' a highly important democratic institution as parliament. Parliament is said to be underrated even after a victorious socialist revolution; indeed, the communists are alleged to abolish the parliamentary system on taking power.

Groundless charges of this kind are refuted by both Marxist-Leninist theory and the policies of the socialist countries. This will be seen by anyone who studies the classics of scientific communism and records of the communist and workers' parties directing socialist and communist construction in their countries, the communist parties of the non-socialist part of the world and the international communist movement as a whole. That is also evident from the actual political

development of the Soviet Union and other countries where socialism is a reality and the principles of genuine democracy extend to every public sphere, first of all to the decisive sphere — production relations. Parliament, whose significance under socialism does not diminish but increases notably, plays a qualitatively new role as an instrument of people's rule.

This article is an account of the work of parliament at various stages of social development. It concentrates on the following fundamental issues: the party's attitude to parliament in preparing for and accomplishing the socialist revolution, and the place and role of parliament in the socialist political system.

1

Czechoslovakia has gained substantial experience confirming, in our view, the vitality and universal validity of the principles underlying the Marxist-Leninist doctrine of the socialist revolution, the role of the working class and its political vanguard, the revolutionary party's attitude to bourgeois parliament, and the socialist state and institutions of people's government. However, we always stress that we succeed when we apply these principles with due regard to the situation in our country and weigh all inner political and international factors.

It is well known that between the two world wars, under bourgeois democracy, the CPCz was persecuted and often had to operate in conditions of semi-legality. Nevertheless, it strove to use parliament to the utmost as an arena of class struggle.

Communist deputies and senators did not at all consider parliament the main, let alone the only, arena of class struggle, and, taking into account the state of affairs at the time they did not share the reformist illusion that the debates conducted in it would work radical changes in the character of power. But they did not look on parliament as a mere debating club to be ignored by revolutionaries. In pre-war Czechoslovakia it was not the communists but the government coalition and the right-wing opposition that treated parliament as a setting intended to create the impression of democracy and disguise the power of the bourgeoisie. Although parliament was the scene of heated debates, the country's fate was shaped elsewhere, in the narrow circle of bankers, industrialists, landed proprietors and their political agents.

In the tragic autumn days of 1938, the ruling bourgeoisie revealed its real attitude to parliament. At this crucial point, it saw in parliament an obstacle to the attainment of its class aims. The president of the republic and the government found it unnecessary to hear the opinion of their own parliament on the Munich diktat; they flouted the Constitution and grossly exceeded their powers. They gave the MPs

no chance to speak out on so important a matter as the annexation of part of the republic's territory and the violation of its sovereignty. Incidentally, Czechoslovakia's Western allies of the time, who extolled democracy in such florid language, were equally indifferent to the attitude of the Czechoslavak National Assembly.

But, as we have said, the contempt shown for the highest legislative body of the country by the big bourgeoisie and its political agents did not induce the communists to underrate parliament. They used its rostrum to spell out their party's policy, unmask anti-popular parties, combat the evils of capitalist society and defend the working people's interests.

Of course, the comparatively small communist group in parliament could not have convinced the bourgeois MPs, no matter how fiery their speeches or forceful their arguments. But the communist deputies and senators did not speak for the record alone or on only their own behalf; they also spoke on behalf of their party and their electorate, appealing to all working people. Their statements caused concern among bourgeois MPs because the communists' voice was the people's. The communist MPs expressed the interests of hundreds of thousands of jobless men and women. They campaigned for the rights of the workers, poor peasants and small employers and were backed by progressive intellectuals. Their speeches could not be simply dismissed, for they were supported by demonstrations and mass rallies, by numerous large-scale social and political actions. The people knew and respected the communist deputies and senators as fearless champions of the working people's interests. The communists did spend their time in parliament but always worked in the midst of the masses and headed their struggle. Owing to this none of the communist deputies was safeguarded even by his parliamentary immunity against the police truncheon or the prison cell of the 'democratic' republic. The experience of combining parliamentary activity with extra-parliamentary mass actions had its effect on the party's subsequent effort and helped it to evolve a correct policy toward the postwar parliament and use it in the struggle for working-class power.

In the national-liberation struggle against the nazi invaders and a traitorous bourgeoisie, our party followed a strategy and tactics expressing the people's resolve to prevent a comeback of the prewar regime. It wanted to ensure that after liberation the republic was built on the principles of social, class and ethnic justice and that the working people became masters of the new state. Although the situation after the defeat of fascism was favorable, the CPCz resisted the temptation of calling for an immediate socialist revolution. It realized that certain segments of the population still had illusions about that group of the national bourgeoisie which had not discredited itself

through overt collaboration with the enemy. The bourgeoisie could certainly not abandon its class aims; it hoped that revolutionary sentiment would subside, and was waiting for an opportunity to restore its class rule. The task was to show up the real designs of the bourgeoisie sections of the National Front. This objective conditioned the party's political work among the masses and predetermined its position in the Provisional and then in the Constituent National Assembly.

We regard political developments in Czechoslovakia between 1945 and 1948 as an illustrative example of a national democratic revolution growing into a socialist revolution by peaccful means, without the use of armed forces. Our party also used parliament which had been elected by direct, equal and secret ballot. In the 1946 general election, the CPCz won 38 per cent of the votes. It had the largest group in parliament and the party chairman was entrusted with heading the government. But the situation developed in such a way that, contrary to National Front principles, bourgeois and some social-democratic members of the Constituent National Assembly formed an anti-communist coalition. In spite of this outwardly unfavorable balance of forces, the communists carried the day in one political battle after another. They owed these gains to the fact that their campaign for the unfailing implementation of the Program of National Democratic Revolution, known as the Kosica Government Program, was not limited to parliament. Outside parliament they continuously expanded and strengthened their bonds with the masses, supplied the public with detailed information on all negotiations and showed who stood in the way of democratic development, trying to slow it down and eventually turn it back.

No wonder the defenders of bourgeois interests were getting nervous. In fact, how could they have backed, say, the rate and scale of nationalizing industry proposed by the communists? Could they have accepted the communist interpretation of the land reform according to the principle 'The land belongs to those who till it'? or approved the granting of greater powers to the National Committees and thereby helped to consolidate people's rule? How could they have resigned themselves to the Constitution formalizing all the political, economic and social gains of the national democratic revolution or to basing the foreign policy of the new state on durable and all-round cooperation with the Soviet Union? Reactionary MPs felt how they were losing ground along with their masters, and how curbs on their economic power entailed a decline in their political influence.

The communists stood on guard of the people's interests and so could not wait idly for the results of the vote in parliament on this or that issue, however important. Developments in the country dem-

onstrated that the majority of the working people, with the workers in the lead, firmly supported our party's policy, because it met their interests. In these circumstances, the arithmetical balance of forces in the National Assembly was no longer indicative of the real alignment of social forces, the actual political strength of the parties represented in parliament or the people's will. Bourgeois politicians were betraying the National Front program, which they had supported before the election, and were therefore losing the electorate's confidence. The communists were joined by those MPs from other parties who had come to realize who was right, and they refused to be unquestioning underlings of the reactionary bourgeoisie by opposing their people's interests, although they continued to belong to their respective parties.

By invariably coupling parliamentary activity with effort to organize a powerful revolutionary movement of the working people, the party created increasingly favorable conditions in which to move on to the socialist revolution. The decisive class battle in Czechoslovakia was fought according to the people's will and with their active support. The reactionary politicians who had pinned their hopes on plotting behind the scenes found themselves in the plight of generals without troops, for the majority of their electorate and members of their parties, including many functionaries, took a stand against them. The policy of the CPCz won the working class so many allies that the transition to the socialist revolution proceeded peacefully; the workers took power without using force. The Constituent National Assembly (in which, I repeat, the communists were in a minority) discussed and approved the government program submitted by Klement Gottwald.

Those who showed a lack of respect for democratic principles and of 'constitutional sentiment' were by no means the communists but the organizers of a reactionary putsch recruited from the bourgeoisie and its parties. The transition to the socialist revolution was effected by constitutional methods strictly respecting the parliamentary procedure then in force. This was made possible by the proper application of Leninist principles in our country, by the party's strong links with the working class and the majority of other working people, and by the political activity of the masses. Last but not least, the peaceful development of the socialist revolution was made possible by the Czechoslovak-Soviet alliance, which precluded the possibility of imperialist attempts at direct interference in our affairs. Solidarity on the part of the international communist and working-class movement and support from the progressive forces of the world played a notable part. We think this solidarity is and will be very important to any communist party fighting for its country's socialist future.

In the changed political climate, the Constituent National Assembly was able to perform its role. The Constitution adopted on May 9, 1948, finalized all the revolutionary gains and paved the way for building a socialist society.

The newly elected National Assembly, whose composition reflected the changes brought about in the balance of class forces, devoted considerable attention to safeguarding the gains of the revolution. However, its main effort was constructive from the outset, being aimed at managing public life, developing the economy and culture and seeing to the working people's needs. Our parliament passed important laws, nationalizing more industries and other branches of the economy, establishing a foreign trade monopoly, defining the principles of a socialist monetary and insurance system, completing the agrarian reform, setting up a social maintenance system and introducing universal free medical care. Laws instituting a universal type of general-education school, setting up a network of secondary specialized and higher schools and founding an Academy of Sciences played a tremendous part. Agricultural cooperation was promoted by laws on cooperation and land tenure. In short, the National Assembly showed by deeds that it served the working people and that power in the republic was entirely in the people's hands. This, we believe, what makes a fundamental difference in goals and content between socialist democracy and bourgeois, or so-called representative, democracy.

2

For almost 30 years now, the socialist character of our parliament has manifested itself primarily in the *constructive methods* of this body. Incidentally, bourgeois parliaments, though sitting for weeks or even months, often cannot boast of specific results. Our deputies do not have to waste their time and energy in political skirmishes. They are enabled to devote all their abilities to constructive work in committees and at plenary meetings of the two chambers and to political activity in their constituencies.

Another characteristic of a socialist parliament we wish to point out is its constant *link with the working people*. In socialist society, it would be hard to imagine a situation in which deputies concerned themselves with their electorate only during the election campaign and then forgot all about it. It is also indicative that our prospective deputies' electoral speeches never contain big promises that are not backed up by specific action programs. Our candidates go to the electorate with realistic programs based on the policy of the CPCz and the National Front of the CSSR. Implementation of these programs is under the constant supervision of the general public, to

which every deputy renders account at regular intervals. This practice is in striking contrast to that of bourgeois MPs, many of whom forget about their electoral promises even before the election posters have been torn by the wind. What enables our deputies to maintain direct and close links with their constituencies is, among other things, the fact that they continue to perform their professional duties and social functions, live and work side by side with their fellow citizens, share their joys and know their problems. The only thing that sets them apart from their colleagues is that they have bigger duties. Their responsibility to the electorate and the role of public control are also accentuated by the voters' right promptly to recall a deputy who does not keep his promises, or fails to carry out the duties he assumed on being issued with a deputy's credentials, or who infringes socialist moral principles.

Thirdly, a socialist parliament is characterized by the deputies' *political unity on matters of principle*. The situation in Czechoslovakia has been shaped in the course of history in such a way that operating alongside the CPCz within the National Front are another four parties expressing the interests of definite population groups. Besides, 20 per cent of the members of the country's Federal Assembly belong to no party at all. However, all deputies — both communists and non-communists — are united by the desire to express and serve the interests of the electorate to the best of their ability, to execute its will. The policy of the CPCz and the National Front program serving this end, the deputies naturally support them.

The deputies' political unity is a result of their devotion to socialism, to its ideals, of their effort to contribute to the prosperity of their country, and their conviction that the alliance with the Soviet Union and other countries of the socialist community is of vital importance. A sentiment common to our deputies is solidarity with the international communist and working-class movement, with all anti-imperialist, progressive and peace-loving forces.

In multinational states, the working class in power sees one of its most important and pressing tasks in solving the problem of the intricate and delicate relations existing between nations or ethnic groups, Czechoslovakia is one of these states. In tackling the nationalities question, we drew on the vast and fruitful experience of the world's first socialist state. This experience shows that the only just way to settle the question is on the principles of proletarian internationalism and Lenin's relevant doctrine.

The CPCz demanded equality for all nations and nationalities even before the war. After the victory of the socialist revolution, it engaged in a vast effort to materialize this principle step by step. The party saw the main requisite of guaranteeing the equality of all nations and

nationalities in the simultaneous, socialist solution of the problems of both national emancipation proper and class, social emancipation. This hinges above all on equalizing the economic levels of the various regions, and on forming a working class and training specialists from the once backward Slovak people and ethnic minorities. The Czech Republic and its working class played an important internationalist role in this respect by extending disinterested aid to those peoples of our country who were lagging behind.

The party's effort to bring about socialist relations between nations resulted in the establishment of a federal state in which the Czechs and Slovaks united voluntarily, on the basis of the right of nations to self-determination and ensured an equal status in society for citizens of all other nationalities. This has been reflected in the new organizational structure of people's government. The Czech and Slovak republics forming the Federation have autonomous legislative assemblies and governments, and the Federal Assembly consists of two chambers. Whereas deputies to the House of the People are elected in all parts of the country on the principle of one deputy for a specified number of voters, in the House of Nations the two republics are represented by an identical number of deputies. The equality of the two nations is also assured by the equal status of the two chambers, which means that no law becomes effective until approved by both. The Czechoslovak Constitution prohibits all individual privileges or restrictions on account of nationality. Nine years' experience has convinced us that federalization has proved its worth. It has enabled both republics to develop their distinctive cultures and economies and has strengthened the unity of the Czechoslovak state. The CPCz is the decisive factor for these achievements and guarantees a uniform approach to all fundamental issues.

The purpose of socialist democracy is to continuously extend the working people's participation in the management of public affairs, production, and life in cities, districts, regions, in republics and throughout the Federation. Socialist society has a stake in the greatest possible number of people participating directly in the framing and implementation of our home and foreign policy, in their not being mere onlookers but active builders of socialism and makers of their destiny. To this end, we use the most diverse ways and means of furthering socialist democracy, which range from citizens' participation in various commissions and activists' groups of national committees and in the work of mass organizations to nationwide discussions of important bills, economic and social development plans, and so on.

Members of legislative assemblies, who are the conduits of people's rule, play an important part in extending and perfecting these

activities. The standard of legislative and supervisory activity depends on their political and human qualities. Our deputies enjoy the people's respect also because they perform their parliamentary duties, which require considerable effort and time, without giving up their jobs in industry, agriculture, research, culture or other fields. To be sure, the state affords deputies definite opportunities to carry out their duties but being a deputy in our country provides no extra source of income. We regard this as an important advantage of the socialist parliamentary system, which guarantees deputies genuine freedom of activity. (What 'freedom of decision-making' can there be, for example, in the case of bourgeois MPs whose election depends, sometimes in decisive measure, on mysterious 'election funds' and on the activity of the monopoly bourgeois alignments behind them? Or for those MPs who are also board members of banks and industrial companies and who take bribes and accept 'gifts' and other donations from companies interested in their services?)

Many of our opponents simply deny the effectiveness and competence of socialist parliament, alleging that the electoral principles on which it is constituted are not really democratic, for they do not guarantee the expression of the will and interests of every population group. They see the 'absence' of electoral democracy in the lack of struggles between political alignments and their candidates, of political advertising through the mass media, and so on.

Now, first of all, these allegations betray a conscious or unconscious desire to impose on socialist society the criteria of democracy borrowed from bourgeois politics and mirroring capitalist relations. We consider this approach wrong in principle. Democracy is a class concept; the principles and criteria of socialist democracy differ qualitatively from those of bourgeois democracy, which cannot be mechanically transplanted into socialist society.

Secondly, is it true that bourgeois democracy, even in its most advanced form, provides the working people with the opportunity to influence politics directly and effectively through the electoral system? What has changed in, say, the condition of jobless Americans now that most congressmen, state governors and the president himself are Democrats and not Republicans? For that matter, how can anyone call the president a man 'chosen by the people' since he only won about 27 per cent of the votes of all registered electors? What about the opinion of the 47 per cent who stayed away from the polls? Very many politicians, ideologists and public opinion experts in the USA have admittedly described this massive lack of interest in exercising so important a civil right as a sign of disillusionment with bourgeois democratic institutions.

I will not dwell at length on how elections to all the organs of

people's power take place in our country* but will merely say that our electoral system really guarantees the free election of candidates by voters. Our party sees the electorate's active participation in every stage of the elections and their confidence in both electoral procedure and the candidates as a key advantage of socialist democracy. Last year's election campaign, for instance, involved over half the adult population of the republic. This democratic approach resulted logically in a massive turnout (although it was not obligatory) and unanimous approval of the National Front candidates. Over a million citizens joined in preparations for and the organization of the 1976 general election in Czechoslovakia.

A further indication of the democratic nature of our political system is that the composition of our parliament is representative of the social class structure of society. More than 60 per cent of the members of the Federal Assembly are directly engaged in material production; 28 per cent of them are women and nearly 20 per cent, young people.

There are no seats in our parliament for spokesmen of industrial, bank and landed big capital. For these elements, like other exploiters, are simply non-existent in our society. Consequently, there is no social and economic basis for warring political parties, struggle between diverse political forces during election campaigns, a parliamentary opposition or other attributes of bourgeois democracy. We are certain that to revive them, by way of 'democratizing' socialism, as bourgeois propaganda persistently suggests, would mean to revive forces hostile to socialism and our people would never consent to this. Indeed, we know from history that opposition in a socialist society can only be directed against socialism, a system brought into being by the people and enjoying their unqualified support.

The absence of such a 'political opposition' is not a weak point but an advantage of socialist democracy. It is evidence that the people are masters in their country, that they themselves make the laws, interpret them and see to their enforcement.

As distinct from many capitalist parliaments, our Federal Assembly (FA) is not only a legislative body but 'the supreme organ of state power,' to quote the Constitution. Accountable to it are the President of the Republic, the government of the CSSR and its every member, the General Procurator and the Supreme Court. It is the duty of all Federal government bodies and economic agencies to supply it with requisite data. Our parliament decides on the objectives of economic development and distributes the national income. The content and methods of the FA, its chambers, committees and individual members are in keeping with this provision. Legislative activity is

*For details of the procedure, see F. Travnicek's article in *WMR*, July 1977.

supplemented by the supervisory function of verifying the execution of decisions and laws, and by coordinating and organizing activity. Principled public criticism is a most important method of eliminating shortcomings. FA decisions are binding on the executive authority. Cabinet ministers must not only answer deputies' questions, but take the measures these questions may necessitate. Our deputies' work is planned; they are allowed ample time to draft laws and plan chamber sessions. This enables them to weigh the likely effect of each decision they prepare, which they do with due regard to the opinions of their constituent, National Committees, non-governmental organizations and experts.

To fully appreciate the advantages of socialist democracy one must know something more than the status and activity of legislative bodies. In our country, these bodies base their work on that of lower-echelon representative bodies (regional, district and local National Committees), which number 200,000 members. In the CSSR the National Committees are actually responsible for everything that is connected with the life of the people, and they have corresponding authority, financial funds and administrative powers. If one adds to this all the organizations united in the National Front and takes account of the role in solving various problems, one will see what the CSSR Constitution means by stating: 'All power in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic belongs to the working people.' In promoting socialist democracy, we proceed from Lenin's idea that the socialist state is strong 'when the people are politically conscious. It is strong when the people know everything, can form an opinion of everything and do everything consciously.' (*Coll. Works,* Vol. 26, p. 256).

Our enemies distrot reality by reducing the socialist political system to the 'diktat of the ruling party.' We do not deny that the FA sees its paramount task in carrying CPCz policies into practice and in providing prerequisites for building a developed socialist society. This approach is objectively determined by the growing role played in socialist society by the Communist Party, which Leonid Brezhnev, speaking to the USSR Supreme Soviet in session last June, described as 'the core of our whole political system, of all organizations of the working people, governmental and non-governmental alike.' As a ruling party, the CPCz has decided, and will continue to decide, on the strategy of solving all major social problems. Deputies follow the party line not because they are carrying out someone's orders but because they consider the party's policy to be the only correct one. I would like to add that communist deputies strive to approach party decisions in a creative spirit and with due regard to the distinctive conditions of their parliamentary activity. Furthermore, deputies are not mere 'executors' of party policy but take part in shaping it. The

CPCz and the National Front use the deputies' vast experience of life, professional knowledge and proposals resulting from their frequent contacts with the electorate.

As regards members of other parties and non-party people, the communists use the method of political leadership in its Leninist meaning. We win their support for our party's policy through concrete, meaningful discussions, by advancing sound arguments, showing patience and tact and fostering trustful human relations. As a result, our non-communist colleagues satisfy themselves that by supporting CPCz policy they are serving a good cause and proceeding in accordance with their voters' views.

However, socialist democracy — its content, forms and methods — should not be construed as a 'model' complete in every respect, something designed for all time. Its development is a continuous process influenced by current and long-range needs, the objective and subjective possibilities of society, and international circumstances. The 25th CPSU Congress, the 15th CPCz Congress and the congresses of other communist parties devoted much attention to perfecting socialist democracy and increasing the working people's participation in management. The CPCz purposefully guides the development of socialist democracy and encourages this process in its everyday work. We proceed from Lenin's well-known thesis that socialism is inconceivable without democracy, just as no genuine democracy can exist without socialism. To treat democracy and socialism as antitheses and say they are incompatible — which is what anti-communist propaganda does — is to deliberately misrepresent the real state of affairs.

The draft of the new Soviet Constitution is an outstanding instance of consistent advancement of socialist democracy. The whole world can again see the great advantage of developed socialist society, in which political freedoms and social and civil rights are a natural and inseparable component of the Soviet people's life and a constant spur to their initiative, labor and political activity. The new Soviet Constitution is a fitting contribution to the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Great October. It is proof that the path which the world's first socialist state is following under the leadership of Lenin's party is the right path.

The CPCz, like the communist parties of other fraternal socialist countries, maintains that in the period of the scientific and technological revolution the role of the subjective factor in the management of society is particularly great. More than ever, success depends primarily on people's political awareness and professional qualities, on their extensive, active and creative participation in the solution of every

problem. Hence the logical need to increase the role of people's representative bodies, including socialist parliament.

The decisions of the 15th CPCz Congress prompt deputies to the Federal Assembly to persevere in perfecting their legislative, supervisory and organizing activity. This means that we must seek still closer links with reality and respond to its requirements, drawing on the working people's wisdom and striving for well-coordianted team work.

The way to revive the Portuguese economy

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RESULTS OF A NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE PORTUGUESE COMMUNIST PARTY

The so-called policy of economic rehabilitation, being conducted by the socialist government with the support of the Social Democratic Party and the Social-Democratic Center, is, in effect, a policy of restoring the positions of capitalism, latifundism and imperialism, and is hampering the revival of Portugal's economy. It is actually aimed at nullifying the gains of the revolution and restoring the capitalist order of the fascist period through a steady worsening of the economic and financial situation and abandoning any independent national policy on economic matters.

For all practical purposes, the country's production is in a state of stagnation. Investments remain at an extremely low level. This year's agricultural crop will be much lower than last year's. In 1976, the trade deficit was 20,600 million escudos up on 1975, and in the first three months of this year, it was 3,500 million escudos up on the same period last year. From July 1975 to February 1977, according to the official data, unemployment nearly doubled. In the past year, real wages fell by 6 per cent and will continue rapidly to decline as a result of the wage freeze. Since March of last year, the cost of living in Lisbon went up 32 per cent. Corruption and speculation have spread.

The wide gap between national production and consumption tends to increase the trade deficit, which in 1976 came to 75,000 million escudos. This necessarily had an effect on the country's

financial condition. Last year, the payments deficit totalled 29,000 million escudos, and there is every sign that it is on the increase. Portugal had a gold stock of 850 tons (of which 350 tons have already been pledged for loans), and at the present exchange rate it is valued at roughly 130,000 million escudos. Its foreign-exchange reserve now stand at no more than 5,000 million escudos, while the external debt (of the state and private companies) comes to roughly 160,000-170,000 million escudos, which is more than the value of the gold stock and the foreign-exchange reserves. The gravity of the situation is quite obvious, for the country may well lose all its foreign exchange reserve and gold stock, together with hopes of obtaining fresh credits for importing the goods it needs. The government's policy of making systematic use of foreign credits to cover the deficit has been pushing the country into greater indebtedness and dependence and is running into mounting difficulties.

