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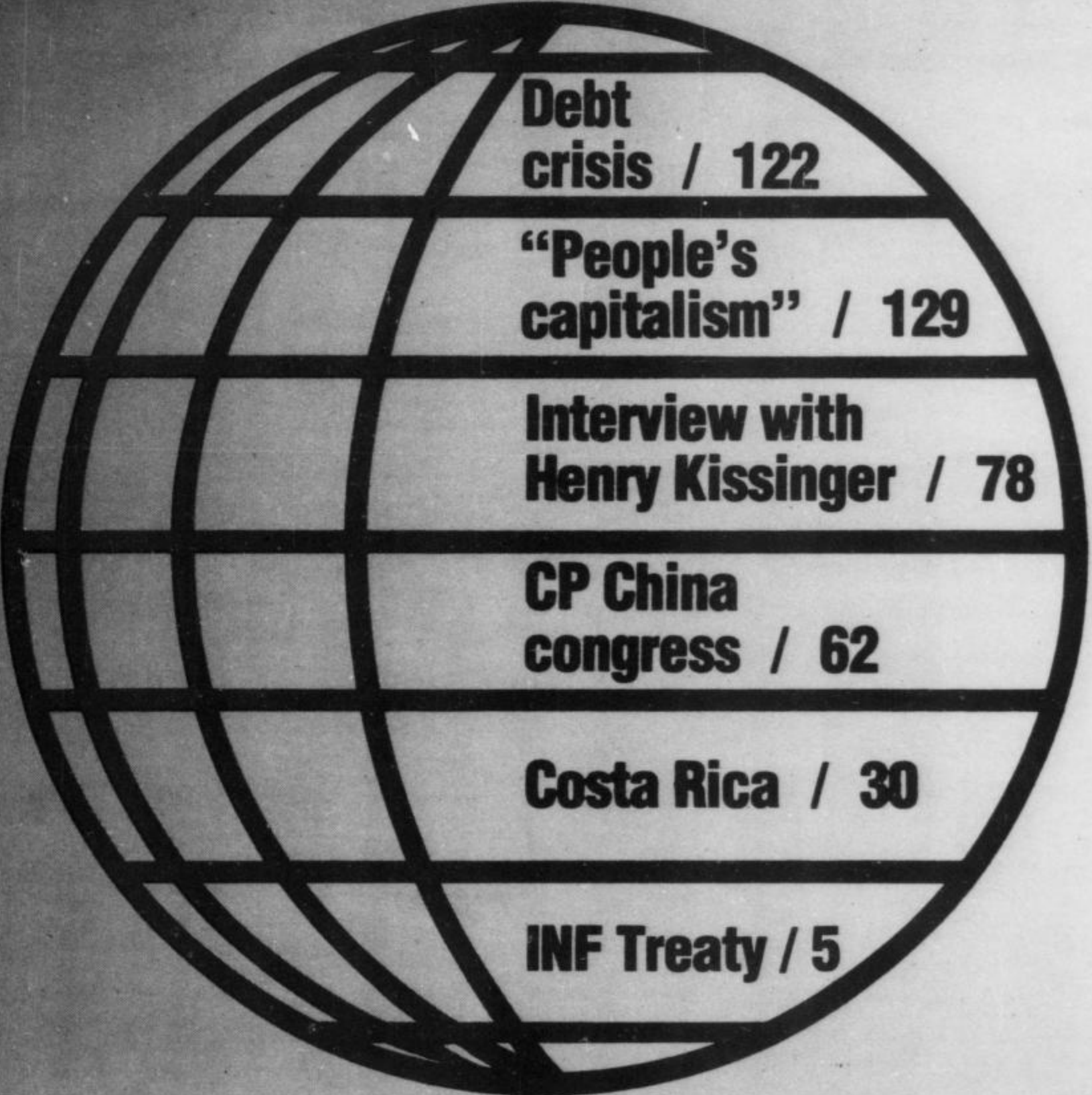
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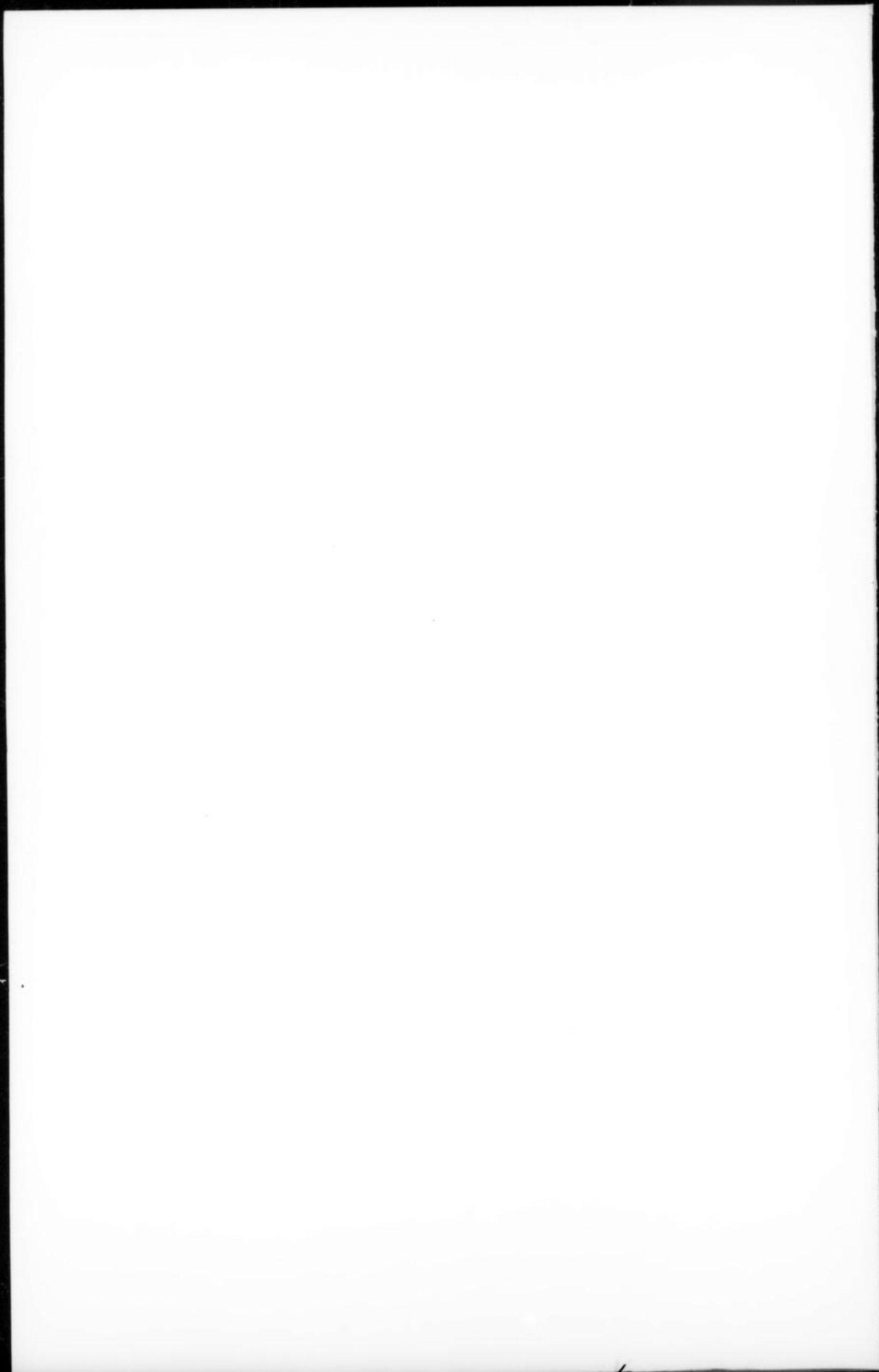
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First Step Towards A Nuclear-Free World

Commentary

Disarmament Is Possible!

Georg Kwiatowski — member of the WMR Editorial Council and representative of the German Communist Party on WMR

Unni Krishnan — member of the National Council of the Communist Party of India, member of the WMR Editorial Board and Editorial Council, and representative of the CPI on WMR

THERE are events which can be adjudged from the outset — and with absolute certainty — as landmarks of their day. *The Soviet-US Treaty on the elimination of medium- and shorter-range missiles*, signed by Mikhail Gorbachov and Ronald Reagan in Washington on December 8, 1987 we think, is one such event. It is a landmark not just for 1987: people all over the world had been looking forward impatiently to it as a symbol of the real hope to avert the risk of self-annihilation facing humanity at the threshold of the third millennium.

Over the years the forces of peace and socialism have been fighting valiantly against the nuclear arms race. The agreements on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the ban on their tests in the three media were important steps. The SALT-1 and SALT-2 treaties put constraints on the deployment of the more dangerous strategic offensive systems. But the nuclear arms race nevertheless continued, and weapons kept piling up and becoming more and more sophisticated from year to year.

The 'zero-zero' treaty between the USSR and the USA effectively eliminates, for the first time in history, two classes of nuclear weapons and thus marks the starting point for real progress on the road to disarmament. It

is a turning point of historic importance to the whole world! It showed for the first time ever that *disarmament is possible*. The hope of millions of people, the cause to which immense efforts have been committed, is beginning to take on flesh. Saying so, we do not at all lose sight of the reality that the missiles that are to be dismantled constitute just a modicum of the nuclear arms arsenals. The elimination of 2,000 warheads does not remove the danger: there are around 50,000 such warheads in the world. But the *first step* taken by the two sides has special meaning because it has been taken in the new, right and, moreover, only possible direction towards human survival.

Rajeshwara Rao, General Secretary of the National Council of the Communist Party of India, has stated: "Mikhail Gorbachov deserves every credit for the ability and sense of purpose he has shown . . . It is a good beginning for the process towards the total abolition of weapons of mass annihilation." There have been many more responses from various representatives of the broad international public, Communists and non-Communists alike, welcoming the 'zero-zero' treaty as a landmark in the history of East-West relations, a hopeful sign and proof of the possibility to stop the mad arms race at least in some areas and to slow down the dynamics of arms escalation.

Now that the treaty has been signed, some quarters would like to present it as a result of the 'policy from strength' that the US Republican Administration has been pursuing and its 'victory': the 'intransigent' Soviet Union supposedly realised that the West was standing firm and at last made concessions. The US military-industrial complex needs this tale both to rationalise the arms race without precedent in peace time that has been going on in the past seven years and to justify its new rounds in the future.

The INF missile treaty is not at all the fruit of policy 'from strength' or of the intensive arms race. It is a result of the unprecedentedly favourable climate for the cause of peace and disarmament, created in the world by growing awareness of the perils of the arms race. That ground swell of struggle for peace contributed significantly towards the Soviet-US treaty. Its most important aspect was the innovative and dynamic foreign policy of the Soviet Union which, jointly with all the Warsaw Treaty member countries, put forward a series of bold and far-reaching proposals for disarmament. They gave a new dimension to the mass movement for the prevention of nuclear catastrophe and for curbing the arms race. Having pooled their efforts, the peace forces denied the opponents of accords any chance to thwart the planned disarmament measures. It is the opponents of the treaty who have lost, while both sides stand to gain regardless of how many missiles and warheads either would scrap: *It is a victory for the whole of humanity!*

That effective policy of peace relies on new political thinking that has originated from the Soviet Union and is a reflection of the dramatically changed realities of the late 20th century. New thinking with its common humanitarian criteria and emphasis on human reason and conscience is exerting ever greater influence on international affairs. It emphasises that our world is one and interdependent, that the alternative is to survive or to perish in it together, that security is guaranteed today not through the

escalation of armaments but through mutual accords, and demands a new approach to global problems. The paramount global problem is that of safeguarding peace. The INF treaty is the first tangible result of new thinking. In the words of Herbert Mies, Chairman of the German Communist Party, that accomplishment has "historic significance and constitutes an indubitable success for new thinking and a new approach".

The road to agreement was anything but smooth and easy. Let us recall just some of the points on its last stretch.

— In August 1985 the Soviet Union unilaterally halted all its nuclear explosions and called for immediate talks on a total nuclear test ban. That moratorium was extended five times but the United States did not reciprocate. The initiative was not in vain, however, as it gave a strong impetus to the mass movement of millions all over the world for a nuclear test ban and demonstrated anew who really wants an end to the pernicious competition in modernising the nuclear arms arsenals and who wants it continued.

— In November 1985, the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee and the US President said in their joint statement at the end of the Geneva meeting that nuclear war must never be fought and that there will be no winners in it. That statement further stimulated the struggle for the elimination of nuclear weapons, although Washington's policy afterwards was in many ways controversial and sometimes even contrary to the spirit of the statement.

— On January 15, 1986, the Soviet Union announced a programme for the total abolition of nuclear weapons in the world by the year 2000, which became a veritable manifesto of human survival. The Soviet Union's stand was consonant with the view of the international public, represented, among others, by the Delhi Six (India, Argentina, Sweden, Greece, Mexico and Tanzania). The idea of and programme for a nuclear-free world were further elucidated in the Delhi Declaration on the Principles for a Nuclear-Weapon-Free and Non-Violent world.

— The Soviet Union and other socialist countries launched at the United Nations a series of new major initiatives, including a blueprint for a comprehensive system of international security.

— The Warsaw Treaty member countries addressed NATO and all the European states with the proposal for cutting the armed forces to the level of 'structural non-aggressiveness'.¹ They also advanced the idea of comparing the military doctrines of the two alliances, removing suspicion that has accumulated over the years and revising the military doctrines so as to make them exclusively defensive; they suggested that zones free from both nuclear and chemical weapons be established and that chemical weapons be prohibited and eliminated; another proposal was for the elaboration of effective measures of verifying arms reductions, including on-site inspection.

— The Soviet-US meeting in Reykjavik gave a new dimension to the struggle against the nuclear threat. The leaders of the USSR and the USA reached an unprecedented understanding on the possibility of and need for drastic reductions in the nuclear arms arsenals. No agreement to this effect was concluded but new thinking continued to advance and gain ground

among still broader political and public circles. Although appreciations of that meeting were controversial, more and more people came to recognise that the slide of mankind into the nuclear abyss could really be stopped.

— The practical achievements of the struggle for a nuclear-free world are related in many ways to the broad coalition of all the forces of peace, reason and realism and to the actions of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Delhi Six. Actions for peace, national liberation and social progress have grown more vigorous in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The activities of the Contadora Group and the striving of the progressive forces to have the centres of conflicts eradicated through peaceful talks, restraint from hostilities and national reconciliation in Central America, Afghanistan and Kampuchea have had a beneficial effect on the overall atmosphere:

— Soviet and US allies made a significant contribution towards the achievement of accord and the treaty. Though technically bilateral, it is really international because it involves nine states.

— Helmut Kohl, Federal Chancellor of the FRG, consented to the removal of Pershing-1A missiles from his country (after much nerve-racking, and not the least because 81 per cent of the West German voters wanted it and because the Soviet Union and the United States had already reached understanding to this effect) and thus cleared a major obstacle to the agreement. Realistic politicians from other capitalist countries also contributed to the final result.

Millions of people today try in various ways to make themselves heard when it comes to decisions bearing on peace, disarmament and human survival. 'People's diplomacy' is growing in importance. The peace movement is gaining momentum, launching ever broader actions and formulating ever clearer goals for itself. The Socialist International and most of the Socialist and Social Democratic parties strongly oppose steps towards nuclear self-annihilation. The trade unions, the Greens, the Liberals, the clergy and certain conservative forces are growing more and more active in the efforts for disarmament and for a nuclear-free world. Even some of the big bourgeoisie are turning to the ideas of peaceful coexistence. This process has been facilitated to a large extent by the increasingly vigorous actions of the anti-nuke movements of natural scientists, physicians, teachers and other professionals who use their knowledge and cite hard facts to demonstrate to the general public the dangers in store for humanity if the arms race is not stopped.

The Communists the world over appreciate these efforts and, being a part of the worldwide peace movement, continue to contribute in various ways towards the saving of world civilisation.

The more adventurous forces of imperialism had to beat a retreat under the pressure of world public opinion, which is being determined to an ever larger degree by the realistic forces. Another factor was the aggravating crisis phenomena in the world capitalist economy: astronomical state debts, panic at the stock markets of New York and other capitalist centres, and rivalry between various groups of the monopoly bourgeoisie and between those who represent them in politics. A broad opposition to the pressure of the arms-making corporations and the Pentagon has coalesced

in US Congress. The pendulum is swinging back: the realistic quarters in the US ruling classes are pushing back the forces of confrontation.

The demands for a curb on the insatiable appetite of the military are growing more and more popular in view of the chronic and ever rising budget deficit and political leaders cannot help heeding them. It is clearer than ever that the imperialist policy of the arms race has been the largest single drain on the US economy in the past few years and has stretched it to the limit. The world's aggregate military spending was close to one trillion dollars last year, which is comparable to the loss of property in the two world wars. The arms race has cast a cloud not only over the physical survival of mankind but also over its socio-economic progress.

The first UN-sponsored international conference on the relationship between disarmament and development in New York in August-September 1987 stated that disarmament and development were *the two most urgent problems facing mankind*. In the developing world almost 1.3 billion people live in misery, around 800 million are undernourished, 850 million are illiterate, and one billion have no housing worthy of a human being. In the industrialised countries the arms race diverts resources from the solution of priority economic and social problems. In other words, the world can either carry on the arms race and perish or disarm itself and take the road of stable and balanced development. There is no other choice. Small wonder that more and more politicians and businessmen in capitalist countries urge the abolition of the wasteful strategy of 'security through armaments'. The reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons and the non-militarisation of space therefore constitute an *economic as well as political imperative*. The concept of 'disarmament for development' is winning ever broader support.

Characteristically, even some of those who belong to the inner circle of the military-industrial complex are critical of Washington's nuclear strategy. Former US Defence Secretary Robert McNamara lambastes in his book *Blundering into Disaster* Reagan's policy of the runaway arms build-up and strongly urges drastic cuts in the arms arsenals. Seven former Pentagon chiefs joined most of the American people in approving the INF accord.

The treaty gives a strong impetus to all the peace campaigners by demonstrating that their efforts have not been and will not be in vain. But there may be setbacks as well.

The West German peace movement, for instance, was campaigning throughout the early 1980s against the deployment of Pershing and Cruise missiles in the country, but they were deployed all the same. A defeat? No: although the main goal was not achieved, the political climate in the FRG changed. Some of the peace campaigners lost heart, others had second thoughts, but the German Communist Party firmly believed that there was no reason to despair: the new situation should be thought over and struggle continued in the changed conditions. It is now clear that that stand was correct and that, generally speaking, optimism, patience and perseverance are a must in the struggle for peace and disarmament.

It is only to be expected that the enemies of military detente and nuclear disarmament will try to turn the tables. Immediately following the

announcement of the agreement of principle on the INF, Supreme Allied Commander Europe John Galvin said that the loss of the medium-range missiles should be compensated with the development of other systems. The militarist Steel Helmet faction in West Germany responded to the news of the 'zero-zero' agreement with a call for improving small-range missiles and for more strenuous efforts on the 'star wars' programme, while *The New York Times* raised the alarm: "If Wall Street abhors uncertainty, it ought to be looking with particular unease at the prospects of the military contractors that make billions of dollars from the production of nuclear weapons . . . Psychology of the marketplace may dictate a decline in share prices of arms makers, as stockholders disarm their portfolios in anticipation of any substantial agreement to control the superpowers' nuclear inventories." The opponents of the treaty are now gathering forces to block its ratification by US Congress.

The signing of the accord therefore is *no reason for complacency: it ushered in another stage of struggle for disarmament. The peace forces, including the Communists, face new tasks.* There is a long and arduous road to travel to a universal agreement on the total abolition of nuclear weapons. Realistically, the difficult problem of disarmament can be resolved *only through step-by-step partial agreements.*

The next item on the agenda is 50 per cent cuts in the strategic offensive weapons with strict adherence to the ABM Treaty, i.e., non-deployment of weapons in outer space. This agreement can be signed during the return visit of President Ronald Reagan to Moscow in the first half of 1988. The Soviet-US summit last December paved the way for another, even more important step towards disarmament.

The other outstanding issues include prohibition of chemical weapons and elimination of their stocks, reduction of conventional armaments, a ban on nuclear weapon tests and establishment of nuclear-free zones. *What makes the current situation entirely new is that the agreement on the elimination of medium- and shorter-range missiles can lay the pattern for the solution of other disarmament problems and various urgent questions of international affairs.*

The US aerospace and other military monopolies and the militarist forces in general are certain to make every possible effort to block changes for the better in the world and especially an agreement to reduce strategic offensive weapons.

The task now is to make the best possible use of the treaty further to advance the process of détente and thus prepare the ground for follow-up steps towards disarmament. While doing everything we can to bring them about as soon as possible, we should by no means lose sight of the ultimate goal of *the total prohibition and elimination of all nuclear weapons.* The more determined the peace forces and all the realistic people in their efforts, the better the chance of success.

The Communists do not turn their back on the difficult problems before them as they look into the future and set themselves specific goals. Exchanges of views between representatives of 178 parties and movements in Moscow during the celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution were evidence of this attitude. Speakers

there concentrated on a search of ways to a world without nuclear weapons, war of violence by the 21st century and on how to involve other forces in that search.

But is that goal at all realistic? Is it possible to achieve a situation in which war between the two systems will be absolutely ruled out? Imperialism has lost none of its aggressiveness or expansionistic ambitions in the military, economic, political, ideological and cultural fields. At the same time we see the world changing and possibilities for curbing the aggressiveness of the militarist forces growing. The strength and influence of socialism and the efforts of all those who vigorously oppose imperialism and work for peace have already brought about a substantial shift in the alignment of forces on the world scene.

It is possible, we are convinced, to create conditions which will rule out world war. The first step towards a nuclear-free world taken last year obliges all of us to work even more concerted and purposefully in the struggle for the greatest value humanity has, life. Throughout his long history man has always had enough strength to surmount obstacles and difficulties in his way. We are optimists and say with certainty that the present one will be no exception in this sense!

¹ Which means that a country's armed forces are structured so as to be sufficient for defence but insufficient for offensive operations.

The Ultra-Right Will Not Stop This Process

Lee Dlugin — Political Bureau member, Central Committee secretary, Communist Party U.S.A.

THE conclusion of the INF Treaty is an historic first step in the breaking of the whole nuclear arms cycle. It is extremely important because, among other things, it gives people the confidence that we can move on to the next steps. There is now a general feeling that we have moved the whole process of saving humanity from nuclear destruction onto a higher level. People are now aware that *the worldwide peace momentum does produce results; thanks to the peace policies and initiatives of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries it is possible to come to agreements even in difficult times.*

The other thing that is very important for the United States is that there is now more confidence in our ability to isolate the ultra-right forces. The resignation of Caspar Weinberger was more than symbolic. It represented the failure of the policy to block arms control negotiations. That is significant in relation to the fight for the ratification of the INF Treaty in the Senate.

The American people are part of the worldwide majority that has launched the peace offensive. For many years there has been a movement

in the United States advocating a freeze and reductions of nuclear weapons. According to opinion polls, most Americans support negotiated treaties with the Soviet Union. We all know that people in the United States were looking forward with great expectation and desire to the visit of Comrade Gorbachov. At this point I think it would be interesting to think back to George Schultz's visit to Moscow in October 1987. It looked for a few days like there might not be a summit. The general perception at that time was that there was some going back on understandings about the ABM Treaty, causing the possible cancellation of the summit. There was great disappointment, but there was also determination that the ABM Treaty had to be strictly enforced so that a summit could take place.

The American people welcomed Comrade Gorbachov's visit to the United States. People's faces lit up with joy and happiness when he got out of the car in Washington to greet and chat with Americans. His visit symbolized the thawing of relations and a step back from the brink of nuclear war. His television appearances made a great impression. We the Communists say that if American politicians want to be popular, all they need to do is go onto a peace offensive the way Mikhail Gorbachov has been on.

One of the things that characterize the United States today is a very sharp decline of anti-communism. Everything that has to do with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries is greeted with growing interest in the U.S. The summit has made a tremendous impact. The few days of the summit proved more useful to our people than what it sometimes took years to accomplish: people could learn the truth about socialism. Americans saw the Soviet leader with their own eyes, and it is now very difficult to go back to the Cold War rhetoric. That is why it is possible to talk about the further isolation and breaking-up of the influence and propaganda of the ultra-right.

The key question today is the *soonest possible ratification of the INF Treaty*. We know how the ultra-right can mobilize their forces in the United States. They did block the ratification of the SALT II Treaty. However, things are very different now. The peace movement has gained strength, and the Americans have, on the whole, changed their attitude to disarmament. There is a very deep desire for the treaty to be ratified as rapidly as possible so that we can move on to the next step, the 50 per cent cut in strategic offensive armaments with the strictest enforcement of the ABM Treaty. That would pave the way to nuclear disarmament by the year 2000.

One can expect the Senate to ratify the treaty because, among other things, Senators know that if they want to be re-elected, they have to work for the ratification. Besides key members of the administration — Reagan, Bush, Shultz and Carlucci — advocate ratification, and that will have an impact on many Senators. We do not think that the ultra-right will be able to shelve the treaty by proposing all kinds of amendments to it.

Our party regards the *prohibition of nuclear testing* as another major aspect of the peace movement today. An agreement to ban nuclear tests will also obstruct the development of space weapons, and many Americans believe that a test ban will help avert the insanity of 'star wars'.

Another item on today's agenda is the *reconversion of the economy*, reconversion to a peacetime economy. No one doubts it any longer that the military budget and economic policy are deeply tied together. The success will depend on how forcefully the trade union movement will come to the forefront of the fight for reconversion. The arms race does not create jobs but reduces employment in the civilian industries.

The Communist Party U.S.A. is intensifying the fight of the masses for jobs, against capitalist exploitation, for peace and disarmament. We are striving for the unity of all peace forces, for discussion and dialogue so as to act jointly to *save humanity from nuclear destruction*. This priority problem has been covered extensively in our press — the *People's Daily World* and our journal *Political Affairs*.

We will continue to expose the aggressive policies of U.S. imperialism and to mobilize the people against the arms race and the nuclear threat. In these efforts, the American Communists are inspired by the overall success of the worldwide peace momentum — the beginning of genuine nuclear disarmament brought about by the INF Treaty.

Socialism: Unity Of Theory And Practice

Czechoslovakia, February 1948: Dialectics Of Revolution

Alois Indra — member of the
Presidium of the Central Committee,
Communist Party of Czechoslovakia,
and Chairman of the Federal Assembly
of the Republic

IN February 1948, our people made their decisive choice and embarked on the road of socialism. The 40th anniversary of that remarkable event is a good occasion to turn anew to Lenin's theory of socialist revolution, to the idea of a democratic revolution evolving into a socialist one and to the way in which it was creatively applied in Czechoslovakia.

Note should be made of the difficult circumstances in which the CPCz was working out the strategy and tactics that were to make the triumph of the new system possible. Czechoslovakia lost independence in 1939 as a result of the betrayal of the national big bourgeoisie and the Western powers' connivance with aggressive Hitler Nazism.

What came to the fore at the time when Nazi occupation threatened the very existence of the Czech and Slovak peoples was the contradiction between fascism and our peoples, who were seeking national liberation

and the restoration of state independence. That was why *the order of the day was not a socialist but a national democratic revolution* under the leadership of the working class. It should be national because its aim was to wrench all political and economic power from the hands of the Nazi invaders, and democratic because it was to give power to the working people and was directed against the reactionary big bourgeoisie, who had betrayed national interests by collaborating with the invaders.

The party leadership drew the right conclusion: at that time the goal of a 'direct' socialist revolution would have been premature as it would have resulted in the isolation of the working class from the non-proletarian classes and strata and its defeat. *The goal of a gradual transition from a national democratic to a socialist revolution was realistic.* Working out its strategy and tactics, the CPCz relied on Lenin's doctrine and on the lesson of the battles waged by the proletariat in 1918-1920 (when workers spontaneously sought victory but leadership of the national democratic revolution was in the hands of the bourgeoisie, which circumstance was used by capital to consolidate its class supremacy).

The correct appreciation of the character of the future revolution enabled the party to achieve the establishment of a broad national front of resistance to the invaders. That front united the working class, the peasantry, the middle strata and the anti-fascist, democratic bourgeoisie. *The National Front of Czechs and Slovaks provided the political framework for that alliance.* Through it the Communists and other parties rallied around a joint programme for the renewal of the liberated republic and its further development (the April 1945 Košice Governmental Programme and the Development Programme approved in July 1946). The National Front was an embodiment of broad unity at that stage. Conditions were being created simultaneously for making it a 'springboard' to struggle for the triumph of socialism.

It was *the hegemony of the working class that contributed decisively* to the victory of the national democratic revolution, which took the form of armed struggle at its first stage: the Slovak national uprising in August 1944 and the rebellion of the Czech people in May 1945. The working class had a vital interest in the consistent accomplishment of revolutionary goals and contributed to the immense growth of the prestige of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. Another invaluable factor was the historic contribution of the Soviet Union to the defeat of Nazism worldwide and the Red Army's mission of liberating Czechoslovakia. The Communists' dedication and valour in the struggle against fascism and their role in the Resistance at home and abroad were forceful proof that the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was a most consistent defender of national interests and that the reborn republic could not be governed without it. As for the right political parties of the big bourgeoisie, their 'hurray-patriotism' crumbled down in the face of Nazism and they themselves ultimately lost face.

The main result of the national democratic revolution was the rebirth of the state independence of the Czech and Slovak peoples.

There were differences of principle between the emergent people's democracy and the pre-Munich bourgeois republic, namely, far-reaching political and economic transformations. Although parliamentary

democracy was retained, the machinery of the state was drastically overhauled. The backbone of power now was the *national committees*, which had been born of the national liberation struggle, and it was through them that the working people decided the affairs of state at the local level. The Communists, for the first time ever a ruling party, were represented at every level of state administration. Only those parties which had rallied around the programme of the National Front remained active. United public organisations, such as the trade unions and the youth union, in which the Communists had much influence, began to play a significant role in politics.

The relationship between the Czechs and the Slovaks changed dramatically and became that of equals, while the bourgeois concept of 'Czechoslovakism', which denied the Slovak identity, had been abandoned.

Although a part of the bourgeoisie still had a role in the administration of state affairs (they had much weight in the judiciary for example) and in politics, it was the working people of town and countryside who had the decisive say.

The sway of the big bourgeoisie was abolished through the confiscation of the property of the invaders and traitors, a revision of the 1919 agrarian reform and the nationalisation of mines, major industrial plants, banks and insurance companies. There took shape three sectors, the state (potentially socialist), the capitalist and the small commodity sector. The bourgeoisie nevertheless had strong positions in the economy.

When the victory of the national democratic revolution had resolved the principal contradiction in the country, that between fascism and democracy, *the antagonism between labour and capital, between the working class and the bourgeoisie began to emerge increasingly as the new basic contradiction.*

The forces of reaction put up resistance to the consistent introduction of the governmental programmes, which had been worked out and endorsed with their participation, and tried to reverse the national democratic revolution and to restore capitalism.

But the Communist Party, openly committed to the strategic goal of building socialism, concentrated its efforts on developing and extending the national democratic revolution. *The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia combined the revolutionary democratic movement with the struggle for socialism and sought to make the national democratic revolution a prelude to a socialist revolution.* The broad sections of the working people developed a revolutionary spirit in a series of clashes with the bourgeoisie and grew aware that only the new system could fully meet their needs and aspirations. That enabled us to formulate and put forward demands with an increasingly socialist content.

The Communist Party oriented itself towards the peaceful growth of the national democratic revolution into socialist revolution. That option was kept open both by the hegemony of the working class in the national democratic revolution and by external circumstances, namely, by the existence of the Soviet Union with its economic and defence potentials, which prevented the imperialist forces from reversing the revolutionary

process. What was necessary in terms of domestic conditions to translate that historical opportunity into reality was to get *most of the people to support the demand for socialism*.

A number of factors tended to contribute towards that goal. To begin with, in pursuit of its strategic and tactical objectives, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia used opportunities for the development of *the revolution both from 'above' and from 'below'*. In its efforts it relied on the Communists' dedicated work in the midst of people that was conducted in extremely diverse forms with the overall goal of winning mass support for the party's course. Party members sought to influence public mentality also through the united public organisations and through such institutions as factory councils and peasants' commissions. That the Communists' policy was correct and attractive to the mass of people was manifest in growing recruitment: the party had a truly mass base.

Exposure of the perfidy of the leaders of those non-communist parties which did not respect the commitments which they had assumed voluntarily by approving the governmental programmes contributed substantially towards the swing of most of the working people to our side. Such leaders eventually grew isolated from the rank and file, who firmly supported the National Front.

Good use was made of the Communists' positions in Parliament, the government, ministries and national committees. Being the ruling party, the Communists articulated the demands that were long overdue and, sustaining the revolutionary spirit of the people 'from above', worked for their implementation through the bodies of state power.

The Communists viewed elections to representative bodies as a substantial means of increasing their influence on the working people. *The CPCz became the strongest political party in Czechoslovakia* and polled 38 per cent of the votes in the 1946 elections to the Constituent National Assembly. When later on the reactionary forces began to pose ever greater difficulties in the National Front, Parliament and the government, the CPCz Central Committee set the task of winning the absolute majority in the next elections, scheduled for 1948, so as to secure for the Communists decisive influence in the National Front without excluding the other parties from the exercise of state power.

Characteristically, the ministers of the National Socialist, the Populist and the Slovak Democratic parties resigned from the government on February 20, 1948, not waiting for the people to express their will in the elections but wishing to provoke the fall of the Klement Gottwald government.

The working people saw through the ministerial resignation intrigue. The reactionaries had in view the far-reaching goal of forming a government that would turn social development back towards capitalism. *The people gave strong support to the Communist Party, which demanded that the resignations be accepted*. The working people translated their support into practical actions, such as demonstrations, a one-hour general strike and the establishment of action committees of the National Front to purge reactionaries from individual bodies and organisations, and also the formation of a people's militia as an armed force of the working class. The

bourgeois political leader, President Edvard Beneš, could not help bowing to the united will of the people: on February 25, 1948 he accepted the ministerial resignations and on Gottwald's proposal appointed new government members from among the representatives of the revived National Front, which now included the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement.

There was one more noteworthy factor: the crisis was settled in accordance with the then effective bourgeois constitutional provision of 1920. Gottwald presented the governmental programme to Parliament and 230¹ deputies supported it, thus expressing their confidence in the Prime Minister. Altogether 106 Communists and 124 deputies from other parties took part in the voting.

The triumph in February crowned the process of the peaceful evolution of Czechoslovakia's national democratic revolution into a socialist revolution, ultimately placed power into the hands of the working class and paved the way for full-scale efforts of construction in the country. The party's wise tactic helped the transition to socialist positions on the basis of the National Front by the absolute majority of the people. That triumph also decided that Czechoslovakia was to become a part of the emergent world socialist community, and that fact was of great importance at the time when imperialism had unleashed the Cold War.

The revolutionary process in Czechoslovakia and February 1948 confirmed the viability of Lenin's theory of transition from democratic to socialist revolution, moreover, in an industrialised country with a rather broad bourgeois democratic tradition. Conditions for that transition were provided by a well-substantiated creative policy of the party, which had mastered the dialectics of the general, the specific and the singular in the circumstances of Czechoslovakia.

Social developments in the run-up to February 1948 and the events of that month demonstrated the diversity of the forms and methods through which a democratic revolution evolves into a socialist one. They proved that Parliament can be one of the instruments of such a peaceful transition. In terms of Czechoslovakia's experience, however, the concept of a 'peaceful transition to socialism' seems broader than 'a parliamentary road to socialism'.

We turn and will continue to turn to February 1948 as to not just an historical event which ultimately paved the way to building socialism in Czechoslovakia but a source of experience which is relevant to our time as well. The point is the lesson which continues to be our guide for action now that we have set out to accomplish a truly historic task of attaining a *qualitatively new state of socialism* and of asserting in peaceful competition with capitalism our superiority in the economy, in the political and spiritual spheres and in the extension of the rights and freedoms of citizens.

As I have already said above, the CPCz's policy aimed at the evolution of the national democratic revolution into a socialist revolution was based on the creative development and application of revolutionary theory, which took due account of the dialectics of the general, the specific and the singular. Now that the strategy of the 17th CPCz Congress for the acceleration of the socio-economic progress of society is being translated

into practice, the importance of theory to practical politics is growing immensely. We are facing tasks of a revolutionary character and their fulfilment should rely upon a purposeful theoretical concept of perestroika that is based on new ideas meeting the needs of today and tomorrow and going farther than the habitual but outdated precepts and dogmas.

In evolving the concept of perestroika, we rely on the experience of fraternal parties, first and foremost the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which pioneered it both theoretically and practically. We are aware, however, that the far-reaching social processes in a number of socialist countries, whether they are called perestroika or anything else, are a reflection of not only what is common to all of those countries but also of concrete circumstances and national economic, political, social and cultural characteristics. Hence the conclusion that in borrowing experience from friends, it is important to discern what is specific to them but does not tally with our realities.

Clearly, in the course of transformation we should always match our actions to the concrete circumstances, the specific characteristics of development and the present state of society. What I mean is, for instance, that Czechoslovakia has the National Front and non-communist parties, as the political system goes, and also a developed socialist agriculture, a long-standing tradition of cooperation, etc. Consideration for these and other circumstances and characteristics, however, should not result in the underestimation, let alone negation of that common aspect which is the essence of perestroika, that is, the attainment of a new qualitative state of socialism.

The period in the run-up to the February 1948 developments saw struggle between the progressive and the reactionary forces over the character of democracy in Czechoslovakia. What was at issue was *whether a truly democratic system would assert itself in the liberated republic and whether power would really belong to the people or whether pro forma democracy would be established*. The Communist Party strove to create the conditions to enable tens of thousands of citizens to participate through the national committees in governing the state and to run, on the basis of the National Front, the affairs of society. Use of the existing democratic institutions and the establishment and consolidation of new ones, such as national committees, factory councils and united public organisations, led to an unprecedented upsurge of the political activity of the mass of people.

Historical practice before and after February 1948 confirms that *democracy is a condition for the progress of socialism. It will not be an exaggeration to say that it is also a direct prerequisite of this progress*. The correctness of this conclusion is especially vivid now that far-reaching change in our society depends on the further development of socialist democracy, the extensive introduction of the principles of self-governance in the operation of the state system and also of organs of the National Front and its constituent organisations, in economic management and in cultural and intellectual affairs.

The national committees, the popular base of our state, remain the principal vehicle of furthering socialist democracy in Czechoslovakia. The growth of their role as democratic institutions of self-governance depends

to a large extent on the breadth of their rights and duties and on how *effectively* deputies and all the citizens participate in deciding outstanding issues in the life of their villages, towns, districts and regions and in the fulfilment of the tasks set before them. If any of these aspects is underestimated, the committees' underlying principles of self-governance are eroded. If their rights and powers are restricted, democratic institutions (such as meetings, commissions and the work of deputies) are barren. The outcome will be much the same if the national committees do too much work through officials rather than through the collective bodies of the elected representatives of the people and through citizens themselves. Practice shows that *the national committees are a success only if the content of their work and democratic forms merge into a single whole.*

We think it important to continue to take care of a correct relationship between the local representative bodies and the executive branches reporting to them, which sometimes acquire an inordinate influence. The staff of the national committees should do their duty, translating into practice the will of the collective representative authority, and be more resolute in doing away with manifestations of bureaucratism. The demand formulated by Klement Gottwald, "Not the people for the office but the office for the people",² still holds true.

That we attach due importance to representative democracy does not at all mean that we underestimate the institutes of direct, immediate democracy. Conversely, any use of its forms, as the events before and after February 1948 demonstrated, furthers democracy in the social life as a whole. Undoubtedly, as time goes on the institutions of direct democracy, be it direct decision-making or advisory functions (such as public debates on draft legislation) will keep growing broader both nationally and in places.

We understand democratisation as a comprehensive process. It cannot be restricted to the political sphere but must embrace entirely all the spheres of the social life, first and foremost the economy. The main thrust of the efforts here should be to broaden and deepen the participation of the working people in the administration of the state enterprises and cooperatives on the basis of the principles of socialist self-management. Under draft legislation due to be promulgated this year, the state enterprise ought to have such bodies of self-management as the meeting of the work collective and the council elected by it. They will have the authority to discuss and settle major questions of the collective's activity. To make self-management in industry effective, it is essential to revise the system of national economic management. The task is to do away with superfluous centralisation, which is a brake on independence, and to introduce cost-accounting, self-financing and self-sufficiency, which will immediately relate the material interest of the work collectives to the results of economic performance. Clearly, self-management in production is an objective necessity under conditions of the new economic mechanism: this democratic system makes the worker the true master at the workplace.

The National Front, which *remained after February 1948, too, the political form of our social life as we advance towards socialism,*³ makes room for the participation of all the citizens, party members and non-party people alike, in the administration of the affairs of the socialist state and

society. The policy of the National Front is a line of principle for the CPCz because, in view of our traditions and circumstances, it guarantees that socialism is the creative activity of the mass of people. We have always thought that those who underestimate the role of that union and who, being Communists, are arrogant towards members of other parties and towards non-party people, are absolutely wrong.

It should be remembered that the best members of the non-communist parties, those who dedicated themselves to the ideals of the National Front, contributed to the victory of the working people and then shared with the CPCz responsibility for building socialism. They should have been more active in the National Front and made more often constructive initiatives. The same holds true for the contribution of the non-party people, and the party has always taken special efforts to secure their cooperation. Lenin is known to have considered it absolutely essential to win non-party people over to the side of the party and to have them verify the work of party members.⁴ The point of Lenin's idea is that the party should be in close touch with the mass of the people, know their views and moods, closely listen to their opinions and reckon with them.

Now that we are embarking on the further democratisation of the social life, the role of the National Front is markedly growing. The task is first and foremost for its bodies and the organisations united in it to make a more substantial contribution to the formulation of policies. This presupposes addressing proper authorities with initiatives and proposals concerning the solution of questions of national or local importance, participating in discussions on draft decrees of the government, ministries and national committees before endorsement insofar as they touch upon the key questions of the life of the socialist society and the needs and hopes of its citizens. Public organisations have a substantial role to play here: their task is to meet the specific interests of the population. They should be more efficient in raising topical problems and in putting forth all the diverse views and opinions, which will help appropriate agencies draw correct and rational conclusions. The search for ways of broadening socialist democracy is taking place in our society against the background of differing interests and even contradictions, which reflects itself in a diversity of views. Socialist pluralism, which is inseparable from democracy, manifests itself in identifying, collating and discussing them. This phenomenon has nothing to do with political pluralism that is being imposed upon us: the question of power was resolved in our country forty years ago.

