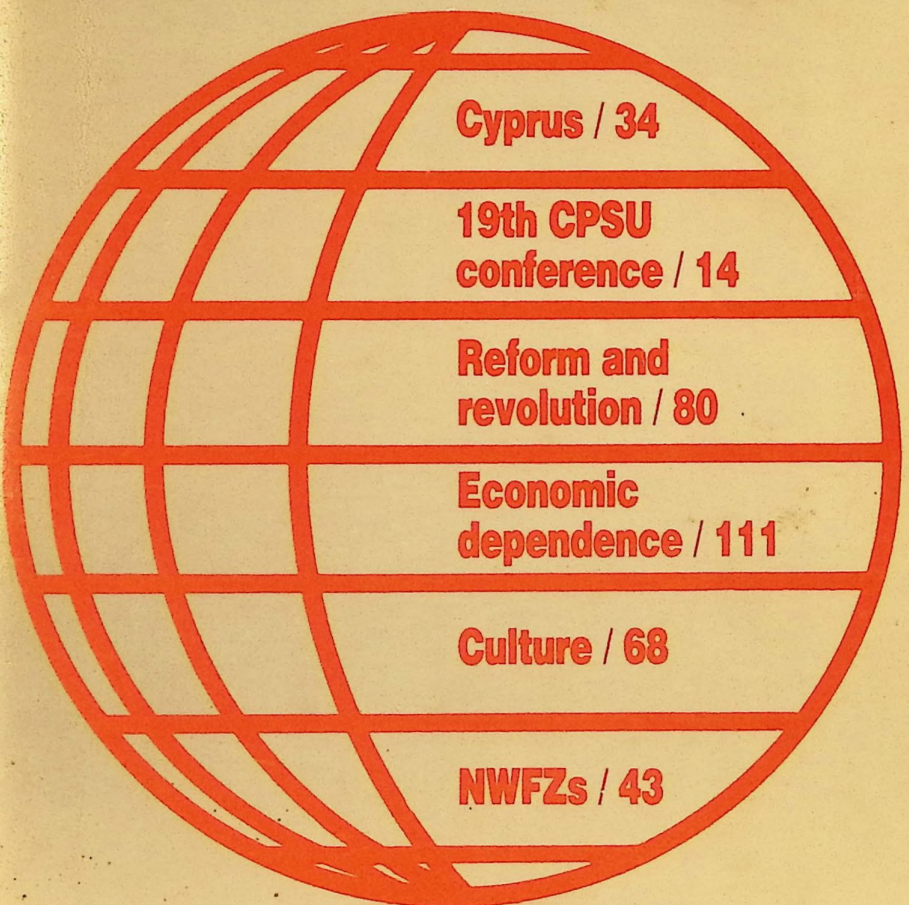


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The Spirit And The Letter Of The October Revolution

Michael O'Riordan — National
Chair, Communist Party of Ireland

SOME readers may find my reflections and assessments concerning the 71st anniversary of the October Revolution subjective and even honestly biased — and rightly so. I cannot distance myself, my aspirations and my commitment from a cause to which I have devoted my whole life. I cannot remain impartial to the movement this cause gave rise to, a movement of which I have been a member for over 50 years. For me personally, since I was born in the city of Cork, Ireland, on November 12, 1917, the October Revolution is a biographical fact, a part of my life story.

But is this the only reason why we older-generation Communists are so unyielding and uncompromising in our defence of the traditions of the October Revolution? Is this what explains the firmness of our stance — in the sense that otherwise, we would have at least to question if not completely revise the rationale of our lives? This is, of course, one of the reasons — but not the foremost one. I think I can say on behalf of my generation of revolutionaries that our commitment to the cause of the October Revolution is not only justified by the path we have traversed but is also reinforced by more weighty considerations far transcending the subjective sphere. This commitment would be worth little if it did not stem from reality, from the practice of the class struggle.

Taking Stock

To those who claim that the October Revolution has long lost its power to influence world developments and that its ideas survive only as prejudice harboured by the stubborn fundamentalists of the Comintern era, I would say, “Look around you, look at the world you live in. It is a world radically transformed by the powerful impact of the great revolution of 1917. It is a world in which this revolution’s motives — social, political and intellectual — continue to operate as effective factors of social progress.”

I do not intend to maintain that Ireland, with her north-eastern part still

saddled with British colonialism, a hold-over of the pre-1917 era, offers a vivid example of the changes which have occurred over the past decades. But even our country has felt the impact of the October Revolution. I would quote one of many such instances. When the Irish Labour leaders Thomas Johnson and Cathal O'Shannon returned from the Berne International Labour and Socialist Conference in February 1919, they concluded their lengthy report to the National Executive and Affiliated Organisations of the Irish Trade Union Congress and Labour Party with these words: "Finally, we have grown still stronger in our conviction that the Soviet Government of Russia is Ireland's best and most disinterested friend."

On the eve of the revolution's fourth anniversary Lenin noted that "the farther that great day recedes from us, the more clearly we see the significance of the proletarian revolution in Russia, and the more deeply we reflect upon the practical experience of our work".¹ Now that we have entered the eighth decade of the era ushered in by the revolution which shook the world, we keep assessing its results again and again, so as to better understand today's problems and to fight for our objectives more confidently. Let us now consider these results and their current significance.

The October Revolution expressed and effectively met society's profound demand for the emancipation of man from social exploitation and other forms of oppression. With hindsight we can see that the system that emerged was far from ideal. Socialism developed along paths previously unexplored. It was an effort to tackle unprecedented tasks of radically transforming a way of life and mental stereotypes which had been shaped over centuries. The difficulties of building socialist society were compounded by the fact that the revolution triumphed in a country which in many respects lagged far behind the industrially developed nations. Newly born, socialism encountered the destructive aftermath of the Civil War and foreign intervention. It bore the brunt of the struggle against fascism. As the new social system gained ground, it experienced a constant and comprehensive pressure brought to bear by the imperialist countries that surrounded it. Its development had its share of various deformations and of stagnant, crisis-related phenomena.

However, it is the overall result that is important — the fact that the 1.5 billion people currently living under socialism have effectively proved the possibility of creating a society which is not torn apart by antagonistic internal contradictions and which ensures everyone's right to employment, meets other vital human needs and guarantees involvement in government. Without these accomplishments, mankind's further progress is simply unthinkable.

The influence of the October Revolution has turned into a permanent factor for the world's renewal along the lines of social justice and democracy. The continuity of the ideas and the cause of the October Revolution is focused now in the Soviet Union's perestroika. That is the best proof of the inexhaustible creative potential of the revolution and of the viability of the social system it gave birth to.

The October Revolution made an enormous impact on bourgeois society

and dramatically aggravated its contradictions. By taking the means of production away from the exploiters and handing them over to the people, the revolution destroyed the myth about the immutability of capitalist property and the bourgeoisie's exclusive right to govern. The world's working class became a 'class for itself', aware of its role in social development and, after the example of Russia's workers, fighting resolutely for a better future.

The bourgeoisie has changed too. It had to make considerable concessions to the working people while fully mobilising its potential for self-preservation. Capitalism has succeeded in adapting to the new conditions. It has stood the test and found enough resources to promote the scientific and technological revolution, to use its results for allaying the class struggle and to expand the scope of social manoeuvring. Monopoly capital has devised supranational ways of regulating political and economic contradictions — ways that make it possible to keep the situation from going critical.

Replacing the old system with the new on a global scale has turned out to be a more protracted and complex process than was seen earlier. But capitalism has failed to overcome its antagonistic contradictions. It keeps breeding exploitation of the working people, oppression of national minorities, unemployment, poverty and other social ills which deprive it of a future in historical terms.

For example, in the Republic of Ireland, and indeed, in the island as a whole, there is the position of less persons in the labour force than there were 30 years ago, and a greater percentage of the present labour force unemployed, a greater number of young people emigrating from our shores for work in the United Kingdom, USA, Australia and other countries. As well there has been a major deterioration of medical and hospital service, education and general social services.

The ideas and the practical experience of the October Revolution, as well as the growing role and influence of world socialism have created fundamentally new conditions for the advancement of the national liberation movement. Against the background of these conditions; colonial and dependent nations have freed themselves from imperialist oppression. The colonial system of imperialism has virtually ceased to exist. More than 100 countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America in which over half the world population lives have embarked on a path of independent development. These countries' involvement in the conscious process of making history, their policy of non-alignment, their vigorous resistance to neocolonialist forays and the socialist orientation some of them have chosen reduce the scope of imperialist domination and strengthen the world's forces of progress.

In this sphere, too, events have taken a course that has been contradictory and not straightforward, often disproving earlier forecasts. More of the newly liberated countries have been integrated into the world's capitalist economy. Some of them are joining the club of the industrialised nations. Others are in fact still backward and semi-feudal. Nevertheless, the overall thrust of the development of this vast and diverse world is shaped by the trends which the October Revolution made

irreversible — anti-imperialism, anti-colonialism and the commitment of nations to freedom and independence.

The October Revolution made it possible for the international communist movement to develop into a highly influential political force of today's world. While in 1917 there was only one communist party — the Bolshevik party — and, counting the communist groups existing in some European countries, the Communists totalled 400,000, today there are over 100 communist parties with more than 85 million members.

Naturally, these figures merely reflect the general trend. Far from everything is perfect in our movement. Its influence is due largely to the ruling communist parties in the socialist countries. It is not everywhere or always that we succeed in adapting our work to new realities and new problems. But the tackling of the issues that arise opens before us ever more opportunities for enhancing our influence with the masses. The communist movement remains the only political force offering a realistic alternative to the system based on exploitation. That is the most important thing. That is what shapes the leading role of our movement in social progress.

The October Revolution has changed not only the socio-political map of the world but also humanity's awareness. The example of the socialist revolution has transformed the consciousness of the working masses. They have realised that the ideals of justice and freedom are attainable. The ideas of scientific socialism have been translated into social practice and embraced by millions of people.

Of course, the world's ideological situation is complicated and changeable. New elements emerge in the world view of the working class, of the bourgeoisie and of the middle strata. Completely new forms of ideology appear, and forms that seemed hopelessly outdated are revived — specifically, forms of religious ideology. Undeniably though, the development of the ideas born of the October Revolution express those intellectual aspirations to which the future belongs. I am convinced that only these ideas could produce new political thinking — an element essential to the survival of human civilisation.

The October Revolution has achieved a breakthrough in the entire system of international relations; it has ended the complete sway of militarism and aggression in this field and made it possible to bar wars from world affairs. The realism of this view we can now see in the INF Treaty and in other recent peacemaking moves. The threat of nuclear disaster remains. The struggle against it will be long and arduous, and we should entertain no illusions on this score. But the road opened by Lenin's Decree on Peace must be traversed, and it *will* be traversed, for there is no other way the human race can take.

That, briefly, is what underlies our commitment to the traditions of the October Revolution (mine and, I think, all dedicated Communists). These traditions are inseparable from the realities of today's world. Naturally, they are not what they used to be. They are as dynamic and changeable as the social processes they reflect.

The Dialectics of Continuity

Just as amnesia destroys the personality of an individual, disdain of history and of traditions can disintegrate a party or a social movement, deprive it of its rationale and turn it into something alien to itself. Lenin scorned all pseudo-innovation, the claims of some activists of the working-class movement to “arrive, ‘necessarily by their own understanding’, at great truths”, and their penchant for ignoring “all that has been produced by the antecedent development of revolutionary thought and of the revolutionary movement”.² He never forced the experience of the October Revolution on anyone. *Generally, the idea that any revolution can be copied is alien to Marxists.* It is another thing that revolutionaries should always master the international experience of the liberation movement. Mastering it creatively is essential to the success of the revolutionary forces. That was how Lenin studied the experience and the lessons of the Paris Commune, without any intention of treating it as a model. However, the traditions of the October Revolution embody standards and principles of importance to many countries.

We hold that it is essential for us to cherish the traditions of our party and the memories of outstanding landmarks of the revolutionary movement in Ireland and in other countries. Our objective is not to judge the past in retrospect or to show off our intellectual prowess by reflecting on whether this or that mistake could have been avoided. Our aim is to better grasp the historical record and, on that basis, to find solutions to current problems and define the objective of our struggle more accurately.

We should be fighting resolutely against attempts to present the past of the communist movement as an unbroken chain of blunders, and in this way to denigrate the path begun by the October Revolution. Equally, we should try not to lapse into euphoria as regards our history and to see it as comprising both achievements and mistakes. The latter, just like the former, are useful as lessons.

We must be able to combine loyalty to revolutionary traditions with innovation in thought and action, to develop creatively everything of value the communist movement has accumulated, but without letting ourselves be hypnotised by the conclusions made in the past. That was what Lenin said. He was utterly opposed to “slavish imitation of the past” which he connected with a pedantic understanding of Marxism.³

Lenin stressed that *Marxists should be guided by the spirit, not the letter of revolutionary traditions.* Respect for the past does not mean that we should make an absolute out of it. Rather, we should regard it as an object of our critical thought and draw lessons for the present from it. We do not see historical experience as something immutable. New developments and new data enable us to discern new aspects in it — aspects that used to escape our attention. “The duty to preserve revolutionary traditions,” Lenin said, “also calls for an analysis of the conditions in which they can be applied, not for a simple reiteration of revolutionary slogans which were meaningful under specific circumstances.”⁴ Marxism-Leninism closely studies new developments proceeding from continuity in the advancement of revolutionary theory and practice, by no means claiming that any new factor should negate the entire record of the past.

Lenin used revolutionary experience and the general principles of Marxism to apply them to a specific analysis of the new era, not to shut his eyes to objective reality. That is a salient feature of Leninism distinguishing it in principle from dogmatism whose advocates cling to the truths of yesterday and refuse to look for novel solutions, seeing this search as an attempt on the 'purity' of revolutionary theory. Dogmatists deny the novel nature of what is new. They always look for direct analogies with the past and refuse to acknowledge the distinctive aspects of developments, treating them only as an illustration confirming the validity of standards discovered earlier.

The truth is always specific. Therefore, *attempts to find ready-made recipes and answers to all of today's questions in the traditions of the October Revolution have nothing in common with loyalty to these traditions.* If we really want to grasp the significance of the experience gained by the October Revolution, we should not search current realities or trends for something that resembles the past. Rather, by drawing on Lenin's method, we should learn to study history in all its concrete aspects and diversity. This calls for scientific objectivity, for a sober assessment of revolutionary traditions and for an ability to analyse in depth not only the progressive trends of social development but also its contradictions and difficulties, to firmly expose and overcome negative developments and boldly dismiss outdated thought patterns.

The way of thinking and action based on these principles is an expression of *revolutionary continuity in our movement.* Embodied in communist policies, this continuity does not mean simply following the old track or treating the past with nostalgia. It means moving ever onward, analysing new realities and being able to abandon obsolete concepts resolutely. As Lenin said, one should become firmly aware of the truth that a Marxist must look back and grasp the past in its fullness, dialectics and conflict, "take cognisance of real life, of the true facts of *reality*, and not cling to a theory of yesterday".⁵

Brilliantly able to use the great traditions of the past in the current struggle, Lenin himself never delayed the raising of new problems in their entirety, at the same time creatively integrating the accumulated ideological values into Marxist theory.

Under new historical circumstances, he resolved many highly complex issues connected with the practical application of Marxism. His foremost theoretical achievements — the concepts dealing with the party of a new type, with the theory of imperialism, with the possibility of a revolution winning in a single country, with the drive to build socialism and with the peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems — raised Marxist theory to a new high and helped translate it into reality in the course of a revolutionary process.

Today — *and this we see as a continuation and development of the traditions of the October Revolution* — it is the path along which Lenin's party is advancing, promoting new political thinking, moving firmly to overcome stagnation, enhance democracy and make the popular masses more active, and working with dedication for transformations consonant with the essence of socialism. By consolidating and furthering

revolutionary gains, Soviet perestroika increases the competitive strength of the socialist example, thereby assisting the Communists of the capitalist countries in their struggle. There is also close continuity with the ideas and experience of the October Revolution in the fact that the policy of the CPSU and the changes under way in the USSR are extremely important in aiding the international communist movement in its current transition to a radically higher level.

The Priorities of Our Struggle

Our movement needs constant renewal if it is to remain a living and developing entity. This need is particularly acute today, with the world at a crossroads. We should take a fresh look at some of the assessments we have grown used to and correlate not only the path we have traversed but also the road ahead with the criteria of progress and the objectives of our struggle which were articulated by the founders of Marxism-Leninism. This is an extremely complex task. Today, it is more difficult to correlate the experience of different countries and regions (there is the vast diversity of the practical forms of the class struggle) or to preserve continuity in the experience of different generations (things have changed considerably since the times of the October Revolution, the Comintern or the post-war years).

As an indelible part of the international communist movement, the CPI seeks to fully understand the role and the place of this movement in the rapidly changing world of today. This quest is the objective of many sister parties that strive to gear their programmes, slogans and methods of struggle to the realities of the late twentieth century. It also demands that we take the lessons of the past into account and reappraise earlier decisions in the light of the new situation.

Briefly, man is the central element in these efforts. Not too long ago, we accorded undisputed priority to the class factor in our theory and in our politics. This priority has now shifted to the human factor due primarily to the nuclear threat, a monstrous reality which has imparted a global universal significance to Hamlet's dilemma — 'to be or not to be'.

There is absolutely no conflict between this new approach and Marxism-Leninism, the ideas of the October Revolution. It specifies the deeply humanistic tradition of Marxist-Leninist thought and of the Communists' political struggle in the light of current realities. From the outset, the Marxist position has been that the *class interests of the proletariat coincide with the interests of the entire human race*: the working class cannot emancipate itself without emancipating all society from exploitation and oppression. When Lenin wrote that the "interests of social development are higher than the interests of the proletariat",⁶ he stressed that same Marxist precept. The humanistic ideals of emancipating man from exploitation, hunger, poverty, ignorance and the horrors and outrage of the imperialist bloodbath — ideas of social justice — led Russia's rebellious workers and peasants to destroy the old system in 1917. Since then, the *human right to life* has been foremost among the values upheld by the Communists. While the world remains socially divided, the survival of the human race — not of a particular class or nation — makes it imperative

to be guided by universal human values in spite of what any special interest group may advocate.

This realisation is the source of new thinking. Realistic in content and revolutionary in spirit, it is based on fundamental class values, on Marxist-Leninist ideology whose key ideas it develops. The *issue of combining the class-based and the universal human elements* in world affairs and, consequently, in politics is a major and urgent question facing both Marxists and their opponents. Our party's stand on this matter is clear. As the 19th National Congress of the CPI noted in 1986, the struggle to prevent war and preserve peace is a priority task of the international communist movement. The congress stated in a resolution that "we Irish Communists fully support the consistent role of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries who are fighting for détente, effective disarmament and the prevention of a nuclear war".

As far as Ireland's distinctive conditions are concerned, the maintenance of peace and security in Europe is inseparable from the struggle for our country's neutrality, unity and independence. British imperialism and its NATO allies are trying to play on the Irish people's commitment to national unity in order to draw Ireland into their political and military orbit. This was the objective the British government had in mind when it signed an agreement with Dublin on 'jointly managing' the affairs of Northern Ireland. The reactionaries' dangerous schemes can only be upset by mobilising all democratic, anti-imperialist forces. Now that bourgeois politicians in the North and in the South increasingly tend to appease imperialism, only the working class can tackle this task effectively. Efforts to overcome religious prejudice, sectarianism and Unionist ideology which now divide Ireland's working people are coming to the forefront of communist activities. We have advanced a specific programme of struggle to end the sway of British imperialism. This programme calls for stepping up all forms of the drive to meet the socio-economic demands of the working people, for creating a broad national democratic front to resist the politics of repression, and for enhancing the unity and the influence of the Communist Party throughout the political and social fabric.

However profoundly different sections of the working people may disagree, this programme is no obstacle to a fruitful and regular exchange of views, to parallel or joint action. This makes it necessary to adopt a new style and develop a new culture of a dialogue stipulating an open comparison of views and discussions based on mutual respect. The ingrained habit of dismissing the viewpoint of the other side out of hand must be abandoned. This habit took shape in olden days, when the slogan 'he who is not with us is against us' was popular among Communists. Following the spirit, not the letter of the October Revolution, the Seventh Congress of the Comintern (1935) rejected this slogan and replaced it with '*he who is not against us is with us*'.

The working class does remain the main motive force of social development. At the same time, the global nature of many current problems implies a considerable expansion of the composition of those forces which can and must join the endeavour to tackle urgent tasks of history. Naturally, the differences in philosophies remain insurmountable,

and they will impose certain limits on our opportunities for cooperation. But no one suggests that we give up our world view.

What we mean is joint action on issues with regard to which a *common approach* has been devised — and the number of such issues has now increased dramatically. For example, there are those who agree with us on the question of democratic rights in Northern Ireland but do not necessarily advocate a united Ireland. We seek to promote our cooperation with these quarters. Our party believes that the expansion of the anti-monopoly alliance on the basis of the struggle for peace, democracy and jobs should not be confined to those working for society's radical transformation. We should overcome relapses into sectarianism, conduct a bolder dialogue with the social forces which used to escape our attention, and establish relations of equitable partnership and cooperation with them.

The Moscow Meeting of Parties and Movements in 1987 offers a model for such a relationship. For all the differences in the views held by that meeting's participants, they confirmed their common dedication to peace and the need to act jointly in order to preserve it. We believe that the results of the Meeting have outlined a common platform of the world's democratic, peace-loving forces — new political thinking, human survival, work to overcome underdevelopment and the division into 'poor' and 'rich' nations, respect for the right of every nation to choose its own path and a protective attitude towards Earth, our common home.

The emergence of new forms of international solidarity by no means makes proletarian internationalism obsolete. True, it manifests itself in forms that differ in many respects from the way it was expressed in the wake of the October Revolution, when an international solidarity movement under the slogan of 'Hands Off Soviet Russia' swept the world, or during the 1930s when internationalists from many countries, myself included, fought against fascism in the Spanish Civil War. The forms of the October Revolution's internationalist traditions do change. *But the spirit of these traditions remains unchanged, just as its source remains the same — the unity of the vital interests and objectives of the world's working people.*

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 51.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. 5, p. 408.

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. 33, p. 476.