For all these reasons, the payments balance is a heavy burden on the economy and a highly acute problem which is fraught with much danger for the country. Unless urgent measures are taken to meet the situation, and the deficit is radically reduced, the crisis is bound rapidly to lead to a financial collapse with profound consequences for production and consumption. Imperialism and reaction have been pushing the country onto this disastrous course in the hope that the critical situation will help them to saddle our people with the most onerous conditions of economic, financial and political domination. That is why urgent measures need to be taken and the nation's energy concentrated to get out of the crisis, overcome the current difficulties and revitalize the economy.

This situation is the inevitable result both of the overall economic-policy orientation and of the practical, day-to-day acts which tend to destroy the non-capitalist structures created by the revolution. The manifestly unjustified return of enterprises abandoned by their owners and taken over by the state, and of lands to the latifundists clearly shows that, far from stimulating national-economic development, the policy of restoring capitalism has in effect caused great complications, led to stoppages in industry and to a decline in industrial and agricultural production.

Land has been arbitrarily returned to the big landowners, while the members of collective farms and cooperatives who have been working it have been left jobless once again. Large landed estates are being neglected. There are numerous examples to show that the return to latifundism is undermining economic rehabilitation, and that the acts of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries are criminal and run counter to the interests of the national economy. The aims of Antonio Barreto (a renegade from the Portuguese Communist Party and a

one-time leftist) who heads the Ministry, are quite obvious and have nothing to do with economic rehabilitation.In a speech of June 21, 1977, he declared: 'Our agrarian reform is essentially socialist and is aimed to oust the Communist Party from Alentejo.' Actually, however, despite Barreto's intentions, the Communist Party's influence in Alentejo has been growing from day to day, while the Socialist Party has been losing its positions in the area.

The facts show that far from helping to revive the country's economic life, the minority socialist government's measures, which cut across the specific features of Portugal's economy, in effect tend to worsen its economic and financial positions. However, the working people's struggle has limited the scale of capitalist restoration and has helped somewhat to consolidate the major gains of the revolution, such as the agrarian reform, nationalization and workers' control.

That was the complicated situation in which the Portuguese Communist Party held its national Conference last June. It was an expression of massive initiative and evoked a positive response among various sections of the population.

In November 1976, soon after its Eighth Congress, the PCP decided, in view of the country's worsening economic and financial condition, to start a systematic study of the economy and to seek resources and potentialities for its development. A Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee held on April 4, 1977, summed up the results of the work done and decided to call a National Conference of the party to discuss one question: 'The economic and financial situation and ways of overcoming the present difficulties.'

A political resolution approved by the Plenary Meeting emphasized that 'the only reliable basis for rehabilitating and developing the economy is a growth of production both in industry and agriculture.' It also noted the importance of party branches at enterprises and defined their role and tasks in agricultural associations and in other sectors of production. It emphasized the need to carry on at every opportunity open debate on the economic problems which are of concern to all Portuguese, with the participation of non-party working people and of members of other parties.

As a starting point, 80 documents were framed for the various sectors mainly to consider the concrete aspects of production both in agriculture (grain and oil crops, animal husbandry, dairy farming, etc.) and in industry (engineering, metallurgy, mining, the textile industry, etc.), and also various problems in transportation, the payments balance and the financial situation. These documents were circulated among the party branches directly concerned with the specific problems in each area. After this, the party cells and branches began a study of the problems dealt with in these documents for the

purpose of starting a discussion. Across the country, 1,283 open preparatory meetings were held with the participation of hundreds of technicians and economists, and tens of thousands of working people. At many of the meetings called on the initiative of the party cells, most of those taking an active part were not communists. Indeed, invitations to attend the National Conference were circulated on the basis of the same criterion: over 50 per cent of the invitations went to non-communists. In the course of the preparation of the Conference, hundreds of individual and 747 collective letters containing various proposals were received by the Central Committee, and many of these came from non-party people and members of other parties.

This helped to set a clear aim before the Conference: to map out the concrete tasks and ways of fulfilling them in each area of economic and financial activity, especially those which are or could be of the greatest importance for the balance of payments, and also to formulate recommendations on ways of markedly reducing the payments deficit, which has become a concentrated expression of all the difficulties, needs and weaknesses of the Portuguese economy. In other words, the Conference had as its aim the formulation of urgent measures to do away with the trade and payments deficit, considering that the guidelines of the party's economic policy had already been laid down by the Eighth Congress.

The Conference reached the conclusion — and it was reflected in its final statement — that the most important condition just now for rapid rehabilitation of the national economy is preservation of the existing structures, characterized by the Eighth Congress of the PCP:

'1. The non-capitalist structure consisting of three sectors:

(a) the state sector comprising nationalized enterprises and enterprises run and financed by the state:

(b) the cooperative and collective-farm sector in the agrarian-reform zone;

(c) the sector of the cooperatives set up by the working people at enterprises abandoned by their owners.

2. The economic sector of small-scale industrial and handicraft production and small farm-owners.

3. The capitalist sector of the economy.

4. The economic sector with a tendency toward its transformation into a state-capitalist sector of mixed state enterprises and private Portuguese or foreign capital.'[1]

If the economy is to be revived, the existing production relations need to be maintained and the right of each sector to function and develop recognized. The agrarian reform has shown the tremendous potentialities opening up for production with the establishment of collective farms and cooperatives run by the working people, and by

the small and middle landowners. There is a need finally to secure for the collective farms and cooperatives their right to use the land they now hold in perpetuity. This implies preventing sabotage by the big landowners, prohibiting any measures violating the immunity of collective farms and cooperatives, undermining their activity and infringing on their rights. The provisions of the Constitution on the agrarian reform have to be observed.

Workers' control or control over management are required to ensure the normal functioning of enterprises and their development. The enterprises abandoned by their owners and revived by the workers with the support of the state must not be returned to their erstwhile saboteur owners. A solution has to be found together with the working people themselves: there is a need to continue guiding such enterprises, setting up mixed enterprises, including them in the state sector, the cooperative sector, or a sector with some other type of property. The nationalized enterprises must become the mainspring of economic rehabilitation. Observance of the terms of nationalization and recognition that the nationalized enterprises have the crucial role to play in the economy rule out any transfer of management of such enterprises into private hands.

The capitalist sector and the small and middle enterprises, in particular, are in need of appropriate legislation and resources to invigorate them. In Portugal's present conditions, this sector could play an important role in reducing imports by starting production of goods now being imported. The state has a duty to help the small and middle landowners by providing them with technical assistance and credits, helping them to market their products at fixed prices, and by establishing cooperatives and by other initiatives.

That is the kind of policy — based on the realities of our economy which have resulted from the revolution and which have been written into the Constitution — that must be held out to the Portuguese people, to all the exploited, all the laboring sections, and all the classes desiring to strengthen democracy and defend national independence. The participants in the Conference believe that the situation requires the following:

— an economic policy based above all on increasing production and reducing the payments deficit, with preservation of the economic sectors existing in the country and with an eye to their importance and pace of development;

— a reduction of imports and an increase of exports through strict accounting of all the potentialities in selecting the domestic product-mix with preference for products which are most competitive or which require insignificant investments, coordination of state control over exports and boosting them through genuine diversification of

external relations and a policy of national independence;

— an increase in the production of goods now being imported through the utmost use of the national resources, the available production facilities and manpower resources as a mandatory and necessary condition for keeping the balance of payments in equilibrium and rehabilitating the national economy;

— stimulation of external revenues (tourist trade, remittances from emigrants), which will help to carry the burden of imports; direction of external credits into the sphere of production with respect for national sovereignty, use of all the potentialities for obtaining international credits on more favorable terms in order to build up the country's industrial potential;

— a tough policy to prevent non-productive and wasteful spending to ensure overall economy of resources (electric power, fuel, raw materials, etc.).

All these measures aimed to improve the health of the economy and, in particular, gradually to reduce and eliminate the balance of payments deficit within the shortest possible period, must accord with the guidelines of economic development whose main aim is to promote the interests of the people and national independence.

However, economic rehabilitation depends on a number of other factors: a national policy based on acceptance of the existing economic sectors, and a correct combination of controls and orientation in economic and financial activity (planning, credit policy and investments, agrarian and industrial policy, and policy on trade and prices). But a revival of the economy also depends on such a factor as coordination of the efforts of the state, the enterprises and the working people, and on the level of initiative within the framework of established policy and accepted plan.

The PCP's National Conference reached the conclusion that the trade and payments deficit can be rapidly reduced and then altogether eliminated. This can be done if the proposals for the measures approved by the Conference and made public on the same day are adopted by the government. The participants in the Conference believe that within two years farm and forestry output can be increased by roughly 12,000 million escudos. According to preliminary estimates, industrial production could go up to a point at which it would exceed the volume of farm output in value. It is also possible to cut back imports within a short period by roughly 28,000 million escudos, including 11,000 million through austerity measures and 17,000 million through a substitution of national products for imports. The development of exports and tourism, and an increase in foreign-exchange receipts from emigrants will help to cover the payments deficit.

The policy proposed by the Communist Party to revitalize the economy on the basis of the existing socio-economic structures can yield the desired results: a rapid achievement of equilibrium in the Portuguese economy, a reduction and subsequent elimination of the payments deficit, release from the burden of external indebtedness and development of the Portuguese economy on the principles of democracy, progress and national independence. However, economic life can be revived only with the participation of the working people. Conscious of their responsibility, they are prepared to take a voluntarily, dedicated and creative part in the effort.

The present socialist government is incapable of coping with national problems. Its policy of restoring the positions of capitalism, latifundism and imperialism, its inefficiency and lack of popular support have all led to an aggravation, instead of a solution of the problems. That is why all the political forces in the country are now seeking an alternative course.[2]

The forces of reaction have tried to impose their own alternative on the present government. The 'democratic accord' — a bloc of the Social Democratic Party and the Social Democratic Center — is, in effect, a reactionary alliance aimed at establishing a patently right-wing government with or without the participation of the Socialist Party. Far from improving the health of the economy such a government would soon pave the way for a new dictatorship.

A democratic alternative cannot be ensured by the reactionaries, the capitalists, the big landowners and imperialists, who are acting against the Portuguese people and national independence, but only by the democrats, the working people, the masses. And this alternative can be made a reality only with the participation of the Communist Party, a great working people's party; it cannot be directed against it.

The National Conference declared that the PCP would continue tirelessly to bend every effort to bring about unity of all the men and women of Portugal seeking to avoid a return to the fascist past and to safeguard the development of the democratic process. The PCP re-emphasized its readiness to join with *all* the democratic forces and circles seeking to advance the democratic process and defend the constitutional regime, and to study the possibilities for working out a national platform to ensure the rehabilitation of the economy, establishing political freedoms and consolidating the national independence.

It is safe to say that the Conference achieved its aims. The depth and scale of its decisions have surpassed our expectations. There were 111 speakers, while the Editing Commission received more than 350 proposals and remarks on the draft statements.

Never before in this country has so much information been col-

lected, such a detailed analysis carried out, or so many decisions and recommendations adopted on concrete measures. In terms of involvement of the people, this conference offers an example of the methodology of truly democratic planning.

Never before in the country's whole history had our people gained such a deep insight into national-economic problems as it did during the Conference, and never before had economic policy been defined in such encompassing, circumstantial and precise terms. This was made possible by the PCP's style of work, which is marked by profound study of the problems involving the most democratic, broad and direct participation by the working people.

1. Alvaro Cunhal, 'A revolucao portuguesa. O passado e o futuro.' *Edicoes 'Avante!'*, 1976, p. 281.

2. In breach of the promises to Portuguese voters and of the socialist government's own party and government program, it has recently put through various measures against the interests of the working people and threatening to wipe out the key revolutionary gains. These include the so-called Barreto Act 'On the Principles of a New Agrarian Reform,' which has been substituted for the earlier agrarian legislation adopted in the first years of the Portuguese Revolution and which is in overt breach of the provisions of the Constitution. A law has also been passed on the payment of compensation to shareholders who are former owners of nationalized enterprises, banks and insurance companies. Following a circumstantial analysis at this year's July PCP CC Plenary Meeting of the situation which has taken shape in the country, the communists presented their proposals for discussion by the Portuguese people. These call for the resignation of the present government, the dissolution of parliament and new elections. The Communist Party has also proposed the suspension, by using the valid constitutional and juridical rules, of the laws recently passed by the Assembly of the Republic. — *Ed.*

The Polish village on the road of change

Josef Pinkowski
CC Secretary,
Polish United Workers' Party

In its work to achieve all-round national development and a steady rise in the people's standard of living the Polish United Workers' Party attaches great importance to the problems of developing agriculture and the food industry. Its agrarian policy is closely bound up with the whole strategy of socio-economic progress outlined at the Sixth Congress and stated in full at the Seventh Congress of the PUWP in 1975. This strategy is primarily designed to improve the general standard of living on the basis of accelerated economic development and more efficient use of the means of production and

resources. The urge to substantially improve living conditions is characteristic of the period of building a developed socialist society, the stage which Poland has now entered.

The objective of our agriculture and food industry is to increase production to the level needed to further improve the national diet. According to the long-range program drawn up by the PUWP Central Committee, agricultural production is to be doubled between 1971 and 1990. Substantial progress is to be made in modernizing agriculture and the food industry and the process of social change in the countryside is to be carried deeper. At the 15th CC Plenum in 1974, Edward Gierek, First Secretary of the CC, PUWP, noted: 'The common denominator of all our initiatives in agriculture must be the desire to modernize it in the broadest sense of the term.'

The targets are being consistently achieved. The five years between 1971 and 1975 saw a more than 20 per cent growth in agriculture's overall output, despite the unfavorable weather conditions in the latter years of this period. Another 16-19 per cent increase is envisaged under the current five-year plan (1976-1980). So over the 10 years, 1971-1980, agricultural production should rise by upwards of 40 per cent. In 1971-1976 the output of the food industry increased by nearly 56 per cent. The present five-year plan envisages a further dynamic rise in this industry. Over the whole period, 1971-1980, its output will be more than doubled.

To sustain this rate of development all the reserves and potentials of agriculture must be used rationally. This applies both to its constantly expanding and strengthening socialist sector and to the private farms, which are still dominant in production and market deliveries. Two of the CC, PUWP plenary meetings held in the past year have been devoted to this issue. They listed measures for the complete fulfillment of the Seventh Congress's socio-economic program, including the agriculture and food industry targets.

In its agrarian policy the PUWP seeks to ensure conditions for a steady rise in farm output while at the same time deepening and expanding the social changes in working conditions and rural life. Agriculture in People's Poland is gradually being modernized and restructured on the basis of socialist construction.

Capitalist Poland was an agrarian country. The great majority of the population lived and worked on the land, but farming was unproductive, technically backward and overcrowded. In socialist Poland things have changed for the better. Agrarian reform abolished the landed estates and created the foundations of a better life for the peasants. Socialist industrialization eliminated rural overcrowding. It also raised the level of consumption and demand for farm produce, which gave to agriculture a new impetus. Opportunities appeared for

equipping it with industrial means of production for consistent transformation and modernization. Of course, considerable effort and massive investment have been and still are needed to overcome the historically conditioned, inherited backwardness and underdevelopment of the material and technical base. But the progress so far achieved provides a good basis for further work.

The party is operating all the levers of social and economic development in order to eliminate this inherited lag and set up a modern highly productive agriculture, that vital link in the dynamically growing socialist economy. At the same time it is taking steps to ensure steady social progress in the rural areas, to improve the rural population's living and working conditions. The efforts of the working class, the peasantry and the intellectuals are being coordinated for this purpose; the growing alliance between the workers and peasants, which was born of the joint class struggle against capitalist oppression and helped to radicalize the peasant masses, also serves this goal. Today this alliance forms the political foundation of the people's power, the basis of the people's growing unity, of its solid backing of the guiding force of our society — the Polish United Workers' Party. The alliance of the working class and the peasantry is a powerful instrument for putting into effect the party's long-range program for developing and perfecting agriculture and improving the national diet.

Most of the agricultural land in Poland (over 70 per cent) belongs to individual peasant farmers. So particular attention is devoted to using the reserves in this sector. The party encourages the peasants' interest in intensifying production on their farms because this tends to increase the output of food and agricultural raw materials, as well as adding to incomes and improving conditions of life in the villages. The main trend in this sphere is specialization and cooperation, which improve productivity and marketing and consolidate the ties between the private farms and the planned socialist economy by means of the system of guaranteed deliveries and contracts.

State planned procurement and contracting now cover over 90 per cent of the marketable output of the private farms. This ramified system, plus a regular system of supply and service, ties the private farms both to the agricultural enterprises of the public sector and to state planning and the socialist national economy as a whole. The proportion of public property in agriculture is gradually increasing and now accounts for approximately 50 per cent of the value of means of production in this sector. Moreover, it comprises not only the property of state and cooperative enterprises, but also machines and other technology concentrated in the agricultural circles[1] and earmarked for servicing the privately owned farms. This is advantageous both for the peasants and the state. The farmer is guaranteed a market

for all his produce at realistic prices laid down in agreements and contracts and he can count on receiving the machines and services he needs. This strengthens his confidence in the future and makes for better use of production potentials and efficient organization of deliveries of farm produce, and enhances the influence of state planning in agricultural development.

Cooperation has a special significance for the farms in the private sector and in strengthening the connection between town and country. It is highly developed in the Polish countryside. There are various cooperatives operating in the villages and their members are nearly all peasants. The agricultural production cooperatives are concerned with procurement and contracting; they supply the farms with equipment and the villages with consumer goods, and process the produce. The cooperatives of the agricultural circles, organized on the basis of the *gmina* (administrative subdivision comprising two or three villages), provide the farmers with production services. These cooperatives have funds for agricultural development made up of contributions from their members. The funds are used to purchase tractors and other farm machinery, which are concentrated at the *gmina* cooperative centers and employed for mechanizing labor on the peasant farms.[2] The *gmina* cooperative banks provide credit services for the private peasant farms.

Besides helping to achieve basic economic targets the broad development of cooperatives in rural areas helps to solve not only the basic economic problems, but also the equally important problems in the social and educational spheres. The cooperative becomes a school of social activity and self-government; it initiates the development of many different forms of cooperation in agriculture. Our daily life confirms Lenin's idea of the cooperative movement in the countryside as an important factor in transforming the peasant consciousness and paving the way to higher forms of cooperation.

The steady growth of the public sector in agriculture reflects the consistent social transformation of the Polish countryside. This growth has been particularly rapid since the Sixth Party Congress. In the past six years the area of land farmed by the public sector has increased by 1,043,000 hectares, or by 18 per cent. The setting up of 727 new agricultural production cooperatives has swelled the total to more than one and a half thousand. The widespread adoption of basic forms of cooperation also shows that the peasants have a growing interest in collective farming.

The state farms have at their disposal a large area of land, totalling 3,400,000 hectares. They have grown dynamically in the past six years, increasing their overall agricultural output by nearly 60 per cent. This was due to a number of measures designed to strengthen

the state farms, mechanize labor, and introduce financial and managerial principles stimulating efficiency and productivity. The output of the agricultural production cooperatives has grown equally fast.

The public sector is playing an ever bigger role in Polish agriculture. Organizations in this sector supply the whole of the country's agriculture with seed of high-yield varieties, blood stock and other highly productive means of agricultural production. They train personnel, introduce large-scale industrial methods of production and expand cooperation with the private farms. Farms in the public sector are constantly increasing their share in supplying industry with agricultural raw materials and the market with food, and in bringing land under cultivation. The coming years will see a further intensive and all-round development of public-sector production and its increasing influence in modernizing agriculture.

The decisive factor in modernizing agriculture is the level of the material and technical base. Accelerated mechnization, increased investment for the development of the infrastructure and introduction of industrial equipment on farms are the effective levers for boosting production and the supply of produce for the market, and also for bringing about structural changes in agriculture. The party has drawn up a program for the accelerated development of the material base of agriculture and the whole food industry.

A very important aim is to spreed up mechanization. A set of measures designed to bring more tractors and other machines to the countryside has been launched. Large sums have been assigned for investment in farm-machine building. The steadily growing cooperation with the USSR and other socialist countries offers additional opportunities in this sphere. In the period of the current five-year plan (1976-1980) agriculture will receive more than 330,000 tractors, more than 19,000 grain-harvesting combines, 9,00 beet-harvesters, 24,000 potato-harvesters and many other machines. A further considerable increase is planned for the following five-year period and will help to achieve substantial progress in mechanizing labor, particularly crop cultivation. The foundations for a new, modern material and technical base are already being laid.

In addition to mechanization, chemicalization, soil improvement and construction in agriculture, there is also the reconstruction and modernization of the processing industry, which is an important factor among the measures taken to modernize the whole food production and supply complex. A comprehensive long-range program with much larger funds than in past periods is being carried out. Here the aim is to make better use of agricultural raw material, increase the influence of processing on production and improve the supply of produce for the market.

The mechanization and development of the industries connected with agriculture and other measures will motivate toward concentration of production and increased horizontal and vertical cooperation in agriculture and the food industry. Various production links between enterprises in the public sector of agriculture are being expanded and intensified; inter-sector cooperation based on the production links between private farmers and the public sector — state farms and cooperatives — is being developed. One example is the cooperation in the development of livestock farming, where the public sector performs various services for the private farms (sowing, harvesting, fodder procurement) in return for deliveries of cattle, and so on. The connections with industries working for agriculture are also being improved. New forms of cooperation are developing in the sphere of procurement and contracting.

The practical effect of these processes can be seen, for instance, in the Kenrzinski agro-inductrial amalgamation, which coordinates the development of agricultural production over an area of more than 105,000 hectares. Of this land, 75,400 hectares belongs to state farms and 30,200 hectares to private peasant farms, which work together on the principles laid down for cooperation with state enterprises. Another characteristic feature is the creation of complexes of state agricultural enterprises. As a rule they farm large areas (15-25 thousand hectares) and enterprises belonging to such complexes are highly specialized. These forms give rise to new connections between the processing industry and agricultural production. The Amalgamation of the Poultry-Breeding Industry offers an example of the developing vertical forms of integration and concentration of production. This amalgamation comes under the Ministry of the Food Industry and Procurement, and guides the development of poultry farming, basing itself mainly on the large poultry farms in the agricultural production cooperatives, which collaborate closely on cooperative lines with the poultry processing factories. By using new links with agriculture the amalgamation has doubled poultry output in the past five years.

The need for comprehensive solutions to the problems of agriculture and the food industry also arises on a countrywide scale, just as it does on the 'horizontal' plane of the districts, or the 'vertical' plane of the processing industry. The effectiveness of central planning and management depends on the comprehensive approach in defining the targets of agriculture, the processing industry and other spheres that influence the development rate, productivity and qualitative progress throughout the food industry. The structure embraces numerous spheres connected with processing and services. Besides agriculture it has to do, specifically, with enterprises processing farm output, the

system of procurement and contracting, including all storage facilities, agricultural machinery, certain branches of the chemical industry (fertilizers, etc.), agricultural construction, and also higher education, schools and courses for improving qualifications and spreading agricultural knowledge, and research establishments. The integrated management of the whole food-production and supply complex is vitally important. The foundations for this activity were laid by the long-range comprehensive program for the development of agriculture and the food industry. Between 1971 and 1975 this program received 20 per cent of the country's total investment; under the current five-year plan investment will be increased to approximately 22 per cent.

The setting up of a modern material and technical base for agriculture and the food industry is promoted by the deepening economic and scientific and technological cooperation in this field between the member countries of CMEA, in which our country takes an active part. The creation of the necessary material and technical base guarantees the further development of food production, modernization of agruiculture and social changes in the countryside. This is one of the most important undertakings of our people's state; it involves a vast mobilization of manpower and resources to make better provision for the people's needs and for creating conditions that improve agriculture and turn it into a powerful section of the national economy.

Work and initiative are the driving force of change in agriculture and social relations in the countryside. The party, as the guiding force of society, seeks to mobilize the peasantry and the whole people to solve the problems confronting agriculture and fulfill the program for improving the national diet. This is a task of national importance. Public attention has been focussed on it and party organizations across the country, in every branch of the economy are working for its successful fulfillment. A great deal depends on the peasants themselves and special emphasis is laid on strengthening the party's potential in the villages, on raising the level of ideological, educational and political work among the rural population.

In accordance with the class principle on which the PUWP is built, the majority of party members are workers and peasants. These include 400,000 peasants and agricultural workers. Every *gmina* has several primary party organizations that work under the leadership of the *gmina* committee. A few years ago the *gmina* was strengthened by the reform of the local administrative bodies, which introduced a two-tier system of administration and also changes in territorial division. The *gmina* became the basic element in the system of state administration. The powers and responsibilities of the *gmina* leader-

ship in directing the development of agriculture were considerably expanded. The reform helped to concentrate the party and all social forces operating in the countryside under PUWP leadership.