February 1948 proved that the CPCz had won the trust of the mass of people and convinced them of the correctness of its stand. Our open policy and glasnost had contributed significantly towards that outcome. The party devised various ways of introducing to the working people its proposals, such as those on the agrarian reform, nationalisation, taxation and wages, and mobilised the public for efforts to implement them. Our goal in today's conditions is to have the principle of openness and glasnost applied as extensively as possible in the activities of all the government, economic and public organisations and agencies both in the centre and in the provinces. That process has been so far making uneven progress. People often are better informed of the work of higher party and government bodies than of

the activities of the local authorities and organisations. The principle of glasnost is often given a narrow interpretation and related only to the mass media. They have made a large and useful effort in the recent period, of course, but no less importance attaches to other forms of mass political work, such as direct communication with the working people, reports by officials to public meetings on the performance of government and other agencies, etc. All these forms of work are by no means outdated.

Socialist Czechoslovakia today is an economically and socially developed state with a relatively high material and cultural standard of living. However, new problems are arising in the national economy and solutions to them have to be found. Now that the possibilities for extensive development have been exhausted, the party has set the task of intensifying the economy. The 17th CPCz Congress noted that to this end it is necessary to abandon the old economic management system by decree and to restructure the economic mechanism. The new principles of that mechanism, drawn up in a comprehensive document that was approved by the CPCz Central Committee at a plenary meeting last December, rely on such ideas as the application of predominantly cost-benefit methods of management, the use of monetary-commodity relations and plan, an improvement in centralised management, broader autonomy for enterprises and greater democracy in economic organisations.

The introduction of a new economic mechanism, naturally, will cause some conflicts and run into problems because the change it is to bring about would mean in many ways the abandonment of practical habits and ideas which have shaped and struck deep root over the decades. Take social justice in relations of distribution, for example. As everyone knows, there is much levelling without any regard for the quantity and quality of work. The introduction of full-scale cost-accounting is bound to cause drastic changes in distribution and the differentiation of incomes. The introduction of self-financing will similarly lay bare differences in performance between enterprises and do away with the practice of profitable outfits covering the losses of sluggards. The party, naturally, will have to make considerable effort in its political, organisational, ideological and educational work to overcome some of the simplistic conceptions (for instance, there is a lop-sided interpretation of the social guarantees to citizens as a sort of absolute right which should be immune to social justice). We think it essential to translate the principles of new economic management into practice to the fullest possible extent.

Both the road we have travelled and the present day show that the behests of February 1948 have an everlasting importance for us Czechoslovak Communists. We rely on that legacy and are developing it in every field of the social life, always remembering the conditions that made possible the victory of the working class and its allies forty years ago. The Communist Party was creatively developing and applying Marxism-Leninism and the dialectics of revolution; ensured broad and effective participation of the working people in the administration of social affairs; and concentrated efforts on key political, economic and ideological tasks.

That experience is valuable to us and its importance keeps growing now that we are working to accomplish the tasks of perestroika, which actually is a continuation of the socialist revolution.

¹ The parliament had a total of 300 deputies, and 230 of them were present when the votes were cast. — *Ed.*

² K. Gottwald, *Spisy*, sv. XIII, Praha, 1957, p. 50.

³ *Ibid.*, sv. XV, Praha, 1961, p. 160.

⁴ See: V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 508.

International Communist Movement

Reawakening Hope

Louis Van Geyt — President,
Communist Party of Belgium

SPEAKING on behalf of our party at an informal meeting of the representatives of 178 parties and movements held in Moscow on the occasion of celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution, I focussed my speech on the idea of 'reawakening hope'. I meant the positive impact on the new policy of peace pursued for nearly three years now by the Soviet Union and its allies and also of the new image of existing socialism that has been taking shape of late on public opinion and the entire range of social and political forces in the developed European capitalist countries, including Belgium.

What is the essence of this positive impact? What possibilities are opening in our sector of Europe and throughout the world for the forces of peace and progress, especially for the communist parties? After all most of them (just as the left workers' movement in general) are painfully emerging from a very difficult period of their history. In the past few years transnational financial capital and its political placemen, using in their interests the world capitalist crisis and the results of putting into effect latest scientific and technological achievements, managed to launch an offensive in practically all areas.

These questions in one way or another are connected with the general problem of the dialectical relationship between socio-political struggle in the world of capital (particularly in the developed West European countries) and changes in the world of socialism. For our analysis to be productive, it is necessary to evoke, if only in most general terms, how this

We continue the series of articles on modern problems of the international communist movement (see *WMR*, Nos. 9, 10, 11, 12, 1987.)

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relationship took shape in the past. The reader will, of course, find this evocation slightly schematic. Notwithstanding the fact, the Belgian Communists deem it their duty especially today to voice frankly the opinion, including those on most complicated issues.

'Thaws' and 'Chills'

It is commonly admitted today that in the early post-revolutionary years — in Lenin's time — the October Revolution had an extraordinary strong mobilising effect on the mass of the working people and the oppressed peoples of all continents, whereas the development of the world communist movement in the late 1920s and the early 1930s became, on the contrary, characterised by sectarianism and dogmatism, as illustrated by the resolutions of the Sixth Congress of the Communist International.

We believe that our movement is still to comprehend fully and in true measure the significance of an unusual shift marked by the Seventh (and the last) Congress of the Communist International, which went down in history as the 'Dimitrov Congress'. In our opinion, the *inconsistent implementation of the resolutions passed* in no way belittles its importance, though the consequences were indeed grave.

The resolutions of the Communist International at the time not only demanded the renunciation of narrow concepts and practices of the preceding period but also gave a decisive impulse to the formation of the anti-fascist popular front. They in fact laid the foundations of the anti-Hitler coalition, which together with the Resistance movement scored a victory over Nazi Germany and its allies. Simultaneously an attempt was made to surmount straightforward ideas, according to which class struggle was reduced exclusively to antagonisms between 'labour and capital', 'socialism and capitalism' and 'the oppressed classes and peoples and imperialism'. Speaking about the developed capitalist countries, it meant a militant alliance with all the anti-fascist forces, including part of the big bourgeoisie, for the sake of preserving or restoring parliamentary democracy called bourgeois heretofore, an alliance that was to strive constantly after raising the weight and positions of the working class and other strata of the working people.

The Belgian Communists think in the light of their own experience that the manner in which the communist movement reacted in the post-war period of the Cold War to provocation by the reactionary forces showed that many lessons and significant accomplishments of the period of the Seventh Congress of the Communist International had been forgotten. We do not mean here the fact that in response to the Marshall Plan adopted by the West European countries and the shifting of the communist parties and their closest allies into opposition there the partisans of the reestablishment of the hegemony of the big capitalists and landowners were eliminated from the governments of some Central and East European states or that the signing of the Brussels Pact, the NATO Pact and the West German entry into it was followed by the conclusion of the Warsaw Treaty. We are not going to speak about the colossal efforts that the USSR had to make to put an end to US nuclear monopoly. We mean here something different, namely, that the rebuttal of the imperialist strategy of the Cold

War was accompanied in the light of the resolutions passed by Cominform and some West European Communist Parties by a certain reversal almost to those same *narrow* restricted interpretations of class struggle and the class nature of international relations that had already been surmounted in fact by the Seventh Congress of the Communist International and later on in the years of the anti-fascist unions and anti-Nazi coalition.

The image of existing socialism in the eyes of the democratic West European public was that of a 'besieged fortress' resigned to the logic of the 'confrontation of two systems' which was largely identified with the logic of escalating bloc policy. Most of the Communists, including in West European countries, again fell into the old trap in the stubborn belief that 'all those who are not with us are against us', instead of trying to attract to their side 'all those who are not against us'. In this way many parties lost a considerable portion of their influence gained during the anti-fascist struggle.

Small wonder therefore that the communist movement on the whole was not ready for the eruption of critical assessment and inventive ideas coming from the 20th CPSU Congress especially on the problems of struggle for peace and of transition to socialism. Meanwhile it is sufficient, for instance, to consider the speech made at the congress by internationalist Otto Kuusinen¹ to see certain continuity with the ideas of the crucial Seventh Congress of the Communist International.

Nevertheless following 1956 during the relatively brief period of 'thaw' the spirit of the Cold War was shattered and the image of existing socialism among the democratic West European public significantly improved and the ability of the Communist parties to form broad alliances for peace, social progress and freedom was indisputably reinforced. That openness and the hopes it reawakened proved fragile: the manifestation of improvisation and even subjectivism that followed gave food to all those who from the very beginning desparately opposed changes. Finally, all sorts of setbacks, both in the socialist development of the USSR and on the international scene (namely, the conflict with China), led to the gradual renunciation of the policy of openness itself. A 'chill' set in on many occasions accompanied by a 'symmetrical' response to imperialist provocation and at times by the demonstrations of force in the name of the defence of socialism. West European democratic public opinion saw it above all as the acceptance of the logic of bloc confrontation rather than the desire to break away from that logic.

The period of 'chill' coincided with the emergence on the political scene of the representatives of the ultra-conservative and even aggressive elements of financial capital in many leading capitalist countries. Given the worsening transnational crisis of capitalism and also scientific-technical and socio-cultural changes, the reactionaries launched an all-round onslaught on the rights of the working people and the democratic gains of the workers' movement, escalating the arms race, especially the nuclear arms race. The Communists, first and foremost in West European countries, reacted to those processes disunited for the most part and sometimes even torn apart by differences. The socio-political influence of the traditionally militant and most organised sections of the working class, to which our

parties primarily oriented themselves, began to dwindle steadily.

It is quite understandable therefore how under the circumstances the new dynamic policy of peace pursued by the USSR and its allies and the open image of existing socialism can help '*reawaken hopes*'. Of course, much depends on the extent to which the forces of peace and progress in the capitalist countries, particularly in Europe, and above all the communist parties will make use of the favourable opportunities that appeared in the past three years.

The Universal Mission of the New System

Thus at different stages of history the relationship between the development of existing socialism, its image projected in the non-socialist countries and the conditions of the struggle waged by the peace-loving and progressive forces in the industrialised capitalist states was not the same. In the recent period the nature of that relationship has changed, giving birth to new hopes. What then are the *long-term factors* that determined its evolution?

The well-thought-out analysis made by the CPSU Central Committee on marking the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution shows that existing socialism came into being and developed in concrete historical circumstances. Its main advantages and the contribution to the positive solution of problems posed to humanity by the most nefarious tendencies of twentieth-century capitalism manifested themselves in the process of overcoming the grave heritage of the preceding historical formations. Socialism was being built in a single country, which was poorly developed industrially and had gone through the First World War and the Civil War. But it managed to rebuff the attack of the Nazi barbarians, predetermining their eventual defeat. During the Cold War the foundations of the socialist community were laid virtually on ruins and much had to be sacrificed. The fact that countries, like Yugoslavia, with its relatively modest size and natural resources and China which was at first poorly developed economically, had to lay the foundations of socialism on the whole practically in complete isolation from the community also seriously interfered with showing the advantages of the new system.

But then an extraordinary event took place in 1957 — the first man-made satellite was launched by the Soviet Union, which had hardly emerged from the crippling period of the Cold War and was still shackled by dogmatism responsible for Lyssenkoism and impeding the development of science. Four years later Yuri Gagarin flew into outer space. It is noteworthy that those accomplishments of socialism played a decisive role in changing the attitude of the main world capitalist monopolies to some latest scientific and technological achievements, which they until then considered to be a factor complicating rivalry among them, 'freezing' production capital and, consequently, as a factor destabilising and jeopardising profits and the power of dominant financial groups, especially those of the United States. After the first satellite was launched the forces, which had pursued the cartel policy of 'partitioning markets' and which had a great number of latest discoveries and inventions under lock, had to renounce their conservative stand and to opt for the application of scientific and technological achievements.

Such a 'defreezing' of the scientific and technological potential was, naturally, carried out in the conditions of the capitalist world keynoted by the frenetic chase after superprofits and was inevitably accompanied by the destruction of the productive forces, the natural resources and cultural wealth and by an escalation, both quantitative and qualitative, of the arms race. While the major capitalist monopolies were actively introducing the achievements of the scientific and technological revolution in production, existing socialism entered a period of stagnation characterised by a growing gap between scientific progress and the practical utilisation of its results to serve the people. Nevertheless the decisive impulse in 'defreezing' inventions and discoveries until then kept under lock and key *came from the socialist world, whose natural vocation* (though in no way automatic) *is to promote the development of science and to put it to the service of the people.*

This is an exceptionally remarkable manifestation of the very nature of the new system in modern conditions when humanity is confronted with vital and global problems, such as to stop the sliding towards a nuclear holocaust, to safeguard the natural and cultural environment, to rid the majority of the people of economic underdevelopment and to make economic growth serve the people. The natural vocation of socialism (and to a certain extent its *raison d'être*) is to meet *common human interests in the face of these problems, though not alone but in a close interaction with all the forces worried about the future of the globe.*

Perhaps the most fundamental and promising feature of regenerating socialism consists in the fact that it deliberately undertakes to fulfil that 'universal' mission and that many forces outside it feel today the positive impact of that system. Without them it will be unable to cope with the problems of humanity, which are also its own problems. And the other way round, those problems cannot be resolved without a contribution from socialism. It therefore depends on recognition of and mutual respect for that vital relationship and the ensuing responsibility if that 'reawakening hope' is to gain ground.

What Stands in Our Way?

Talking of the past, I discussed the influence exerted by the new system on the struggle waged by *the forces of peace and progress* in the European capitalist countries. But what we talk of today is *the forces outside socialism that are worried about the future.* Why so? The fact is that truly universal problems of life itself are being tackled today, and the spectrum of the forces involved *has not been so broad and diverse* since the universal struggle against fascist barbarity. But while at that time the alliances and coalitions which in fact were products of the strategy of the Seventh Congress of the Communist International were formed under the influence and on the initiative of the left forces, first and foremost the Communists, the situation in capitalist European countries is different today. The ability of the left, including the communist parties, to be a sort of rallying point for forces outside socialism is far from always apparent to public opinion. Let us have a look at just a few causes of this phenomenon which are perfectly self-evident.

— During a long period of revival in a number of the capitalist economies after the Second World War, we were concentrating our efforts on struggle for the social and democratic demands of the working class and the people as a whole. There was the hope, however, that the growth would be sustained and relatively consistent: it was entertained by many Marxists not only in Europe at that time.

— Regrettably, despite the lesson of the mass popular action in May 1968, the West European left woke up far too late to the far-reaching changes brought about in technology, the social life and international relations by revolutionary scientific discoveries and by the growth of informatics, telecommunications, new materials and biotechnology. The bigwigs of transnational financial capital, meanwhile, latched onto the scientific and technological revolution and used it to maximise their profits and to consolidate their dominance, and launched more or less vigorously (depending on the local conditions) an onslaught on the working class and popular movements to undo what they had achieved since the Second World War.

— In the period of the 'thaw' most of the West European communist parties, seriously weakened during the Cold War, stabilised their influence and became the 'spearhead' of the left forces but since the late 1970s some of them have sustained grave losses because of the aggravating crisis of capitalism, a neoliberal offensive and the growing confrontation of the alliances. Meanwhile, the emergent social movements, which championed peace, environmental protection, the cause of the dispossessed strata of the population and solidarity with the oppressed and exploited Third World peoples, arose outside or next to the working class movement and historical left organisations rather than on their basis.

— Also, very controversial reactions were provoked in the communist movement, especially in Western Europe, by the exposures made and new goals set in the resolutions of the 20th CPSU Congress and by step-by-step 'freezes' and some of the political and military actions of the USSR and its allies since the late 1960s.

Make Use of the New Chance

An analysis of the development of industrialised capitalist countries participating in the European Community prompts the conclusion that the diverse forces worried about the future cannot be effectively rallied around the clearly defined tasks of our age without a substantial contribution of creative Marxism and without better concerted and updated activities of the left organisations and communist parties adhering to Marxism. No realistic way out of the series of economic and financial upheavals (like the recent stock market crashes) caused by the neoliberal policies of the past few years can be conceived even in the short term unless those forces intervene. It is important to reckon, too, with the readiness of the more realistic circles of financial capital (although they are so far in the minority) to accede to measures of the New Deal² type, adapted, naturally, to the present situation. Unless this intervention materialises, the leading capitalist powers and their groupings will never be made to renounce in all seriousness the arms race, confrontation between the blocs and the harsh

exploitation of the Third World and to embark on the road of mutually beneficial cooperation. It was that opportunity that Mikhail Gorbachov pointed out in his report on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Great October Revolution.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that a great deal is yet to be done to clearly define prospects and to draw up and translate into practice a concerted strategy of the left forces, including a number of European communist parties.

We are pleased to note, of course, that the Communists along with other organisations and parties were active in the broad public movement which made an unprecedented contribution towards the conclusion of an historic agreement on the mutual elimination of the medium- and shorter-range missiles by the Soviet Union and the United States. Actions by diverse social forces for the continued de-escalation of the policy of blocs and for arms reductions in Europe, especially Central Europe, are noteworthy as well. European Parliament passed a clear-cut resolution by a substantial majority to this effect. The plans for the escalation of the race with nuclear and other weapons in new areas, which are being laid by the Atlantists with their allergy to any rapprochement among the peoples, are thus being countered. The positions of certain segments of the business community and politicians linked with them (e.g., in Western Europe) are worthy of note as well: they are openly calling for daring joint ventures of East and West, North and South, and trying to turn over the page of history that is associated with the policy of confrontation.

At the same time, the major detachments of the working class movement and the traditional left, including the Communists, are coming against serious difficulties in our countries. It is only by overcoming them that those forces will be able to assume a role of responsibility, cut out for them, in resolving the vital problems facing humanity and to make good use of the new chance offered them by the 'reawakening hope' today. Summarised below are just three of those difficulties.

First. Faced with the crisis of the capitalist economy and resultant cuts in employment, large sectors of the labour army still consider it to be the main task to preserve jobs and wages. But more often than not they confine their struggle to protests against the wasteful and destructive actions of 'their own' proprietors, against arms production and trade, against ecologically harmful and socially useless production and against the chase after state subsidies and contracts in order to beat domestic or foreign competition. Alternative programmes for maintaining employment and the living standards have not always been convincing. Major detachments of the working class, left movement have sometimes found themselves on the sidelines of mass popular actions and the just demands put forward by the peace activists in the early 1980s.

Second. The belated realisation of the implications of the scientific and technological revolution by the Communists and other progressive forces is still making itself felt. The changes brought about by it at the time of the crisis of transnational capitalism have inevitably detracted from the weight and political influence of the detachments of the working class that once were most combative, while the weaker segments of the labour army are

altogether given a back seat in social affairs. At the same time new categories of the working people, better skilled but far worse organised, are making themselves heard to an ever larger extent. From the point of view of ideology, they are more sensitive to general social problems, such as peace, environmental protection, underdevelopment and human and personal rights, than to the need to develop individual enterprises or industries, or the social services as a whole. That gap is a considerable impediment to rapprochement between the inheritors of the best traditions of the working class and the new strata of labour, some of which succumb to the 'anti-collectivist' propaganda of the right neoliberal quarters. The mass movements, such as the Greens, do not quite realise that their struggle is anti-monopoly and even anti-capitalist — and as such actually merges with the actions of the vanguard of the left forces.

Third. At the time of the 'freezes' of the late 1960s and especially the early 1980s the West European Communists had the prevalent desire to 'extricate themselves' from their problems exclusively on their own, on the national level. Meanwhile, the processes of internationalisation continued to gain momentum at the level of the Common Market, the European continent and the world as a whole.

It is my conviction that the Communists of those countries must join efforts to surmount those three obstacles, which stand in the way of another upsurge of the forces of peace and progress in Western Europe. Their goal can be a strategy of *the broadest possible alliance for a national and West European policy of recovery, peaceful renewal and economic growth*. Its purpose is to increase production, to expand employment in the socially useful sectors, to meet the material and cultural needs of the population and also to broaden international cooperation with all countries.

That goal, known in Belgium as the '*peace economy*', reckons with the increasingly obvious relationship between struggle for peace and emergence from the crisis, between disarmament and development. It is called upon to contribute to the unification of the combative detachments of the labour army with the new social movements at the national level and on the scale of the Common Market and capitalist Europe as a whole. Just as in the years of anti-fascist Resistance, we should be both more open to dialogue and cooperation with all those who are willing to take a step, however modest, in that direction, and firmer in the face of those who are persisting in their policy of 'hands off' for the transnationals and provoking confrontation with the socialist world and the non-aligned movement.

The meeting in Moscow on November 4-5, 1987 demonstrated that conditions are re-emerging, thanks to the renewal in socialist countries and to their decisive contribution to the process of nuclear disarmament, for exchanges of views between the Communist and other progressive parties of all continents on ways of resolving the key problems of today's world. There appear opportunities for their joint analysis by the Communists and all the other forces working in the specific conditions of capitalist Europe of the late 1980s. It would be an unpardonable error not to use these opportunities immediately and with good effect.

¹ Otto Kuusinen (1881-1964), a leading figure in the international communist movement and one of the founders of the Communist Party of Finland, was secretary of the Communist International Executive Committee from 1921 to 1939. He was member of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) since 1941 and was elected member of the Presidium and secretary of the CPSU Central Committee in 1957. — *Ed.*

² A system of measures taken by the US Administration of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt from 1933 to 1938 to eliminate the consequences of the economic crisis and to alleviate capitalist contradictions. Stronger state regulation of the economy was accompanied by some social reforms. — *Ed.*

Costa Rica And Crisis In Central America

*Humberto Vargas Carbonell —
General Secretary, CC, People's
Vanguard Party of Costa Rica (PVP)*

SAFEGUARDING peace is a challenge common to us all now. This is essential if we are to survive. Every country and every party has its own view of this challenge. Ours is that Central America has been the target of unceasing aggression and crushing exploitation by imperialism. For us the drive for human survival is also one for the survival and progress of the working people. To effectively protect peace, people's support is vital, and to have that we need to press harder against the alliance of oligarchy and imperialism.

Whatever the barriers facing us we still remain optimistic. The role of the USSR in campaigning for disarmament and peace and CPSU efforts at streamlining society through broad democracy and openness are making things easier for us, too. Events like the meeting of communist parties and other democratic and left forces to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, which was hallmarked by unobstructed dialogue and mutual respect, have inestimable historic significance and help unmask imperialist lies of the 'Soviet threat'.

What we Costa Rican Communists need to do in the first place now is to *fight for peace, against US interference in Central America, as well as to boost revolutionary action against oppression and exploitation by imperialism and the local oligarchy.*

The situation in Costa Rica, events of the past few years, and the policy of the People's Vanguard Party of Costa Rica should be seen in the context of the historical evolution of Latin America and our region. Relations between the US and Latin America are undergoing profound changes caused, among other factors, by the deepening crisis of a 'development model' imperialism is forcing on us. Its more salient economic aspects are an overpowering foreign debt, and the power politics of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank¹, which are pressing us hard to repay the debt. Costa Rica, for one, is going through extremely hard times. We are burdened with an economic policy developed under accords with these

financial institutions. Like the peoples of other states on the subcontinent, the Costa Ricans increasingly become aware of who is really to blame for their dire straits, and are frequently taking to the streets to protest over the IMF line, more specifically a 'declaration of intentions' and other obligations by our government to 'settle' the debt problem.

Responsibility of the Revolutionaries

Central America is now in the grip of the most hard-hitting political, military, economic and social crisis it has ever seen. It is the scene of revolutionary processes of varying intensity and a growing contention between the people, on the one hand, and imperialism and its allies, the local oligarchies, on the other. The only conclusion we can make is that the region will never be the same again. There already is clear evidence to support our case.

The building of a new, truly independent, democratic and popular state in Nicaragua has radically changed the nature of its relations with the US. But the Nicaraguan revolution is also having its impact on changes in the neighbouring republics. Their range is broad, including relations with imperialism.

The situation around Nicaragua, the heroic revolutionary struggle in El Salvador, the mounting guerrilla movement in Guatemala, US army occupation of Honduran territory, and the broadening involvement of Costa Rica in regional affairs all go to prove that *changes in each individual country occur amidst most intense military and political tensions*.

The present situation urges the revolutionaries to show effective flexibility, as strikingly exemplified by the Sandinist leaders' policies. Aside from a clear vision of the future we need much tactical skill and a political steadfastness combined with an ability for manoeuvre. We must resist interventionist imperialist policy with an adamant struggle for peace and the sovereignty of our peoples, providing a strong leadership to them.

Our resolve to build up solidarity with the Nicaraguan revolution requires that we keep a close watch over the Costa Rican government's policy towards the neighbouring republic. The administrations of Luis Alberto Monge (1982-1986) and Oscar Arias (in office since 1986) were formed by the National Liberation Party (NLP), which portrays itself as a social democratic one. The four years of Monge's tenure saw overt anti-Nicaraguan policies. Amid much propaganda fanfare the president declared a 'constant neutrality' of Costa Rica, which was virtually a cover for operations in its territory by the US and its hirelings the contras. Efforts were made to present it as a defenceless victim risking ending up in the 'claws of Sandinism'. The position of the Costa Rican government was fully endorsed by the chief opposition bourgeois party, the Social Christian Alliance. A propaganda ballyhoo is being steadily fuelled — and financed — by imperialism and the oligarchies of both bourgeois parties. It has now grown into an overt psychological war. Our people are being incited to be aggressive, chauvinistic and hateful towards Nicaragua. All this is being paraded as defending 'democracy' but is actually an element of the campaign to destabilise the Sandinist revolution. While Honduras has been the chief beach-head of aggression against Nicaragua, Costa Rica has been

used to provoke armed conflicts or overt foreign intervention.

Our party has consistently stressed that neutrality could be the mainstay of a true peace policy if only the government matched its words with actions. Regrettably, this was not the case. The *contras* set up their bases, hospitals and supply routes in Costa Rica to use it as their dependable rear.

A US congressional inquiry into the Irangate affair produced ample evidence of the way Potrero Grande airport was being used for *contra* needs, as well as of CIA operations in Costa Rica. There is evidence pinning down the Monge administration's complicity in the dirty war against Nicaragua.

The international prestige of Costa Rica and its image of a democratic government lauded by the bourgeois press in many countries turned to dust overnight. Instead the Monge cabinet got sizeable financial aid from the US, which helped to keep it economically afloat in the teeth of a most severe crisis and one of the biggest per capita debts in the world.

What shaped government policies was pressure by imperialism and the very class nature of the National Liberation Party, implicitly loyal to the oligarchy. But as the danger of direct intervention and the war engulfing the whole of Central American region became increasingly real, some elements within the ruling class started to air misgivings about such prospects. There were also people worried by the position of many Latin American states, primarily those within the Contadora group and the Support group, which did not share the anti-Nicaraguan stance of Costa Rican authorities. As well, the party leaders could not turn a deaf ear to the views of some West European governments and parties, which disagreed with the power politics practised by Reagan in Central America.

President Arias and Nicaragua

Oscar Arias came to power with a political platform of regional peace and solution of the country's crying social problems like unemployment and housing shortages. But already his first year in office showed him to be as hostile and arrogant towards Nicaragua as his predecessors. His promises to deal with domestic social and economic problems remained as such. The authorities continued to clamp down on peasant actions for more land and campaigns by the urban poor for more housing.

But later the government policies showed a measure of disagreement with Washington. After the president unveiled his peace plan for Central America, the CC plenary meeting in March 1987 pointed out: "Special note should be made of the document, 'The hour of peace has struck', submitted to the meeting of Central American presidents (in February 1987 — *H.V.C.*). Originally an interventionist, anti-Nicaraguan manifesto, it later evolved into a basis for talks . . ."²

Indeed, the initial draft publicly endorsed by Frank Carlucci³ aimed to isolate Nicaragua. But when the heads of the Central American nations (excluding Daniel Ortega) came to Costa Rica to sign it they failed to reach agreement. Why? Chiefly owing to the failed strategy of the '*contras*', the greater international standing of the Sandinist revolution and the Contadora and the Support groups, and also because the four presidents failed, even with US support, to lay down their terms to Nicaragua.

It became clear that the plan had a chance of success only if Nicaragua was a party to it, which would drastically change its nature. This is exactly what happened. After protracted negotiations a document was signed in Guatemala on August 7, 1987, now known as 'Esquipulas II' or, more popularly, the Arias Plan.

What this process will come to is hard to predict. The warmongers, primarily the US administration, have not given up their schemes and aid and comfort the contras. The above document will doubtless help the peace policy along. Characteristically enough, Nicaragua is the only signatory country to strictly abide by the accords. The Communist parties and other revolutionary and progressive quarters in the region are demanding that all the other countries do likewise. The guerrilla forces in El Salvador and Guatemala were fairly instrumental in this respect by starting talks with the authorities. In Honduras the democratic forces set up a national reconciliation commission. In Costa Rica we have been successful in forming a similar commission to look into demands by our party and other public organisations.

The US administration is looking askance at this formula to settle the Central American problems. With support from its allies in the region it will sabotage any shift for the better. The plan is being boycotted even by some of its signatories. Arias himself has been sending out conflicting signals. And yet his winning the Nobel Prize is a bonus for the cause of peace in Central America and efforts at a negotiated resolution of conflicts and greater democracy in our countries.

Common People on the Receiving End of the Crisis

The Costa Rican president has made some political capital out of the peace plan. There has been more public backing for his foreign policy since the signing of the Guatemala accords, but there is also mounting protest against his current socio-economic policies. The nation is getting more dependent on the IMF and the International Development Association (ADI). The policies these two are laying down are adding to the taxing burden the working people already have to shoulder.

Costa Rica's foreign debt of nearly \$5 billion⁴ is impossible to repay. The private banks are responsible for the more burdensome part of it, owing to high interest rates. In 1983 it stood at \$800 million and topped \$1.5 billion after yet another 'agreement' with the creditors in 1987. The chronic defaulting on financial obligations and consequently ever new 'refinancing measures' are only making things worse. This is not something new for the Third World, but the problem of Costa Rica has a special urgency due to its relatively small population and economic disarray.

To gain new settlements with the IMF the government is slashing social programmes and reducing taxes on enterprises, while raising those on the people. Consumer goods taxes are going up while grains subsidies are going down. The state sector in the economy is being phased out; the process started with the abolition of our people's milestone gain, the system of nationalised banks. Over the past few years privatisation has affected cement, aluminium, mineral fertilizer, fish farming and processing and other areas. It is now the turn of the services. Consumer necessities

and utilities are costing more now and pay curbs are being tightened.

Our national currency is trading at less and less to the US dollar. The republic's weak economy is being increasingly hurt by inequitable trade. Costa Rican industry is suffering from US protectionist measures, which are at odds with Reagan's widely publicised 'Caribbean initiative'. The debt problem will never be settled if its discussion with the creditors carries on in the same vein.

The 'belt-tightening policy' may do a lot of harm to a country which has for years been run by reformists fairly skilled in demagoguery. The living standards people have become accustomed to over the past forty years or so are going downhill. As we mentioned earlier, the workers, peasants and other social groups have come to realise that the decline in their living and other standards has been caused by the overbearing international financial institutions. Evidence of it were working people's strikes and marches and recent big demonstrations by high and higher school students who demanded resistance to IMF pressure and urged the government to take charge of financing the education system.

The economic development model imperialism forced on Costa Rica with consent by the local oligarchy has been an unmitigated flop. The vice-president of the preceding administration had to admit that 70 per cent of the Costa Ricans live in poverty. Such is the outcome of reformist rule and submission to imperialist orders.

A meeting of former Costa Rican presidents in August 1987 evinced the anxiety of a wide section of the local bourgeoisie. The participants suggested a meeting in Costa Rica of former Latin American presidents to jointly look for ways to settle the foreign debt problem. The IMF was strongly criticised and charged with appropriating the Costa Rican government's functions. Ex-president José Figueres stressed that Latin Americans should uphold their reputation for being honourable.

The crisis is affecting the propertied classes as well, though in varying measure. In its March 1987 plenary meeting resolution our party's CC noted that "there has been a strengthening of the economic and political positions of the bourgeoisie's financial circles, the most powerful groups of industrial and agro-industrial exporters and trader importers. These circles are the chief motive force behind the present policies and immediate beneficiaries of the financial aid extended by the IDA, IMF and IBRD. Their predominance in the state apparatus, bourgeois political organisations and the mass media has become much more conspicuous than before".⁵ The positions of other groups of the bourgeoisie have been slipping. The policies of liberalisation and privatisation of credits, free imports of goods, the depreciation of the currency and the lifting of duties on imported raw materials, parts and equipment have constrained their ability for accumulation of capital.

By and large the Arias government is following the lead of international imperialist financial institutions, even though they do differ on some matters. The working people are growing more dissatisfied with their falling living standards and mounting social problems. One indication of their increasing social and political awareness is that for over two years now the country's trade associations and major independent trade unions

have been working within a Standing Council of the Working People. Unity processes have been gaining fresh ground among peasant federations and student organisations opposed to the present economic policies.

The government's political ambiguity stems from its awareness of, apart from divisions among the capitalists themselves, mounting public protest.

An impartial examination of the highly complicated situation in Costa Rica will make it obvious that *neither the government nor the bourgeoisie could profit from the instability or the continuation of war in Central America. They hardly relish the prospect of direct US armed intervention in the region.* Many local businessmen choose to transfer their capital to other, quieter places abroad. All this is having its effect on the taking of decisions to settle regional conflicts by negotiation.

Our Goal Is Unity

The March 1987 Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the PVP emphasised that today the "prime objective is to mobilise and organise the people. The party must help them gain their own experience of struggle".⁶ The meeting stressed that the people have awoken to the need for political action and become increasingly active in this regard. It considered the effect the crisis had not only on the working people but on the middle classes as well. The delegates stressed that "demands by the trade union and peasant movements became more clear and mature, and that the trend towards setting up bodies to coordinate joint action was growing all the time". The meeting's conclusion was: "Concerted action by the mass organisations should promote the broadest yet political unity with other public quarters."⁷

Our party is doing a lot for alliance with other left organisations. It recently came up with a proposal of an alliance of trade unions with left policies as well as other mass movements. Our goal is creation of a Coordination Centre for the left forces, and its work should not be necessarily confined to election campaigning. What we want is concerted action in possible elections of deputies to a Central American parliament. There have been consistent attempts at a rapprochement with organisations fighting for peace, sovereignty, and civil rights and freedoms.

The Communists' desire for dialogue and cooperation with all progressives in the land was made clear in a Central Committee resolution on the 16th PVP Congress published in late November 1987. It stresses, in part: "The 16th Congress should be used to start a candid, fraternal and serious dialogue with all elements in the popular movement. We need to hear them all speak out. We want their experience and ideas to enrich our views, whatever our ideological differences. Young people wishing to come to terms with the knotty problems facing their generation, Christians concerned about social justice, and intellectuals anxious for the future of Costa Rican culture will all be given a fair hearing at our forum. The basic documents to be discussed by the Congress will be published and widely circulated in advance to enable anyone wishing so to make their suggestions on them."⁸

The Costa Rican Communists are convinced that the unity of all left organisations should be rooted in the following principles: a consensus

decision-making, mutual respect and independence of all allied forces, constructive and tolerant discussion of varying views, and a broad openness in discussing and adopting concrete policies. This is what the People's Vanguard Party essentially thinks of the alliances problem at this grave historic moment.

The Reagan administration's continuing truculence towards Nicaragua is a grave threat to peace in Costa Rica and the whole region. The party is bracing itself for the worst.

Staunchly committed to the popular cause, the People's Vanguard Party endorses the government's moves towards settling regional conflicts by negotiation and is simultaneously resisting its treacherous and anti-popular economic line. Our efforts to protect the rights and living standards of the working people enable us to broaden our contacts with them. It is only with unqualified support by the working people that we can hope to do our level best to safeguard peace and stave off imperialist interference in Central America.

¹ This is how the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development is commonly known. — *Ed.*

² *Trabajo*, San Jose, No. 1, 1987, p. 6.

³ At the time President Reagan's national security adviser. Became US Defense Secretary in November 1987. — *Ed.*

⁴ In per capita terms every Costa Rican owes some \$2,000 to foreign creditors.

⁵ *Trabajo*, No. 1, 1987, p. 11.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁸ *Adelante*, San Jose, November 19-25, 1987.

WMR Questionnaire

We continue publishing the replies to the *WMR* questionnaire prominent political leaders and statesmen sent in at the close of 1987.¹

The questions were:

1. What would you describe as the greatest political accomplishment — and, conversely, the greatest disappointment — of 1987?

2. Last year the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution in Russia was commemorated throughout the world. What aspects of the struggle fought over the past decades do you believe should be preserved and developed and what should perhaps be abandoned?

3. What do you expect from 1988 concerning the advancement of the developments and the overcoming of the difficulties you have referred to?

Michael O'Riordan
National Chairman, Communist Party of Ireland

1. TO begin with, there was the epoch-making encounter between Comrade Gorbachov and President Reagan, from which the world expects a momentous breakthrough on the paramount issues of peace and disarmament. Besides, I would note the successful holding of the International Meeting (Moscow, November 4-5) of 178 delegations of communist, workers' and social democratic parties, national liberation movements, ecological and other organisations — the largest and most representative meeting of world forces that stand for peace, social progress, national freedom and the harmonisation of relations between man and nature. It was indeed a tremendous gathering brought together on the initiative of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union for an appropriate honouring of the 70th Anniversary of the Great October Revolution of 1917.

Convened on an international level, it has great potentialities for the unity in action of all progressive forces in each national situation. The Meeting was neither dominated by any political power or state. The approach on a basis of equality of all, big or small, was introduced by the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachov when he said, "We do not claim a monopoly on the truth." The participation of the other delegations was certainly in the same spirit. The full fruits of the International Meeting have yet to blossom.

My greatest disappointment was the outcome of the Referendum on Ireland agreeing to sign the Single European Act of the European Economic Community. Ireland is a member of the EEC — the only member which has a state policy of neutrality and has no connections with NATO. In our party's view, membership of the EEC is a threat to our neutrality, and endorsing the Single European Act further jeopardises such. However, we believe that despite that our Irish people can be rallied for the cause of peace and national sovereignty.

2. The past year was not only the year of the 70th anniversary of the Great October Revolution, it was also the year after the holding of the 27th Congress of the CPSU in which there was more and more application of the decisions of the Congress of February-March 1986. Perestroika and glasnost were innovations which many did not at first understand fully and it took until the time of last year for such to be demonstrated in practice that led to a fuller comprehension. Now more and more people understand that, as Mikhail Gorbachov said in his report to the jubilee meeting marking the 70th anniversary of the Great October Revolution on November 2, 1987, "The purpose of perestroika is the full theoretical and practical re-establishment of Lenin's conception of socialism, in which indisputable priority belongs to the working man with his ideals and interests, to humanitarian values in the economy, in social and political relations, and in culture".

As to what should be left behind in the past year — they are the forms of struggle that divide the Irish people and therefore logically and objectively help to perpetuate British imperialist presence in Ireland. In every

significant struggle of the Irish people for social, political and national liberation, our Communist Party of Ireland, since its foundation date in 1933, has played an active part. Our party is not opposed to armed struggle. Indeed, many of our members in their time have taken up arms in the struggle for Ireland's independence and against fascism in Ireland, Spain and during World War II. As we have consistently pointed out we do not agree with the form of struggle conducted by the Provisional IRA — because it does not advance the necessary unity of class forces which is basic to the achievement of Ireland's unity and independence from all forms of imperialist domination.

3. The major event of 1988 will in fact consist of a number of happenings. The year 1988 will mark the 75th anniversary of the Great Dublin Lock-Out of 1913. Around that anniversary we will be organising a number of events that will highlight the national and international character of the Irish workers' struggle then and their relation to the contemporary world. That strike began when a number of workers were sacked because they had joined the newly formed Irish Transport and General Workers' Union (now the largest trade union in Ireland). In an organised counter-strike Dublin's tramway workers struck suddenly on August 26, 1913. That was the day on which began the capital's fashionable society week, the Annual Royal Dublin Horse Show. At 10 a.m. precisely, the drivers and conductors left their trams on the streets after affixing to their coat-lapels the union badge with its 'Red Hand'. Then began a bitter class struggle with the employers 'locking-out' all those in other employments who had joined the new union.

The battle was to rage for over seven months. On one side were ranged 400 of the big Irish employers, on the other were 30,000 workers under the leadership of 'Big Jim' Larkin. It was a combat that was marked by extreme police brutality, and from it emerged a workers' armed force, the 'Irish Citizen Army' which three years later participated under the command of James Connolly in the Irish Revolt of Easter 1916.

We intend to honour the occasion particularly emphasising the role of Lenin in that great Irish class battle. A bare two weeks after its beginning Lenin gave the international working class movement the first picture of what was happening in Dublin. He wrote, under the heading of 'Class War in Dublin', of how, in the capital of Ireland, "the class struggle, which permeates the whole life of capitalist society everywhere, has become accentuated to the point of class war".²

We will also include much more about Lenin and Ireland in 1913 and Ireland's reaction to him shown in the action of 'Big Jim' Larkin who on June 24, 1925 went to Red Square to pay homage to the dead Lenin. Larkin was to describe his feelings on that occasion when he wrote in the columns of the *Irish Worker* on the first anniversary of Lenin's death: "The capitalist governments of the world and the paid defamers and the licensed liars may spit out their venom, may continue to lie and malign and even caricature the Bolsheviki and their leaders and their teacher Lenin, but he who laughs last laughs best."³

It is in that spirit that we will honour the historic battles of the Irish working class in 1988. What is good for our working class is good for our

country. As the other outstanding leader of the 1913 struggle said, "The Cause of Labour is the Cause of Ireland and the Cause of Ireland is the Cause of Labour".

¹ See *WMR*, No. 1, 1988

² V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, p. 332.

³ *Irish Worker*, January 24, 1925.

Kalevi Sorsa
Vice-President, Socialist International

1. After a decade of relative immobility several signs of rapid change may be noticed. The United States and the Soviet Union have concluded an agreement eliminating a whole category of missiles from nuclear weapon arsenals. This solution is especially significant with regard to quality: it contributes to strategic stability by eliminating such nuclear weapons that both parties have considered means of limited nuclear war. It is also encouraging to note the preparedness of the great powers to start limiting strategic weaponry on the basis of the Reykjavik summit meeting.

The burden of the arms race and the responsibility brought forth by the threat of nuclear war will oblige the great powers even in the future to seek permanent solutions to consolidating security.

One of the most encouraging signs has been the renewed recognition of the significance of the United Nations in striving towards solutions of difficult regional crises and maintenance of collective security. I have acquainted myself with great interest with General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachov's extensive proposals concerning the strengthening of the status of the UN in the maintenance of international peace and security, which were published in *Pravda* and *Izvestia* on September 17, 1987. We share Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar's wish that all members of the Security Council give every support to efficient activities of the UN. 'A friend in need is a friend indeed', says the proverb, and the UN needs friends now.

The world is one. The encouraging progress which can be noticed in measures of immediate security — in disarmament — has not reflected in eliminating the roots of violence, the structural inequality. We have not found sufficient solutions to the situation of the developing countries.

A common feature in the problems of East and West, North and South is that we see more clearly common action as a prerequisite for their solution. Or, the other way round, we realise that solutions cannot be achieved by single, unconnected measures.