⁴ V. I. Lenin, *Complete Works*, Vol. 16, p. 474 (in Russian).

⁵ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 45.

⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. 4, p. 236.

Our Course: Democracy, Self-Government, Rule Of Law

(Concerning the results of the 19th Conference of the CPSU)

Anatoly Lukianov — alternate member, Political Bureau, CC CPSU, First Deputy Chairman, USSR Supreme Soviet

SOVIET society is in motion. The far-reaching change launched three years ago has affected the economy, politics, the social, cultural and intellectual sphere, and socialist theory and practice as a whole. The distinctive thing about perestroika is that it is being effected both throughout the nation and in the inner world of the individual. Since the October Revolution, never have our public and civil affairs been so vigorous. Never have millions of people been so enthusiastically involved in the discussion of our history, our present and our future.

The 19th All-Union Conference of the CPSU gave a new and powerful impetus to Soviet politics. The great interest shown by the public in the preparations for that forum, in its deliberations and decisions, as well as in its heated and constructive debate, were a vote of popular confidence in the party's policy of perestroika. To discuss only the background paper prepared by the Central Committee for the conference, more than one million party, shop floor and office meetings were held, attended by almost 54 million people and addressed by more than 6.5 million. Within a single year, the CPSU Central Committee received nearly one million messages and letters, many of them dealing directly with the agenda of the forum. This enabled the conference — which focused on pressing issues of democratising the social fabric and reforming its political system — to reflect more fully than ever before the concerns, hopes and sentiments of the masses.

The conference demonstrated that the policy of renewal, adopted at the April 1985 Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee and at the 27th Party Congress, had proved its viability. *Perestroika's strategy and tactics were worked out, as was its ideological, theoretical and organisational basis, shaped by Marxism-Leninism and the present realities of our society. A new political, moral and psychological climate has developed in the USSR. Glasnost and constructive criticism have opened the way to society's moral recovery.*

Positive results are gradually emerging in the economy. Growth of real incomes, suspended during the stagnant years, has resumed: over the two years of the current five-year plan period per capita real incomes have risen 4.6 per cent. This year, the national income is increasing faster than envisaged in the plans while the number of those employed in the production of goods is diminishing in absolute terms. The social thrust of economic development is asserting itself. The total floor area of the housing space we now build annually is 15 million square metres more than during the previous five-year plan period. The construction of schools, day

care centres, clubs, cultural centres and hospitals has been stepped up. The production of consumer goods is developing at a faster rate than other sectors of the economy.

Since April 1985, the party has been working steadily to improve its personnel policy. Many modern, competent and energetic people have been placed in charge of various spheres of public affairs. Almost two-thirds of the secretaries of the party's regional committees and of the Central Committee of union republics, as well as some 70 per cent of the secretaries of the CPSU's district and city committees have been replaced. So has a large part of the USSR Council of Ministers and of other government bodies at union, republican and local level.

Without either inflating or denigrating the progress achieved, the 19th party conference concluded that *economic and social recovery had not yet gained the required momentum*. We continue to encounter snags that hold us back in different areas. Ministries and other agencies still stand in the way of expanding the autonomy of factories and promoting their self-management. Democracy on the shop floor often clashes with obsolete departmental instructions and with the outdated thought patterns of the managerial staff. Abolishing red tape has proved to be quite difficult. Ossified forms of work, as well as inertia tie the hands of civic organisations and mass movements. In other words, having created *a vast material and intellectual potential, our society has been unable, because of the cumbersome way in which its democratic institutions function, to tap this potential effectively, properly apply the advances of the scientific and technological revolution, or make the best use of our people's knowledge, experience and skills in the economy, science and culture*.

This had to be admitted honestly, and that was what the party did. The readiness to combine the principles of Marxism-Leninism with constructive revolutionary practice, to bring socialism as it now exists into conformity with genuine democracy, to carry out a political reform, and to act on the concept of accelerating the country's socio-economic development is, by itself, a major accomplishment of the CPSU's collective thought.

It is a salient feature of the changes under way that the conference approached the reform of the political system from a position in which the basis and the superstructure, the economy and politics were closely interconnected. Rejecting, on the eve of the October Revolution, the claims that democracy would wither away under socialism, Lenin argued passionately that socialist democracy would inevitably and immensely influence the economy, feel the impact of economic development and, in turn, give an impetus to it. An organic linkage of society's economic and social systems and the interaction of the changes effected in politics and in the economy are emerging as factors essential to perestroika.

Why, then, did the party conference focus on the *reform of the Soviet political system*? After all, its record includes the transformation of a once backward country into a mighty industrial power which won an historic victory over Nazism, quickly healed the wounds inflicted by the war and made considerable economic and social progress. All that is true: But the fact is that, while intensely working, in general terms, for the benefit of socialism, this political system failed to protect us from the cult of a

personality and from its relapses, as well as from stagnant phenomena which were growing in the economy, in the social fabric and in culture. This system, with its distinctive concentration of administrative powers in the hands of the executive branch and reliance on administrative decree, proved incapable of rebuffing abuse of power, careerism and opportunism. But the main flaw was that politics largely lost sight of man as the chief maker of history in socialist society.

As Mikhail Gorbachov noted, this exacted a stiff price, perhaps the biggest our country had ever had to pay in peacetime: the masses' social activity declined, civic apathy grew, and workers were alienated from public property and from government. It is the ossified system of government and its mechanism of pressure by decree that are now holding back perestroika's radical changes — economic reform, social and cultural progress and the promotion of a responsible attitude to the country's affairs.

The reform of the political system approved by the conference is designed to remove these and other distortions we have inherited from the past, revive the Leninist concept and practice of democracy, effectively involve millions of people in running the country, ensure the development of self-government and strengthen socialist rule of law. The reform affects all political institutions and offers a new definition of their role, their interrelationship and the principles underlying the delimitation of functions between the party, government bodies and civic organisations.

The crucial task is to give full and effective powers to the soviets of people's deputies as the basis of our socialist statehood and of self-government by the people. The ultimate objective is to have the soviets run as many of the country's affairs as possible and to place them above all other government bodies. This is to be achieved primarily by strengthening the legislative, administrative and monitoring functions of the soviets, effecting a radical reorganisation of their work, tangibly boosting their role as representative bodies, and reshaping the higher echelons of government.

The restoration of the soviets' prestige and influence stipulates a *substantive renewal of the electoral system*. Following up on the experience of the past few years, the conference deemed it necessary to go further and ensure unlimited nomination of candidacies, their broad and free discussion, the practice of having more candidates than there are seats to be filled, strict observance of the democratic electoral procedure, regular reports of deputies on the work performed, and the possibility of their recall. With this end in view, election districts represented by one or several deputies will be created and the powers of pre-election public meetings and conferences, as well as of electoral commissions, will be enlarged.

Of particular importance is the conference-designated task of creating economic conditions that would make it possible to reinforce the independence and accountability of the soviets in promoting the integrated development of the areas they run. This means that they should receive increased revenue from all economic enterprises in these areas, no matter what superior agency this or that factory has. The soviets should be in full

control of the local industries, and they should accumulate funds for tackling urgent questions of improving living standards, protecting the environment and the like. The objective has been formulated clearly: party policy — economic, social and ethnic — should be conducted primarily via the bodies of people's representatives operating on the basis of self-government, self-financing and self-sufficiency.

Effective sovereignty of the soviets from the ground up calls for a thorough restructuring of the supreme bodies of government. The conference advocated the establishment of a USSR Congress of People's Deputies as the country's supreme body of authority comprising, in addition to the deputies representing territorial and ethnic/territorial constituencies, deputies representing the principal elements of our political system — the party, the trade unions, the YCL, the cooperatives and other mass civic organisations — and democratically elected at congresses or plenary meetings of these organisations' governing bodies. The USSR Congress of People's Deputies is to decide on the country's more important constitutional, political and socio-economic issues at annual sessions. To work between these sessions, the congress is to elect a relatively small bicameral USSR Supreme Soviet — a standing legislative, administrative and supervisory body.

This will considerably expand the democratic basis of government at the national level. The same principle will also underlie the new procedure of electing supreme bodies of government and organising their work at the level of union and autonomous republics.

The objective of enhancing the role of the soviets and delimiting the functions of party and government bodies led the conference to the conclusions that local government bodies, except at village or township level, should elect standing presidiums and all soviets without exception should elect their chairpersons. The idea was expressed that it would be useful to nominate, as a rule, the first secretaries of respective party committees to serve as the soviets' chairpersons. This conclusion is connected very closely with the very concept of the reform of our political system.

First, the chairpersons and the soviets' presidiums they will lead will take care of organising the work of the deputies, including the supervision by the soviets of the executive and administrative apparatus. In this way the functions of the soviet as a body of authority and of its executive committee will be delineated more clearly. We will also fully observe the principle of barring members of an executive committee and the chiefs of its departments and desks from serving as deputies of the respective soviet. Currently, first secretaries usually serve on executive committees. Whether we want it or not, this increases the powers of the executive body and its staff at the expense of the powers of the soviet and its deputies. Shifted from the executive committee to the soviet, the first secretary will become more answerable for the effectiveness of the soviet and of its standing commissions and groups of deputies. This combination of offices will therefore enhance the prestige and the influence of popular representation bodies. In this sense, the party and the first secretaries of party committees are to serve as guarantors.

Second, this practice will also further a better division of powers between party and government bodies. This may sound paradoxical, but it is a fact. As stated in the USSR Constitution, the party remains the leading and guiding force of our society. Obviously, it cannot confine its activities to ideology and education only. The foremost task of the party as society's political vanguard is to shape economic, social and ethnic policy. This time, however, party committees will primarily carry out this policy directly via the soviets, the representative bodies of government, instead of via the committees' staff. With the apparatus of party committees reorganised and the onus of managing the economy and social development shifting above all onto the soviets, the first secretary's job of chairing the soviet will produce a clearer division of powers between party and soviet bodies. In working to have the soviet exercise its powers comprehensively, the first secretary will be able to look at the party apparatus from a new angle, freeing it from purely managerial and economic functions and orienting it instead on party-related, political, organisational and ideological ones. It follows that, as one of the delegates aptly remarked at the conference, "there must be unification to permit division".

Finally, there is the third aspect of the problem, perhaps the most important one. By taking the first secretary out of an administrative environment (the apparatus) and planting him or her among the deputies, the party deliberately places itself, as well as its central and local organs and its cadres *under the control not only of Communists but also of non-Communists* — in fact, of the people at large. The first secretary, having passed the trial of elections within the party, must now go through another very important test of this prestige: the election to a deputy's seat and to the chair of the respective soviet will be by secret ballot. If the first secretary fails to win the support of the public, this will inevitably call into question his competence as a party leader. Here one might add that the principle *restricting all holders of elective offices in soviets or executive bodies to two consecutive terms* will be formalised constitutionally: all office holders, including party leaders, are to report regularly to their constituents and deputies who may recall them at any moment. This means that the party accepts a situation where in all elections, its leading and guiding role will be verified and confirmed by the electorate. That is a major step in democratising Soviet society.

Since it outlined important elements of the reform of the representative government bodies, the conference could not ignore questions of *improving the entire system of running the country*. The elimination of command-style administration, the cardinal reform of planning, financing and credits, the switch to wholesale trade in the means of production, and the debugging of the mechanism designed to enhance the initiative and the autonomy of economic enterprises and of agencies at republican and local level — all these are becoming not only an organic element of strictly economic activities but also an important part of the effort to restructure the political system.

As overall patterns of managing branches of the economy are being approved, republican and local economic agencies are *sizeably reducing their managerial staff*. Specifically, the number of ministries and

departments in union and autonomous republics is being cut by more than one-quarter and that of the local soviets' departments and desks, by one-third. That is only the beginning of a large-scale and complex restructuring of the managerial system. It involves three major aspects.

First, management is to be decentralised, relevant powers will be transferred from the centre to the local level, and the rights and responsibilities of workers' collectives and of cooperatives will be expanded. This will be furthered considerably by the recently enacted laws on state enterprises (amalgamations) and on the cooperative movement. Second, representative bodies, their standing commissions and deputies, the public, civic organisations and people's control bodies are to enhance dramatically their monitoring of the way the managerial apparatus operates. In this sphere, full and effective use should be made of the conference resolution 'On Combating Bureaucracy' which calls for an effective offensive against administrative diktat and arbitrary action in the economy and in the social, intellectual and cultural spheres, against indifference to people's rights and needs, as well as against disdain of the social experience of the people. Finally, the third aspect provides for improving the operation of the apparatus as much as possible, introducing the latest advances in communications, informatics and other technologies and raising the level of competence and responsibility.

In discussing the issues of perfecting management, the conference stressed that they must be viewed from the angle of the *multinational character of the Soviet Union*. We will be unable to carry out any major undertaking of perestroika without due regard for the fact that, in Lenin's words, ours is an integral system of Soviet government bodies, a system sealed in our federal union. In accordance with the conference resolution 'On Relations Between Soviet Nationalities', the July 1988 plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee set the task of extending legislatively the rights of union republics and autonomous entities by delimiting the jurisdiction of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and that of the union republics, by transferring some government functions to local bodies and enhancing their independence and responsibility in the economic, social, cultural and environmental protection spheres.

We are also to strengthen union government and considerably increase the role of its bodies, particularly the Soviet of Nationalities and the standing commissions on inter-ethnic relations. The attention the party accords to all these issues is clear from the decision to devote a special plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee to the problem of inter-ethnic relations.

The extension of the reform to cover different elements of our political system means that *all forms of the people's direct involvement in running the country should be developed*. At the same time, we should aim at asserting the abilities and the potential of our people as citizens enjoying all rights and freedoms, as true masters of their factories and of their country.

With this end in view, all popular institutions through which the working people express and pursue their interests should be used much more intensively. First and foremost, the struggle for social renewal and for

perestroika should be joined vigorously by the trade unions, the YCL, the cooperatives, the more than 100 union and the almost 200 republican voluntary societies and the nearly 40,000 various associations, clubs and civic initiative groups, most of them quite recent. The party is vitally interested in having every civic entity operate on a profoundly democratic and truly independent basis, perform all its relevant functions, and effectively represent and uphold the interests of the people associated in it. It is perfectly natural for opinions to clash and for alternative proposals to be put forward, compared and agreed upon. That is precisely the healthy democratic environment which must be organic to the development of socialism.

A comprehensive effort to strengthen law and order is an equally important element of this development. That is why the party conference defined the establishment of a *socialist state based on rule of law* as a matter of fundamental significance. Here is how we see this socialist rule-of-law state.

First, it is a state which confines itself to the legal framework, primarily to that of the Constitution, and which sets itself principles and limitations not to be exceeded. Second, it is a state which abolishes exploitation of man by man and strictly enforces the equality of all citizens before the law. No government body, no official, no collective, no party organisation or any other civic entity, no individual can be exempted from abiding by the law. Third, it is a state which has obligations to all its citizens and in which all citizens have obligations to our state of the whole people. This mutual responsibility means that every citizen must be fully guaranteed his rights and his protection from any arbitrary action of the authorities or their representatives and, on the other hand, that state power must be as reliably protected from any citizen's attempts to undermine it. Fourth, it is a state with a stable constitution and a ramified system of legislation constantly renewed and improved to further social progress, encourage civic activity and protect citizens' rights. Fifth, it is a state which has developed a smoothly operating mechanism to ensure the achievement of all these objectives, as well as a body of special entities governed exclusively by the law and designed to safeguard law and order.

The large-scale legal reform outlined by the conference is to become an integral part of the drive to create a rule-of-law state as a completely socialist system of political power. Its principal elements are defined in the conference resolution 'On Legal Reform' — primarily, an effort to radically enhance the role of the courts, as well as strict compliance with the democratic principles of judicial procedure: the independence of the courts, the equality of the contending parties, openness and the presumption of innocence. We will increase drastically the responsibility of the Procurator's Office for ensuring, through supervision, unswerving enforcement and uniform interpretation and application of laws. The police, which conduct the preliminary investigation of most offences, are to improve their work substantially. The rights of the Bar and of state arbitration are being expanded. Major steps are being planned to improve, systematise and codify legislation and to educate and train our cadres and the entire population in legal matters.

A people enjoying full rights, a government enjoying prestige and a law that is unbendable are the components of the socialist rule-of-law state in which man is the supreme value. It is no accident that central to the reform of the political system is the task of *guaranteeing the rights and freedoms of every individual to the fullest possible extent* — something on which the success of perestroika depends overwhelmingly. But, as any other civilised society, we are aware of the need not only to safeguard civil rights but also to ensure our citizens' compliance with their obligations under law and order. Socialist democracy is not permissive anarchy. It is conscious self-discipline.

The Soviet record in ensuring socio-economic civil rights is well-known. At the same time, we are also aware of our weaknesses in this sphere, and we are working to make our extensive social care and security system operate better and more effectively. A great deal will have to be done to raise both the citizens' and the authorities' level of political culture, to promote a socialist pluralism of views and to encourage the emergence of different ideas and standpoints. In this context, we regard pluralism above all as a form of expressing a diversity of views, as something that helps consolidate and develop socialism. Of course, this pluralism has nothing to do with any pluralism of power because all power in our country belongs to the working masses, to the whole people.

Glasnost is a major accomplishment of perestroika. It embodies political freedoms — those of criticism, of expression, of the press and of meetings. As it defends perestroika, glasnost must be defended too. In a relevant resolution the conference therefore stated that glasnost was a natural atmosphere for the life and advancement of a democratic and humane socialist society and that any hopes for its restriction were groundless.

Substantive socio-political changes in a major country such as the Soviet Union are necessarily reflected in its international position and therefore affect world developments. Perestroika's revolutionary change is boldly influencing the universal search for ways leading to social justice and genuine democracy. It is obvious that, in this sense, perestroika is not only a 'strictly internal affair of the Soviet Union', just as the revolution of October 1917 was not a 'purely Russian development'.

The firm orientation on enhancing democracy, expanding popular self-government and strengthening rule of law stems from our desire to meet the urgent and fundamental needs of the Soviet people and to correct the distortions of socialism. The CPSU's ideas about the need for perestroika demonstrate that liberation from dogmatic blunders and the acceptance of the world as it really exists make it possible to draw more effectively on the vast potential of Marxist-Leninist theory. This proves the capability of socialism for both theoretical and practical renewal and invalidates the claims that communist theory can no longer provide answers to today's topical issues.

We regard our country's democratisation and the establishment of a socialist rule-of-law state as a valuable contribution to the democratic renewal of the entire system of international relations. Perestroika in the Soviet Union implies a foreign policy consistent with the humanistic thrust of the changes under way and opens great opportunities before Soviet

society for mutually beneficial cooperation and many-sided relations with other countries. The appeal to reason and common sense in international affairs is the essence of the policy we have proclaimed and are pursuing steadily on the world scene. In this connection, the CPSU invariably reiterates its solidarity with the struggle of communist and workers' parties and of all other public-spirited forces for peace, social progress, freedom and democracy.

The energetic renewal of Soviet foreign policy along the lines of new thinking has produced a series of initiatives aimed at removing the war threat through an open and constructive dialogue and disarmament effort which paved the way to the INF Treaty and shifted the talks on nuclear, chemical and conventional weapons onto a practical plane. The decision to withdraw Soviet troops from Afghanistan in accordance with the Geneva accords suggests new ways in which regional conflicts can be settled politically.

The Soviet Union is firmly committed to the strengthening of international cooperation with the socialist countries and to peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems. It categorically rejects war as a means of settling political and economic international contradictions or ideological disputes. As it was emphasised at the 19th Party Conference, foreign policy should contribute increasingly to the release of national resources for constructive peaceful purposes, and it should be linked closely with the democratisation of our society. Our entire defence effort is now oriented primarily on quality — in military hardware, in the military science and in the composition of the armed forces. These activities guarantee the security of the Soviet Union and its allies and are pursued in strict conformity with our defensive doctrine.

The record shows that progress in democratisation within the Soviet Union also influences our foreign policy and helps promote trust and confidence in our country as a partner in international affairs. Particularly valuable is the fact that this trust is spreading through the popular masses which are beginning to challenge the myths about 'Soviet expansionism' and the 'Soviet military threat'.

The great scope of the changes effected in Soviet domestic and foreign policy makes it incumbent on the party to work harder in providing society with political guidance. By undertaking perestroika, the CPSU has confirmed that political initiative is in its hands and that it can act as the chief organiser of the masses' history-making efforts. But we also remember Lenin's warning about the danger of the belief that the ruling party should perform its leading role by taking the place of the soviets and other organisations of working people. We remember his demand to "delimit much more precisely the functions of the party (and of its Central Committee) from those of the Soviet government".¹ We are now working to devise a mechanism which would democratically ensure the CPSU's leading role in a self-governing society and help the party in the best and fullest possible performance of its ideological, theoretical, political and organisational functions in the implementation of perestroika.

One of the more important conclusions made by the conference is that under the new conditions, this leading position of the party will depend

exclusively on the actual prestige it is to reassert by tangible action. The objective is to *make the CPSU, the essence and the methods of its work fully consonant with the Leninist concept of the party's leading role in society*, so that the democratic organisation of the party's internal affairs would be an example of the way democracy should be promoted throughout the political system.

The 19th All-Union Conference of the CPSU and the steps taken by the party since mark our transition from statements asserting the need for prompt and far-reaching change to the actual realisation of this change. The July 1988 plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee was one such major step. It outlined the ways in which the policy decisions of the conference should be acted on and charted the necessary current and long-term moves in the economy, politics, the affairs of the party and the social fabric.

In accordance with the conference guidelines, the USSR Council of Ministers adopted a series of important resolutions on the implementation of the social programme. During the current five-year period, government purchases of meat and dairy products are to increase over and above the original plan, and the output of industrial consumer goods is to rise, also additionally, by 24 billion rubles. Major steps have been charted to radically improve the sphere of commercially offered services and retail trade.

Work is proceeding according to a schedule drawn up for the implementation of the conference resolutions. An election campaign is under way within the party, conducted largely in a new way. In the course of this campaign, cadres are being replaced and the party apparatus is being restructured. Draft laws on amendments and additions to the USSR Constitution and on elections of people's deputies are being submitted for nationwide discussion. By the end of the year, the USSR Supreme Soviet is to discuss the practical aspects of improving the organisation and the activities of the soviets of people's deputies and of the judiciary. All this will make it possible to reshape the entire system of union, republican and local government bodies along new lines as early as next year. The draft law on local self-government and local economic management is to be discussed extensively. We are also to carry out most of the projected legal reform and restructure the work of the Procurator's Office, the investigative apparatus, the Bar, state arbitration and the legal departments of economic agencies. To sum up, practical work in the government, party and economic spheres is proceeding apace.