The strengthening and perfecting of the PUWP's leading role in the countryside is of great importance for organizing the masses to carry out the tasks confronting agriculture, for stimulating the initiative of peasants and agricultural workers who want to make better use of production opportunities, and for raising the level of social awareness. The party's assistant in carrying out the tasks confronting agriculture is the Union of Socialist Polish Youth, which has more than 800,000 members in the rural areas. Agricultural policy is drawn up and put into practice by the state in close collaboration with the United Peasant Party. Its agricultural circles support the activity of the PUWP organizations in dealing with economic and social problems.

The PUWP's agrarian policy enjoys the support of the rural population and the whole people. It furthers the vital interests of all who work on the land. It reaveals the prospects for building a modern, highly productive agriculture, the new opportunities for organizing life and labor in the countryside. Politically it is based on a broad alliance of the working class and the peasantry and is calculated to bring ever fuller satisfaction of the people's food requirements.

The general support of the party's agrarian policy unites the efforts of the peasantry and the state and sets the stage for a steady rise in agricultural production and the further social transformation of the countryside.

1. *Agricultural circles* — public organizations for farmers based on villages. Their aim is to promote production, technical progress, advanced farming methods, and social and cultural progress in rural areas.

2. The cooperatives of the agricultural circles also take part in cultivating land handed over to the state by peasants. Like the agricultural production cooperatives, they also accept members who contribute their land to the common fund.

Communists in the municipalities

EXPERIENCE AND PROBLEMS OF THE LEFT *GIUNTAS* IN ITALY

The Italian Communist Party has gained considerable experience of work in local government bodies. Some of them have been administered by communists independently or in alliance with other left-wing forces for decades. The ICP's massive success at the polls in the summer of 1975 led to the formation of many new left *giuntas* in the regions, provinces and communes.

Today, so the ICP Central Committee informs us, six of Italy's 20 administrative regions have left *giuntas*.[1] Four of these are presided over by communists, and the other two by socialists. In another nine regions the communists do not have seats in the *giunta* but are not in opposition, that is to say, they are collaborating with the *giunta*. Communists preside over councils in seven regions where they are not members of *giunta*. This leaves five regions in which the communists are in opposition.

The provinces. Italy has 94 of them. Of these 48, accounting for over 60 per cent of the Italian population, are governed by left-wing *giuntas*.

In Italy there are 8,068 communes. Independently or in alliance with left forces the communists govern 2,779 communes, which account for 54 per cent of the whole population. There are various political alignments in the large, medium and smaller communes. Left-wing forces govern the communes of Italy's five biggest cities — Rome, Milan, Naples, Turin and Genoa. Out of the ten biggest cities the left *giuntas* govern eight — Florence, Bologna, Venice, plus those already mentioned. Of the 100 most populous cities 65 are under left-wing administration.

In the smaller communes the alignment of forces is less favorable to the communists and their allies. In Italy there are 1,979 communes with populations of more than 5,000. Of these 901 are governed by communists in alliance with other left forces. There are 6,089 communes with a population of less than 5,000, and of these the left forces administer 1,878. In the medium sized communes with populations of from 30 to 100 thousand the influence of the left is considerable: 97 out of 189 are governed by left *giuntas*. As for communes with

populations of between 100 and 250 thousand, 19 out of 34 are governed by the communists and their allies.

These developments of recent years have imparted a new quality to the activity of the communists in the local government bodies.

We are two journalists, one an Italian, the other a Soviet communist, and we set ourselves the task of describing this activity. We met and questioned communist mayors and councillors of a number of communes. We were received by Armando Cossutta, one of the leaders of the Italian Communist Party, who also granted us an interview for the *WMR*.

Working on the assumption that the question of the possibility of using the commune's organs of self-government as a springboard for the liberation struggle of the working class and its allies has been sufficiently elaborated on the theoretical plane (the idea, as most people know, was proposed by the founders of scientific socialism), we asked the people we interviewed a number of questions relating to the specific practice of the Italian communists. These questions may be summed up as follows:

— What have the communists and their allies accomplished and what can they accomplish for the working people today, in the context of the capitalist state, by participating in the municipal councils?

— What place does the communists' municipal activity occupy in the struggle for the democratic regeneration of the country and a socialist future?

— What methods do the communists use to achieve their aims in municipal activity? How do they link it with the solving of national problems, with organization of the working people's mass struggle for their everyday and fundamental interests?

The discussion we had with many people revealed various aspects of this experience and also the complexity of the problems and the contradictory nature of the solutions, which inevitably bear the stamp of the bourgeois character of the state power: we realized that the everyday activity of the communists in local government is not only a struggle for certain improvements, although these are significant in themselves. It is also a search for the means of achieving a radical, qualitative change in society, a search that brings understanding of what has already been achieved and what has yet to be done. In the assessments of events, phenomena, methods and prospects given by those who are taking part in this mass search we naturally encountered some diversity, and we ourselves, in view of our differing party experience and party affiliations, did not always see eye to eye on certain facts. Some of them gave rise to discussions. So we have decided to report what we learned from the people we talked to, their thoughts, assessments, opinions and so on, without drawing any

general conclusions. In other words, we are publishing the interviews, the record of our discussions as they occurred, with as little summarizing as possible in the hope that this will give the reader ample opportunity to draw his own conclusions.

We have decided to begin with our interview with Cossutta, although we actually met him at the end of our tour. The first part of this interview reveals the characteristic features of ICP policy in relation to the local government bodies and conveys an idea of the most important objectives of communist activity in these bodies. The second part, consisting of answers to questions that arose during our tour, sums up all our meetings and discussions and we use this to conclude the article.

PRESENT TASKS

Armando Cossutta
Member of the Leadership, ICP

As you know, Italy has been engaged in a major reform of the state structure since 1970. Regions[2] have been introduced. The regional bodies, as distinct from those of the commune, have legislative powers, although these are, of course, confined to the limits laid down in the Constitution of the republic. The regions have existed for only a few years, but already much has been done to channel their activities in a progressive direction.

The regional bodies have become important centers for rallying the democratic forces. They are also becoming important centers for putting into effect the policy of drawing up economic programs and a very sharp political and social struggle is being fought over this subject.

As we see it, the policy of programming demands central guidance and this unifying guidance should be given by Parliament. However, the aims of the programming policy cannot be realized unless there is also broad decentralization and broad democratic participation. In our view, the regions should be a means of decentralization and democratic participation.

Question. Could you explain the actual implications of these two terms? From what you have said it would appear that it is not a matter of abolishing all centralized government and not a matter of the technology of administration, but of changes in the class set-up?

Cossutta. Yes, exactly. The country does need central leadership. Policy in the sphere of industry in Italy is a national policy. The choice has to be made in Parliament. But the centralized government we have in Italy is tailored to the kind of economic domination, the centralized economic control that is being exercised. We should not be suffering from such a disproportion of consumption today, for

instance, if there was no centralized control exercised by the capitalist classes. For many years the automobile was regarded as the 'flywheel' of the economy and the whole Italian economy was geared to the development of automobile production. The choice, however, turned out to be incorrect. If the public at large, the working people, had been able, at all levels, including the regional, to participate in choosing the basic directions of economic development, that is to say, if there had been a possibility of democratic participation and decentralization, the priority would have been accordded to other branches of the economy; for example, more attention would have been given to agriculture, which has been badly neglected. There would not be such an imbalance between the development of the North and South. Or take another example. The reform of agriculture requires not only the passing of the appropriate laws at the national level, but also their practical application in action and decisions reflecting the situation in every specific region. But throughout our history agricultural policy has been centralized and this has led to a crisis. One could cite many other examples from education, the health services, transport, territorial division, town planning and development. In all these spheres today the regions are making their own laws.

Naturally, such laws are progressive in varying degrees, depending on the balance of forces in the particular region. In our view, however, the crux of the matter is this: there can be no programming unless, as I have already said, there is democratic participation. Decentralization alone is not enough because that, too, could be merely a technical, bureaucratic measure. There must be participation by the various classes and social strata that are interested in renovation, in progress. We are trying to bring about such democratic participation in the regions.

We also realize that in Italy many problems are so acute, particularly in the economy, that to carry out any of the vitally needed reforms the efforts of one party or one class will not be sufficient. There must be a social alliance of the workers and peasants and the middle strata; there must also be a political alliance between the political forces representing these classes and social strata. And this social alliance and political alliance are just what we are trying to establish on a regional as well as a national scale.

The ICP works on the assumption that various social forces are objectively interested in renovating the country. Objectively, in the sense that they have a common interest in the struggle against the basic enemy — monopoly capital. Various classes and social strata oppose this common enemy, though in different ways. That is why we believe that the industrial working class and, on the more general plane, the other toiling classes and the middle strata — the peasants in

the rural areas and the craftsmen, traders and small producers in the towns, and also broad progressive sections of the intelligentsia — are objectively interested in the policy of renewal. In this grouping the working class plays a role that is objectively a leading role inasmuch as it, more than any other class or social group, is interested in changing society in a socialist direction, as we understand it, and above all in overcoming the crisis, in revitalizing the economy, in democratic renewal. In our view there is no dividing line between the struggle for the full affirmation of democracy and the struggle for socialism.

That is as regards the regional level. But in your tour of the country you have been concentrating on the communes, on the activities of the communists in the municipal councils and *giuntas* at that level. What is most important here?

We believe the main thing is to do away with the obsolete legislation defining the rights, responsibilities and functions of the communes. This legislation was passed more than half a century ago. Its fetters must be broken in practice, through struggle, and a new law on local government bodies must be drafted.[3] Nothing of the kind would have been possible in the past because there was no adequate balance of forces. Now the party has made it a plank in its political program to get a new law on the communes passed before the end of the present parliament, i.e., by 1980-1981. What do we expect to achieve?

The main thing is that the communes, the municipal councils, should be regarded as general governing bodies on their territory, that is, they should be able to exert directive functions in all spheres. This is not the situation at present. The communes only have jurisdiction over the social services — transport, schools, hospitals — but have no power whatever to influence economic processes. The goal we hope to achieve with the help of the new law is to give them such power. In other words, what we really want is to put into practice the Constitution of the republic, which states that the local autonomous bodies are the basic instruments of the country's economic and social development.

This battle is being fought at a particularly critical time for the economy because the country's financial resources are inadequate for its needs. So the communists' activities at this specific moment are aimed at turning the communes into local autonomous bodies or instruments for overcoming the economic crisis. The communists in all the communes are leading the struggle, the actions of the working people to change the direction of the country's economic development.

We believe that Italy can emerge from the crisis only if it is possible to chance the character of consumption. Today our whole economy is

based on private consumption, on grossly over-inflated private consumption, while our natural resources are being squandered. Priority must be tranferred to social consumption. This, in our view, is the basic responsibility of the state bodies. And it demands a different approach to production, a different investment policy, that is to say, more funds than at present must be invested in the sectors whose development promotes the development of social consumption. We want to fight, as Enrico Berlinguer states in one of his speeches,[4] not only to bring Italy out of the crisis, but also to bring her out as quite a different country, to get rid of the criteria that have controlled development over the past 20-25 years; we are oriented on the goals, criteria, values and methods inherent in the socialist ideal.

Such are the communists' basic objectives. We seek to achieve them both on the national scale and in the local bodies, although in the latter the task is much more complex.

What can be done for people?

What can the communists and their allies in the municipalities do for people today? How much more successful have they been in local government than the previous right-wing administration? What is the significance of the current achievement for realization of the party's strategic concepts? The people we talked to answered these questions and their answers had much in common. Each person stressed one or two of the more urgent problems for his particular commune.

OPEN, HONEST GOVERNMENT, TOGETHER WITH THE MASSES

Maurizio Valenzi
Mayor of Naples

In my view, Naples may be described as a city where the contradictions of Italian society explode in a particularly dramatic way.

For example, Naples has the highest percentage of unemployment. Some 200,000 people, perhaps more (about 70,000 families) live in buildings with bad sanitation, in flats that have no windows, no proper lavatories, and only one door opening straight on to the street. The unemployment and poverty and the insanitary condition of part of the city are largely responsible for the high rate of infectious disease. Naples has the highest rate of infant mortality.

Side by side with this poverty there is wealth. Naples is a city of contrasts. The luxurious villas that make such a splendid panorama border on the slums of the old city.

The municipal government consisting of communists and socialists took office on September 29, 1975. A government of the left, we had no majority in the local council: we held 33 seats out of 80. Our

opponents, the Christian Democrats, the traditional rulers of the city, had lost their supremacy through failure to form an alliance with 15 members of the City Council representing the Italian Social Movement-National Right Forces. This group is a very strong branch of the fascist movement. Its candidates probably made their best showing at the polls in 1975, but even today the poll for the right forces in our city is one of the highest in Italy.

Understandably our administration found itself in a rather difficult position, but already in its first years of office it was able to achieve definite results and form a new alliance of political forces and a new coalition *giunta*. The present *giunta* has the support of 40 votes in the City Council and on some issues we are supported by the liberals and have a majority. This change in the balance of forces stemmed from the communist success in the parliamentary elections of 1976. The *Unita* fête, which enjoyed enormous success in the city throughout its 16 days, also did much to consolidate our position. But a very big part was played by the activities of the new administration itself, which won added support among the broad sections of the population.

What did we actually do?

First of all, we tried to do something about the problems I have already mentioned: unemployment, poverty, bad sanitation and disease. But we ran into great difficulties because of our own restricted rights and possibilities and the grave financial problems that we had inherited from the Christian Democrats.

The problem of unemployment in Naples is so vast that the commune cannot hope to solve it independently. We tried to move in three directions. First, we did everything we could ourselves, that is, by taking special measures in the commune. In 18 months we found 2,445 jobs. But the commune of Naples has only about 30,000 jobs altogether at municipal enterprises and other enterprises depending on the municipality but enjoying autonomy. When you consider that unemployment in Naples and the province stands at the 150 to 160 thousand mark, you realize how big the gap is between the demand for jobs and our ability to meet it.

Our second line of action was to appeal to the enterprises in Naples, the banks and commercial companies, to take on as many people as possible. But this did not get us very far.

Our third line was to demand emergency subsidies for public works from the government. This is the basic way of dealing with the problem. We have made some progress in this direction but we cannot afford to wait. Do you hear the noise outside? That's a demonstration of taxi-drivers. Every day we have people shouting under our windows. The Christian Democrats send against us everyone who has a grievance; they egg on all sorts of corporative and

group elements; and the leftist extremists and the fascists also try to make capital out of unemployment and poverty. The tense situation encourages any provocation. For a time Milan was turned into a city of chaos and fascist provocations, then it was Rome and Bologna's turn. Today it looks as if the next target for reactionary conspiracy is going to be Naples.

Another stumbling block in dealing with many of our problems is the fact that our *giunta* inherited from the Christian Democrats an enormous debt of 1,616,000 million lire. Every day we pay the banks 500 million lire in interest. The treasury was absolutely empty. Money had been borrowed from everyone, including the commune's own employees, who were not paid their wages on time. We were in debt for the telephone and electricity, in debt to the San Carlo Opera House, the Aquarium (zoological research station) and even the San Gennaro Chapel.

The new administration declared war on spendthrift practices, abuses and mismanagement and was able to meet its main debts. We also declared war on the clientele methods in providing employment.

Question. Would you make that last statement a little clearer?

Valenzi. When there are a lot of people without jobs, the rivalry for the relatively well paid and easy ones, with safe pensions attached breeds profiteering. To get a job you have to make friends, promise somebody your vote at the elections, in other words, become somebody's client. Besides being immoral and corrupt, clientelism is harmful because it leads to employment of the incompetent. In Naples it was a running sore and we have put an end to it. We have not taken on a single person who would not have qualified through the proper channels. For Naples that is something quite revolutionary.

To achieve this we had to fight various malpractices, even on the part of some of our supporters. They would say to us: 'Other people used to be in command. Now you are. Why can't we have the same advantages as other people had?' We replied that we could not accept that position, that all citizens were equal and, besides, the communists should be first to set an example of honesty and integrity. It is quite probable that this will cost us a certain number of votes at the next election, perhaps the votes of some employees of the commune who got used to working at half pressure, including some communists. But the party can do without such people and they can leave us. We are confident that our way of running things, our integrity has won us the support of a lot of honest-minded people.

And another important aspect of the matter. We have kept the population constantly informed of everything, every difficulty, every problem. We have issued statements, put out leaflets, broadcast on radio and television, held meetings and never missed a chance of

letting people know day by day what is going well and what is going badly. We have urged people to take part in everything, to give us their cooperation.

Honest administration, openness in our work and real public concern have won us very wide approval in all parts of the city.

Question. Do you have difficulties in using the machinery that was set up under the previous administration?

Valenzi. We should have a very hard time if the most responsible officials (general secretaries, directors, and so on) attacked us to protect their own interests. But we have not restricted any of their main privileges (high salaries, use of cars, and a few other perks), and so far I have not encountered a single case of sabotage. As regards the problem of the bourgeois state machinery on a broader plane, in the situation we have at present one has to act carefully. One can't expect to win over everyone who might eventually realize that the policy for saving the country must come first and be given priority. As we make further progress, it becomes clear who can still be won over and who our enemies are. Then, without going into ideological problems, whenever we catch them out in some illegal practice, we have to crack down on them. We are trying to narrow the dangerous sector, widen the neutral sector and through our party work boost the sector that supports us.

IMPROVE LIFE NOW

Antonello Falomi
Leader of the communist faction in the Rome City Council

The problems of Rome are those of any Italian city, plus the additional complication of its being the capital.

Huge debts, chaos in urban development, abnormal growth of population owing to the concentration of state and private administration in the capital, housing shortage, wildfire development of the outskirts and consequent acute problems in transport and other social services, unrestricted speculation in housing and driving the local people out of the historical center — these are only a few of the most urgent problems. It would be unrealistic to expect the new *giunta* led by Mayor Giulio Carlo Argan,[5] composed of communists, socialists, social democrats and independents, and supported by the Republicans, to be able to achieve any radical change in the situation in the near future.

Two things, at least, depend on the national government. There must be decentralization that would relieve Rome of some of its central offices, and there must be economic programming to stop migration into the city from the South.

But the left has come into municipal government not just to stand idle and wait for decisions from above.

As members of the administration of the Lazio region we have made it our first task to redistribute investment in a way that would stimulate reverse migration out of Rome.

We are not going to resign ourselves to having thousands of people living in huts, so we have adopted an emergency housing program and it is being fulfilled. The program also makes provision for the municipal authorities to rent rooms for the hut dwellers from private owners.

We are fighting 'wildfire' development and taking steps to see that the existing developments on the outskirts are better provided with transport, electricity, sanitation and other services. Working people who had to build houses anywhere they could find are not to blame for the situation. We are planning to build low-rent apartment houses for the people, so as to undercut the private landlords.

The commune intends to revitalize the historical center of the city and stop the speculative rebuilding of old houses by drawing up a proper program.

Much is being done to increase the quantity and quality of various services. The problems of improving urban transport, though very complex, are being dealt with.

This is how we are trying to improve the working people's lives now. But the colossal budget deficit makes it all very difficult. I repeat, the legacy of 30 years' rule by the Christian Democrats cannot be got rid of at once, particularly when conditions across the country are unfavorable, when the capitalist forces are still in control.

Question. What is most needed in dealing with the basic problems?

Falomi. Apart from the main and most obvious thing — the radical transformation of Italian society — I would say the decisive factor for the local administrations today is still the problem of their role in the system of local government and their relationship with the central authorities. Everything has to be done to achieve genuine democratic decentralization, the transfer of a number of governmental functions to the communes, and also solution of the acute financial problems.

CREATE NEW RELATIONSHIPS. INTRODUCE NEW VALUES

Diego Novelli
Mayor of Turin

The development of our city is unique in the sense that in the space of a few years the population has nearly doubled, from 700,000 to 1,200,000. This was due mainly to the industrial development during the so-called 'economic miracle' of the 50s and 60s.

The political forces that ruled the city at the time, not to mention the business circles, never gave a thought for the consequences of

such development. In their anxiety to raise productivity and reap the profits they forgot the human side altogether.

No one considered where the people who had come to Turin and found work there would live, how they would organize their lives, accomodate their families, their children, what schools there would be, what social services, transport, housing, hospitals. The city lived by the concept of laissez-faire and, we would add, development simply ran wild.

The result was a situation of tension that caused the factories to explode. At the end of the 60s the city was swept by a wave of oncflict — strikes, demonstrations, protests. They began inside the factories, although the root cause lay in the problems outside.

Turin was the first city in Italy to have a general strike over housing. The communists have always, even when serving on the municipal councils, supported the just demands of the working people.

But apart from this we have yet another serious problem, the problem of social disintegration that has been going on in the city for the past 20 years. This is a kind of tearing down of the tissue that holds the community together. There was no organic merging of the newcomers with the city's original population; nor was there any unity among the newcomers themselves, who had come from different regions. No real community life arose. This was due not only to the differences in tradition, thinking, customes, but also to the fact that just at the time of the influx the approved life-styles and values were not of the kind to promote unity. The vogue was either for extreme consumerism or for self-isolation, the idea of settling all problems on an individual instead of a collective basis.

I would say that this is a crucial problem for out city today and we are giving it serious attention. The point is to recreate the community to restore the spirit of unity and solidarity among the working people, but on the basis of different values compared with those of the past. I would say, to put it in a rather exaggerated form, that people have got to learn to be together again, to live together, to talk to one another. The city squares must recover the role they played in former times. The 'economic miracle' has made them into gigantic parking lots where there is no room for a person to walk.

Our plan envisages such a regeneration of society on a new basis and we are going to begin with the youngest generation, with the children. Our biggest investments in the past two years have been in the development of schools, which are regarded not only as an educational factor but also as a factor in the moral and civic education of the child. We have drawn up a 'Children to the City' program envisaging daily trips into the city for the children so that they get to know it

properly. We have listed all the buildings and equipment that can be placed at the children's disposal, and not only municipal property but state and private property, as well, from fire stations to television studios, museums, art galleries, theatres and cinemas.

With regard to the population as a whole, we are planning to decentralize the city. We have mapped out 23 districts. Elections to the district councils will be held in October and it will be proposed that various powers be vested in these councils so as to draw as many people as possible into the process of dealing with the city's problems and raising the sense of responsibility for the environment.

Many measures could be mentioned. Naturally we are also faced with other problems, the most urgent being the of tax policy; we are trying to get the financial burden on the working people reduced. We also take up the most ordinary matters; we work out plans for reorganizing transport, adopt new methods in urban development, and so on. But the main focus of the new administration's attention is on the central problem I mentioned before, and this naturally takes in all the other problems.

Question. How is this work connected with your aims as a communist, that is, with the class aims set out in the party's program?

Novelli. We draw a strict dividing line between state institutions and the party. I have been a party activist for the past 30 years, ever since the resistance movement. I am the mayor and I represent the majority. But in my capacity as mayor I must take into account minority opinion as well. So there can be no mixing of my role as a communist and my responsibility as mayor. At the same time I am firmly convinced that the problems of a city such as ours cannot be solved by political strength alone or by the majority. We need the collaboration of all the democratic and anti-fascist forces of the city. That is the broad unitary policy pursued by my party, so I am in no difficulty on that score.

Question. All the same, as leader of the majority, don't you try to guide its efforts toward targets that are in line with the ideals and policy of the ICP?

Novelli. When I am promoting efforts to reunite that city, when I am solving problems that affect the working people, I feel that this is the prime task for a communist. When I am working to improve the quality of life of Turin's citizens, I also think this is the task of a communist. Explaining to people, to the broad masses, what values there are in life and society, trying to tell them there is more in it than consuming material goods, getting a flat or a car, that there are also various cultural, intellectual, social and civic values, I think this is also one of the tasks of a communist. When I organize district councils, organize people to take part in the affairs of our society, promote

the development of democracy, I am also choosing an orientation that I, as a communist, consider to be correct.

We want to change this society, to build a new and different society with different values. Socialism means for us a system in which there is freedom of ideas, of comparison, where there is democracy, participation, a system that focuses on human values, human needs, expectations and aspirations. It will be a society where there is no more exploitation or profiteering, no unearned income, and where there is more justice. So I believe that by working in this body, I am developing action in the right direction. The comrades working at the level of the party's political leadership have quite different tasks, which nevertheless concur with what we are doing.