This fact is clearly exemplified in the work of the Socialist International. Both aspects were simultaneously brought forth in the latest Council meeting in Dakar. The UN special session on development and disarmament, which convened just before the Socialist International meeting, created special chances for that.

Progress in disarmament does not only release economical resources but

also lays a foundation for a broader understanding, a wiser use of intellectual resources.

2. I had the honour to be an invited guest at the 70th anniversary festivities of the Great October Revolution in Moscow. It was an event that did not only emphasise the history of the Soviet Union but also created a new dialogue, the full importance of which is still too early to assess.

A wide range of political parties and movements were represented. The discussions between the two main streams of the labour movement, the Social Democrats and the Communists, were frank and opened new perspectives. The active participation of many member-parties of the organisation I represent, the Socialist International, became an important step in enlarging relations.

One of the first decrees of the Soviet regime, the Lenin Decree on Peace, contains the nucleus of the foreign policy doctrine of the Soviet Union. The ideas presented in it were naturally aimed in the first place at finishing the war, but the principles of relations between the peoples have endured. The value of cooperation based on equality is naturally emphasised when a tangle of problems cannot be solved by one-sided action. This is the situation today even more than 70 years ago.

3. Predicting is difficult, particularly predicting the future, said one of our politicians. I would therefore rather answer the question of what I want the coming year to look like, what kind of future I want to work for.

I hope that the process of disarmament which has begun with great expectations will lead to notable extension, especially with regard to nuclear weapons. At the same time we must secure that disarmament in one section does not lead to growth of armament in other sections. Work for nuclear-free zones is of essential value in this respect. Extension of the arms race to space or, more emphatically, to naval areas must be prevented. I see the activity of people against the arms race as important and adding to the pressure for disarmament.

I see multilateral consultation as the only possibility to dissolve the structural inequalities between the North and the South. I support all measures aimed at increased efficiency of the United Nations.

It is my opinion that one channel in this work is the Socialist International, which has considerably increased contacts with ideas and partners.

'Peace and bread' is still an attractive plan of action.

Salvador Clotas

Secretary, Federal Committee, Spanish Socialist Workers' Party
(SSWP)

Alejandro Sercas

Secretary, SSWP Federal Committee

1. Important steps were taken in 1987 along the road of peace and international détente. Positive results were achieved at the talks between the two great powers, the Soviet Union and the United States, in nuclear

arms limitation. We would also like to stress the significance of the Guatemala accords reached by five Latin American countries concerning the establishment of durable and lasting peace in Central America.

As to Spanish politics, we would first of all note the local elections whose outcome was favourable to our party.

Terrorism is one of the more difficult problems of concern to the Spanish people. We were reminded of its gravity by a terrible crime — a bomb explosion in a big supermarket in Barcelona. The bomb, planted by the ETA, the organisation of Basque terrorists, killed innocent people. Terrorism is condemned by different political forces in Spain. Political parties and the government are conducting talks to reach agreement on joint action to solve this acute problem.

2. We hold that the October Revolution which turned 70 in 1987 produced a tremendous impact on the development of Europe and the world.

3. One should hope that 1988 will settle many local and regional conflicts that are still raging — be it the conflict between Iran and Iraq or the situation in the Middle East or in Central America. Their settlement would be of enormous importance for peace and détente.

While on the subject of the international situation as a whole, it is important to stress that the hopes born of the US-Soviet agreement are emerging as a powerful force which is sure to influence subsequent developments. Once change gets under way, it is not easily checked. We are referring to people's innermost sentiments. Hundreds of millions in the East and in the West reject the arms race and yearn for peace. And it will not be difficult to deceive the hopes that have been born. World public opinion will exert a steadily growing influence on the policies of governments.

We trust that the accords reached will not remain in isolation but will be followed up. The levels of nuclear and conventional armaments should be reduced on the basis of verifiable agreements. This will pave the way to genuine peace and make it possible to defuse the confrontation between the blocs.

We believe that 1988 will be marked by a retreat of the conservative forces. Public opinion in the West and in the East is beginning to turn away from conservative ideas.

In our view, the changes under way in the Soviet Union will exert a considerable influence on the international climate. Openness and frank coverage of all that is actually happening make it easier for countries with different political and economic systems to maintain relations. Everywhere, in the East and in the West, ideas of renewal are defeating conservative thinking, and this creates good conditions for closer cooperation of the forces advocating progress and détente.

We are at an important historical juncture. A new leaf is being turned, and we hope that a new and better chapter is beginning.

the party

Torture Did Not Break Them

Prague, December 17, 1987

To the Chief Prosecutor of the Republic of Turkey, Ankara

The Editorial Council of *World Marxist Review*, an international periodical published by 70 communist and workers' parties of different continents, expresses its indignation and protest at the arbitrary and brutal treatment of Haydar Kutlu, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Turkey, and Nihat Sargin, General Secretary of the Workers' Party of Turkey. Upon their voluntary return home from political exile, they were seized, imprisoned and subjected to humiliating interrogation and torture. We demand that our comrades be released immediately and granted all rights enjoyed by the citizens of a modern democratic state, and that the disgraceful ban on communist activities in Turkey be lifted.

L'HUMANITÉ has published a photograph of Haydar Kutlu and Nihat Sargin. It was taken on November 16, 1987, just as they stepped off the plane at Ankara Airport. They were accompanied by a group of communist parliamentarians from West European countries which included Efstratios Korakas, Central Committee member of the Communist Party of Greece and member of the Greek Parliament. Five minutes later, despite the protests of the parliamentarians and of the public that gathered at the airport, the two general secretaries were rudely pushed into a police van and taken to the building of the national security service.

There followed three weeks of anxiety and alarm: neither lawyers nor journalists were allowed to see the prisoners. It turned out that the alarm was well justified: in December, as he emerged from the Procurator's Office to be taken to Ankara's central prison, Nihat Sargin shouted, "We've been tortured!" Their lawyers said that the two prisoners were stripped naked and subjected to electric shock, hosed with ice-cold water, hung by their feet and injected with psychotropic drugs. In violation of the law, the records of the interrogation sessions were not presented to the defence lawyers until the end of December.

The prosecutor of the national security court charged Haydar Kutlu and Nihat Sargin on six criminal counts — establishing illegal organisations, subversive activities and propaganda, maligning the President of the Republic, etc. If found guilty, they may be sentenced to more than 70 years in jail.

Protests against the arrest of the courageous patriots have been spreading in Turkey and abroad. Demands for their release have come

from representatives of the European Parliament, from the public and from political parties in many countries. For example, the CPSU Central Committee has adopted a statement which expresses the Soviet Communists' support for Comrades Haydar Kutlu and Nihat Sargin and solidarity with the struggle of Turkey's Communists and other Left democratic forces.

Shortly before they flew to Ankara, Haydar Kutlu and Nihat Sargin granted an interview to Vladimir Shelepin, a *WMR* staff member. By that time it had been announced that two important decisions had been taken by the leaderships of their parties — that they would merge to form a United Communist Party of Turkey and that both general secretaries would return to Turkey to fight for a legally held constituent congress of the new party and for its right to work in the open.

They were aware of the risk they were taking. They knew, from past experience and from eye-witness accounts, what it meant to be imprisoned in Turkey. Finally, they knew that their health was not all that robust. But in the interview that follows, nothing indicates fear — only a quiet confidence that their cause is just and a desire to present objectively some of the lessons their parties learned on their way to unity.

Unity Is Now Real

Haydar Kutlu — General Secretary,
Central Committee, Communist Party of
Turkey (CPT)

Nihat Sargin — General Secretary,
Workers' Party of Turkey (WPT)

The announcement that your two parties have decided to merge has been widely welcomed in the communist movement. Could you tell us how and on what basis you found a way to unity?

Nihat Sargin. Let me begin with what may be a little-known fact. General Chairperson Behice Boran of the Workers' Party (she died in October 1987) has been a member of the Communist Party for the past 46 years, while Comrade Kutlu and several of his co-workers have been fighting in the WPT's ranks too since their young years. Since its foundation in 1920, the CPT has acted in the open for only two years. The Workers' Party, established during the period of relative democracy in the early 1960s, enabled many Communists to work in more or less normal conditions.

When the WPT was banned in 1971 after a military coup, the Communist Party expanded its vigorous clandestine activities. But over the decade of legitimate work, our party, too, had acquired a membership base and a sphere of influence of its own. After the general amnesty of 1974, the WPT again operated in the open. So there were two parties working at the same time, one in the open and the other underground, up to the military coup of September 1980, when both were banned.

It follows that the existence of our two parties, the WPT and the CPT, is not rooted in any rift or profound ideological differences. The two have always been close, and unification has been an item on our agenda since the mid-1970s. But the first bilateral protocol was initiated only in April 1980. It stated that both parties would work together on the basis of Marxism-Leninism, proletarian internationalism and working class interests.

At that time we agreed that our leaders should meet every two or three months, but these plans were frustrated by yet another coup. Nevertheless, our cooperation expanded and, in 1982, was also joined by the Socialist Workers' Party. In 1983 the question of WPT-CPT unity was raised not only in political but also in organisational terms, and a vigorous search for ways to that objective was launched.

We came to agreement on four major points — a common name, a common programme, a common charter and a common leadership. The fact that each party reiterated its recognition of the other as a Marxist-Leninist party guided by the principles of proletarian internationalism helped a great deal. The support of our joint efforts by sister parties was also valuable but it took time to finalise everything.

The impression is that we are actually dealing with a reorganisation of a single party which adopted a different name as a cover, to be able to work in the open.

Haydar Kutlu. That is a wrong impression. There have always been historical ties between the CPT and the WPT, but they have been two different parties, each with its own record. I would like to emphasise this point again: it is a merger of two equal sister parties, not an incorporation of one into the other.

Did you differ on tactical questions and in your assessments of the specific conditions of struggle — that is, within the framework of your common Marxist-Leninist ideology?

Nihat Sargin. Of course we did, otherwise the search for unity would not have taken so much time and effort. But I believe that the differences were precisely over specific questions of our struggle, over our assessment of specific events or situations. When the leaders of both parties criticised each other, they always tried to do that in a responsible and careful way. Those who favoured a different approach and refused to observe this condition which was adopted by a majority either resigned from the party or were expelled.

Haydar Kutlu. This does not mean that expulsions were widespread. As for the character of the differences, let me cite an example. After the military coup of 1980 the WPT described the new regime as fascist while the CPT did not. But that was no obstacle to our joint struggle against it.

Looking back at the path we have traversed, I would note first of all that when we met for talks, each side was profoundly aware that there was no alternative to unity. Our two parties analysed the causes of the defeat

democracy suffered as a result of the coup. We concluded that much of the blame should be put on Left disunity. If we had not been so disunited, it would not have been so easy for those who attacked democracy to succeed.

We assessed our record self-critically, and we condemned ideological and political sectarianism. Besides, each party was familiar with examples of how easily divisions often appeared and how the fragmentation of the Marxist forces aggravated trends leading to Left disunity. It was a logical imperative, it was our duty to unite. And, since this unity was to be based on a Marxist-Leninist platform, all other differences or disagreements had to be set aside.

Secondly, we have decided not to discuss the important but quite complicated issue of which party is now the vanguard of Turkey's working class. Neither the CPT nor the WPT claims to be such a vanguard — either in mutual discussions or in contacts with other Left parties.

Nihat Sargin. The vanguard role is to be asserted by practical action, not by declarations.

Haydar Kutlu. Thirdly, serious obstacles which are hard to surmount usually appear when a process of unification begins with abstract discussions of principles. At that level, one side may describe something as 'white' and the other as 'black', and agreement proves virtually impossible. Conversely, we have taken up urgent and topical issues of the present-day situation and our struggle. We have turned to facts which are obvious to each of the partners.

That attitude has led our parties to see the necessity of reviewing their thinking. We have taken a hard look at the realities and become better aware of the fact that conditions have changed both in Turkey and on the world scene. The 27th Congress of the CPSU showed us new perspectives, helped us to define the method of our creative search, and made us bolder. New thinking became an organic need with us as a result of our own experience and, proceeding from this new thinking, we are working on a strategic programme of the future United Communist Party of Turkey.

Nihat Sargin. Our draft programme has been published, and it is really new and novel. It is not an updated and expanded document of the WPT and the CPT, of the kind that used to be released in the past. It is not an eclectic conglomerate featuring both parties' previous policy guidelines. It is a modern strategy jointly elaborated on the basis of new thinking.

Haydar Kutlu. And so today we can say with confidence that unity has been achieved at a higher ideological level. Significantly, the objectives and tasks set in the programme imply cooperation between the Communists and other forces. We have opened our draft programme for discussion with them.

The record shows that divisions usually occur at turning points of history. Our country has now reached such a turning point. However, instead of division we have found our way to unity. We see the merger of the Communist Party of Turkey and the Workers' Party of Turkey on the basis of a new programme and strategy as modest evidence of the fact that the progressive forces are not fated to be fragmented and weakened at history's turning points.

Nihat Sargin. There is another conclusion one can draw from our experience, and I think it will be useful to others too. It is that the unification process has its own logic. Comrade Kutlu has noted that we began with the more clear and simple questions and set aside those problems which we could not resolve at the time. That was how we gradually inched forward. Then, looking back, we realised that the degree of closeness and understanding we had reached made it possible to resolve problems which were previously stumbling blocks for us. That was the method which enabled us to overcome the obstacles we encountered on the way to unification.

There are several other progressive, revolutionary parties in Turkey which do not assert their allegiance to Marxist-Leninist ideology. Voices are sometimes raised maintaining that it is possible for the Communists to attain unity — including organisational unity — with such forces. What is your opinion on this score, both in general terms and in relation to Turkey?

Haydar Kutlu. Sister parties in different countries are now looking for ways leading to unity. Creative search comes natural to Communists. But we prefer a unity built on a firm ideological foundation. To the Communists, that is Marxism-Leninism. At the same time, many of its theoretical precepts are acquiring a new meaning, while others recede to the background.

I think, for example, that fundamental concepts such as the recognition of the historical role of the working class, the necessity for it to take power together with all working people, or Lenin's concept of the party have not changed. But would it be right to pose the question in the following way: if you advocate a dictatorship of the proletariat, we can join forces, and if you don't, we cannot? An attitude like that will hardly help one advance towards unity. We do not use this term in our new programme.

Another basic problem concerns cooperation with non-Marxist forces and the fundamental tasks for such cooperation at the present stage. For us, these basic tasks are peace and the democratic renewal of our country, and they are organically interconnected. We hold that with most of our allies for peace, we can also cooperate for democracy and social progress. However, we do not think it necessary to draw up a rigid model which, today, would determine the concrete stages we are to go through and decree with whom and how far we can travel together at each stage. This also refers to the future: we see no use in mechanically dividing the integral revolutionary process into different stages, into two or more revolutions.

I think it is also important to recognise that we do not necessarily have to have differences with the Social Democrats at all stages — except, perhaps, in the final stage, in the struggle for socialism. But prior to that, as we tackle general democratic tasks, there are no fundamental differences between us, although we believe we are bound to act more substantially and consistently than others. Our new party strategy includes an alternative programme for solving some basic tasks already at the capitalist

stage. If we can now agree with the Social Democrats on these tasks, why should we refrain from that?

Another stereotype we have abandoned is the previous practices of drawing up a programme which proceeds from the question of what we want to destroy. Now we develop our policy by first asking ourselves what we want to create.

People throughout the broad political spectrum of Turkey, both on the Left and on the Right, say openly that it is abnormal for military regimes to come to power every ten years. The demand now is for democracy with all its institutions and features. The press writes about the Kurdish problem, although previously 'Kurd' was a taboo word, and quotes our statements. Legalisation of the Communist Party is now being debated even more vigorously than it was when there was more democracy. On the other hand, the government wants Turkey to become a full-fledged member of the Common Market — something that makes the ban on communist activities a handicap.

The government is aware that democratic sentiment is growing and it is trying to control and check this process and weaken the opposition movement. And so it is necessary to take the initiative away from the authorities and make them take a clear-cut position, to show whether they are for democracy, for enabling the Communists to operate in the open. That is why our two parties have decided, after thoroughly considering all the risks, that their general secretaries return to Turkey.

Thank you, comrades, for an interesting interview. Let me say again that we admire your courageous decision.

Haydar Kutlu. I would like to repeat what was said on behalf of both our parties to the participants in the international meeting held in Moscow during the celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution. We have no illusions about this move resulting in an easy victory. It is an act of struggle. We are confident that all forces of democracy and progress will support us.

Grassroots Experience

Backing Slogans With Action

Batmunhiyn Ligden — CC member,
Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party,
editor-in-chief, party journal *Namyn*
Amdral

ONE of the key questions in party-building is to increase the role of grassroots organisations and to make them more energetic and combative: they constitute the political core of work collectives, which play the decisive part in fulfilling the tasks set by the party, create material, cultural and intellectual values and help to a large extent to shape the personality and his or her attitudes in life. However, the work of grassroots organisations is far from always up to the mark and the 19th MPRP Congress (1986) formulated the task of improving and invigorating it. What has been accomplished in the year and a half since then?

Primary organisations cannot be energised overnight: this process gains momentum along with the growth and strengthening of the party itself. Direct contacts between the Central Committee and the grassroots are now becoming day-to-day practice. The CC regularly hears reports of primary organisation secretaries, which sometimes become the starting point for drafting and adopting documents of importance to the whole party. The aimak, community and district party committees have diversified their direction of primary organisations and made it more efficient. There are many new aspects in the activities of the primary organisations themselves; for instance, party committees are less and less duplicating the functions of administrative and economic management bodies.

Grassroots organisations have begun to play a more meaningful role in new recruitment. The 19th Congress amended the MPRP Rules and the primary organisations now take decisions on accepting new members or on expulsions by a two-thirds majority of the Communists present at a given meeting. Party members of at least three years' standing have the right to give recommendation for enrolment. All these measures are intended to keep up the quality of membership. Today workers account for 33.2 per cent of the more than 90,000 party members, cooperative farmers for 16.8 per cent and office workers and intellectuals for 50 per cent, and the task is to increase the share of the working class and the cooperated peasants.

The opinion of the primary organisation counts when decisions are taken on promotions, dismissals, encouragement, bonuses and awards, choice of workers to be sent to institutions of learning, etc. Character references issued to Communists are discussed in primary organisations as well, and party meetings hear reports of bureau members and of officials, economic managers and leaders of public organisations.

We continue our coverage of the work of primary organisations of fraternal parties (see *WMR* Nos. 6, 11, 12, 1987). This is a summary of an article received by the *WMR* delegation at the meeting of editors of party journals from socialist countries in Zakopane, Poland.

Grassroots organisations generate a great deal of new experience. For instance, party members are given one-off assignments related to specific tasks facing their work collectives at the moment. When party meetings are prepared, the party bureau takes a fortnight to a month to poll members of the work collective, including non-party people, on questions on the agenda and to draw general conclusions from their views.

Reviews of party work are organised to discuss on the basis of concrete figures, in a matter-of-fact way, its positive and negative aspects, while the bureau of the primary organisation evaluates its own performance, as it were. The latest such review in Ulan Bator covered 93.2 per cent of the primary party organisations in industry, economic management, the communal economy and culture. Half the organisations which took part evaluated their work as good, 29 per cent as satisfactory and 21 per cent as unsatisfactory. This practice stimulates a creative search for new forms of activity.

The 1987 election campaign highlighted a marked growth of the Communists' activity. Altogether 93 per cent of the party members attended the election meetings and one-third of them took the floor. Some of the organisations nominated two Communists to be secretary of the party bureau. Multiple-candidacy elections were not ordered from on high but were the result of grassroots initiative. We consider them an important step in extending democracy in party life.

Factual criticism of ministers and other economic managers and party leaders that was voiced in the election campaign and drawbacks and shortcomings in their work were examined and analysed by the Central Committee, which instructed the central and local bodies concerned to take urgent measures to rectify them and to introduce all the useful proposals put forward by Communists.

An atmosphere of exactingness, efficiency and a principled approach is now taking shape in the aimak, community, district and primary party organisations. But that is just a good beginning while far-reaching qualitative transformations are still to be achieved. The 19th MPRP Congress noted that the present situation made it necessary to evolve new forms of party leadership of the public life and to restructure the entire style of party work. It can be summarised as a turn from paper-shuffling to practice, from sloganising to practical deeds.

When Communists take these principles to heart, the results are not long in coming, as shows the story of the Darkhan state farm on the virgin lands in the north of Mongolia. The higher-up MPRP committee recommended Uldiyn Bavuu to the post of secretary of the primary party organisation of the farm. The farm had operated in the red for 20 years and there was a need for a party worker who knew farming, the problems of farmers and their way of life. Bavuu fitted the ticket perfectly: a herdsman's son, he began his work career at 17, first at a grain elevator and then as a tractor driver; he had also finished the correspondence course of an agricultural institute.

The new secretary realised that he could not provide political leadership without a detailed knowledge of the situation in production and began by examining with the activists' assistance the state of affairs on the farm.

They sought first-hand information, so to speak, talking to shopfloor and office workers and technicians in all the sectors of the farm. Grassroots proposals were generalised and presented for discussion at an open party meeting.

The Communists drew up for the management a broad programme which they thought would help the farm break the negative trend. To begin with, they gave up mouldboard ploughs, which caused soil erosion, bought new technology, introduced advanced methods and started retraining courses for farm machine operators. The farm went into seed-growing, stock-breeding and fine-fleece sheep-breeding.

All these innovations took time and effort, of course, and people had to revise their thinking patterns too. The primary organisation provided ideological guidance for the restructuring processes. Party members explained why the plans had to be carried out urgently and strove to make every worker aware of his or her responsibility. Non-party farmers contributed to the formulation of all the practical decisions that concerned the workers' interests. Much importance was attached to the placement of personnel: Communists were given the more complex and responsible jobs. The bureau regularly heard their reports and gave them practical assistance.

Social problems, primarily those of health care and communal services, began to be tackled in a new way under the influence of the party organisation and its secretary. The Communists concentrated on the young people. Until recently many young people used to migrate to cities with their cinemas, theatres, cafes and discotheques. The situation changed when the farm had opened facilities of its own: young people are drifting back from the cities and newcomers move to the farm from other parts of the country.

If not just the party as a whole but every primary organisation makes man with his needs, thoughts and concerns the centre of its activity, it will be a success and its initiatives will enjoy understanding and support. Proof is the Darkhan farm: it is largely thanks to efficient party guidance that the farm is now doing well and earning good profits, thus being able to pay handsome wages and to make people's lives more interesting and meaningful.

The Communists and Youth

Who Are They Going To Follow?

Ginette Despretz — youth section of the CC, French Communist Party (PCF)

FRANCE has 12 million young people aged from 10 to 24. The bourgeoisie seeks to remodel French society beginning with them. The holders of capital who govern France would wish the young people to be submissive

and, if possible, to participate in attempts to reverse social development. It is not only a matter of putting into question the social and democratic gains the working people, the Democrats and all the progressive men and women have made in their struggle; they also renounce values, like solidarity and hopes for justice, equality and progress for everybody, that have developed in the course of that struggle. Such ideas are obstacles to the efforts to preserve their capitalist system, now in crisis. Instead the bourgeoisie would prefer the young people to adopt its own creed: 'Every man for himself. Might is right. And the weakest, the unfortunate and the destitute had better lie low!'

Opinion polls conducted in France show that the *younger generation is in a state of profound anxiety* created by the abyss existing between the necessities and possibilities of our epoch, on the one hand, and the situation the younger generation finds itself in, on the other. Their anxiety is growing all the more as the young witness (and often fall victim of) the retrograde policies. They respond to the situation with bitterness and sometimes even despondency. Their behaviour is affected by fear of the problems and doubts about the possibility of extricating themselves from the crisis. Meanwhile their aspiration towards peace, justice, brotherhood, equality, their rejection of practices that are characteristic of politicians and their magnanimous inclinations — all these underpin their resistance to the projects of the big bourgeoisie and serve to support those who have decided to embark upon the road of unity and struggle for the sake of a better future in keeping with their aspirations.

The fate of the entire popular movement in our country is at stake today. Either the big bourgeoisie will succeed in imposing on the young people, who will be the working class of tomorrow, its own projects (and even in making them propagandise the latter among the working people) or it will become possible to enlist millions of young people in the struggle to change the existing situation.

Employment of the young plays a decisive role in the mechanism of remodelling French society to conform with the objectives of the big bourgeoisie. The capitalists need workers in those production and non-production sectors that they consider profitable from the financial point of view. Their intentions and hopes are obvious — for them the employees should be obedient, inexpensive, exploitable and easily dismissible as soon as the opportunity of raising profit prompts the businessmen to invest their capital elsewhere. Furthermore, they dream of wedding the young people to their aim of augmenting their profits.

The French big proprietors know how difficult it is to impose this on the generations of the working people who have, in struggle, won the rights and guarantees obstructing the establishment of new forms of exploitation. With typical cynicism they have taken into account and made use of the young people's anxiety in the face of unemployment and also weakening class consciousness and the waning influence of progressive ideas, which became manifest in the general shift to the right.

The employment policy for young people pursued by the bourgeoisie is one of the main instruments of cutting wages, making jobs precarious and eroding the social gains of the working people. By confronting the adults

with the young at every enterprise, big capital also seeks to divide their ranks.

This policy had disastrous effects upon the young people. At present more than 900,000 unemployed in the country are under 25, with women accounting for 54 per cent of them. Every other unemployed person comes from a working class family. In the period from 1975 to 1985 the number of unemployed young people trebled. More than 600,000 get no financial support whatsoever. Of nearly 900,000 school graduates in 1984-1985 a mere 26 per cent have stable employment, whereas more than 40 per cent are jobless. According to the 1985 data, 70 per cent of the French from 15 to 19 were resigned to temporary employment and 30 per cent of those from 20 to 24 were in the same position.

Like the employment policy, the education system is at the disposal of the big bourgeoisie in remodelling French society. After all every other French citizen from 15 to 24 is a student. For a number of years now we have had schooling 'at different speeds', so to speak. The conclusion made in respect of this device by a competent commission of the OECD is particularly appalling: "The French education system is characterised by a considerable number of lagging students. It seems to be motivated not so much for education as for selection . . ." This selection is made above all on the social basis: half the working class schoolchildren repeat every class already in primary school, the corresponding figure for children of superior classes is one-tenth.

Failures in studies have a strong effect on the *development of consciousness and personality among young people*. Since childhood their attitude to education differs from that of their parents. In the past education was thought to be necessary because 'to become adult, one has to learn a craft'. The view today is that 'one won't make it without education because there isn't room for everybody in our society'. This vision of life, in which there are those who make it and even greater numbers of those who don't is born of the reality of this society in crisis. This is the breeding ground for the 'go-getter' mentality, which rather than encouraging striving after success, persuades millions of people that they will never make it and that they should resign themselves to their fate. Under the circumstances many tend to conclude that failure in studies was due to, say, lack of ability, oblivious of the primordial role played by *social inequality*.

Human consciousness takes shape very early and the age from eleven to thirteen is decisive from this point of view. The ideas that youngsters form of themselves and of society on the basis of their knowledge and experience gained at school are of paramount importance. 'Values' that impregnate our educational system and television, beyond doubt, largely impede the quest for the true path. That is why big capital has launched its efforts to organise society 'at different speeds' at precisely the school level. Educational establishments are being turned into a formidable instrument of reproduction and aggravation of inequality, transmitting from one generation to another ideas and behavioural standards of the dominant class to the exclusion of everything else.

For millions of young boys and girls coming from the mass of the people

to be 'flunked' out of school carries not only the stigma of failure in studies but also of social failure. They develop a feeling that from now on they will be constrained in their life. Quite a few conclude: 'I have no abilities' or 'I've never had a chance'. Others try to assert themselves through nihilism, drugs and delinquency. These phenomena have spread in the past few years. Drug addiction has become especially widespread among adolescents and children, which automatically leads the poorest of them to delinquency as the means of obtaining their needs. But there also are many who feel wrath and a sense of profound injustice.

The attitude of the young people to social and political problems merits deep analysis and exploration. The big bourgeoisie makes great efforts to pass its concepts and its class objectives on to their children both individually and collectively. The situation is quite different with the young workers. A very negative trend appeared in the seventies by which the influence of the working class and its organisations on the shaping and social consciousness of the younger generation was gradually effaced.

Besides, school with its longer tuition period and its isolation from social reality has also made its contribution. Together with television, the system of education promoted the dissemination of the ideological values that the bourgeoisie wants the young people to adopt. The ideas of the 'disappearance' of the working class and of waning class struggle have also had their effect. Under the common left programme the revolutionary movement (engaged in the politics of the top-level union with the Socialist Party) let its ties with the working people's daily life weaken. The Socialists taught the people to renounce the demands they used to make in the past. The wide spread of the 'go-getter' mentality sapped the influence of the ideas of working class emancipation through collective struggle, giving way to dreams of personal emancipation to be attained through strong willpower and diligent studies or by being smarter or less scrupulous than others.

Another element affecting the shaping of the younger generation is its *political experience*. The young people neither have as scanty experience nor gain it as belatedly as is generally thought. They want to find their bearings with respect to the experience of the preceding generations. For those who are today between fifteen and twenty that means the generation which saw the turbulent events of May-June 1968 — those who faced the impasse of the common left programme and the disillusionments of 1981-1986. Small wonder that the young people are distrustful of politics as such and doubtful of the possibility of finding a way out of the crisis and of building a new life.

Seeking to perpetuate its rule, the bourgeoisie bends over backwards to divert the young people from the socialist perspective. Their opinion of Soviet reality and the socialist countries and the situation of their peers in these countries has become a crucial target of class struggle. Television, radio and the press, including the youth press, and school curricula all create a false image of socialism — its economic failures, its 'gulag', its aggressive policy, its young people oppressed by the power, to which inert and outdated leaders cling.

Naturally, the echo of important changes in the Soviet Union and the

activity of Mikhail Gorbachov in the interests of peace and disarmament, and his personal image compared with that of Ronald Reagan, trigger a positive change in the picture of socialist society. But the young people remain deeply susceptible to the continuous flow of anti-Soviet campaigns.

The results of constant pressure of anti-communist, anti-Soviet ideology are superimposed on the ignorance of millions of young Frenchmen in the world of labour and in the activities and initiatives of the working people's organisations and on the conclusions that the young may draw from the experience of the older generations. It is in this context that *relations between the young people and the workers' movement, the Communists* should be viewed. In the majority of cases the young people are ignorant of what our party does and proposes. Their opinion of the French Communist Party is based on what they are told. At the same time an appreciable number of them associate the word 'Communist' with the ideas of generosity and solidarity, to which they themselves are attached. Hence their conflicting feelings about us.

Real opportunities exist for improving relations between the Party and the young people. For years on end politicians of every hue have been trying to persuade the young people that 'in the name of freedom and progress' they have to resign themselves to precarious jobs, 'flexible' employment, élitism and 'go-getter' ideology. Nevertheless in growing numbers the young people become aware of glaring differences between the objectives proclaimed by the authorities and their actions.

The growing participation of young workers in militant movements, their indignation over full or partial unemployment and over-exploitation, the protest and demands of secondary and high school students in the course of powerful actions are the characteristics of the recent period. They attest to the mounting potential of the popular movement.

Our youth does not shirk social activity. On the contrary, hundreds of thousands engage in projects of humanitarian aid and in defending human rights at educational establishments and residential areas. Tens of thousands of young people, primarily from among the secondary school students, have come out, together with the French Communist Youth Movement, for the liberation of Nelson Mandela and for sanctions against South Africa's racist regime.

The young people are pretty hard on politicians and politics as such, condemning above all anti-democratic and immoral politicoes, which is one of the aspects of our society in crisis. For the most part they tend to cast reprobation on all the political parties and politicians without exception. But the essential reason for this confusion lies in their ignorance of what we are and what we propose. Should we Communists who advocate a different, new approach to exercising politics be appalled by this? Numerous successes made by the French Communist Youth Movement, its growing ranks and the affiliation of young people with our party demonstrate the possibilities for changing our image among the young people.

Some were stupefied to discover that demands made at universities and lycées in November-December 1986 against selection, injustices and police violence largely coincided with the proposals, ideas and values advocated

by the Communists. Even the young people who initiated those demands were ignorant of this fact. Isn't this another confirmation of the fact that by countering the movement imposed upon society by the forces of capital we uphold the aspirations and hopes of the people?

Taking into account the real possibilities to change for the better relations between the French Communist Party and the young people and seeking to promote their mass involvement in joint action against the policy pursued by the big bourgeoisie and for social transformation, the party Central Committee has called on all the Communists to *turn resolutely towards the younger generation*. It is necessary to launch political and ideological work among the young people (proceeding from the problems they face, including those of their future) as well as among the people at large, focusing general attention on youth problems.

Equipped with facts, we tell the young Frenchmen: "Neither you nor your parents are to blame for what is happening to you. You are suffering not because you are young or have not had a chance. Your difficulties are the result of the choices made by those who amass fortunes while we lead a hard life and have precarious futures. This country has money, know-how and great material and manpower resources. There are means to adapt schools to the requirements of our day, to develop French industry, to create jobs, to work differently — with good qualifications and real use to society and to lead a better life, happy and free. But in the existing system the money is the king and capital dominates everything. Your life and that of your parents are being sacrificed to it. You consider it unjust and revolt. So do we. It is for this reason that we are Communists and want to change the existing system."

We are not content with telling the young people who demand today sound vocational training, stable employment and decent living conditions that the solution lies in changing society, in socialism. We invite them *to act today*, to resist right-wing policy, to offer an alternative to it.

The Communists side with the young people in their struggle for peace and disarmament, against starvation and backwardness, and for international cooperation, solidarity, freedom and human rights. The world without arms and wars — this is the problem of direct concern for millions of young people. They know, too, that the very survival of mankind is at stake and that the French military budget far exceeds the country's spending on education. Many already take part in the initiatives for disarmament and for stopping nuclear tests.

Showing solidarity with other nations and their young people, the Communists strive to encourage all lofty initiatives. We promote the interaction of people of goodwill and also all concrete steps that might frustrate those who would like to starve the peoples, those who encroach upon their independence and freedom. The French Communist Party seeks to create everywhere conditions for the young people to express forcefully and effectively their protest against the violation of human rights in France and other countries. The Communists are with the young people in opposing racism, all forms of discrimination and the scandalous government projects with regard to a reform of the nationality code. The aspirations and values which inspire the young people coincide with the

aspirations and ideals that have always been pivotal to our own activity. They lie at the heart of the identity of the Communist Party, which has consistently fought for the development of the personality, for respect for and extension of individual and collective rights, for a new world in greater harmony with the principles of justice, fraternity and humanism.

In their daily struggle the young people wonder not only about the reasons for the present-day situation in France and the rest of the world but also about their future. They ask themselves: 'What sort of society do we need to be happy and to live a life worthy of our time?' Our answer is again as follows: "*Socialism is the future. It is worth being fought for.* It is a modern response to the problems of our time. Socialism French style, as we see it in the light of problems facing the country today, is the building of a new society in accordance with our great ideals of liberty and fraternity." We tell the young people that 'go-getter' ideology is in fact prehistorical ideology. One cannot be a success if one attacks another or has no greater ideal than to crush other people. On the contrary, one will make it only by uniting with others to build a society of justice, equality and solidarity. This is a modern attitude, just like it is a modern road that we propose to take — the road of uniting the majority of the people. To transform society, it is necessary to defeat those who profit from the existing order of things and those who serve it. And to attain this, it is necessary to unite and fight, to organise and to engage in policy-making. As distinct from politicoes, we have to take concrete, resolute and effective actions to thwart plans of the adversaries of progress and to unite forces for victory. This is what we need.

Efforts are needed to turn the party towards the young people. It is a matter of *persevering work* envisaging vigorous activity in all directions rather than of a sudden impulse. With this aim in view the PCF Central Committee decided to place at the disposal of every grassroots party organisation the paper *l'Huma* from 15 to 25 put out in 750,000 copies five times a year. We offer active support to the publications of the French Communist Youth Movement and to those of the Union of Communist Students. Meetings will be held directly at lycées and faculties of different universities to discuss educational, economic and other problems.

The Central Committee has called on the entire party to turn to the young people. Much is at stake now. It is a matter of the future of the working class, the popular movement and society, the future of France.

Learning Lessons And Righting The Wrongs

Francisco Frutos — member of the
Executive Committee and Secretariat,
Communist Party of Spain (CPS)

Over the past decade the CPS has gone through many trials, like a steep decline in the membership and the popular vote, a shrinking influence in parliament, infighting and divisions. Could you review the more important milestones on the way you have travelled and use the party's self-critical examination to get at the objective and subjective roots of these things?

THE Communist Party has indeed been through a rough patch as the nation has taken a long time changing over from Franco's dictatorship to a democratic regime. The present generations of Spanish Communists have spent nearly all their lives working underground, a fact which left its mark on their inner-party work. Quite often the analyses and practical conclusions they made had a superstructural nature as it were, taking no stock of everyday realities.

To illustrate, the party was convinced that the dictatorship in Spain would be swept away by a social and political struggle, which would in turn produce radical changes and a democratic explosion, as we then used to call it. Our hopes were for an interim government, which would subsequently form a constituent parliament and offer a forward-looking programme to the people. But what happened was that Franco was not brought down but peacefully laid to rest, while the ruling quarters were busy finding a replacement for him.

Instead of thinking how to maintain our political, social and cultural influence with the people (it had dimensions other than our electoral performance — in the first elections in 1977 the Communist Party won only 9.2 per cent of the vote) the emphasis was placed on a policy from on high. The CPS tried hard to portray itself as a moderate and certainly not a combative party, as shown by its suggestion of a government of 'concentration of forces'. This fairly disarmed many Communists and working people with left sympathies. All the while the power structure had been working to form a two-party system, initially staking on the right and later on the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (SSWP), which, they knew well, would balk at fighting the capitalist system.

Inside the CPS this leadership policy led to first serious clashes, which made themselves felt at the Ninth Congress in April 1978. These were followed by much friction and a split within the United Socialist Party of Catalonia. The infighting went on and did not subside until the 11th

Francisco Frutos talked about some problems of the past, present, and future of the communist movement in Spain with Arias Papantimos, *WMR* staff member and member of the Communist Party of Greece, shortly before the 12th CPS Congress in February 1988.

Congress in December 1983. Still earlier we parted company with Ignacio Gallego.¹

The objective and subjective reasons for all that happened might be summed up this way: a misguided examination of the class struggle in Spain; the overrating of the actually organised elements among the people; and too much reliance on alliances with the right quarters which paraded themselves as democracy champions. The idea at that time was to take these forces in tow as it were, hoping that they would readily follow the Communist Party's lead.

The party took pains to self-critically explore the situation, devising new ways to plan, discuss and project our policy. This raised objections from former CPS General Secretary Santiago Carrillo, and he left the party. We believe that things have become clearer now, but we have yet to contend with our organisational and electoral shortcomings left behind by the crisis.

What is the outlook for the communist movement in Spain? Will it be able to regain much of the popular trust it has lost and reaffirm the principles of democratic centralism in internal party matters?

We are taking a realistic view of the future, tinged with moderate optimism. We are not hoping for some fantastic leap ahead but believe that the party will be gradually getting stronger. As we see it, our advancement hinges on across-the-board consolidation on the left. One contributing factor are the efforts of the United Left coalition, which includes the Communist Party of Spain, the Communist Party of the Peoples of Spain, and two small socialist-oriented parties.

It is also our view that the party can get stronger only in parallel with the mass movements. Unless our work among such movements is well organised and politically relevant, no declarations of our best intentions will be any good. Over the past three years the CPS has woken up to this fact. It is now prominent in the peace and disarmament campaign and active in all worker actions against the government's economic and social policy. We are doing a lot to advance international solidarity with national and social liberation fighters, particularly in Chile, Nicaragua, South Africa, and the Middle East.

The Communist Party of Spain and the United Left are gaining increasing confidence among working class voters. The documents submitted for consideration by the present 12th Congress stress the need to restore communist unity to resist attacks by the conservatives and gain new ground.

For over a year and a half now we have been working within the United Left coalition, facing no great obstacles in framing programmes and policies. Our plans are to set up a central commission to work out organisational and ideological unification principles as well as a commission to keep in touch with all areas and provinces to settle particular issues. Characteristically, many communist organisations in the provinces are working hand in glove.

Our idea of democratic centralism is a broad and free discussion of any subjects and problems. Decisions are taken unanimously, if possible, or by

a majority vote, with subsequent concerted action indispensable to see them through.

How do you see democratic centralism principles working out in practice, supposing, if reunited, the party will have members with differing ideological views?

I think we could work together provided we stick by the democratic principle of absolute freedom of views, agree that all Communists should work in concert as one party within the society, and take stock of the debilitating divisions of the past. Of course we realise that any organisation consists of people and there may be problems. This is also so with ideological differences.

Just one example. Among newcomers to the CPS in 1986 were Enrique Lister, Spanish communist movement veteran and legendary Civil War army leader, and his followers. His theoretical views are more radical than those of most people in the party leadership. And still he is on the CPS Central Committee, and many people lend an ear to what he says.

I think it pointless to carry one's arguments to the extremes of saying things like, 'I am a Leninist and you are not'. We should also avoid splitting hairs about which term is the truly correct one: proletarian internationalism or international solidarity. The really important thing is the practical message these two notions are putting across.

No one questions the role of Marxism and Leninism in advancing the cause of the communist parties and the international working class movement. We want no more rhetorical exchanges. Only practical efforts in carrying through a truly communist policy will show if we have actual ideological differences. There is no denying that there may be conflicting views within the CPS leadership as well. What is vital is that our discussions be open and our decisions taken in a democratic way.

Some people in our movement say that communist work suffers in any one country with a strong social democracy. Things in Spain and Greece are very much the same in this respect: both here and there the Socialists are in office and project a policy of social reform. What is the significance of the SSWP as seen by the Spanish Communists?

True, wherever there are strong social democratic parties, in power or not, the Communists have a worse deal. Not infrequently the gains of their policies are claimed by someone else. It seems that the masses of working people think the Socialists a more 'useful' party, better qualified to fight the right; they also believe that its policy of reform will not provoke a sharp reaction from imperialism, especially in the US.

The Spanish Socialist Workers' Party has always sought to minimise communist influence. It has been successful in wooing over to its responsible positions many former communist party members who gave a fine account of themselves in the underground and who had much experience in various areas of public life. There certainly are honest people among them who believe that their SSWP membership might help them

better advance the working people's interests, but there are plain self-seekers who sided with the ruling party in search of perquisites and social prestige.

The SSWP has been outspoken in its criticism of the Communist Party, especially in the election campaigns. Its leaders are not fussy about resorting to political and personal insults. They are given wide exposure by the media, while we Communists have a most hard time getting access to it. My impression is, therefore, that no matter how well we occasionally get to the root of some particular problem we have difficulty getting across to the people voting left. Barring this, I think this is the reason some of our voters sided with the Socialists who got 8.8 million votes in the last parliamentary election.