Perestroika, economic reform and the restructuring of the political system are not an easy undertaking. The 19th Party Conference did not produce a magic wand which would deliver us from difficulties. We know that renewal will pose many complex problems before the party. Nor are we guaranteed against mistakes. But, as they say, we shall overcome. Our society, our people are on the march, and they will keep forging on towards their goal.

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 253.

Social Democrats Speak

From An Era Of Wars Towards A Culture Of Peace

Carmelo Mifsud Bonnici — leader,
Malta Labour Party, former Prime
Minister

The growing role played by smaller non-aligned states is a salient feature of today's world politics. The Malta Labour Party, while in power in 1971-1978, contributed vigorously to the all-European process and promoted peaceful cooperation in the Mediterranean. The proposals submitted by Malta at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe were reflected in its results and generated widespread international response. In May 1987 Labour became an opposition party. Its leader, C. Mifsud Bonnici, received our correspondent who interviewed him for *WMR*.

A great deal is being said and written about the need for new political thinking in our nuclear age and, specifically, about the impulses generated by Soviet foreign policy initiatives. How does the Labour Party and other Mediterranean parties affiliated to the Socialist International assess these ideas and steps?

MIKHAIL GORBACHOV has advanced very interesting and profound ideas. You may be interested to learn that the two famous words which originated in the Soviet Union — perestroika and glasnost — have been applied to our party too. *The Times* of Malta has even accused us of not having enough perestroika and glasnost. The use of these terms is a very positive development: they are applied to countries which are not socialist and have an altogether different political system.

But I must say that up to now, the response of the capitalist countries to the Soviet initiatives has not been all that positive. I do not think that the actual steps which are being taken match the theoretical requirements of the new approaches to international relations. There should be bigger commitment to the implementation of these concepts dealing with international cooperation. Although there is a new consciousness, effective and concrete ways and means of overcoming historical prejudices and points of view have not been found yet.

You could ask: isn't it in the interest of everyone that there should be peace? It is so. But not everyone agrees with that. Consider the interests of

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the military-industrial complex. The higher the tensions in the world, the more money they make. Therefore, they want wars, armed conflicts to continue. They are very strong. In the United Kingdom, there are 350,000 people directly or indirectly employed in the military-industrial complex, and it is millions in the United States. These complexes wield a lot of influence as far as public opinion is concerned because, apart from turning out armaments, they also control the media.

As to the latter part of your question, I would like to note that while they display, in theory, a readiness to adopt new attitudes to international affairs, the socialist parties of the Mediterranean countries are in fact not steering a new course. None of the more influential among such parties — French, Spanish, Italian or Greek — has started any radical change in its foreign policy. They keep insisting on 'strong European unity'. But they imply a community which does not embrace most European countries and therefore promotes a bloc approach, not the universal concept of all countries working together.

It is true that there are moves for the Common Market countries to have a different and more open approach to other nations, specifically, in the economic field. But if the 12 countries of the Community think that something is not likely to yield an immediate economic benefit, they will not do it, even if they know that in the long run the entire world stands to gain.

We have witnessed this attitude in the course of the North-South dialogue. There has been so much talk about the need to restructure the relations existing between developed and developing countries, but in actual fact very little has been done. In some countries there is so much excess in production and in productive capacities, while in others huge numbers of people are undernourished, starving and dispossessed. The difficulties (demographic and others) are on the increase, and the gap between the rich and the poor is growing. We hold that in order to advance this cause, we should encourage not so much the North-South dialogue as the South-South dialogue between developing countries themselves. It is only when they reach a stage at which they can *demand* something from the developed countries that the latter will become more responsive to cooperation.

If the developing countries do not help one another, the gap between the rich and the poor, the developed and the developing nations, will increase instead of contracting. That would go against the trend towards greater international cooperation and more durable peace.

A lower level of military confrontation in the Mediterranean is an important factor of universal security. Several countries advocate renunciation of the deployment of nuclear weapons in the region and the withdrawal of nuclear-armed warships from the Mediterranean. What is your party's position with regard to such proposals?

Our position is a radical one. We believe that the fleets of the big powers, both the Soviet Union and the United States, should withdraw from the Mediterranean. We are aware that the Soviet Union has accepted this plan. It is now up to the United States to accept it.

A nuclear-free status of this zone would help reduce tensions and the risk of even accidental contamination. Security would be very much enhanced if the conventional-armed fleets are withdrawn too because their presence still poses a threat to stability in the region. As regards the prospects of achieving this ideal soon, I cannot say that they are bright because on the northern shores of the Mediterranean there are the NATO countries — Spain, France, Italy, Greece and Turkey. They are committed to NATO, and I do not think that, in the foreseeable future, they would give up the policy of having a US fleet in the Mediterranean and US bases on their territories. Greece is saying that it wants to remove the US bases, but I cannot see Turkey or Italy doing that in the near future. Therefore, we have to view the withdrawal of the fleets of the great powers from the Mediterranean as a long-term objective.

Apart from that we are aware that the United States may use its influence on other countries such as Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt. For this reason, in working to ensure security and reduce tensions we have to consider not only the question of the foreign naval presence but also our close relations with the North African countries. We must do all we can to smooth the differences that might arise and to promote the understanding that it is in the interest of all Mediterranean countries to work hand in hand and not to let the United States or any other foreign country exploit our differences.

The transfer of the US F-16 planes from Spain to Sicily is bringing the source of danger closer to Malta: the distance between us and Sicily is less than 100 kilometres. But apart from the fact that this proximity makes us feel very uneasy, there is also the general situation: we cannot understand why such moves should be made now that the US apparently trusts the Soviet assurances about there being no intention of committing any aggressive acts, and, to a certain extent, the Soviet Union also relies on similar US assurances. The transfer of the air force base from Spain closer to Eastern Europe is, in a sense, provocative, and it will make the East European countries uneasy.

We therefore think that the question which should be given most attention is whether there is going to be an amount of trust necessary for arms reductions, and not only nuclear but also conventional. After all, everyone understands that it is impossible for one nuclear power to attack another. Nevertheless, since the end of World War II we have not had peace in different regions — in the Middle East, between Iran and Iraq, Chad and Libya, or Algeria and Morocco. Regional conflicts undermine stability and peace, in this case stability and peace in the Mediterranean. And, although a new culture of peace is taking shape, the bloc system has not been dismantled and is being reinforced in the economic field.

Your country and your party played a palpable role in raising the issues of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean. Do you believe that the smaller countries' contribution to world politics is growing?

In the past, the main issue for us was the opposition of the labour movement to imperialism and to UK supremacy in Malta. The struggle for

independence was basically carried out by the working people. Then came the issue of securing the status of a neutral, non-aligned state. As a result, the UK naval base was removed from Malta. During the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe it proved possible to use the principle of consensus. Without it, we would have been unable to achieve anything: you are aware that the big powers and practically all the other countries participating in the Conference were against extending European détente to the Mediterranean. But we insisted that the Mediterranean was part of Europe. There can be no peace in Europe without peace in the Mediterranean.

However, certain people are not yet ready to accept the independent role of the smaller countries. How can those Americans who judge everything by its size, power and money tune their perception to a new wavelength? Attitudes are the hardest thing to change.

What do you see as impeding or facilitating the cooperation of different and sometimes even ideologically opposite political forces in tackling the key issues of world politics and global problems?

As long as we as a party feel that we are right and that the solutions we suggest are right, we fight to translate them into reality, and other forces champion their own proposals. We will insist on ours, trying to persuade the people to accept our solution and reject those suggested by others. There can be no agreement here, except the agreement that we cannot impose our solution by force.

On the international scene, too, a country cannot impose its will on others. In the past, it was normal for one country to impose its solutions on another by resorting to armed force. Today, we have to accept that force cannot help one win the hearts of the people of another country. But how can the strong reconcile themselves to this? It is natural for Malta, a country possessing only moral strength, to say that objectivity, ethics and justice should prevail. But it is very difficult for a country relying above all on its military strength to be made to accept a solution proposed by another country if the former is convinced that its interests will be furthered by a different policy. It will always find a number of reasons and justifications to support the policy it follows, even though the rest of the world says that this course is morally wrong.

Unfortunately, it is very difficult to find a universal yardstick of justice. That is why renunciation of the use of force is of prime importance today. The history of our civilisation has so far been a history of violence. Whatever country you take as an example, the major chapters of its history involved fighting and wars. We are now attempting — the whole world is attempting — to change our mental outlook, our perception of what is good and what is great. People will have to change their way of thinking and their attitudes.

The Labour Party and its leadership have been working to achieve a consensus of different forces in the Mediterranean, looking for what unites people rather than divides them.

Actions Speak Louder Than Words

Pertti Paasio — Chair, Finnish Social Democratic Party (FSDP)

Many socialist and social democratic party leaders have been making contributions to *WMR* for some time now. This year alone there were articles and interviews by leading social democratic leaders from Denmark, Spain, the Netherlands and Peru. Below is the first interview with Pertti Paasio, Chair of the Finnish Social Democratic Party, who describes the view taken by this influential Socialist International party of current processes in Western Europe, and the role of the Social Democrats in them. The interview was recorded in Helsinki by *WMR* staff member Sergei Yastrzhembsky.

A few years ago Hans-Dietrich Genscher, addressing bankers and businessmen at Bielefeld, announced the “end of the social democratic and the beginning of a new liberal epoch”. His assessment must have been based on the fact that in the late 1970s and early 1980s the conservative forces were in power in many of the major industrialised countries of the West. There are various explanations for the rise of this neoconservative wave. What is your view?

I WOULD regard Genscher's statement either as the private opinion of a liberal leader or as a political assessment by his party. It is a fact that the evolution of European politics follows a wave-like pattern, but I do not see any signs that the conservative wave will last much longer.

European development in the preceding period was marked by a fairly rapid internationalisation of capital, and the paradox there was that the working-class movement, whose ideology is based on internationalism, remained mostly a national phenomenon. In an increasingly integrated Western Europe, the main question for the political and trade union workers' movement centres on its own role in this process, and it is important to reveal not only this role, but also the possibility of influencing various elements and trends in this process.

Here I should like to make three points: it is necessary, first of all, to see that trade union cooperation within the transnationals (TNCs) should proceed on an international basis. The West European working-class movement, I think, is mostly the same as the social democratic movement, which is why this matter has come up for discussion in our party and in our dealings with the trade unions. We have put forward the slogan of trade union cooperation within the TNCs, and between factory and office workers at their subsidiaries in various countries.

Pertti Paasio was born in Helsinki in 1939. His father was a leader of the FSDP and Prime Minister of Finland. Pertti Paasio is a Bachelor of Political Sciences. He has been a member of the party since 1957, and has been on its board since 1978. He was elected to the chair of the party in 1987. He was a member of parliament from 1975 to 1979, and has now been an MP since 1982. He has held various governmental posts. — *Ed.*

Second, there is a political aspect to this question. It is as well to understand that the pressure coming from Big Capital in Western Europe is essentially both economic and political. It is aimed at undermining the fairly major political, social and cultural achievements enjoyed by the population of Western Europe precisely as a result of the strength of the working-class movement. This is why it is vital for the Social Democrats to make political statements and participate in decision-making in governmental and municipal bodies in order to neutralise these attempts to destroy the social gains.

Third, it is important that wage-earners gain a clear understanding of their actual status, and an awareness of their position in relation to big companies, and that they make an effort to join the masses in defending their own interests. Such is the overall picture.

I think that the European working-class movement is once again on the rise, and that it will demonstrate its effectiveness in the next few years. As for liberal policy, I feel that the wave of conservatism has been so powerful that it has engulfed liberalism. Let us recall that wherever liberal parties constitute any sort of influential force, they cooperate with the conservatives, and not with the working-class movement, their natural ally. Therefore, I call on the liberals of Europe to play a fitting role in the context of cooperation with the working-class movement.

Do you not think that the shift to the right in Europe's political life resulted not only from objective, but also from subjective factors, in particular, the weakening of the positions of Social Democrats whose economic employment and ecological policies turned out to be ineffective and caused disappointment among the electorate?

I would say that the first thing to consider is the pressure on voters of US stereotypes primarily in the sphere of culture, i.e., the emphasis on the role of the individual, and the belief that 'might is right'. This violence culture is opposed to the principles of solidarity and equality held by the working-class movement. All of this has an especially profound effect on the young people. To use a medical metaphor, the European youth now needs to be immunised against this kind of cultural epidemic.

The situation in the sphere of culture is closely connected with processes in economic life and certain changes that have taken place in market-economy countries. There has been a growth in the influence of transnational capital, for instance, which has delighted the architects of bourgeois policy. From the standpoint of the working-class movement, however, society must be given greater opportunities for influencing this process (which, of course, has its positive aspects), primarily so as to prevent it from increasing inequality between people, the spread of poverty, and the alienation of citizens from society.

Psychologically, the European situation is now more favourable to the bourgeoisie than to the Socialists, but if we had not acted none of the achievements which we take for granted would have been possible.

Yet it is quite logical to look at the subjective factor. We all remember the conservative election victories in the FRG, Great Britain, Denmark

and Portugal, and the temporary departure from power of the Social Democrats in Sweden and Norway, and of the Socialists in France. These reversals suffered by social democratic parties would seem to have been the result of their failure to discover objective trends in their own national economies, in the world economy, in the mass consciousness, and in the social structure of society.

I admit that the criticism is valid in the sense that European Social Democrats did not thoroughly analyse conservatism, which has changed markedly over the past 20 years (and is still changing). It is quite obvious that our policy was, in the main, a response to a type of conservatism that no longer prevailed. Neoconservatives now use a language which is more typical of liberals, but neoconservative leaders still lack a clear, if any, notion of the harsh reality of unemployment, or what it is when you can't afford to buy food or pay the rent. Neoconservatives never mention these things, merely holding forth in the most general terms about higher living standards, and never analyse the growth of social inequality in present-day Western Europe. But it is true that the social democratic movement has also dealt inadequately with these problems.

Do you mean that the Social Democrats have been ineffective only in theory, or in their practical policies as well?

Both in the analysis and in policies. Weak analysis leads to shortcomings in policy. But one should also recall that Social Democrats are in the governments of many countries, and have a fairly strong influence on the shaping of policy, as in Finland, Sweden, Norway, Austria, Spain, Italy, and France.

Many European politicians and journalists believe that the way out of the situation for the Social Democrats is to refurbish their ideas and programmes and to put forward new systems of values. Do you agree?

I am sure that our ideals rest on a solid basis. After all, the ideals of freedom, equality, solidarity and internationalism have not lost any of their values, but there is still a need to renew and revise the programmes based on these ideals. We need programmes that accord with present-day realities. It is time to ask ourselves: is it that perhaps we are advancing along a road with traffic signs 20 or 30 years old?

Take my party as a case in point. When the working class movement began to challenge the almighty power of money, we stressed the significance of collectivism, but what we often implied by collectivism were the administrative, state and communal institutions. Strong state and communal organisations were clearly necessary at a definite stage, after the war — when the living standards rose, mainly due to the strength of Finland's working-class movement — but there is now evidence of inertia, obsolescence, and inflexibility in the methods and activity of these institutions. Now they have to pick up speed and get closer to the people, something bureaucrats cannot do. We often use this metaphor: when a big house is being built, the scaffolding must be strong. When the house is

ready, the scaffolding is no longer needed. So perhaps have we lived much too long in a house whose handsome front was concealed by scaffolding?

Would you agree that the residents cannot be very happy with the front, however pretty, if the foundations are shaky. Until recently the social democratic house could be said to have rested on such conceptual foundations as government on the basis of social contract, state intervention in the economy and the social state. But doubt has been cast on the effectiveness of these ideas as a result of the conservative offensive in many countries. Are they still valid in the present conditions?

Let me say that the need to renew our ideas and programmes is not due to the growth of the neoconservative wave, but to the fact that the world itself has changed, a process on which the working-class movement has also had an influence. Our long-standing concept of the general welfare state evidently remains valid, and it proposes a strong society to counter the power of capital.

State regulation of economic life is also necessary in a democratic society, but it is no longer enough for the state merely to intervene in the economy, because not every kind of intervention is effective. The state has repeatedly made mistakes, and the first thing that needs to be done is to see that this intervention be reasonable and right.

The question of the social state is an acute one. In Finland, as everywhere else in Western Europe, it is the main dividing line between the socialists and the bourgeoisie. We believe, and have good reason to believe, that the state should provide essential services for everyone, whereas the bourgeoisie wants the services to be privatised and paid for. If the demands of the conservatives, which are backed by the liberals, are realised, by the end of the century Finland, for instance, will find itself with services available to people not according to need, but according to the ability to pay. Then services will be enjoyed only by those who can pay for them. Together with other parties and trends in the European working-class movement, we flatly reject the development of society along these lines.

In that case it is not quite clear why the FSDP, whose interests markedly differ from those of the conservatives, is now cooperating in the government with the National Coalition Party, the most conservative in Finland. It turns out that tactics do not accord with strategy.

What is important for the Social Democrats in Finland, and those in other countries, is the effectiveness of policy, the need to achieve results. This brings to mind Bertold Brecht's idea which could be rendered as actions speak louder than words. In view of the political background against which our decision to participate in the government was taken, it should be noted that there were other alternatives as well. For example, a government could have been formed by members of the bourgeois parties alone. We

analysed the situation and decided that such a government would do nothing for the poorer sections of the population. Our decision was therefore based on practical considerations and sprang from concrete political conditions.

When Helmut Schmidt was FRG Chancellor he once said that, despite his high post, he was able and authorised to tackle only 30 per cent of the problems relating to the FRG, while the remainder could not be solved without consideration of international factors. Many West European Social Democrats now say that policy on a national scale can no longer be sufficiently effective, and that it is time for cooperation on a regional scale. According to prominent SDP leader Peter Glotz this requires two conditions: the Social Democrats must overcome their social limitations and switch to a European strategy. What is your view?

In that article which, I believe, was published in *Der Spiegel*, Glotz also asked whether there were still any left-wingers in Europe, which is like asking if Everest is still in the Himalayas. As for Schmidt's analysis, at least he was lucky enough to have been able to tackle 30 per cent of his country's problems.

Cooperation between European workers' parties and trade unions is vital, and it does take place. The process has begun. Our point of departure should be that the working-class movement will not attain tangible results and influence within the national framework alone. The next few years may produce growing and effective cooperation in concrete areas. Analysis shows that internationalisation is a fact, and probably an inevitability. One's concern should be to keep the process within the limits that will not jeopardise the gains of the working-class movement, nor prevent further successes. It is much easier for the conservatives to pursue a policy in this area because the big companies, which are our problem, are their allies.

To what extent, in your view, does the balance of political forces in Western Europe depend on the situation in the socialist part of the continent, and are the changes now under way in the USSR and other socialist countries creating favourable conditions for the re-establishment of the positions of the left-wing forces in capitalist Europe?

The processes occurring in the Soviet Union are perhaps of greater interest than the current developments in Western Europe. They have certainly had an impact on public opinion, and on the working class movement. But they are having an especially beneficial effect on the growing potential for strengthening international peace, something that is promoted by the USSR's new, creative and flexible approach to world political issues and security problems. I think that it is now exceptionally important for Europe and the rest of the world to rid themselves of the enemy image. One had to stop seeing the menacing spectre of an enemy lurking behind the

ideological differences. This is an approach which, we believe, the working class movement in Western Europe should also promote.

Do you agree that if the political climate in Europe is to be changed, all the European left-wing forces, the Communists and the Social Democrats in particular, should cooperate on a higher level? What can be done to activate such cooperation?

I believe that cooperation between the two streams of the working-class movement should assume more concrete forms. The development of Western Europe and the socio-political situation on the national and the regional scales make such cooperation natural. The Communists and the Social Democrats have common historical roots. It is, of course, unrealistic to expect that in the modern world there could be a direct return to these origins, but they do exist, and are positive. Over the decades, two differing and independent ideological lines have evolved. There are great differences between their analyses of social development and their views of its goals, but there are also enough points of contact. The positions of the Social Democrats and the Communists are largely similar on the defence of the weak. I think that favourable conditions for cooperation are now also being created all over Europe, from the Atlantic to the Urals, due to a changed European political climate.

It will be recalled that the FSDP and the CPSU have maintained close bilateral ties for 20 years now. Indeed, we pioneered the dialogue between the representatives of the two main streams in the international working-class movement.

The forms of this dialogue have recently been substantially enriched. In this context, I think it is worth looking at the relations between the FSDP, the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, and the Italian Socialist Party, whose trilateral cooperation is based on a mutual recognition of the need for greater cooperation in the matter of security policy of European countries not in possession of nuclear weapons. The first working meeting of this 'trio' was held in Finland in early June, and was attended not only by the representatives of these parties, but also of other socio-political trends from the three countries. For example, right-wingers and Communists came from Finland and Italy, and Hungary, too, sent a representative delegation, its members ranging from Communists to churchmen.

Two themes were discussed: conventional arms cuts, primarily in Central and Southern Europe, and observance of the non-proliferation treaty. But what is to be done after that? The discussions were most interesting and are still going on. The outlines of a common document have appeared which could become a model for discussions in Europe.

The 'left forces' is a formula that is given different interpretations in Western Europe. What, in your view, are the trends making up these forces?

The right-left division has its origins in the time of the French Revolution, when the radicals sat on the left-hand side of the Convention, and the

others on the right. I believe that the concept of 'left' continues to be meaningful and valuable for Europe today. It applies to the Social Democrats and the Communists. As a political trend, the Communists in Europe are seriously divided, and we find the same situation in Finland, something that makes our cooperation somewhat ineffective. I would also include some Greens within the left-wing forces. They have different origins from those of the working-class movement, but their view of the basic factors behind the aggravated social problems largely coincides with that of the working-class movement.

May I end by asking a somewhat futurological question. If the results of the next election in the West European countries and Finland depended on your wishes, what would you like to see most of all: a weakening of the conservatives or a strengthening of the Communists?