Question. What are your main difficulties? Do they lie in the limited powers of the municipality and the mayor? Or in the lack of a solution to the problems of the state as a whole, which prevent the solution of local problems?

Novelli. I would say in both. What we are fighting for now is a part of the big battle that the party, the whole Italian democratic movement are wageing for deep-going reform of the state, for giving greater powers to the local bodies.

Clearly, it is impossible to find a satisfactory solution to our problems in the framework of the type of economy that got us into the crisis. Today one feels an urgent need for a society capable of providing not only work and commercial use of leisure, but something more — the organization of life in the broadest sense of the term, life that is the positive expression of the human presence in the world, life reflecting the cultural values and the attainment of a goal not exclusively subordinated to the logic of capitalist production.

'IT IS WORK AND STRUGGLE'

The communists' activity in the municipalities is most successful where it is closely linked with the struggle of the masses, and also where the solution of local problems is coordinated with that of problems of national magnitude. This has partly been discussed in the foregoing interviews. But in Milan we has a more detailed interview on precisely this subject — the diversity of the communists' methods, their winning over of the broad masses, their relations with other political and social forces, and their ability to link together the solution of national and local problems. The point of departure was the distinctive situation in the city.

Maurizio Mottini,
Leader of the Communist Group in the City Council of Milan

After the 1975 elections to local government bodies, a political struggle began in our commune that in form and intensity was more typical

of such struggles at the national level. The communists had for the first time won strong positions, oustripping the Christian Democrats (25 seats on the council against 22). However, the communists and socialists together secured only 37 of the 80 seats and were unable to form a left-wing majority. I will not go into the vicissitudes of the campaign, but the fact is that the attitude of the Christian Democrats, liberals and even Republicans at the time of forming the left *giunta* and long afterwards was not merely critical but unyielding and they proceeded accordingly. This complicated the functioning of the city council. The *giunta* reacted by strengthening its links with diverse social forces outside the council, especially with the trade unions. It also took other steps, specifically the holding of a conference on Milan's economic problems, to establish contact with the industrialists and financiers, who carry not only political but considerable social and economic weight in the city. This effort, and certain political decisions to improve the development plan, (the necessity of which was recognized in Milan fully a decade and a half ago) tended to regroup the intermediate forces — the social democrats and Republicans. They refrained from a head-on clash with the left *giunta*. In fact, in February 1976, the social democrats joined the council majority and the *giunta*. The Republicans, rather than engage in sharp criticism, expressed readiness to study every proposal on its merits. As a result, the CDP has in recent months been in virtual isolation, and in recent days it has shown a tendency to reconsider its attitude to the *giunta*.

Question. But how did you manage to use the support of two opposed forces — the unions and the employers? What did you offer them? In what way did they back you?

Mottini. In the case of the unions, the *giunta* held preliminary consultations on the more important administrative matters. The unions in a city like Milan concern themselves not only with the working people's problems in the enterprises but take a stand on the political and administrative decisions of the city council.

We can achieve much provided we act together, in coordinated fashion. Take public transport, for one, Contacts between the *giunta* and the trade unions made it possible to adopt decisions that are truly unprecedented. The task was to design and build urban railway and underground lines extending beyond the city limits, to suburbs inhabited largely by workers. This is one of Milan's most pressing problems. Then there is the general urban development plan, which we likewise discussed with the unions. In drafting it, an effort was made to stop working people being driven out of the city center by speculative development (turning old houses into offices or luxurious mansions). An important aspect of the general plan is that it strives to

preserve the industrial character of Milan, to prevent it from becoming a city of offices. This is important both economically and politically, for it is essential to have the working class in the city.

As regards other social strata, other social and economic forces, including employers, merchants and financiers, we must above all demonstrate our political capacity, must show them that the presence of communists in the *giunta* of a center as important as Milan is a fact which can guarantee the development and success of *their* activity. Let me say in passing that this has had to be done in a rather complicated situation, for they must be made to understand that they cannot go on doing what they could do in the past but that they can, now that there is a new type of *giunta,* be confident of the future of Milan from the point of view of both its internal life and its function in the national economy.

It should be borne in mind that the economic and social crisis, the government's inability to lead the country out of it, and the defects in the functioning of government agencies are detrimental to the capitalist as such. For instance, he finds himself in a hole when the postal service is functioning poorly or when the system of social maintenance, social insurance and medical care breaks down. When the workers cannot satisfy their most elementary requirements in education, health care or in other respects on a social basis, they step up their struggle at the enterprise for higher wages to solve their problems that way.

The Milan bourgeoisie is very critical of the shortcomings of the administrative machinery. We have taken steps to ensure that the municipal machinery runs more smoothly. Let me give you an example. Once it took from eight to 10 months to obtain permission for a construction project. We have reorganized the department and now permission can be secured in less than half the former time. This benefits everybody. Or take another example. The Milan bourgeoisie has traditionally been engaged in economic management and its members like costing a project and checking its efficiency. So they see signs of a serious and orderly approach to economic matters and a renunciation of demogagic methods in the measures which the *giunta* adopted by bringing charges for certain municipal and other public services, in particular fares, into line with increased maintenance costs.

Question. But surely that affects the working people's interests and must create problems in relations with the unions?

Mottini. Yes, and we need a special method of working out such decisions. They are not always easy to make. We hold discussions, ask people's opinion and give them the reasons for our decisions, telling them why charges for certain services must be adjusted. In

cases like that, we go out of our way to protect the poorest population groups. Right now there's a discussion underway on the price of milk. We must remember that the factory cannot incur growing losses in distributing milk. But school children get their milk free. This influences the public's attitude to the *giunta*.

I don't mean, of course, that the whole bourgeoisie of Milan agrees with the communists. In fact, it was the CDP circles in Milan who recently staged some very noisy actions with a right-wing, reactionary bias. In other words, the situation is highly volatile and may evolve in either direction. How do we actually benefit from the flexible and realistic policy I've been talking about?

Speaking of the intermediate social strata, we must, first of all, put on record a reduction of anti-communist influence, even though it is still there. These strata cooperate with us on some issues. For example, we have a municipal enterprise, Soveco, which purchases certain food products from the producers to sell them to the Milanese at controlled prices and prevent profiteering. Soveco fixes prices by agreement with the municipality. Although this is a very delicate matter, we have succeeded in establishing cooperation with the merchants' association and persuaded owners of small shops to sell these products at fixed prices. Representatives of the merchants' association and experts have agreed to work on the technical committee which studies openings for more food sales to the population in collaboration with Soveco and the municipality.

Another example belongs to the sphere of relations with the owners of construction firms which undertake to build municipal facilities: the municipality is wrestling with enormous financial difficulties but the tactful and frank relations established with these organizations make it possible to negotiate a deferment of payment.

Making urban life and administration more democratic is an important aspect of relations with the people of Milan, a factor in winning them over to our side. The communists have always advocated decentralization of the major communes. In Milan there are 80 councillors to the city's 1,700,000 inhabitants. In other words, the ratio is most unsatisfactory and the opportunities for contact are minimal. This makes it necessary to have intermediate echelons in the power structure of the commune so as to know the requirements of the population and be able to supply the right answers, as well as expand people's participation in the management of public affairs. The city used to be divided into areas in each of which a small 'commune council' functioned. We are now discussing a new plan intended to grant these bodies greater powers, thus enabling them to play an important part in decision-making on urban development, transport and public services.

In this way, we are gaining increasingly reliable support among the most diverse sections of the city's population as we strive to meet primarily the interests of the working people.

Question. Would you say this means something more than solving current or local problems?

Mottini. The meaning of our participation in the *giunta* has to do with factors of national significance. The communists' participation in local government and their ability to prove, if only at local level, that they are good administrators helps to counter CDP propaganda at national level claiming that there is no alternative to CDP rule. This is a fundamental issue. However, anyone who wants to grasp it fully must realize the extent of the dissatisfaction among the masses, the working people and other sections of the population, with any public organization that performs inadequately, with the inability to act and to lead the country out of its present crisis.

Question. How do the communists and other leftists in your commune manage to accomplish more than the previous adminstration? Surely it isn't because the Christian Democrats cannot train good administrators?

Mottini. The CDP is a party with a sufficiently clear-cut policy line and unites its forces to achieve its goals flowing from that line. However, it is an agglomeration of alignments holding very different views. Each CDP alignment has its own sphere of influence and support, and a definite section of public opinion whose requirements it tries to meet by fighting other alignments, with the result that the CDP's general line is weakened.

This explains, as a case in point, why the CDP in Milan cannot form an opposition. The Christian Democrats never oppose the substance of the *giunta's* proposals but always raise questions of form. When it comes to substance they are often divided and so lack a common line. In the Milan organization of the CDP there are leftists who agree with us on many issues but then there are also extreme rightists who demand the use of most brutal methods against the communists. The CDP-led *giuntas* could not govern well, both because they lacked adequate support among the working people, and because they were unable to concentrate the efforts of all on the goals set.

Question. But the Christian Democrats did have the advantage of ruling at both local and national level, but are not your possibilities limited, because you are in a different situation? For example, when it comes to influencing the operation of factories in the working people's interests as regards labor relations, working conditions or wages?

Mottini. Let us begin with concrete things. Speaking of working

conditions, the regional council recently passed a law empowering the communes, and hence the city council of Milan, to set up technical commissions for the supervision of working conditions and to take steps against conditions injurious to health. But these are only initial measures because the concept of the commune as the fundamental nucleus of the state is still non-existent in Italy.

In recent months the city council has been searching for solutions to problems created by the economic crisis in enterprises which are compelled to curtail production. We have tried to see to it that the workers employed in these firms did not become jobeless. As well as showing political solidarity, the city authorities took specific steps. We went as far as to offer these firms bank guarantees underwritten by the city council, which means that the council plays the role of guarantor with the bank to secure credit for the firm in need of help. But, of course, this was done only where it was obvious that the difficulties were temporary and that a bank credit would help to tide them over. In two cases, the credit made it possible to continue the operation of the firms until the title of ownership was transferred from one person to a group willing to take over the firm with all its employees. In Milan we also had this experience of the workers at a factory setting up a cooperative and working as in a cooperative for more than a year, waiting for the factory to be definitively taken over by another group of employers in the same industry.

Measures like these don't solve the problem radically. They ease the workers' condition for a while, and we tell them so, showing that a radical solution is only possible under a different social and economic system. These are not problems of local significance but a matter of drawing up economic programs at national level. State participation in the Italian economy is considerable. Eighty per cent of banking is controlled by the state, which also owns the greater part of metallurgy and all or half of the biggest industrial complexes, with the exception of Fiat and Pirelli. To start drawing up economic programs in these conditions, one has to start by planning the tasks and lines of activity in this state sector and to entrust the main solutions to the two elected bodies — parliament and the regional councils. It is important that economic programming should set goals for both the public and private sector of the economy. The Christian Democrats were unable to do this because each group in the public sector had a leading nucleus belonging to this or that CDP current; it makes decisions on its own, without coordinating them with other groups.

Question. Let us go back to the problem of prospects, shall we? Just what is meant, specifically in the case of your municipality, by 'holding one's head high above the water,' as Comrade Berlinguer put it, speaking to Milan workers last January? And what is meant by the

phrase 'introducing criteria inherent in the socialist ideal?'

Mottini. The first phrase means not getting bogged down in current problems but looking ahead and advancing to socialism through democracy. But that isn't all.

The communists' ability to exercise power at local level is part of the more general problem of the ability of the working class to lead. The difficulty confronting us at the moment is to help the working class realize its role. In the climate of inflation there is always a temptation to which various groups of workers yield, namely, the temptation of confining oneself to the defense of one's own living conditions and thereby refusing to exercise a leading national role. But the working class will really become the leading force only if it acts both in its own interests and in those of other sections of the population, and also if it takes care of both consumption and accumulation.

Our work in the municipalities of Milan and other cities confronts us with problems which in the past we, as representatives of the communist and working-class movement, could not have come across directly. Since June 15, 1975, we have learned many things we knew nothing about before. And there are many more things to learn. Because we have experience of exercising power at local level, we must take better account of specific problems. After all, it is no longer enough to visualize the distant future; we must also make specific decisions every day and this means serious schooling. It's easy to criticize but hard to govern. 'There is a deep sea between word and deed,' as the Italian saying goes.

Nothing is easier than to say we will do this, that every problem will be solved when we have socialism. But there will be no socialism if we don't work day after day to introduce elements of a socialist society, if we don't fight for it every day and every hour. We already manage to score gains. Take the labor market, for one. The changed balance of political forces and the strength of the trade union movement have created a situation in which, unlike what we had a few years ago, the owners of big firms can no longer decide where and how to recruit their work force. This is not final yet but it's a trend that is not typical of the main laws of capitalist society.

Twenty years ago, it could happen that Pirelli built a plant in the suburbs of Milan and made the city council put up housing for the workers, provide transport facilities between the site and the city and set up a service network without even stopping to think whether the council could afford it. Today special efforts are made and talks held between the local government body and the industrial plant concerned to solve such problems together. But we mustn't exaggerate our gains — it's a struggle we are carrying on.

And now for a similar example. In the 50s Fiat decided to expand production by building new plants and forced large numbers of people to migrate from the South to the North to work. But now efforts are made to induce Fiat to invest where jobs must be created, that is, right in the south of the country. What is more, the workers have won the right to have their say on where Fiat should make new investments.

The strength of the Italian trade union movement has almost no parallel in any other capitalist country. The metal-workers' union does not concern itself with wages and working conditions alone but raises questions concerning the commitments of companies to invest in this or that area of the country. We also have trade union agreements providing, among other things, that the company concerned will aid the municipality by making a definite contribution to the construction of public transport lines even if they go beyond the city limit.

We also have a cooperative movement. It is distributed unevenly over Italy's territory but even so, it is already a notable economic force in many areas.

Mention should be made of the balance of political forces. For several months now, parliament has been engaged in a debate on reorganizing industry to establish the concept of programming and so raise the role of the state in normalizing the development of those industries that are in a particularly critical condition.

There are many more example but they are only particular cases which don't indicate that the fundamental transformation of society is already a fact. It still has to be fought for, particularly by striving to introduce various elements of the future society into present-day life. It's not a question of capitalism 'growing' into socialism but of the ability to wrest concessions from capitalism, to make it give up one position after another. Nor is this fight limited to the municipality; it can be successful, as our experience suggests, only if based on a strong unitary working-class movement, a well-organized mass movement. We can achieve our objectives only through competent work and well-organized struggle.

Question. So would you describe the activity of our group in the municipality as work or rather as struggle?

Mottini. I would call it work and struggle.

THE LEFT GIUNTA AND THE PEASANTS

In Correggio, a rather small commune in the 'red belt' of Emilia-Romagna (capital, Bologna), we had something of a round-table discussion or collective interview. The subject was quite specific: the left *giunta* and the peasants; the communist approach to local agrarian

problems. However, discussion virtually followed the same lines as everywhere else because the problem was examined both in terms of what can now be done to improve the peasants' life and from the standpoint of the party's strategic goal, which is to strengthen the worker-peasant alliance. We spoke of the intimate connection between these two tasks. The participants in the interview included *Giulio Fantuzzi,* mayor of Correggio, *Eros Guerrieri,* agricultural adviser to the *giunta, Camillo Cocconi,* member of the commune council, secretary of the local branch of the Alliance of Italian Farmers, and *Paolo Vezzani,* chairman of a peasant organization affiliated to the CGIL (General Confederation of Italian Labor). They answered our questions.

Guerrieri. Both as a party and a local government body, we pursue a policy bringing the peasant world into closer contact with the general problems of our society and inducing it to consider its problems in connection with them. To do this under industrial monopoly domination is no easy task for the local administration or even for our party, a mass party uniting large forces and having numerous sympathizers. Difficulties crop up daily because our farming, like our whole economy, is in crisis. This is why we must check every day how far our initiatives and aims are in keeping with the nation's complicated overall problems. In spite of difficulties, we as the vanguard party of the working class have been able to take organizational measures fostering agriculture. (Incidentally, we have administered the municipality since the 1944-1948 period.) We have succeeded in uniting the peasant world and establishing what I would call good relations with it. The local administration has contributed to this effort, particularly in regard to development programs, which it decides on; so has the left as a whole.

The development of cooperatives has been the economic pivot of our activity. Large cooperative enterprises have been started and new forms of association developed in our commune and our *comprensorio*. The cooperative movement has long sought closer relations with other forces, and powerful social elements have united in the effort to develop the cooperative movement, especially in recent years. This movement, or social alignment, has given an answer, if a timid one, to the question of what our economy, in particular our agriculture, should be like, and has initiated a new type of development.

Establishing cooperatives and associations encountered various obstacles, some of them economic. Local bodies tried not only to help the peasants financially but to set agriculture on a new course, to direct it toward new economic forms.

What I mean is that our area is one of small-scale farming, each

farmer owning six hectares on the average. This makes it difficult for our output, especially farm produce, to compete on the EEC market. But the establishment of large collective lifestock farms, wineries and dairy factories enabled the cooperative movement to advance and to hold its own in the economic battle, even though the problem can by no means be regarded as settled.

The communists and other leftists are doing much explanatory and propaganda work. Drafting of programs by the commune is a most important means of fostering the cooperative movement. But we have little leeway in this respect. If programming is to be more realistic and effective, the communes and *comprensorios* must be enabled to make economic decisions. Under national laws, the communes, regions and *comprensorios* can not only study and draw up development plans at their level. They can also set up peasant councils that would be able to make recommendations on programming, the all-round development of the territory and capital investment, as well as dealing with the problems of relations with other social strata.

There are also political difficulties. The cooperative movement and the peasant movement consist of different social and political components. This is not to say we reject a dialogue with them or don't encourage it. We do our best to promote the unity of the peasant movement so as to rally together all social and political forces in defense of the working people's rights. In this field, we have both achievements and problems.

Cocconi. I would like to cite some data. In 1900, as many as 90 per cent of the farms in the area covered by our commune today were run on a sharecropping basis. There were 850 sharecroppers' families and about 50 peasant proprietors who tilled their land themselves. Later on, especially toward 1948, sharecroppers and tenants found themselves in a position to buy land. Feeling the resistance of capitalist forces and determined to hold out against them, proprietors began to associate so as to process their output, such as milk or grapes. The left *giunta* contributed to this development. Today 96 per cent of milk processing in our commune takes place in cooperative dairy factories, and grape processing by cooperatives is just as extensive. Having taken this step and meeting the resistance of big merchants, the peasants realize the need to set up what we call second-stage cooperatives, that is, to merge existing cooperatives into enlarged farms that could market their output (such as wine, cheese or butter) direct.

However, agriculture is still beset by difficulties owing to the country's unsound economic development. What the peasants propose now is to unite in collective stock-farms and pool their livestock so as to cut costs. This, in turn, makes crop farmers think of cultivating the

land in common, planning the sowing of various crops and taking joint measures to improve farming.

Question. How far have crop-farming cooperatives advanced?

Cocconi. Progress is still slight. Our organization publicizes the advantages of association. We already have groups of peasants who acquire a tractor and machines to cultivate the land in common and produce more.

Vezzani. I must point out that what we mean by 'association' and 'cooperative' are two different things. An association is a group producing one and the same kind of output for sale to processing factories. For example, the entire output of sugar-beet is sold to the processing industry through the only peasant association growing that crop. Sales are negotiated before sowing and this, too, is becoming an element of programming. Associations do not farm together whereas cooperatives are economic entities operating on the economic principles of cost and income.

In some production branches cooperatives would be impossible without direct government intervention. In the region of Emilia-Romagna, the communists propose that plants producing tractors and fertilizers or processing farm produce should be based not on private capital with state participation but on state capital and peasants' funds. This would enable the peasants to exercise control over industry with state participation.

All this is part of the communist policy of building socialism by operating inside capitalist society, by winning the support of the working people and middle strata and encouraging a more active role on their part because they are interested in this trend of social development.

Question. What is your opinion of the discussion held in the past on whether cooperatives can lead directly to socialism?

Fantuzzi. It was in our part of the country that the cooperative movement came into being, and just at a time when socialist ideals and ideals had begun to take root among the peasants. It is becoming the form in which the more advanced peasants are striving for their own new unity and a new unity with the working class to solve economic development problems and transform society. Cooperatives are not only a safeguard for the peasants' economic interests but, in a sense, a counter to the capitalist logic of private individual profit. In a cooperative, peasants learn to produce and distribute collectively.

But the cooperatives' range of action in present conditions is very limited. Production of fertilizers, chemicals and machines is in the hands of big monopolies, state industry and multinationals, which impose their prices. The marketing of agricultural products is in the

hands of parasitical groups of speculators and depends on the mediation of private wholesalers. The output goes next to processing factories, which likewise fix their prices, at least for a number of products. This is not to say that we are still stuck where we were years ago. I think the cooperative movement in our area has made big gains both economically, in terms of fixing the prices of definite products, and as regards the opportunity to influence the market. Things have changed even politically — a new unity is taking shape in the peasant world and the process involves communist, socialist and Catholic-oriented peasant forces. Together they are solving the problem of ending farming's historical lag.

Another noteworthy aspect of the cooperative movement is that in our conditions it has invariably meant defeating individualism as a way of life and thinking, and has led to the rise of new ideological values. This is why we are of the opinion that it is through the development of cooperatives as a new social and economic formation constituting an alternative to the one existing now that we can already introduce elements of socialism that will be realistic economically, ideologically and in terms of human values.

However, it should be perfectly clear that we cannot associate the possibility of moving on from capitalist to socialist society with only the development of cooperatives. We believe that in developed capitalist society, which is what our country is, and hence within the framework of the Western economy with its highly developed industry, the transition to the socialist type of economic and social organization and to a socialist economy in the true sense of the term must be a continuous process encompassing every sphere of the economy and of social and civic activity. Production relations in agriculture must not be isolated from the problems of transforming production relations throughout society, from its economic organization in its entirety, or from social and political changes.

SOME QUESTIONS IN CONCLUSION

Answered by Armando Cossutta

Question. We should like to ask a few questions to round off our interview and clear up certain points.

As far back as the end of the last century, it was suggested that, given a working-class majority in the municipalities, it would be possible to integrate 'bits of socialism' into capitalism and in this way achieve an evolutionary transition from class society to a classless one. Would you comment on this idea in the light of the vast experience gained by the Italian Communist Party in local government bodies?

Answer. We communists have always held that the idea of arriving at socialism through the municipalities is illusory and typically reformist. It has already been abandoned by virtually the whole Italian working-class movement. We know society cannot be transformed without deep changes in the existing class structure, which means that something more important is needed than the activity that can be carried on in a municipality. We do believe, however, that consistent effort to transform the municipalities can help transform society.

Question. We have satisfied ourselves that the Communist Party wields strong influence in local government. We also know that, although the ICP is not in the government, it is hard, indeed impossible, to settle any problem of national significance without the ICP's participation, let alone against its objections. And so the capitalists, the politicians now in power, are compelled at every turn to seek your support in tackling problems of both local and national significance. Clearly, however, even a neutral position of the communists on certain points commits them seriously with regard to the people. But the communists adopt very important decisions — in, say, the economic sphere, such as the decision on an austerity policy — and assume responsibility for these decisions although they do not exercise full power. What is your view of this intricate and contradictory situation?

Answer. You have put a question which our communists, too, ask in one form or another. We have tried to answer it at our federation and regional congresses. We have said that, as we see it, the Communist Party and the working classes, whose interests the party expresses, must win a leading position, a leading role in society. This cannot be done through mere propaganda in support of our principles. We do need propaganda, and it must be more and more active, for the struggle will be pointless if there are no great ideals. But propaganda alone isn't enough, nor is it enough to know that, historically, we represent the leading class, that is, the working class. Historically we have won already. The working class is destined to win all over the world. But we must daily prove that we are equal to solving problems in the interest of the working classes and the people as a whole. This is why we mustn't be afraid to join in the effort to overcome economic difficulties. In fact, it is through finding solutions to various problems that we are increasing our leading role. And it is in providing concrete solutions to difficult economic problems (and political ones, too, for there are also problems of home and foreign policy, as well as many other vital problems) that we achieve working-class unity and alliance between the working class and other social strata. At the same time, we bring about political alliances.