It is for this reason that I think it advisable, if at all possible, to avoid engaging the Socialist Party in big polemical battles. Our chief priority is to censure concrete actions by the Socialists, where they are actually to blame, and show the people that such actions derive from the overall social-democratic policy.

There is yet another problem equally acute for us Spaniards and you Greeks. I refer to the two-party system. The SSWP has been constantly warning that the only alternative to their tenure is a right-wing regime. Naturally enough this is causing a spontaneous popular swing to the Socialists.

When the policy of the Socialists is falling out of step with their election promises their influence starts to wane. There emerges a real threat of a conservative tide. How can we prevent the Right exploiting the ground ceded by the Socialists?

What we need most is to correctly and timely inform the ordinary people about our economic, social and cultural matters; we should work with the young people and join all big popular actions. And we should do so every day, for the three weeks or so of election campaigning will not win us back the hoped-for voters we have already lost.

We well realise that far from all the voters the Socialists have been losing will come over to our side. Hence the idea of the United Left coalition, which is open to people with divergent political views — Communists, Socialists, and generally people with progressive ideas. The coalition is promoting a strategic programme of concerted action. It has been started to join the election contention for seats in the national parliament and in the local governments. But aside from that, the coalition's objective is to help consolidate the left forces, being a focus of attraction as it were. Already the alliance has been joined by the Party of Socialist Action, which has split away from the SSWP. We see formation of a broad unity alliance as the most correct policy.

At the time the CPS and its leaders were much wedded to Eurocommunism, Santiago Carrillo often said things critical of the socialist countries and some communist parties. They were made a lot of by the bourgeois media. It is fair to say that they told in some

measure on the ideological fight by the Greek Communists, too. I assume that parties in other countries had to face the same difficulties. How does the CPS see such things now? What principles does it think should guide the relations among communist and workers' parties, now and in the future?

In his speeches in Greece, the FRG, France and other countries Santiago Carrillo voiced his conviction that policy may be formulated from 'on high'. It was his view that in Spain the Communists would be quick to make tremendous gains, unlike other communist parties which took years to make only marginal advances, and even gave ground in some areas. And he taught others which policy was the best for them, without trying to put his own house in order.

We suffered a series of setbacks. While in the 1979 elections the Communists polled 10.8 per cent of the vote, their 1982 vote plummeted to a mere four per cent. The party was hit by a severe crisis, as its membership plunged from 200,000 to the current 70,000. We now think that Carrillo's policy, specifically subjectivistic attacks on the socialist countries and fraternal parties, did much damage to the communist positions at home, too. Rather than teaching and censuring others in terms of abstract liberalism we should be doing things better in our own country.

From our bitter experience we have also drawn lessons on international contacts. Here is one example typical of our new attitude. Until recently we have been practically out of touch with our comrades in Portugal. Then a delegation led by Alvaro Cunhal came over here for several get-togethers and mass rallies in Madrid and Barcelona. Soon after a Spanish delegation led by Gerardo Iglesias came to Portugal and was greeted by rallies in Lisbon and Porto. This is the way to restore relations, by meeting one another halfway.

Following its 11th Congress the CPS has gone a long way towards establishing candid, fraternal relations with other communist and workers' parties, based on mutual respect and independence; such relations should exist among people with a common historical objective — building socialism and communism. Whatever frictions we may have they should not be a source of alienation. No one party has the monopoly on truth. We have our own views of many problems and we willingly compare them with the views of others.

The Communist Party of Spain thinks a lot of the current fundamental changes in the Soviet Union. They were promoted by the need to overcome a definite stagnation, which tarnished in some measure the prestige socialism enjoys, among others, within the masses of working people in capitalist countries. In its home and foreign policy the CPSU is facing up to the most formidable challenges. Allegations that perestroika is bringing back capitalism in the USSR are but malicious propaganda. On the contrary, socialism is growing stronger, using the new opportunities to eradicate the shortcomings which held back its economic, social and political advancement.

After the Moscow celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, which brought together many parties and movements, many rank-and-file Communists in our and other countries have been pressing for moves to better coordinate efforts by the communist parties and jointly consider the peace campaign and other topical issues. What does the CPS think of it?

We do not think one should be afraid of multilateral conferences. In preparing for such representative meetings the emphasis must be on consideration of concrete issues. We can doubtless work out a general policy on issues like disarmament, the impoverishment of Third World nations, violations of working people's social and economic rights, etc., given our largely similar views of them.

Many political forces are getting together and organise, like the Christian Democratic International, the Socialist International, and the Conservative International. Why can't we Communists set up a forum to discuss our concerns in an atmosphere of full equality and mutual respect? The only unfortunate aspect of such a meeting could be the absence of big parties, like the Communist Party of China.

¹ Between 1984 and 1987 General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Peoples of Spain, now its Chairman — *Ed.*

A New Impetus To The Policy Of Reform

The Chinese Press About The 13th National Congress Of The CPC

The Communist Party of China held its 13th National Congress in Beijing from October 25 to November 1, 1987. It was attended by 1,953 delegates representing the CPC's 43.6 million members and 2.4 million candidate members. The following survey of the CPC press reflects the issues discussed at the congress and the decisions adopted.

NEWSPAPERS and periodicals in the People's Republic of China continue their examination of Chinese society's creative tasks and problems in the light of the guidelines drawn up by the 13th National Congress. They turn to the Central Committee's report *Advance Along the Road of Socialism With Chinese Characteristics* which was presented by

Zhao Ziyang, at that time acting General Secretary of the CPC Central Committee and subsequently elected to that post at the First Plenary Session of the 13th CPC Central Committee (in November 1987). The report analyses China's record over the past nine years — a period marked by a policy of comprehensive reform and change aimed at the nation's modernisation.

The *Renmin Ribao* daily cites examples highlighting the major socio-economic changes that have occurred in China over these years:

— Food and clothing are no longer a problem for the overwhelming majority of China's population of one billion. In many areas people have become more prosperous, and things have improved in those where this goal has not been secured fully.

— Job opportunities have expanded. In the cities, 70 million jobs have been created, while in rural areas the mushrooming of village and township enterprises has enabled 80 million peasants to shift fully or partly from farming to industry.

— Market supplies have improved substantially. China has basically put an end to acute and long-lasting shortages of consumer goods.

— Serious imbalances in the national economy have been reduced noticeably, and it has gradually been set on a course of coordinated development.

These accomplishments, the Chinese press notes, would have been impossible without the enormous amount of work done by the party in the political field, in ideology, culture, national defence and foreign policy. Explaining the documents adopted at the congress and stressing the gains that have been secured, *Renmin Ribao* says:

"... Political stability and unity have been consolidated and developed, thanks to the proper handling of social contradictions, prompt elimination of 'Left' and 'Right' interference, firm commitment to the four cardinal principles¹, and dedication to economic development and reform. There has been a marked turn for the better in public order. The struggle against bourgeois liberalisation has raised people's consciousness and added to the experience of opposing wrong ideologies through education by positive examples and through appropriate criticism, not through political campaigns.

"— Socialist democracy and a socialist legal system are gradually gaining ground. A system of socialist laws based on China's Constitution is taking shape. The people have become increasingly involved in political affairs. The patriotic United Front has expanded as never before. The system of multiparty² cooperation and consultation under the leadership of the Communist Party has been functioning effectively. The fraternal unity of China's ethnic groups has grown stronger.

"— Major progress has been made in the shaping of a socialist culture. Education in ideals, ethics and legality is a nationwide drive. Education, science, culture, art, the press, the publishing industry, health care and sports are flourishing.

"— A strategic change has been made in the ideology guiding the efforts to build national defence. Army reform has scored major successes. The armed forces have been reduced by one million servicemen.

“— In accordance with the principle ‘one country, two systems’ China has reached agreements with Britain on Xianggang (Hong Kong) and with Portugal on Aomen (Macao). Guided by this principle, China will strive for a peaceful settlement of the question of Taiwan as well. History will prove that the idea of ‘one country, two systems’ and its application are a great accomplishment of the Chinese nation’s political thought.

“— In the light of the international situation and the need to modernise China, the pattern of the nation’s foreign affairs and the party’s external relations has been readjusted. An independent foreign policy of opposing hegemonism and working to preserve world peace has been developed. China now has more friends around the world than ever before.”

The Chinese press focuses on the definition offered in the report to describe the current phase of China’s development. “The almost 40 years of experience accumulated by People’s China,” *Renmin Ribao* says in a commentary, “prove that a clear understanding of the present historical stage of Chinese society is of prime importance for building socialism.”

The CPC forum provided a clear-cut definition: *China is now in the primary stage of socialism*. The press views this statement from two angles. First, Chinese society is a socialist society, and China must firmly keep to the socialist road and never deviate from it. Second, China’s socialist society is still in its primary stage. The nation should proceed from this reality instead of trying to jump over it. The CPC holds that under the specific historical conditions of China, to believe that the Chinese people cannot take the socialist road without first going through the stage of fully developed capitalism is to take a mechanistic view of the revolution. That is the main cognitive root of Right mistakes. On the other hand, to believe that it is possible to jump over the primary stage of socialism in which the productive forces are to be highly developed is to take a utopian attitude to the revolution. That is the main cognitive root of Left mistakes.

The periodical *Hong Qi* stresses the assessment of China’s historical record as stated at the 13th National Congress: China used to be a big semi-colonial, semi-feudal country. For more than 100 years since the mid-nineteenth century, repeated trials of strength between various political forces occurred. Finally, a democratic revolution of a new type triumphed. This proved, the CPC maintains, that the capitalist road was a blind alley for China. The only way out was to follow the Communist Party, overthrow the reactionary rule of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucracy-ridden capitalism, and embark upon the socialist road.

“However,” the periodical continues, “precisely because our socialism emerged from the womb of a semi-colonial, semi-feudal society with the productive forces lagging far behind those of the developed socialist countries, we are destined to go through a very long primary stage. We are yet to complete industrialisation and to accomplish the commercialisation, socialisation and modernisation of the economy — something many other countries have achieved under capitalist conditions.

“Now that socialism has been developing in China for more than three decades, a socialist economic system based on public ownership of the means of production and a socialist political system of people’s democratic dictatorship have been established. The guiding role of Marxism in the

realm of ideology has been affirmed. In effect, the system of exploitation and the exploiting classes have been abolished. However, the economic infrastructure is still weak, and China's per capita GNP is still among the world's lowest."

The concept of the primary stage of socialism as formulated in the report of the CPC Central Committee to the 13th National Congress provides the theoretical basis of far-reaching course, says *Renmin Ribao* in an article entitled 'The Theory of the Primary Stage of Socialism in China is of Great Importance for Building Socialism with Chinese Characteristics'. In this connection the party has set forth the following six tasks.

First, to concentrate on modernisation. The fundamental task of a socialist society is to expand the productive forces. Helping their development should become the point of departure in the consideration of all problems and the basic criterion for judging the work of the Chinese Communists.

Second, to persist in a comprehensive reform. Socialism is a society that advances through reform. In the primary stage, and at present in particular, reform in China is an urgent historical necessity because the development of the productive forces has been seriously hampered by the rigid structure that was built up over the years.

Third, to firmly pursue the policy of expanding external ties. Now that international economic relations are becoming increasingly close, no country can possibly advance behind closed doors. When a country has only a poor foundation on which to build socialism, it is especially necessary for it to develop economic and technological exchange and cooperation with other countries and to assimilate the achievements of civilisation the world over so as to gradually close the gap between it and the developed countries.

Fourth, to vigorously develop a planned commodity economy with public ownership playing the dominant role. A fully developed commodity economy is an essential stage of socio-economic progress. So far as ownership and distribution are concerned, 'perfect purity' and egalitarianism are by no means necessary in a socialist society. In the primary stage it is particularly important to develop diverse sectors of the economy, provided that public ownership remains dominant; to have diverse forms of distribution, provided that distribution according to the work performed is the principal form; and, with the objective of common prosperity in mind, to encourage some people to become well-off ahead of others through honest work and lawful business operations.

Fifth, to enhance political democracy on the basis of stability and unity. A high degree of democracy, a comprehensive legal system, a stable social environment and correct handling of the contradictions among the people are a must in a socialist society.

Sixth, to shape an advanced culture based on Marxism. The ideological, ethical, scientific and cultural standards of the whole nation should be raised. China should overcome the narrow mentality and conservative habits of small-scale producers, resist decadent feudal and capitalist ideas, and promote the enthusiasm and creativity of the masses.

"The basic line of our party during this stage," *Renmin Ribao* notes, "is

to lead the multinational people of China in a united and intensive effort to turn China into a prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced and modern country by making economic development our central task, adhering to the four cardinal principles, and persevering in reform and in the expansion of external ties."

Following the popular saying that 'the past offers lessons for the future,' the Chinese Communists analysed their comparatively recent historical experience. It is noted that along with useful discoveries and major successes, the road the party has traversed has taken many twists and turns, and this has cost it dear.

Beginning in the late 1950s, *the CPC Central Committee says in its report*, under the influence of Left mistakes we were too impatient for quick results and sought absolute perfection, believing that we could dramatically expand the productive forces by relying simply on our subjective will and on mass campaigns, and that the broader the scale and the higher the level of socialist ownership, the better. For many years we relegated the task of expanding the productive forces to a position of secondary importance and continued to 'take class struggle as the key link' after the socialist transformation was basically completed. Many things which fettered the growth of the productive forces and which were not inherently socialist, or were applicable only under certain particular historical conditions were regarded as 'socialist principles' to be adhered to. Conversely, many things which, under socialist conditions, were favourable to the growth of the productive forces and to the commercialisation, socialisation and modernisation of production were dubbed 'restoration of capitalism' to be opposed. As a consequence, a structure of ownership evolved in which undue emphasis was placed on a single form of ownership, and a rigid economic structure took shape, along with a corresponding political structure based on overcentralisation of power. All this seriously hampered the development of the productive forces and of the socialist commodity economy.

It is noted in the documents adopted at the congress that in the final analysis, 'without reform of the political structure, reform of the economic structure cannot succeed' and that 'the process of developing a socialist commodity economy should also involve the building of a socialist democracy'. In order to reform the political structure, *Hong Qi* says, socialist democracy should be combined with Chinese characteristics. The system of the people's congresses, the system of multiparty cooperation and political consultation under the leadership of the Communist Party, and the principle of democratic centralism in the adoption and prompt implementation of decisions are the characteristics and advantages of China. China should not abandon them or introduce the Western system of separating the three powers (legislative, executive and judiciary) and of different parties ruling the country in turn.

The party press lists the following aspects of the effort to reform the political structure: separating the functions of party and government; delegating power to the lower levels, reforming government organs; reforming the personnel system; establishing a system of consultation and dialogue with the public; improving the systems of socialist democracy; and

strengthening the socialist legal system.

Zhao Ziyang described the first of these aspects as the "key to reforming the political structure". The party must conduct its activities within the limits prescribed by China's Constitution and laws, ensuring that the organs of state power exercise their functions to the full. The party should respect mass organisations, enterprises and institutions and not monopolise the conduct of their affairs. The principal method by which the party exercises political leadership in state affairs is as follows: through legal procedures, what the party advocates becomes the will of the state, and the people are mobilised by the party organisations and the good example of party members to implement the party's line, principles and policies.

The party is also restructuring its own ranks. Strengthening the party's collective leadership and democratic centralism should start with the Central Committee, *Renmin Ribao* says. Specifically, there should be a system of regular reports to the Political Bureau of the Central Committee by its Standing Committee and to the plenary sessions of the Central Committee by the Political Bureau. The Central Committee should hold its plenary sessions more frequently so that it can play a bigger role in collective decision-making. Local party organisations should also improve the conduct of internal party affairs. This calls for reforming the system of elections within the party and for working out explicit provisions to regulate nominating procedures, with more candidates than there are posts to be filled.⁴

The press accords particular attention to the section of the report entitled 'Striving to Win New Victories for Marxism in China'. In it, socialism with Chinese characteristics is defined as the product of integrating the fundamental tenets of Marxism with the modernisation drive in China. *Hong Qi* notes that in theory and in practice — the practice of building socialism in one country, the practice of building it in many countries and the practice of introducing reforms in socialist countries — scientific socialism broadens and deepens the understanding of socialism. In the course of this process, it is only natural for some precepts to be discarded because their historical limitations have made them utopian, and for dogmatic interpretations of Marxism and erroneous views ascribed to it to be rejected.

"Whatever is conducive to the growth of the productive forces," says *Renmin Ribao*, quoting one of the conclusions made at the congress, "is in keeping with the fundamental interests of the people and is therefore needed by socialism and allowed to exist . . . Judging life by abstract principles or utopian models instead of by the growth of the productive forces will only discredit Marxism" . . .

The congress called for encouraging people to explore new paths in practical work ('without comparison between different experiments and contention between different views, our cause will be lifeless') and for adherence to the policy of 'letting a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend' in theoretical research. The congress approved a series of precepts the CPC had developed while deepening its understanding of socialism:

— it is necessary to emancipate the mind, seek truth from facts and take practice as the sole criterion of truth;

— people must take their own road in building socialism in the light of the specific conditions of their own countries;

— there must be a very long primary stage in the building of socialism in a country that is backward economically and culturally;

— the fundamental task for a socialist society is to develop its productive forces and concentrate on modernisation;

— the socialist economy is a planned commodity economy;

— reform is an important motive force for the development of a socialist society;

— opening to the outside world is essential to socialist modernisation;

— an advanced socialist culture is an essential characteristic of a socialist society;

— the reunification of the motherland should be achieved by applying the principle of 'one country, two systems';

— a good work style is vital to the very existence of a ruling party;

— relations with communist parties and other parties¹ in other countries should be developed in line with the principles of independence, complete equality, mutual respect and non-interference in each other's internal affairs;

— peace and development are the key issues of today's world.

Foreign observers note that the highest forum of the Chinese Communists virtually did not tackle any issues of foreign policy. In a brief passage, it merely expressed satisfaction with the Soviet-American agreement in principle on medium- and shorter-range missiles and welcomed the trend towards relaxation of East-West tensions. 'The current international situation is favourable to our socialist modernisation,' *the report to the congress* noted.

The party press emphasises that China will steadfastly continue to pursue its independent foreign policy and to develop relations of friendship and cooperation with all countries on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence.

György Kovacs

¹ They are: 'Keeping to the socialist road and upholding the people's democratic dictatorship, leadership by the Communist Party, Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought'. — *Ed.*

² Aside from the ruling Communist Party of China, there are several bourgeois political parties and groups — the China Democratic League, the China Democratic National Construction Association, the China Zhi Gong Dang, etc. — *Ed.*

³ This principle, advanced by China, implies the coexistence over a certain period of two socio-economic systems (socialism and capitalism) within one state — the People's Republic of China. For example, under the agreement reached between China and Great Britain, the capitalist system will continue to operate in Xianggang for 50 years after China's sovereignty over it is restored in 1997. — *Ed.*

⁴ New procedures were used in the elections of the CPC Central Committee and the CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection at the 13th National Congress: there were 5 per cent more candidates than there were seats for full members of the Central Committee and 12 per cent more candidates than were to be elected as alternate members. The congress incorporated a provision on this procedure and other substantive amendments into the CPC Rules. — *Ed.*

⁵ According to statistics published by *Renmin Ribao*, since its 12th National Congress in 1982, the CPC has established or restored ties with more than 130 political parties abroad. — *Ed.*

FRG

Communists Sound Out Public Opinion

OVER a thousand residents with different social backgrounds in major FRG cities were surveyed by the German Communist Party for their attitudes to the country's political parties. The *Unsere Zeit* newspaper carried a comparative rating of the Communists, Free Democrats and the Greens on the strength of the survey.

One of the findings is that the GCP has more influence than may appear from its showing in parliamentary and municipal elections. Many voters sympathising with it are siding with other parties only because they think the Communists are unable to get over the five per cent barrier. Nearly 60 per cent of the respondents see the Communists as the most able and stalwart champions of workers' rights.

'A party looking for the future' is how most unemployed and 26.4 per cent of the workers described the GCP. Asked whether they see the party as forward-looking and dynamic or torpid, the respondents split nearly equally, with 21.6 per cent of them siding with the former description and 22.2 per cent with the latter. They were far more definite in their attitude to the Greens, as 85 per cent of them said they were dynamic and only 1.7 per cent argued against this.

47 per cent of the respondents said they knew about GCP work from their personal experiences, while only 35.7 per cent said the same about the Greens. Most of the respondents believe that the Communists are active in publicising drawbacks in the provinces, among them the housing problem. 70 per cent of the unemployed in the survey said they knew about the GCP in quite concrete terms. 40 per cent of the respondents said they received GCP propaganda materials like leaflets, newspapers, etc., with respectively 26 and 13.3 per cent saying the same of the Greens and the Free Democrats.

19.5 per cent of those surveyed by and large trust the Communist Party. Over 26 per cent expressed confidence in its activists. Even though this figure for the Greens was a robust 47.7 per cent, only 16.6 per cent of them could name a few of the party's prominent figures. According to 55 per cent of the respondents, the so-called small parties are winning increasing public acceptance.

The survey has confirmed that the GCP is still for most people a working class party and its efforts have a lot showing for them in the provinces and are maintaining popular support for the party.

WMR Introduces

Miloš Jakeš

General Secretary, Central Committee, Communist Party of Czechoslovakia

THE Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia elected Miloš Jakeš its General Secretary at the plenary meeting in December 1987.

Miloš Jakeš was born into a poor peasant family in the Český Krumlov area in August 1922. After graduating from school he was trained in electrical engineering and was employed as an installation worker and then industrial designer at the Svit factory in Gottwaldov. While working on these jobs he completed a course at the Higher School of Industry.

In June 1945, soon after Czechoslovakia was liberated by the Soviet Army, Miloš Jakeš joined the Communist Party. He carried out party functions at the Svit factory, served on the CPCz district and regional committees in Gottwaldov, was active in the youth organisation and was the first secretary of the district and regional committees of the Czechoslovak Union of Youth and a Presidium member and secretary of its Central Committee.

After graduating from the Higher Party School under the CPSU Central Committee, Miloš Jakeš was appointed head of a department in the CPCz Central Committee. In 1961 he was put in charge of the Central Office for the Affairs of National Committees. In 1963 he worked as first deputy chairman of the Central Office for Local Economic Development and in 1966-1968 as deputy Interior Minister in charge of civil administration.

In March 1968 Miloš Jakeš was elected chairman of the CPCz Central Auditing Commission on which he had served since 1966. During the open offensive of the anti-socialist and counter-revolutionary forces he firmly upheld the interests of the party and the people and was active in the drive to overcome the crisis in the party and in society and to clear the backlog of problems.

Miloš Jakeš became a member of the CPCz Central Committee, an alternate member of its Presidium and a Central Committee secretary in 1977, and a full member of the Presidium, a Central Committee Secretary and chairman of the CPCz Central Committee Commission on the National Economy in 1981. He has been a member of the House of the People since 1971 and a Presidium member of Czechoslovakia's Federal Assembly since 1981.

In Brief

AUSTRALIA

THE newspaper *Guardian* published by the Socialist Party of Australia held its festival in one of Sydney's parks. The discussions organised within its framework and the exhibitions mounted focused on the historical experience and new horizons of existing socialism and struggle for peace and for the preclusion of nuclear catastrophe.

COSTA RICA

The plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the People's Vanguard Party of Costa Rica decided to hold the 16th Party Congress from July 22 to 25, 1988. The congress is to discuss the draft of the new Party Programme and the Party Rules and to analyse the present-day situation in the country, international affairs and Central American problems.

FRG

The plenary meeting of the Board of the German Communist Party decided to convene the next (ninth) Party Congress in Frankfurt on the Main from January 6 to 8, 1989.

HUNGARY

The Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party has undertaken another exchange of party cards. Opinions of the current tasks facing the party and every Communist are being openly discussed at personal talks with grassroots organisation members. One of the aims of exchanging party cards is to regulate the party ranks. Those who cannot perform their duties nor want to do so should leave the party of their own accord or on the initiative of their primary organisations.

INDIA

For the first time since 1964, when a split occurred in the communist movement of India, the Communist Party of India and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) held a joint mass meeting in Delhi involving a million people representing all of the country's states and strata of the working people. The participants in the meeting voiced protest against the domestic policy pursued by the present government and demanded its resignation and new parliamentary elections.

ITALY

General Secretary of the Italian Communist Party Alessandro Natta declared that the 'democratic alternative', that is the alliance of all the left-wing progressive forces, first and foremost the Socialists and the Communists, set forth by the Italian Communist Party as a strategic goal to counteract the dominant role of the Christian Democratic Party, was unfeasible today. Deep-going differences exist between the Communists and the Socialists, which have to do with the splitting policy pursued by the latter and also with their collaboration and simultaneous rivalry with the Christian Democrats.

ROMANIA

The national conference of the Romanian Communist Party considered the main tasks facing the party leadership in the economic field. It stressed the need for improving management and planning, for stimulating political, ideological, cultural and educational work by the party among the mass of the people and for resolutely combatting formalism, red tape and suppression of criticism. The resolutions of the conference outlined the key trends and rates of further economic growth.

SPAIN

The newspaper *Nuevo rumbo* published by the Communist Party of the Peoples of Spain held its festival at the Madrid Palace of Sports. Conducted under the mottoes 'Seventy Years of the Great October Socialist Revolution', 'No to US bases in Spain!' and 'No to missiles in Europe!', the festival was attended by delegations from Catalonia, Andalusia and other parts of the country.

TUNISIA

The Tunisian Communist Party and the Progressive Socialist Alliance jointly discussed the situation in the country and reiterated their support for democratic orientation expounded in the statement made by the new Tunisian president on November 7, 1987, and voiced their intent to take part in concretising and deepening that orientation. The two sides expressed their striving to ensure the unity of the left-wing and progressive forces, which are called upon to play an important role in democratic changes.

looking towards the 21st century

Options for Global Economic Development

A Forecaster's Contribution to Polemics

Ferenc Kozma — pro-rector of the
Higher Political School of the Central
Committee, Hungarian Socialist
Worker's Party

THE short 13 years to the end of the century can now be visualised in general outline. The major trends of world economic development have to all purposes coalesced as well. Microelectronics, with one generation of hardware replacing another ever faster, has become the main motive force of technological progress. Biotechnology has made remarkable headway as well. Economic patterns in various countries and regions are likely to be determined by two mutually dependent factors, namely, the intellectual potential and the amount and quality of the available resources. Any shortage of either may cause or further the dependence of economically backward countries.

Turning to the positions of socialism on the international scene, we see that it still carries far less weight in the world economy than in world politics. That imbalance is rooted in history: socialism triumphed mostly in medium- and less-developed countries. At the same time the gap with the more industrialised states is being narrowed far slower than we would like it to because of mistakes, failure to make full use of the potentialities of the new system, and inadequately developed international socialist economic integration.

Around one-third of the world population live in socialist countries. The ratio holds for other comparisons: one-third of the population of the industrialised socialist countries and roughly one-third of the Third World population in less developed socialist (and socialist-oriented) countries. These correlations are unlikely to change significantly till the end of the century.

Labour productivity in the industrialised CMEA member countries is roughly half that in the OECD states, and there is no realistic opportunity to close that gap before the end of this century even if the socialist community does everything it can to intensify and accelerate its economic progress.

Last but not least, the socialist countries' foreign trade today is less than one-tenth of the world commodity turnover and can be expected to rise above the ten per cent level by the 21st century.

Abstractions and Realistic Possibilities

Far-reaching changes in technology and in the world economy in the past 15 years or so have faced socialism with the imperative of speeding up *the pace and modifying the character of its development*, and the ruling communist parties of socialist countries are aware of that need. Tasks have been formulated to accelerate and intensify socio-economic progress. The parties of the less developed socialist states tend to work out and implement policies that would achieve substantial technological progress and economic growth along with the solution of outstanding social problems, such as food, health care and cultural development.

If these plans are accomplished, *the appeal of socialism* to all the peoples will increase. This prospect is quite realistic, although substantial increases in labour productivity and consumption levels are likely to remain on the agenda well into the 21st century. But the peoples of the socialist world can make up for that gap in large measure thanks to the advantages offered by their social system.

Presuming, however, that some industrialised socialist countries fail, for one reason or another, to intensify production and accelerate their socio-economic development in good time and that the socialist countries aspiring to industrialisation do not succeed in devising and putting into reality a model of harmonious economic growth, they may find themselves confronted with *two equally cheerless options*.

First, some individual countries may fall under the influence of capitalist economic and political centres. In that case their unilateral dependence may not necessarily be strong enough to jeopardise the very existence of the socialist system. But even in that eventuality the risk of economic, scientific and technological backwardness remains very real.

Second, a socialist country may be tempted to avoid the adverse influences of capitalist centres by curtailing (or even severing altogether) economic relations with them. In the longer term self-isolation from world technological and trade processes will lead also to backwardness even if every effort is made to accelerate economic and technological progress. Autarky and unilateral dependence therefore will lead to the same outcome.

These two *abstract* visions of the future are not in fact real alternatives to socialist development. Neither can be considered an 'acceptable' option or a 'lesser evil'. Pursuing its interests, socialist society has just one option: *to intensify the national economy, to speed up its growth rates and to carry out reforms to this end in the social sphere and in economic management*. The peoples of a number of socialist countries have already embarked on that road: they clearly understand that there is no other choice because otherwise socialism will lose ground in the world economy and roll back to its periphery.

Changed Alignment of Forces

The alignment of forces in the world economy takes shape under the impact of the clash of *three major groups of contradictions*, those between socialism and capitalism, between the industrialised capitalist and the developing countries, and between the major capitalist centres, the United States, the European Economic Community and Japan. What are the likely developments in that field?

One contingency for the development of relations between *the capitalist centres* is the assertion by the United States of its economic hegemony or its energetic advance towards that goal. Western Europe has markedly slackened its expansion in the 1980s; Japan, though, has made a far better use of the circumstance than the United States. Washington's foreign economic policy has for years been dominated by actions to weaken Western Europe or at least to contain its expansion, but of late Japan seems to have been making far more trouble for America.

North American capital is pushing ahead towards economic hegemony against the strong resistance of its rivals. However, it may turn out differently at some point in the future: Western Europe and Japan, exposed to psychological warfare, the pressure of the military-industrial complex and other factors, may opt for adaptation to the changing situation, i.e., will decide that their efforts to contain US hegemonistic ambitions are futile, too risky and politically hazardous, or too costly.

Another option will be opened by the success of Western Europe and Japan in neutralising these hegemonistic ambitions. That resistance only becomes visible at times of the dramatic aggravation of contradictions and conflicts between the three imperialist centres, and socialism could benefit from divisions in the imperialist front. However, judging from the history of international economic relations since World War II, the tendency for the aggravation of inter-imperialist contradictions prevails only *temporarily* and even that in a very extreme situation. To all appearances, resistance to US economic hegemony will have its ups and downs. It is Japan rather than Western Europe that will tip the scales of fierce competitive struggle.

Two major options, too, can be visualised in relations between *the industrialised capitalist and the developing countries*. One is the perpetuation of neocolonialist machinery, the further development of the system of neocolonialism, and the adaptation of the Third World to a hierarchically organised world economy. The old colonial extra-economic exploitation will then be ultimately supplanted with a system of the international division of labour that will be shaped by transnational capital and its handiwork, the huge foreign indebtedness of the developing countries.

The other option is the establishment of a new international economic order. The Third World countries could then make headway by mobilising domestic resources to promote economic progress, by expanding their domestic markets and by building stronger mutual economic relations with reliance on broad cooperation with the socialist countries. They would then be in a position to press consistently for equivalent commodity

exchanges with leading imperialist powers and for fair solutions to the problems of indebtedness.

The next 15 years are hardly likely to see the latter option, undoubtedly more beneficial to socialism too, prevail in every respect. But one thing is clear: in the years to come resistance to neocolonialism will grow stronger and better organised. It is highly probable that many of those developing countries which for various reasons have not been active in the struggle for a new international economic order or have withdrawn from it will join the anti-imperialist front.

The imbalance of interests in East-West relations that has been growing worse in the capitalist centres and the aggravating inter-imperialist contradictions can be expected to give an edge to the debates over the application of the 'American' or 'West European' strategy of *economic relations with socialist countries*.

The 'American' approach actually boils down to isolating the socialist countries on the world market or even to locking them out of it altogether. They are being denied access to informatics and commercial and financial resources and forced into autarky, i.e., development on the basis of their own resources and science and technology.

The 'West European' approach is different: the monopoly capital of the Old World would like to establish with socialist countries selective relations in the economy, technology and the financial field so as to make them unilaterally dependent. Western Europe hopes to dump on the Eastern markets obsolescent technical information and equipment and thus to make socialism trail behind, and eventually to build a sort of 'drug addiction' situation. It would like to make continuous Western imports a condition for technological progress in the East, for cooperation of the CMEA countries, etc. The 'West European' concept proceeds from the assumption that capitalism will succeed in regulating economic, scientific and technological relations with socialist countries to its own benefit and in furthering the latter's dependence on the West. The imperialist forces do not rule out either the possibility of undermining the socialist world politically and militarily.

We can accept an approach that provides for contacts on the basis of equality and mutual benefit rather than the one designed to isolate socialism.

Both imperialist concepts, incidentally, are a reflection of the hope for strategic errors that one socialist country or another may commit in developing its relations with the world capitalist economy. The 'American' concept, I repeat, forces the socialist community into autarky while the 'West European' concept will deliberately lead the socialist economies up the blind alley of unilateral dependence.

Socialist International Cooperation

In addition to tackling the tasks of internal development, socialism is *vigorously to meet the challenges of the world capitalist economy*. A number of countries have launched programmes speedily and drastically to modernise their economies, to renovate output and technologies, to upgrade the technological standards and to cut back production costs.

These economic and technological policies will eventually give the socialist countries extra edge on the world markets. Priority has been attached to overhauling the system of economic management and to enabling socialist economic enterprises continuously to introduce innovations. Their work collectives are to learn to operate vigorously and independently on the markets, to look far ahead, to take risks and to master the discipline and ethics of cooperation both at home and abroad. Otherwise any plan or concept of modernisation will remain on paper.

New comprehensive tasks outline long-term prospects for mutually beneficial international economic cooperation among socialist states. As regards integration, socialism is making a far from full use of its own specific potentialities. *Its progress will be advanced immeasurably by improvements in regional integration and by internationalisation of specific enterprises.* The CMEA countries have now embarked on that road.

The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance has drawn up and approved a comprehensive programme for scientific and technological progress and a series of other fundamental decisions making it possible to give a new dimension to cooperation, to increase its stabilising effect on the national economies and also to strengthen the world economic positions of socialism. An updated concept of cooperation envisages, for instance, that emphasis in the joint efforts should be shifted to the development of its market and financial mechanisms along with the identification of development goals and the organisation of appropriate coordinating activities. Direct links are being established between individual enterprises in addition to coordination at the macroeconomic level. As a result, *cooperation among the fraternal countries will become part and parcel of a process which will make socialism a dynamic and attractive economic centre.*

The world economic environment will hardly be 'benevolent' for the further progress of socialism in the years to come. Neither should we expect the unchallenged dominance of the forces which would like to deny socialism every possibility to attain its development goals. Those forces, however, will be constantly exerting an adverse effect on the world economy. A certain feedback pattern is taking shape: the economic successes of the socialist countries (among them accelerated technological progress, economic reforms and a brisk pace of integration) are neutralising the adverse effects caused by the steps of the reactionary imperialist forces and detracting from their political foundations. It is these successes that are propelling the capitalist partners into equal cooperation between different social systems. *That is a truly hospitable environment for socialism and its creation depends to a large extent on the quality of socialist economic policy.*

US-Soviet Relations: Confrontation or Cooperation?

Henry Kissinger (USA)

A lively worldwide discussion is on concerning the results of the meeting between Mikhail Gorbachov and Ronald Reagan in the United States and the future of Soviet-American relations. In the United States, different opinions are voiced, from positive to wholly negative. A special place in this spectrum is occupied by Henry Kissinger, a prominent Republican and a former US Secretary of State, who, while a spokesman for quite conservative quarters, holds more realistic views with regard to several important issues. Following is an interview he granted to Stanislav Menshikov, a *WMR* staff member.

How do you see the geopolitical future of the world, the constellation of powers at the beginning of the 21st century?

WE are living in a period in which the traditional relationships among powers are changing crucially. The United States represented 52 per cent of the world's gross product in 1950; at that time we did not have to worry about the balance of power because we were the balance of power. The fundamental American foreign policy problem at that time was to identify a difficulty and overwhelm it with resources. Today the United States represents maybe 20 to 23 per cent of the world's gross product. It is still the largest single economic unit in the world, but confronted now with a totally different set of foreign policy challenges.

At the moment the Soviet Union and the United States are by far the most powerful countries. By the beginning of the 21st century they will still be probably the most powerful countries. But at that point there will be several other countries of growing strength. Japan is clearly moving toward devoting at least 2 per cent of its GNP to military affairs. And since its GNP is growing and since its technology is advanced, by the turn of the century that will give it a considerable military force. From that base they can rapidly expand.

As to China, it depends on how one assesses its reform program. Chances are that it will make progress, so that by the 21st century China will become a more powerful country. India will also be growing in strength, and it is possible that Western Europe will unite. In fact, I believe that it is imperative that Western Europe unite now in the military field in addition to the political and economic field. The real issue is, will Western

Henry Kissinger (b. 1923), a former Harvard professor of international relations, has written several books on US foreign policy. He served as the President's national security adviser from 1969 to 1975 and as Secretary of State from 1973 to 1977. He is now head of Kissinger Associates, a New York-based private consulting agency.

Europe seek its unity in neutralism or in some sense of self-reliance. That the Europeans have to decide.

So by the 21st century we will have five to six power centers in the world, each of them attempting to assert a greater role, at least in their immediate area. If that happens, the kind of global competition that the United States and the Soviet Union have had, where we have been competing in every part of the world, will not make any sense any more, and if, indeed, in the immediate period ahead, the Soviet Union and the United States were to slide, by mistake or by design, into a conflict, they would be exhausting themselves over issues that the evolution of history and of geopolitics may make irrelevant. If present trends in the world continue, if each side keeps encouraging every crisis everywhere and settles none, we run the huge danger that sooner or later something happens like World War I, in which none of the leaders had the slightest intention of producing the consequences that came about.

What is your conclusion as far as the relations between the US and the USSR are concerned?

I believe that the United States and the Soviet Union need to have a fundamental dialogue. I think that some arms control measures can be taken, but the issue of arms limitations is so complicated and creates so many temptations for the negotiators to achieve a unilateral advantage based on special technological knowledge that in the end it will not greatly improve the situation. Sooner or later the USSR and the US must have a political dialogue in which they will try to limit their competition, at least, in areas distant from their borders.

You do not mean an agreement to divide spheres of influence?

No, I do not say that we should divide the world into spheres of influence. But if we could all agree, for example, that neither of us will ship arms into Africa, and neither of us will engage in certain intelligence activities which will have to be defined precisely, then we would have taken one continent out of the military competition. We will still believe in our own ideology and, presumably, we will each make whatever propaganda we think is necessary. You cannot stop the spread of human intelligence, but though I do not think we should divide the world into spheres of interest, we should have sensitivity to special concerns. Close to the borders of each country we should be very careful not to engage in those actions that give the impression that one is trying to gain a military advantage or that one is trying to undermine the other, other than by one's convictions.

I do not want to get into a dispute, but the Middle East is not further from the Soviet Union than Nicaragua is from the US borders. So there must be some measure of closeness.

Yes, but there are also many historical circumstances. In the Middle East the United States has had an historical relationship with Israel and also

with a particular group of other countries. But even there I would agree that we should try not to turn the Middle East into an area from which the Soviet Union should feel threatened.

But how would you consider the spread of the socialist system in the case when a left government comes to power as a result of elections or even as a result of internal revolution? Would that be something that would be considered a menace to the US even if it were not supported by the Soviet Union directly?

No socialist system has come to power by elections, as we conceive them.

Chile is an example of a left government which came to power through the parliamentary procedure, but was overthrown with the help of the US.

We did not like the government that came to power in Chile, any more than the USSR would like a capitalist country established in an area with which you have had a long historical relationship. In fact Allende destroyed himself. We did not destroy Allende no matter what the various sources may claim.¹

We are talking about the future. Suppose this happened again. Would you have to necessarily interfere?

In the future I would take a different view. If a left government in some country came to power not with the help of Soviet intelligence or indirect military support, in a free election, I would probably not like this, but it depends where it is. It is certainly a difficult issue. But in those situations we have two different problems. One is the existence of that government. The second is what that government does. Let me take Nicaragua. If there were not 10,000 Cubans and thousands of other advisers, and Nicaragua did not receive \$500 million a year from the Soviet bloc, then I would have a different view of the Sandinistas than I do in the present situation, where there is a Soviet involvement at the furthest distance in the world where the USSR can be from its borders.²

Does that justify operations conducted to topple foreign regimes the US administration doesn't like? But let us change the subject and talk about nuclear arms. The Soviet Union is committed to a non-nuclear world by the year 2000. Mr Reagan has been speaking about a world free of nuclear arms, but presumably at a later date. What is your view?

I think it an impossible goal. And I hope the Soviet leaders know this, because I would hate to think that they are not realistic. I will explain my point of view. The Soviet Union has a huge territory with eleven time zones. It is impossible to have any assurance that you are not hiding a certain number of nuclear weapons. We would therefore have to analyze

how many weapons the USSR can hide. If the Soviet government were prudent, it would realise that the same could be true in the United States. So for this reason alone we would have to define the minimum number of weapons with which we would be secure as a hedge against violations. Second, there are Israel, India, China, France, Britain, all having nuclear weapons.³

Israel is a nuclear power?

It is generally said that they are a nuclear power. It is not official, but for purposes of arms control you have to assume the worst. I think it would be reckless of the United States and the Soviet Union not to have enough nuclear weapons so that any other nation or group of nations could threaten them. We are therefore back again at what is the minimum number of nuclear weapons we can live with. And this is a discussion I am prepared to see happen.

How do you see the agreement to eliminate intermediate and shorter-range nuclear weapons?

I do not like the INF agreement, but I am going to support its ratifications because we cannot go on forever making agreements, not ratifying them, and spending years of efforts analyzing our problems. As to the INF agreement itself, from the very beginning I did not believe it was in our interest to propose 'double zero', because it was essential to have a link between the defense of Europe and the defense of the US. Also, my view has always been that if we want to zero, it could only be in relation to a substantial conventional disarmament. This has been my unvarying position since 1981. But the Western leaders for some time have had a tendency to make proposals that appeal to their domestic public opinion, and not to any long-term strategy. Nevertheless this is now gone and there is no sense debating it.

Helmut Schmidt has said recently that he does not believe in the Soviet conventional threat, since the quality of arms and military personnel have to be taken into account, not only quantity, when there is a discussion of the balance of conventional forces. What is your view of this issue? Do you agree with Schmidt?