In my position one obviously wants the Social Democrats to win. As for the others, success is preferable for those forces in Europe with which we find it easier to cooperate. Political developments in Finland have regrettably led, objectively and subjectively, to a situation where the cooperation between parties of the left in the government has become impossible. At the same time, I should very much like to see the governmental cooperation between the left-wing forces in the 1960s and 1970s repeated.

for human survival

The Planet's Flashpoints

Any Prospects For A Dialogue?

An historic event took place on Cyprus on September 15: barriers were simultaneously raised on both sides of the buffer zone dividing Nicosia, the capital of this island state, into two parts. In the presence of local and foreign journalists, Argentinian **Oscar Hector Camillon**, special envoy of the UN Secretary General, welcomed President **Georgios Vassiliou** of the Republic of Cyprus and **Rauf Denktash**, heading the Turkish Cypriot administration, to a meeting arranged following their Geneva talks last August. After years of uncertainty,

We continue publishing articles on the planet's flashpoints. See *WMR*, Nos. 7 and 10, 1988.

this marked some progress towards better relations in what is one of the world's trouble spots.

WMR asked Georgios Vassiliou and Rauf Denktash to answer some questions related to the present situation on Cyprus and its possible evolution. Below are the abridged versions of the interviews received in the latter half of September.

What new domestic and international factors have contributed to a resumption, after more than three years, of top-level contacts between the Greek and Turkish communities? Can these contacts be considered a manifestation of the new trend towards the peaceful settlement of local conflicts?

Vassiliou. As regards the domestic factors, my Government's declared policy has been to resume the intercommunal dialogue and make a new effort for a just and viable solution to the Cyprus problem. The new initiative of the UN Secretary General, Mr Perez de Cuellar, followed closely on my election to the Presidency of the Republic (February 1988. — *Ed.*). The Greek Cypriot side accepted the new initiative without reservations and immediately declared its readiness to negotiate for a settlement in good will.

The new initiative of the UN Secretary General also coincided with a series of new international developments which had a positive effect on the political climate in our region. A major development which facilitated the resumption of the intercommunal talks was the meetings and dialogue between the Prime Ministers of Greece and Turkey, Mr Papandreu and Mr Ozal.

The improvement in relations between the superpowers with the resumption of the top level dialogue between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachov and the effort to solve the major international regional conflicts had a direct positive effect in the whole region of the Mediterranean.

Within this international framework the resumed intercommunal dialogue under the auspices of the United Nations constitutes another effort for a peaceful settlement of a regional problem with international dimensions.

Denktash. The Greek Cypriots elected a new leader for themselves, Mr Georgios Vassiliou, who agreed to start a dialogue with the Turkish-Cypriot side with a view to finding a solution based on bi-zonal federal structure, which was the essence of the 1977 Agreement between the two sides. Merely this factor, namely, the appearance of a Greek Cypriot leader who agreed to negotiate with the Turkish Cypriot side (which was the thing Turkish Cypriots had been seeking since 1964) resulted in the Secretary General's initiative for bringing the two sides together in Geneva where it was decided, on the basis of political equality, to commence the intercommunal dialogue in Nicosia.

The Davos meeting between Turkish and Greek Prime Ministers earlier had a positive impact on the Greek Cypriot leadership and Mr Kyprianou's (former Cypriot President. — *Ed.*) intransigent policy became senseless

and looked ridiculous when Turkey and Greece — the respective motherlands of the two communities — agreed to settle their differences through negotiations, renouncing the use of arms against each other in settling such problems.

There is no doubt that the example set by the leaders of the two superpowers for 'talking to each other' rather than continuing the unproductive war of words, and their willingness to help solve regional conflicts rather than pour oil on them had an all-round impact all over the world. I believe that 'Gorbachov-Reagan teamwork' for reducing international tensions and limiting nuclear arms has helped to put all regional conflicts into their own perspective. In Cyprus, for example, no Greek Cypriot leader can hope — as they did for twenty years — that they can utilise the competition between the superpowers to achieve their own personal ambition of making a bi-national island completely Greek.

Thus the Soviet-US accord, even on a limited scale, has established in the world a new trend towards the peaceful settlement of international and local conflicts. This is a remarkable achievement on which we must all build bridges of understanding, friendship and cooperation and save the human race from the scourge of war and the indignity of having to kill each other in order to survive. The superpowers have shown that the philosophy which should guide all nations must be one of brotherhood, irrespective of ideological loyalties, and respect for each other's rights by creating a world free from fear of nuclear calamity, indeed free from all kinds of threats against each other. Cyprus, I believe, is benefiting from this new trend.

Do you foresee a peaceful settlement of the Cyprus problem in the near future? What do you think are the essential political and socio-economic prerequisites for it and what international guarantees would it need?

Vassiliou. We hope for a peaceful settlement as soon as possible since continuation of the existing situation of division and occupation of a large part of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus by Turkish troops is a source of suffering for all Cypriots. And the longer the current situation continues the more the *faits accomplis* are consolidated. Despite the pressing need for a speedy solution, nobody can foresee what will happen in the near future.

On our part we shall do all we can for a peaceful settlement of the Cyprus problem without delay. Any settlement, however, should provide for the withdrawal of the Turkish troops and the settlers from Cyprus and the fundamental rights of all the citizens should be safeguarded, including the right of movement, settlement and property ownership.

As far as any international guarantees are concerned, they must be effective and exclude the right of unilateral intervention by any country.

Denktash. The problem is 25 years old. We should not, therefore, expect to settle all its aspects in a short time. Time, patience and belief in the evolutionary process will all help in the right direction. Sound steps are better than hurried ones. We should not seek a makeshift settlement which one side or the other will try to get rid of in a few years' time, but a sound,

fair settlement which will diminish all areas of friction between the two peoples.

We believe that the Greek Cypriot side must understand the Turkish Cypriot insistence on guarantees and adequate constitutional protection to feel secure and free from any fear of oppression in the future. The meaning of partnership presupposes that the Greek Cypriots should know that the Turkish Cypriots cannot harm them either. If the talks succeed, there shall be established a partnership state (this time on a bi-zonal federal basis) and the two national communities will have to share power as political equals.

From our point of view, bi-zonality must be accepted in good faith and good neighbourliness cultivated instead of indoctrination that all refugees are entitled to return to their old places. Bi-zonality implies two zones (one Greek Cypriot in the South and one Turkish Cypriot in the North). This is necessary for security, for the reduction of all areas of conflict so that blood-feuds do not erupt into a civil war. It is also necessary for economic viability of the Turkish Cypriot community. Greek Cypriot propaganda that what they call 'the three freedoms' (to movement, settlement and purchase of property. — *Ed.*) should be implemented without restriction as a matter of fact indicates to the Turkish Cypriots that the Greek Cypriots are not sincere in conceding 'bi-zonal federalism' and that they aim at eroding the Turkish Cypriots out of their northern zone.

The Turkish Cypriots believe that the only power which has saved them from utter destruction was Turkey under and by virtue of the Treaty of Guarantee of 1959. No one should expect the Turkish Cypriots to enter into a new political partnership agreement with the Greek Cypriots without the continuation of this guarantee.

Have the meetings in Geneva and Nicosia brought about any rapprochement between the two sides and, if they have, in what respect? Which differences are persisting? Is it realistic to proceed gradually with the settlement by implementing any accords that might be reached, and postponing the resolution of more complex problems?

Vassiliou. The meetings I had in Geneva and Nicosia with the Turkish Cypriot leader under the auspices of the United Nations have prepared the ground for the resumption of the intercommunal talks in accordance with the proposal put forth by the UN Secretary General. It is too early to evaluate the situation and to predict how the dialogue will proceed.

Denktash. Our meeting in Geneva gave us each a chance to get to know the other side. This was necessary and it proved to be of positive value. I believe that our first task is to understand the approach and philosophy of the other side and then to try and reconcile these as far as possible. And when that is done, we should start working on details. Working on a package deal basis is a useful procedure as one can talk on all issues without any inhibition that he has conceded too much because one will have to look at the package as a whole right at the end. But confidence building measures can be tackled as we go along.

What role can the United Nations and the world democratic public play in achieving a just and lasting peaceful settlement on Cyprus and in what way could a UN-sponsored international conference help bring it about?

Vassiliou. The General Assembly and the UN Security Council have through resolutions defined what the dimensions of the situation of the Cyprus problem should be and the UN forces in the island have been playing an important role in maintaining peace. The Secretary General himself has made his good offices available at the request of the Security Council.

The world democratic public has been demonstrating solidarity with our people's just cause all along and we are grateful for that. At the United Nations and other international forums the freedom-loving countries have expressed their valuable support at difficult times for Cyprus and its people.

At this period when the Cyprus problem is going through a delicate phase anything that can facilitate the intercommunal talks and the implementation of the provisions of the UN resolutions is a valuable contribution to world peace and is welcome.

As regards the convening of a UN-sponsored international conference to deal with the Cyprus problem, our position is clear. Such a conference should be convened to deal with the international aspects of the problem.

Denktash. Now that the two sides have agreed to start a dialogue to establish a partnership government and have set June 1989 as a target date for doing so, UN should accord full equality to the Turkish Cypriots and the tendency to see the Turkish Cypriots as subjects of the Greek Cypriots must be stopped. We believe that the Greek Cypriot government cannot be treated as the legitimate government of the whole of Cyprus.

During the course of the dialogue we would recommend the Greek Cypriots to stop resorting to international forums where they present the Cyprus problem unilaterally in our absence and seek to get resolutions which contradict the principles of the dialogue.

The good-offices mission of the UN Secretary General is an effective way of settling the problem. If no results have been achieved until today it is due to lack of political will on the Greek Cypriot side and not to any defect in the good-offices mission of the United Nations. It is indeed very odd and unacceptable that representatives of countries, or groups of countries, do not hesitate to bolster up the image of the Greek Cypriot side by having visits and seminars in the South in complete disregard of the requests of the UN Secretary General not to hinder his work by so doing and in complete disregard of the protestations by the Turkish Cypriots.

The Greek Cypriot leaders have in the past tried to destroy the UN goodwill mission by seeking international conferences on Cyprus where, they know, the political equality of the Turkish Cypriots will be nullified. The Turkish Cypriot side cannot afford to sit with the Greek Cypriot side at any international conference where the latter will be sitting as 'the Government of Cyprus'. Doing so would condemn us forever.

What other factors, besides the Cypriots' national interests, make it important to extinguish the 'flashpoints' on Cyprus and what role does the island play in the Mediterranean, the Middle East and in a broader international context?

Vassiliou. Our aspiration is to make Cyprus a prospering country with the human rights of all its citizens safeguarded and its democratic system consolidated. We hope to turn Cyprus into a bridge of peace and cooperation between the peoples of the region without foreign occupation troops and settlers and with its sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-aligned status respected by all.

You are aware of the active participation of Cyprus in the non-aligned movement and its constructive role in the efforts to contribute to world peace both within the framework of the International Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and elsewhere. On this occasion I wish to assure you that Cyprus will continue to play its role in the universal effort for peace in the Mediterranean and the world at large.

Denktash. Had Cyprus stuck to its non-aligned policy sincerely, instead of using the 'non-aligned tag' as a means of getting votes one-sidedly on the Cyprus problem, it could have played a remarkable role in the area not only by being an example of intercommunal cooperation and accord of peoples of different religion, language and culture. It could also actively and with moral weight contribute to the solution of other problems in the area.

Cyprus today could have been an island of stability helping others in their search for peace and accord and giving an example of 'live and let live through mutual respect' to all multinational and multireligious countries. In such unity it could assure East and West that Cyprus will not be used against one or the other as a base or become part of any bloc, thus establishing in the Mediterranean a haven for diplomatic peace work, like Switzerland. This small island is big enough to accommodate all peaceful missions but it is too small to be used by anyone as a military base.

Stability Is Essential To Development

Professor *Andras Balogh* — Vice-President, Hungarian Society of Political Sciences; Vice-Chair, Hungarian Peace Council

HUMANITY is faced with globally serious challenges equally affecting our present and our future. Most of them may be deduced, directly or indirectly, either from the irregularities of development, or from armaments existing everywhere and materialising at an ever higher level. In the past decades these problems have got into the focus of economic,

historical and politological research, and they have been accorded widespread publicity.

In a recent *WMR* article Jan Tinbergen discussed various aspects of universal security, but he did not deem it necessary to touch upon its economic criteria.¹ While advocating a broader approach he, unfortunately, did not share his views on the now constantly emphasised but insufficiently examined subject of the interconnection between disarmament and development. Apparently, this is a reflection of the way certain sections of world public opinion regard the difficulties of the developing countries. This is largely due to tendentious news coverage of only some events and aspects of life in the highly variegated socio-economic environment of Asia, Africa and Latin America. As a result, the entire developing world is associated in the eyes of many people — say, Europeans — only with socio-economic instability, brutal dictatorships, local wars and existential uncertainty.

On the other hand, some apathy and disillusionment can be noted as the numerous and various well-meaning national and international efforts to speed up development and eliminate foci of crises have brought about little success, as has the struggle for a new international economic order. One must acknowledge that the problems of hunger, illiteracy, poverty and social underdevelopment in the Third World have been getting worse in recent years, and one cannot expect any radical improvement in the foreseeable future either.

Moreover, peace based on the balance of military power in the developed regions of Europe and North America has not yet become a stable condition of existence and development in other parts of the world. The planet as a whole has not had a single day without hostilities: in the past decade alone, wars have destroyed millions of lives. Nor has there been any demonstrable decline in the arms race. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), between 1982 and 1985 military spending increased faster than the world's gross national product (by 3.2 per cent and 2.4 per cent respectively), although these figures were different for different groups of countries.²

True, the first step towards disarmament has been made with the signing of the agreement on scrapping part of the Soviet and US nuclear arsenals. However, even practical success in the implementation of the INF Treaty can influence the relationship between disarmament and development only in the long run.

The arms race constantly affects Third World countries. A considerable part of the conflicts taking place there was related to the East-West confrontation. Different sources offer different data on the militarisation of the developing countries, but even if their arms expenditures are small in comparison to population size, they are a burden the backward economies cannot endure.

The dependent status of the developing countries is particularly manifest in the military sphere. Each nation aims at acquiring the most effective and latest military hardware which, with very few exceptions, can only be obtained from the developed countries. Two-thirds of all arms imports are purchased by the developing countries, the Middle East accounting for

one-third. Even though a large part of this hardware is bought with long-term credits and even given in the form of grants, dependence does not diminish but acquires a more sophisticated political dimension. It promotes all sorts of myths about the need to possess a large military potential to ensure independence and 'national greatness'.

As international tensions grew (from the late 1970s almost to this day), the needs and hopes of the South were pushed in to the background. Obviously, the aggravation of the East-West confrontation exacerbated, directly and indirectly, the plight of the developing regions. Developed nations earmarked less material and intellectual resources to combat hunger, disease, illiteracy and the high infant mortality rate than during the period of détente. Generally, Third World problems received only scant attention compared to the issue of preventing a nuclear catastrophe.

Now that the first steps have been taken towards genuine nuclear disarmament, we should reappraise the influence of nuclear-free stability on better prospects for the peaceful settlement of regional disputes. A new approach should be worked out to the entire range of issues related to effective development unburdened by militarism.

An analysis of the interconnection between disarmament and development prompts us to consider the antagonistic contradictions between socio-economic progress and the arms race.

First, arms manufacture is using up our far from infinite human and material resources. The squandering of labour, minerals, capital and technology on war preparations is an impediment to stable and balanced development.

Second, military and political instability in the under-developed parts of the world leads to socio-economic degradation and decline. In turn, economic instability aggravates aggressive tendencies in politics.

Third, the growth of military expenditures seriously increases the internal and external debt.

Fourth, military confrontation engenders and promotes discriminatory moves in the sphere of international economic relations.

Such is the vicious circle of the adverse effects produced by the arms race. It should long have encouraged effective practical action instead of simple reflections of how disarmament would ease the tax burden, give a boost to the consumer-oriented industries and promote social progress. Solemn declarations about the interconnection of disarmament and development can be misleading — for example, if public opinion believes that successful disarmament negotiations will be accompanied quickly and automatically by a rechanneling of military allocations into economic development.

Indeed, without a drastic reduction of the military infrastructure, one cannot expect to fully tap the potential of new thinking, since one cannot rule out the danger of relapses into old-fashioned concepts, methods and stereotypes. The most serious impediment to stable and effective development is rooted not only in the existence of the huge military industries, but also in the profound economic, social, political and ideological consequences of the long decades of confrontation.

That is why one cannot expect military spending to decline drastically

soon even though disarmament has entered a practical stage. A proper mechanism for the conversion of military research is yet to be developed. Besides, will the factories slated for conversion become commercially viable at once? What about the 'conversion' not only of the engineers and workers employed in arms manufacture but also of career army officers and experts? Will their switch to civilian occupations be swift and universal?

Development and disarmament can benefit crucially from the *establishment of a comprehensive system of international security* based on the principles of peaceful coexistence and equal security for all at a lower level of armament and from the complete elimination of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction.

While previously, security was regarded as — and achieved over the past few decades through — the military balance of the two opposing systems at constantly rising levels of might, this approach is no answer to the global problem of human survival in the nuclear age. Stubbornly repeated assertions about the aggressive nature of capitalism and about the military balance as a cure-all for the ills of instability do not square with the realities of our age. This policy can only perpetuate the vicious circle of confrontation.

There is also another highly relevant question: in our age of universal interdependence, can certain positive developments begin in the Third World? Can stabilisation of international relations, including East-West relations, receive considerable impulses of stability, trust and understanding from the developing regions? In other words, how autonomous and powerful should positive trends in the developing world become to be able to help the two systems abandon confrontation? Apparently, only practical action can answer these questions.

Undoubtedly, the initial impetus for improvements in the international climate was given by the new Soviet foreign policy based on new thinking. Moscow's present attitude to international issues proceeds from a qualitatively new world concept and leads to entirely new conclusions. So far, we are not yet in a position to fully grasp all the ideological and political effects of the idea that universal and common human interests have absolute priority which must not be challenged by any ideological or military considerations.

The socialist and other progressive forces will *inevitably* find — and are already finding — common interests with influential political, business and other groups in capitalist society. Only a responsible approach to disarmament issues, an approach fully based on new thinking, can rally all these forces together in the effort to attain common objectives — preventing a worldwide catastrophe and solving other global problems.

¹ See *WMR*, No. 8, 1988. — *Ed.*

² The military expenditures of developed capitalist countries grew 4.9 per cent a year and their GNP, only 2.1 per cent. Respective figures for the developing states were 3.1 per cent and 1.8 per cent; an opposite trend was recorded only in the socialist nations. — *Ed.*

Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones

Last summer Berlin played host to the International Meeting for Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, attended by heads of state, leaders of political and social organisations, and by scientific, cultural and church workers from 113 countries. Below are a series of articles on this important international problem.

Europe Needs A Churchill Of Peace

*Michiel Hermann von
Meyenfeldt (Netherlands) — Major
Generalitet, Chair, Generals for Peace
and Disarmament*

PEOPLE often ask me: would NWFZs be a real step towards peace or simply a palliative, some sort of division away from practical disarmament? If even one country (let alone a few) wants to create such a zone, then from the moral and psychological point of view this is a step towards stronger peace. However, if no one cares about reinforcing peace, then such steps are not going to be proposed.

The idea of denuclearisation should not be reduced to the mere desire to survive, to escape the consequences of a possible nuclear conflict, because there is no protection against such a catastrophe, it recognises no frontiers. Rather, it is the preventive aspect that assumes greatest importance. Denuclearisation as a concept has become an indispensable element of a strategy designed to gradually decrease and finally rule out the possibility of nuclear war.

In addition, NWFZs are a very important factor for security policy because of their role in nuclear disarmament. Of course, we should take care not to oversimplify this: it does not automatically involve a reduction of nuclear arsenals. However, these zones help to preserve the nuclear-free status of regions where no nuclear arsenals have been deployed, thus effectively reinforcing the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

There is another security policy aspect, in that denuclearised zones may enhance international stability. No nuclear threat would ever emanate from these regions, and the likelihood of the use of nuclear weapons elsewhere would also be drastically reduced. As a result conventional arms may be valued more rationally and cut down substantially.

The concept of mutual trust, openness and joint responsibility for survival merits special attention. The effect of a nuclear-weapon-free corridor in Central Europe would be felt outside the purely military sphere. Simple disengagement of the nuclear potential there would reduce the possibility of surprise attack, human error or technical malfunction, and in doing so lessen the threat of a military conflagration dramatically.

The nuclear threshold would be raised quite considerably in a region with the highest concentration of nuclear weapons in the world, and the withdrawal of dual delivery systems would inevitably lead to deep cuts in conventional and chemical arsenals.

This raises again what the Warsaw Treaty Organisation (WTO) has been suggesting for two years now: the side with a lead in a weapons category should come down to the lower level of the other. But the proposal has gone unheeded by NATO, although conventional parity would obviously remove all the real and imaginary fears of the WTO's edge.

From a military perspective, a nuclear-weapon-free zone presupposes a change in military doctrines, which assume a more defensive character. Are the NATO nations willing to take this step? With regard to the North Atlantic Alliance's doctrine, I cannot say that it is changing for the better. Worse, some people think the Intermediate Nuclear Force Treaty gives them the right to urge further modernisation of conventional arms and tactical nuclear weapons. The alliance's leadership continues to adhere to the traditional strategy, relying little on intermediate and shorter-range missiles which can always be replaced by other weapons deployed on aircraft, ships and so forth.

So what factor can alter the NATO doctrine in principle? I think that it is the development of a concept of security at the all-European level. If we are bound by the principle of confrontation between the two great powers, we shall never make any real progress towards disarmament. This underscores the need for European politicians to work out an idea of regional security. I regard this as a prerequisite stimulating the process of disarmament; new thinking could have its fullest impact here and bring what they call a 'European home' to fruition.

The time has come to solve international disputes solely by political methods. Military systems will become superfluous, having outlived their usefulness. Such systems no longer offer any security and it is a great pity there appear to be no sufficiently broad-minded and innovative leaders in the smaller European countries. I often tell my friends that our region needs a second Churchill, but a Churchill of peace. Olaf Palme was a personality of this calibre.