We know from our own experience that political parties do express

the interests of various classes, but they do this only on the general plane, or indirectly, as we say. For instance, the working class is also influenced by other, non-working-class, parties. It follows that we must achieve political unity of the working class in addition, of course, to trade union unity (politics belong to a much higher plane). I repeat, however, that this can be brought about only by daily demonstrating our ability to defend the working people's interests and express the policy of transforming the whole of society, because the working class is directly interested in something more than the solution of its own class problems. These class problems can be solved if a general transformation of society takes place. This means that we must be able to solve, from the point of view of the working people's overall interests, not only economic problems, but problems of education, the organization of life, public order, peaceful coexistence, and so on. We consider, therefore, that in the face of the tremendous difficulties of today, we must not be afraid to assume responsibility because we know by experience that those absent are always to blame and that we must be present. There is yet another aspect to this — it is the effort to solve specific problems that reveals who is responsible for the crisis and who blocks solutions in the working people's interests.

Question. Speaking of a democratic transformation of the country and of the transition to socialism, how would you describe the problem of the bourgeois state machinery, particularly at the level of regions and communes?

Answer. Some experience has been gained in this field and there are theoretical works. We believe the struggle for economic change cannot be isolated from the struggle for political power. Consequently, we must constantly combine economic and social reforms with political ones. Specifically, we cannot contemplate a policy of socialization unless deep-going changes are effected in the state apparatus as well, meaning the judiciary, the armed forces, police, education, information policy, and so on. We must achieve a far-reaching democratization of the entire state machinery. Prominent in this reform is the role of local government bodies, which we are now discussing. This is the stand we take.

Question. Lastly, a very practical question. How do you succeed in training people who can cope with all this exacting work in local government bodies?

Answer. That's a very difficult problem. Enormous responsibility has now been put on us and I think we must be much more energetic in encouraging the abilities of our cadres. How do we go about it?

There is a traditional method of training in schools on the principle: political culture plus specialization in management. We have a per-

manent network of party schools in the north, central area and south of the country, as you know. There are one central, four interregional and three provincial schools run by a Central Committee department. But we also have permanent training courses in all regions and the biggest provinces. After the electoral success of June 15, 1975, our party courses went over largely to training people for local administration. We have also decided to organize, and already have correspondence courses for tens of thousands of people. We are preparing textbooks which will be brought out in series. Each book of the series is mailed to students and contains one lecture and certain questions he must answer. After three or four lectures, a conference is held in the province concerned to discuss problems of the economy, urban development, social maintenance, finance, education and public health. But, of course, schools alone are not enough. The best form of study is experience, as you know. This is why we organize numerous interviews, conferences and meetings to compare notes; we transfer cadre members from one community to another to train them and ensure that the best experience is shared.

In this way we communists contribute to the training of increasingly qualified people to direct administrative bodies, and this serves the fundamental interests of the working people and the country.

Interviews conducted and recorded by
Luciano Antonetti and Alexander Volkov

1. The regional council elects a president of the council, a presidium, and an executive body known as the *giunta*. The executive body of a provincial or communal council is also known as the *giunta*.

2. According to the Constitution, the country is now divided into regions and communes. The communes can also set up *comprensorios* — amalgamations of communes on the basis of economic and other interests. Before the reform, the state structure included provinces, to which the central government appointed a prefect, who supervised the activities of the elected bodies. Even today, although the Constitution makes no provision for the existence of provinces and strong pressure is being applied for consistent enforcement of its principles, the provinces still exist.

In Italy the word 'regione' usually implies not merely a territorial division but also, like the word 'communa,' a social community, a part of the state and social structure.

3. Referring to the passing — after an agreement had been reached by six parties of the constitutional bloc — of Emergency Law No. 382, giving real force to the Constitution's statement on expanding the power of the regional and communal councils, Cossutta noted that 'these measures taken together constitute a genuine institutional reform, which will initiate a process of deep-going renewal of state administration . . . and at the same time this paves the way for carrying out more immediate reforms in the economy, social security and health.' (*L'Unita*, July 22, 1977).

4. Speech at a conference of worker communists in Milan. See *L'Unita*, January 31, 1977.

5. Independent, supported by the communists in the elections.

viewpoints

Further extension of Soviet democracy

K. Karasyov
Jurist, USSR

ON THE DRAFT OF THE NEW CONSTITUTION OF THE USSR

The reader will receive the present issue when the Supreme Soviet of the USSR meets to hold an extraordinary session to examine the draft of the new Soviet Constitution. In discussing it with our readers,* we have already dealt with the question of why our country needs a new Constitution at precisely this moment and we gave the views of Soviet people on the draft. We should now like to continue our discussion in the light of the fact that a sizable portion of our readers live in the capitalist world, where it is not very easy to obtain authentic and detailed information.

That this is so has been made obvious by dozens of bourgeois publications in various countries. What have they told you about the draft of the new Constitution? The London *Times* alone has published the text of it. *Le Monde* of Paris has given only a summary, whereas the overwhelming majority of periodicals have made space available to only a gush of 'commentaries,' patently designed to misinform readers and malign the draft. Their edge is aimed against the very essence of the document, whose cardinal purpose is to extend and advance socialist democracy.

It is above all the provisions of the draft which consolidate the development of the democratic foundations of the Soviet state system, and which record the present-day achievements of the socialist people's government, and the rights and freedoms available to citizens that are being falsified and distorted. *Die Presse* of Austria, for instance, admits that the rights of Soviet citizens have been extended, but hastily adds that the draft has displayed 'caution' in this. The *Frankfürter Allgemeine* of the Federal German Republic, for its part, unreservedly claims that their rights are being 'curtailed.' The bourgeois ideologists would obviously like to take advantage of the draft to carry on their campaign for 'human rights,' which, they say, are being trampled underfoot in socialist society.

*See *World Marxist Review*, No. 8, 1977.

We think it would be useful, therefore, to see how the draft of the new Soviet Constitution deals with questions of democracy, rights and freedoms.

Before looking into these matters, one observation of a methodological character needs to be made. In reading the comments of the bourgeois press on the Draft Constitution of the USSR one cannot help seeing that they all set up bourgeois democracy as the supreme standard and hallmark of democracy in general. This is the explicit or implicit approach in all their discourses as the absolute point of departure and the only basis for comparison and appraisal of all other political systems.

However, this approach is contrary to the requirements of any genuine scientific analysis of social phenomena, above all because bourgeois democracy is by no means the absolute or supreme achievement. It is a historically transient form of political organization which reflects capitalist social relations, that are far from perfect and are, in fact, narrow from the standpoint of genuine people's government, and real rights and freedoms. There is no doubt that, in historical terms, the establishment of capitalist social relations helped democratize the political life of society, but this process had its limitations, which are determined by the conditions needed for the normal functioning of the capitalist mode of production, and which at the same time constitute the foundation for the political organization of bourgeois society. These are immutability of private ownership of the means of production, free sale and purchase of labor-power and nominal equality before the law. This is as far as the capitalist class is prepared to do. All the other principles, standards and institutions of bourgeois democracy (including, beyond doubt, such progressive elements as universal suffrage, system of representation, accountability of executive authority to elective bodies, personal and political rights and freedoms, etc.) do not stem from the nature of capitalism and are alien to it. They are the result of the working people's class struggle or (to a certain degree) of rivalry between the ruling classes.

The anti-democratic essence of capitalism is particularly manifest in the real trends in its political life at the present state-monopoly stage of development. In fortifying their economic and political domination, the monopolies seek to curtail the bourgeois-democratic institutions and increasingly to turn the bourgeois state into an instrument of their rule. The communists are the most consistent fighters for democracy in the countries of the non-socialist zone of the world, for they regard radical changes which curb the power of the top monopoly elements of the bourgeoisie as a major step to socialism.

Any form of bourgeois democracy, however advanced, is charac-

terized by a contradiction between the democratic principles, rights and freedoms proclaimed in the political sphere and its anti-democratic nature in the sphere of socio-economic relations embodied in the private ownership of the means of production and exploitation of the working majority of society by the capitalist minority. That is why bourgeois democracy is no more than nominal, for it has been and continues to be a political form of bourgeois dictatorship. That is why it cannot serve as a standard of genuine government by the people, or a yardstick for appraising socialist democracy.

Socialism means the surmounting and dialectical negation of bourgeois democracy. For democracy in socialist society is not limited to the political sphere, but covers every sphere of social life, in particular the socio-economic sphere and the whole system of administration and management. Thanks to this, socialism not only inherits and gives real content to earlier democratic achievements of the working people, but also creates totally new forms of democracy and democratic institutions that earlier societies did not have. Socialism ensures genuine government by the people, involving the entire mass of working people in the administration of society and creating the forms and conditions for each participation.

Consequently, a truly scientific and objective approach to the appraisal of the draft Constitution (which consolidates this qualitatively new stage in the political organization of society) requires answering this question: to what degree does it ensure the participation of the working people in the administration of society, to what degree does it guarantee their real rights and freedoms?

Analyzing the draft of the new Fundamental Law of the USSR from this angle, one will find that, as distinct from the constitutions of capitalist countries, it makes clear that the economic system of society serves as the material basis for real democracy. Under socialism this foundation is social property of in the means of production, which abolishes exploitation. From the standpoint of ensuring real rights and freedoms for the individual this provision of the draft is of outstanding importance. And this is evident from the fact that the emancipation of labor from exploitation is the main condition for the freedom of the individual. Another important circumstance is that social ownership implies social management of property. In keeping with one of the principles of the draft Constitution, the socialist state effects planned management of the economy on behalf of and in the interests of the whole people, with the participation of collectives of working people and social organizations. Therefore, contrary to the claims of bourgeois propaganda, the draft Constitution, far from limiting democracy, extends it to the economy, which is the decisive sphere in the life of society.

The draft in equal degree ensures the rights and freedoms of the individual, in a section containing 36 articles. (16 in the 1936 Constitution). Here again it is not the number of additional articles but their content that matters. First, they consolidate the rights and freedoms which together form the very foundation of every citizen's work and social and political activity. These are: the right to work, rest and recreation, protection of health, social security, housing, enjoyment of the achievements of culture, etc.; freedom of speech, the press, street processions, meetings and demonstrations. Second, as distinct from bourgeois constitutions, these rights and freedoms are not merely proclaimed, but are backed up with material, political and legal guarantees.

Thus, the Constitution of the FRG proclaims that all citizens 'have the right freely to choose their profession, place of work and place of education.' However, the people of the FRG know the worth of such declarations. Suffice it to recall that many people have lost their jobs on account of the anti-democratic *Berufsverbot*. It is a fact that the overwhelming majority of the victims of this reactionary practice are progressives, communists above all. It would be fair to say that the constitutional permission to 'choose' the place of work sounds like mockery to an army of nearly a million unemployed who have been unable to find any work at all for a period of many years. The journal *Stern* philosophically remarked: 'Happiness is not more travel, happiness is work.' One should add: when jobs are available.

Capitalist practice shows that the working people constantly have to fight even for those rights and freedoms which have been formally proclaimed by the Constitution. Many vital rights and freedoms are not mentioned in the constitutions of those capitalist countries whose ruling circles are inclined to lecture others on the meaning of genuine democracy. Thus, the Constitution of the USA does not even mention the right to work. Unless this right is real, there can be no happiness or freedom of the individual.

In Soviet society, the situation is totally different. Here *the rights and freedoms are fully guaranteed*. Socialist practice provides economic guarantees (the socialist economic system and steady growth of the productive forces of society), political guarantees, as embodied in the democratic state and general political set-up of society, organizational guarantees (the work of the state bodies and public organizations being conducted in pursuit of the laws to protect and implement the rights of citizens), and legal guarantees (encompassing the legal institutions to ensure the implementation of rights by legal means).

In keeping with a long-standing tradition the draft Constitution stresses guarantees which are recorded side by side with the pro-

claimed rights. This refers primarily to all socio-economic rights. The draft states, for instance, that the right to housing 'is ensured by the development and protection of the state and social housing fund, promotion of cooperative and individual housing construction, fair distribution of housing under public control . . . '

The draft of the new Constitution embodies the principle that the constitutional provisions are inseparable from the guarantees, a principle providing the answer to the question: in what way does the draft differ from the 1936 Constitution? Along what lines has the new draft gone beyond the Fundamental Law now in force in extending individual rights and freedoms? Why have many of these rights and freedoms appeared in the Constitution only now? Another feature of socialist democracy which cardinally distinguishes it from the nominal bourgeois democracy is that its real content is increasingly extended as the new system gains in social and economic maturity. However, this is a lengthy process. It would be Utopian to imagine that a socialist revolution produces a complete type of democracy overnight, one that would not need to be developed or improved. Lenin wrote: ' . . . . In reality *only* socialism will be the beginning of a rapid, genuine, truly mass forward movement, embracing first the *majority* and then the whole of the population, in all spheres of public and private life.' (*Coll. Works,* Vol. 25, p. 472).

The draft Constitution is an example of a balanced, scientific approach to defining the fundamental rights and freedoms which correspond to the stage of full-scale socialism which Soviet society has attained. It expresses the enrichment of the content of some vital provisions in the present Fundamental Law. At the same time, the draft contains a number of rights and freedoms which reflect the new features and realities of the socio-economic, political and cultural life of Soviet society. Let us list some of these, because, as I have said, bourgeois commentators are inclined to overlook them.

In the sphere of political freedoms, it is the right to participate in the administration of state and social affairs (though Soviet citizens have enjoyed this right since the triumphant October Revolution, it was not written into the Constitution); the right to criticize shortcomings in anyone's work (when such criticism is voiced, the official concerned must respond within the time set by the law, and harassment for criticism is forbidden). In the sphere of personal rights, it is the right to lodge a complaint in court against unlawful action by officials; the right to receive compensation for damage inflicted by unlawful action on the part of state bodies, social organizations or officials. In the sphere of socio-economic and cultural rights it is the aforementioned right to protection of health, to housing, the family's right to assist-

ance from the state, and the freedom of creative effort in science, technology and the arts.

This list could be extended, but I feel that the above shows that the new draft Constitution ensures the citizens' rights and freedoms, first, in every sphere of public life, including the economy, which is the decisive sphere; second, on a scale inconceivable for any bourgeois constitution and, third, it provides for them a firm foundation of material and other guarantees.

The enemies of socialism claim that these rights and freedoms are curtailed by the clauses of the Constitution which lay down the duties of the citizens. For instance, the London *Times* says that 'relations between the individual and the state remain almost as ambiguous.' Why? Because the draft Constitution states that the citizens should use their rights and freedoms without detriment to the interests of society and the state, or to the rights of other citizens. And from this the incorrect conclusion is drawn that 'duties appear to take precedence over rights.' The Italian paper *Corriere della Sera* pursues the same trend of thought: 'all these limitations nullify the enjoyment of civil rights . . .'

What can one say about these arguments?

In the first place, it is necessary to remind our opponents of an old rule, which has become a truism, that there are no rights without duties. As compared with exploiting socio-economic formations, socialism enjoys a great advantage over them, for it has abolished the ground for antagonistic contradictions between the interests of the individual and those of society. It follows that it is in the citizen's interests to fulfill his duties to society, like the duty to safeguard and consolidate socialist property, defend the homeland and to educate his children. The fulfillment of these political, economic and ethical duties is of cardinal importance for the flourishing of society, and this, in turn, is a vital condition for the flourishing of the individual. Can the fulfillment of such duties infringe upon or restrict human rights in any way?

Further, bourgeois commentators describe as undemocratic the articles of the draft Constitution dealing with acts infringing upon the interests of socialist society and the state. How can there be real democracy without an opposition or political pluralism, they ask. The most convincing answer is provided by the 60-year experience of upbuilding and development of existing socialism in the USSR and by the experience of other socialist countries. Socialism has developed its own forms and methods (which are fully in keeping with its nature) for solving contradictions arising in the course of social development, for expressing and harmonizing the interests of the social classes and sections, and overcoming difficulties. That these methods are effec-

tive is evidenced by the stable progress of socialist society and by its steady advance in all key directions.

As I have said, the bourgeois press tries to question the provisions of the draft Constitution which cement and advance the socialist system of government by the people. What are its arguments? It is saying, in effect, that the enhancement of the role played by the state, by centralism, on the one hand, and promotion of democracy, on the other, are mutually exclusive.

However, the experience of political development in the USSR and the other fraternal countries has revealed that all these processes complement one another, that they are all closely interconnected. The draft Constitution determines the main lines along which popular government is being advanced in Soviet society in the context of full-scale socialism.

It is above all further promotion of the role played by the Soviets of People's Deputies — which form the political basis of the USSR — in solving all the vital problems of social life. It is through the Soviets that the people exercise state power. All the other state bodies — executive, administrative and judicial — are accountable to them and are controlled by them. Thus, the USSR Supreme Soviet is now empowered to handle all matters within the competence of the Soviet state, while the local Soviets handle matters not only of regional importance, but also exercise control over the work of other bodies in the area under their jurisdiction.

The power of the Soviets is genuinely popular. This is evidenced by their social composition: two in three of over 2.2 million deputies are workers or peasants. The Soviets regularly report to their electors. The latter have the right to recall a deputy who has failed to justify their confidence. In the last 10 years, over 4,000 deputies to the local Soviets and 11 deputies to the Supreme Soviet have been recalled. In their work, the Soviets are assisted by a large body of activists made up of representatives of workers, peasants, of office employees and intellectuals who help the deputies in their work.*

Mass organizations, such as the trade unions, the Young Communist League and cooperatives, play a big part in the system of Soviet socialist democracy. In the United States, for instance, 75 per cent of the workers are not unionized. By contrast, the Soviet trade unions have a membership of 113 million, i.e. virtually the whole of the able-bodied population is unionized. The draft Constitution provides for the participation of the trade unions and other mass organizations '... in the management of state and public affairs, in the solution of political, economic and socio-cultural questions' (Article

*For a more detailed treatment of the subject see the article by J. Pittman and S. Sudiman 'Government by the people,' *WMR*, May 1977.

7). The possibilities of these organizations are great indeed. Thus, the unions conclude collective agreements with the management to regulate its relations with the working people, exercise control over safety-engineering and working conditions and run virtually the entire network of health and holiday resorts. No worker or office employee in the USSR can be dismissed without the consent of the trade-union committee. Mass organizations have the right of legislative initiative, to which the draft Constitution has given the force of law. The draft also contains a clause on the working people's collective, because it plays a big part in extending their participation in production management.

Of course, finding an optimal balance between democracy and centralism, between state and public elements in the administration of socialist society is a difficult problem. In practice, the solution comes mainly through the activities of the Communist Party. It is quite logical, therefore, that Article 6 of the draft states that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union is the guiding and directing force of Soviet society. In performing this role it combines the interests and aims of individual groups and sections with those of the whole of society to ensure its moral and political unity.

It should be mentioned that Article 6 has given rise to numerous misconceptions in the bourgeois press. Thus, *Corriere della Sera* has declared that 'with the new constitution the Soviet state is even formally being turned into a party'(?!) while *The New York Times* sees no 'legitimacy' in relations (of the communists) with their people.

In actual fact, the party does not take the place of the state, nor does it stand in opposition to society, that is, the people. Its leading role stems from the objective needs of communist construction. One of the most important of these needs is to ensure scientifically sound guidance of social development and international relations. It is the party, and it alone, that can exercise this role, because it consists of the most advanced, class-conscious and best organized part of the working class and all other working people, and because it is equipped with the scientific Marxist-Leninist theory which helps to formulate and implement a sound political line. The party does not replace the state in carrying out its functions, and does not narrow the field of activity of public organizations, or the activity or the initiative of the masses. On the contrary, the party is the most consistent supporter of democracy both in it own ranks and in society as a whole. In this respect, it sets an example in democratic standards of life to all the mass organizations of the working people and stimulates mass initiative and endeavor.

The chapter on foreign policy which is a new one in the Constitution of the USSR has evoked a wide response in the world. As I have

pointed out above, the chapter characterizes the essence of the USSR's foreign policy, a policy of peace and peaceful coexistence which has now been given a prominent place in the Constitution. It also puts on record the 10 principles of international relations endorsed by all the peoples of the planet and reflected in the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference; renunciation of the threat or use of force, sovereign equality, inviolability of frontiers, territorial integrity of states, peaceful settlements of disputes, non-intervention in internal affairs, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, equal rights and self-determination of peoples, etc.

Surely these provisions, on which the USSR has always based its relations with other states, are indicative of the democratic character of the state structure of socialist society, a democratic character which has been extended to the sphere of international relations. Is there a fundamental law in the capitalist world which would consolidate with an equal degree of consistency and in such complete form the above principles as a constitutional standard? Here, too, the draft Constitution has new elements which are not only of legal, but also of philosophical and ethical importance.

The participation of millions in the discussion gives us every reason to state that the new Constitution will be a product of the collective creative effort of the whole Soviet people. The day is not far off when the charter of full-scale socialism will cease to be a draft, when it will be referred to in the present and not the future tense. It is noteworthy that this will take place on the eve of the 60th anniversary of Soviet power, in the light of the glorious jubilee of the October Revolution that ushered in the epoch of transition from capitalism to socialism.

The neutron bomb — an affront to humanity

Martha Buschmann
Presidium member, German CP

New facts indicating a sudden activation of the forces in the United States opposed to international détente have captured worldwide attention. Their stepping up of the development of new systems and types of weapons, particularly in the nuclear field, endangers the great efforts that have recently been made to secure lasting peace on our planet. It exposes Washington's desire to launch an even more dangerous phase in the arms race, which could threaten humanity's

very existence. Progressive opinion has been particularly roused of late by the intention of U.S. leaders to go ahead with the manufacture of a neutron bomb and to deploy this weapon in Europe.

The World Peace Council, the World Federation of Trade Unions, the International Democratic Federation of Women, the World Federation of Democratic Youth, other international and national democratic, trade union, youth, women's and religious organizations, and many politicians, scientists and cultural workers resolutely oppose these barbarous plans.

Why do the protests against the neutron bomb stand out amid the general effort for military détente and disarmament? Why have they acquired a qualitatively new dimension? The first reason lies in the nature of this inhuman weapon.[1] By its decision to make this weapon the U.S. government has thrown a challenge in the face of all humanity. While officially advocating human rights, it has revealed as never before the essentially anti-human character of imperialism.

The apologists for the neutron bomb are trying to justify the policy of stepping up the arms race and to neutralize the storm of protest that has been raised across the world. With an air of complete seriousness they suggest arguments for the 'advantages' of this new means of mass annihilation, claiming that the neutron warhead is merely a 'clean' nuclear weapon with a limited radius of action. Just how disgraceful these 'arguments' can become is illustrated by the utterances of the Editor-in-Chief of the Springer group's *Die Welt,* Herbert Kremp, who with ill-concealed regrets writes that production of a neutron bomb is overdue because if such a weapon had existed during the Second World War 'Dresden could have been preserved in all its beauty, despite the mass murder of citizens and refugees.'[2]

What it boils down to is that those who praise the neutron bomb are trying to blind public opinion to the fundamental difference between conventional and nuclear weapons. There is nothing new in such attempts. Twenty years ago, Konrad Adenauer, seeking to conceal the dangers inherent in his plan for the nuclear arming of the Bundeswehr, which had evoked a mass protest movement in our country, alleged that tactical nuclear weapons were no more than a more sophisticated form of artillery.

At present the spokemen of official policy in the FRG have adopted a contradictory position. Attempts are often made to play down the enormous dangers connected with the neutron bomb. It is frequently suggested that this is merely a low-power nuclear weapon to be used only on the battlefield, that this is just another tactical nuclear weapon. Sometimes it is claimed that the name 'neutron bomb' is misleading.

Such statements contain a double peril. First, they imply that the

neutron bomb is no more dangerous than other arms; second, they seek to persuade us that its use can be confined to the battlefield. Moreover the public is being cajoled into believing that use of the neutron bomb will not necessarily spark off a global nuclear conflict.

All those active in the movement of protest against the neutron bomb are well aware of the danger in these arguments. They realize that the theory that the 'balance of terror' may prevent a nuclear catastrophe is no more than a myth, but a myth designed to dull awareness of the continuing nuclear threat. The appearance of the neutron bomb has shown yet again that such a threat exists. It has increased the probability of war.

In the present conflict between the forces of war and peace the most reactionary spokesmen of imperialism do not even attempt to hide their warlike intentions. When Georg Leber, the FRG Defense Minister, made a pitiful attempt to conceal the facts and assert that NATO was not yet committed to the neutron bomb, he was exposed as a liar by none other than U.S. General Alexander Haig, the NATO Commander-in-Chief in Europe, who stated that the question of the neutron bomb had already been discussed in NATO circles and the possibility of its use in Europe had been approved.

The politicians of the CDU/CSU joined Haig and his ilk in openly welcoming the development of the neutron bomb. The *Frankfurter Allgemeine's* politico-military expert stated it as his view that the time had come for NATO to switch from defense to a more active posture. The problem, he said, could be solved quite simply. Once an indignant public was persuaded that the bomb would be used on enemy and not their own territory, the protest movement would simply peter out. However, the efforts of these Pentagon and NATO propagandists, these public relations men of the military-industrial complex, are not producing the desired results. The movement against the neutron bomb is growing day by day.