Obviously, the Soviet Union traditionally has reasons to feel insecure. But if it drives its sense of insecurity to the point where it feels safe only if everybody around it is impotent, then it becomes a danger to everybody. So the question is, can we define relative security between the Soviet Union and its neighbours? Some people say it does not matter how many tanks and soldiers the Soviet Union has, because their quality and morale may be no good. I think this is a very reckless, nationalistic argument. Serious people should sit down and analyze how many tanks and soldiers have to be reduced on each side. And what the disproportionate number is

which Gorbachov has agreed you have to reduce, and on that level we could have a serious discussion.

Apart from mutual understanding concerning non-interference in third countries, what other political modus vivendi have you in mind between the Soviet Union and the United States?

There are some issues like world energy, world climate, world environment, in which we certainly have a common interest to cooperate. The fundamental decision we have to make is whether we think that by the year 2000 none of us can outmaneuver the other or that by the year 2000 we have to be in a real equilibrium. If you have a lot of bureaucrats, each strengthening his position unilaterally, the cumulative impact is to create a great sense of insecurity and untrustworthiness. That is the problem.

Your general conclusion? Do you believe in a new détente, a period of good relations, relaxation of tensions?

Good relations with the Soviet Union are possible. They should be based on strict reciprocity, and on a common assessment of the future world situation and of what we want to bring about. We should also put an end to attempts at outmaneuvering each other. This is possible and desirable.

I give Gorbachov high marks for his courage in recognising the dilemmas of his society. But my field is foreign policy, and my question is what should we be asked to be paid in foreign policy currency for what a prudent, courageous Soviet leader needs to do in order to make his country stronger. I confess I do not have the imagination to assume that, if there are no changes in foreign policy, a stronger adversary is necessarily better for us than a weak adversary. I do not want to be misunderstood. I think we should encourage Soviet reform when we can. But our main necessity is to try to bring about a change in the international environment that has caused tension for forty years. If these causes of tension cannot be removed now, I would like somebody to tell me when this is possible.

So we must both develop a concept of where we are going. And it is all the more important because undoubtedly we all in the West will soon face a major economic crisis when the neglects of the last decades will become evident and the markets will not solve them. It will require some act of coherent leadership that restores confidence and a sense of direction. So this is our necessity — with the world balance changing, major internal changes occurring everywhere. And we must not make it too easy for ourselves. There is an American poet who wrote: "We shall not cease from our exploration and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time".

An Editorial Comment. Henry Kissinger touched upon several important issues of Soviet-American relations, arms limitation, etc. To present the Soviet view of these questions, let us quote briefly from Mikhail Gorbachov's statement at the press conference in Washington on

December 10, 1987⁴, from his book *Perestroika. New Thinking for Our Country and the World*⁵ and his article 'Reality and Guarantees of a Secure World'.⁶

From the Statement by Mikhail Gorbachov at the Press Conference in Washington

"We can talk about a deepening political dialogue between the leaders of the Soviet Union and of the United States. Today the President and I issued a top-level Joint Soviet-American Statement . . . Summing up this *conceptual part* of our joint statement, I could say that at the highest level of our two states, it has been recognised that they are now emerging from the long period of confrontation, that they are really to leave it behind.

"You will agree that this is an important political result and an important political statement . . . That is the essence of the transition to a new phase in Soviet-American relations . . .

"*The work which had been going on for many years to prepare a treaty eliminating intermediate- and shorter-range missiles on a global basis was completed* in the course of the visit . . . Now that this has been done, now that signatures have been affixed to that instrument on behalf of the peoples of our two countries, we can speak about a major event, a history-making event, I would say. We can speak of a great success achieved through joint constructive effort . . . The percentages do not really matter. What does matter is that we have opened up a new phase in the real process of nuclear disarmament . . . So we can sincerely congratulate each other on having taken the first step toward a nuclear-free world."

From the article 'Reality and Guarantees of a Secure World':

"Unconditional observance of the United Nations Charter and of the right of peoples to sovereignty, choose the roads and forms of their development, revolutionary or evolutionary; is imperative for universal security. This also applies to the right of maintaining a social status quo which is exclusively an internal matter. Any attempts, direct or indirect, to influence the development of countries 'other than our own', to interfere in such development should be ruled out. Attempts to destabilize existing governments from outside are just as inadmissible . . .

"Recently, Soviet and American scientists have specially studied the issue of the relationship between strategic stability and the size of nuclear arsenals. They have arrived at the unanimous conclusion that 95 per cent of all US and Soviet nuclear arms can be eliminated without stability being disrupted. This is a devastating argument against the 'nuclear deterrence' strategy, the source of a mad logic. We believe that the 5 per cent should not be retained either. And then the stability will acquire a different quality . . .

"The question of a mechanism to prevent the outbreak of a nuclear conflict is more complex. Here I am approaching the most sensitive point of the idea of all-embracing security: much will have to be reappraised, rethought and improved. In any case, the international community should work out agreed measures to deal with possible violations of, or attempts

to violate, the all-embracing agreement on the non-use and elimination of nuclear arms. As to potential nuclear piracy, it appears possible and necessary to consider it in advance and prepare collective measures to prevent it.

"... While thinking of advancing towards a nuclear weapon-free world it is essential to see to it even now that security be ensured in the process of disarmament, at each of its stages, and to think not only about that, but also to come to agreement on mechanisms for maintaining peace at drastically reduced levels of *non-nuclear armaments*.

"All these questions were part of the proposals for establishing a system of international peace and security set forth jointly by the USSR and other socialist countries at the United Nations."

From the book *Perestroika. New Thinking for Our Country and the World*

"In the West they talk about inequalities and imbalances. That's right, there are imbalances and asymmetries in some kinds of armaments and armed forces on both sides in Europe, caused by historical, geographical and other factors. We stand for eliminating the inequality existing in some areas, but not through a build-up by those who lag behind but through a reduction by those who are ahead . . .

"We believe that armaments should be reduced to the level of reasonable sufficiency, that is, a level necessary for strictly defensive purposes. It is time the two military alliances amended their strategic concepts to gear them more to the aims of defence. Every apartment in the 'European home' has the right to protect itself against burglars, but it must do so without destroying its neighbours' property."

¹ Hearings held in the US Congress in 1976-1977 showed that the CIA was active in operations to discredit the Allende government and to finance anti-government activities in Chile. — *Ed.*

² The presence of experts from socialist countries in Nicaragua is mostly connected with the assistance extended to that country in the construction of several food processing and consumer industry projects, port facilities, and with other economic, scientific and technological cooperation programs. The trade and economic blockade of Nicaragua by the United States reduced the US share in the volume of Nicaraguan foreign trade from 30 per cent in 1980 to zero in 1986. Meanwhile, the share of the socialist countries (including Cuba) increased from 1 to 40 per cent and that of Western Europe from 18 to 40 per cent. From 1981 to 1986 the USSR shipped to Nicaragua goods worth more than 700 million roubles (about 120 million roubles annually, or \$170 million at the official exchange rate). — *Ed.*

³ India does not possess nuclear weapons. It conducted a peaceful nuclear explosion in 1974. At the same time, India has not signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty. — *Ed.*

⁴ *Information Bulletin*, No. 3, 1988.

⁵ Mikhail Gorbachov, *Perestroika. New Thinking for Our Country and the World*, Harper and Row, New York, 1987; Collins, London, 1987.

⁶ *Information Bulletin*, No. 22, 1987.

Sharing Benefits Together

A joint Interview by Nuclear Physicists From China, the USA and Japan

Humanity's progress towards the turn of this millenium is something more than a simple movement in time. This is a vast qualitative evolution taking us from industrial to technological society. Today we can no longer live with scientific and technological progress as we have known it for some time now, when things 'bigger' and 'better' were achieved at the expense of nature and mankind and at the unjustified price of a peril to their very existence. A *WMR* staff member has been discussing these problems and the chances of international cooperation in tackling them with Chiyoe Yamanaka of Japan, Director of the Institute of Laser Engineering at Osaka University, Chen Zezun, member of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and Robert L. McCrory of the USA, Director of the Laboratory for Laser Energetics at the University of Rochester.

THE striking industrial advances of the 20th century have been challenging the world with immensely perilous and even disastrous effects. This is so not only in the military but in the civilian sector, too. Some paper-and-pulp operation — and who could question its purely peaceful uses? — can harm man and the environment no less than some chemical weapons like Agent Orange. Or acid rain. And what about nuclear energy? People know, and not just from hearsay, that this fascinating discovery of our century can heal and kill, create and destroy, provide life-giving heat and light or unleash the all-consuming conflagration of nuclear war. How can we secure only its peaceful uses to the exclusion of all others?

Ch. Yamanaka. Coming from a nation which is the world's only one scarred by the atomic bomb, I'd like to say that military nuclear power is a monstrous mass destruction weapon and should be outlawed. We should be pressing for moves to make it non-existent at all. My research pursues the peaceful uses of atomic power. This is both a scientific and a social choice.

R. L. McCrory. I think that most people hope that the one thing the world does not want to do is to build more nuclear weapons. I think we all want to find a way to reduce the numbers of warheads. My country does, Mr Gorbachov does.

But peaceful uses of nuclear energy are no guarantee in themselves against accidents, like those at civilian nuclear power plants. What happened at Chernobyl in the Soviet Union in 1986 and earlier in 1979 at the Three Mile Island nuclear plant in Pennsylvania, US, shocked not just the Soviet and American people; it was a common human tragedy.

Appropriately enough, I am thinking back to 'The China

Syndrome' movie US film-makers brought for the International Moscow Film Festival that same year. It was a real blockbuster. Essentially its message was this: if a 'chance' radiation leak at a nuclear plant is so vastly ruinous for all living things, what might deliberate military use of nuclear power do to us all?

R. L. McCrory. What people need is an exclusively peaceful and absolutely safe nuclear power.

But is such an absolute security possible at all? Is it not just another utopia?

Ch. Yamanaka. No, it is not. One single most promising area of research is fusion using the laser, which is one of the things our institute is concerned with. While the commonly used way of getting nuclear power through nuclear fission always carries with it the risk of the process breaking out of control and consequently harming people and everything else, the technique we are working on is absolutely safe. Which is why I think it holds out the most promise.

What is this fusion about?

Ch. Yamanaka. To give you a thumbnail sketch of it, to start fusion the fuel, in this case tritium, obtained from deuterium and lithium, is heated to incredible temperatures under high pressure.

Basically, there are two possible things to set hydrogen isotopes fusion — the tokamak or the laser. We go for the latter.

But there are scientists, though not too many of them, who are experimenting with the military laser. I am talking about science ethics.

Chen Zezun. I believe that the militarisation of space — for certainly you are referring to the SDI or 'star wars' research in the US — is a fallacy. It is far more worthwhile for people to cooperate on peaceful problems.

Ch. Yamanaka. The human mind and the most staggering breakthroughs may have differing uses. The way we employ them is entirely up to us all. The point is to make scientific and technological advances benefit the people.

The SDI architects maintain that their research and development is boosting progress in the civilian industries. The idea is all but critical to scientific and technological progress, which is the vested interest of entire humanity. There are further claims that the priority advancement of the military industry appreciably helps come to grips with unemployment . . .

Ch. Yamanaka. It happens in some cases, but not all the time and everywhere. My view is that things are different in Japan'. Our industry is

churning out lots of consumer goods. This has even led to vast imbalances in our trade with the US and Western Europe . . .

I have already mentioned that my nation was the only one to have suffered from atomic weapons. This is why we have strong anti-war and anti-nuclear sentiments. We are all for exclusively peaceful uses of scientific and technological advances to benefit people's welfare. This is a good area for peaceful competition. I am convinced that this area has a huge potential which has yet to be tapped in our common interests.

But this will require new reliable sources of energy.

Chen Zezun. Look at these telling figures: one gram of thermonuclear fuel releases energy yielded by the burning of ten tons of classical organic fuel, whose resources are not limitless. But lithium and deuterium are plentiful.

R. L. McCrory. I think it's important to mankind to realise why we need fusion. And you can understand this in very simple terms. To survive each person requires about one hundred watts of power continuously. And the way of estimating that is to count how much food you eat — about 2,500 calories in one day. And then if we look at the world's consumption of energy, in the United States each person consumes a hundred times that amount — ten thousand watts. And we all know as the world will come to some industrialised place the quality of life for all the people has to increase, so we can expect that as the civilisation progresses, mankind will require 30 to 40 times this basic hundred watts per capita to have a nice quality of life. And we now have more than five billion people . . . So how do we supply such energy? We know that we will not be able to do it by using oil or coal as a primary source.

There are scientist looking to solar energy to fill the bill.

R. L. McCrory. If we use solar energy, even with the most optimistic projections the solar scientists have, the solar energy can only supply one-third of that necessary energy. So what do we do about the other two thirds? We only have a choice really of going to some form of nuclear power generation or to burning coal. And coal is something that we should not use for several reasons. More deaths have been caused by coal mining certainly than by even the worst nuclear reactor accident. It is a source of carbon dioxide and particular matter in the air which could be very unhealthy for our environment.

The scientists have this warning. The world is now mining, transporting, storing, and using nearly ten billion tons of conventional fuel for energy uses alone. This huge mass, which can burn and explode, is comparable to all our nuclear arms stockpiles. Can you see the threat?

R. L. McCrory. The National Academy of Sciences in the USA reviewed this problem and said, if possible, find a way to avoid consuming more and more fossil fuels. And for that reason then we have two choices — fission

and fusion. Fission may be associated with the proliferation of nuclear weapons. But fusion does not proliferate special nuclear materials, it cannot be used for weapons, and it is a very safe reaction. Until we have it we will be balancing a ping-pong ball on a grapefruit as it were. It is a very tricky business indeed.

What you have said about the inconvertibility of fusion nuclear energy to military uses is very important. Could you predict, within reasonable limits, when nuclear power plants using fusion will make their appearance?

Ch. Yamanaka. Of course, we can only have tentative estimates. Possibly by the middle of the next century or by its 2020s or 2030s at best. This will be a revolution of sorts in science, and mankind will forget about such things as power shortages.

For 40 years or so now scientists have been working to produce a sustained controlled thermonuclear reaction. This might take yet another 50 years, or even more, given the cost of the research. In fact, a modern laboratory boasting laser and other latest technologies roughly costs a billion dollars. Surely not every country could afford such expenses.

Ch. Yamanaka. True, it is crucial for us to cooperate and expand our contacts. It might sound presumptuous, but science belongs to the whole of mankind, and we must cooperate and act together for the sake of a better life for us all and our posterity. Of course I refer only to creative and peaceful ventures. Otherwise mankind would be acting unwisely. The use of science and technology to develop new armaments is intrinsically absurd.

Chen Zezun. My country is a peaceful one. Generally speaking, socialism is essentially peaceable. At its recent 13th Congress, the Communist Party of China stressed that peace and development are the prime goals of our day. Incidentally, China was the first nuclear power to pledge itself not to be the first to use nuclear weapons. Nuclear power should be peaceful and serve humanity rather than destroy it. In going ahead with its ambitious plans for socialist modernisation, creative sweeping reforms, and opening up more and more to the outside world, China will be needing more energy, too. This is why nuclear power engineering is a major concern in China, since by the mid-21st century most of its electricity will be generated by nuclear plants.

Chinese scientists are anxious to be equal to the tasks set by the 13th Party Congress. Among them are, and I quote "an emphasis on developing science, technology and education, to make scientific and technological progress boost the economy . . . and a steady expansion of technological and economic exchange and cooperation".

R. L. McCrory. As a scientist I feel responsible to my country to do the best science we can. And I am a believer in a very strong national defence. Yet this in no way precludes active international cooperation, of which the

European Conference on Laser Interaction with Matter is a good example. It is particularly essential in our field. Many of us exchange scientists between our institutions, among our institutions. We have many exchanges of scientists — from Israel, from Japan, from West Germany and elsewhere. We speak about international collaboration — that's a good thing. But it should not be used as a guise for countries reducing their contribution. We need to pull our weight, financially and intellectually — for this is an area of international opportunity for all of us.

¹ As it happens, in July 1987 Tokyo and Washington signed an intergovernmental agreement on participation by Japanese government and private organisations. This makes Japan the fifth country next to the FRG, Britain, Israel and Italy to have formally joined the SDI. Characteristically, there will be no feedback from the R & D resources Japan is offering the Pentagon, since the agreement rules out SDI technologies' commercial uses, contrary to Tokyo's expectations: the Pentagon will have exclusive rights to these technologies.

exchange of views, discussion

Invitation to a Discussion

Reflecting On The Concept Of The Party

Dimitr Ananiev — Prorector,
Academy of Social Sciences under the
Central Committee of the Bulgarian
Communist Party

THE efficiency of party guidance by decree has now been exhausted in Bulgaria. While previously, at the stage of extensive growth, objective circumstances (post-war dislocation, resistance of the overthrown bourgeoisie, etc.) made it necessary for the BCP to directly administer various spheres of the social fabric (the economy, defence and foreign relations) and the party's decrees, rulings and instructions helped to mobilise the country's material and intellectual resources in the building of socialist society, today both the situation and the tasks have changed. The content, style and methods of leadership by the party change together with

the conditions in which the party operates, together with the tasks it tackles, together with the changes occurring within the party itself.

Bulgarian society is ripe for a democratisation of social relations, for extensive socialist self-government, for a nationwide and comprehensive intensification of economic development on the basis of the scientific and technological revolution. Bulgaria needs a different mode of implementing the leading role of the party. *Indirect influence, not administration by decree* is coming to the fore. This does not mean that the Communist Party is forced to camouflage its leading role or to exercise this function so as not to irritate some quarters. Under socialism, no social forces want the Communists to operate clandestinely, in secret. On the contrary, they must perform their leading role in an atmosphere of greater openness and publicity.

Today, Bulgaria's socialist society commands a well-developed material and intellectual potential and a sizeable body of positive and negative experience that enable it to discharge functions which are organic to socialism, and that includes self-government. A gradual transformation is under way *from government for the people to government by the people*. The accomplishments, the current state of society and the processes occurring in it do not change the essence of the communist party's leading role but affect the forms and methods of its exercise. Here it is important to recall Lenin's words to the effect that "when the situation has changed and different problems have to be solved, we cannot look back and attempt to solve them by yesterday's means. Don't try — you won't succeed!"¹. The maturity, unity and balance of our socialist society have risen so high that they are constantly ousting administration by decree, regimentation and similar methods of management. These are increasingly replaced with the practice of defining strategic objectives, drawing up long-term targets, standards and criteria, and holding discussions. In other words, dialogue methods instead of monologue methods.

Now that the situation has changed, particular importance is attached to the guidelines worked out at the 13th Congress of the BCP (1986), the July Plenary Meeting of the BCP Central Committee (1987), and the 27th Congress of the CPSU (1986) regarding the modern ways of exercising the party's leading role. Let us single out three such methods.

First, the party can resolve new problems successfully *if it is itself in uninterrupted development, free of the 'infallibility' complex, critically assesses the results that have been attained, and clearly sees what has to be done*. Modern methods of leadership by the party are incompatible with the speculative or biased views that the party and its apparatus are guardians of the ultimate truth, that all ideas, intentions and proposals of the party adequately express society's needs and problems, that it and only it holds all the keys to the future. Like other organisations, the party has its share of misconceptions, vacillation, doubts, hesitant moves, utopian notions and illusions. The conclusions it makes are not *a priori* truths. Deduced from practice, they are constantly checked and compared against it. And only those that withstand this rigorous test can claim to be universal.

Second, the importance of the *example of the communist party is*

growing. The word 'example' is used here in its broadest possible sense — as a model, pattern and prototype to be emulated by all in everything. At the decisive juncture we have reached, the need is greater than ever for the party to generate and encourage new ideas, set an example of innovation, act in a principled, businesslike and selfless way, and make increased demands on the cadres and on the style, methods and character of party work.

Third, modern methods of exercising the leading role of the party in Bulgaria accord *priority to the grassroots components of the party*. At the 13th Congress of the BCP Todor Zhikov set forth the fundamental precept that the party's leading role should now be enhanced "not by expanding and strengthening administration by decree but by a more thoroughly and scientifically substantiated and better articulated strategic thrust of the work undertaken by the party's central bodies, through the initiative and independent activity of party bodies and organisations, by taking the views of the working people into careful consideration".²

This fundamental orientation is sure to encourage self-governing activities of Communists and grassroots party organisations and to comprehensively promote their vigorous and creative initiative. Implementation of this guideline will make it possible to free many organisations from tedious routine, from sham efficiency, window dressing, complacency, self-satisfaction and petty regimentation.

In the final analysis, the objective is to elaborate and apply in party work a new content and *new methods of democratic centralism* which would be geared to society's interrelated requirements and given which centralism is democratic and democracy is guaranteed by centralism.

Development of the theoretical concept of the party is essential for mastering these methods. Studies of the party as such have been based for several decades primarily on the research and the conclusions made by Marx, Engels and Lenin. The concept of the party of a new type has stood the test of time. To this day, it underlies the party's political science. Meanwhile, communist parties have traversed a long and difficult path and encountered internal contradictions. Unfortunately, this record has not been covered adequately by social scientists in theoretical studies. True, certain additions have been made, emphases and priorities have been changed, and documentary data has been accumulated. Nonetheless, research has been largely devoted to restatements of the well-known, descriptive accounts of current facts, and apologia of current policies.

We have witnessed genuine scientific quest give way to propaganda, we have seen precepts of party activities canonised and the principles and standards of party leadership treated as dogma and interpreted to suit requirements of transient expediency. All this hampers the development of the theoretical concept of the party. I think that the content, form and depth of the knowledge which are now reflected in the theory of the development of the party need to be reassessed and appraised in the light of today's realities.

The record shows that earlier studies had one major flaw — they were divorced from the realities of party work and of the integral political process. The laws, principles and standards of party activities were studied

in an abstract and idealised way, and their inner contradictions were ignored. The result was a kind of subjective logic 'for internal consumption'. In most cases, it is at odds with the objective logic of actual reality. Negative developments occurring in this or that party were almost invariably explained by 'deviations from laws, principles and standards', and 'restoration' of the latter was recommended as 'the cure'. Why do the laws, principles and standards of party activities become deformed? Do they have any limits? Who is to lay them down definitively and monitor strict compliance with these principles and standards? These questions remain unanswered.

I hold — and this is another aspect of the problem — that studies of this kind are artificially divorced not only from reality but also from the integral party infrastructure, from political and party systems at the national, regional and global level. Although bourgeois ideologists have developed a whole new area of research which includes a branch that studies the phenomenon of the political party, our scholars have virtually closed their eyes to innovative trends of political thought. We have confined our studies of the political party of a new type mostly to a narrow national framework. In examining questions involved in the development of the party, researchers usually reduced the subject mostly to issues of inner party organisation, structure and relations. We have ceased to develop jointly, on the basis of our classical heritage and our experience, the integral Marxist-Leninist concept of the communist party or the more general Marxist-Leninist theory of the political party.

The new political, economic, social and cultural development tasks we will have to tackle in the near future make it urgently necessary to adopt a more profound and adequate understanding of the party's role and a new approach to studying its activities. There is an acute shortage of knowledge of phenomena and developments occurring in the party and in politics. These shortcomings can be rectified only by a drastic improvement in the quality and efficiency of theoretical research into the concept of the party. Conditions are now more favourable than ever for enhancing coordination, joint action and integration, for drawing up a broad strategy of long-term and multifaceted studies dealing with the methodology, methods and practice of the development of the party. Such studies will produce a store of ideas which could be used in the shaping of party development policy and in the drafting of relevant decisions.

Topical for us All

The letter of the Bulgarian scholar was discussed by the *WMR* Commission on Party Experience. The exchange of views is summed up below.

The author of the letter proceeds in his reflections from the rich experience of the Bulgarian Communist Party. The issues he raises, the participants in the discussion noted, are interesting, important, timely and topical for us all. The following issues attracted particular attention:

— the changes in the concept and practice of the leading, vanguard role communist and workers' parties play in contemporary society; the role of

the Marxist-Leninist party in scientifically defining the directions of social progress and in grasping, expressing and defending the interests of the working masses; practice as the test of theory;

- the impact of socio-economic and political change and of change within the communist party itself on the content, style and methods of its work; democratic centralism as the basic principle underlying the operation and activities of communist parties; the correlation between democracy and centralism;

- openness, glasnost and democracy as essential factors for the exercise of the party's vanguard role in the socialist countries; party initiatives to expand and enhance democracy throughout the socialist social fabric, to switch from government for the people to government by the people;

- the example of the party in generating and encouraging new ideas and innovative action to develop the social fabric;

- the priority of the grassroots, primary organisations in exercising the party's leading, vanguard role;

- the causes of distortions in the principles and standards of party activities; the adverse effects of party leadership exercised through administration by decree;

- the need for an integrated study of the experience accumulated in the development of the party; for coordination of relevant research.

The discussion also dealt with the forms of work with young party members and sympathisers, efforts to increase and strengthen party ranks, the party's ties with mass general democratic movements, youth and women's organisations, trade unions and the like. Among other things, the following points were made:

José Arizala (Colombian Communist Party): I think that the part of the letter concerning the lack of progress in the development of the concept of the party is of particular importance. Indeed, many sister parties have gone through serious internal difficulties and conflicts. Researchers have failed to analyse them thoroughly, as if afraid to tackle the subject.

It is important to examine several new phenomena in the life of our parties. For example, in some Latin American and other countries joint involvement in the class struggle has brought the Communists and other sections of the revolutionary forces closer together and, in some cases, resulted in their unification in a single party. These forces also claim the role of the vanguard of the popular masses. These trends towards unification exert a profound and substantial influence on the parties' work and internal activities. In this connection the following questions arise: Should a Marxist-Leninist party merge with other leading revolutionary forces? What should be the ideological and organisational principles of such mergers? How are the principles of democratic centralism to be asserted within such a newly established party? Specifically, will its leadership follow the will of the majority or work through consensus?

Donald Ramotar (People's Progressive Party of Guyana): The letter of the Bulgarian scholar provides a good basis for a fruitful discussion. I would like to say a few words about the passage dealing with administration by decree as a method used by the party to guide socialist development. My impression is that its use at a certain (initial) stage in the

development of socialism was necessary and mandatory, all the more so because this produced positive economic results — say, in the Soviet Union in the 1930s or in post-war Bulgaria. Nevertheless, I believe that administration by decree is, in principle, incompatible with scientific socialism.

Antonio Ribeiro Granja (Brazilian Communist Party): I think the Bulgarian comrade has raised a very important issue — that of democratic centralism. We in Brazil hold that it is impossible to develop the party without performing a concrete analysis of the past and drawing lessons from it. The Brazilian Communist Party had to operate clandestinely for many decades. That period has left a legacy of certain negative habits which we must give up. Apparently, the way the questions raised in the letter are tackled can help our party to correct past mistakes and elaborate the right methods of party work.

Badamyn Lhamsuren (Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party): As we know, the role of the party's ideological and political leadership increases steadily at each new stage of building socialism. The content, forms and methods of work of a ruling communist party change. The Marxist-Leninist concept of the party should be developed, and we should remember that the concept of the party of a new type, of inner party principles and standards has stood the test of time. How do we advance our theory?

Scholars in several countries of the socialist community have not ignored the concept of the party or the science of developing the party. In the MPRP, for example, the practical work of the party and its improvement have been based on Marxist-Leninist principles and standards. Therefore, the objective is to grasp them profoundly and to apply them in the party's day-to-day work. In some cases, the Leninist principles of the party's internal affairs had to be restored.

Currently, the role of the party as the political vanguard of the people is being reappraised, and new methods of its work are being developed to meet new requirements. The competence of party leadership in all fields of social development is improving. The discharge of the vanguard role implies the party's ability to renew its methods of work, pay due and precise attention to the specific historical situation, grasp new tasks and find ways of tackling them.

Lenin taught us an antidogmatic approach to realities, he stressed the need to study them creatively and in depth, to regard social development as a complex clash of contradictions and to resolve them in the interests of the people.

Doung Ngoc Ky (Communist Party of Vietnam): The author of the letter asks whether the communist party can lay claim to the ultimate truth. I am convinced that it should strive to attain it. The sister parties work on the firm basis of Marxism-Leninism which essentially seeks the objective truth. This means that, given its considerable potential, a ruling communist party should develop its programme and political course on a strictly scientific basis.

Unni Krishnan (Communist Party of India): The experience of party development in the socialist countries is very important to Communists in the non-socialist world too.

In studying this experience, we are looking, among other things, for answers to the questions of what conditions produced administration by decree and why these methods were used. Generally, it is clear that a departure from the principles of democratic centralism leads to bureaucratisation, with all the adverse effects and deviations this entails.

So far, the experience in the development of the party has been studied at the national level. We need closer coordination of these studies and involvement of communist parties from both socialist and non-socialist countries.

Rafic Samhoun (Lebanese Communist Party): We are interested in the examination of the principles and standards governing the activities of communist parties in the Third World, where the working class is still small. It appears that we should therefore discuss the role of the party in broad social and political alliances.

Another question is connected with the Leninist principles of party development. The problem is not to recognise them but to translate them into practice in the distinctive conditions of our countries and parties.

Mustafa Azzaoui (Party of Progress and Socialism of Morocco): I think a broader discussion of the practice and record of political alliances is important. At the current historical stage, each party should elaborate its policy independently, with due regard for its distinctive national conditions.

José Lava (Communist Party of the Philippines): If the principles of democratic centralism are understood properly and applied consistently, this guarantees us against serious mistakes in the activities of the party. I am confident that today, too, there is no need to impart a new meaning to the concept of democratic centralism. It is based on both democracy and centralism, on their correct synthesis depending on concrete circumstances.

As far as criticism and self-criticism are concerned, if the implementation of the principles of democratic centralism is coupled with extensive criticism and self-criticism, that is the best remedy against mistakes and errors. I maintain that that is the only way of defeating any trends towards the cult of a personality, of pinpointing its source and resisting its development and spread.

Khalid Hammami (Syrian Communist Party): In examining the role of the communist party as the vanguard of the working class, it is clearly not enough to study only the various methods and forms of its activities. It is also important to discuss the objective and subjective factors involved in party development, specifically the selection, education and appointment of key party cadres. There was good reason for Lenin to warn us against thoughtless reshuffling of our cadres.

Georg Kwiatowski (German Communist Party): The party should be aware of the changes occurring in today's world and in the domestic conditions of struggle, as well as of the changes in the structure of the working class under the impact of the scientific and technological revolution. The conditions under which people live and work are changing, and so are their habits and patterns. This raises the question of the organisational principles the party is to follow in its work. We should check

whether old, traditional methods remain effective in the new situation. It is essential to find new methods of work and to apply them practically. However, we should not only devise new techniques but also preserve all those elements of our experience which have stood the test of practice.

I would like to note that democratisation of a party's internal affairs takes different forms. In this respect, each party should decide independently which new methods it will use to improve its organisational, ideological and political work. I would like to reiterate that we must not discard those Marxist-Leninist principles underlying the activities of the party of a new type which have stood the test of time.

The participants in the discussion concluded that continued *WMR* examination of theoretical and practical issues involved in party development would be useful and help overcome mistakes rooted in the past.

We invite scholars, party activists and all our readers to respond to this article and to answer these and other new questions.

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 173.

² Todor Zhikov, *Introductory Speech at the 13th Congress of the BCP*, Sofia, April 1986, p. 33 (in Bulgarian).

International Economic Security: The Communists' Stand

WMR has sponsored an exchange of views on problems of international economic security. Representatives of several fraternal parties reviewed a broad range of issues, among them causes of the deterioration of the world economic climate, the sources of crisis phenomena in the capitalist economy that threaten the security of individual countries and groups of states, the concept of international economic security and its relationship with the concept of a new international economic order.

The highlights of the discussion are summarised in the review below.

THE drama of the situation in world economic relations today is a direct result of the policy of escalating global tensions that is being pursued by the imperialist powers, first and foremost by the United States. Runaway arms build-ups and the dangerous plans to militarise outer space threaten to distract from the needs of socio-economic development even more resources than has already been thrown into the furnace of the arms race. Imperialist violence, arbitrariness and interference dominate international economic relations and stymie their stable growth. Trade, credit and

technological blockades and discrimination in trade and scientific and technological contacts make it impossible effectively to tap the potential of international economic cooperation.

The imperialist forces are out to put countries and peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America in new shackles of dependence. Those countries are sustaining immense losses in their foreign economic dealings because monopoly capital and transnational corporations hold sway on the anarchic markets and handle most of the commodities supplied by the Third World. The huge foreign indebtedness is a drain on the developing economies, swallowing one-fifth of their aggregate accumulation fund and more than one-third and in many cases even more than half of their export revenue, and also complicates international affairs. The debt burden is fraught with unpredictable social and other upheavals in countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, which are especially vulnerable to the effects of the monetary and financial crisis, the policy of high interest rates, the drain on financial and manpower resources and currency instabilities in the capitalist centres. Hence economic instability in the periphery of the capitalist economy, the participants in the discussion stressed. It is further aggravated by the imperialists' intimidation of sovereign states with their militarist policy.

That is why the efforts of the world community to achieve international economic security are necessary and timely. The idea originated quite some time ago, speakers noted. A relevant resolution¹ passed by the 40th session of the UN General Assembly on the Soviet Union's initiative in 1985 demonstrated anew the keen interest of most of the states in effective measures towards the drastic normalisation of world economic relations.

The approach of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries to problems of international economic security was outlined at the *WMR* meeting by Prof. Ernest Obminsky, a leading Soviet specialist in the field. By the mid-1980s an obvious gap opened between numerous recommendations, plans and programmes for restructuring global economic relations, on the one hand, and real prospects for their implementation, on the other, he noted. The UN, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Communists, the Social Democrats and the general public have more than once voiced their dissatisfaction with the progress achieved so far. International capital, however, has been scuttling initiative after initiative, like the non-aligned countries' programme for a new international economic order (1974), their short-term plan for action in the world economy (1983), attempts to control the operations of transnational corporations or proposals for a round of global talks on the key issues of economic affairs.

Practice has shown, the Soviet scholar continued, that it is pointless to concentrate on just one of the many interrelated problems of the present system of international relations. The need for a comprehensive approach to their solution stems from the growing *interdependence* of today's world. What is meant here is the objective dependence, when no single country can conduct its affairs in isolation from others or care only for its own national interests in disregard of those of the other members of the world community. Under this approach the concept of comprehensive security is

the totality of many components, with *economic security* playing an exceptionally important part among them. The latter notion covers an across-the-board invigoration of international economic relations, their restructuring on the basis of equality, mutual respect and mutual benefit, and the eradication of any form of discrimination. International economic security also envisages that states belonging to the opposite social systems will curb the arms race, agree on a nuclear test ban and other similar measures and go over to economic competition. By advancing towards stable international economic relations, mankind will advance towards a universal security system.

Interdependence is manifest also in the fact that the world has come face to face with global problems, which cannot be resolved singlehandedly by any individual country or even by groups of countries. It will take concerted actions to resolve the problems of the World's Oceans, outer space, the environment or the eradication of dangerous epidemics in order to guarantee the life of the succeeding generations.

Last but not least, the international economic security concept caters for the needs and hopes of billions of people living in the Third World and is called upon to encourage a search for common ground in various approaches to world and regional economic problems, to build trust and to promote economic cooperation. These goals summarise the stand of the socialist countries, expounded comprehensively in the document 'On Overcoming Underdevelopment and Establishing a New International Economic Order', approved by the May 1987 meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty member countries in Berlin.²

Participants in the meeting responded to the Soviet scholar's address with a series of methodological and practical questions.

Doesn't the concept under review overlook problems of socio-economic development, so vital to the newly-free states, while concentrating on universal security and interdependencies of states? asked **Semou Pathé Gueye** (Senegal Party of Independence and Labour). A broad globalist approach, he continued, should not be a substitute for the class approach, the Communists' guide in appraising all developments in international affairs.

It was noted that the goals of international economic security should be viewed in the context of the stipulations of the programme for a new economic order. But this approach poses another question, **José Regato** (Communist Party of Ecuador) believes: What is the correlation between the two concepts? What would economic security mean in practice for countries of a specific region, say, Latin America?

Hugo Campos (Paraguayan Communist Party) and **Ali Ashour** (Communist Party of Israel) noted the exceptional importance of the ideas of economic security in the context of the current world situation and pointed to their direct relationship with the efforts to avert a thermonuclear conflict and achieve solutions to other global problems. At the same time they stressed that peaceful cooperation among states with different social systems does not abolish the contest between socialism and capitalism on the world scene, which is likely to influence prospects for

international economic security. Can fair economic relations between capitalist and developing states be at all achieved if the objective interests of the two are opposite? **Khalid Hammami** (Syrian Communist Party) wondered.

Discussion over these matters concentrated primarily on two areas: participants considered the role and place of global problems in the concept of economic security and analysed the character of its correlation with the programme for a new international economic order.

Global Aspects of the Problem

In the view of **Ali Ileri** (Communist Party of Turkey), those aspects of the struggle for economic security which make it a part of a broader task, that of achieving comprehensive security, have universal significance. There is an intimate relationship between nuclear disarmament, renunciation of the threat or use of force and joint actions of governments to avert ecological disasters, on the one hand, and the goals of international economic security, on the other, because economic cooperation and interaction among states *builds up the material fabric of peaceful coexistence*. Antagonistic contradictions that pervade the structure of international relations naturally remain valid and operative. However, since the trend towards an interdependent and integral world is inexorably gaining ground in global development, most diverse public forces are growing increasingly aware of their responsibility for the destinies of civilisation and for the future of mankind.

Hugo Campos concurred. The complex and explosive international situation has made all the countries and peoples practically interdependent, which is paving the way towards a secure and non-violent world. That goal, however, is blocked by capitalism-generated chaos in economic relations, having an especially adverse effect on developing countries. What is needed is a basically new approach to world economic, ecological and social problems that are confronting man on the threshold of the third millennium.

I would like to draw attention to two major aspects of the problems we are discussing, said **Georg Kwiatowski** (German Communist Party). First, economic security and comprehensive cooperation among states are creating conditions for the relaxation of the political climate, the building of trust in international relations and help advance towards accords on disarmament and the settlement of conflict situations. The establishment of stable and fair economic relations meets the practical interests of the peoples in every part of the world. But the subject before us has also a broader aspect, which has already been mentioned, namely, relevance to the solution of the global problems facing the whole of mankind. For instance, the worldwide scope of scientific and technological progress necessitates an adequate worldwide pooling of the efforts not merely to sustain that progress but also to avert negative side effects, which we see virtually everywhere.

It is the dialectics of the scientific and technological revolution at the turn of the century that, while offering people unheard-of opportunities for the development of natural resources and for improving their well-being, it

simultaneously jeopardises their environment. Adverse tendencies, according to many forecasts, will snowball along with the deterioration and growing instability of ecological systems and the destruction of the biosphere. An ecological mishap in any part of the world may push the whole of the world ecosystem onto the brink of catastrophe. There have been more than one such incidents in the past 40 years as a result of technological and production activity usually related to the arms race. Destabilisation processes have not yet affected the regional ecosystems of the industrialised countries to the same extent to which they harmed the subtropical and tropical zones. But industrial emissions in the moderate climatic zones of Europe, North America and Asia, too, have badly affected the forests. Unwelcome climatic changes on a global scale are a distinct possibility. The seas and oceans are being turned into industrial dumping grounds. Economists predict that by the end of the century each state will have to set aside 3-5 per cent of its GNP (totalling some 150 billion dollars a year) for nature protection. Speakers at the meeting noted that a promising approach seemed to be the establishment of a world ecosystem to meet the ecological and economic security interests of any part of the world.

To my mind, said **Francisco Gamboa** (People's Vanguard Party of Costa Rica), the examination of problems of economic and ecological security in the context of the interdependence concept even in our, Marxist, interpretation should not lead to the undue broadening of that concept. One may get the impression that the world already is integral to some extent. I agree that there are problems equally affecting all of us regardless of class, national and other differences. The most crucial one among them is the problem of human survival in the face of nuclear death. Economic interdependence is also objective, of course. Lenin said in his day: "There is a force more powerful than the wishes, the will and the decisions of any of the governments or classes that are hostile to us. That force is world general economic relations, which compel them to make contact with us."³ If that was true in those days, when the first socialist state, breaking through the economic blockade, sought to establish economic relations with the capitalist world, it is all the more true today, in the context of contemporary realities and the exceptional importance attached to the economic aspect of peaceful coexistence of states belonging to the opposite social systems.

But it is hardly correct to overlook the dialectics of the coexistence and contest between capitalism and socialism, the exploiter character of relations between capitalist and developing countries, and the aggressive nature of imperialism as the paramount source of insecurity in the world as a whole and in the economy in particular.

The logical question to ask is: what are the boundaries, the limits of the concept interdependence?

The important thing to do, I think, is to start by specifying the concept itself, **Ernest Obminsky** said in reply. We have long criticised the bourgeois interpretation of the concept and stressed the asymmetric and unfair character of interdependence: relations between the capitalist world and

the developing countries, for example, resemble the 'union' of the rider and his horse.

As Marxists see it today, the scholar continued, the world, interdependent and to a large extent integral, is a complex entity of bilateral and multilateral relations of states and groups of states, the scene of sharp contest between the social systems, and simultaneously of the growing interaction between the members of the international community. Here are two examples.

One issue would seem simple nowadays: several states use the resources of the same river, say, the Danube in Western, Middle and Eastern Europe. However, it took a special convention to concert their interests in using that major waterway. West Germany, which initially took exception to the convention, has now joined it.

Or take scientific and technological progress, one of the highways for the development of relations of interdependence. As human genius makes ever new discoveries, these relations will grow more and more diversified. In other words, it is difficult in such cases to set any limit to interdependence. However, there is technological neocolonialism, which keeps the achievements of science and technology away from the peoples of the newly-free countries and blocks the assertion of new promising forms of cooperation among states and peoples. All this is to prove that *the problems of interdependence should be put into the context of common human, international factors, and at the same time in a class and social context.*

Given the persistent exploitation, the speakers observed, the mainstream tendency for broader interdependence is making its way on the international scene through the struggle of the opposites, through the sharp struggle of the forces of oppression, aggression and reaction with those of progress and national and social emancipation. International economic security should be viewed in this context as a programme of struggle and vigorous and united actions of all those who stand for genuinely equal and democratic state-to-state relations.

Stability, Equality, Predictability

The practice of the 1970s and the 1980s testifies to the imperative of broadening diversified economic activity and giving a fresh impetus to it. But how and according to what principles can this activity be arranged in view of the divergent and often opposite interests of various states?

In Ernest Obminsky's view, international economic security calls first and foremost for an economic and political interest of *all groups* of states in the normalisation and stability of their external economic relations. A global approach in this context is no substitute for attention to the specifics: for instance, when it comes to the hopes and needs of the Third World countries and peoples, international economic security is to prepare the best possible conditions for the implementation of the programme for a new international economic order. And a new international economic order for its part can be established only if the following principles of international economic security take root on the international scene:

stability (i.e., external conditions for the rational economic development of each country and for the steady improvement of the well-being of its population);

dependability (i.e., fulfilment in good faith of mutual obligations and respect for the norms of international law, the UN Charter and the commonly recognised rules of economic relations);

predictability (i.e., opportunity for each state timely to take account in its national economic policy of the trends and prospects of the world economy and to use them for purposes of national development but not to the prejudice of the international community as a whole);

equality (i.e., respect for the partner's lawful interests and guarantees of relations being mutually beneficial);

readiness for genuine partnership and joint efforts in resolving both global and interstate economic problems.