But how is a new generation of contemporary leaders to be raised? How to find generals who don't act out of pure self-interest, concerned only with their official positions and privileges? The answer is to mobilise people, either through mass actions, or through an educational peace campaign. This will inevitably influence, indeed is already influencing, the condition of the army.

For example, in the West German Bundeswehr there is an officers' organisation, the Darmstädter Signal. They have a realistic programme and are actively seeking an end to nuclear weapons, and the adoption of genuinely defensive military doctrines; they are developing contacts with their colleagues in East European countries. Such moves deserve the support of anti-war movements, the church, the ecologists, and so on. This will oblige the politicians to follow the road to a peaceful solution of the problems more consistently and resolutely.

Our group of retired NATO generals is also eager to promote the new

thinking and action. Shortly before the forum in Berlin we published a document about the need for a new strategy in NATO, in order to encourage progress within the bloc along the lines on the Vienna negotiations and bilateral cooperation with the East European countries.

Towards Partnership On Global Security

Karsten D. Voigt — Board member,
Social Democratic Party of Germany, the
SPD Bundestag Group's foreign policy
expert

WHAT does the concept of a nuclear-weapon-free corridor (or zone) mean in a situation where the USSR and the USA have accepted the 'double zero' option? Experience shows that, given an agreement on arms control, modernisation proceeds in areas not covered by this agreement. That is why the idea of the corridor is so important, since it also concerns battlefield nuclear weapons. Besides, the idea has to be linked to the question of missiles with a radius of less than 500, but more than 150 km.

Our party has independently, as well as alongside ruling parties from East European countries (above all in the joint working group with the Socialist Unity Party of Germany), been determining the principles for regional stability and partnership on security. Our proposals to create a zone free of chemical weapons and a denuclearised corridor on the line where the two alliances meet, has now been supplemented by initiatives on stabilising Central Europe and reducing attack capability, that is, a *zone of trust and security*.

Another important new element has been the discussion in Berlin of the relationship between nuclear disarmament and stability in the field of conventional arms. Even if no direct link is made between these questions at the Geneva talks, it is obvious that the greater the scale on which nuclear weapons are eliminated, the more significant conventional arms will become. This particularly applies to Central Europe and border areas. General stability, on a lower level of armaments from the Atlantic to the Urals, can only be achieved by substantial cuts in military forces and the elimination of any superiority in conventional arms.

Lastly, there is the question of the relationship between the idea of a denuclearised corridor and the proposals on nuclear disarmament in other regions of the world. These seem easier to put into effect in some places because — in Latin America and the South Pacific for example — they have no land-deployed nuclear weapons, while in the rest of the world no one knows for certain whether there are any nuclear weapons. South Africa, South Asia, and the Middle East are good examples. Honestly speaking, I have the impression that the idea behind the decisions to set up nuclear-weapon-free zones in some parts of the world, is often how to retain control over the situation in quite different regions.

A point of view exists according to which, should the two superpowers arrive at an agreement on 50 per cent reductions in their strategic arms, their credibility will have been so increased as to enable them, with a greater degree of moral authority, to demand to the extension and strengthening of the non-proliferation regime. This is important because, in the absence of East-West cooperation, attempts to put pressure on the Third World countries not to produce nuclear weapons will make little or no sense; but even with cooperation such pressure may achieve only limited success. That is why the subject of non-proliferation should be given special attention.

The Concept, Its Pluses And Minuses

Harkishan Singh Surjeet —
member, Political Bureau, Communist
Party of India (Marxist)

A GENUINE process aimed at freeing our planet from the threat of nuclear weapons began this year. However, the world's peoples, while hailing the INF Treaty, would like to see further steps taken towards nuclear disarmament. Among such efforts an important place belongs to the concept of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

The concept of NWFZ has been in force from as early as the 1950s, when the USSR and Poland suggested this as a way of reducing the nuclear threat in Europe. Unfortunately the USA and NATO turned down these proposals, the result being that Europe has become the most densely populated nuclear weapons area in the world.

During the Euro-missile build-up, the Palme Commission in 1982 proposed a *zone free from tactical nuclear weapons or assets, known as a nuclear-free corridor in Europe*. Since then the European nations, particularly the GDR, have taken a variety of steps to make this corridor a reality. The Tlatelolco and Rarotonga Treaties have both shown the possibility of nuclear free zones as a feasibility in the process of complete disarmament: by dissociating whole regions from the nuclear arms race and lessening the danger of a global conflict by reducing the sources of such danger, NWFZs will mean more security with fewer military means.

There are, however, several shortcomings:

1. While such zones prohibit the deployment of nuclear weapons, they permit their transit through the region. The distinction between transit and deployment is an academic one, since nuclear armed vessels moving through an area can readily use their weapons when required. In other words, the zone should not only prohibit the deployment of land-based weapons but also sea-based nuclear weapons.
2. The NWFZ concept defines nuclear weapons narrowly, meaning only warheads. The nuclear infrastructure which facilitates deployment, command, control and use of nuclear weapons is as important. By allowing

such facilities in the region, the NWFZ concept legitimises the participation, in a supportive role, of the countries of the zone in the global nuclear arms race.

3. The territorial delimitation of such zones should not be of such a nature that a nuclear military base remains at the periphery of such a zone. The exclusion of Guam from the South Pacific NWFZ has resulted in a situation where hundreds of US nuclear weapons are stored 15° North of the delimitation line, posing a nuclear threat to the entire zone itself.

4. The possibility of a country being a party to a regional nuclear-free zone but acquiring or testing outside the zone must not be allowed. The Israeli-South Africa nexus in testing a nuclear device in the South Atlantic in 1979 is a case in point.

We have raised some of these specific problems so that steps towards global nuclear disarmament should be comprehensive. In this way we shall help to end the doubts about such zones, and prevent the sabotage that has for a decade succeeded, among other things, in forcing the postponement of a conference on the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace.

Our government cannot ignore such facts. It is all the more significant that for all its complex view on this issue, it agrees in principle to the idea of freeing the planet of nuclear weapons by the year 2000. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi has effectively repeated this idea, only pushing the dateline back ten years.

As to the foreign policy platforms of the various political forces of India we are, for example, finding fairly rapidly a common language with the Indian National Congress, the Communist Party of India and other parties. In our discussions we are arriving at unanimous conclusions, since peace is common concern. Directly before Mikhail Gorbachov's last visit we convened a forum in which most political forces, and also scientists and cultural personalities took part; a year after the signing of the Delhi Declaration we held a function dedicated to this event. Our party issued a statement highly praising the Indian Prime Minister's speech at the third special session of the UN General Assembly on disarmament. It is noteworthy that this document appeared at the very height of the elections (which we, the CPI/Marxist, contested in opposition to Rajiv Gandhi's INC party), because we recognise and support anything constructive that furthers a more stable peace.

A Latin American Peace Zone

Jose Regato — CC member,
Communist Party of Ecuador (PCE)

THE peoples of Latin America are demanding that the Pacific Ocean should be preserved as a peace zone free of nuclear weapons. This question was discussed by the inter-governmental Permanent South Pacific Commission' in Quito, at the end of 1987, where three foreign ministers (not including the Chilean) accepted the need to establish such a zone in

the *south-eastern* part of the ocean, and expressed their disapproval of French nuclear tests on Mururoa, which inflict serious ecological damage on this vast region.²

To preserve the integrity of the ocean is to protect the health and indeed the very life of the peoples of this zone, and to ensure food resources. In Ecuador, for example, shrimps constitute the second largest item of foreign exchange earnings (after oil). The ocean provides millions of Latin Americans with food and work, and contains vast reserves of untapped mineral wealth. Finally, from time immemorial the Pacific Ocean has brought nations closer together, representing the most important means of transport and commerce in the region. The ecological, economic and general security concerns Latin Americans share with states in the Asia-Pacific Region force them to think about our new, 'oceanic' responsibilities to present and future generations.

However, nuclear tests, and the attempts by US imperialism to draw our countries into the orbit of Star Wars, have compelled Latin Americans to realise the grave danger facing their continent and the whole of humankind. Great Britain's aggression in the Malvinas — with direct US backing — and the subsequent installation of a nuclear base there have dispelled the illusion that Latin America is safely removed from any potential nuclear confrontation.

Geographic remoteness from the centres of the world politics is no longer considered a guarantee of security. The issues of peace and war are now decided not only in the capitals of nuclear powers, primarily in Washington and Moscow.

Today everybody is worried by reports of nuclear arsenals being set up in Costa Rica and, since its infamous invasion of Grenada, the US has conducted an unrelenting campaign against Panama and its right to possess the Canal, and is obviously looking for fresh targets. Pinochet, against the national interest, has already started negotiations with the USA on the fate of Easter Island, where he has agreed to the construction of a landing site for US space shuttles and of a station for tracking submarine-launched missiles, which means that he is, in fact, ready to help implement part of the Star Wars programme.

Imperialist circles are afraid that the Latin American countries on the Pacific coast might follow the example set when a pact was concluded, in Rarotonga, on establishing a system of security in the south-western part of the ocean. But in their search for new military bases the maniacs on the Potomac tend increasingly towards the states of our zone.

The attempts by the US military to set up bases in Ecuador's Amazonia with the connivance of the former right-wing president Febres Cordero, were thwarted by the Ecuadorans, who achieved a significant victory in the struggle against imperialism when Social Democrat Rodrigo Borja, supported by the Communists and other left-wing forces, was elected president.

Washington still hopes to get its hands on the Galapagos archipelago. The crisis provoked by the US in Panama has led the Ecuadoran media to recall that, throughout this century, the North Americans have applied pressure on Ecuador in order to get control of the Galapagos islands,

which hold a strategic position in the Pacific, in front of the Canal. How many efforts had to be made to force the USA to dismantle the military base installed in the archipelago during World War II! The voracity of the Pentagon has not decreased, and now they want, with the help of their local friends, to get the islands in payment for Ecuador's external debt. The Pentagon, finally, intends to use for its own purposes the geostationary orbit that passes over our land. But the people will not allow our country to be used for militarising outer space, stressed René Maugé Mosquera, General Secretary of the PCE Central Committee.

Today, security, survival and sovereignty are directly or indirectly bound up not only with territory and the airspace over it, but also with water expanses. The Pacific countries welcomed the proposals put forward by Mikhail Gorbachov in Vladivostok to convert the ocean into a denuclearised zone, where their common development would be possible.

It is important to recall that Latin America was the first region to be declared such a zone over twenty years ago by the Treaty of Tlatelolco. Then, back in 1975, nine Pacific and Latin American states submitted to the UN First Committee a draft resolution for the creation of a denuclearised zone in the South Pacific. Four years later Guyana, Grenada, Saint Lucia and Jamaica obtained from the Organisation of American States (OAS) a resolution declaring the Caribbean a zone of peace, and Brazil in its turn suggested that a zone of peace and cooperation should be established in the South Atlantic. A unity of purpose has thus been shaped: to free the Pacific of nuclear weapons and to prevent this region being drawn into the Star Wars project.

Governments and socio-political circles in Latin America have lent their support to the peace initiatives aimed at creating new denuclearised zones. It would seem that a tendency to pursue a policy of peace, détente and cooperation has arisen here. The activities of the Contadora and Support Groups has, to a certain extent, helped to frustrate aggressive designs on Nicaragua, facilitating a political settlement in the Central American region. The OAS, for its part, began to pay greater attention to its members and has, in a major affront to US imperialism, invited socialist Cuba to rejoin the organisation.

Yet it has to be admitted that, in spite of the important role democratic organisations and communist parties play in the peace movement and the inculcation of anti-war sentiment among the popular masses, the activity of these forces falls far short of the present challenges and the real opportunities existing in Latin America and the Caribbean. Our primary, most urgent, task is to *achieve a maximum unity of all those who are interested in preserving peace*. The most diverse political circles, church workers and progressive military have started along this road. By joining it, the broad masses come to realise that the struggle for peace and disarmament is intimately linked with the socio-economic demands of the majority, with the extension of democratic freedoms and human rights and with national and social liberation.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones of peace and cooperation in the Pacific and the Andes area, in Amazonia, the Caribbean and the South Atlantic would be a significant milestone in the historic campaign of the world's peoples for peace and social progress.

¹ It was set up in 1952 by Ecuador, Peru and Chile to preserve and protect their marine resources. Colombia joined it in 1979. — *Ed.*

² The radioactive pollution of oceanic depths (resulting from debris deposits after explosions), experts believe, has been responsible for the gradual disappearance of tuna-fish from the coastal waters. The Peruvian fishermen no longer encounter any shoals of anchovies, and the climate in the coastal zone has markedly deteriorated, affecting the cacao and banana yields.

'Pacific' Islands?

Ben Micah — President, National
Union of Students, Papua New Guinea

THE far-flung islands and atolls of the South Pacific have often conjured up an image of paradise, a serene 'mini-state' softly hidden away from the political storms in the rest of the world. But there is trouble in paradise: the greater incidence of cancer; the birth of deformed babies; continuing 'nuclear colonialism'; and growing ethnic conflict.

The great changes taking place in our part of the world, having related these problems, can now help to solve them. A nuclear-free world, independence and political, economic and ecological self-determination are now global concerns, and small states, like anybody else, have an equal right to security and development.

The Pacific has always been considered as a region greatly influenced by the Western world. Most, if not all, the newly independent countries of the region were colonised and received formal independence from either Britain, Australia or New Zealand. Even after declarations of political independence they all still suffer the legacy of colonialism and neocolonialism. Their economies are still basically controlled by foreigners, tied as they are to credits from former empires and 'trustees'.

A concrete example is that of my own country, Papua New Guinea, where Australian corporations have a considerable interest in trade and mining, mainly oil and copper. Because of these economic interests, and the right to an exclusive exploitation of the rich natural resources, the Western capitalist powers have resorted to any methods — even murder and coups — in order to prevent any progressive forces from challenging their domination of the region.

Witnessing the tragic fate of neighbouring 'test-range' atolls and the other 'fruits' of Western rule, a group of island states has embarked on a course for affirming their sovereignty in international affairs. A precedent was set by the independent foreign-policy line of Vanuatu, which, after independence, decided in 1980 to establish diplomatic relations with Cuba and join the non-aligned movement. It is now active in promoting decolonisation and nuclear disarmament.

Another example is the Republic of Kiribati. In 1985 its government signed a fishing agreement with the Soviet Union that met with disapproval from the United States, Great Britain and Australia. President Ieremia Tabai defended his government's dealing with the USSR by saying that he failed to understand why his country could not choose to trade with whichever country offered it the best economic deal.

The principle of national sovereignty and security in the Rarotonga Treaty, signed, among others, by Papua New Guinea and operative since the end of 1986, has acquired an anti-nuclear thrust. We all want to see a South Pacific without nuclear weapons, explosions and radioactive waste, and the Treaty has provided an example of a responsible collective attitude to the issue of a denuclearised world.

This tendency had gathered momentum even earlier when a Labour government led by David Lange came to power in New Zealand. The new Prime Minister declared New Zealand a nuclear-free zone, barring ships carrying nuclear weapons from its ports. This policy received much criticism from Australia and the US, but the New Zealand government, backed by popular support at home, reaffirmed it and, as a result, withdrew from the ANZUS bloc.

However, there is no reason to sound over-optimistic: two influential countries in the region — Japan and South Korea — are being drawn increasingly into the strategic plans of the USA, which obviously seeks more control, and to prevent changes, by tightening its 'rings' and 'arcs' of military bases' around the other countries in the area.

The following also reveals the difficulties the young states face as they strive for real independence and security: in May of last year Fiji's government declared an anti-nuclear foreign policy platform. But Prime Minister Timoci Bavadra was never given the chance to implement the reforms he had promised during the election campaign: a coup d'état with CIA backing overthrew his government and established a military dictatorship.

A shining example of the growth of a movement for genuine self-determination and independence was set by the struggle of the Karaks in New Caledonia against French neocolonialism.

The day will come when the peoples of our region will be able to develop ties with their neighbours in the oceanic expanses, including the socialist countries, on the basis of mutual understanding and cooperation. We can already see the increasing drive for stable peace, and, apart from the DPRK and the South-east Asian states, a number of developing and developed capitalist nations of the region have come up with proposals to set up denuclearised zones — zones of peace and security.

Every nation is today interested in peace and cooperation, and I think that the efforts to this end by small and geographically remote states could be — and are already becoming — increasingly constructive.

¹ In particular, US nuclear weapons are deployed in South Korea and the Philippines, plus large US test ranges, space tracking stations and other Star Wars facilities in Micronesia, Australia, Hawaii, and Easter Island. — *Ed.*

the party

For An Efficient Cadre Policy

Jose Ramon Machado Ventura
— Political Bureau member and
Secretary, CC, Communist Party of
Cuba

THE 30 years since the victorious Cuban revolution have seen significant progress in the economy, the social class structure and the political system. At the same time some mistakes and miscalculations of the past few years have given rise to negative phenomena, such as greed, black-marketeering, violations of labour discipline and disregard for political education. The Third Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba (1986) stated the need to fight those phenomena and further to perfect socialism. The Congress laid down the following programme policies and objectives for the party: to develop a material and technological base for socialism, and new culture, to advance ideology and to improve the political system of Cuban society.

Efficient work with the cadres is a vital prerequisite for accomplishing the present tasks of the revolution and socialist construction. "Executives at every level and the party apparatus shall bear responsibility for the pursuit of the party policy line in every area of social life," says the CPC programme approved by the Third Party Congress. "This means that the party leaders at every level, from the Central Committee to the primary organisation, must concern themselves with the correct selection, adequate advancement, correct placement and timely renewal of cadres within their purview and strictly according to the established procedure."

Our party has always attached priority importance to this aspect of its activity, while bearing in mind the specific historical circumstances and characteristics inherent in every stage of the revolutionary process. The First CPC Congress (1975) defined the basic principles for working with the cadres, the essential qualifications and duties required of senior personnel, and the procedure for personnel assessment. These basic provisions have lost none of their relevance, but the tasks now facing the party and the people demand that they be updated and made more specific. This is because *cadre policy makes it possible to consolidate the people's achievements in the three decades since the revolution and to rectify mistakes.*

That was why cadre policy was at the centre of a wide-ranging debate at the latest Congress. It noted that state and public organisations were trying to evaluate objectively the candidates for senior posts and the performance of senior personnel, and were preparing reserves with due regard for the need to rotate personnel and to replace those whose dynamism and creative energies were exhausted. But the Congress did not deem the party's work in that field to be satisfactory. It noted a persisting bureaucratic approach to cadre questions, frequent cases of formalism, a

disregard for the personnel qualifications of candidates or the specific requirements of a certain job. The measures to control the number of administrative and managerial personnel were inadequate and the need for constant reductions ignored. Many specialists were taken out of production and the services and given jobs of little practical use. There was no streamlined and efficient system for the induction and advanced training of economic managers.

The party's goal now is gradually to renew and improve the administrative personnel. We are making a greater effort to train young Communists, women's movement activists, Blacks and mestizoes for responsible positions in party and government bodies and in mass organisations. In this way we will be able to develop a rational system for utilising men and women from different age and racial groups that creates a balance between the experience of veteran executives and the enthusiasm of newcomers.

Young people who were born and brought up after the revolution, in a just and democratic society, are a talented and knowledgeable generation with a new vision of the world, and should be *more actively promoted*. They are intolerant of shortcomings and ready to fight them. If we want a dynamic leadership we should draw replacements and reinforcements from the younger generation rather than from any other pool of candidates.

The promotion of middle-level party cadres under 35 rose to 40 per cent in the 1987 election campaign; there are now 48 per cent of people with university or secondary technical education among party officials, compared with 38.6 per cent in the past. Recruitment is in the focus of attention: we think that around 70 per cent of new party members should be supplied by the Cuban Union of Young Communists and the dramatic increase of new 'recruits' from this sector is encouraging.

As the leadership is renewed, we try to ensure *continuity* by encouraging veteran party workers to share their experience. We do not think that younger cadres, either in the party or in the administrative and managerial bodies, are given sufficient assistance. Whilst improving the induction and advanced training system, we are also revising its individual components, such as curricula, in response to the growing needs of society and to the tasks set by the Third Party Congress.

The Congress noted the imbalance between the active role of women in building socialism and the degree of their involvement in administration and management. In 1986 women accounted for 37.3 per cent of Cuba's economically active population as compared with 32.4 per cent in 1980; 55.4 per cent of all specialists with a higher or secondary education were women and 80 per cent of the female population — 3.1 million — were members of the Cuban Women's Federation, which is mobilising women workers to join in revolutionary change. For example, the Federation spearheaded a campaign to involve housewives in literacy classes, in the course of which more than 100,000 women received secondary education. More than 1.5 million mothers are taking part in the Help the School movement, launched on the Federation's initiative, 60,000 are members of volunteer medical nurses' teams and 1.8 million have volunteered for the territorial militia.

A significant fact is that *more and more women are joining the party* (in

1985 women's share of new recruits rose by 21.5 per cent over 1980) and being promoted, albeit gradually, to senior posts (they make up 13.8 per cent, but the percentage is lower in the municipal and provincial executive bureaux). There are few women occupying posts of responsibility in the local bodies of state and people's government. We think it important to encourage their promotion, bearing in mind the abilities, experience, knowledge and revolutionary spirit of each candidate. Society as a whole has an interest in this process and the Communist Party should take the lead in the matter.

Ours is a multiracial society, and Blacks and mestizoes constitute a sizeable segment of the economically active population. Following the Congress's directions, we are now trying to draw more of them into governing the processes of building socialism and into politics.

There is much latent talent in the masses and, the party believes, our task is to spot the worthiest people and train them to be true leaders. Pools of reserves for every organisation have been identified, and reserve lists have been drawn up with reference to actual needs. People meeting specific requirements are selected on this basis.

The decision has been taken to establish *general criteria of cadre policy* for governmental institutions as an essential instrument of raising the efficiency of administration and management in production, the services, education and in the country as a whole.

The selection and education of cadres demands consistency, patience, and close attention to personal qualities, abilities, aptitudes, and shortcomings. *Personnel assessment* is an important element: it is a unique way of supervising the performance of personnel, an efficient means for their development and professional growth, and a basis for their selection and placement. In the past few years assessment has often been marred by superficiality, and a lack of criticism and self-analysis. Selective emphasis was placed on either the merits or the drawbacks of specific workers, depending on their seniors' attitude to them and on the plans for their advancement or demotion. Although the situation has somewhat improved, assessment has not yet achieved its desired purpose. We want it to produce an objective and impartial evaluation of every worker, his or her influence on team performance, ability to use various forms and methods of work, personal qualities, potentialities, etc.