The people in the anti-neutron bomb movement point out quite rightly that this weapon is like another Auschwitz. It can turn whole cities into gigantic death chambers, housing nothing but corpses. Peace supporters remind us that the weakness of the war criminal trials lay in the fact that they passed sentence only after the murder of millions, after the annihilation of whole peoples, after the gassing and incineration of a multitude of our fellow creatures. Today the very possibility of such crimes against humanity must be ruled out. That is why it is so important to deprive the makers and potential users of the neutron bomb of any opportunity for a repetition of mass murder.

Everyone knows what an explosion of protest has been caused by the plan to deploy the neutron bomb on FRG territory. Many people have uttered a firm 'No!' to this plan. The main role has been played

by the democratic and peace forces, who have made an active contribution to détente and are participating in the powerful 'End the Arms Race' movement. They held an impressive demonstration calling for disarmament and demanding the scrapping of all new arms projects. These forces are urging the federal government to oppose the manufacture of the neutron bomb and never to allow this dreadful weapon to be based on German soil. They believe that the imperialists' new plans undermine the political credibility achieved by the pacts repudiating the use of force and recognizing the European frontiers, which form the bedrock of peace in Europe. The fighters for peace and democracy regard the manufacture of the neutron bomb as a mockery of the most elementary human rights, as an act in patent contradiction to the goals and principles proclaimed in the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference.

The activities involved in the decision to manufacture the neutron bomb cannot be squared with President Carter's widely publicized declarations on behalf of peace. They are diametrically opposed to the hopes born of the preparations for the vitally important negotiations on arms reduction.

The nations joining in the global movement of protest against the neutron bomb have a reliable ally in the shape of the socialist countries, and particularly the Soviet Union. In the context of the struggle against the plans for neutron bomb manufacture, the fundamental difference between the positions of NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organization is particularly striking. On the one hand, we see the imperialists planning to build a new weapon of mass destruction; on the other, the socialist countries urging the countries participating in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe to conclude a treaty repudiating first use of nuclear weapons. On one side, the prospect of war and death; on the other, peace and life.

The communists have proved again and again that they are the most consistent fighters for peace. It is the communist and workers' parties who play an exceptionally important part in the mounting movement against the neutron bomb. Their initiative is having a mobilizing effect on the whole peace movement. They have launched joint and parallel actions, various kinds of nationwide operations, often in close collaboration with all the peace and democratic forces. On August 8, 1977, marking the anniversary of the tragedy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, 28 communist and workers' parties of the capitalist and socialist countries of Europe, the U.S. and Canada issued a joint appeal protesting the U.S. government-sponsored production of the neutron bomb. The parties have urged all peace forces, and particularly socialists, social democrats and Christians, to come out in support of continued détente, and the securing of peace by

means of effective disarmament measures. The parties have appealed to the peoples to act to stop the arms race, particularly in the field of nuclear arms.

There can be no doubt that the communists' call will win worldwide support, and that the broadest sections of the peaceful and democratic public, all who treasure the cause of peace, will back up the struggle for détente, disarmament and enduring peace. The arms race must be stopped! No to Carter's neutron bomb!

1. With a vastly increased radiation yield, a low temperature of explosion and a minimal shock-wave, the neutron bomb destroys all life while leaving buildings, property, real estate and weapons of war almost unharmed.
2. *Die Welt*, July 14, 1977.

The right to work — the right to manage

INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY IN HUNGARY — PROBLEMS AND METHODS

Tadeusz Wrebiak
Representative of Polish United Workers' Party on *WMR*
Georg Kwiatowski
Representative of German CP on *WMR*
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CC member, CP Bolivia and its representative on *WMR*

We gladly accepted the invitation of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party Central Committee to study Hungary's system of worker participation in management, a subject of keen interest to us. It is on the agenda both of capitalist countries, where the workers are fighting for the right to influence the economic policy of their employers and the monopolies, and the socialist countries, where the communist parties and trade unions are devoting much attention to the continued improvement of the democratic management system.

Our Hungarian hosts afforded every opportunity to see how economic democracy works in their country. We visited factories, spoke to workers, foremen, engineers, party and trade union officials. In Salgotarjan we interviewed members of the Regional Party Committee. In Budapest we were received at the Party Central Committee, its Institute of Social Sciences, and the Central Trade Union Council.

We were deeply impressed by what we saw and learned. It would

be wrong, of course, to say that all we saw came as a surprise. One of the authors of this report comes from a socialist country, the two others are frequent visitors to the socialist countries, and all of us have for some time been working in a journal published in socialist Czechoslovakia. Nor did we set out on a trip of discovery. However, each of us saw much that is new and of interest and brought back much useful information. If we were to reduce our impressions to a common denominator, we would say that we came back with the deep conviction that socialist democracy — economic, social and political — is a distinguishing feature of Hungarian society.

What we saw in Hungary clearly refutes all the bourgeois propaganda talk about the 'absence' or 'underdevelopment' of democracy in socialist industry. The truth is — as we shall try to show in this report — that socialism's record in this area, too, is an impressive one.

We were often reminded of Lenin's words that, without being Utopian, the communists know that an unskilled laborer or a kitchen-maid cannot get on with the job of state administration the day after the revolution. But the communists demand an immediate break with the prejudiced view 'that only the rich, or officials chosen from rich families are capable of administering the state, of performing the ordinary, everyday work of administration.' Lenin called for an immediate start in training all the working people in the art of management, pointing out that this would generate such unprecedented revolutionary enthusiasm 'that much that seemed impossible to our narrow, old, bureaucratic forces will become possible for the millions, who will *begin to work for themselves* and not for the capitalists, the gentry, the bureaucrats, and not out of fear of punishment' (*Coll. Works,* Vol. 26, pp. 113, 115).

These passages are from the article 'Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?', written about a month before the Great October Socialist Revolution. The 60-year experience of building socialism and communism in the USSR, and the experience of fraternal socialist countries, has fully confirmed these prophetic words of the leader of the world proletariat.

Of course, it did not come all at once. Socialist democracy does not emerge ready-made, as a finished product; it is the result of a long and complex process, of painstaking day-to-day work by the Communist Party using the objective conditions of the new social system to educate the masses, heighten their political awareness and promote their initiative. But what we saw in Hungary justifies the conclusion that Lenin's postulate of *the indivisibility of socialism and democracy* has become as living a reality as socialism itself. And clear evidence of that is the 'penetration' of socialist democracy into industry, a

process that held our attention throughout our stay in Hungary.

Director Balazs' 'glass pocket'

Our first insight into worker participation came at the Budapest chemical combine. Its product, chemicals for agriculture, are known in all the countries of the socialist community. Its director, *Tamas Poros,* told us that it held second place in Hungary in labor productivity. And this, we learned, was the result of the workers' active and creative attitude to their jobs, an indication of their interest in boosting production.

The following words of director Poros could well serve as the epigraph to this report: 'No vital problem is solved without worker participation.' And we had ample proof that this was indeed the case.

No industrial manager will today assume responsibility for any major decision without first consulting a group of specialists. At the chemical combine this group is the director's council, made up of the director, his deputies, department heads and other specialists, and also of the elected heads of the party, trade union and YCL branches. A few years ago four workers were put on the council. They come to its meetings straight from the shopfloor.

We talked to one of them, *Lajos Redli,* an electrician. We asked him how members of the council were elected. In the most democratic way, he replied: first, every shop nominates its candidates — there were 30 in the last election — and the trade union committee, after consultation with shop trade-union organizers, selects four to represent their fellow workers on the director's council.

'What were your feelings at your first council meeting?'

'I felt that I was seeing the problems we had earlier discussed in the shop in an entirely new light. You get a different view from "above" than from "below": now I know not only what the workers think and feel on one or another problem, but the combine's overall economic policy. This is a dual advantage: I can bring to management the views of the workers and keep the workers in touch with management policy.

'But there was also a feeling of great responsibility, for now I had to intervene on important questions, knowing moreover, that I was speaking for my fellow workers, whose conditions to some degree depended on me.'

At meetings of the director's council, production conferences and other democratic forums (which we shall discuss in this report) worker representatives decide on a wide range of matters — production plans, optimal use of plant, working and welfare conditions, employment, working time, pay rates. That applies also to other countries building socialism and communism, for the socialist revolu-

tion gave the workers not only political power, but also ownership of the means of production.

That is the basic contrast between the condition of the workers in socialist and capitalist factories. True, in the capitalist countries the workers have scored a measure of success in their long fight for the right to share in management, but their influence on production and management policy is insignificant.

That applies to the FRG, from which one of the authors comes. Employers, politicians and bourgeois propaganda have been assiduously inculcating the myth of 'social partnership,' 'close cooperation' of employer and worker. There is even legislation institutionalizing the forms of such 'cooperation' as, for instance, the factory 'supervisory councils.' The 'new factory statutes' (1972) provide that worker participation in management 'shall be based on mutual trust and cooperation.'

But there can be no 'partnership' or 'cooperation' between exploiters and exploited. The FRG communists are showing the workers the hypocrisy of that formula. They regard worker participation not as a means of achieving 'social harmony,' but as an effective means of limiting monopoly economic and political power. Accordingly, the communists demand freedom of trade-union and political activity in the factories, safeguards for the rights and activities of trade-union delegates, production council members and youth representatives; worker participation in resolving all questions relating to working conditions, wages, investments and profits; parity representation on all supervisory and management bodies.

The supervisory councils do not and cannot discharge these functions. First, because the capitalists or their representatives are in a majority and can put through any decision they want. Second, unlike democratic worker representatives in socialist industry (the director's council mentioned above is a typical example), supervisory council members are not accountable to the workers or the trade union. Third, all matters concerning optimal use of plant are denied by the manager who, naturally, is motivated not by the interests of the workers, but by a desire to increase profit.

The narrow framework of 'social partnership' is especially apparent when it comes to allocating profit, a question in which the workers have a vital interest but no rights whatever. The capitalist monopolies and their managers conceal from the workers how much the factory is making. No wonder the communists and progressive trade unions in the FRG have called for 'glass pockets,' that is, a full and accurate account to the workers of the company's profit.

'What is the position in Hungarian industry?' we asked our hosts. For under socialism, too, there are some social contradictions, includ-

ing the contradiction between the interests of the individual worker and the work collective, on the one hand, and the state, as represented by factory management, on the other.

We got a clear answer: The work of the individual, the factory collective, and of society as a whole is, in the final analysis, based on public property and every citizen has a stake in developing it. Hence, the identity of fundamental interests of the individual and society and, consequently, the possibility of harmoniously combining them at all levels. How this is done in practice, we saw at the Budapest firm specializing in construction of public buildings.

We issue a monthly bulletin, director Balazs said, with detailed figures on every aspect of our economic and financial position. The bulletin is circulated to foremen, the trade union and the party branch, etc. It is open to every worker, and he can also get additional information from management. The draft annual and five-year plans are discussed by the workers. Besides, there is a special section on profits in the annual collective agreement, the draft of which is published in our factory newspaper and is widely discussed by the staff. We have no secrets from the workers, Balasz remarked, and to use your term, the 'pocket' of the Hungarian factory manager is really a 'glass' one.

The most important thing, *Janos Simon,* leader of a carpenter team, said in joining the conversation, is not simply the 'transparency' of the 'pocket,' but the fact that the director cannot dispose of its contents without first getting the approval of the workers.

Simon's words carry weight. The son of a worker, he had been with this building firm for 26 years, in 15 of which his team won the Socialist Work Award. Simon and his comrades have put up some of Budapest's finest buildings, the new National Theatre, Cultural Center, Hilton Hotel, and rebuilt the Budai Fortress and the Royal Palace.

We also learned from Simon that the work collective has virtual supervision of the 'profit-sharing fund' (PSF), that is, the share of total profits that remains with the enterprise. But first, let us say, that the size of PSF in many ways depends on the workers, though, of course, the enterprise's share depends on the amount of total profit. Obviously, there can be no reduction in the portion of profit that goes into investment, into the country's material wealth, which is the very basis of the prosperity of its citizens. PSF can be increased only if total profits are increased. That is exactly what happened at the end of last year when the 1977 plan came up for discussion. After a careful study of workers' suggestions, the trade union committee found that profits would be high enough to allocate six per cent of PSF instead of the four per cent envisaged in the plan. Simon put the new figure before the director's council, of which he has been a member for

several years. He pointed out that the workers wanted to upgrade some of the plan's targets to increase profit and, consequently, the share that is left with the enterprise. His arguments were convincing and management accepted the six per cent figure. This, we believe, is a good example of how, in a socialist society, the personal interests of the workers coincide, in the final analysis, with those of their factory and of society.

How is PSF apportioned? First, it is divided into three parts: current bonuses, allocations for social and cultural needs, and the '13th wage.' How much goes into each of these parts has to be cleared with the trade union committee. And since this concerns every worker, the debate is usually a heated one. Having solicited the views of the workers, the trade-union committee draws up a draft. At times this, too, becomes the subject of a long and spirited discussion, but in the end a consensus is achieved.

The Hungarian workers' interested, competent approach to allocation of profit — a closely guarded secret in the capitalist world — led us to reflect on the importance of industrial democracy for educating politically active and dedicated members of socialist society. *Sandor Lakos,* member of the party Central Committee and director of its Institute of Social Sciences, said: 'Shopfloor democracy not only contributes to expansion of the productive forces and effective operation of the socialist principle "to each according to his work," but also encourages an interest in social activities, raises the worker's educational and cultural level. Shopfloor democracy is producing a fundamentally new, socialist relationship between people, notably between manager and worker. And these are relations based not on domination and subordination, but on mutual respect, comradely assistance, joint responsibility for the factory and for society as a whole. Socialist industrial democracy thus helps all-round development of the personality and of the socialist way of life.'

This was borne out by everything we saw in Hungary and by our own knowledge of socialist reality. For the first time in history, socialism has given the workers the right to manage, and this helps both socialism and the worker — such is the logic of a society in which the ideals of freedom and democracy, for centuries merely a dream, have become a living reality.

Experiment in industrial democracy

As noted above, socialist industrial democracy is not something static, but a continuous dynamic process. What determines its scope and pace and, consequently, its present level? First of all, our Hungarian comrades told us, economic democracy cannot be isolated from the state and development of socialist democracy as a whole, especially

political democracy. In socialist society all democratic processes are interconnected and react on each other. The degree of worker participation in management depends also on the strength of democratic traditions, accumulated experience and on educational and cultural standards. Nor should we ignore such a factor, Lakos said, as party, trade union and YCL democracy in a given factory and throughout our society. Naturally, economic democracy is determined also by changes in the productive forces, and this is decisively influenced today by the scientific and technological revolution (STR).

This remark was of special interest, because it touched on a subject now being widely discussed both in socialist and capitalist countries. No one will question the fact that, by its revolutionary changes in the productive forces, STR exerts a definite influence, through the system of social relations, on the social and political life of society, necessitating changes in the organization and management of the economy and in the role of the human factor. And though, by and large, STR is having a beneficial effect on social development, its role in promoting industrial democracy is not one-dimensional. In fact, the difficulties and problems it poses, especially acute in capitalist countries, have led many bourgeois ideologists, politicians, management specialists, etc., to declare that industrial democracy no longer applies, for management is the preserve of an elite, the technocrats.

Socialism wholly rejects that approach, our Hungarian comrades emphasized. But we know, they said, that the solutions are not at all simple. For on the one hand, STR generates a natural desire by the worker to assume greater responsibility consonant with his higher skills, and have a bigger say in decision-making. On the other hand, however, modern socialist production is highly specialized and concentrated, uses new technology, requires more executive ability and responsibility, enhances the role of specialists in policy-making. If that is so, we asked, doesn't STR tend to reduce the role of the working class? And if it is compatible with industrial democracy, how does it influence it and, specifically, the functioning of the various democratic forums?

This is the answer we were given: first, we should differentiate between problems in the solution of which worker participation is both possible and necessary, and those that do not offer the conditions for such participation. If you take, for instance, technical and operational problems, then it is natural that they should be dealt with by the managerial staff, for their solution requires highly specialized technological, economic and managerial expertise, and the level of such expertise is rising from year to year. STR plays an increasing part in solving such problems. Not so in drafting the factory's

development plans and resolving major economic, social, personnel and similar questions. Here you must solicit the opinion of those who will have to fulfill these plans, and upon whom successful operation of the plant depends. Though STR requires higher levels of technical and professional knowledge, its problems are not insoluble and are well within the understanding of the workers. For, first, experience has shown that STR tends to enhance the role of the human factor in the production process. More importance attaches not only to centralized planning of production, but also to combining it with more initiative and activity, and more authority, for the work force. Second, the conditions for such a rise of worker activity are steadily taking shape — higher educational, cultural and professional standards, availability of a wide range of information, more free time for public activities, etc. Third, since this growth of worker participation is one of the decisive advantages of the socialist system, the communist parties of fraternal countries are trying to devise more effective forms of such participation.

'That applies to all the fraternal socialist countries, including my own country, Poland,' one of the authors of this report remarked during our talk at the Party Central Committee. 'But elaboration of new methods does not necessarily follow one and the same pattern. What is the main line in Hungary today? What changes are being made in factory democracy to meet changing conditions?'

This is what we were told by *Tibor Baranyai,* deputy head of the party CC department dealing with party and mass organizations: 'You have come at a time when we are summing up the results of an experiment in perfecting industrial democracy. The 11th HSWP Congress declared that the present level of factory democracy does not accord with the new demands and it is therefore necessary to develop it both in content and methods. Our critics in the capitalist West have shown a touching solicitude for Hungarian democracy and the rights of the workers. They contend that after long years of "neglect," industrial democracy is being revived and has entered a qualitatively new stage. This is a gross distortion. In our 30 years of socialist construction, factory democracy has reached a high level, with a large segment of the workers involved in managing production and with a well-functioning system of democratic forums. And if the party is now looking into the matter, it is not because we have to eliminate some major defects, but because this is required by the building of a developed socialist society and the on-going scientific and technological revolution. The object of this experiment is, first, to find ways and means of bringing into participation in management workers who still hold aloof from public activity, and second, to intensify the functioning of all the forms of factory democracy. We do not propose to

repattern the existing system, but to improve it by introducing certain new elements and finding better methods.'

The introduction of worker representatives in the director's council is weighty proof that this is being done. It is proof, also, that the development of socialist society leads not to the disappearance, but rather to the perfection of existing democratic institutions and the emergence of new ones. But though the director's council has an important part in representing the workers' interests, it is not the chief vehicle of industrial democracy. That role belongs to the *production conference,* the main social forum in Hungary that brings the STR into the democratic mainstream.

The conference holds a place all its own in the factory, for at its meetings the workers discuss and approve the factory's economic and social development plan, the directive that governs the life and work of the entire collective. However, our Hungarian comrades said, in recent years many formal elements have crept into the work of the productive conferences. The workers were not always able to influence decision-making, often for lack of the necessary information. There have been cases of the conferences being confined to hearing management reports.

To rectify this, a new form, workers' meetings, has been set up in a number of factories. They meet several times a year on the initiative of the workers or of the trade-union or party branch and discuss a wide range of problems. The party's Central Committee, in welcoming this innovation, advised against using the meetings as a substitute for the production conferences, which have been functioning for many years and have made a meaningful contribution to industrial democracy. Accordingly, party and trade union branches were advised to improve their work.

What is new in the work of these conferences, we asked the workers at the Salgotarjan glass factory. One of them, *Tibor Gordos,* a polisher, said the most significant innovation was that 'now we know what questions will be discussed. More, trade union organizers and members of shop committees brief us on our options in deciding on one or another question. And so we are prepared for the conference, and we come not simply to hear what the manager has to say, but to put our own point of view and help formulate a decision. For instance, the draft of the current plan, which we examined at the close of last year, contained a number of variants. We examined all of them and chose the optimal one. The amended draft was published in the factory paper and discussed by every trade union group. The conference was a lively one and resulted in effective decisions.'

The production conferences now deal with key economic, social and personnel questions. The workers can also bring up for discus-

sion all matters concerning the entire industry or the area in which their factory is located.

The main result of these innovations has been a visible growth of worker interest in the production conferences, which means that they play a bigger part in running the factory. That was emphasized in our talk with two officials of the Salgotarjan regional party committee, *Artur Huszak,* head of the industrial department, and *Istvan Bata,* head of the propaganda department. Much still remained to be done, they told us. 'We conducted a special study of the factors that determine the number of workers attending the conferences, for this can tell on their results. Along with such objective factors as educational and cultural standards and availability of information, much importance attaches to the way the conferences are prepared and the attitude toward suggestions and proposals made by workers. More than half of such proposals are acted upon and put into practice, and that's a good thing. But what about the other half? True, many proposals are obviously unrealistic. (Incidentally, this is also a problem, for an unrealistic proposal suggests lack of information or inability to combine personal with public interests, etc.) But every unrealized initiative tends to damp worker interest in participation in management. That is the political aspect and we are devoting much attention to it.'

The growing involvement in the affairs of the factory is manifest also in other forms of industrial democracy introduced in the course of the experiment.

These include, first of all, meetings of socialist work teams to discuss questions directly concerning every worker, sum up the results of socialist competition, act on current matters, and so on. They also take up such important and intricate questions as calculation of hourly pay, apportioning of bonuses, extra holiday time for exemplary work, etc. 'And it can safely be said,' *Tibor Messaros,* a member of the trade union committee at the chemical combine remarked, 'that the workers are successfully coping with all such problems. For they are the best and most objective judges of the contribution each worker makes, so that this is the fairest way of distributing bonus payments. In some teams this is decided by secret ballot, though the trade union committee believes that an open vote is more suitable.'

Of no lesser importance are other forums, which cater to workers with similar interests: technical conferences, activists' meetings, conferences of socialist work team leaders, veteran worker councils, women's committees, young specialists councils, and various youth and sports organizations. There is no room in this report for a detailed

description of each of them, but one, the youth parliament, merits at least a brief description.

And this is how it was described to us by *Gabor Vörös,* lathe operator at the chemical combine: 'Our youth parliament was set up in accordance with the youth law. All workers under the age of 30 elect members of the departmental parliament, which, in turn, elects members of the factory parliament. Elections are held every two years, and as a rule the parliament meets every six months. Its meetings (I am one of its 200 members) are attended by the director, members of the managerial staff, the secretaries of the party and YCL branches and the chairman of the trade union committee. At our last session there were about 40 speakers, and they dealt with problems that were causing a good deal of concern to our younger workers.'

In other factories, too, we were told, the youth parliaments have proved a success. Young workers voice not only their complaints and requests, but also present constructive proposals and not infrequently (we were told at the glass factory) subject management to severe criticism.

One of the authors of this report asked a 20-year old woman worker, *Erzsebet Nagy:* 'You probably know that in West Germany youth activists who stand up for the interests of their comrades are penalized. Some of them are sacked. In the past few years, hundreds of young people have found themselves without jobs only because they had the courage to stand up for their fellow workers or protest against unjust decisions. I would like to know how the management of your factory responds to youth criticism.'

'At our last parliamentary session we had some very harsh things to say about housing.' Erzsebet replied. 'We said that young workers and specialists were not being given a fair deal. And in general, we are not afraid to stand up for our rights and point to shortcomings and blunders. Sometimes I think it wouldn't be a bad thing to criticize ourselves just as harshly. Of course, there can be no question of "punishment" for criticism, and any attempt in that direction is cut short from the very start. But there is a problem — how quickly does management respond to legitimate complaints by us young workers. Usually the director tells us at the close of the meeting which suggestions can be acted upon immediately, which are unfounded, and which need further study. Besides we always have the support of the party and the trade union branch.'

Everything we saw in Hungary allows us to say with full conviction: in a socialist society there are no antagonistic contradictions between STR and democracy. On the contrary, the two are closely interconnected and interdependent: socialist democracy is the most fertile soil for continued development of STR and, conversely, STR

stimulates perfection of democratic forms of worker participation in management. This is one of the great advantages of socialism and its economic system.

Why there are no strikes in Hungary

We often address working-class audiences in capitalist countries on life under socialism. And practically at every such meeting we get one and the same question: why don't workers in the socialist countries go on strike? For the strike is the workers' most potent weapon, the surest way of upholding their interests. Besides, the right to strike is recognized by governments, and is an important indicator of the workers' successes in the fight for democracy. Why don't workers in the socialist countries have that right?