It is therefore important to take account of the interests of *all the members of the world community* in formulating the principles and concepts of international economic security. The concept envisages that the lawful aspirations and ambitions of various countries of all the continents of their socio-economic development levels should be taken into account through compromise.

Antonio Ribeiro Granja of the Brazilian Communist Party remarked that emphasis on the global principles of international economic security pushed into the background those real problems of economic security which faced specific peoples in various regions. Other speakers also noted that those problems seemed to remain on the sidelines of the discussion.

Too great an emphasis on the commonality of the interests of the members of the world community may create the wrong impression of some sort of collective responsibility for the crisis of the international economy, although it is imperialism that is to blame for the crisis, **Semou Pathé Gueye** observed. Problems that countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America tackle as they struggle to achieve a new international economic order and economic security, **Unni Krishnan** (Communist Party of India) added, are basically different from the global problems caused by the disruption of the ecological balance and by rapid scientific and technological progress. Poverty, hunger, disease and socio-economic backwardness were inherited by the newly-free countries from the period of colonialism, and it is neocolonialism that is to blame for these glaring problems being still unresolved.

The groups of non-aligned and other developing states challenged unfair economic relations in the mid-1970s by formulating their programme for a new international economic order. That programme can be viewed as the forerunner of the concept of economic security and is closely linked with it. The latter concept, the member countries of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance believe, by no means supplants the existing basic resolutions and documents of the world community on restructuring international economic relations.

Antonio Diaz Ruiz (Communist Party of Cuba) thinks that the ideas of the concepts of a new international economic order and international economic security should complement one another. The Non-Aligned

Movement and the Group 77^a did a good deal in their day thoroughly and comprehensively to explore international economic problems with emphasis on doing away with the unequal economic position of the underdeveloped countries and with relations of dependence, non-equivalent exchanges and exploitation. At the same time the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America are vigorously championing peace, the normalisation of state-to-state relations, cuts in military budgets and the use of the funds thus saved to promote development. Internationally, this means respect for the global aspects of security, which are dominant in the concept of international economic security.

While approving the ideas of economic security overall, the participants pointed out, countries in various regions lay emphasis first and foremost on those aspects of that concept which they consider especially important to their own economic development.

Governments and the general public in Latin America have long shown interest in relevant problems, **Sully Sanéaux** (Dominican Communist Party) said. A series of international documents have been approved to stress the need to guarantee the economic security of the states in the region. Many Latin American governments believe that it is likewise important to specify more precisely the framework of the concept itself, which will make it easier for regional and subregional groupings to draft their plans for mutual cooperation. It is economic integration and adequate conditions for 'protecting the process of development' that will pave the way to economic security in our part of the continent, spokesmen for the fraternal parties of Latin America noted. As for the main obstacle on that way, it is the huge 400 billion dollar debt of Latin American countries to transnational banks.

The Middle East states, other speakers noted, have a comprehensive approach to economic security, taking account of both its global aspect (as a part of the system of universal security) and its regional one (the development of natural and other resources through joint efforts, joint ventures, etc.). As for the Pacific countries, they lean towards assembling machinery for regulating international economic activities as a means of making economic development stable and predictable.

The discussion brought out that *there are not only common but also specific factors of the interest of various groups of states in the implementation of the ideas of international economic security*. Another example is Europe, where states belonging to the opposite social systems are close neighbours. It is widely believed in Europe that economic security means stability, the further invigoration of state-to-state contacts and that it will help capitalist European countries (as many Westerners believe) to avoid economic upheavals or cushion their unwelcome effects.

The complex and acute problems of the developing countries can really be resolved through the establishment of a new international economic order, **Ernest Obminsky** said, whereas economic security merely is a condition and means of the drastic restructuring of economic relations.

Clearly, the two programmes incorporate common or compatible approaches. The Economic Declaration of the latest non-aligned summit in Harare, for instance, views the development problems of the Third World

countries as an integral component of an 'interdependent world economy'. It also says that if those problems are ignored (and the imperialist powers do ignore them), consistent and dependable economic growth will remain an illusion. We also believe, the speaker stressed, that unless far-reaching measures are taken to rectify the plight of the developing countries and to overcome underdevelopment, neither economic nor political stability is feasible in the world. The above-mentioned document of the Warsaw Treaty member countries stresses the significance of the fair international division of labour and national sovereignty over natural resources. Dozens of the developing countries share these views.

Sam Moeti (Communist Party of Lesotho) and **Mustafa Azzaoui** (Party of Progress and Socialism of Morocco) put forward the view that the role of the ideas of economic security was likely to grow because imperialism was raising ever new obstacles to the restructuring of the existing unfair system of international economic relations. The programme resolutions passed by the developing countries in that field have not been implemented not just because some of them are mere declarations: the imperialists are actually blocking the programme of a new international economic order. Their aim is to use economic and financial leverage, transnational banks, foundations and companies to perpetuate neocolonialist dominance.

Responsibility for the plight of the developing world rests squarely with the imperialist powers, which are to blame also for underdevelopment, a product of colonial and neocolonial plunder. What was to be underlined **Unni Krishnan** said, is that this plunder has continued and with the beginning of the 1980s even intensified. In this period real transfer of resources from the periphery to the developed capitalist countries has taken place on an increasingly massive scale through the non-equivalent exchanges, direct repatriation of huge profits by the TNCs and the debt servicing. The plight of the Third World countries has worsened. This situation will have very serious repercussions for the world economy as a whole, including that of the capitalist countries. Yet imperialism has not shown any inclination to change course.

Concerted action of all the forces vitally interested in the solution of this problem, he continued, is called for to meet this situation. To be effective, this action would undoubtedly have to have an anti-imperialist orientation. The developing countries should intensify economic cooperation and trade among themselves and with the socialist countries. Instead of the most advanced technology from the TNCs — which they would not give anyway, and in most cases it is not needed at this stage of development of the Third World — these countries will have to go for appropriate technology which can be obtained through their mutual cooperation and cooperation with socialist countries. Once this course is firmly pursued, possibilities of more just and rational economic relations with the developed capitalist countries also may open up. We are not at all suggesting autarky.

The idea that concerted action of different forces is needed to resolve the acute problems of the Third World was voiced also by other participants, with special emphasis laid on the joint actions of *the entire international community*. The plight of the developing countries is a grave world

problem and the efforts to resolve it, accordingly, should be made on a worldwide scale.

While subscribing in principle to this view, **José Lava** (Communist Party of the Philippines) thought it necessary to specify: if the case in point is joint actions within the framework of North-South relations, contacts between capitalist North and the Third World in no way contribute to the overcoming of backwardness and cannot amount to true partnership; as for the relations between the socialist world and the developing countries, they are characterised by partnership and friendship. Can the ruling quarters of the industrialised capitalist powers be at all expected to agree to concerted actions with the other world public forces to help the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America to shake off the burden of underdevelopment, hunger and disease?

This question highlights anew the dialectics of the general and the specific, which in our case is the relationship of the regional and the global aspect of international economic security, **Ernest Obminsky** said. If major and far-reaching steps are taken towards disarmament, primarily nuclear disarmament, for example, the conversion of military spending to civilian purposes will make it possible to work out truly global answers to the vital needs of the Third World. The same view is held by the far-sighted and influential political forces in the capitalist world. Significantly, the CPSU and the Social Democratic Party of Germany have recently agreed that as soon as agreements are reached on real and verifiable cuts in the armed forces and armaments, an international solidarity fund should be set up to give assistance to developing countries. This shows that consensus with these forces, at least in principle, is a distinct possibility.

Another factor to be reckoned with is that a number of capitalist governments (i.e., those of the Scandinavian countries and some others) have long been involved to a considerable extent in such aid. Even transnational capital is known to have been involved in some cases of mutually beneficial cooperation, when, of course, newly-free countries are good at defending their own interests and pursue independent economic policies (e.g., the operations of US oil companies in Angola and the rehabilitation of the Beira transportation link with the participation of Western companies in Mozambique). Prospects for trilateral cooperation between a socialist country, a newly-free state and a transnational should not be disregarded either provided equitable relations conducive to economic progress are worked out on the basis of compromise.

The participants in the discussion reached the following conclusion: *underdevelopment with all its implications ranks among the urgent problems of economic security along with global problems, such as human survival and the preservation of human habitat.* That conclusion is prompted by the most acute manifestations of the plight of Afro-Asian and Latin American peoples, such as onerous debts, hunger, poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and disease. There is a need for urgent solutions and for responsible and timely support on the part of the world community for the developing countries to complement their own efforts.

Uphill Struggle Ahead

The participants discussed possibilities for involving the broadest possible and most diverse public forces in the movement for restructuring international economic relations and for achieving international economic security. At the same time they showed interest in the manifestations of the class nature of the struggle between those diverse but interdependent interests which economic security is meant to serve.

According to **Unni Krishnan**, a narrow, let alone simplistic view of class struggle is hardly applicable to the problems under consideration. The point in case is phenomena of a global scale, such as the striving of all people to survive, the destinies of socio-economic progress and the future of the Third World. Discussing class struggle in this context, we should first and foremost concentrate on what should be the direction of, and who (what social forces) are really striving for, positive change and also expose those who stand in the way of such change. It will then be clear that concrete actions to establish a new international economic order and to achieve international economic security are objectively being taken in the frame of *general class struggle* on the international scene.

Francisco Gamboa believes that the dialectics of cooperation and struggle in the examination of these problems will be clearer if it is viewed in the context of the movement for a new economic order. Far from all the participants in it display a class-based approach (as the Marxists understand it) to the principal ills of the capitalist economy. Many of them, for example, tend to set the 'poor' countries in opposition to the 'rich' ones, etc. But the point is that a new economic order is in fact not a document but a *process*, which takes on a class meaning along with the unfolding of the struggle for a truly fair organisation of world economic relations. And it is here that deep-seated contradictions that divide the exploited Third World peoples and imperialism become obvious.

The concept of economic security should be viewed from the same angle, participants in the discussion noted. Its class-based and anti-imperialist nature will be more transparent at the stage of practical solutions, in the course of overcoming every obstacle in the way of the establishment of stable, equal and predictable state-to-state relations.

Speakers pointed out that the imperialist forces, primarily the United States, were dead set against the ideas of international economic security. Their reaction to the demand for a new international economic order a dozen years ago was much the same. There is a long uphill struggle ahead for the implementation of the two interlinked programmes and the broader the spectrum of the public forces involved in the movement for restructuring the existing economic order, the more successful that struggle will be.

It is first and foremost the socialist and the developing countries, acting in concert at the United Nations and in other international forums, that are working perseveringly for the establishment of a new international economic order and international economic security. The two programmes are in the focus of attention of the trade unions and other mass organisations. That movement can really gain momentum in the non-

socialist world, **Georg Kwiatowski** stressed, if it relies in each country on the working class, the other democratic strata and the progressive public. Demands for respect for the sovereign rights of states, for restrictions on the monopolies' economic sway, for drastic measures to do away with the burden of debts, to overcome underdevelopment and to eradicate hunger in the Third World are resounding in various parts of the world today; they are put forward by the Communists and the Social Democrats, by the ecologists and the clergy, and by political and public movements of different ideological persuasions. The ruling capitalist classes, speakers noted, cannot help reckoning with those demands.

As for the attitude of the imperialist powers to the programmes for a new international economic order and international economic security, **José Lava** observed, it is important to take a differentiated approach to the monopoly bourgeoisie itself, namely, to discern that part of the bourgeoisie which represents the military-industrial complex and is directly linked with the war business, and the capitalist sector controlling the civilian industries. Although some of the businessmen and their political backers are obsessed with the idea of achieving superiority in nuclear missiles and view the arms race as an inexhaustible source of profits, it does not yet mean that our class adversary is totally out of touch with reality and will take any adventuristic suicidal step, **Ali İleri** noted.

Major business interests within the monopoly class are putting their stakes on peaceful cooperation because they realise that relations can no longer be based on the principle 'might is right': there is a need for certain international rules and norms of conduct. Cooperation must be stable and attractive to the parties to economic relations. Many speakers noted that the ideas of international economic security are rejected in the capitalist world not by the public, not even by the monopoly class as such but by a very narrow group of tycoons linked with the military-industrial complex and by the war business: they would like to carry on their dangerous gambles, to manipulate millions and to pile up obstacles in the way of the far-reaching democratisation of the system of international relations.

Those who are opposed to disarmament, speakers stressed, are out to block a search for a solution to such an important task of our time as the relationship between disarmament and development. The principle of '*disarmament for development*', however, is winning more and more supporters all over the world. A recent UN-sponsored conference on these problems (August-September, 1987) had a global effect. In spite of militarist propaganda flowing from Washington and some other imperialist capitals, public opinion is increasingly leaning towards the noble idea of converting military spending to peaceful uses for the good of mankind, including the peoples of the developing countries. Such an effort, naturally, will require the concerted actions of the entire world community.



The joint actions and steps of states, governments, progressive and democratic forces and influential realistic groups in the West to implement the programme for a new international economic order and international

economic security will have a special part to play in the foreseeable future, the participants in the discussion concluded. The idea of the 27th CPSU Congress for a World Economic Congress and the proposal of the Non-Aligned Movement on the convocation of an international monetary and financial conference have lost none of their relevance. Another series of upheavals which have rocked the capitalist economy is fresh proof that both initiatives are timely and should be pursued without delay. The socialist world, the member countries of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance will indubitably play a role in the improvement of the global economic climate. The processes of economic restructuring and renewal now under way in the socialist countries, especially in the Soviet Union, are imparting new dynamism to the process of change on the international scene.

¹ A draft resolution on 'International Economic Security' was tabled by the USSR in the Second Committee (Economic and Financial) of the UN General Assembly and approved by a majority vote.

² See *Pravda*, June 10, 1987.

³ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 155.

⁴ Group 77 unites more than 125 countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

viewpoints

Breaking The Vicious Circle

Mohammed Ibrahim Nuqud —
CC General Secretary, Communist Party
of the Sudan

THE Sudan has been in a vicious political and social circle since independence. How is it to be broken? Our country has gone through a great deal since then: bourgeois parliamentary government on the 'Westminster model', the military coup, the dictatorship, the overthrow of the dictatorship, and the transitional government. Traditional general elections were held and a parliamentary system set up. What next? Is another military coup in store for the country?

Consider some of the developments in our recent history. Military dictatorships ruled the Sudan for 22 years during its independence, while the parliamentary system was in place for half as many years. But that is when transitional governments were twice set up in the country, and under them the people lived in relative democracy. Such government was a

reflection of the changes in political power, but it did not affect either the economic and social system, or the interests of the ruling classes.

How did these developments proceed? We had parliamentary government from 1954 to 1958, when the country moved on from the regime of autonomy²; foreign troops were pulled out, the colonial administration was dismantled and independence proclaimed. From then on, until 1964, we had the first military regime, a dictatorship of the generals, which collapsed during the general political strike and uprising from October 1964 to June 1965. This was followed by a transitional government made up of representatives of the political parties, including the Communist Party of the Sudan, and also of the trade unions and other workers' and peasants' organisations. The elections started a period of parliamentary government which lasted until the May 1969 coup.

The country's second military coup was led by junior officers who borrowed Nasserite socialist slogans from Egypt's experience. The dictatorship lasted for almost 16 years, and has given way to the 'independent non-party' transitional government.

The peculiar aspect of the new stage was that following the generals' intervention and concentration of power in the hands of the Transitional Military Council, the latter announced the abolition of the political institutions of the dictatorship and Nimeiry's removal. The parties, the trade unions and other organisations agreed that the transitional period would last for 12 months, to be followed by parliamentary elections and the establishment of the third, i.e., the present, bourgeois parliamentary regime.

For a fuller picture let us try to clarify some of the specific aspects which, despite their similarity with processes in other Third World countries, may shed light on the distinctive and unique features of the Sudanese experience.

1. Throughout the period of army rule (both under the first and second dictatorships) influential groups of officers and men were on the side of the people; they suffered bitter reverses and repeatedly tried to stage coups in order to change the state of things. At crucial moments — during the political strike and the uprising — these military men put pressure on the armed forces leadership and the ruling circles to make them give up power, heed the voice of the masses, restore political liberties and refrain from using the army for the purposes of suppression. That, one could say, is a constant factor in the Sudan's political and social life, and it is bound to have an influence in the future as well if there is the prospect of another military dictatorship.

2. These three bourgeois-parliamentary regimes relied on a parliamentary majority represented by the parties of the semi-feudal, communal and tribal forces already involved in capitalist activity (the parties of 'semi-feudal capitalism'). Their interests were closely bound up and even entirely integrated with those of traditional Sudanese capital, both in commerce and in modern industry, foreign trade, foreign capital, banking in real estate, transport, communications, storage and the services. The capitalist bureaucracy, both civilian and military, acted hand in glove with these circles.

The involvement of semi-feudal, communal and tribal forces in capitalist enterprise did not mean a loss of their ideological influence among the tribes and religious communities. The overwhelming majority of the population is still under the strong influence of tribal chiefs and religious leaders, and local capitalist circles have been trying to maintain it and use it for their own political purposes.

3. The government, representing the 'semi-feudal capitalism' turned out to be incapable of tackling the political, economic, social and cultural problems after independence, and impotence which appears to justify the 'legitimacy' of the military coup and to provide the pretext for setting up a military dictatorship.

4. When the military took power, they proclaimed various slogans: right-reformist under the first military dictatorship, and left-wing, revolutionary and even socialist slogans, under the second. They promised to end the degradation of political and social life produced by the multi-party regime, to restore order out of chaos, to put an end to the illegal enrichment, the bribe-taking and the squandering of public funds, and to work for social justice, indeed, for the building of socialism. But the ultimate result of the rule by both militaristic cliques was faster capitalist accumulation, concentration of capital and the spawning of entrepreneurs in the Sudan.

The state apparatus and the public sector, the nationalised enterprises in the first place, together with the banks, were the main instruments of capitalist accumulation, which turned many members of the petty-bourgeois strata into capitalists, a process that affected groups of people who had earlier been within the revolutionary movement and the Communist Party of the Sudan. Trade union leaders were also integrated with the bureaucratic hierarchy of the state apparatus, the security service, and the highest organs of the political organisation which was then the only one in the country.

As it matured, Sudanese capitalism was more able to stand up for its interests, to carry on a purposeful fight against the working class and the other labouring strata also because petty-bourgeois forces and trade union bureaucrats joined the ranks of those who favoured capitalist development. Former Communists and others with a revolutionary past not only took an opportunistic attitude in defence of the interests of capital 'within' the working class and the revolutionary movement, but became an organic element of the capitalist structure. Meanwhile, the vacuum in the ideological sphere was filled by far-out leftist elements and groups.

5. Under the first and the second military dictatorships, the foundations of national sovereignty were undermined, and there was growing infiltration of the country by foreign monopolies. The Sudanese economy was essentially run by the international institutions of these monopolies — The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund — which imposed their own political and economic solutions. The IMF, for instance, prescribed stale medication for the treatment of such chronic ailments of our economy as the balance-of-payments and current account deficits, the external debt, the shrinking of the production sector in agriculture and industry, and the worsening state of the social sphere. Meanwhile, the state apparatus increasingly operated as an incubator for capitalism.

Two social groups — the parasitic bourgeoisie and the technocracy — called the tune. Under the Nimeiry government they were joined by another specific stratum, namely, the religious leaders making use of Islam for their own purposes who flourished when the dictator announced a switch from the less orthodox brand of Islam to Islamic rule under shariat laws and rules. This led to the appearance of Moslem banks with capital from Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf countries advocating an end to the taking of interest, which is prohibited by the Koran. Their activity was, as a rule, confined to financing short-term commercial operations. Credits on easy terms were made available to those who belonged to the Moslem Brotherhood party, or who sympathised with it. One could say that the capital of the oil-producing countries of the Persian Gulf did much for the growth of the Sudanese bourgeoisie as a whole, and especially of its parasitic groups.

I have to add the following for greater clarity and to avoid theoretical confusion. We also use the concept of 'the stratum of parasitic capitalism', which has now become a part of the political lexicon, but we regard it within the context of the Marxist categories relating to the capitalist class as a whole and point to its parasitic nature. In view of the situation in the Sudan, the 'parasitic capitalism' term is used by the Communists to indicate a stratum which includes some concrete and fairly well-known names. Those who belong to it did not engage in any capitalist activity in the past, but through their political contacts with the ruling military clique they were given an opportunity to use commercial licences and banking privileges, and often became the agents of foreign companies, from which they collected commission fees, robbed the treasury, bought farmland, housing, etc. They are the ones who introduced the policy of conspicuous consumption and devastated the production sector by remitting money abroad or investing it in projects that the country had no use for. We in the Sudan prefer to use this term because we believe it gives a more precise idea of the development model of the country's capitalist class than, say, 'comprador', which the leaders of the Communist Party of China used to describe their country's specific capitalist development.

The political parties, including the CPS, and trade unions, that is, all those who shouldered the burden of responsibility for overthrowing the latest military dictatorship (March 22-April 6, 1985) were probing for a way out of the vicious circle (parliamentary system — military dictatorship — political strike and mass uprising, and then all over again). They issued a Charter in Defence of Democracy, thereby unanimously reaffirming their rejection of dictatorship and coup, whatever the slogans used to justify them: right-wing, left-wing, centrist. The document was signed by all the political parties and organisations (with the exception of the Moslem Brotherhood) and by the trade unions at a mass meeting held on November 17, 1985 to mark the anniversary of the first military coup in 1958. The Charter was signed by a member of the Transitional Military Council on behalf of the armed forces.

The social movement in the Sudan is still faced with the task of translating the provisions of the document into practice to enable the popular masses not only to reject military dictatorship, but also to make

one impossible.

The experience of the third parliamentary regime, which is now in its second year, shows that it is faced with many difficulties. The authorities are powerless in solving the problems for whose solution the Sudanese rose up to overthrow the Nimeiri dictatorship. These problems are: the growth of prices, the decline in living standards, the spiralling of inflation, and the need to revive agricultural and industrial production. In October 1987, the government accepted the IMF's terms for a devaluation of the Sudanese currency and higher prices on the prime necessities.

Mass discontent and indifference have been growing: the people are worried that no essential changes have taken place in their life, and that the democracy for whose restoration they fought and made sacrifices has not brought any social renewal or eased the working people's hard lot.

The civil war in the south is another intractable problem that has also had a negative effect on the country's western and south-eastern areas. It is a drain on the manpower and financial resources which are so badly needed to revive the economy and to keep the country united and territorially integrated.

A wave of strikes and demonstrations in town and country has been spreading in protest over the situation. *The masses are still active, capable of militant action and true to the objectives and slogans under which they were united against the dictatorship.* That is a source of strength in the fight by the party and the trade unions to turn the Charter in Defence of Democracy into an insuperable barrier in the way of any military coup. But the Moslem Brotherhood, who failed in their attempt to enter the government (despite their strong positions in parliament) have been trying to capitalise on the mass discontent: when staging protest actions, they want to end democracy and to get the military back in power, whether directly or indirectly, for they believe that it will be the best instrument for carrying out the plans to Islamise the country, something Nimeiri tried to do.

We have to ask ourselves this question: how can we call on the people to defend democracy and the parliamentary system if the government formed after the elections is incapable of meeting the demands and aspirations of the masses as reflected in the slogans of the uprising?

We believe that the Communist Party, together with many other parties and the trade unions, has taken the right approach following a critical analysis of the functioning of the bourgeois political system in the Sudan and in some other Arab and African countries with a similar situation. The answer undoubtedly lies in a *reform of the regime of bourgeois parliamentary democracy* in order to get rid of the 'Westminster model', with its trappings of popular power, and to make the state administration system accord with the conditions and specifics of the Sudanese society at the present stage of its development, with implementation of the Charter in Defence of Democracy as the *first step*.

The *second step*, on which agreement has been reached, is to prepare a constitutional conference representing the various political, trade union and other social forces, and designed to work out the best state system for the Sudan and to examine matters like distribution of social wealth, the

rights of ethnic minorities, and the relations between state and religion. It could concentrate on the difficulties and problems facing Sudanese society, with its numerous racial, ethnic, national, religious, ideological and cultural facets. Various conflicts, civil wars, inter-tribal strife and government instability still have an effect on the class struggle and political and ideological life generally. Among the acute problems are ethnic equality, uneven development, and the future constitution: is it to be a secular or an Islamic one? Last but not least is the question of the way for the Sudan: will it follow the traditional pro-capitalist way (and it is one which has led us to the present situation) or will it opt for some other way? The struggle over choice of way naturally implies various alternatives.

Finally, the *third step* provides for transition to a democratic system of government in the light of present conditions, and that means fulfilling the recommendations of the national economic conference held in March 1986. All Sudanese economists and specialists in various economic sectors took part in preparing it. The earlier sectoral conferences examined the state of crisis in the economy and assessed the damage done by the Nimeiri dictatorship, and accordingly mapped out the necessary measures. All this work culminated in the national conference with the participation of the parties and the trade unions. Its recommendations, which were worked out by its commissions, call for a reform known as the *Programme for Saving the National Economy*.

The tasks set by the Programme do not go beyond the reformist approach and require the pursuit of a national economic policy with the maintenance of the capitalist structures that will also be found in other less developed countries. It is an attempt to set up more equitable relations with the world capitalist market and to obtain higher returns on investments, and seek ways to ease the external debt burden, mainly through renationalisation and reconstruction of the agricultural and industrial sectors. The economic and financial reforms should hit the parasitic elements, to return the wealth they have plundered, to stabilise prices, however minimally, and to check inflation.

Let us now look at the political slogans and objectives of the democratic movement advocating a *reform of the bourgeois parliamentary system*. There is the demand for a secular constitution in place of the Islamic one: a parliamentary system of government instead of the presidential one, a change in the electoral law by dividing the republic into constituencies with an eye to the specifics of the population on territories inhabited mainly by working people (chiefly in the towns and rural areas where state-capitalist-type agriculture projects are being implemented) since the existing system ignores these distinctions and gives a preponderance to other areas. Among the other demands are the establishment of special constituencies in accordance with the categories of working people living there. There is also the need to set up a decentralised system of local organs of power which have due authority and which do not require large outlays on their operation, to abandon the idea of reviving the abolished institutions of tribal administration, and to make tribal territories subordinate to the local organs of administration. The democratic forces want the abolition of legislative enactments limiting civil liberties, like the shariat provisions

introduced by Nimeiri (when he last tried to rescue his regime), and repeal of the trade union law.

A reform of the bourgeois parliamentary system does not, of course, make it possible to go beyond the framework of capitalist development, of whose effect on the fortunes of the backward countries the Communists are well aware. The Sudan cannot hope to solve its painful problems and break the fetters of neocolonial dependence by moving along the capitalist way, but since what is now at issue is the regime and forms of political administration, we must emphasise: *a bourgeois parliamentary system altered in accordance with these demands is preferable* for the Sudanese people and the mass social movement (with an eye to the prospect of its spreading influence) to any military dictatorship, whether right-wing or left-wing. This has been fully borne out by the country's political experience since independence.

It is, of course, quite true that the victory of a national democratic revolution and the establishment of a system of power in accord with such a revolution pave the way for breaking out of the vicious circle, but we can hardly afford, in expectation of it, to look indifferently or sceptically at another government regime that is more favourable and less harmful to the people in the existing conditions. After all, a minimum of basic rights, and democratic and trade union freedoms are the crucial factor in developing the mass movement under bourgeois parliamentarianism, even if power is in the hands of the right-wing parties representing the interests of the bourgeoisie and the semi-feudal elements.

The people's experience shows that the strident 'tutelage' imposed on the masses by Nasserite-type military regimes which ban party and trade union activity and the multi-party system as a whole on the pretext of setting up one 'common' political organisation (such as the Sudanese Socialist Union in our country) cannot be an adequate substitute for basic democratic rights and freedoms. These are won by the masses at the price of tremendous sacrifice, and the people have no intention of giving these up even under a right-wing bourgeois parliamentary regime.

In more general terms, let us note that, in the light of our people's own experience, we in the Sudan reject any kind of rule by the military, even if it styles itself progressive, revolutionary-democratic or left-wing, while usurping the basic civil rights; a rule that does away with the multi-party system, encroaches on the freedom and independence of the parties, trade unions and other public bodies behind a screen of a single political organisation, such as the Arab Socialist Union in Nasser's Egypt. Nor shall we tolerate the establishment of any front as a screen for the activity of the ruling or the largest party, as it is with the Baath party in Syria and Iraq. The Nasserite and Baath practices have a common root: the military coup, or 'the armed forces role of revolutionary vanguard' as it is also styled. The Sudanese revolution, for its part, has developed through the political strike and uprising, which means that it was massive, and that there was no vanguard, whether civilian or military, acting as a substitute for the masses. The patriotic and revolutionary groups within the armed forces in our country have their own place and act as an auxiliary factor helping to complete the revolutionary tasks, a factor that does not in any sense give

them a vanguard or independent role.

What has been said should not be taken as some kind of abstract theoretical conclusion out of touch with the realities. It is one that has been suggested by the results of our painful and costly experience in developing the popular movement in the Sudan.

The lessons of the past make it incumbent on us, Communists, to carry on a consistent ideological struggle which now bears on various aspects of the concept of democracy. It is not at all a general theoretical issue, considering that democracy, like dictatorship, whether military or civilian, is ultimately an expression of definite class interests.

The ideological contest has ranged over issues that are highly concrete and most important for the Sudan itself. There is, first of all, the general Marxist view of bourgeois liberal democracy as being historically and socially limited. In the Sudan, it is the political form of a feudal-bourgeois regime, and that being so (our petty-bourgeois opponents claim), it seems to have worked itself out, so that it should be replaced by a new democracy based on an alliance of the working people's forces represented by a socialist alliance as the sole and common form of political organisation.

Such an approach is a *petty-bourgeois distortion* of Marxist propositions, and those who advocate it suggest an erroneous conclusion reflecting their narrow perception of the complexities and prospects of the political, ideological and organisational class struggle aimed to unite the masses. It also shows up the petty bourgeoisie's incapacity to think deeply on the *equilibrium-of-forces problem*. They make the subjective assumption that the objective reality can be 'leaped over' by means of a military coup which they expect eventually to establish monopoly domination by some bourgeois stratum or group and to abolish democracy as a system of basic rights, freedoms and guarantees of legality. That is an inevitable outcome of the petty bourgeoisie's one-sided view of liberal democracy.

Liberal democracy, however, is actually the product of protracted struggle by masses of workers, peasants and other labouring strata, and the enlightened section of the bourgeoisie, including the petty bourgeoisie. That is borne out by the history of the early bourgeois-democratic revolutions in Western Europe. When capitalism takes over it does kill the *social content* of democracy, but then it does not in any sense eliminate this other obvious fact: democracy has been and continues to be the outcome and derivative of political and social revolution. It is the duty of the national democratic — and eventually of the socialist — revolution in our country to improve democracy by restoring its true social content.

Another aspect of this problem is that whenever the mass movement gathers momentum under democratic rights and freedoms, democracy is at once under attack from the other side, as feudal and bourgeois elements begin to claim that the existing political regime may suit Western capitalist states, but that Sudanese conditions require another sort of 'democracy'. By that they mean the strengthening of the positions of Islam, removal of the trade unions from political activity, leaving them to act as supplicants and to undertake to do their 'patriotic' duty by standing on guard of 'economic stability and development'. Other arguments are, of course, also trotted out in order to justify the abolition of rights and freedoms.

The Sudanese people have never viewed democracy in an abstract romantic or idealistic light. Both in the period of the October 1964 uprising, and in March and April 1985, they put forward slogans produced by their own experience and demanded that social groups or individuals who had usurped power and used it for their self-seeking interests should be prosecuted, deprived of their capital and denied the right to engage in public activity. Following the trial of the officers who joined with Nimeiri in leading the May 1969 coup, the people want Egypt to extradite the former dictator so as to put him on trial.

The Communist Party has relied on massive experience in its ideological fight both against petty-bourgeois views, which minimise the importance of democratic rights and freedoms for developing the popular movement and the social revolution, and against the views of the semi-feudal pro-capitalist forces, which keep speculating on religious feelings and want to abolish these rights and freedoms altogether. Broad social forces have been taking shape in this struggle, and their goal is to bar the way to a military coup or a civilian dictatorship, to safeguard political democracy and to work for restoring its genuine economic and social content.

¹ Meaning the parliamentary system in Great Britain. — *Ed.*

² From 1953 to 1956. — *Ed.*

The Right To Be Masters Of The Country

Transformation In Vietnam As Exemplified By One City

Phan Van Khai — CC member,
Communist Party of Vietnam, Chairman,
Ho Chi Minh City People's Committee

THE city, which has been named after Ho Chi Minh, our people's leader, is the largest in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, with over 3.5 million inhabitants. It is a major economic and cultural centre turning out over one-third of the country's industrial product. What is made in the city — machine tools, electronic equipment, construction materials, pumps, spare parts for motor vehicles and tractors, rolled ferrous stock — is of great importance for the industrialisation of the whole country. One can well understand, therefore, that it now has a big part to play in advancing our republic along the way of transformations and the building up of the material and technical basis of socialism. Many valuable initiatives have originated here in recent years and have been spread far and wide.

A few facts from our history. Our people's heroic and continuous struggle against the barbarian aggression of the US militarists ended in victory in the spring of 1975, with the overthrow of the hated puppet regime. Neocolonialism left a hard legacy in the South of the country, of which Saigon was the centre.¹ The war-time economy heavily depended on imports: 85 per cent of raw materials and nearly every type of machine and equipment, foodstuffs and consumer goods had to be imported. The domination of foreign capital had produced a situation in which industry accounted for less than 10 per cent of total output. Many enterprises had been ruined by competition from the United States and other capitalist countries and stood idle; the working people were cowed by the police terrorism. Every other inhabitant of Saigon was jobless. Because of the succession of economic upheavals under the old corrupt regime, consumption per head was very low.

Once our homeland was reunified, the leadership and the party organisation of the city had to tackle many challenging tasks with the support of the whole country: to have the economy revived, and the working people's living standards raised in the course of socialist construction with a prevalence of petty-commodity production.

The following figures show how the city's economy has developed since then. The volume of social production has been going up at roughly 12 per cent, and income at 10 per cent a year; from 1981 to 1985, industrial and handicraft output grew at an average of 15.5 per cent a year.

Agriculture has been markedly transformed by the establishment of cooperatives and state farms in the city suburbs on an area of over 100,000 hectares. Over the past decade, agricultural, forestry and fisheries output (and Ho Chi Minh City is, of course, a major sea and river port) has been going up at over 5 per cent a year. There is also evidence of advance in science, technology, education, culture, medicine and sport.

These achievements have resulted from the labour effort of the population and the tireless quest for new approaches by the party organisation and administrative bodies of Ho Chi Minh City at every level. We have striven to tie in production with distribution and circulation, and also with export, and to expand economic cooperation within the city limits and with neighbouring provinces.

New relations of production originated and were improved as industry, commerce and agriculture were switched to socialist lines. Progressive bonus schemes and contract remuneration applied at some enterprises yielded good results. Here special attention was paid to blending the interests of the state and those of the working people.

Vietnam has to face some difficulties in the economic and social sphere, and that is also true of our city. For example, while production has on the whole gone up, its efficiency is still low, and the rate of growth falls short of the actual potentialities. The large potential of labour power, land, financial resources, and material and technical facilities is not being used fully. Distribution and circulation are being improved at a slow pace: the market still defies complete control, and there are occasional price rises. Large masses of commodities and money at the disposal of the enterprises and those held by private capital here and there remain outside the state

administration system. Speculation and smuggling are still rife, and these tend to undermine the socialist property.

Scientific and technical progress does not yet have a truly pivotal role, and does not have a direct effect on production which is aimed at creating modern industries and turning out badly needed goods.

All of that tends to destabilise living conditions, especially those of industrial and office workers, military men, and the poorer strata of the population, who often find themselves in dire straits. There is also a shortfall in social justice.

Some of us here also tend to take a superficial approach to the gist of the resolute class struggle to decide 'who beats whom'.² There is some hastiness and an urge to eliminate the non-socialist sectors of the economy overnight, whereas there is a need for greater effort to bring about in-depth transformations in the society, to develop progressive forms of productions and bring up the new man.

The long-standing bureaucratic methods of administration by fiat have yet to be overcome, obsolete instructions have not been annulled, while many new ones are not carried through all the way and now and again contradict each other. Lax organisation and poor discipline are fairly widespread.

Those mistakes and shortcomings, especially in the economy, spring above all from subjectivism and voluntarism, over-simplified approaches and practices, and a tendency to underestimate or ignore the objective laws in building the new society.

What are the concrete tasks the working people and the party organisation of Ho Chi Minh City now have to tackle in view of the situation in the country?

Within the city limits, we try to develop production, to stabilise living conditions and expand the socialist sector so as to *harmonise the interests of the society, of the work collectives and of the individual working people*.

The first thing to do is to overcome the difficulties produced by the centralised mechanism of administration, which has outlived itself, and to go on resolutely to socialist cost accounting.

There was evidence of stagnation threatening a serious decline at the end of the 1970s. Within two years, 1979 to 1980, output dropped by a quarter, and many workers, including highly-skilled workers, left state enterprises to take up other jobs.

In that period, key importance attached to the decisions of the Sixth Plenary Meeting of the CPV CC in 1979, which were aimed to do away with all the constraints on the activities of economic units and to create the conditions for their development. We have worked perseveringly to find new methods of economic management and to improve administration in the light of these decisions.

The People's Committee of the city reviewed the practice of planning in creatively applying the party's line. We took account of the actual state of the economy and the presence of five sectors³. We concentrated on fulfilling the plan which was worked up on the bottom-to-top principle so as to keep it in balance and to make utmost use of our potentialities. We required economic managers to prevent the idling of equipment and losses

in the form of waste. Broader cooperation and the establishment of associations helped to make better use of labour power and hardware. Manufacture of goods for export was simultaneously stimulated.

Contract work is being ever more widely used in industry and the handicrafts. Contracts stipulate the quality and volume of output, wages, producer assets and the technological cycle. In the countryside, contracts are concluded with teams or individuals. In this way, the fundamental principle of distribution by labour is being gradually realised.

We have been working to even out incomes between sectors and various categories of the working people through a rational combination of economic interests, but some outstanding problems still tend to give narrow departmental views the upper hand.

We believe that *it is up to the working people themselves to solve all the problems in economic management*, and so the party organisation has initiated the establishment of administrative mechanisms on the level of the urban neighbourhoods and the rural communes, which now draw up the development plans, expend their own budget, run the life of their inhabitants, and ensure employment. They also act to defend the revolutionary gains and combat any social vices and offences. This helps to consolidate the people's political forces, to strengthen the party ranks and to educate leading cadres for party, administrative and economic management bodies.

Management is being restructured in industry, agriculture and in every other sector of the economy, with the right of initiative in production being transferred to the economic units. Factories and plants, other organisations and urban and rural districts are being made financially independent, with the right to use the available funds, including foreign-exchange funds, to expand output.

But the conditions for administrative decentralisation have yet to be created, and so this experience cannot be applied everywhere. There are still many outstanding problems in combining economic and administrative methods with the organisation of production and economic management on the neighbourhood and commune level.

The party organisation has been gradually working out *a concept of socialist transformations*, having made a concrete analysis of the intricate class and social structure of the population of Ho Chi Minh City and making efforts to correct its own mistakes. As it is throughout the country, *our aim is simultaneously to carry on three revolutions: in the relations of production, in science and technology, and in ideology and culture*, with scientific and technical progress having the prime role.

As we advance along this way, we take account of the operation of the law of correspondence of the relations of production with the nature and level of the productive forces. The leading positions must belong to the socialist sector, of which the state sector is the backbone, while the others are being used and gradually transformed by means of relevant methods.

The various sectors of the economy in the city do not, of course, exist independently of each other, for they are linked up through the division of labour and cooperation. That is why we have made flexible use of such transitional forms as mixed enterprises of the state and the private sector,

and collective, private and family farms, and that helps to limit the chaotic growth of the capitalist elements today, and will help to eliminate them tomorrow. Our rejection of these economic forms or excessive restraint would slow down the growth of the productive forces.

One should not, of course, forget about the private-economic urges of the petty-commodity producer. But we also reckon with the fact that the proletariat in Ho Chi Minh City has matured. Despite the large share of private capital, state industry is prevalent. The People's Committee intends to use market relations for powerfully accelerating our transformations. This will make it possible gradually to change social production as a whole with the ultimate aim of planning being put in place of haphazard development in the long term.

The solution of these important problems depends on *the revolutionary movement of the masses, on socialist emulation, and the full use of the working people's experience, energies and capabilities in exercising their right to be master*. The dictatorship of the proletariat, the power of the working class, acting in alliance with all the other working people is the main instrument in this process. The many thousands of party members in Ho Chi Minh City rely on the masses and are capable of mobilising their energies and capabilities. That is the only way to overcome the difficulties in production and in everyday life, and to develop cultural and social activities. The city's Communists have been creatively applying party decisions in a sustained search for new forms of work with the popular masses, and in exerting an active influence on moulding the man of the socialist society. Here the experience of perestroika in the Soviet Union is a great help.

Creative dynamism has always been a feature of the working people of Ho Chi Minh City, with its long-standing revolutionary traditions. Socialist emulation and the scope of the movement are closely linked with the rights and interests of every individual worker, and of the collectives at the enterprises and organisations. Socialist construction in Vietnam is being carried on in the light of President Ho Chi Minh's precept: "The party must work out a good plan to develop the economy and culture so as to keep raising the people's living standards."

The decisions of the Sixth Congress of the CPV in 1986 formulated the tasks facing the country at the initial stage of the period of transition to socialism.⁴ Over the next few years, the working people of our city will have to stabilise the economic and social situation as a whole, particularly production, distribution and circulation as the basis for gradually improving living conditions, to boost productivity and increase economies so as to accumulate funds and resources for socialist industrialisation.

We have got down to modifying the structure of social production in the city and around it, with emphasis on the earliest build-up of industries in accordance with the specialisation of each economic unit, and on merging kindred enterprises on the territorial principle.

We believe that it is appropriate to use organisational forms combining district-wide planning and centralised administration from the city, because that will help to muster the potentialities of the various populated localities and to create the region's economic and social structure for

successfully fulfilling these three goal-oriented programmes: increasing the output of food, consumer goods and export goods. That is the task the party's Sixth Congress set.