Assessment findings are used to compile or correct reserve lists and to replace slackers. This system makes it possible to nominate candidates for future vacancies well in advance in order to avoid rash decisions.

Control over the work of the party apparatus and the state administrative system is an important aspect of the party's cadre policy. It is one of the basic functions of the Communist Party, which under the Constitution exercises the political leadership of the state and society while fully observing the democratic principles and respecting the will and decisions of every work collective. That aspect of work with the cadres which is by no means free from mistakes and omissions either, is in the focus of our attention as well.

The party wants every Communist, from the grassroots level to the Central Committee, to recognise the need for a marked improvement in

cadre policy and to approach it, in the Leninist spirit, as a most important task.

In short, a strategic policy line has been worked out and the ways and means for implementing it have been defined. The results so far attained do not yet fully meet the demands made on cadre policy by party forums, especially by the latest, Third Party Congress. But we already have a sound basis for achieving our goal in the near future through consistent efforts and a creative quest for new ideas and solutions.

¹ *Programa de la Partido Comunista de Cuba*, Editora Politica, Ciudad de la Habana, Cuba, 1986, p. 209.

Impulses of Renovation

The Third Meeting Of The Communist Parties Of South America

AS has been reported in the last issue, on August 5-7, the Third Meeting of the Communist Parties of South America took place in Montevideo, the capital of Uruguay. It was attended by delegations from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. There were also observers from the Communist Parties of Cuba and the Soviet Union, Nicaragua's Sandinista National Liberation Front, El Salvador's Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front, and the *World Marxist Review*. The People's Progressive Party of Guyana was unable to attend because of its national congress, but expressed its full support for the decisions adopted in Montevideo.

The agenda of the meeting included three items:

- assessment of the situation in Latin America and the reinforcement of solidarity among the peoples of the southern part of the continent;
- work experiences of the communist parties and reflection on the process of renewal of the world communist movement;
- problems of coordination, concrete initiatives and the adoption of a final communique.

The forum participants have stated that in comparison with the 1960s and 1970s a new situation exists in Latin America and that the times are gone when Washington could impose measures like the blockade of Cuba. Today the Contadora and Support Groups firmly reject imperialist intervention in Central America. In the Organisation of American States the USA has found itself alone in its bid to apply pressure to Panama. Typically for the present times, the new President of Ecuador, Rodrigo Borja, invited Fidel Castro and Daniel Ortega to the ceremony of his assumption of office, and his first government act in foreign policy was the re-establishment of diplomatic relations with Nicaragua.

Anti-imperialist sentiments and the desire for unity are growing stronger

in the region. Imperialism has reinforced the shackles of economic dependence, but, at the same time, the bondage is deeply in crisis due to its unbearable exacerbation. The fight against foreign debt servicing, the non-equivalent trade, the transnationals' greed and the dictates of the International Monetary Fund has involved various sectors and tens of millions of people. The demand for a new international economic order is gaining ground rapidly.

On the other hand, the recourse to the fascist dictatorships made by the US administration and the local oligarchies has generated in the peoples of the region a renewed valuation of democracy, liberty and unrestricted respect for human rights. Thus, what most characterises the situation in Latin America today is the existence of great opportunities for the development of the mass movement for political and social liberation. *The key issue at the Montevideo forum was therefore how to transform the communist parties of the region into major political organisations with policies of alliances that will effectively unite all the revolutionary, anti-imperialist and democratic sections.*

A profound scientific study of the current processes in Latin America will help to solve this task. It is necessary to tap more fully, and in an original way, all the creative potentialities, in transforming as well as interpreting the world, that Marxist-Leninist thought contains; to proceed from the concrete reality to corresponding conclusions and not conversely, as often happened in the past, when people attempted to view life through the prism of established doctrinaire stereotypes. It involves, for example, a scientific comprehension of the whole system of contradictions in play to understand such questions as the rise of a sentiment of Latin American independence from imperialism, now exhibited by many governments as well as by the peoples.

One of the self-critical points at the meeting was the acknowledgement of the lag which in many aspects expresses itself in the level of analysis of phenomena such as the most recent changes in the structure of the Latin American working class; its possibilities for alliance with the middle strata in town and country; the role which the youth, students, marginal sections, and Indian masses play in the liberation struggle; the emergence of women's organisations of a new type; dialogue and joint action with believers and sections of the church; work with the military; the comprehension of ecological problems, and the participation by the Communists in the broad movement for the protection of the environment; finally, the necessity of a new appraisal of scientific and cultural development in its relationship with political activity and the study of the protagonist involvement in it of great masses of intellectuals.

The meeting participants suggested coordinating the efforts by all research centres of the fraternal South American parties, and most speakers underscored the need for a more detailed study of the consequences of the US policy in the region. It is obvious that Washington will never look calmly on an upsurge of the liberation movement. The Communists should therefore examine together the results of the fulfilment of the imperialist plans contained in the Document of Santa Fe,¹ which is known to have served as a guideline for the action of the Reagan

Administration against Latin America. They would also do well to explore all the consequences of the application of the so-called National Security Doctrine and to know in what manner it has evolved into a fresh neoglobalist concept of 'low-intensity conflicts'.

One of the questions most debated in the Montevideo forum was the theme of democracy. There exists a consensus among the South American Communists to view the democratisation of the political regimes not only from the point of view of tactics, but, fundamentally, as a matter of principle, inherent in the entire thought and action of the revolutionaries, the basis of socialist society to which we historically aspire. In upholding democracy on the continent, the Communists have accumulated a great experience and sacrificed no few lives. We have more authority than anyone else to speak of it with full propriety because our combat in this field knows no renunciations. It is for this reason that the meeting in Montevideo re-emphasised our foremost duty to continue to act in this spirit.

The fall of the dictatorships and the advent of democratic governments, in most of the South Cone countries, has been an historic gain of our peoples. At the same time, those regimes do not go beyond the limits of bourgeois parliamentarianism. The submission by ruling circles to the economic diktat of imperialism and their preservation of the repressive apparatus nurtured by the tyrannies do not safeguard an irreversibility of the changes. So in what way can the Communists achieve a more consistent, advanced democracy for the masses and simultaneously create safeguards against the return of fascism to power? The exchange of opinions on this issue will be continued, with due regard for both the overall situation and the diversity of the countries of the region.

The meeting has noted that the Cuban Revolution, which will soon celebrate its 30th anniversary, was a significant event for Latin America and the entire world. Not only did it mark a turning point in the continent's political history, but also enriched our theoretical vision and ideological conceptions. The same has happened, more recently, with the triumph and heroic resistance of the Sandinista popular revolution. For this reason, if we are to speak of the tasks of solidarity, the firm defence of Nicaragua is indisputably a top priority. It is the duty of the Communists to actively support the selfless efforts by the Salvadorean patriots, the actions of the peoples of Chile, Paraguay and Haiti, the struggle of Panama in defence of its sovereignty, and to work for an end to the dirty war that the military have unleashed against the Colombian people.

Perestroika in the Soviet Union, the process of rectification of mistakes in Cuba, and the changes in other socialist countries were considered as *potent creative impulses destined to favour the urgent renovation of the whole international communist movement*, which has entered a new historical stage of its development. The overcoming of dogmas and stereotypes and the consolidation of a unity based on diversity makes it incumbent on the South American Communists to define their own positions by adhering to the principles of Marxism-Leninism.

The Montevideo meeting was a truly working forum in which criticism and self-criticism were assumed as a normal scientific method in the life

and activity of the Communists, and the joint discussion was completely free from formalism or any interference in the internal affairs of each of the parties. What distinguished the debate participants was the desire to make a contribution to the renovation of our movement.

Orel Viciani
representative of the Communist Party of Chile on *WMR*

¹ For details see Rodney Arismendi 'A Global Madness Once Again', *WMR*, No. 7, 1981; Narciso Isa Conde 'The Decline of the Santa Fé Policy', *WMR*, No. 3, 1988. — *Ed.*

Communists And Youth

How To Win The Future

"We are a party of innovators, and it is always the youth that most eagerly follows the innovators," wrote Lenin (*Collected Works*, Vol. 11, p. 354). Is this thesis still borne out in the practice of communist parties and, if not, then why not? What are the distinguishing features of the youth which shape its revolutionary and creative potential? What can and must the Communists do to win it over for peace and national and social liberation? Our Communists and Youth series has tried to answer these and other questions.¹

The *WMR* Commission on the International Communist Movement and Exchanges of Party Experience discussed its results. Speakers at the meeting included Editorial Council members **Antonio Granja** (Brazilian Communist Party), **Christophoros Ioannides** (Progressive Party of the Working People of Cyprus), **Jose Regato** (Communist Party of Ecuador), **Abu Saad** (Iraqi Communist Party), **Rafic Samhoun** (Lebanese Communist Party), **Gombojevyn Ochirbat** (Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party), **Mostafa Azzaoui** (Party of Progress and Socialism of Morocco), **Juan Tutuy** (Peruvian Communist Party), **Ali el Tayeb** (Communist Party of Sudan). Below is a brief survey of their views and judgements, prepared by the chair of the commission, **Rafic Samhoun**, and its secretary, **Vladimir Shelepin**.

THE main conclusion arrived at by the contributors to the series and the discussion participants is that the study of the problems of today's youth, systematic work with it — even special effort in some cases — and a decisive relationship with it are of particular significance. This is a matter of paramount, indeed vital, importance to the Communists, a guarantee of the renewal of our movement in each country and throughout the world, and the march of humanity along the road of peace, national independence, freedom, democracy and socialism in the approaching 21st century.

At the same time they noted that for all the general interest in this problem it is so multifaceted and complex that it requires a flexible, differentiated approach free of oversimplification or schematism. For example, the concerns of young freedom fighters in Palestine, Lebanon, El Salvador and South Africa are very different from those of their contemporaries in Western or Eastern Europe. The situation varies greatly not only from region to region and from country to country: the students, young workers and peasants all have their own cares and interests. Finally, such rapid changes have been occurring in the mood, consciousness and aspirations of the young generation that it is simply impossible to work out any long-term recommendations for working with it.

Most young people today *readily accept all that is new, are not afraid to experiment and are hostile to conservatism*. They hate delay and are willing to fight for freedom, the job they want and access to education, culture and sport. They don't like being lectured, nor those who suppress their initiative, they won't tolerate lies and hypocrisy and never forget the promises made to them. They might be the first to repudiate injustice, but they will resolutely defend what they believe to be right.

However, these general, mainly positive features vary according to time and place. In the opinion of the Argentinian Communists, young people in their country, active in political life since the mid-1970s, differ from older generations by their striving for a more profound theoretical understanding of today's problems and by their revolutionary enthusiasm. Young Argentines, participating widely in the struggle for human rights, vigorously support the demand by the Communists that the country should renounce the interest payments on its foreign debt, seeing this as a flagrant injustice, and are highly sympathetic to other peoples in trouble: youth coffee-harvest brigades have been going to Nicaragua for the last seven years.

Assessments of the position in the developed capitalist countries are notable for their evident anxiety. Today, for example, most young people in Belgium have no idea of the struggle for social gains, or of trade union work, having only known recession and unemployment. They have withdrawn into themselves and succumbed to individualistic sentiment, which quite often manifests itself in nihilism and violence. French opinion polls also reveal the *deep confusion of the young generation*, whose fear in the face of certain problems, and doubts about a possible solution to the crisis, affect its behaviour. In Switzerland 20-year-olds are now more inclined to individualism or conformism than before. These people appear to be 'programmed' to make a career, to achieve, as they put it, success in life — a 'credo' found not only among those who come from bourgeois families, but also among workers' children.

Nor have the socialist countries escaped these negative tendencies. Financial troubles and the inconsistent application of the principles of justice disillusioned some young people in Hungary, leading to *social and political passivity* among them. Earlier, according to opinion polls young Hungarians' three chief desires were good professional prospects, independence and personal happiness — all reversed since the end of the last decade; now happiness in personal life tops the list, followed by 'a flat'

and 'much money'. Discussion participants also expressed concern about the heightened interest in religion among young people in socialist society. They suggested that further attention be paid to this problem, taking, for instance, the example of Poland.

Critical appraisals of today's youth are seen by the Communists as a *sign of objectivity not of pessimism*. According to the HSWP CC Secretary Janos Lucacs, the present generation is not a 'lost' one; besides the passive and indifferent people there are many who, while critical of existing practices or specific aspects of party policy, yearn for changes and are willing to do their bit in bringing them about. The contributors from Denmark and Switzerland were pleased to note the growth of young people's interest in global problems: preventing war, protecting the environment, and overcoming the Third World's social and economic backwardness.

The young generation is more acutely aware of the vice of capitalism than other sections, precisely because it is more vulnerable to these vices: rising prices, the housing crisis and unemployment. Although the revolutionary potential of young workers and students is great, they are influenced by a number of factors which weaken their socio-political activism and ultimately cause few of them to join the Communists in many countries. Among such factors the round table participants cited the following:

- the Americanisation of culture and political life, particularly evident in Latin America and the Caribbean;

- the rise of consumerism among the population, entailing a perfunctory attitude to serious problems and an indifference to political struggle;

- a steady flow of anti-communist and anti-Soviet propaganda;

- an increased feeling of hopelessness, leading to the spread of drug-addiction and crime.

Disillusionment with the ideal and the loss of a vivid and, most importantly, an intellectual perspective has a particularly adverse effect on young people's consciousness. This gives rise to nihilism, escapism and leads some of them into the arms of petty-bourgeois 'Left' radicals, religious extremists, or even neofascists.

Imperialist propaganda actively manipulates people's minds by distorting the facts and creating appropriate stereotypes. For a long time the press, television and radio in France, including youth and educational programmes, have portrayed a *negative image of socialism*: an economic failure, a Gulag, aggressive politics, young people forcibly restrained by inert and superannuated leaders. In Brazil anti-communist propaganda has successfully used the crimes of the Stalin-cult period to alienate young people from the Communists. In Peru it has done much to dampen the enthusiasm aroused in the 1970s by the successes of the Cuban Revolution and by the Vietnamese victory over the US.

Besides being constantly exposed to lies about socialism, young people in the non-socialist countries, especially in the Third World, are also treated to unrestricted praise of the advantages of the bourgeois way of life, whereas the media available to the Communists and their parties,

including those in power, are unable to neutralise such propaganda. The voice of truth, the voice of socialism, reaches most countries and areas too feebly, and sometimes in a form which only alienates the receivers.

Apart from propaganda, there is a more profound aspect to this question. The Communists of the older generation in Belgium joined the party because they were attracted by the strength of the Soviet Union and its role in the struggle against Nazism. "Whereas I, on the contrary," says the chair of the Communist Youth of Belgium, Eric Remackle, "became a Communist in 1980 in spite, as it were, of everything that was then being said of Afghanistan. I consider this distinction between our generations very important. The experience of the USSR and the socialist countries is now understood differently than before, more realistically." The Hungarian Communists explain the gradual decline in socialism's attraction, among young people in particular, as due to its having failed to organise production better, or to apply the achievements of science and technology more effectively, than the industrialised capitalist states.

Naturally, the repercussions of the important changes now occurring in the USSR are beginning to alter perceptions about socialist society. But they still bear the deep imprint of successive anti-Soviet campaigns. In its discussion of the series materials, the commission has noted that *great hopes are now being pinned on perestroika and on the correction of the mistakes made both in the socialist countries and the entire communist movement*. It is very important that young people are not disappointed again. Our main job now is to show them that our parties are *genuinely* capable of renewing themselves and meeting the challenge of our times. On the other hand, we have to explain to the impatient that the restructuring process cannot produce results overnight.

In a self-critical and constructive spirit, now intrinsic to the communist movement, the representatives of the fraternal parties have examined the questions of *renewing* their internal life, and ideological and mass political work, in order to win back the youth, find points of contact and strengthen these contacts.

For example, until recently many young Danes were of the opinion that the *Communists are a party of old people*, conjuring up the image of an organisation slow on the uptake, in which it is hard to change anything. "Obviously," wrote the Chair of the Communist Party of Denmark, Ole Sohn, "our inner-party life is not organised in the best way, and in the eyes of the public we are not so 'open' as we sometimes assume . . . People must know more about the debates going on among the Communists, about the criticism and self-criticism, and recognise what they stand for."

Most Argentines at the beginning of the 1980s did not perceive any difference in policy between bourgeois parties and the Communist Party, and with good reason. "Now," pointed out Angel Negri, a member of the CPA Central Committee, "*there is nothing more important for us than to regain young people's trust, and that of the whole Argentine people*, in the Communists and the other Left forces who form the Broad Liberation Front."

In an involved and contradictory world such as ours, the individual's path to consistent political struggle and Marxism is rarely straightforward,

often passes through much soul searching over the issues of concern to young people, and their involvement in the concrete actions of diverse social movements. "Until we as Communists," stressed Anjusta Weil, a member of the Political Bureau of the Swiss Party of Labour, "pay more attention to these movements and participate more actively in them, I don't think we shall achieve any real contact with young people."

The Sudanese Communist Party believes that to *draw young people into the political struggle by slogans alone is impossible* today. Material resources are needed. The bourgeoisie and its parties have much greater resources because they receive powerful support from both imperialist and Arab reactionary forces. By means of special religious schools, various courses and cultural and educational centres, the youth of the Third World is being brought up in a spirit far removed from genuinely national requirements. To resist this coordinated attack by imperialism and local reaction on the youth, the SCP thinks that new approaches and a new style are required.

In the Dominican Republic the Communists have not yet found an effective way of working with the young generation, or come up with an alternative to the existing way of life that it would find attractive. The party has raised the question of *developing a line specially targeted at youth*. The Communist Party of Ecuador also considers it important to pursue its own youth strategy, rather than limit itself to attempts to solve urgent concrete tasks.

The Central Committee of the French Communist Party has called upon the entire party to *turn towards the youth*, since the future of the working class, the popular movement, and France itself, depends on this. This means not simply a one-off impulse, but consistent effort involving powerful thrusts in every direction. The CC PCF has decided to equip each party cell with a newspaper entitled *L'Huma: 15-25*, which will be published five times a year in an edition of 750,000 copies.

Hungarian Communists, through the Communist Youth Union, the mass media and other channels, have been working hard to overcome the pessimistic mood among the young. However, they believe it is a mistake to ascribe all the troubles to propaganda shortcomings. Young people have a right to enjoy life. This is only natural, and so the task of the ruling party is to prove in practice that it is *socialism that can provide them, that it really is the most advanced, humane and democratic society*.

Most young people in the Arab countries have a Muslim background. The communist parties of Lebanon and the Sudan have amassed a very rich experience in relations with them. At its 5th Congress (February 1987) the CPL introduced changes in its rules, religious convictions no longer standing in the way of admission to the party, especially for the working youth. The Sudanese Communists admit believers who are interested in a revolutionary transformation of society, treat their performance of religious rites with respect and do not require their members to be atheists.

Examples of *active and successful youth work by parties* were cited in the materials of the series and the discussion of its results. The Brazilian Communist Party has increased its membership tenfold within a year; 80 per cent of its members are now people under 30. In the small Swiss town

of La-Chaux-de-Fonds, the local party has, over the past few years, succeeded in attracting new blood and thus set an example of how to deal with the problem of ageing affecting some other West European communist parties. Communist recruitment in the town now consists mainly of young people because an open and unbiased dialogue has been established with them.

The fraternal parties attach great importance to guiding the activity of communist youth organisations correctly. They consider it essential that those organisations ensure the following:

— that, while guiding themselves by the programme and policy of the Communists and coordinating their efforts with the party, *they do not become merely a branch* of it and do not copy its methods;

— that they avoid a narrow, sectarian approach to recruitment and proceed from the premise that, for a progressive young person, joining the youth organisation is *only the first step* to becoming a Communist;

— that their activity is not limited to assisting the party, but concentrates primarily on the youth's own interests;

— that *broadest sections of it* are included, while denying preferential treatment to any specific categories.

Discussion participants and the authors of the materials drew attention to the fact that in the world today there is a much greater need for *international communications* among young people, including those who live in countries belonging to different social systems, and those in the developed and developing states. The Communists could more actively promote such contacts.

It has been suggested that the process of restructuring in the socialist world, and in the communist movement, opens up favourable prospects for work among young people. In this light it would be useful to take a fresh look at the activity of such organisations as the World Federation of Democratic Youth and the International Union of Students, both of which have become somewhat bureaucratic.

The Commission on the International Communist Movement and Exchanges of Party Experience has unanimously concluded that the discussion of this important subject in our journal has not ended with the publication of the materials in the Communists and Youth series. In particular, we are planning an exchange of experience and ideas on the following themes:

— the specific nature of youth problems in countries where the people are waging a struggle for national liberation against imperialist aggression and dictatorial regimes;

— new developments in the activity of the young communist leagues of the socialist countries which have embarked on restructuring;

— how the Communists can help expand the international youth contacts and to reinvigorate its international organisations.

The Commission calls upon fraternal parties, young communist leagues and readers to *continue an investigation into the problems of youth in the pages of the WMR.*

'The series opened with an account of our round table 'How to Recruit, Educate and Retain New Members' (*WMR*, No. 1, 1988) involving the representatives of the communist and workers' parties of Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Greece, Guyana, Jamaica, Lebanon, Morocco, the Sudan. We then published (*WMR*, Nos. 2-6 and 8) articles, reports, discussions and interviews from Argentina, Belgium, Denmark, France, Hungary, and Switzerland looking at this theme from different angles.

INFORMATION

International Contacts

Overcoming Differences

THE talks between Nicolae Ceausescu, General Secretary of the RCP and President of the Socialist Republic of Romania, and Karoly Grosz, General Secretary of the HSWP and Chair of the Council of Ministers of the Hungarian People's Republic, last August demonstrated the sides' common desire to promote cooperation between the two parties and peoples, to overcome problems between Romania and Hungary, and further to develop their relations of friendship and good neighbourliness.

Talking to the media after the talks, the two leaders noted that there were persisting differences of opinion between the two countries. However, priority should be given in the relations of the two parties and peoples to those issues on which the sides have identical or close views.