First, let us say that the question is not correctly put. For the fact is that there is no piece of legislation in any socialist country that denies the workers that right; there is no ban on strikes. In keeping with the democratic principles of socialist society, no one can be punished for actions that come within the law. Which means that the possibility of strike action under socialism should not be ruled out. But there are practically no strikes. Why? We decided that the answer to that could best be given by workers in socialist industry. And we asked our Hungarian friends for their views.

Jozsef Troll, trade union committee secretary at the Budapest building organization mentioned earlier in this report: 'I will probably not be making any great discovery by saying that our workers not only know, but deeply appreciate, that they are the owners of the factory they work in and are responsible for its normal operation. That is the most important factor — our workers' approach to all questions, including the question of strikes, is entirely different from that of their counterparts in capitalist countries. Any interruption of production recoils not only against society, in which the working class plays the main part, but against the work collective itself, since its fortunes are dependent on the factory's efficient operation. Second, our system of worker participation in management effectively protects the workers' interests. That is not to say that it is all smooth sailing. In our own building organization there have been some very heated discussions and it took several meetings of the production conference to thrash things out. But in the end agreement was reached and every worker felt that he shared in formulating it and that it accorded with his own interests and those of the collective as a whole. I would like to ask workers in a capitalist factory: if we workers are the owners of the plant and if no decision bearing on our conditions and interests can be taken without our approval, why should we strike?

Gyula Vincze, a mechanic at the chemical combine, touched on the problem of layoffs, which in capitalist countries are swelling the already huge army of unemployed. In fact, during our stay in Hungary the press reported that there were 5.8 million jobless in the EEC countries, including 1.2 million in the FRG.* The man who loses his job has a very slim chance of finding another one and lives in constant fear of the morrow. The position is even worse in developing countries, where unemployment is part of the widespread poverty. For instance, in Bolivia (from which one of the authors of this report comes) there have been no wage rises since January 1974, though prices have been steadily, and rapidly, rising. The worst off are the unemployed, who now make up about 15 per cent of the employable population. And to this should be added that, due to existing production relations and technical backwardness, 40 per cent of agricultural labor is doomed to idleness. Every year thousands leave the country in search of work. The fascist dictatorship, which has scant regard for the well-being of the people, has aggravated the situation by its so-called 'privileged immigration program' — it has allowed in 150,000 'Rhodesian escapees' (!) from the national-liberation struggle in Africa. But notwithstanding brutal police repression, the protest movement is spreading, with more strikes and demonstrations. The struggle for freedom and democracy is gaining momentum.

Dismissals, we were told, are not such a great rarity in Hungary, too. Technological progress has led to the closure not only of individual factories, but of whole industries. And here, too, of course, there are problems: one can well understand the feelings of an elderly worker who has become used to the factory collective. Problems, yes, but no tragedies: society looks after every person who has lost his job. Special commissions composed of representatives of government agencies, party and trade union organizations, have been set up to find work for them. And everyone is given a choice of several jobs, and if need be is put through a retraining course at the expense of the state. Most important, perhaps, is that the worker does not suffer material loss. A while ago we took on a group of workers from a factory that had closed down. They are being paid their former wages (higher than the average of our own workers) and enjoy full seniority privileges. In short, in these conditions loss of jobs is no reason to call a strike.

Or this reply from *Lajos Panczel,* electrician and shop committee secretary: 'A few years ago workers at some of our construction sites complained about the lack of dressing rooms, showers and facilities for hot meals. Things were especially bad when we were putting up the

*In mid-1977, unemployment in developed capitalist countries stood at more than 16 million. — *Ed.*

cardiological clinic, and there was a good deal of grumbling. But there was no conflict. The trade union committee invited the project manager to its meeting, and what we told him was not exactly to his liking. A few days later work was started on temporary premises for a canteen, dressing-room, showers and rest room.'

This terse account is typical of how the Hungarian trade unions work. The TU committee deals with all questions that concern the workers and their role in public life. The collective agreement can be altered only with the consent of the trade union committee, which also examines the draft plan, all questions pertaining to wages, welfare and safety arrangements, etc. Depending on the nature of the problem, the committee can either state its views, give its consent to a management decision, put forth its own proposals, or see that adopted decisions are properly carried out. But it can also protest any management decision. With such solid backing, our hosts said, there is no need for strike action.

Tibor Gordos, a polisher at the glass factory, said that the workers' interests are central to the activities of the party organization which, along with the trade union and the production conference, is a component part of the industrial democracy system. Our party organization uses its prestige and authority harmoniously to combine personal and collective interests with those of the society as a whole. The party committee studies and weighs the many views and suggestions coming from different groups of workers and their organizations and draws up decisions that are in the interests of all. There have been cases, we were told, of the party branch finding a solution that satisfied the workers, when all other means of defending their interests had already been used.

'Western propaganda,' Gordos said, 'maintains that the party branches have usurped all power in the factories, so that the trade unions and other worker organizations are only appendages of the party. Well, anyone who has been to our factory will see that there is not a grain of truth in that. Of course, the party branch directs the work of all the other forums, not by diktat, but through the prestige of the party and its members. The party branch draws up guidelines for relations between management, the trade union and other factory organizations. We don't think there is anything bad about that, because these guidelines, and party policy in general, are based on our interests, the interests of the working people.'

We were deeply impressed by the replies we got from the workers. They provide a clear picture of a Hungarian factory, where democracy permeates all relations between management, workers and their organizations. This precludes the possibility of serious conflicts. But how are these guidelines applied in practice? Are there no snags? And

what happens if management bypasses democratic procedures and institutions and takes a decision without consulting the workers or, still worse, one that impinges on their interests? Our study would be incomplete without answers to these questions.

And we got the answers in a very interesting talk with *Otto Juhasz,* secretary of the Hungarian Central Trade Union Council. 'It would be wrong,' he said, 'to idealize the present state of worker-management relations. If they were beyond reproach, there would have been no need for the party and trade unions to improve them. Not all factory directors appreciate the importance of checking every step they take with the workers or their representatives. In some cases you can even sense resistance to the development of factory democracy. This assumes different forms, for instance, adopting decisions which involve the interests of the workers but come as a complete surprise to them. But even in such extreme cases things do not go to the point of strike action. The workers have a very effective way of safeguarding their interests — the right of veto: the trade union committee can veto any decision made in violation of established procedures or contrary to the interests of the work collective. Implementation of such decisions is suspended pending examination by the superior trade union organization. You might ask why this right is granted to the trade union, and not to some other workers' organization? But your observations have probably convinced you that the trade unions hold a special place in our system of industrial democracy. First, in line with party policy, they organize and direct the work of all democratic forums, coordinate their activity and are themselves an organ of industrial democracy. It is party policy to enhance the role and influence of the trade unions in relation to all other factory organizations as a means of further improving worker participation in management. Second, the trade unions have a long-standing tradition as the main spokesman of the working people.'

'Could you cite a few examples of management decisions being vetoed?'

'Certainly. Last year the management of a big meat-packing plant in Zala province drew up a far-reaching reorganization program. It did not discuss it with the workers, though it would affect many jobs. The trade union committee immediately vetoed the plan. After long discussions it was substantially altered and accepted by the workers. Another and more modest example: the trade union committee of a building organization in Fejer province vetoed a new profit-allocation scheme since it had not been cleared with the union. Here, too, a satisfactory arrangement was worked out.'

'But is the union always right? Can't it happen that it will press

demands which, though in the interests of the workers, clash with more general interests? What is the solution in such cases?'

'My third example will answer your question. A while ago the management of one of Budapest's biggest grocery stores changed working hours without first consulting the union committee, which immediately vetoed the decision, on the plea that it would inconvenience the staff. But it turned out that the management was responding to requests by customers, so that, from the point of view of society, its decision was right. The matter was examined by trading and union organizations and the veto was revoked.

'I would emphasize,' Juhasz continued, 'that the party and society are against indiscriminate use of the veto. But there are no obstacles to its use. And experience has shown that the very fact that there *is* this veto right helps to prevent wrong decisions and resultant serious conflicts.'

What we learned on the 'strikes-under-socialism' question could be summed up in the following two remarks: First, acquaintance with socialist reality is bound to lead to the conclusion that, as a working-class weapon, the strike withers away under socialism along with class antagonisms, exploitation and oppression, unemployment and fear of the morrow. Strikes have no role in a society in which the state and its economic apparatus serve the working class and the people, and relations at factory level are based on cooperation in working toward a common goal. Second, socialism creates its own effective system of safeguards enabling the working class to uphold its interests, attain its aims and share in shaping the future of society.

Socialism has long since demonstrated its immense superiority over capitalism in such important areas as work and rest, education and culture, material and social security. That is admitted even by bourgeois propaganda, which now finds itself obliged to reorient its attacks on socialism. It is now concentrating on the political and legal status of citizens of socialist countries. Distorting all the facts, anti-communist ideologists claim that the socialist countries do not recognize or do not observe a number of political rights and freedoms, including those listed in the Helsinki Final Act.

We do not propose to begin an argument with the men responsible for this type of fabrication. But, within the framework of this report, we would like to draw attention to an essential detail. No matter how Western propaganda extols bougeois democracy and criticizes socialism, it cannot refute this simple truth: there can be real, genuine political democracy only if there is economic democracy, in other words, if the former is based on the latter, which is its guarantee. But by its very nature capitalism is incompatible with economic and social democracy. On the other hand, it cannot allow political life to develop

along other principles than those of its economic and social life. Hence, political democracy in bourgeois society — and history provides abundant proof of that — cannot but be limited, since it does not rest on the solid basis of economic rights and freedoms, of which the most important is the right to work, the right to manage.

And our last remark. Having seen how the Hungarian workers manage their factories, we are more than ever convinced that genuine socialist democracy, extending to every sphere of the country's life, can come only in a genuine socialist society.

Of course, we appreciate the long-range importance of what communist parties in the capitalist countries are doing to extend worker participation in management, win a majority in the municipal councils, etc. This is all part of the overall struggle for anti-monopoly democracy. However, the communists do not regard the winning of demands that contribute to restricting monopoly power as an aim in itself, but rather as a long step toward the ultimate goal of the class struggle, socialism. And there is the long record of the labor movement to show that hard-won democratic gains, even if they go far beyond the most advanced bourgeois democracy, do not automatically or smoothly lead to socialism if they bring only political institutions and freedoms and do not extend to social and economic relations. Genuine democracy, democracy for the working masses, begins with the victory of the socialist revolution, that is, with the extablishment of political power of the working class and the socialization of the main means of production. And that democracy fully develops only through struggle to consolidate the political power and build a socialist society.

It is in this sense, we believe, that one should understand the Leninist proposition that socialism and democracy are indivisible. This has been confirmed by the 60-year experience of the Soviet Union and the experience of other socialist countries.

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exchange of views

Latin America: current tasks in the anti-imperialist struggle and international solidarity

INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE OF OPINION IN PRAGUE

The recent period has been marked by an upswing in the Latin American peoples' struggle for stronger national sovereignty, social progress and democracy, against the fascist threat, for anti-imperialist changes aimed to eliminate foreign-monopoly domination, and for an independent foreign policy for their countries. This struggle has gone forward at a time of radical change in the balance of forces in the world arena in favor of peace, democracy and socialism, and with growing unity of the main revolutionary streams of our day: the world socialist system, the international working class, and the national-liberation movement.

An international exchange of opinion was arranged by the *World Marxist Review* in Prague on the subject: 'Current Problems in the Latin American Peoples' Struggle and Solidarity in Face of the Present Strategy of Imperialism.' Among those who took part were: Rubens *Iscaro* (Argentinian communist and public leader), Luis *Padilla* (CC member, Communist Party of Bolivia), Marcelo *Santos* (CC Executive Commission member, Brazilian Communist Party), Orlando *Millas* (CC Political Commission member, Communist Party of Chile), Francisco *Gamboa* (member of the CC Political Commission, People's Vanguard Party of Costa Rica), Manuel *Menendez* (Representative of the Communist Party of Cuba on the journal), René *Mauge* (CC Executive Committee member, Communist Party of Ecuador), Dunières *Talis* (Political Bureau member, CC Secretary, Guadeloupe Communist Party), Otto *Sanchez* (CC member, Guatemalan Party of Labor), Janet *Jagan* (Executive Committee member, head of International Department, People's Progressive Party of Guyana), Milton *Paredes* (CC Political Commission member, Communist Party of Honduras), Maurice *Juston* (Martinique Communist Party), Salvador *Gonzalez Marin* (CC Secretariat member, Mexican Communist Party), Ricardo *Garcia* (Nicaragua Socialist Party), Felix *Dixon* (alternate CC member,

People's Party of Panama), Carlos *Maciel* (CC Political Commission member, Paraguayan Communist Party), Pedro *Mayta Zapata* (CC Political Commission member, Peruvian Communist Party), Miguel Enrique *Melendez* (Puerto Rican Communist Party), Enrique *Rodriquez* (Executive Committee member, CC Secretary, Communist Party of Uruguay), and Pedro Ortega *Diaz* (member of the CC Political Bureau, Communist Party of Venezuela).

The meeting was opened by *C. Nunez Anavitarte,* the Peruvian Communist Party's representative on the Journal and Chairman of its commission on problems of the national-liberation movement in the Latin American countries. The current exchange of opinion, he said, reflects the urge of Latin America's communists constantly to enrich and develop our theory and to acquaint themselves with the practical experience and political approach of fraternal parties to various phenomena and events. The task of the participants in the meeting is to duscuss problems in the peoples' struggle in each of our countries in connection with the latest expressions of the structural and political crisis in Latin America and to clarify the scale and actual content of the present strategy of imperialism, notably U.S. imperialism, which has met with major reverses in other parts of the world and now seeks to re-establish at any price the positions it has lost on our continent. As its contradictions sharpen, imperialism becomes more dangerous to the peoples.

The Conference of Communist Parties of Latin American and Caribbean countries (Havana, 1975) said that 'the exacerbation of the overall crisis of capitalism and its total inability to find a way out of the situation has induced the most aggressive circles of monopoly capital to turn to fascism.' That is why it is so important to study and sum up the diverse forms of the heroic struggle against fascism, which is being carried on in highly difficult conditions in Chile, Uruguay, Brazil, Bolivia, Paraguay and other countries. Convincing evidence of the power and importance of international solidarity and proletarian internationalism can be seen in the constant and all-round support which our people are getting from the progressive forces, the socialist community in the first place.

Such exchanges of opinion are a form of living contact which helps to broaden and deepen the approach to the common problems and makes it easier to understand the intricacies of the changing reality.

Gonzales Marin. Faced with growing difficulties, imperialism has sought to work out a new policy. It has sought to shift the burden of the consequences of the overall crisis of capitalism on the countries which are dependent on it, especially on its southern neighbors, and evidence of this will be found in the activity of typical instruments of

imperialism, like the International Monetary Fund. Here, imperialism has relied on the local oligarchy and the monopolies, whose economic and political interests are closely bound up with the interests of the 'metropolitan country.' Judging by the measures being taken by the new Mexican government, the local oligarchy has succeeded in achieving its aims. The 'alliance for production,' which the Mexican government has concluded with representatives of the most reactionary circles of the oligarchy, and the calls on the people to contain their requirements have actually resulted in a freezing of wages, cut-backs in government spending on social security and education, and growing profits for the oligarchy.

At the same time, there is evidence of a crisis in the methods used to run the state, which the political bureaucracy has been using over the past few years. The communists allow of the possibility that the present economic crisis can be overcome. However, it is not a matter of indifference to us what kind of measures are used to do this. They must not harm the mass of people. What is more, mindful of the lessons of the crisis, we have put forward demands whose fulfillment will help to reduce the dependence of the national economy on imperialism. On the political crisis, our main efforts are aimed to overcome it in a democratic way. Complete legalization of the Mexican Communist Party would provide evidence that that is the way the ruling circles have taken.

Gamboa. For years the imperialists have advocated a Central American alliance that would meet their interests. There is an awareness among our peoples that a Central American alliance is an objective requirement of economic development, but they do not want it to be sponsored by imperialism. The United States has managed to set up a 'common market,' a system of economic integration in Central America, and, on the basis of a military treaty, a Central American Defense Council (CADC), which is empowered to send one country's army to operate on the territory of others. This military treaty has most of all affected the Costa Ricans' interests, because our country is the only one in America without an army, although it does have a civil guard with repressive functions, a public order force.

We have no military institutions or military caste. A bourgeois democratic system has been established in Costa Rica, which is the only Central American republic to maintain diplomatic and trade relations with the socialist countries. After 27 years in the underground, the communists and left-wing forces have won complete legality and the trade union movement has been developing in relative freedom, although it does have to face many difficulties. Together with other left-wing forces, we have been working persistently for unity.

Iscaro. Following its reverses in Asia and Africa, imperialism has concentrated on safeguarding its positions in Latin America. The temporary defeat of the democratic process with a socialist perspective in Chile, like the establishment of diverse dictatoships in other countries in the southern part of the continent does not mean that the Latin American peoples are in retreat, or that fascism is on the offensive, winning new positions everywhere. It is true that the revolutionary movement in some Latin American countries has been dealt heavy blows, but its achievements are also unquestionable. We believe that in evaluating these one should not be guided only by whether we have or have not succeeded in attaining power. We must take account of the extent to which the masses are involved in the anti-imperialist struggle, of the growth of the revolutionary movement in Latin America as a whole, the changing frame of mind among individuals in the armed forces, the attitude of the Catholic Church to the democratic movement, the action started by some circles of the bourgeoisie opposing the policy of international monopolies, and so on. All of this testifies to the development of the anti-imperialist and revolutionary movement on the continent. Every country has its own specific problems, and these are taken into account by each party in working out its line and tactics. Of course, we have one common enemy — imperialism — and one common weapon — internationalist solidarity. That is why we communists must act in concert both in Latin America and all over the world.

The contradictions between U.S. imperialism, on the one hand, and the masses of people in the Latin American countries and some governments, on the other, have become so acute that a complete break is a possible prospect. As for Argentina and other countries of the continent, among the causes of their friction with the United States one must note the problems of 'defense' of the South of the Atlantic, nuclear treaties and human rights. Our task is to use these frictions to develop the anti-imperialist movement.

We believe that there is only one way to unity and liberation, the way of mass struggle. The peaceful, like the non-peaceful way, must always be connected with mass action, instead of reckless action by a minority out of touch with the masses. In our countries, the struggle for socialism is closely bound up with the struggle for democratic change. We Argentinian communists have carried on an ideological struggle against every form of ultra-leftism, which has done so much harm to the communist and anti-imperialist movement.

We feel that more attention should be given not only to the activity of political and social organizations and mass action, but also to processes taking place in the armed forces. In Argentina, there is a wide spectrum of views among the military, ranging from pro-

gressive-minded groupings to reactionary elements. Some military men reject communism but take an anti-imperialist and democratic attitude. We feel that much importance should be attached to the problem of the military.

The struggle in Argentina is aimed to prevent the dark cloud of fascism and reaction in the service of imperialism from covering the sky of the Southern Cone. Success in ensuring respect for the Argentinians' democratic rights and freedoms would inevitably tell on the neighboring countries, because Argentina obviously exerts an economic and political influence on them. If democracy in Argentina is strengthened — and we regard such a perspective with optimism — the situation in the Southern Cone could change.

Enrique Melendez. A few days before leaving the White House, President Ford announced the U.S. intention to turn Puerto Rico into yet another state. This did not come as a surprise for the Puerto Rican communists. For years, the U.S. oil companies had been conducting geological exploration on the territory of Puerto Rico and in its off-shore waters. An official announcement said that large deposits of oil, copper and other minerals are located in the area of the country's northern coast. Politically, Puerto Rico is beginning to be source of serious alarm for the United States. The Puerto Rican Communist Party wants to see the establishment of the broad patriotic front to tackle the problem of the country's legal status in the national interest, that is, to eliminate the colonial regime with the participation of all patriots, regardless of party affiliation. International solidarity has enabled us to give broad scope to the struggle at home.

Talis. The people of Guadeloupe have been carrying on a hard struggle for decolonization. Despite the fact that we have not yet induced all the working people to display concern for winning autonomy, this question continues to be one of the most important for Guadeloupe. French imperialism and the French government, which protects its interests, regard autonomy as a threat to colonial rule in our country. But as the 1974 elections showed, a majority of voters came out in favor of abolishing the colonial regime. There is no doubt that it is now possible to unite the forces in Guadeloupe fighting against colonialism. Like all the other peoples, our people take an optimistic view of the struggle against imperialism.

Maüge. Since the takeover by the armed forces government, our party has formulated a tactical line of supporting all the positive elements in its activity. It has also indicated the need to combat all the negative aspects of its policy, which harm the interests of the people and the country. A variety of approaches to the political situation in the country will be found among the military. There are the pro-fascist elements which attempted to stage a coup in 1975. There are

also the democratic forces which fought arms in hand against the fascist grouping. In these conditions, we have been working to strengthen the progressive and democratic attitudes among certain circles of the armed forces, although we do not have any illusions about the army as a whole being able to support progressive and revolutionary aims. Just now a polemic and a polarization of forces is under way in the armed forces government.[1] Our party has been working for the establishment of a broad left-forces front to unite the Socialist Party, Christian circles, a section of the army, the working class and peasant movement, and progressive forces in general.[2]

Rodriguez. Our starting point for analyzing the situation on the continent is the Declaration of the Conference of Communist Parties of Latin American and Caribbean countries, whose overall evaluations have been borne out by time, and this is of great importance, considering the changes that have taken place and Latin America's political instability. The fact that we are faced with a counter-offensive by imperialism is being confirmed. To be more specific: this is not an offensive that has allegedly left us routed, but a response, a counter-offensive, mounted in view of the very grave political process going forward in Latin America. Make no mistake about it: the counter-offensive has brought U.S. imperialism some success, but it was achieved at the price of a considerable overall weakening of its positions. Nevertheless, a worsening of the strategic perspective does not necessarily mean that at this tactical moment the consequences of imperialist policy have been nullified. The counter-offensive has cost our peoples much sacrifice and suffering.

It is impossible to describe everything that has occurred in Latin America from 1964 to 1977. It is no longer possible to use the old yardstick, because we now have to deal with fascism. Still, despite the monstrous crimes of imperialism, it is a fact that is has failed to destroy the communist parties. Nor has imperialism managed to split the trade union movement or to set up yellow trade unions. In strategic terms (also taking account of present potentialities) the balance of forces in the world is shaping in our favor. In these past few years, Latin America's communist parties have done a great deal, and this has not been easy anywhere. In Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, Brazil and other countries the fraternal parties have lost many of their leaders and rank-and-file members.

U.S. imperialism has sought to present itself in a new guise, conducting an international campaign against the socialist countries and seeking to split the international communist movement over the human rights issue; it has also made use of various moves over the terms of military aid. But ultimately this policy has engendered fresh contradictions and has further worsened its positions in Latin Ameri-

ca. This is a very intricate process including elements of the inter-imperialist struggle (like the nuclear-energy agreements between Brazil and the FRG). We must use these contradictions, without harboring any illusions or losing our political independence.

Imperialism will seek to prevent Latin America from returning to the 1970 situation (the year of the Popular Unity victory in Chile), or the one which took shape after the collapse of the dictatorships in the 50s and the victorious Cuban Revolution. The most it can hope for is to accept some 'institutionalization' on the Brazilian model. But it will not abandon fascism and will not suppress the pro-fascist elements in the army. This will have to be done by the peoples themselves (however tremendous the price in sacrifice) through the broadest possible struggle and unity of all the patriotic forces; civilians, military, atheists and believers. In this struggle no opportunity must be overlooked, however insignificant or indirect, so as to bring about an upswing in the struggle of masses of people and their unity in the battle against fascism to breach the enemy camp.

It is four years since the dictatorship was established in Uruguay. Bordaberry has gone down, the contradictions between those who are holding onto power illegally have been growing, and the economic situation is catastrophic. Weakened by internal resistance and international solidarity, the dictatorship finds itself in ever greater isolation. The leadership of the Communist Party of Uruguay has never ceased its activity inside the country. It has continued to issue underground publications and has helped to advance the struggle of the masses, above all the preservation of the organizational structure and sustained activity by the trade union center (Working People's National Convention) and various workers' trade unions. Despite the threats and fierce struggles, May Day was publicly celebrated in 1974 and 1975.