We have been creating additional jobs (a most important effort in view of the still incomplete employment of the able-bodied population). Accumulation funds are being gradually increased. We intend to have selective development of Group A industries (production of the means of production), primarily mechanical engineering, and also small and medium enterprises processing raw materials. These rapidly yield returns on investments, effectively promote agricultural production in the suburbs, and help manufacture goods required by the population and for export. But raw material, electric power and equipment supply is now the urgent problem, and that is why we seek to have producer facilities running at full capacity and full use made of raw materials. We believe that the city economy should have a multi-tiered structure, with emphasis on medium and small but modern enterprises.

Export-import operations should develop into Ho Chi Minh City's main line of economic activity over the long term. We have reliable foreign partners: the socialist-community countries, chiefly the USSR, and also Kampuchea and Laos. But that does not rule out a drive for markets in other countries. We also hope to have foreign companies take an interest in various forms of economic cooperation on the basis of equality and mutual advantage. Another promising item of revenue is tourism and provision of services to foreigners, in particular supply of mixed enterprises, ship chandlery, transit haulage, promotion of trade, and building in neighbouring provinces, and in Laos and Kampuchea.

Our party and the whole people of Vietnam have been working very hard to renovate every aspect of economic and social life. The Communists of Ho Chi Minh City are among the builders of the new society tirelessly seeking to adopt the new approaches which, as we are aware, are being used in other party organisations of our country. For its part, our city could not have developed so dynamically but for the assistance from the Communists and all the other working people of reunified Vietnam.

We strive to overcome all the difficulties and trials in order to transform the economy and meet the vital requirements of the Vietnamese revolution at the present stage. We are fully aware that if that is to be done there must be new thinking, especially in economics, a modern style in leadership and in every kind of work, and reorganisation of our cadre policy.

The Third Plenary Meeting of the CPV CC in August 1987 was an important step in working out the party's economic strategy. It voiced the determination of the party and the whole people to start an emulation drive, make economies, tighten up discipline, do away with negative phenomena and achieve advances in production, distribution and living standards. A plenary meeting of the party's committee of Ho Chi Minh City (October 1987) adopted concrete plans to implement these decisions.

¹ It was renamed Ho Chi Minh City at the First Session of the National Assembly of reunified Vietnam in 1976. — *Ed.*

² For details, see Nguyen Vinh, 'Period of Transition on the Socialist Path', *WMR*, No. 8, 1986.

³ Apart from the socialist sector, which includes the state and cooperative sectors and individual subsidiary farms, there are the petty-commodity sector, the private capitalist sector, the state capitalist sector, and the subsistence economy among some ethnic minorities. — *Ed.*

⁴ For details, see Nguyen Van Linh, 'An Important Step in Renovation', *WMR*, No. 5, 1987.

Financial Slavery

Deeper Contradictions Between Latin America And Imperialism

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MANY contradictions of the modern world are being exacerbated by the debt slavery of the less developed countries. Since the mid-1970s, the external debt — financial slavery, as the meeting of the communist parties of South America in Buenos Aires in 1984 put it — is the main element in the 'sacrosanct triad' of neocolonial exploitation: inequitable trade, direct investments and loans.

The extraction of interest on the debt has evolved into a mechanism of plunder which is much more effective than profit-taking, all sorts of deductions and the notorious price discrepancy. This system has been growing ever more complicated because loan capital has largely ceased to be national and has been transnationalised. The CC Political Report to the 27th Congress of the CPSU pointed out rightly: "A new, complex and changing set of contradictions has taken shape between imperialism and the developing countries and peoples."¹

The Marxist-Leninist conception regards underdevelopment not as a stage but a specific form of capitalist development, and some analysts believe that the external debt is especially characteristic of the relatively mature capitalist society as it develops in the conditions of dependence and backwardness. Loans, which in the 1970s led to brief economic growth, have produced premature decrepitude in peripheral capitalism that has leapfrogged the 'prosperity' stage characteristic of the capitalist centres as they move from free competition to monopoly.

The headlong growth of the debt, the ever tougher demands of the private transnational banks, and the mounting debt service payments have turned the economic problem into a political one. While the figures coming from various sources do not always coincide, it is now believed that the Third World countries' external debt has ballooned from \$6-8 billion in

1955, to \$600 billion in the early 1980s, and to \$1 trillion in 1987. In other words, over a period of 30 years it has multiplied 110-160 times over. In the 1960s, its rate of growth was slow; it was much faster in the 1970s, and in the 1980s it began to decline in view of the capacity-to-pay crisis. However, in the recent period, the proportion of short- and medium-term debt has increased in the debt pattern. Almost one-half is owed by the Latin American and Caribbean countries, 15-20 per cent by African countries, and the rest by countries in Asia and other regions. Ninety per cent of the loans has come from the industrialised capitalist countries (including financial institutions controlled by them) and mainly from the United States. The Latin American debt, which stood at about \$6 billion in the early 1960s, has gone up to \$400 billion in 1987, with over 85 per cent of it being owed by seven major countries in the region, and one-half of it by Brazil and Mexico.

For the Latin American countries, the present debt crisis is the fourth one: the first broke out just after the wars of independence (1810-1826), the next was in the 1870s, and the third one coincided with the Great Depression of the 1930s. In other words, it has recurred every half century, a fact which deserves special study. But the historical conditions are now quite different. The economy of the countries on the continent has been transnationalised, the impact of the structural crisis of capitalism on the Third World has intensified, and chaos and anarchy reign in the international financial system, as a result of the US dollar's conversion into world money. That is why *one has to regard the present debt impasse in close connection with the start of the fourth stage of the general crisis of capitalism.*

A listing of the external factors at the root of the problem of Latin America's debt would be long. Let us consider only some of its important elements.

A large share of the loans consists of funds earlier taken out of our region, and this shows that imperialist loan capital is *fictitious*. The outflow of money from the periphery was stimulated by the favourable state of the New York financial markets because of the US urge to use it to cover its billowing budget deficit produced by the wild arms race. There was also Washington's speculation on the fluctuation of the dollar's exchange rate (for the benefit of the Pentagon, in the first place) and this had an adverse effect on the monetary ties between Latin American countries and their partners abroad.

The external debt of the Latin American countries is roughly four times that of direct investments, so that interest payments are much higher than profits. What is more, the transnational corporations used the funds they obtained to consolidate their own positions. It is generally assumed that they account for almost one-third of the external debt of the private sector in the Latin American economy.

The terms of *international trade* have also caused a rise in the debt. Fidel Castro told the Sixth Meeting of the Group of 77 ministers that there were three highly unfavourable circumstances for our countries: the drop in the prices of basic primary products, the increasing inequivalence of exchange, and the growth of protectionism.² Because of the low prices of primary

products, the Third World countries were short-changed of \$65 billion in 1985, and of \$100 billion in 1986.³ The sharp decline in their ability to pay forced them to curtail purchases on the world market. Thus, 440,000 jobs were lost in the United States as a result of the cutbacks in Latin American orders alone.

Internal factors are equally grave. The substance of the debt problem does not, of course, consist in the recourse to loans or their size, but in the motives of the lenders, in the purposes for which the obtained funds are used, and whether they promote economic growth. There is the apologetic idea of the need for 'capitalist aid', which allegedly stimulates economic growth in the countries of the continent that are said to be incapable of turning out the surplus product required for accumulation. But the true reasons for the low level of accumulation are the flight of capital and the constant and burdensome payments to those who set themselves up as aid-givers, Uncle Sam in the first place.

The chronic external-trade deficit and the costs of maintaining an inflated bureaucratic apparatus likewise tend to swell the debt. A large part of the funds it got was used by the Latin American big bourgeoisie *to finance repression against popular movements*, and also for stock-market speculation, which has led to even greater centralisation of productive capital.

According to the neoliberal conception, external borrowing is a substitute for overdue reforms, because such reforms are allegedly too costly in economic and political terms. The state is vested with a new function: it has to withdraw from direct participation in economic activity, and to do more to guarantee exploitation and dependence. There is also the impact of the adaptation to transnationalised consumer standards, which has led to a growth of unwarranted imports.

The borrowed funds *have not promoted either stable economic growth or social development* for the benefit of the working people. As a result, the basis of discontent and the struggle against the effects of the crisis has been enlarged. The TNCs' plunderous policy has now infringed the interests even of the local big bourgeoisie and impeded its capitalist reproduction, although it itself has yet fully to comprehend this contradiction with the 'senior partner'. All these factors make one take a closer look at the political aspects of the debt problem.

The debt burden has now become truly intolerable, and the situation is being further aggravated: it is bound to increase the poverty of the masses and cause social explosions with immense and irreparable losses. In most countries, the debt has been rising not so much through the influx of new funds, as through the refinancing of unmet obligations, and state guarantees for private loans. From 1982 to 1986 the centres of imperialism extracted from Latin America almost \$120 billion; from 1980 to 1986, the Gross Domestic Product of the countries in the region went up by no more than 6 per cent, while it shrank by almost 8 per cent per head. The share of investments in the GDP dropped from 25 per cent in 1981 to 16 per cent in the mid-1980s.

There is a close connection between the towering external debt and the sharp drop in the rate of growth and accumulation: more than one-third of

the Latin American countries' export earnings go into annual interest payments, while the total debt is equivalent to export earnings over a period of four years.

The change in lenders has done much to aggravate the situation, as private transnational banks have come to the fore. According to the Inter-American Development Bank, from 1975 to 1981 they increased their share of the external debt from 69 to 82 per cent, and from 15 to 23 per cent in short-term loans.

There has been a simultaneous change in the make-up of borrowers. Governments have entitled individual organisations and enterprises in the service sector, which find it harder to stand up to bank pressure, to contract loans, and the financial state of these companies is being worsened by the steady depreciation of the national currencies.

The living and working conditions of the masses have been made sharply worse by the vast increase in the debt, stagnation and the fold-up of production. The UN Economic Commission for Latin America has estimated that 35 per cent of the population lives in 'absolute poverty'. The cost of living remains very high, while wages have been going down. In more and more countries, over 7 per cent of the economically active population is totally unemployed. There is a spread of latent unemployment and a widening of the 'informal sector' of the economy that is typical of backward capitalism.

Meanwhile, the Latin American big bourgeoisie has brazenly used the external debt for its own enrichment, as is proved by the concentration of their profits and the million-dollar accounts in foreign banks.

All these factors are bound to cause *substantial changes in the economic and social structures of the region*, and subsequently in social consciousness and political relations.

Fidel Castro has proved that the external debt of the Third World as a whole, and of Latin America in particular, cannot be repaid without serious economic and social reforms. He put it graphically when he said that "the debt cannot be repaid even in a dream".⁴ This prospect is so evident that the UN General Assembly says in its resolution adopted in November 1986: the debt service problems are a heavy burden and a constant brake on the economic and social progress of many developing countries. It called for agreed, equitable and lasting solutions.

Since it is impossible to repay the debt as a whole, a valid mechanism must be found to rid the Latin American countries of at least a part of it. The way seems to lie in a juridical repudiation. Indeed, a large part of the debt could well be repudiated because the juridical, economic and social prerequisites are there. Expert studies show very well that a large part of the debt is not only illegal but illegitimate and immoral. An amount equal to the total debt has already been paid back over the past few years in the form of exorbitant interest, various commission fees, the rising cost of imported goods (mainly armaments) and services, and the declining prices of primary material.

That the debt is illegitimate is well known by the loans contracted for military purposes, for the purchase of luxuries abroad, and for speculative operations. Many loan agreements were not duly approved by parliament

or were signed in breach of established legislation. Generous 'commission fees' have been paid to high-ranking civil and military functionaries. A part of the debt consists of capitalised usurious interest, even if it is made out to be new borrowing. That is why we are right in insisting on *a repudiation of the state external debt*, i.e., of that part of it which puts a direct or indirect burden on the majority of the population. As for the private external debt, only the obligations which the governments have underwritten could be repudiated.

Studies made in Brazil warrant the assertion that more than one-half of the money loaned (without the \$16 billion owed by subsidiaries to their transnational corporations) has never actually reached the country. We believe that it is up to the governments, parliaments or the judiciary to make a detailed investigation of all the foreign loans since the early 1970s, to establish their origins, the purposes for which they have been used, to compare prices and tariffs with those existing on the world market, to bring out the role and incomes of the middlemen who are Latin American citizens, and to determine which of the imposed terms are an infringement of national sovereignty.

The external debt has become a national problem, and that is why the claims that any investigation would be an infringement of the rights of private persons should be ignored. The transnational banks, which have artificially spiralled the debt, should bear a part of the responsibility.

The private transnational banks are a creditors' club, a transnational banking monopoly. They have a highly efficient system of information and control, which ignores the sovereignty of states, including the imperialist states. Lenin's description of bank capital in his classic work on imperialism is now more relevant than ever before.

All the transnational banks have long since united in a worldwide banking trust, of which the Club of Paris is the legislature, and the International Monetary Fund, the executive.⁵ The creditors' club has tried hard by every means to prevent the debtors from uniting. All the formulae it has proposed for solving the debt problem contain three main conditions: bilateral negotiations in every case; non-acceptance of responsibility by the private banks for the existing situation, and no review of the size of the debt.

Since the debt problem defies solution by purely banking methods, a technico-economic variant has been proposed. It is said to be very easy to put through and to be mutually advantageous for creditors and debtors alike. The idea is to convert a part or the whole of the debt into equity by swapping debt obligations for the shares of Latin American enterprises. The president of Citicorp agreed while on a tour of Latin America that the external debt cannot be repaid, but rejected any political solutions. The only way, he said, is to convert the debt into direct investments, although such an operation, as he himself admitted, would apply to about a quarter of the debt. The idea was endorsed by the US Federal Reserve System by allowing US banks to own up to 100 per cent of the capital of foreign non-financial enterprises.

This supposed panacea is both false and dangerous. There are not enough enterprises in Latin America that are sufficiently attractive for the

transnationals and whose sale could help to cover the debt. An amount equal to only 10 per cent of Brazil's debt would go to pay for 50 major enterprises in the country, even including Petrobras, a world giant. Such an operation could produce a short-term improvement in the state of the hard-currency balance, but it would ultimately lead to a denationalisation of the economy whose consequences are simply unpredictable.

The Latin American governments have still done little to organise joint action in surmounting the debt. That bilateral negotiations alone are possible because of the great differences between states and the borrowing terms is a half-truth that continues to be current, but the differences are being obliterated by the crisis, which compels the working out of a common stand. Evidence of the slow but inexorable development of this process comes from the Cartagena Consensus⁶ and the declaration issued by a group of political personalities and economists in May 1987, among them several former Latin American presidents.

The substance and the acute character of the confrontation with the United States over the external debt problem largely depends on the stand of the imperialist financial groups: they will either have to accept an expansion of the domestic markets of the countries on the continent by writing off a part of the debt, an approach that favours the industrial and commercial monopolies, or they will insist on continued debt service payments, since an end to payments would mean losses for the transnational banks. It is hard to predict what the solution will be, because one has to reckon both with the immediate and the strategic interests of imperialist capital, which are often regarded as being more important than the rate of profit. Only organised resistance by the peoples and joint action by the Latin American governments can produce a solution meeting the needs of the LDCs, and expansion of their domestic markets.

The debtor countries have the right *to act in unison and to put up collective resistance* to the creditors' club. We believe that there must be a conference on the external debt with the participation of all the countries of the world, preferably under the auspices of the United Nations.

It has been proved over and over again that military expenditures are non-productive and are in excess of any reasonable idea of defence: the existing nuclear arsenals can destroy a population that is twelve times larger than the actual number of people on the Earth. The monetary and financial turmoil and its consequences — the astronomical growth of the Third World countries' external debt — is largely the result of the way in which large-scale US military programmes are being financed. That is why, as Fidel Castro has shown, the debt burden can be removed through a dialectical solution of these two problems: *the excessive debt of the dependent and backward countries, and disarmament*. Let us recall that the Soviet Union proposed to the UN General Assembly back in 1973 a 10 per cent cut in the military budgets of the permanent members of the US Security Council, and the use of the resources thus released for assistance to the Third World countries.

The governments of the industrialised capitalist countries, once they have accepted the recommendation to hold a world conference, will have to compensate the transnational banks based on their territory in

proportion to the military-budget cuts. If the funds do come from military-budget cuts, they will not fall as an additional burden on the citizens of these countries and will not inflate expenditures or increase the national debt. The governments concerned could issue special bonds and agree their terms and maturities with the transnational banks with an eye to the period of amortisation of the written-off part of the Third World's debt. That cannot, of course, imply any obligations for the Latin American countries, because it applies to the essentially illegitimate and immoral part of the debt, which is not due to be repaid anyway.

In this way the governments would guarantee the banks the repayment of earlier loans and so would avert the bankruptcy which threatens them in the event of debtor insolvency.

Finance capital is increasingly aware that developments could run such a course. Accordingly, the banks have been selling off (often in secret from their governments) the debt obligations of Latin American republics at a large discount which sometimes comes to more than 50 per cent, while simultaneously increasing their liquidity reserves to offset the actual depreciation of active loans on their balance-sheets. The suggestion is that the private banks, in fact, assess the external debt at a much lower figure than its nominal value. While such actions may be regarded as capitalist prudence in sacrificing some profitability, so as not to lose all of it, they also show, even if indirectly, that the profits they have already made have adequately compensated them for any possible losses.

Even specialists who can hardly be suspected of being hostile to the transnational banks do not rule out the possibility of a partial write-off of the debt. A report by the UN Economic and Social Council admits that a partial write-off of the debt, or a lowering of interest payments to a level below the market rate, would go to benefit all the parties concerned.

One should bear in mind that while the external debt is extremely high for an underdeveloped economy, it is not all that large when compared with the total volume of loans made available through the financial system of imperialism. US non-financial corporations alone have run up a debt close to \$1.5 trillion, which is 50 per cent higher than the external debt of the LDCs. These corporations are themselves faced with the problems of non-liquidity and insolvency. If the private banks will not even hear of the similar problems faced by the Third World countries, and especially by the Latin American countries, that is not because our debt is the basic component of their assets: they simply want to avoid receiving yet another blow in addition to that inflicted on them on the internal front.

But even a partial write-off of the debt would not mean any definitive solution to the problem. There arises the question of what is to be done with that part of it which has actually been used by the economies. In any negotiations on this issue, we believe, one should start from the possibility of a *general moratorium*, without any interest accruing over a period of at least five years, a reduction in interest rates, a deferment of payments to a maximum percentage either of export earnings or of the GDP: these should not be in excess of 20 per cent of the former, and 2 per cent of the latter.

A solution to the debt problem is *the prerequisite for a resumption of*

economic growth in the Third World countries and, consequently, for an improvement of the state of employment in the leading imperialist states. But there is more to ensuring balanced and stable development. *International economic relations as a whole* need to be made healthier. The central element in this process should be a democratic restructuring of the financial system, elimination of the dollars' power as world money, and Washington's hegemony in the world's financial centres. There is also a need to modify the dependent industry of the LDCs, to reorient it towards internal requirements and raw materials, and to fix fair prices for their goods. So long as TNCs continue to be the factor behind the economic perturbations, it is hard to implement the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States or to set up a New International Economic Order.

The periphery of the capitalist world, including Latin America and the Caribbean countries is, in fact, not the debtor but the creditor of imperialist centres, which is why a partial write-off of the debt would at least be a minimum compensation for the vast losses the peoples of our continent have suffered during the long years of exploitation for the benefit of transnational finance capital.

¹ Mikhail Gorbachov, *Political Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 27th Party Congress*, Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1986, p. 18. — *Ed.*

² *Granma*, April 21, 1987.

³ *Ibidem*.

⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵ See the report by corresponding member of the USSR Academy of Sciences, Victor Volsky, at a round table on 'The General Crisis of Capitalism and Latin America's External Debt Problem', *WMR*, No. 4, 1986.

⁶ The original document was adopted in June 1984 at a meeting of 11 Latin American countries in the Colombian city of Cartagena. — *Ed.*

Is There Such A Thing As 'People's Capitalism'?

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FOR a long time, the increasingly painful crises inherent in the development of capitalism have led bourgeois economists and other scholars to look for formulae of an elixir of life for that social system. In recent years, the conservative emphasis on monetarist policies has again revived the theories of 'people's capitalism'.

From the viewpoint of scientific socialism, the term 'people's capitalism' is a mixture of oil and water, reminiscent of the student at a United States college who was trying to register to take a course in Business Ethics. The registration official, looking at the long queue of students waiting to sign up for courses, lost his patience and snapped, "Make up your mind. Do

you want a course in Business or do you want a course in Ethics?" Similarly, in the case of 'people's capitalism', the question is whether its advocates are for the people or for capitalism.

Describing the attempts to transform and improve capitalism, Marx and Engels wrote in the 'Conservative, or Bourgeois, Socialism' section of their *Manifesto of the Communist Party* that "a part of the bourgeoisie is desirous of redressing social grievances, in order to secure the continued existence of bourgeois society . . . The Socialist bourgeoisie want all the advantages of modern social conditions without the struggles and danger necessarily resulting therefrom. They desire the existing state of society minus its revolutionary and disintegrating elements."¹

That statement is fully applicable to the ideology and practice of 'people's capitalism'. Keynesianism has in fact emerged as its particularly widespread embodiment. This theory is based on the idea that the government's economic policy should ensure a high level of investment and aggregate demand which, in turn, would bring about prosperity for capitalist enterprise and meet the basic requirements of the population.

These schemes to reform capitalism and moderate its worst excesses contain a complex mixture of conflicting factors: a critical commentary on certain aspects of the capitalist system (condemnation of unemployment and the imperfect workings of the market); a utopian view of its supposedly progressive elements (full employment achieved through state economic regulation); reliance on the development of new forms of capital and on emerging reforms (development of state-monopoly capitalism); a progressive content in tune with working class aspirations (the Keynesian welfare state); and a passive role dictated for the working class with ideological support for the status quo (reliance on entrepreneurial 'animal spirits' and the beneficial neutrality of the capitalist state).

For a communist perspective, the acid test by which such proposals should be assessed is by reference to who retains control over production and how class conflicts between labour and capital are managed, as such, two key factors are: who really owns the means of production and who appropriates the product manufactured. These cannot always be interpreted in straightforward terms. For even a nationalised industry running at a deficit can be organised along capitalist lines and serve to subsidise privately owned capital — as in many state-owned energy utilities. It is hardly surprising that, as it exists today in the policies pursued by the extreme right-wing governments of Reagan and Thatcher, the ideology of 'people's capitalism' settles these questions in favour of capital. Instead of extension of public ownership, there is suppression of the working class.

Populist demagoguery, however, imparts to 'people's capitalism' a certain perverse affinity with the principles of socialism: in the political sphere, the appeal is for the defence of democracy and freedom allegedly eroded by the 'power of the trade unions'; in the economic arena, the idea is that the people should share in the ownership of capital and the workers in the control and profits of private enterprise in the spirit of class collaboration. The latter is particularly typical of right-wing Labour ideologists.

How, then, is this to be done? At the level of control, there is the idea

that *workers' cooperatives* should be encouraged, for these are often seen as alternatives to trade unions. In contemporary Britain, this outlook has been taken up by the right wing of the Labour party as a version of 'new forms of social ownership' and local economic initiatives associated with local government planning. They are even presented as an alternative to the social ownership of the means of production.

Of greater ideological weight is the role of *small businesses* and the so-called *self-employed*. The idea is not new. Almost two decades ago, the 'small is beautiful' campaign advertised the advantages of small-scale ownership and small businesses.² Created is the image of people working for themselves and reaping the benefits of their initiative and effort. In Britain, over the life of the Thatcher Governments, the self-employed have grown by a third, now approaching ten per cent of total employment. However, the self-employed in general have become far removed from the image of the successful, self-made businessman (rarely a self-made businesswoman) who is rewarded handsomely for his own efforts and initiative.

In the context of present-day mass unemployment, self-employment has become the second-best option in the absence of a secure long-term job. Bankruptcy and insecurity are endemic in this category, and levels of incomes are low. The law — whether concerning conditions of work around health, safety or hours — is not observed, and survival can depend upon the orders subcontracted from large-scale companies who play off the multitude of small firms against each other. In short, the reality of self-employment and small businesses as a segment of 'people's capitalism' has been one of self-exploitation.

Indeed, in small firms which observe labour legislation only haphazardly, there has been a resurgence of the sweatshop system. Meanwhile, to the property holder the state is a villain which is deemed to stand in the way by its regulation to protect the wages, hours and conditions of employment. Here, too, the ideology of 'people's capitalism' offers a pseudo-solution and advocates restricting the role of the state. Mrs Thatcher's Government has reduced employment protection against unfair dismissal, and it has undermined much of the Wages Council system set up by none other than Winston Churchill to protect unorganised workers against excessive exploitation by laying down levels of wages and standard conditions of work. The steps to curtail this government intervention are described as designed to increase the flexibility of the labour market, but it is the people that bend and capital that benefits. Such is the real nature of the 'small is beautiful' concept.

The *sale of shares* to workers has been a major element of 'people's capitalism', designed to transform the buyers into co-owners of enterprises and beneficiaries sharing in the profits. In Britain, this dispersal of share ownership has taken a distinctive form — predominantly the sales of shares in nationalised industries, most notably for British Telecom, the Trustee Savings Bank, British Airways and the British Gas Corporation. The number of small individual shareholders has doubled over recent years and reached eight million, although they remain a minority of the population.

Naturally, the bulk of the shareholdings is still controlled by the existing

financial institutions, and the structure of wealth concentration has remained essentially unaltered. Available figures indicate that the top one per cent of shareholders own 54 per cent of shares and the top five per cent, as much as 80 per cent. Ironically, the addition of a large number of small shareholders makes it more difficult to ascertain who really controls the economy because the top one per cent of share owners has now extended to what was previously the top two per cent. In one of its early decisions, the Conservative government abolished the standing commission investigating the distribution of ownership of wealth in the United Kingdom, and it is now quite difficult to obtain relevant figures. 'People's capitalism' does not extend to people's knowledge of 'people's capitalism'.

The situation with regard to 'democratic' share ownership is similar in other capitalist countries too. Since 1980, the number of workers covered by profit-sharing plans in the United States has risen from one to about ten per cent, with programmes to involve almost ten million more workers.³ Meanwhile, the top one per cent of shareholders own 50 per cent of shares and the top six per cent own 80 per cent.

Significantly, shares are offered to workers in the United States when the companies in question are under threat of bankruptcy — Chrysler and the Eastern, Pan Am and Republic Airlines. The money paid by workers is thus used to save these firms.

Another typical feature is that in negotiating employee share ownership, the *quid pro quo* has been wage cuts or restraint. In return for \$35 million in shares, 23,000 unionised employees of Pan Am had to suffer a 10 per cent wage cut and a 15-month pay freeze. At Eastern, 25 per cent employee share ownership cost workers a loss of \$290 million in wages. A subsequent net profit of \$190 million yielded less than \$50 million in workers' pro rata share.⁴ Employees thus incurred a loss of over \$240 million. When Chrysler was facing bankruptcy, the US Government guaranteed a loan of \$1.5 billion, one of the objectives being to support an employee share ownership scheme. But employees had to give up \$585 million in pay increases over the next three years in return for equity valued at \$165 million.

These 'people's capitalism' practices not only show that capitalists are willing to share profits when they no longer exist but also reflect a deeper point — that *the worker is tied to capital* by a wage relation, be it piece or time wages. But wages may also be paid in the form of a share in profits.

The notion that profit-sharing is a form of wages used to bolster private profitability is confirmed by the experience, at the end of the 19th century in Britain, of the sliding scale of wages which rose and fell with the level of prices in various industries. It had the effect of tying the fortunes of the worker to the fortunes of the company. But no one pretended at that time it was employee share ownership or profit-sharing. The changed circumstances that make this possible today are to do with the public form that private property now takes, with share ownership rather than individualistic family entrepreneurs making up the formal ownership of companies. Just as private property and control were the sacrosanct ideology of the past, today we are told that public ownership in the form of

shares is the foundation of the new democracy of 'people's capitalism'. But, as we have seen, both the new and the old rationales for capitalism require wages to be sacrificed to profits.

The principal motive behind the introduction of the new form of remuneration is to reduce the overall wage payments to restore the company to profitability. At the same time, the long-term goal is to lead employees to identify themselves with the company and make them dependent on its success (i.e., to work harder for some but not all of the profit), to moderate conflict between 'them' and 'us' (i.e., to pretend capital and labour are not in fundamental conflict) and even to pose employee share ownership and profit-sharing as an alternative to trade unionism. The way these far-reaching plans are linked with 'people's capitalism' is clear from a remark President Reagan has made: "Could there be a better answer to the stupidity of Karl Marx than millions of workers individually sharing in the means of production?" We could reply: "Could there be a better answer to the stupidity of President Reagan than millions of workers collectively controlling and planning the means of production under socialism?"

Returning to the example of Britain, one should say that its distinctive form of privatisation through the sales of shares pursues several objectives besides the purely ideological desire to strengthen the free enterprise system. In the short term, the government raises cash which can be used to fund current budget deficits or income tax reductions — a favourite election ploy of Mrs Thatcher's.

Privatisations also mobilise the funds of workers and encourage them to cut current consumption as a means of saving more. More importantly, privatisation represents a redistribution of funds between those that can buy shares and those that cannot, *widening the gulf between the rich and the poor*. This conforms to the distributional effects of the Thatcher government in the realm of wages, where those who are high-paid and in jobs have done well compared to those in low-paid jobs and those on unemployment or other welfare benefits. To consolidate its electoral support out of the sale of British Telecom, the Tory party obtained the list of addresses of shareholders and wrote them a letter warning that a Labour government would confiscate shareholders' rights and inviting contributions to Conservative party funds.

The fact that British Telecom shares doubled in value⁵ immediately after they were sold by subscription is used by the apologists for 'people's capitalism' to advertise private enterprise to the detriment of the idea of nationalised public property. John Moore, a former Tory Minister, claims that "the share price performance of companies after privatisation is at least partly a reflection of how the profitability and efficiency of the companies have increased as a direct result of being privatised".⁶ This view is echoed by the British economist S. C. Littlechild in the paper on regulation of British Telecom following privatisation that he wrote for the Department of Industry: "One would not expect it immediately to become as efficient as a comparably large organisation already in the private sector, but it will gradually respond to the normal commercial incentives to eliminate inefficiency and take a realistic approach to wage negotiations."⁷

What the latter point really means is that the employees are going to be robbed. Here we have the ideology of 'people's capitalism' at its crudest, and transparently a support to private monopoly capital.⁸ There is something ironical about the way the British people are called on to widen their stake in capitalism by buying shares in nationalised industries which, as public property, they used to own.

Those who advertise the ideology of 'people's capitalism' also claim that it can cure unemployment, a major social malady which hits the people hardest. This idea has been built on by the US economist Martin Weitzman whose work has been judged by the bourgeois press as the 'most important contribution to economic thought' since Keynes. In his book *The Share Economy* Weitzman asserts that profit-sharing will lead to lower levels of unemployment: since wages are tied to profit, they will fall in a recession along with profitability and make higher levels of employment than otherwise attractive to the firm paying profit-related wages.⁹

Weitzman's ideas found ardent supporters in Britain too. James Meade, the Nobel Prize winner for economics, admits in the preface to his book: "I state here simply once and for all that his (Weitzman's) two articles caused this book to be written and that it is basically an exposition of various applications of his models." His honesty is to be welcomed for he favours profit-sharing because "it removes the large element of direct conflict of interest between capital and labour".¹⁰ But Meade has nothing against a clash of interest between workers, preferring a scheme in which new employees do not share in profits, for otherwise "there would be a conflict between 'insiders' and 'outsiders'. Those already in employment . . . would be required to face a reduction in pay as a necessary condition for allowing unemployed outsiders to join in the concerns' useful activities."¹¹ This would impede the employment creation effects so that, for Meade, it is better to take on new workers at lower wages than those already employed. That is an implicit attack on the basic principle of trade unionism — the same pay for the same job.

Guided by such recommendations, the Conservative government has proposed that pay should be related to profit (although nothing is said of what is to happen to government employees). This approach to the labour market has been reflected in a government Green Paper.¹²

Arguing in favour of reducing pay during slumps, the Chancellor of the Exchequer said in the House of Commons: "The problem we face in this country is not just the level of pay in relation to productivity, but also the rigidity of the pay system. If the only element of flexibility is in the numbers of people employed, then redundancies are inevitably more likely to occur. One way out of this might be to move to a system in which a significant portion of an employee's remuneration depends directly on the company's profitability per person employed. This would not only give the workforce a more direct personal interest in their company's success . . . It would also mean that, when business is slack, companies would be under less pressure to lay men off; and by the same token they would, in general, be keener to take them on."¹³

Attention to the rigidities in the labour market is food and drink to Mrs Thatcher's government. For them, this is 'Toryspeak' for the idea that

wages are too high and that the power of the trade union movement is too great. The same language has been used to justify a whole series of anti-labour measures — restricting the right to strike, enforcing postal strike ballots, restricting welfare benefits to strikers and the unemployed and the like. Now, on the pretext of combating unemployment, the government would like to ensure *collaboration between labour and capital*, with workers' voluntary agreement to lower pay.

An unholy alliance between a monetarist government and bourgeois academics advocating 'people's capitalism' has thus arisen around the idea of workers sharing in the profits. Whether, and the extent, to which academic economists and government ministers are able to pull the wool over each other's eyes is not of great significance to the labour movement. Certainly, capitalists, especially the successful, have not been convinced of the virtues of profit-sharing. The Green Paper has not been well received by the representatives of industry and is seen more as a gimmick to suggest that the Tories are doing something about unemployment.

Much more important for the labour movement is that it should not be seduced into accepting the ideology of 'people's capitalism' and that it should retain the perspective of *social ownership and class conflict* as the means of achieving this strategic goal. There are signs that the right wing of the British Labour Party could attempt to appropriate the policies of 'people's capitalism' in place of socialist policies. They have already accepted the idea of owner-occupation in housing at the expense of public ownership. This wing may well prefer a workers' share scheme over nationalisation in order to exert influence on the employers' decision-making.

This must be powerfully resisted both for particular industries and for the idea of socialism.

¹ Marx, Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, 'Conservative, or Bourgeois, Socialism'.

² See E. Schumacher, *Small is Beautiful*, London, 1973.

³ See K. Bradley and A. Gelb, *Share Ownership for Employees*, London, 1986.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁵ As a result of the stock market crash of October 1987, British Telecom shares dropped sharply in value in line with most other shares. Equally, the government price set for privatising British Petroleum before the crash was affected to the extent that the shares largely remained unsold, and the government paid out hundreds of millions of pounds to the bankers who had underwritten the issue. This experience will undoubtedly damage the demagogic propaganda for 'people's capitalism'.

⁶ John Moore, *Privatisation in the United Kingdom*, London, 1986, p. 5.

⁷ S. C. Littlechild, *Regulation of British Telecommunication's Profitability*, London, 1983, p. 28.

⁸ Littlechild's concept is discussed in greater detail in: B. Fine and L. Harris, 'The Economics of the New Right' in *Socialist Register*, London, 1987.

⁹ See M. Weitzman, *The Share Economy*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1984.

¹⁰ J. E. Meade, *Alternative Systems of Business Organisation and of Workers' Remuneration*, London, 1986, p. 114.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

¹² See *Profit-Related pay: A Consultative Document*, London, 1986.

¹³ *Ibid.*

Education – For Whom?

Julius Mende — CC member,
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THAT Austria's educational system is rooted in the division of society into classes is quite obvious. By agreement between the two major parties, the Austrian People's Party and the Socialists, the school system has been retained as it was shaped under the Emperor even before World War I. The 1962 constitutional law, a product of the ideas of social partnership, stipulates that any school reform ought to be supported by a two-thirds majority in Parliament to go through, which effectively guarantees that neither of the major parties, even if it forms a government, will be able to introduce such a reform without the other's consent.

The Austrian school is structured along *class lines* to such an extent that it does not envisage even on paper equal educational opportunities for all children, with the exception of the first four years (6 to 9) of the elementary school (*Volksschule*). Children of 10 to 14 are already streamed into two basic types of education.

Around 80 per cent of all students — for the most part children of factory and office workers — continue in the senior forms of the *Volksschule*, which is meant for the mass of people and trains youngsters for jobs involving manual work; children leave it at 15 years of age. The other 20 per cent proceed to the *Gymnasium*, also a part of the system of universal secondary education; graduating from it at the age of 18-19, the young people have the right to university education.

Recently tuition in major subjects, such as mathematics, German and English, in the senior forms of the *Volksschule* became pegged to three streams of students depending on their progress.

The school-leavers are thus subdivided into four categories: on the one hand, there are *Gymnasium* graduates, predominantly children of professionals, politicians, office workers and, of course, entrepreneurs; and on the other, three groups of *Volksschule* graduates destined to serve capital. The children of workers and especially immigrants are thus given a back seat in the educational system.

Along with the state-run schools, the educational system has a private sector, which furthers the *class-based structure* of general education. Numerous private and especially church *Gymnasiums* have made education especially selective and élite. Those institutions cater for children from bourgeois families: their status along with the parents' personal and political connections paves the way for their offspring to suitable positions in life.

Those schools charge tuition fees and receive state subsidies (which go to pay the teachers), and are therefore well equipped. Graduates are issued certificates which are equivalent to those of state-run schools. The privileges of the ruling minority are thus paid for with public money.

The Social Democrats have concluded agreements with the Vatican¹ in a bid to neutralise the considerable political influence of the church in the

country (some 90 per cent of the population are Catholics) and to secure more votes in elections.

Working class children have been granted broader educational opportunities in Austria as a side effect of the socialist countries' achievements in the field of education. The idea of 'human investment' has been borrowed from the Americans: its central thesis is that spending on education is likely to push up profits or at least to give an impetus to economic growth. The rising birthrate in the late 1960s and the completion of the post-war phase of industrial rehabilitation fuelled the hope that the expansion of education would stimulate the growth of production. The slogans 'Help talent!' and 'Broaden access to education!' were formulated. The number of working class children attending secondary schools indeed grew in the next few decades. The schooling of girls was also improved with the extension of instruction in natural sciences. Free bus services were provided for schoolchildren living in remote rural localities.

However, there has been little change in the percentage of university students with working class background. As many as 40 to 60 per cent of Austria's hired labour are classified in various studies as workers in the narrow sense of the word — but only 8 to 12 per cent of their children receive university-level education.

As compared with other capitalist states, Austria is a developing country in terms of citizens with higher education. Economic patterns seem to be one reason for this situation: alongside a few large enterprises, some of them state-owned, there exist numerous artisan workshops and small cottage-type factories with virtually no university-educated specialists in their workforce.

Moreover, around one-third of Austria's capital is controlled by transnationals. They establish their research centres in other countries, and during the spell of economic growth in the 1960s a 'brain drain' to the USA and West Germany blocked the growth of the skilled labour force at home and made Austria lag behind other countries in all the major areas of the scientific and technological revolution. Unless foreign partners offer help, Austrian firms, universities and research centres can carry out independent projects in very few fields, such as microelectronics.

All this has given an edge to the problem of occupational and preoccupational training, which is the foundation of knowledge at a time of the emergence of new technologies.

Austria's occupational training system is rooted in medieval apprenticeship. For a long time it coped well with the task of providing graded training to and instilling a sense of discipline in workers-to-be. Most of the *Volksschule* graduates take a one-year 'polytechnical training' (vocational guidance) course and go to factories for a three-year specialist course of training. During that time they have to attend once a week (or daily during six weeks) a vocational training centre, which provides a smattering of general education but first and foremost specialist knowledge.

Nowadays young people are trained in more than 100 occupations and therefore cannot be given broad fundamental knowledge. Training is highly specialised to suit the needs of enterprises. The alternative to this

outdated practice is the idea of a lifelong process of education and training effectively to match advances in production.

More and more *Volksschule* graduates opt for three-year advanced vocational training centres. Some of those centres have their students take exams for the school-leaver's certificate at the end of the course of training. Those centres have many specialists classes, e.g., in informatics and electronics, promptly to respond to the changing needs of capital.

The number of such training centres issuing school-leaver's certificates has grown by half since the 1960s. Their graduates are given preference in employment in small and medium-sized enterprises.

In view of the growth of youth unemployment (from 10 to 30 per cent in various regions), many young people seek enrolment in those training centres to have a better chance of employment. As the scientific and technological revolution advances, a need for workers of a new type is likely to arise and the training centres will have to match it. More flexible skills within each occupation will most probably be required and people will have to change their occupations more than once during their work careers. The rapid renovation of production through automation closes some occupations and brings into existence others, and workers have to be always ready for advanced training or retraining.

In future the so-called rudimentary types of activity, those involving low skills and concerned with the servicing of production, will most likely be converted to flexible production systems as well.

Even today any job requires knowledge beyond the field of the occupation involved and the number of narrow, specialist types of activity based on manual work tends to diminish. Dual-type occupations, such as engineer/marketing expert or electronics/mechanical engineer, are likely to appear.

Conventional vocational training is a brake on these trends. Big business has already realised this drawback and is making up for deficiencies in the state-run training system by establishing company schools, like the one of the Siemens AG.

The coalition of the Conservatives and the Social Democrats which is currently in power in Austria has responded to the requirements of capital and passed legislation enabling it to *intervene direct in the training system*. Enterprises are invited to invest in educational establishments, to hire professors and to organise private schools for the élite. When *Gymnasiums* introduced training in computers, industry rather than the state provided teaching personnel.

Clearly, an attitude to the growing possibilities for the flexible and diversified use of manpower in the labour process depends on whether you look at them from the point of view of the working people's interests or from that of the profitable investment of capital. An educational system is progressive if it prepares the working people in the best possible way for a life with a sense of dignity, not if it can quickly rise to the needs of capital.

The Communist Party of Austria demands a reform of the educational system in the spirit of democratic traditions of the working class movement, namely, the establishment of an *integral school* and the closure of all the private élite educational establishments, primarily those

influenced by the church. The Communists with their own views of the importance of labour to the development of the individual and to social progress reject the mere adaptation of man's productive power to the scientific and technological revolution as to some spontaneous process. Occupational training must involve the development of class consciousness and of the ability for independent action, including action in production. If the planning of education just trails technological progress, education will never match these tasks. We cannot foresee what challenges young people will face 10 or 20 years on; the school therefore should equip them with diversified knowledge and skills and raise them to be active and energetic and able creatively to match those new challenges rather than succumb to them.

Prognostication is virtually impossible under capitalism with its anarchic economic development because economic plans are revised year after year. Socialism alone has the potentialities to raise the younger generation with an eye to the future.

When the growth of the productive forces slows down, young people with high basic skills can naturally find their expectations for challenging jobs come into conflict with practical opportunities to secure them. But in principle the Austrian Communists support the idea of a general polytechnical school: it will go farther to equipping *all* the young people with progressive basic occupational skills than our country's selective educational system which, moreover, is cumbersome and, with the exception of private institutions for the élite, too slow in responding to new requirements.

A debate on Austrian education has demonstrated that rigid divides between educational cycles as well as the traditional 'cramming' are outdated. People trained to take orders and obey will be unable to show initiative in technological innovation, in operation of machinery or in the social sphere. The demand of the Communist Party for the development of a general polytechnical school is therefore inseparable from the goal of the *democratisation of the academic process*, from the integration of research, technological and industrial projects into it, and from studies of practical problems in the life of society.