Karoly Grosz proposed a high-level Hungarian-Romanian meeting next year to formulate principles of nationality policies.

For Broader Dialogue

At their meeting in Varna Todor Zhivkov, General Secretary of the CC of the Bulgarian Communist Party, and Harilaos Florakis, General Secretary of the CC of the Communist Party of Greece, focused on restructuring processes in Bulgaria and other socialist countries. The sides stressed the international implications of those processes and their positive influence on the international communist movement and on the struggle for peace and social progress. They exchanged information about their parties' activities and analysed the situation in the Balkans and the world over. A dialogue on security and good neighbourliness is gaining momentum in the region, and the Greek Communists' efforts for democratic rights and freedoms and against the US military presence and nuclear weapons in their country are important to that process.

Call For Solidarity

The French Communists have always displayed effective solidarity with the struggle waged by the people of South Africa and the African National Congress, PCF General Secretary Georges Marchais told ANC General

Secretary Alfred Nzo in Paris. The two leaders noted the need for a stepped-up international campaign for the release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners from Pretoria's jails, and voiced support for Angola's and Cuba's efforts to resolve the problems involved in granting independence to Namibia and defending Angola's sovereignty.

From The Press

Qiushi Takes Over From *Hongqi*

THE journal, *Hongqi*, the theoretical organ of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, has ceased to be published: this year's No. 12 was its last issue. Following a decision by the CPC CC, the Party School of the CPC CC has been assigned the publication of a new journal which is called *Qiushi*, the Chinese for 'Striving for the Truth'. Su Xing, Pro-Rector of the Party School, said in *Renmin ribao* that the substitution of *Qiushi* for *Hongqi* was an active measure designed to pursue the spirit of the 13th CPC Congress, which oriented the party cadres towards more harmony between theory and practical work. This is required by the new atmosphere of reform and the extension of ties with the rest of the world. Another consideration is the need for greater theoretical analysis, a fresh impetus in developing Marxist thinking. The publication of *Qiushi* springs from the party's urge to have a journal that would be equal to the tasks now facing Chinese society.

Su Xing says that its preparation and publication has been entrusted to the Party School because, on the one hand, the student body is made up mainly of higher- and middle-echelon practical workers, and, on the other, the school has an experienced and knowledgeable group of theorists. The pooling of the theoretical forces of the Party School and the creative potential of *Hongqi* to issue the new journal is expected to strengthen the links between theory and practice, and help in understanding the new problems facing the party locally.

The new journal, according to *Renmin ribao*, is not a party school study aid, but a theoretical publication of the whole party addressed to the widest possible circle of readers, and not only to those who work in theory and propaganda. Su Xing says that *Qiushi's* main purpose is the following: guided by the party's main line in building the initial stage of socialism, to give all-round coverage of the course of economic advance which is the most important thing, and also to back up the four basic principles of the party and government policy,¹ to carry on reforms and wider develop international relations.

Qiushi, says the Chinese party press, sets itself two main tasks. First, to make a thorough study of theoretical and practical problems arising while China is in the early stage of socialism, particularly those posed by the policy of reform and opening up to the world, and to work for greater

harmony of theory and practice. Second, to pursue resolutely the line 'Let One Hundred Flowers Bloom, Let One Hundred Schools Compete', and to enliven analytical research into theory in order to prevent one-sidedness. The journal intends to give strong support to these two lines and thus to promote greater unity of theorists, with special emphasis on the cohesion of comrades holding dissimilar views.

Su Xing said, that guided by the principle 'Practice is the sole criterion of truth', the spirit of the 13th CPC Congress, and the practical experience gained since the 3rd Plenary Meeting of the 11th CPC CC, they were to combine the fundamental propositions of Marxism-Leninism, the thought of Mao Zedong and the specific features of the initial stage of socialism in China in order to publish a journal that would have a meaningful content, and be interesting and attractive to its readers.

From *Renmin ribao* and Xinhua News Agency reports

¹ The four basic principles are: 'socialism, the people's democratic dictatorship, the CPC's leading role, Marxism-Leninism and the thought of Mao Zedong'. — *Ed.*

In Brief

Communist Press Festivals

THE Austrian Communists' newspaper *Volksstimme* held its 43rd festival in Vienna's Prater Park. Many Viennese and guests from all over the country attended the two-day festivities and took part in extensive discussions on the more important problems of domestic life and international affairs.

The Canadian Tribune, the newspaper of the Canadian working people, celebrated its 53rd annual festival outside Toronto. It attracted the newspapers' regular readers, supporters and donors. The strategy of the Communist Party of Canada at the next parliamentary elections was a central issue in discussions at the festival.

The central festivities of the festival of the Czechoslovak Communists' newspaper *Rude Pravo* were held in Prague's Julius Fucik recreational park. The festival became a demonstration of the strong and extensive links of the CPCz and its leading newspaper with the mass of people.

The newspaper *Land og Folk* of the Communist Party of Denmark held its regular festival in Copenhagen in order to draw public attention to the Communists' work, to heighten interest in the party press and to boost circulation.

The weekly *El Pueblo* of the CC of the Communist Party of Ecuador held its festival against the backdrop of a new situation, created by the victory of Rodrigo Borja of the Democratic Left in the latest elections. The Communists stated their support for any measures that the new government would take in the interest of the working people.

The festival of the French Communist newspaper *l'Humanite* took place in the Courneuve Park outside Paris. As usual, fraternal newspapers — around 80 of them from 60 countries — put up their displays next to the pavilions and displays devoted to the activities of the PCF. The leading theme of the festival was the forthcoming bicentenary of the Great French Revolution.

The traditional festival of the newspaper *Avante!* published by the Portuguese Communist Party was held in a suburb of Lisbon. The focal issue was the 12th PCP Congress scheduled for December this year.

This year's festival of the Italian Communist Party's newspaper *l'Unita*, held outside Florence, featured both extensive discussions on urgent problems of domestic and foreign policies and memorable cultural events.

ARGENTINA

The Communist Party of Argentina has called for the establishment of a democratic and anti-imperialist electoral alliance of the people. The Communists suggest that it should include many progressive and left forces, in fact, all those who do not want to vote for the candidates of the ruling party or the opposition bourgeois parties in the 1989 presidential elections. The party plans to campaign on a large scale in order to reach out to the broadest masses of people.

EL SALVADOR

The Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front, in which the Communist Party of El Salvador participates, has supported the initiative of the Roman Catholic Church for a national dialogue involving 62 organisations. The Front's command reaffirmed their aim of contributing towards a political solution on the basis of an earlier plan for the overall settlement of the conflict, and also to lessen the brutality of the continuing hostilities. The Front urged all the organisations concerned to join the dialogue.

URUGUAY

The CC of the Communist Party of Uruguay took the decision to convene the 21st party congress on December 7-11. The draft documents to be submitted to the forum will be discussed in the party in advance. Many politicians, trade unionists, and representatives of other public organisations have been invited to comment on the party's policies and offer their proposals and criticisms.

exchange of views, discussion

Culture Is Not An Ornament But A Form Of Politics

The *WMR* Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean has sponsored a symposium in Prague to discuss the subject of 'The Communists and Culture in Latin America'. Contributions were presented by prominent Latin American writers and political figures — **Volodia Teitelboim**, member of the Political Commission of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Chile; **Oswaldo Navarro**, a Cuban writer and poet; and **Hector Mujica**, Central Committee member of the Communist Party of Venezuela. Discussing the contributions were representatives of fraternal parties: from Argentina — **Jorge Bergstein**, member of the CPA Central Committee; from Brazil — **Antonio Granja**, member of the BCP Central Committee; from Chile — **Orel Viciali**; from Colombia — **José Arizala**, Political Commission member of the CCP Central Committee; from Costa Rica — **Francisco Gamboa**, Political Commission member of the PVP Central Committee; from Cuba — **Antonio Diaz**; from the Dominican Republic — **Sully Saneaux**, member of the DCP Central Committee; from Ecuador — **José Regato**, member of the CPE Central Committee; from El Salvador — **Jaime Barrios**, member of the CPES Central Committee; from Panama — **Ornel Urriola**, member of the PPP Central Committee; and from Paraguay — **Hugo Campos**, member of the PCP Central Committee; Professor **Stepan Mamontov**, a *WMR* staff member, was also a participant. Following is a brief review of the symposium prepared by Hector Mujica.

THE discussion dealt with a wide range of issues connected with culture — from the ancient *Popol Vuh* epic of the Quiche Indians in Guatemala to the so-called boom of the modern Latin American novel. We talked about the fine arts, music, folklore, the New Troubadours movement and popular protest songs. We examined the salient features of the art and literature of Latin American and Caribbean ethnic groups, as well as forms of Afro-American culture. Much attention was paid to protecting the national identities of Latin American countries from the cultural expansionist drive of imperialism in the mass media.

A Leading Force of Reason

Volodia Teitelboim recalled the 1972 polemic between a reactionary journalist from *El Mercurio*, a Chilean newspaper, who described Communists as ignorant and inferior, and Nobel Prize winner Pablo Neruda. The great poet wrote: "Among these 'inferior, ignorant, malicious, incapable and bankrupt Communists', there are people like Maxim Gorky, Yuri Gagarin and other cosmonauts, the aircraft designer Tupolev, the scientist Joliot-Curie, the artists Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse and Fernand Leger, the brilliant tapestry maker Lucat, the remarkable singer Paul Robeson, the writers and poets Anatole France, Henri Barbusse, Vladimir Mayakovsky, Louis Aragon, Paul Eluard, Bertolt Brecht, Jose Carlos Mariategui and Cesar Vallejo, the political leaders Vladimir Lenin, Georgi Dimitrov, Antonio Gramsci, Ho Chi Minh and Luis Emilio Racabarren. May I also humbly join these 'mental cases'."

Culture does not spring up 'out of place, out of time'. It has a temporal framework, but it is also dialectically infinite. It means both a breakthrough into the future and the mastering of the finest accomplishments of the past. Those who dare maintain that in four years time Latin America will celebrate the 500th anniversary of its culture, Teitelboim continued,² will make a mistake and, with one stroke of the pen, deny the existence of pre-Columbian civilisations. Scholars increasingly reject the word 'discovery', preferring instead to talk about a merger or clash of the cultures of two worlds.

Referring to the work of Communists in the sphere of culture, the speaker said they had no right to keep exclusively to their party environment because they should be active in all progressive sections of society. In this connection he mentioned only some of the giants of Latin American culture who worked as servants of all humanity — Gabriela Mistral, Jose Marti's favourite disciple, a revolutionary without a party who called for the formation of a Hispano-American Legion to help Sandino's rebels; Jose Carlos Mariategui, the founder of the Peruvian Communist Party and of the *Amauta* periodical, the first great Marxist of Latin America who made history by attempting a serious scientific analysis of the situation in his country and in all of Latin America which has been awakened by the powerful impact of the October Revolution in Russia; and Cesar Vallejo, another great Peruvian, a poet and a Communist who, during those same years, uniquely reflected the plight and the hopes of his people.

These and other examples highlight the enormous contribution of the Latin American Communists to the development of the continent's progressive culture and the fact that they have produced many of its finest exponents. However, Teitelboim also spoke about the tendency of some party members to 'flirt' with the workers and to indulge in 'workerism' — a pernicious attitude of seeing each worker, with his or her mentality, as a model of loyalty to the revolutionary cause, and each intellectual, with his or her inner world, as someone to be treated with mistrust and suspicion. Such views have alienated thousands of capable thinkers from the Latin American communist movement. Notably, this flaw is least typical of the younger generation of revolutionaries — those who led their nations to

victory in countries such as Cuba or Nicaragua.

Oswaldo Navarro described Cuba's sweeping cultural revolution, whose success and experience added greatly to the store of Latin American and Caribbean knowledge, as one of the major accomplishments of the Cuban people. In Cuba, the social revolution itself was in many ways a factor of culture. It was a great achievement because it succeeded in its mission of national liberation, but it was doubly great because it effected radical economic and cultural changes and began to build socialism. The Literacy Drive of 1961 was an important part of this effort.

If the Cuban people had had no education (nine years of secondary school is the minimum today), they would have been unable to develop their economy rapidly or set themselves demanding scientific and technological objectives — those of promoting genetic engineering, electronics and informatics.

The speaker listed several urgent tasks facing literature and the arts, including a campaign to strengthen the material infrastructure of intellectual and artistic activities, as well as a revised policy in this sphere to pay due attention to the growing role of the intelligentsia and to the social functions of creative artistic work. It is also important to keep expanding close ties with the socialist community and the sister nations of Latin America.

The universal significance of the Cuban Revolution also lies in the fact that its intellectual achievements drew the attention of world public opinion to Latin America — something Jose Marti predicted in his time. Navarro singled out the world-famous new Latin American novel, launched by the outstanding Cuban author Alejo Carpentier and the Nobel Prize winner Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

Confronting Information Imperialism

Latin American nations have always been an object not only of purely economic or political, but also of propaganda interest on the part of the United States, their 'great northern neighbour'. This should be taken into consideration, **Hector Mujica** said, all the more so because the ideological influence of imperialism on the developing countries is steadily increasing. It is very skilful in its use of the latest technologies, of advances in communication sociology and social psychology, and of public opinion surveys. The objective is to transform the Latin American and Caribbean republics into 'states in free association with the USIA' (United States Information Agency. — *Ed.*) and to integrate the region's artistic community into the 'American way of life'.

The socialist countries and the communist parties, the speaker said, are lagging behind imperialism in the use of new ways and means of influencing public opinion. Our propaganda has so far been a cottage industry. We are practically unfamiliar with modern advertising techniques, a sphere in which the United States is the unquestionable leader. Advertising (which includes informatics) is now in fact a powerful sector of the US economy, a sector into which more than \$100 billion is invested annually. A similar process is under way in all Latin American countries — sometimes in distinctive, sometimes in grotesque forms.

The nations of the continent owe much of what they have accomplished in the sphere of culture to Marxist thought and to the national liberation movements. In all countries of the region, the Communists have been sponsors and pioneers of literacy campaigns, and they have done a great deal to develop vocational training, democratise the system of education and establish institutions of higher learning and research centres. In civic organisations and in parliament, they have been working for legislation to support numerous cultural initiatives and to promote the arts. The activities of the communist parties in this field have been and remain consistent and vigorous.

One must, however, admit that during certain periods, Communists were guilty of sectarian and dogmatic attitudes — primarily during the Stalin years when Andrei Zhdanov, the chief 'cultural ideologue', pronounced the final verdict on the work of prominent Communist intellectuals in the Soviet Union. Following up on this idea, **Jose Arizala** said: "No doubt, the fact that some of Lenin's successors had no profound knowledge or understanding of the essence of Marxism was one of the causes of the grave mistakes committed as the Soviet Union developed. Holding high-level posts, they approached Marxism with their own yardstick, schematically. This led to major tragedies because the interdependence of ideology and culture is of fundamental importance."

What happened in the USSR, **Hector Mujica** continued, was echoed within the communist movement as a whole. Today, new paths are opening before us all, before the world's progressive intellectuals, including those in Latin America. Nonetheless — and this is a point on which I agree with Volodia Teitelboim — a kind of 'anti-intellectualism' still persists in some communist quarters. People sometimes forget that the founder of Marxism-Leninism had an encyclopedic education. No true Communist can scorn intellectuals because this would be a rejection of the very essence of our doctrine. By overcoming manifestation of cheap 'cultural nihilism' and intellectual sectarianism, the fraternal parties assert their role as the genuine vanguard of the forces of progress and reason. For, as Lenin said, "you can become a Communist only when you enrich your mind with a knowledge of all the treasures created by mankind".³

Antonio Diaz agreed that amid the ideological confrontation with imperialism, the Communists should pay particular attention to issues of culture and that, by covertly but firmly controlling all mass media, the United States often used them more skilfully than we did to influence public opinion. To grasp how enormous the US propaganda machine really is, suffice it to recall that with a population of only 5 per cent of the world total, the United States controls 35 per cent of the mass media, 75 per cent of all TV programmes, 50 per cent of the film industry and 90 per cent of all televised news (jointly with British companies).

Two major US-based news agencies — AP and UPI — control, together with AFP of France and Reuters of Britain, 90 per cent of the world's news. AP news items on foreign affairs reach one billion people a day, and the agency's services are used by more than 10,000 periodicals and radio stations in 100 countries. The United States is estimated to manage 80 per cent of the industry producing components for modern electronic devices,

as well as 89 per cent of all computer data banks. It manufactures some 80 per cent of all computers available in the world.

However, the high-tech level of data processing and transmission and the enormous amount of news do not mean that the public in the United States gets an objective picture of current developments. Paradoxically, people in that media-saturated country are less informed than others about urgent global problems.

An objective analysis of the causes underlying the creation of this powerful propaganda system shows that it is used above all to impose on the masses cultural, political and ideological stereotypes consonant with the interests of the big imperialist bourgeoisie.

All this does not in the least detract from the considerable contribution the people of the United States have made to world and Latin American culture. "I am far from sharing the view," **Volodia Teitelboim** said, "that everything emanating from the centres of capitalism — for example, culture — should be rejected and regarded as enemy forays. The people of the United States have produced great works of literature and art. In his time, Lenin said that one should learn many useful things from the North Americans — their down-to-earth and businesslike way of thinking, their enterprise, punctuality and ability to work effectively."

The Roots of Continental Unity

While on the subject of the unity and diversity of national cultures, **Stepan Mamontov** stressed that there were at least four major factors linking them together — the common history of the Latin American nations since the Conquest; a common language; similar socio-economic problems stemming primarily from the dependent nature of Latin American capitalism; and finally, an historically common enemy — US imperialism which, since the mid-19th century, has been the main drag on the development of its weaker southern neighbours.

To Latin America's Communists, the southern and central parts of the continent are in fact a vast *common home*, and that is something which one cannot say, for example, of Europe where different languages are spoken in different countries. When Cuba became the first socialist country in the Western Hemisphere, the community of culture and language grew even more important as a factor for the dissemination of Marxist-Leninist ideas. Up to the mid-20th century, the main works of Marx, Engels and Lenin had been publicised 'in translation'. With the rise of socialist Cuba and of Fidel Castro, a political and intellectual leader of great stature, the theory and practice shared by all Communists not only came to be expressed in the Latin Americans' native language but also acquired a more familiar cultural and historical interpretation.

While noting the unity of universal culture, the speaker also said that the fraternal parties should, in pursuing their activities and shaping their strategy and tactics, bear in mind the distinctive national and ethnic problems connected with the mentality of the people and with their old-established economic and cultural traditions and salient features — something which, regrettably, does not always determine communist policies.

Oral Viciani raised a theoretical point of importance to all parties. He suggested that the problem of culture be viewed from a different angle, as an issue inextricably linked with the ability of the working class to play the role of the hegemony. Since the correlation between culture and hegemony highlights the connections between culture and politics, the latter (in its broader and more humanitarian interpretation) can be regarded as a part of culture.

This makes it necessary to dispense with the narrow interpretation of the working-class hegemony concept, which appeared for decades in textbooks, and instead to conduct original and different research projects, to keep an open mind and acquire a profound knowledge of history, following the example of Lenin and of Gramsci, one of his more able followers.

The dictatorship of the proletariat understood simply as a political end in itself, secured once and for all by a skilful use of a certain alignment of forces and maintained by administrative rather than political methods, has nothing in common with the way Lenin saw it. If culture is disdained, it is all the more impossible to secure working-class hegemony by decree, the necessary conditions for which having already been set down on paper. Lenin said that those were petty bourgeois, shopkeepers' views. Moreover, he, and Gramsci after him, maintained that hegemony in its political sense had deep cultural roots.

The proletariat is the only class in history whose complete emancipation can be attained only if society as a whole is emancipated. That is why it is a class capable of understanding and expressing as its own the interests of all social strata, and able to organise and lead the struggle for the accommodation of these interests.

The Plight of Amerindian Culture

As a representative of Ecuador, one of the more 'Amerindian' countries, **Jose Regato** talked about the problem of preserving the language of the indigenous population and of fighting to restore the Latin Americans' cultural identity. The serious shortcomings of our ethnic studies do us no credit, he said, since this issue concerns one-third of the population whose culture was and is denied as a result of socio-economic dependence and almost 500 years of ethnocide.

As far back as the 1920s the Communists played an important role in upholding the interests of the indigenous population, combining a struggle for the return of the Indians' lands, the elimination of feudal institutions and an agrarian reform, with the defence of the cultures and languages of ethnic groups.

The Ecuadoran Federation of Indians exposed and denounced the Summer Linguistic Institute for practising sterilisation of the indigenous population, and forced the government to deport these pseudo-linguists who, like dozens of religious sects, were CIA agents. Their objective is to physically exterminate ethnic minorities by means of direct aggression, forced acculturation and the destruction of cultural traditions; they seek to divide the Indians' movement and foment anti-communism.

Jaime Barrios, who also spoke about the plight of the indigenous

population, linked the political movements of the Salvadoran people (from the 1932 uprising led by Farabundo Marti to this day) with the struggle of the nation's progressive forces to preserve national culture.

The drama which occurred 56 years ago, when 30,000 peasants, workers, and the core of the middle strata, mostly intellectuals, were murdered, still affects El Salvador today. This precedent is vital to an understanding of the emergence of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front, which is now asserting the people's intellectual and cultural potential.

In a document marking the 50th anniversary of that tragedy, the CPES Central Committee says that it "cannot be viewed . . . merely as a terrible massacre which the oligarchy and the army committed against ordinary people trying to achieve social emancipation, although this is, of course, one of the aspects helping us gain a proper understanding of current developments."⁴ According to official figures the population of El Salvador totalled 1,493,000 in January 1932; this means that in the killing spree, which lasted four months, 2 per cent of all Salvadorans lost their lives, with Indian casualties particularly severe.

The indigenous population which fell victim to genocide had a culture of its own, although the Indians were not isolated from El Salvador's mixed society. The Indians spoke Nahatl, their ancestral language, and practised the Catholic faith, intertwined with pre-Columbian beliefs.