Since October 1975, the fascist forces' offensive has been waged with unprecedented savagery. Our movement had to go deep down underground to preserve its cadres. The struggle goes on, and that is the main thing for us. International solidarity has been of tremendous assistance. We realized the great strength of the forces that can extend support to a fighting people. We are aware of the direct connection between the resistance movement in the country and international solidarity, and realize the importance of the heroism of our leaders, like Jaime Perez, Jose Luis Massera, Alberto Altesor and other comrades, for the party's ideological cohesion and elevation of its morale. We are proud of them, and their political prestige is incontestable. Their behavior in the torture chambers has won them the right to be called national heroes of the anti-fascist struggle.

We do not advocate a 'care-free optimism.' Our struggle has been,

is and will be hard. It is part of the struggle in the international arena in which the balance of forces is tilting in favor of the people's struggle. Fierce battles will continue to be fought in Latin America, in which successes may alternate with defeats. We in Uruguay have been concentrating our efforts to achieve unity of action and set up a front of all the anti-fascist forces, seeking not only to liberate our own country, but also to make a contribution to the cause of wiping out the fascist and reactionary dictatorships on the continent as a whole.

Menendez. Imperialism has been forced to abandon its 'cold war' policy because of the victories scored by the forces of peace and socialism, the advance of the struggle by the working class and the progressive forces in the capitalist world, and also of the peoples' successes in the fight against colonialism and neo-colonialism.

The recent period has been marked by a succession of defeats for U.S. imperialism all over the world. First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, Fidel Castro, said in his Report at the First Congress: 'Our people may feel proud of having in some measure contributed to that historic defeat of U.S. imperialism, proving that only 90 miles away, a small nation, relying on no other strength than its moral determination to resist to the very end, and on the solidarity of the international revolutionary movement, was able to beat back the imperialist onslaught by the world's most oppressive power. The existence of revolutionary Cuba, its successes in every sphere of social life and the defeats of the imperialist aggressors give our people hope of a radiant future despite the still existing difficulties.'

Nowadays, the ideological struggle tends to become ever more acute, with the imperialists resorting to ever subtler methods. With socialism scoring more and more successes, and capitalism paralyzed by an economic crisis, the apololgists of imperialism have been conducting a broadly organized campaign to denigrate existing socialism. U.S. ruling circles have vainly tried to present themselves as champions of freedom, sponsors of a genuine peace policy, and initiators of 'just' general disarmament. Having been forced to take such a stand because of the changing balance of forces, imperialism has sought to slow down progressive transformations leading to a further strengthening of the revolutionary camp. Following the election of the Democratic Party's candidate, Jimmy Carter, extensive effort has been made to present the new administration as an advocate of a new order in Latin America, with profuse talk about human rights. Imperialist propaganda says that U.S. military aid will be withheld from Latin American governments violating these rights. However, this is no more than a screen because so-called direct aid is very insignificant as compared with indirect aid going to the repressive regimes. What is

taken from them by one hand, is being abundantly supplied by the other.

By means of this campaign, the imperialists seek to create a climate of mistrust of the socialist-community countries, the Soviet Union in the first place, and to switch the attention of the peoples to the question of so-called lack of freedoms, democracy and human rights in the socialist world, including Cuba. But the fact is that only under socialism can a truly humane society be set up, free of all exploitation, a society in which all men are brothers. How can there be any human rights in a country like the United States in which people are being discriminated against for reasons of color or origin? How can they talk about human rights while supporting colonial domination in Puerto Rico and prosecuting and incarcerating fighters for that country's independence? How can they talk about human rights while resorting to subversion and sabotage, efforts to destabilize governments, continuing their aggressions against Latin American peoples and conducting a criminal policy of blockading our country? How can the imperialists hold forth on human rights while making use of all the means at their disposal to maintain the fiercest exploitation on our continent? How can they claim to be the leaders of the fighters for human rights while pursuing aggressive aims, with dozens of military bases established all over the world, including the territory of our country, and manufacturing every conceivable type of destructive weapon?

Following the events in Angola, imperialism has tried to fan a campaign designed to discredit the Cuban revolution. To drum up support for this campaign, prevent some Latin American and Caribbean countries from defending their natural resources, establishing fair prices for their basic exports and safeguarding their national sovereignty, imperialism has spread rumors about the 'threat' of a Cuban invasion.

U.S. government spokesmen recently announced the U.S. intention to modify its policy with respect to Cuba. At our Party Congress, First Secretary of the CC of the Communist Party of Cuba, Fidel Castro, said: 'We are ready to negotiate, and we reiterate this also at our Congress, before the entire Cuban people, that official negotiations cannot be carried on, unless the U.S. government rectifies the substance of its blockade policy . . . It is a question of negotiating on equal terms, and we have already said that for us the blockade is a knife at our throat; it creates an atmosphere for negotiations that we will never accept.' With the world now developing toward détente, Cuba, which has always based its policy on the principles of peaceful coexistence, equality of states and respect for national sovereignty and independence, will not take a position of negative intolerance in

the matter of settling its contradictions with the United States. This is our position: if a policy of peace and friendship is taken with respect to Cuba, we pursue the same policy. The lifting of the blockade would mean a defeat for the policy which has been pursued by imperialism with respect to Cuba for over 15 years. It would mean a victory for the peoples and for the international revolutionary movement. However, it will not shake our solidarity with the Latin American peoples and with the revolutionary and national-liberation movements in all countries.

Ortega Diaz. Our country is going through a politically complicated period: elections for the President of the Republic are at hand. The parties are preparing to nominate their candidates. Never before has Venezuela had such a rise in prices and such a shortage of foodstuffs as it has today. That is the result of the failure of the 'agrarian' reform, which has, in fact, served the ruling circles as a screen for conducting a bourgeois agricultural reform. As a result, the present level of agricultural output does not meet the country's requirements. On the other hand, as this will be seen from official data, the major economic groupings linked with imperialism have been enriched and have increased their power. In the recent period, despite the nationalization of oil and iron ore, foreign capital has markedly strengthened its positions in the country's economy. There is a rapid growth of foreign investments in industry, finance and banking, in defiance of the Andean Pact's decision 'No 24.' The condition of the masses continues to be extremely grave. The working people's real wages have declined, and in the past few years the bourgeoisie, the employers have increased their share of the national income.

The mass movement has been developing despite the role of the top trade union bureaucrats, who depend, on the one hand, on the Inter-American Regional Organization of Workers (ORIT), and on the other, on the Social Christian movement supported by the United States and the FRG. From 1970 to 1976, the number of illegal strikes increased considerably (let us note, that all were declared illegal). This is an indication of the growing fighting efficiency of the masses. Our party's participation in organizing the trade union movement has grown, and we have continued to consolidate our positions within it. The party's line on the electoral campaign consists in elaborating a common program and nominating a single candidate for all the left-wing forces. We have no illusions on this score: a hard struggle lies ahead, and we may possibly not achieve success. The important thing, however, is that in the course of this struggle the party will be able to consolidate its ties with major political forces.

Millas. Fascism emerged in Chile in response to the development of the revolutionary process which was led by the working class and

which scored considerable successes that the Chilean people cannot forget. For a correct evaluation of fascism, one must make a profound analysis of the changes that have taken place in the economic, social and political development of Chile and other Latin American countries. The Chilean communists devoted special attention to a study of this problem in the 1950s while working out our party's program, and pointed to the formation of a local financial oligarchy. Its most aggressive groups, which we call the great clans, practise open terroristic tyranny, making direct use of fascist military commanders for these purposes. They were set in motion by imperialism, the CIA and the Pentagon in the first place. Today, they are being helped and supported by the Carter Administration.

The main feature of the fascist tyranny is that it is practised as a system of state-monopoly capitalism. Some analysts have debated the point of whether it was right to define as state-monopolist a regime that is dependent on international finance capital, that has yet to reach a considerable level of economic development, and whose most dynamic branches of the economy depend on the metropolitan country. We feel that in analyzing such regimes it is indeed right to lay emphasis on their dependent character. But one should take account of the fact that that is a type of dependence which is also a type of state-monopoly capitalism. In casting about for support from all the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois sections, fascism in Chile resorted to demagogic propaganda against the role of the state. But that was no more than another of the numerous fascist tricks. Actually, the major Chilean enterprises continue to be owned by the state, while the whole intricate system of production and state administration of the economy as a whole, like the development of these enterprises, serves the interests of the most avid groups of the financial oligarchy.

Under fascism, new forms of state-monopoly capitalism are expressed above all in the consolidation of the mechanism of financial domination in the areas where the most active monopoly groups coalesce with imperialist finance capital. We regard the fascist economic 'model' as a component part of the international division of labor in the capitalist world set up by the large international enterprises. In Chile, this has led to the destruction of a sizable section of traditional industry. At the same time, mining, the pulp industry, agro-industries complexes, forestry and the fisheries have been given a fresh impetus for development. To become competitive in these industries, the international monopolies have established control over the provision of technology and financial resources. The local financial oligarchy also has to secure the accumulation of capital and high profits, and this cannot be done without continued fascist terror.

We have on our side, on the side of the working class, tremendous

forces whose interests have been affected by the current situation in the country. It is our duty to work out not only the slogans for the immediate demands and resistance, aimed to mobilize the masses, but also a patriotic, anti-fascist program for the country's further development. That is what we have been doing.

Maciel. There are two main factors in Paraguay which hamper the development of the productive forces, of industrial and agricultural production: latifundism and imperialism. Their domination results in stagnation and a narrowing of the domestic market. Masses of people in the country are impoverished and unemployed. Over a period of many years, Stroessner's dictatorship has systematically sold out the national resources to international monopolies. In an effort to stem the development of our people's struggle, the dictatorship has resorted to threats, persecutions, tortures, kidnapping of political and trade union leaders and violence against them. The situation in the country clashes not only with the vital interests of the working class and the peasants, but also affects the interests of the national industrial and commercial bourgeoisie, including the non-privileged sections of the ruling classes. There is now a universal growth of discontent with the backwardness, poverty and reprisals. The working class is extending its struggle. At the same time, the peasants have been fighting for their land, for fair prices for their produce and guarantees of free activity for their organizations, and the students, for better conditions to study. There is a broadening movement to secure the release of political detainees, against tortures, persecutions and so on. The church has an important role to play in the struggle of the anti-dictatorship forces.

The dictatorship has repeatedly announced the destruction of the Paraguayan Communst Party, but it is still operating within the country. Though we have lost many of our comrades, though CC Secretary, like Miguel Angel Soler was arrested at the end of 1975, and like Derlis Villagra has disappeared without trace, and though many communists are in prison, the party leadership is in Paraguay and has been strengthening the party's bonds with the masses. It has maintained contacts with various political circles on the need for joint struggle by all forces opposing the Stroessner tyranny. Their unity is the main condition for overthrowing the regime.

Zapata. The revolutionary process in Peru, which was anti-imperialist and anti-oligarchic, and had an anti-capitalist orientation, is facing grave difficulties. The economic crisis, a reflection of the world crisis of capitalism, has had an extremely negative impact on the ongoing transformations. In seeking a way out, the armed forces government had ideological illusions because of its class make-up. Its activity was based upon allegedly original theories, notably the con-

ception of 'self-governing socialism,' rejecting the need for a revolutionary party, and for the doctrine of the class struggle, and emphasizing the attainment of national unity. All this prevented the armed forces government from taking the path of deepening the revolutionary process. This would mean a break with dependence and an advance toward the socialist way of development. Failing to do this, it was powerless in the face of reaction. Exploiting the economic difficulties, the reactionary forces managed to change the government's character, secure the removal of its revolutionary wing, revision of the basic program goals and a gradual emaciation of the progressive content of the effected transformations. We feel that the present government is no longer revolutionary. But then it is not fascist either, and we believe that it is trying to work out its own policy in accordance with its conceptions. People's organizations, our party in the first place, believe that the main thing now is to formulate a policy for pulling out of the economic crisis. In so doing, the whole burden should not be thrown on the masses of working people. This policy should be aimed to deepen the revolutionary process, instead of slowing it down. The communists have proposed a program for solving the economic problems that would help to unite all the revolutionary forces. Despite the systematic attacks on the part of reaction and the ultra-leftist elements, the efforts to sow dissent in our ranks, the Communist Party has steadfastly maintained its unity. Even faced with the present serious position, there are still opportunities to advance the revolutionary process, enabling the democratic and popular forces to prevent any further shift to the right or the establishment of a fascist regime in Peru.

Juston. The people of Martinique acquired national self-awareness a relatively short while ago. Our struggle for national liberation has gone forward in a country where, despite all the difficulties, the working class has won considerable gains. The class struggle has forged organizations in our country which prevented a neo-colonialist solution of the problems, as has been the case in some African countries. All of this makes our struggle original and explains why it is democratic automony and not independence that is our slogan. The Martinique communists attach exceptional importance to greater international solidarity and stronger cohesion of the international revolutionary movement.

Santos. As General Secretary of the CC of the Brazilian Communist Party Luis Carlos Prestes said, imperialism has failed to alter the tendency on our continent toward a strengthening of the progressive forces. Still, we should not forget that over the past two years since the Havana Conference, imperialism has concentrated its utmost attention on Latin America. One must also note at present the

existence of a fascist threat on the continent. Reaction's resort to fascism is evidence of its weakness, of a strengthening of the working class and of exacerbation of the class struggle in Latin America. Materialization of the fascist threat is not in any sense inevitable. The threat can be eliminated through concerted action by our peoples and by our parties, but always with international solidarity.

We believe that the question raised by Comrade Millas about state-monopoly capitalism on our continent is highly meaningful. It has a bearing on the countries which have not yet attained a sufficiently high level of capitalist development and which largely depend on imperialism.

In April of this year, the Brazilian dictatorship dissolved Congress for a few days when the opposition resisted the approval of a reform of the judicial system. Thereupon, the reforms, along with others, were imposed on the country, and, like many other measures, cut across the Constitution and were designed to limit the potentialities of the electoral system. The changes made in it are intended to prevent the opposition from winning a majority in the Senate and in the state governments in the elections next year. By means of Institutional Act No. 5 the dictatorship has, in effect, invalidated the importance of the legislature and the judiciary. Having analyzed the regime's policy in the current period, as it is losing its strength and relying on an ever narrower base, a Plenary Meeting of our party's Central Committee said that fascism tends to become ever more aggressive precisely because it was weakening and facing an impasse. However, the opposition movement against the existing system has yet to attain sufficient scope. We feel it is only being revived. As yet, there have been no major mass actions. Our party's stand is to promote the unity of all the forces acting against fascism or entering into contradiction with it, even if they may turn out to be no more than fellow-travellers. This will help to take joint action with all the forces now opposing fascism. We have been working hard to prevent any juxtaposition of the civilians and the military, and have put forward as the basic issue the winning over or, at least, the neutralization of a sizable section of the armed forces. We also believe that to win in the struggle against fascism there is a need to develop international solidarity, which is already there, and which has been giving us crucial assistance.

The arms race has continued in our country, involving an expenditure of something like 2,000 million a year. Tanks, planes and warships are being built, and the nuclear treaty with the FRG is being implanted. The struggle against plans to set up a South Atlantic Pact is an urgent problem and a main element in extending the détente to our continent. Problems like the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, non-interference in the domestic affairs of other countries,

an end to the arms race, and: inviolability of borders are also of much importance for Latin America.

Garcia. Our party has proposed the unity of all the anti-dictatorship and anti-imperialist forces. As a first step, the program of the Nicaraguan Socialist Party contains the proposal for democratizing our society. This requires the unity of all the sections whose interests have been affected by the dictatorship and imperialism. They make up an overwhelming majority of the people. Disillusionment with the Somoza regime even among the bourgeoisie, the work done by our party among the masses and the middle sections of the population, and the defeat of imperialism in Cuba, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia have all helped to set up an anti-dictatorship and anti-imperialist front. It includes right-wing , centrist and left-wing trends. The struggle of the revolutionary forces of Nicaragua has gone forward in an atmosphere of fierce reprisals. But despite the difficulties faced by our party, it has been organizing the working people, and providing leadership and guidance in advancing their class consciousness.

Jagan. Since the time when the Guyana government took an anti-imperialist stand, the situation in the country has had positive and negative aspects. One could note a number of positive steps taken by the government in foreign policy, notably the establishment of relations with the socialist countries. The two main industries — bauxites and sugar — have been nationalized. But there is also a negative aspect. The nationalized industries have remained largely in the same state as they were before, but the nationalization has produced a parasitic stratum, a bureaucratic bourgeoisie.

The Burnham government declares that it has done much in the sphere of ideology. But despite its lip-service to Marxism-Leninism, it has still continued its line of so-called cooperative socialism, and this is causing ideological confusion in the country. The absence of unity among the left-wing forces has also produced serious problems.[3] Our task is to strengthen the People's Progressive Party to enable it to exert an influence on the government and play a leading role in political life.

Padilla. Bolivia's present government is no different from the fascist and fascist-minded regimes established in the southern part of the Latin American continent in the recent period. The 'new order' is more of a terroristic dictatorship of Bolivia's pro-imperialist bourgeoisie than a state mechanism for the domination of the right wing of the armed forces, just as 'Pinochetism' is a mechanism of the Chilean chauvinistic oligarchy. The 'new order' is the face of fascism in Bolivia. We emphasize the similarity of these processes because, although present-day Latin American fascism cannot be regarded as something totally identical in all the countries, it is the common and

similar features of fascism, and not the national specifics that determine its danger and possibility of its further extension. For that reason, and also for various others, anti-fascist and democratic goals are now paramount in Bolivia's life. In order to attain these, the Bolivian working people and other social forces have mounted large-scale mass action. Strikes, manifestations, protests and hunger strikes by the wives and children of those arrested and deported testify to the continued struggle of the working people and other sections for democracy and freedom. The Banzer dictatorship has no social support, and the discontent is growing. Progressive circles reject the dictatorship's concessions to the monopolies of the USA, the FRG and Japan, demand protection for national resources, and condemn the criminal project for resettling in Bolivia 150,000 racists from Rhodesia, Namibia and South Africa, which the Banzer regime seeks to impose under the pretext of resettlement in the country, while it is pursuing a policy of genocide against the Indian population. One of the key results of this struggle is the formation of a broad democratic movement in defense of divil rights and freedoms on which numerous public figures and leaders of the opposition parties, including former ministers of the Banzer government are represented. They are working hard to establish a democratic, independent and progressive regime in Bolivia.

Paredes. There is no doubt at all that the incumbent armed forces government in Honduras has abandoned the National Development Plan, with whose announcement on December 4, 1972, this bourgeois-reformist government began its rule. The takeover in 1975 by Melgar Castro, who headed the lieutenant-colonels' action, was the first phase in the political plot organized by the ultra-rightist forces and the monopolies. The new government abandoned all structural reforms and got down to pursuing its economic policy, whose main purpose is to attain nominal indicators of accelerated growth without carrying out any deep-going social transformations. Increasingly ceding to pressure from domestic and external reaction, the present government has mounted reprisals against the democratic forces on the pretext of combating a 'communist threat.'

Considering that the reformist bourgeoisie's potentialities have been spent, while the objective need for social reforms has remained, our party's Third Congress reached the conclusion that there was a need for modifying our political line without delay. Without abandoning the strategic goal of the anti-imperialist, anti-oligarchy, democratic and popular revolution, we have to work out an alternative for the immediate future to ensure a solution of the political crisis and to enable the people of Honduras to prepare themselves for even more meaningful and resolute battles in the future. We have put forward a

demand for general democratic elections that would make it possible, through direct consultations with the people, to introduce a system that would not only consolidate the social gains of the recent period, but also to show a way out of the current political crisis and block the way of reaction which seeks to spread fascism in the country. We insist on the need for an electoral law to enable participation by all the political forces, including independent candidates. We demand abolition of the repressive laws, and elections without violence and rigging, and also respect for the results of such elections. We call on all the democratic forces in the country to seek unity within a broad political front. In view of the complexity of the political situation and the attempts to spread fascism in Central America, there is a need to enhance the solidarity of our peoples and movements to counter the plans of reaction and imperialism with a powerful and united anti-imperialist movement capable of securing victory for the democratic forces in the whole region.

Sanchez. Guatemala's government and oligarchic circles are trying to make the people bear the brunt of the catastrophic consequences of the crisis of the capitalist system. In international terms, the policy of the Laugerud Garcia government imposed on Guatemala is to join the Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua to become a shock-force of imperialism in fighting peace, democracy and social progress in Central America. The Garcia government is now trying to use force to annex the territory of Belize in order to promote the attainment of the economic, political and strategic goals of the Guatemalan oligarchy and U.S. imperialism. There is a grave threat of armed intervention by Guatemala against that fraternal people if Belize succeeds in winning its long-awaited release from British colonial domination. The most characteristic feature of the present regime, as of its predecessors, is a policy of reprisals and terror aimed against the people. Over the past 10 years, this criminal policy has cost Guatemala 30,000 dead or missing.

Despite the reprisals, the Guatemalan people have continued to put up resistance in the most diverse forms. Since 1973, the mass movement has been gradually re-established and the people's struggle for the satisfaction of its demands has grown. This process was intensified in 1976 following major strikes by the working people and the establishment of a National Committee of Trade Union Unity, which has become the basis for the formation of a single working people's trade union center. The popular movement has been further invigorated this year with the involvement of more sections of the population. This upswing has taken place in the conditions of hardened struggle against the terroristic regime, which has no alternative but to make some concessions to the masses against its will. The Guatema-

lan people is not alone in this struggle. Relying on powerful international solidarity, it will be able to frustrate the fascists' plans.

Dixon. In the past few years, in its efforts to prevent the conclusion of a new Canal treaty and to frustrate the process of change in Panama, U.S. imperialism has used diverse methods, including the tactic of artificially dragging out the negotiations on a new treaty, seeking to destabilize the country, and prevent any further deepening of the revolutionary process led by General Omar Torrijos. In order to paralyze implementation of the government's social program, imperialism has resorted to a sudden freezing of credits, threatened landings of mercenaries and intervention of U.S. troops stationed in the Canal Zone.

Thanks to the Panamanian people's struggle, the unity of the patriotic forces, broad international solidarity and the government's anti-imperialist policy, an agreement has been reached with the United States on the principles of a new treaty on the Canal Zone and the Canal itself. The struggle for Panama's total national liberation has entered a qualitatively new phase. The new treaty, which has been fiercely attacked by aggressive imperialist circles in the United States and by both right and ultra-left elements in Panama, contains the basic elements helping to de-colonize the country and eliminate U.S. jurisdiction of the Canal Zone, establishing a fixed date for the withdrawal of all U.S. armed forces from the country.

The government's policy and the new treaty will certainly continue to be a target of attacks and subversive activity by international and local reaction. The People's Party of Panama has called on all the democratic and mass organizations of the country to give resolute support to the Torrijos government, to strengthen unity in the struggle for final liberation, and to work for the further deepening of the transformations which the Panamanian people need.

Alberto Kohen, member of the Editorial Board of *World Marxist Review,* who spoke in conclusion, expressed gratitude to all the comrades who took part in the exchange of opinions. The problems dealt with in the course of the exchange, he said, could become the subject for fresh discussions. There is good reason why all the participants focussed their attention on the need for mutual information and mutual assistance in all our activity. Without this, it is very hard, one might even say impossible, to develop the struggle which we have carried on in different conditions in each country. All the speakers noted the great importance of the 1975 Conference at Havana. The discussion also centered on the need for broader development of international solidarity. Our solidarity is an instrument of struggle in support of the bulwark of the revolutionary process in Latin America, our heroic and well-beloved socialist Cuba.

All the comrades said that in the recent period imperialism, reaction and fascism have sought new and more efficient ways of defending their interests in Latin America and of maintaining the relations of dependence and domination. On the other hand, they emphasized the growth of the anti-imperialist forces, the aggravation of contradictions with imperialism in each country and the stratification within all the social and political forces which have traditionally provided a reserve for the imperialist camp.

All this shows the need further to strengthen our unity and mutual solidarity and indicates the growing importance of coordinating this solidarity and using it in accordance with the situation in each country and on the continent as a whole.

1. Speakers at a Plenary Meeting of the CC of the Communist Party of Ecuador in July 1977 noted the 'toughening up of reactionary government measures' aimed to suppress the working-class and peasant movement. A communiqué on its results said that action on numerous occasions by workers, peasants and students showed that all Ecuadoran democrats and patriots resolutely reject the regime's reactionary policy. — *Ed.*

2. A broad left-forces front was formed in 1977 with the task of setting up a popular government. — *Ed.*

3. In August 1977, the People's Progressive Party of Guyana (PPP) proposed the establishment of a National Patriotic Front to ensure the country's successful advance along the path of non-capitalist development. — *Ed.*

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