The conventional school raises young people in the spirit of conformity, individualistic competition and the antagonism between the individual and society, which is in accord with the thought and behaviour patterns prevalent in society. It is therefore an important goal of progressive pedagogics to foster in youth a sense of solidarity in the struggle for their own common interests. The school could train the working class for a role in production management if the present social conditions did not militate against it.

At the insistence of the trade unions the social consequences of the introduction of new technologies under capitalism are now covered in computer classes in schools and in the training programmes for teachers of computerisation. But the exposure and criticism of such implications of these processes for the working people as unemployment, monotony at the workplace and increased stress are sometimes obscured in classes by fascination with 'button pushing'. There is the risk that a fetish will be

made of new technology. Clearly, students must be taught the ability critically to evaluate the role of new technology and to resist mechanistic views of progress. *A close unity of the school and labour in general* is an important condition of this ability.

As various types of automated work have become very similar today, the traditional division of occupations into men's and women's is no longer valid. In the longer term, industrial robots and manipulators will make it possible fully to mechanise arduous manual work. All the occupations will be within the reach of both sexes and this fact should be reflected in school education, primarily in work classes and production training.

Work classes for boys and girls in Austrian schools, however, still are traditionally separate and very different. As a result, women are excluded from important spheres of activity — although along with men, who are not trained in 'women's trades'. Girls therefore have a choice between just 10-20 occupations. The Social Democrats came up with the slogan, 'Free access for girls to men's jobs!' The enterprises balked however, and even the girls themselves were not ready to part with the conventional concepts of their predestination. Access for women to important occupations and trades is a significant criterion of their equality with men in society. This does not at all mean, however, that the role of woman as mother is underestimated. But as working hours shrink, thanks to automation, the tasks of child-rearing may be redistributed between mothers and fathers.

Today capital would like to use home labour more intensively but Austria's trade unions and workers' parties are opposed to this approach as perpetuating woman in her traditional role of housewife and denying her essential experience of production and communication with other people on the basis of shared interests. At first women regarded home labour as an ideal opportunity to reconcile the house chores and work careers and only after some experience of that kind have realised how difficult it is to carry the double load, being torn apart between the kitchen and the computer.

However, with shorter working hours, advocated by the trade unions and the workers' parties, some of the work with computers can be done at home. This would give fresh opportunities to women and also to men, who could contribute more to housework and child-rearing.

This example illustrates the importance for both sexes of *polytechnical education* and significant social goals in the application of the achievements of the scientific and technological revolution. These problems are profoundly *political*.

Unemployment, for instance, is caused not so much by new technology as by the state of society. In Austria the ruling classes are already looking forward to living in 'a society of two-thirds', in which one-third of the population will be normally out of work. Following the logic of capital, that one-third should be educated to a level just sufficient for a maintenance of social peace: people should be raised so that they would be happy with unemployment benefits, with having their basic needs met, and should spend their time as passively as possible.

These are the gloomy prospects of the introduction of new technology if the democratic structures are emasculated. The ultimate result could be

'computer fascism' pictured in sci-fi novels — that is, if the mass of the working people would be unable to think and act independently and to sort out realities for themselves.

Small élite groups can gain enormous influence on public opinion and control over the mass media through the development of computer networks, the introduction of cable television and display terminals, etc. People can be watched and their telephones tapped far more efficiently than today.

Conducting classes in new technologies at school, democratic teachers should explain these dangers and educate students in the democratic use of the mass media. Some of the critically-minded Austrian teachers have developed as a study aid for computer programming classes a school monitoring system which gives students an idea of vast opportunities created for various manipulations by the storage of seemingly insignificant data. Many West Germans, for instance, refused to cooperate in a recent census out of the fear of exposing themselves to total state control.

Some of the ideologists of capitalism paint rosy pictures of a totally computerised society. They exult in depicting vast amounts of free time that people will have but never explain that the entertainment industry and its 'automatisation' are designed, among other things, to make the unemployed timidly accept the existing social system. The very organisation of free time is geared to subverting democracy and depriving people of their independence.

Critically-minded teachers of computer programming ask another question: how is the development of the personality influenced by the fact that virtually throughout his life man gets information about the surrounding world from display screens — second-hand, so to speak — be it production, management or operation of his personal computer at home?

All these problems will confront our children and they should be prepared to tackle them. The perspicacity, interest and combative action of the working class organisations will decide if the ruling classes use new technology in their own interest and control every aspect of life or if that technology will be used as truly creative productive forces effectively to foster human talents and abilities and to meet people's needs.

¹ The agreements provide for the establishment in Austria of Catholic schools with government subsidies. — *Ed.*

By Anti-Nuclear Unity – Towards People's Unity

William Somerset — a member of
the National Executive Committee,
Communist Party of Ireland

AS with Communists the world over, seeking a better understanding of today's realities and the priorities and goals of Party activity, we have to try better to define the questions that have to be addressed in Northern Ireland, too.

The placing of the major issues confronting the world before the harassed people there is imperative for our Communist Party, which has to work in the specific circumstances of the two administrations — that of the Irish Republic and the other in that part of the island at present ruled by the government in Westminster.

In Northern Ireland one of the major questions is the relationship between the prolonged conflict of successive British governments with the national aspiration, given all its present-day ramifications and bitter divisions, and also the cardinal issues of world peace and the ending of the nuclear threat. How are these latter to be addressed in a society bleeding emotionally and physically from the long years of invective and discrimination, of bombing and shooting, with lives and families torn apart by the calamities: in a society where children are killed by the 'non-lethal' plastic bullets of the British troops and police, and where women prisoners are humiliated by the strip-searching of their bodies in custody? In the shadowy world of the para-militaries citizens are assaulted and murdered, cruel hostilities are fanned into flame and sectarianism continues unabated. The enmity between the Protestant and Catholic sections of the community grows daily and its intensity heightens yet again with the British abandonment of its erstwhile garrison in the North, the Loyalists, for the better opportunities for its policies afforded by a new relationship with its class brothers of the Irish bourgeoisie.

The scars and agonies of these long years in Ireland have resulted in an exceptionally complex problem for the Communists and socialists who would try to rescue our people from this nightmare on the basis of binding them in a unity that can withstand the provocations and threats of determined enemies, of whom there are many. Striving to counter this divisive exploitation of the Irish people, the Communist Party champions everywhere the need for *unity of the peoples as the premier requirement for their salvation*. The purpose of every action of the people, of every skirmish is to build that unity, to test it against the savage sectarianism and thereby to demonstrate its effectiveness in the day-to-day struggles and those of the longer term.

It is in pursuit of this same goal, unity, that a year after its 19th Congress the Communist Party held in its Northern Area a regional conference to check upon the implementation of the national Party decisions.

Amongst the many issues that must compel the attention of a serious

political party are the key issues of peace and solidarity. These issues are important not only for the effort that Ireland might lend to sustain these causes, but also for the lesson in organisation that such efforts bring to the people. There is, too, the growing realisation that there are other peoples, struggling for aims not dissimilar to their own, whose actions are to be applauded and from whom new lessons are to be learnt. But these issues must be made to compete with the local crescendo. Our national congresses have long recognised that *peace and solidarity struggles are essentially all-Ireland and all-embracing struggles upon which our divided communities might well unite regardless of religion and of class.*

In the Northern Area, therefore, great effort was put into the building of a sound framework within the Party for activity on the peace and solidarity issues.

These matters are in the hands of the Northern Area Peace Committee of the CPI. The Committee needed to move outside the greater Belfast area in order to embrace growing numbers of supporters out there. To this end monthly meetings were rescheduled to take place on alternate months in some one of the peripheral towns. This made it possible to pay particular attention to the issues as the comrades there found them and, on occasion, to lend physical help in local projects like leafletting and posterings and to bring in an outside speaker to their audiences.

Also appraised by the Northern Area Conference was the Northern Ireland Association for Peace and Détente, set up more than a decade ago. It makes no pretence to be representational, but seeks to involve organisations and individuals in vital subjects. It takes up new issues on a promotional basis and will project courses of action on maturing questions. It promotes the discussion of wider prospects with its contacts. It cherishes close links with a number of trade unions.

There exists in Northern Ireland the umbrella organisation of NI Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Alongside it there are also some church-associated groups for peace. Specialist groups of CND, like TUCND, youth CND and Christian CND, send delegates to the NICND Council, which meets on a regular basis.

This structure arose after successive failures in the building of NICND. Early personality clashes and narrower approaches had eroded confidence within the CND ranks. But the changing situation and the harsh realities compelled the people to find a way to cooperate. It took a whole year to smooth out a myriad of organisational problems. Another year was spent in building its forms and in making contacts outside Belfast, where individuals were known and canvasses, leafletting and meetings could draw together others alive to the issues. There are CND branches in Coleraine and Newry. The rebirth of the NICND was celebrated in 1986 with a summer festival, its first since 1983. The festival was a success and many people wanted it to become an annual event.

NICND emphasises that it coordinates the other groups, rather than 'runs' them. It tries to mount campaigns that can draw on all the groups. It encourages each to follow campaigns of their own, of course. The groups come to one another's aid in particular projects.

It still has difficulties, of course, like the usual summer lassitude which

strikes all public organisations, but two campaigns are currently picking up.

The first has been in train for several months to protest against the building of civil defence 'bunkers' — nuclear fall-out 'shelters' for the government's emergency administration. In the midst of local conflagration, British policy is preparing for a greater tragedy, looming in the shape of a nuclear cloud. Initial steps in the protest are to alert the people of the HQ town of Ballymena, where the first shelter is to be built. Another is to be in the west of the province and a third to the south. The latter will probably cover east as well, because Belfast is, of course, expected to be the target of nuclear attack. The campaign will highlight these activities and the enormity of the rationale behind them, a decision which implies the extinction of the people other than the minions of government.

The second campaign is really the Northern Ireland aspect of a concern already public in the Irish Republic. For NICND its launch date was the 10th October, the 30th anniversary of a major accident at the nuclear processing plant then called Windscale and now Sellafield, where, at that time, there had been a fire which released a radioactive cloud. It was rather superficially reported, but in the Dundalk area of the eastern coast of Ireland there was found a rather high incidence of Downes syndrome amongst babies born thereafter. There is some concern about leukemia which seems to occur in certain pockets down the eastern coast of Ireland where the occurrence rate is considerably higher than average rates. The fear is that the 'low-level' wastes deposited on the coast might be a cause. The magazine *Nature* carried a report on a survey of the coasts of counties Antrim and Down and found plutonium there, which supported the idea of a connection between the two phenomena. From time to time, too, fishermen have reported mutated fish. Sellafield has a deplorable safety record. It continues the release of so-called 'low-level' nuclear waste into the Irish Sea, which is an equal concern and a worry for the future. Now the company is planning to build caverns under the sea for the storage of 'intermediate-level' waste.

Already Irish government spokesmen have protested, as have, recently, the Independent Unionist MP for North Down at Westminster, James Kilfedder, and the SDLP Member for South Down, E. McGrady, in major statements. James Kilfedder intends to raise the matter in the British House of Commons. The North Down local Council also objected, backing a resolution of Dun Laoghaire Council in the Republic to demand the closure of Sellafield and condemning its further development. The issue is clearly one uniting the political parties and other forces on both sides of the partitioning border. Sellafield and its closure are a very potent issue for *all the people of Ireland*, with the Communist Party's members engaging alongside others in the struggle.

The recent referendum¹ on the Single European Act (for political integration within Western Europe) was an occasion for Party action and for the involvement of both NICND and Irish CND. This Act was a clear threat to Irish independence at a time when the Republic already is

involved in the Common Market and when NATO would like to use it in its own designs for the 'security' of the alliance.

As our Party notes, neutrality is important because: it is the most serious aspect of the claim that Ireland is a sovereign, independent state; it is a contribution to world peace by asserting that even for a capitalist country the war aims of her NATO neighbours are not the automatic way things should be; it denies the validity of NATO's claim to moral leadership in Western Europe and its obsession with 'rolling back' the advance of socialism in the continent. Finally, it enables the Irish to condemn Star Wars and urge real advance of disarmament.²

A great deal of energy is going into promoting a broader view and a greater awareness of international issues like SDI and its implications for all. Its relevance and the associated question of nuclear missiles have led to recognition of the urgency of a test ban, and a demonstration was carried out at the US Consulate in Belfast last February. NICND were the sponsors and they met the US Consul.

Alongside of and as part of the overall peace effort is the solidarity work in Ireland. As a result of the decisions of the Northern Area Conference, a new appraisal was made of our work in the faltering Anti-Apartheid Movement in Belfast. It is revived again and its links to the other branches are renewed. New effort was also invested in the Chile and Nicaraguan solidarity organisations. Some workers to go to Nicaragua for the coffee harvest have been financed from the Movement, as has been medical aid to Vietnam. In 1987 prime attention was again on South Africa and on the Year of Palestine campaign. The appearance of resolutions on the wider platforms available ensured that these questions were kept before the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, its Northern Committee and the Women's Conference.

Trade Union CND is concerned with the problem of alternative work to armaments, which engages many of those who do have work in Northern Ireland, those in Shorts aircraft, the shipbuilding, and engineering industries. Explorations are going ahead on this question and TUCND also has an interest in the matter of the 'bunkers' where it has members working, of course. It strives to extend the affiliation it enjoys from some of the Unions, which lends it resources and platforms for campaigning on the distortions of industry by the diversion of revenues to war production.

Not least in the sphere of peace and solidarity work is that of the Women's Centre in Belfast, which concentrated on a wide range of events — during the United Nations International Year of Peace. The successful organisation of the Peace Tent, in spite of many obstacles placed by the authorities, was in no small part due to it. It confirmed the potential of peace issues to bring together the women from whatever background in Northern Ireland. The Womens' Rights Movement arranged many solidarity meetings and has plans for visits from Iraqi, Soviet and possibly Aghan women.

The link between *the North and the South of Ireland*, of course, is important in the special political circumstances. Since the two CND's have close links, with members working in one area but living in another, they are allowed to attend, though not to vote, in the other. With a few NICND

members sitting on the Council of ICND, the issues of either become common issues for both.

Contact has been established with Britain's CND. The movement is now working on the notion of associating all the Celtic nations against nuclear weapons. There was a speaker at the NICND Conference from Wales CND, and contact with Scottish CND. In County Galway, in the West of Ireland, a representative of Man CND (the CND of the Isle of Man, which has its own government) attended. There are good prospects of associating the French Bretons and the Cornish people of Southwest England in such a concept.

As for international contacts, mention should be made, in addition to ties with the World Peace Council (WPC) and the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF), of the fifth annual conference of the North Atlantic Network (NAN), a West European regional association of non-aligned organisations dedicated to ridding the North Atlantic of war weapons. The conference was attended by delegates from both areas of Ireland, from Britain, from Nordic countries, and also by peace activists from the Pacific and Indian Ocean countries. The discussion made it possible to bring far closer together the anti-nuke and ecological aspects of the peace concept because it centred on a matter of common concern, that of preventing the pollution of the oceans with radioactive waste and with nuclear weapons themselves. The participants were especially worried, as they noted in the documents of the conference, that "the increasingly aggressive posturings which constitute NATO strategy in the North Atlantic could provoke this, the ultimate human and ecological disaster".

The translation of these plans into actions and the drawing of lessons from their implementation take place against the background of a tense political situation with much attention riveted on the dangerous local events unfolding day by day. The promotion of our issues loudly is imperative if the wider world's happenings are to be heard and appreciated in Northern Ireland, and the Irish question is not to be 'settled' by a nuclear blast on the island.

In that appreciation lies the possibility of building the tenuous links that may grow *to bind in unity* the people of this tortured island. To this endeavour the Communist Party of Ireland bends its every effort.

¹ It is important to note that it was only carried in the referendum on the absolute assurance of the Irish government that its signing would have no impact on Neutrality. There is no doubt that a policy of 'positive' neutrality is essential to both parts of Ireland.

² See *The Irish Socialist*, November 1987.

Limitless Possibilities For Cooperation

Jose R. Lobaton Heredia

Notable renovation processes have been taking place in the Catholic Church of Latin America after the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) proclaimed the so-called *aggiornamento* (updating) policy. The clergy, including its prominent figures, have increasingly been showing interest in developing a dialogue and cooperation with the left-wing forces and also in the realities of the socialist world. These and other problems are considered in an interview below given to *WMR* by Father Jose Lobaton, minister of the influential Franciscan Order of Peru and dean of Lima's largest cathedral of St. Francis of Assisi.

You are known to have great prestige in the progressive and left-wing circles of Peru. How can you explain the fact and how have you arrived at mutual understanding and cooperation with them?

YOU are just being polite to speak of my great prestige, though I won't deny that I do enjoy certain prestige in some left-wing circles of Peru. Many of them belong to groups that have devoted themselves to concrete humanitarian and social work. They collaborate, for example, in the Glass of Milk Programme (to benefit children from the needy families. — *Ed.*), in organising popular canteens and in actively aiding the inhabitants of slums and poor peasant communities. And the clergy, on a personal plane, share these aspirations. Take, for instance, our efforts in mother's clubs, children's canteens and schools in indigent districts and our denunciation of violence, oppression and diverse forms of discrimination and immorality, which do damage to the people. This is a manifestation of our civic and political conscience. This is where our views coincide with those of the friends of the left-wing forces who, like us, struggle for peace and a more humane society. Similar aspirations evoke mutual respect and make us think that our cooperation can be even closer.

What aspects of the Marxist social doctrine do you, as a Christian, find positive and just and which of them are unacceptable to you?

To me a positive aspect of Marxism is that it presupposes and brings efficient actions to resolve secular problems of the Third World and gives a scientific explanation of the structural causes of misery. Marxism equips us with this timely analysis, which is applicable both to the situation in Peru and Latin America as a whole, though it, of course, presupposes a certain level of social consciousness indispensable in bringing about social changes.

The real or seeming one-sidedness of this analysis can be considered a weak point of Marxism. Many other differences (racial, sexual or religious)

together with economic inequality are responsible for man's alienation from society. It is in these spheres that the Marxist analysis in some cases seems to be undiscerning or oversimplified. Even many Marxists, primarily anthropologists and sociologists of culture, have pointed to this shortcoming.

You represent the Franciscan Order in your country. The Franciscans are known for their restrained, simple and modest way of life. Is it possible, from your point of view, to speak of the compatibility of these Franciscan ideals with socialist moral and ethical values?

To answer this question, I would like to divide it into three parts. To begin with, the Franciscan Order was founded by Francis of Assisi (1181-1226), who was an embodiment of the popular ideal and of poverty. In Latin America our order solidarises with the oppressed Indians and carries out missionary work in poorest areas. Its distinctive characteristic is the desire to be a genuinely popular Order and the mouthpiece of the victims of oppression and injustice, poverty and abandonment. This *option in favour of the poor*, naturally, cannot but bring trouble to the friars, many of whom have already had to face it.

As for our austerity and asceticism, I would like to say that in the age of science and technology we are after maximal development and convenience for many on the basis of justice and everybody's participation. Egoism is what leads to the unbridled wastefulness of some and the extreme impoverishment of others; humankind that wastes an enormous wealth for the sake of hedonism or the arms race is a disgrace in the eyes of the great majority of people deprived of vital necessities.

Speaking of the values of the socialist world, I believe that socialism will be able to achieve equilibrium and respect for the natural and productive resources and their rational and humane use, fostering in this way the most humane forms of living.

What do you think of Fidel Castro's well-known thesis about a 'strategic alliance' to be established between Christians and Marxists in their struggle for a more just society?

When strategy aims at justice, free development and the disappearance of flagrant social differences, dependence and age-old slavery, in which we live, I find it not only convenient but also necessary. Every human being, by virtue of being one, should join efforts with others of his kin in an alliance of solidarity without distinction as to faith or race, political views or culture so that our children stop dying of hunger, that TB and other diseases be eradicated and that living conditions be more humane. I believe that this is, of course, not enough to satisfy the people or to enable them to realise themselves in full. But it is the vital minimum enabling man to survive. It would be utopian, if not absurd, to speak of even greater scientific and technological achievements and other values and to forget about the aforementioned things.

What are, in your opinion, the possibilities for and forms of cooperation between Christians and Marxists in their struggle for peace and the moral improvement of the people?

To me these possibilities and forms of cooperation are limitless. In waging peace any interaction is our duty. Naturally, what we mean is not the peace of the cemeteries. *To Latin Americans peace signifies, apart from the absence of war, also social justice and a truly humane form of life.* I think that to us, just like to Marxists, the spiritual and moral aspect is in man fully realising himself. These moral values and mutual respect will lead us to a new civilisation of not only justice but also love, which will have no room for exploitation, alienation, drug addiction, alcoholism and other evils widespread today.

You have visited several socialist countries, including the Soviet Union. What do you think of the changes taking place there and Soviet efforts to build a nuclear- and weapons-free world?

I have had an opportunity to visit several socialist countries. I can state that they are making efforts to create a new culture of peace. The process encompasses all levels — economic, political, artistic, recreational, educational and so on. That is why I have studied seriously Mikhail Gorbachov's proposals to clear the globe by the beginning of the next century of nuclear weapons and of the horrors of a nuclear holocaust threatening us all. Therefore, I believe it would be a grave mistake not to unite in supporting Mikhail Gorbachov's efforts. After all, arms reductions in the industrialised countries, which finance the death programmes (indirectly at our expense), will strengthen peace and at the same time bring benefits to the Third World fettered by the burden of exorbitant external debt, which obstructs its full development.

Uprising In The Occupied Territories

IN December 1987, the most powerful mass popular uprising in the 20 years of occupation swept the overrun Palestinian territories. The media at home and abroad have been forced to acknowledge the fact; the Israeli press has described it as a real civil revolt.

Within the first days of the unrest, more than 50 patriots were killed, hundreds were injured and thousands arrested. When the picture becomes clearer, the toll taken by the reprisals is sure to increase dramatically.¹ The British *Guardian* had reported that the authorities seek to conceal the truth by suppressing information about the uprising as unscrupulously as this is done by the South African racists who prevent journalists and television cameramen from reaching the epicentre of important events.

Many of those injured preferred to stay away from hospitals: occupation troops raided medical facilities, arresting and beating patients. Soldiers

opened fire on two Palestinians who fled from a raid to the roof of the Ash-Shifa Hospital in Gaza. Both were killed on the spot. Patrols stopped and detained ambulances. The invaders murdered wounded Palestinians in Israeli hospitals.

The uprising was set off by a monstrous crime committed by the invaders on December 8, 1987, when an army truck drove into a group of young Palestinians. Four were killed and 11 injured, some of them gravely. That was when people tried to express their indignation, to challenge Israeli barbarity and the policy of occupation as such. However, their peaceful demonstration and strike provoked brutal reprisals and more murders. All that has aroused the just wrath of our people and compounded their hatred of the Zionist rulers who commit crimes on our soil.

Indiscriminately, they kill women, children and old people. As it is clear from the unrest on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip, Israeli policy can in fact be summed up as firing on civilians. Methods of provocation are also used widely. With Israeli Prime Minister Shamir's approval, Cabinet Minister Sharon who represents the Likud bloc moved, at the height of the unrest, to a house he had illegally seized in the centre of occupied Jerusalem and staged a 'housewarming celebration' there. Meanwhile, the Israeli army was delivering strikes against the Palestinians and Lebanese in southern Lebanon.

The revoltingly sadistic Zionist rulers order the killings of unarmed people. UN personnel in the area of the disturbances say they saw Israeli soldiers urinate into the tank of the water tower servicing the Khan-Yunis Palestinian refugee camp (Gaza). Or take another example. When the American friends of Israeli Defence Minister Rabin advised him not to irritate world public opinion and to avoid firing on demonstrators, they suggested other 'methods' — the use of special counter-insurgency units. The Defence Minister did not agree, saying that the establishment of special units would cost too much — firing on people is cheaper, it appears.

The Israeli chieftains and some Western capitalist quarters that have joined them in a common conspiracy have tried to delude public opinion by picturing the courageous uprising on Palestinian soil in a distorted light. An heroic struggle was almost equated with hooliganism encouraged from abroad or provoked by religious fanatics. The Israeli mass media are even speaking about the activities of 'subversive organisations'.

Although forced to voice verbal disapproval of the brutal action taken by the occupation troops, US Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy nevertheless explained the events in a traditional imperialist way. He said the disturbances broke out because over the years of occupation, Israel had "failed to raise the living standards" in these territories. As popular action reached its peak amid the reprisals unleashed by the soldiers against unarmed civilians, Washington made a new deal with Israel, granting it a status equal to that of America's NATO allies in the field of military cooperation, including deliveries of the latest material and of supplies for the Israeli military industry.

Despite the bloodshed and the numerous casualties our people suffered during the uprising, the events of late 1987 are additional proof that the schemes of the Zionist rulers, their US sponsors and those who have joined

their conspiracy to wreck the just cause of the Palestinians are doomed to failure. Our people who have frustrated many conspiracies over the past decades are strong enough to resist the Israeli-Jordanian 'division of functions', 'autonomy' and other similar plans. The Palestinians will never give up their right to self-determination which has been recognised by the United Nations.

Recent developments in the Middle East have given rise to a worldwide wave of solidarity with the just struggle of the Palestinian people whose courage and heroism have won them deep and universal popular admiration. The international community and the democratic quarters in Israel itself have never been more resolute in their condemnation of the crimes committed by the Zionist rulers.

Naim Ashhab
Political Bureau member,
Central Committee
Palestinian Communist Party

'WMR received this article in late December 1987.'

surveys, letters, and diary

Pages Of History

60th Anniversary Of The Paraguayan Communist Party

FEBRUARY 19, 1988, marks 60 years since the foundation of the Paraguayan Communist Party (PCP), whose emergence was a natural outcome of objective and subjective processes. Under the life-giving influence of the ideals of the October Revolution progressive representatives of the working class and the intellectuals of our country became aware of the need to form a political vanguard to spearhead the working people's struggle for the attainment of their historic goals of

building socialism and communism. The Sixth Congress of the Communist International (1928) enrolled the PCP as its member.¹

In the sixty years the PCP has covered a glorious and thorny road and passed the test of time working in clandestine conditions. Quite a few of its best sons and daughters, rank-and-file members and leaders perished in struggle.

From the very beginning the PCP has been defending the vital interests of the working class, the peasants, the middle urban strata and the progressive intellectuals, the cause of the homeland's independence and national sovereignty over the natural resources that have been placed under the control of transnational corporations. When the Chaco War (1932-1935) flared up between Bolivia and Paraguay the Communists, as true patriots and internationalists, were the only party to expose, despite the groundswell of chauvinism, the imperialist nature of that war, showing that the two brotherly peoples were sacrificed by the rival British and US oil companies.

As the domestic political situation exacerbated in February 1936 veterans of the Chaco War staged an armed uprising. To turn it into a revolution, the party called upon the working people to organise militant actions. The developments brought to power the reformist government of Col. Rafael Franco but already in August the next year the reactionaries organised a putsch, nipping in the bud emergent transformations and engulfing the country into mass terror.

The victory over Nazi Germany led to a dramatic upswing of the popular movement in Paraguay. Powerful anti-government actions led to a political crisis on June 9, 1946, with the formation of a coalition cabinet which restored some civilian freedoms. Now acting legally, the Communists spearheaded the struggle for the full democratisation of public life. In that short period thousands of new members joined the party ranks but progressive changes were cut short by the rightists, who staged a military coup in January 1947 and resorted to murderous repression.

The party called upon the working class to rebuff the reactionaries. On March 8, 1947, an armed uprising was organised by the Communists in Concepción but it was put down due to lack of coordination among the participants and due to imperialist interference.

The general strike of August 1958 and the heroic actions by the Itororo guerrilla column have a special place in PCP history. The column was made up of fifty young Communists who till their last breath fought for a better future, for a Paraguay free from oppression, and fell victim to the treachery of agent provocateur Oscar Creydt and his accomplice police agent Raúl Ramírez.

The Third Party Congress (April 1971) became an important landmark in the life of the party which, relying on an in-depth Marxist-Leninist analysis of the domestic and international situation, adopted a new Party Programme and new Party Rules. It set forth the task of expanding ties with the mass of the working people, uniting the working class and strengthening its alliance with the peasants with the aim of building a broad-based national front capable of overthrowing the dictatorship, guaranteeing civil liberties and carrying out agrarian and anti-imperialist

changes along socialist lines.

In the new political conditions characterised by the marked activity of working people in town and countryside, students and patriotically-minded intellectuals, the PCP Central Committee held its plenary meeting in August 1987. It pointed out the importance of mass action, considered the problem of further unity of the left-wing forces and all anti-dictatorial movements as an alternative making it possible to extricate the country from the current impasse through a democratic national liberation revolution. In the face of savage repression by the fascist tyranny of General Stroessner the plenary meeting pointed to the need to prepare for decisive battles using all forms of struggle.

We believe that an indispensable prerequisite of success is the strengthening of the vanguard organisation of the proletariat. We will have to launch an ideological onslaught on bourgeois liberalism, to overcome the gap between words and deeds, to put an end to passivity and lack of initiative, to expose opportunism and factionalism, to raise the role of the party press and to improve cadre training. The PCP seeks to affect dynamically the key developments, to study the experience of the fraternal parties, first and foremost that of the CPSU and on this basis to carry out its own restructuring and all-round renovation, which will bring thousands of new militants into the ranks of the Paraguayan Communists.

The August 1987 Plenary Meeting of the PCP Central Committee passed a resolution to convene the Fourth Party Congress. It is to take place at a crucial moment in the life of humanity when the Soviet initiatives to rid the globe of nuclear weapons are beginning to be translated into life. In this connection a key topic to be considered by the Paraguayan Communists at their congress is that of combining efforts for peace and for a system of universal security with the struggle against tyranny through united actions by all the anti-dictatorial forces.

Marking its 60th anniversary, the Paraguayan Communist Party unswervingly adheres to its policy of internationalism. We are convinced that loyalty to Lenin's great cause will bring us victory.

Hugo Campos
member of the CC Political
Commission, Paraguayan
Communist Party

¹ This fact alone refutes the lies spread by renegade Oscar Creydt, who headed the PCP from 1953 to 1965 and tried to claim that the party came into being exclusively owing to his efforts in 1933.

The Reader Wants To Know

'Abolishing' The Working Class?

"I hear that the World Federation of Trade Unions has denounced the Iraqi authorities for their decision to disband the national trade union association and to reclassify all the public sector workers as employees. What has caused this step? Why has the Baghdad regime 'abolished' the working class?"

Dimitris Khristopulos
Piraeus, Greece

PRESIDENT Saddam Hussain did announce last spring that all the workers of the public sector were to be considered employees, that Labour Legislation was repealed and that the General Federation of Trade Unions of Iraq was disbanded. The decision was endorsed by the Revolutionary Command Council. What are the motives behind it?

The authorities' move was not unexpected for our workers because it was a logical extension of the policy pursued by the Baath leadership, which uses repression to crush the struggle of the working people, to prevent them from rallying closer together and to abolish their rights and gains.

Hatred for the working class and its Communist Party is characteristic of the Iraqi Baath leaders. After the Baath party came to power in the July 1968 coup, as early as November 5 of the same year, following orders from higher up, police opened fire at the striking oil mill workers. A broad campaign for 'Baathisation' of the workers' trade unions was launched to make them a component of the police system and a tool of the ideological manipulation and deception of the working people. Only Baath members were allowed to engage in trade union activities. The best sons of our people were thrown into jail. The authorities ruthlessly repressed anyone who dared criticise, however mildly, Baath policy. Mohammed Ayesh, Chairman of the General Federation of Trade Unions, the Federation's General Secretary Badin Fadhel and Yahia Abdel Hossein, leader of the Baath Central Workers' Bureau, were executed in 1979.

The dictatorial regime keeps pursuing its anti-worker policy and toughening and maximising the exploitation of the working people in a bid to offset labour shortages caused by the wholesale mobilisation for the senseless war (around 50 per cent of the working-age youth have been called up). A 'national campaign of production skill upgrading' has been devised by the authorities to avoid paying bonuses to people working in the war zone, deductions are made from the workers' meagre wages as 'contributions to the war effort' and legislation has been passed to repeal overtime pay. Managers have been authorised to use workers on whatever jobs they wish without the latter's consent. Arbitrariness has become law: managers have the powers to dismiss workers, to throw them out of their

homes or make them move to other domiciles, to curtail their privileges, etc.

The workday has been extended to 10-12 hours and the law banning the use of women's labour on night shifts has been suspended. The fine for absenteeism is four times regular pay and sick leaves are paid at the rate of 75 per cent. *Al-Jumhuriya*, a semi-official newspaper of the Baath party, reporting a 48.3 per cent drop in the volume of medical services in the recent period, explains it away by "workers' increased consciousness as regards health care". The war, it appears, does not at all come into it.

The authorities do not admit that there is class struggle in the country and try to create the impression that the regime is stable and here to stay. They are out to prove that the main contradiction of Iraqi society is not the antagonism between the working people, on the one hand, and the exploiters, the ruling grouping and its repressive machinery, on the other, but that between workers and employees. The classification of workers as employees, the authorities hope, has made the former a part of the state machine and thus obliterated altogether any class struggle between them and their employer, which is state-bureaucratic capitalism.

The true nature of the regime is rooted in its goal of asserting capitalist relations of production and of according every privilege to the private sector. Privatisation is proceeding full tilt and state farms and farmers' cooperatives are being rolled up. Legislation on the workers' rights, won in long and hard struggle, has been repealed. Every effort is being made openly to secure the backing of the local and foreign bourgeoisie, which the teetering regime would like to use as a crutch. For instance, way back in 1984 a Union of Contractors was established; it has been characterised by the Iraqi Communist Party as a nucleus of the political party of the more parasitic sections of big bourgeoisie.

The anti-worker policy of the Baath leadership is also an attempt to find a way out of the crisis and to shift its burden onto the shoulders of the working class. That is why the authorities dip their hand into the pension and social security funds set up with the money of the working people themselves. The dictatorship is trying to make up for labour shortages, caused by the war and the mass outflow of migrant workers, by putting employees to operate machine tools. The regime, nurturing the illusion that it will succeed in this way in 'wiping out' the working class and 'abolishing' the very concept, clearly fears that class and its party, especially now that the Communists' role keeps growing, that they are becoming more active, that all the national patriotic forces are stepping up their struggle against the dictatorship and that Iraq's ruling élite is becoming more and more isolated. The social base of the regime is shrinking and the policy of war and terror unleashed by the Baath leaders is coming against the ever growing disapproval and opposition of the broad segments of the population, including people within the armed forces and the Baath party itself.

The government is out to prevent workers from establishing any organisations that would be independent of it, regarding them as a possible threat to the dictatorship. The sham 'abolition' of the working class and its dissolution in the mass of employees is small wonder: it is aimed at

crushing working class organisations primarily in the public sector, which employs most of the Iraqi proletariat.

In one of the latest statements the Democratic Trade Union Movement of Workers of the Iraqi Republic deplored the authorities' decree to reclassify workers as employees, to repeal labour legislation and to disband the national federation of trade unions. Having gone underground, the movement is nevertheless working vigorously to establish a system of bases at industrial plants and at farms. A series of strikes has been conducted. Our leading periodical, *Saut al-Ummal* (Workers' Voice), is doing a great deal to rally together and organise the working people and to expose the authorities' policy of dividing the working class.

We think highly of the solidarity of the World Federation of Trade Unions and the International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions which have branded the anti-worker action of the Iraqi regime as a violation of the charters of the ILO and the Arab Labour Organisation and stressed that it fits into the pattern of the stepped-up onslaught on trade union rights and freedoms in a number of countries. The Iraqi government has been urged to reconsider its decision on the disbandment of the General Federation of Trade Unions of Iraq and to permit it freely to continue its work.

Fawziya Ayed
Democratic Trade Union Movement of
Workers of the Republic of Iraq

We Are Not Discarding Socialist Values

Is not the Soviet Union going back on socialist ideological principles and eroding the foundations of socialism with its present changes?

Montserrat Domingo
teacher, Barcelona, Spain

THE revolutionary revamping of all areas of public life in the USSR has been caused by objective needs. Over its seven decades socialism's progress has not been totally uninterrupted. Certain imbalances have emerged, and there has even been some deviation from the ideas which triumphed with the October 1917 Revolution. This applies to the totally unjustified personality cult, which is intrinsically alien to socialism, political and economic authoritarian-bureaucratic distortions, and ideological dogmatism. Different as the 1930s and 1940s, and the late 1970s and early 1980s were, common to them were the objective and subjective adjustments made to Lenin's ideas and the concept of socialism, which came nowhere near bringing out the advantages of the new social system.

It is also true that all these things should not in any way belittle the headway socialism has made in the USSR. We took only a short time to

build a robust economic base and make important changes which radically transformed the nation and ensured social guarantees for all its working people. Nor can one minimise the valour shown by the generations of Soviet people who went to enormous lengths to safeguard the socialist gains in a life-or-death fight against fascism. History just cannot be painted either black or white or rosy — it is a living thing and has a great variety of colours.

It is a fact, though, that to make further advances our society needs to rid itself of the false legacy and distortions of the past. So if we are going back on some entrenched views with our present changes, we are certainly not doing so with either socialist values or the ideas of Marx, Engels and Lenin; we are pushing against later 'additions'. Our goal is to restore ultimate authority to Lenin's ideals.

What this amounts to in practical terms is showing greater concern to the individual and his values, as well as moves to restore to socialism its imminent humanist essence as interpreted by the founders of Marxist-Leninist teaching. Social and economic priority should be given to people's needs, social programmes should no longer go underfunded as was the case in the past, and interests of the individual, the collective and society should be balanced.

It is my guess that what made you anxious, Mrs Domingo, were Spanish press reports of the way our socialist economy is using market mechanisms and commodity and money relations. But the farther we move on with our restructuring practices the more it becomes clear that it is pointless to contrast a planned economy with a market one, or reward higher productivity with bonuses rather than with moral incentives. Rather than pitting such things against each other, what we need to do is to use all economic instruments in a socialist context.

Our ideas of socialism are not constrained by the narrow bounds of concrete policies practiced over past decades. We see as essentially socialist our present forms of production cooperation, among them families working as distinct production teams on a contractual basis. Such are the ways our public ownership, which is still predominant, operates nowadays. As regards individual enterprise, there is absolutely no reason to see it as a concession to capitalism, for no exploitation of someone else's labour is involved. Rather, all these things are adding to the big industries, which are still critical to the nation's prosperity.

Our present political changes are also consistent with the true values of socialism. Essentially, they aim to broaden democracy and people's self-government, as well as the citizens' opportunities to have a say in important decision-making at all levels — in the factories, villages, cities and the state in general. Cultural pursuits are being strongly encouraged, too. Is this at odds with socialism? Surely not! Rather, all such things are actually furthering socialism.

May be we should 'seize' from our ideological adversaries some political terms that, until very recently, our zealous guardians of dogma used to scare us with. Among such things is pluralism — but rather a socialist one.

We must no longer be scared of ideological 'ghosts'. We should be moving ahead towards more socialism, more democracy and more humanism.

Sergei Kolesnikov
deputy editor-in-chief of the
Kommunist magazine (USSR)

Letters To *WMR*

Making Our Views Clear

Dear comrades,

A REPORT published in your issue No. 7 of July 1987 entitled 'The Communist View of the Peace Movement' refers to the peace movement in India and has the following to say: "Thus, until 1982-1983, the CPI (Marxist) took a fairly reserved attitude to the Indian peace movement, but discussions, persuasion and our flexible stand induced it to assume a more active role in the peace struggle," Unni Krishnan said."

The CPI (M) has always maintained that a peace organisation should be as broadly based as possible, involving not only a broad spectrum of political parties but also the mass organisations of trade unions, youth, students, etc. Further, we have maintained that such an organisation should function democratically with the participation of all these elements and should not become an organisation controlled and directed by any single political party.

In keeping with the interests of developing a mighty peace movement in the country, the CPI (M) placed before the AIPSO leadership these two conditions — a broadly based nature of the organisation and its democratic functioning. When this was agreed to we had no hesitation in joining the AIPSO and are playing an important role in strengthening it. There was hence no question of any 'reserved attitude' or of 'persuasion' from any quarter. The question under debate always was that of broadening and strengthening the peace movement.

The CPI (M) on its own has always maintained the urgent need for developing a mass-based peace movement in India and has independently undertaken many programmes and activities towards this end. This we continue to do because of our political examination and a Marxist-Leninist appreciation of world realities, the necessity of mobilising all forces against the danger of nuclear war as well as developing solidarity with the people fighting for national liberation and defence of independence.

The CPI (M) has an organised strength of twenty million Indian people through the various mass and public organisations that it leads. This organised strength is today being fully mobilised on the issues of peace and

anti-imperialism. This markedly strengthens the peace movement in the country.

I hope you will publish this letter so that the readers are able to receive a true reflection of the developments in India.

With greetings,
Fraternally yours,
Sitaram Yechury
member, Central Committee CPI (M)
General Secretary All India Peace
and Solidarity Organisation

Readers Respond, Add and Suggest

I have read the letter by Chilean émigré Jose Gonzalez you carried in your No. 4, 1987 edition. I think he is right: a change of priorities in Latin America because of the situation there, i.e., abandoning the idea of armed struggle to safeguard universal peace, could indeed force us at the end of the day to sacrifice the interests of revolution. I have not yet come across any relevant material in your journal. It is a pity, since the issue is a critical one for Latin American Communists.

Jorge Gomez
Argentina

It is most vital to keep the people, primarily working class, politically informed, in terms of communist ideas. The Right quarters in capitalist countries have an actual grip on the major newspapers as well as radio and TV. The media are also at the command of the multinational companies which, for their part, follow by and large the lead of US imperialism. Their goal is to garble and smear developments in the socialist states, among them the peace and disarmament proposals by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries.

This is why we need so badly now broader, detailed and accurate information on living socialism that we Communists can furnish. The more such information in your journal the better.

Anhel Martinez
Spain

I have been brought in contact with *WMR* by a friend, a long-standing subscriber. In it I found things to vindicate my ideological and political views. What I liked most about it is its internationalist dimension and its great concern for the pressing problems of all the nations struggling to be free of international imperialism. I hope that by subscribing to your journal I will learn about the role Communists have in fighting for a new future.

Mahmoud Abdel Jabbar
Belgium

I am a Nicaraguan studying in the GDR. I am soon going back home but will keep up my studies. Rather it will be some sort of self-education for me. And certainly your articles will come in handy.

Our country has been forced into an unjust and immoral war stage-managed by the reactionary aggressive militaristic quarters of US imperialism. We are locked in combat with humanity's arch enemy, and it often happens that the news of the peace drive and peace initiatives by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries take much time reaching us, and haphazardly at that.

WMR will therefore have immense value for me and my comrades if it comes up with more of such information.

Carlos Corea
Nicaragua

We are thankful to the authors of the letters and are looking forward to more of them. Our address is: Thakurova 3, Prague 6, Czechoslovakia.

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