After the massacre of the Indians, their ancient culture withdrew into itself, opening only occasionally. The Indians no longer spoke their language openly and eventually forgot it. Their rural communities disappeared for a long time, although later they began gradually to re-emerge. As a result, El Salvador's indigenous culture was almost completely destroyed. Whole generations of Indians were ashamed of their ancestors' customs and traditions. They succumbed to 'ladinisation' (adoption of the culture which the conquistadores brought to American soil with the arquebus and the cross). In colonial times, people who could not be classed as Indians, Spanish, or Creoles were called *ladinos*.

Over the eight years of the people's revolutionary struggle, the speaker said in conclusion, ethnocide has continued: the army and the 'death squads' have murdered more than 60,000 Salvadorans, and over 5,000 people are listed as missing. But despite the brutal reprisals and the exodus of 1.5 million Salvadorans, refugees and deportees, including progressive intellectuals, the revolution, with its noble national objectives, continues.

The Problems of Central America and the Caribbean

As **Francisco Gamboa** stressed, rigid and sectarian attitudes sometimes led Communists to distance themselves from, and underestimate, issues of culture. That was one of the obstacles which impeded our progress in the development of an adequate cultural policy. And so for a long time, the speaker said, Latin American communist parties failed to attach proper significance to these issues, and many party programmes failed to reflect the need for a struggle aimed at defending and developing national cultures.

Referring to other obstacles to the adoption of effective cultural policies by fraternal parties, Francisco Gamboa mentioned the shortage of cadres

capable of working in this field, and said that concepts and actions born of Stalinism and of the subsequent bureaucratic distortions were copied frequently in Latin America; as a result, barriers arose separating communist parties from the intelligentsia.

Having paid homage to the Costa Rican Communist writers Carlos Luis Fallas and Carmen Lyra, the speaker denounced the suppression of national cultures by the bourgeois mass media, particularly television, which invaded people's personal lives and adversely affected their development as individuals.

Song, he said, is an important part of a nation's culture. The troubadours of the Middle Ages could not even dream that songs would become as powerful in their influence as they are today. Throughout the world, thousands of radio and television stations are broadcasting popular music every hour. It is precisely because songs are such effective aesthetic, ideological and political tools that they are now the battleground of a struggle between reaction and progress. In the words of the Communist writer Emilia Prieto, Costa Rica is the target of 'cultural piracy' which has inflicted significant damage on the nation; on the subject of the popular song, she says that "any casual melody, however banal, assimilated and reproduced by any group of people, immediately transforms them into the bearers of a certain type of culture". In the opinion of Francisco Gamboa, this profound observation helps us grasp the importance of songs for the cultural self-determination of Latin American nations.

Discussing his country's serious problems, **Ornel Urriola** noted the role of culture in the struggle for genuine liberation. Amid the sway of imperialism, the spiritual values once created by the bourgeoisie are being forgotten. Capitalism as a world system has lost its erstwhile progressive character and, scorning its own heritage, become the biggest brake on the advancement of nations, on their attainment of the ideas of liberty, equality and brotherhood.

As international ties grew stronger, industrialised capitalist countries began to deal with underdeveloped and dependent states in the same way as the ruling classes treat the exploited ones in society. Offering so-called technical assistance, the Western powers usurp control over educators and their associations to the Western line, and discredit the principal values of national culture in the eyes of the younger generation.

Therefore, in examining the factors of national liberation, one should realise that in order to advance the revolutionary process in Latin America, what might be called a revolution should occur within the communist parties themselves so as to transform them and adapt them to the demands of the day. Renewal is an imperative stemming from the dialectics of development.

At the 6th Congress of the PPP (1980), where the Panamanian Communists took stock of the anti-colonial struggle within the framework of the national liberation process under President Omar Torrijos, and where they defined the objectives of the next stage in the effort to eliminate all forms of national oppression and dependence, the report on issues of culture was welcomed with particular interest. This interest ran equally high during the pre-congress debate.

Stressing the significant role of culture in the liberation struggle, **Randolfo Banegas**, too, advocated changes in the Communists' attitude to intellectuals.

Latin American culture, he said, has its conservative aspects too, and they work to preserve the existing system and even the vestiges of pre-capitalism relations in the social fabric. At the same time, the cultural heritage comprises the rich traditions of the struggle for liberation. The more advanced intellectuals have always been on the side of their people. Suffice it to recall the names of Simon Bolivar, Francisco Morazan, Jose Marti or Augusto Cesar Sandino. Their commitment to the ideals of freedom has influenced the entire Latin American revolutionary movement since the 19th century. Aware of the great role played by this anti-imperialist cultural factor, US imperialism, the transnationals and the local reactionaries have had all mention of the progressive traditions of the past expunged from Honduran school curricula and tried to distort the ideas of our national heroes.

Latin America's Communists, the speaker said, are not yet fully cognisant of the role played by the cultural factor, of the contribution made by intellectuals to national development, national liberation and social emancipation. To grasp the value of this role and contribution without delay means embarking on a long and arduous journey towards a profound understanding of our realities and clearing up the backlog of mistakes in this sphere.

Sully Saneaux raised the important question of the function of language in the preservation of a nation's cultural identity. A diversity of cultures, traditions and languages, he said, has been historically typical of our part of the world. As the Ecuadoran art critic Filoteo Samaniego put it, to those who came with Columbus, the greatest surprise was not the discovery of a new world but the wide diversity of its thousand-year-old civilisations. Apparently, he was referring to the indigenous peoples of the mainland whose development was particularly advanced. But even in our island, the comparatively backward communities of the Tainos, Ciguayos and Macorixes, while sharing a small area, spoke dissimilar dialects and, generally, were completely different from one another.

During their difficult history, Sully Saneaux said, the Dominican people have created an advanced national culture, and they have had to fight to defend it. Several scholars share the view that our country has gone through three critical multilingual periods, when attempts were made to impose the language of the invaders of our nation — French in 1801-1809, when the island was seized by France; French again in 1822-1824, when our territory was overrun by the Haitian army; and English in 1916-1924, during the first armed intervention by the United States.

Indeed, for all their distinctive lifestyles, customs and spoken dialects, most Caribbean countries speak either English or French. But for us Dominicans, Spanish became a means of defending and preserving our national identity.

The Southern Cone: Cherishing the Past and Caring About the Future

The Culture of Brazil, a vast country which, however, remains in many ways isolated from the other Latin American nations, has its roots in Africa, Europe, Asia and the Middle East, **Antonio Granja** said. Suppressed and held back in its development at an early stage, it gradually grew unified and became a truly national culture with a distinctive art, literature, architecture, painting, music and, above all, folk tradition — folk dancing and, generally, folklore as a special art form. In the 20th century, Brazil produced two creative artists of global stature — Jorge Amado, the novelist who sang about the Brazilian people, and Oscar Niemeyer, the founder of ultramodern architecture, both of them Communists.

This means that Brazil has a tremendous creative potential for enriching world and Latin American culture. Brazilian TV serials have circled the globe and enjoyed great success in Latin America and the Caribbean, including Cuba, in Western Europe, Africa and Asia. The film *Isaura the Slave Girl* has been seen virtually throughout the world.

The speaker stressed that together with the democratic forces, Brazil's broad cultural movement is working to help free art from subservience, alienation, escapism and control by the state and the monopolies.

Hugo Campos, a veteran activist of the Paraguayan Communist Party, emphasised the multifaceted character of the subject discussed at the symposium. The new conditions now obtaining in Latin America and in the world have sharply defined the role of culture as a weapon in the struggle for peace, disarmament, humanism and social progress.

Having spoken briefly about the more outstanding achievements of Paraguayan national culture and about its prominent figures, such as the novelist Augusto Roa Bastos and the poet Elvio Romero, a Communist, Hugo Campos paid homage to the composer Jose Asuncion Flores who died in exile in 1972. His genius was reflected in the *guaranía*, a new musical genre he created to reflect the anguish and the hopes of Paraguay's oppressed people. One cannot remain indifferent to the melody 'Indian Girl' which has transcended the nation's borders, or to the song 'Obrerito' (Little Worker), dedicated to working people and banned by Stroessner's obscurantist dictatorship. Concerned about the future of the human race, Flores created the symphonic poem 'Maria de la Paz' in response to the criminal nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki — a Paraguayan contribution to the struggle for human survival.

Many other prominent personalities from Paraguayan art and literature remain in exile, including Bareiro Saguier and Herminio Gimenez, the best-known contemporary Paraguayan composer. His musical composition 'Let Paraguay Rise Again' expresses his optimism and his faith in his country's future once the long night of the dictatorship has ended.

The importance of the subject under discussion, **Jorge Bergstein** noted, is confirmed by the fact that in a resolution adopted at its 41st General Assembly session, the United Nations designated 1988-1997 as a world decade for the advancement of culture. Within its framework, the bicentennial of the French Revolution and the 500th anniversary of the

discovery of the Americas will be marked.

Argentina is part of Latin America not only geographically but also, and above all, by virtue of a common history, culture and destiny. As before, representatives of one of the two cultures to which Lenin referred (the intelligentsia connected with the old landowning oligarchy and the big bourgeoisie) are trying to separate our national spiritual heritage from that common to Latin America as a whole. This has been going on since the declaration of independence in 1810, when Argentina began to be Europeanised (a progressive trend at the time). However, the efforts of the landed oligarchy, oriented on Paris and London, soon gave rise to an élitist culture which rejected all that was national and, in the economic sphere, to an orthodox liberalism. Not surprisingly, General Roca, twice President of the Republic, said in 1890 that "Argentina is the most precious pearl in the British Crown". Meanwhile, today's advocates of 'modernisation' are looking to the United States for a remedy to cure the nation's ills, and so they keep up with the interest payments on the foreign debt and fill the mass media with the worst kind of shoddy cultural merchandise produced in the empire of the almighty dollar.

However, we live and act in a world which has not forgotten the past despite the efforts of the official mass media to instil a collective amnesia. Viewed from this angle and bearing in mind the vision of culture as set forth by Hector P. Agosti, an Argentine Marxist who was a prominent student of culture, our approach should be free of sectarianism. It should help us restore to the people everything that is beautiful, everything that reflects, however timidly, some aspect of the nation's life, even though this reflection may not offer any specific 'remedy'.

The Communist Party of Argentina is always aware of the revolutionary potential of the intellectual community and sets great store by the role it plays. South America's second biggest country has a great history rich in brilliant scholars, writers, artists and students of sociology, politics, music and folklore — people who dedicated themselves to the cause of socialism, such as Jose Ingenieros, Anibal Ponce, Hector P. Agosto or Rodolfo Ghioldi. We list them without mentioning their party affiliation because we are guided by the Leninist concept in the assessment of our cultural heritage. One should also single out the poets Raul Gonzalez Tunon and Juan Gelman, the deceased writer Alfredo Varela, author of the novel *Turbulent Waters*, the artists Castagnino, Bruzzone and Alonso and the musicians Mercedes Sosa, Victor Heredia and Osvaldo Pugliese.

The list would be incomplete without our mentioning the intellectuals who were among the 30,000 people reported missing under the recent dictatorship — writers of great stature, among them Haroldo Conti, as well as many journalists such as Rodolfo Walsh, who was not a member of any party, or the Communist Roman Mentaberry, who was hanged by a gang of hired killers.

Echoing the Argentine Communists' self-critical assessment of the elements of opportunism and sectarianism in their work,⁵ J. Bergstein recalled that the list of those missing and assassinated included the finest names from the generations of the 1960s and 1970s — intellectuals who learned from the experience of the Cuban Revolution. Reflections on how

they absorbed that experience — creatively, critically or uncritically — do not, he said, absolve us of the responsibility for our former attitude to them, when we treated them as our 'rivals' in revolutionary action. They should have been seen as they were, as exponents of the radical sentiments current among a large part of the masses. The CPA's erroneous attitude to them was compounded by the fact that we underrated the impact of the Cuban Revolution on Latin America.

At its 16th Congress in 1986, Jorge Bergstein said in conclusion, our party revised its strategy and tactics, correcting the course which was leading it away from our revolutionary ideals.

For a Clear-Cut Programme of Action

Summing up the discussion, **Volodia Teitelboim** stressed the need for each party to devise its own programme of action in the sphere of culture. Naturally, this is something they have to decide for themselves, because specific ways and means should be worked out with due regard for the distinctive features of each country. Above all, this work should be conducted among the people because culture is not confined to an élite alone.

Millions of people come into contact with art and we should reach them via amateur theatre companies, choirs or folklore ensembles in urban districts, in trade union organisations and in marginal communities, or via film clubs, debating societies and the like. In forums such as these, everyone feels like an active participant free to express his or her opinions. Communists should not be put off by the fact that some people may not share our views. We can reach them and convey our ideas to them only through culture. That will be our response to the challenge of the bourgeois mass media which resort extensively to artistic forms of ideological influence.

The completely unfounded belief that the classics of Marxism have given definitive and exhaustive answers to all possible questions still persists. This view is a millstone around the necks of some people, dragging them down into dogmatism. It also threatens to turn revolutionary organisations into closed sects within a pluralistic and constantly developing society. As Communists, we cannot keep to sterile abstractions because culture, like life itself, is subject to dialectical renewal. And, like politics itself, it is, in the words of Paul Valéry, the highest expression of the human spirit.

In Lieu of an Afterword

Our symposium, **Jose Arizala**, who chaired the last meeting, said, has been very interesting because most of the speakers offered concrete reflections on Latin American cultural issues and presented new viewpoints, thus adding to the store of communist theory and militant practice in a highly sensitive intellectual sphere.

Of fundamental importance, he added, is the point we have articulated here that culture is not an ornament but a very important form of politics. Many of us will have to introduce considerable changes into our attitude to it, an attitude which, regrettably, has in certain cases been quite

superficial. At times we only notice the entertainment-related aspects of culture and remain blind to its more profound dimension. Insufficient attention to the issue of ideology and creative artistic activities may lead to tragic consequences. We must realise that culture is something essential to human survival, it is the intellectual and creative potential of society, and a source of dynamic social development.

¹ *El Mercurio*, December 17, 1972.

² In 1992 the world will mark the 500th anniversary of the discovery of the Americas. — *Ed.*

³ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 287.

⁴ *Fundamentos y perspectivas*, No. 4, January 1982, p. 5.

⁵ See: Athos Fava, 'Sharp Turn to Revolutionary Forces' Unity' in *WMR*, No. 3, 1988.

Where Do Reforms Lead?

The question of social reforms has long been a key issue in the labour movement. What is their role in the policy of communist and workers' parties to improve working people's lives? Where is the line that separates truly revolutionary changes from reformism? Under capitalism today, what determines the content of reforms that further social advancement and the struggle for socialism?

We publish below a dialogue between the representative of the Communist Party of Great Britain on the *WMR* **Bert Ramelson**, and **Jim Mortimer**, a prominent figure in the British labour movement and a former General Secretary of the Labour Party of Great Britain.

In subsequent issues we intend to continue this discussion and we invite contributions from our readers.

Bert Ramelson. How do you define the term reformism?

Jim Mortimer. I see it as a belief that it is possible to bring about changes within capitalism which will improve the lives of working people without altering the system's essential characteristics. This has been a feature of the British labour movement for many years, although some sections of it have not accepted this definition.

B.R. Communists recognise the importance of the struggle for reforms within capitalism, but we also believe that there should be changes in the system which cannot be brought about without changing capitalism. Above all, there is the problem of unemployment, and there is no way permanent full employment can be secured within a capitalist system. It would, of course, be wrong to ignore the considerable benefits that people in general and the working class in particular have gained from policies implemented by Reformist Governments.

In Whose Interest?

The Welfare State was pioneered by the post-war Labour Government led by Clement Attlee — a typical Reformist leader. At its core — and undoubtedly its most important achievements for the working class — were

the National Health Service, with its aim of free health care from cradle to grave, the introduction of the comprehensive school system, the huge increase in house building — with the emphasis on municipally owned housing at subsidised rents and controlled rent in the private sector — as well as state benefits for the unemployed, the disabled and others in need, and old age pensions for all. Nor should we ignore the importance of the political and economic impact of Labour's programme to nationalise the main branches of the modern industrial infrastructure, i.e., coal, steel, gas, electricity, and the railways as well as extending the Post Office to include telecommunications. The anti-Trade Union legislation introduced after the general strike was also repealed.

Thus reformism can claim considerable achievements. The basic criticism, however, is that the Reformers failed to understand the role of the state and the nature of capitalism, and thus put these achievements at risk because their preservation depended upon the state. Indeed, we are now witnessing attempts to undermine the welfare state and the public sector — through privatisation, intensified means-testing and reduced benefits.

Continuing our theme, I would like to put the following question: Does the bourgeoisie resist reforms or consciously come to terms with them?

J.M. In my view, the bourgeoisie do both. Everything depends upon the balance of forces within society. In general the bourgeoisie, certainly in the advanced capitalist countries, have felt that it is wiser to come to terms with certain reforms after, perhaps, initially resisting them. But when the balance of forces tips in their favour they may then seek to reverse these reforms. The bourgeoisie will make concessions to the working class for a variety of reasons, but mainly because of the challenge from the working class. The extent to which the bourgeoisie resists reforms varies as to their type. They may offer little resistance to working class demands if they believe they can reverse them when they regain the upper hand. But if, on the other hand, it is a working class gain of a permanent nature then, of course, there will be much more resistance. When a reform threatens the very basis of capitalism, then resistance is undoubtedly very strong.

B.R. I would just like to add that there will be less tendency to resist increases in money wages because there is a variety of ways in which, when the economic situation changes, the ruling class can recoup their money either through inflation or wage-cuts. On the other hand, they will resist as long as possible a reduction in the working day or week because once this has been achieved, it is very difficult to reverse. This is why Marx laid so much stress on the importance of struggling more to reduce the working week or the working day than to achieve a bigger increase in wages.

J.M. I think the example of trade unionism is a good illustration of the nature of reforms within capitalist society. The capitalist class would prefer a situation in which there were no trade unions at all because they obviously strengthen the workers and help the latter in the fight for improved working and living conditions. But experience has shown the capitalists that it is possible to accommodate trade unionism within a capitalist society and therefore, after initial resistance to the existence of unions, they were prepared to grant workers the right to organise and the

right to bargain collectively. When the working class becomes strong, really strong through trade unions, particularly in conditions of full employment, then the experience in many countries demonstrates that the bourgeoisie will take action to restrict trade union rights. We in Britain have been living under Mrs Thatcher's government for seven years, during which time the bourgeoisie have increasingly restricted workers' trade union rights.

B.R. I think it fair to point out that there is no unanimity among the ruling class on the role of the trade union movement. There are divisions, with some important sections of the ruling class preferring to negotiate with a trade union which represents the work force as a whole. They consider this a more efficient form of management. Therefore, as long as there are limitations to the powers of the trade unions, they not only tolerate them, but even approve of them.

J.M. I think that this is a very important point and there are many examples in British history of big employers who believe that it is better to accommodate trade unionism within the system rather than to try to oppose or destroy it.

A New Perspective

B.R. How near has the working class struggle for reforms brought the movement to its socialist objectives and how has it influenced capitalism — made it stronger or weaker?

J.M. Again there is no direct answer. Some reforms have strengthened the whole of capitalism, while others have encouraged the workers' movement, demonstrating that headway can be made, and providing a platform for further advance. The key consideration rests on what lessons the working class, and in particular the labour movement, learn from the struggle for reforms. If workers decide that everything can be achieved solely through reforms, then those reforms may strengthen capitalism as a whole because they blunt the sharp edge of the working class movement. However, if workers, as a result of their struggle, raise their social consciousness and recognise that there are certain objectives that can't be achieved through reform — permanent full employment, steady economic growth, the abolition of war and exploitation — then the drive for reforms will help the working class movement in the struggle for socialism.

B.R. In the short term, of course, you are right. But I think if you take the long-term historical view, you will realise that the struggle for reform — the struggle by the working class to reap the rewards due for its labour — is bound to create acute crises for the capitalist system. It may be able to adapt itself temporarily to the consequences of the crises but eventually the objective consequences of the struggle (even if it limits itself to reform) must lead to a situation in which the working class and other strata of society realise that prolonged capitalism only leads to widespread hardship. Certain sections of the population may do well for a while, but only at the expense of the majority, who suffer misery, poverty and unemployment. In the long run these objective consequences cannot but weaken capitalism and ultimately improve the chances of realising socialism. However, nothing here changes the fact that a small proportion

of the population, including the working class, becomes, to use Engels's phrase, an 'aristocracy of labour'.

J.M. I would disagree with regard to the 'aristocracy of labour'. I have always resisted applying this theory to Britain because those who propounded it were, I think, describing a situation in which a minority of workers were in this position. I do not think that is objectively true of Britain. There is a substantial submerged minority of poverty and deprivation and unemployment, but there is an even more substantial majority, including working class people, who feel generally that with the struggle for reforms life is acceptable. So I have always been a bit wary of applying the concept of the 'aristocracy of labour' to British conditions.

B.R. I am surprised because what you really said is what was meant by the aristocracy of labour. When Engels proposed this theory he was not referring to the entire working class as the aristocracy, but to the highly-skilled section who were employed primarily in industries which were able to exploit the colonies for super profits. This part of the working class was corrupted because it ignored the exploitation of the colonies by the British Empire. By the way, I agree with you that there are sections of the working class in Britain, with jobs and improved living standards, who not only tolerate but actually support the ruling Conservative party, and all at the expense of a large proportion of the working class who are suffering poverty and unemployment. Even the 25 to 30 per cent of the people who live well under capitalism feel insecure — tomorrow they might be unemployed or sliding into poverty. We must reveal the inherent instability of their position and expose the illusory nature of their carefree prosperity.

J.M. I take your point. The term 'labour aristocracy' suggests a fairly small minority. I would prefer to put it in this way: that a substantial section of the working class in advanced capitalist countries enjoys a relatively high standard of living as a result of the exploitation of the Third World. In that sense they are an aristocracy. But if you look at conditions in Britain or West Germany you will see, I think, that social democracy and reformism are not based simply on a small minority of the working class, but on a majority of the working class.

B.R. Yes, reformism still has a solid base in the labour movement, which suggests this question: has it exhausted itself, in the sense of having achieved everything capitalism can allow the working class without endangering the system itself — without a transition to socialism?

J.M. I don't think we have exhausted the possibilities of compelling the ruling class to restore some of the advances which the working class made in the past and which were taken away from them. The opportunities for reform have not been fully exploited. I think there are still many important socio-economic demands to be met and by fighting for them we can win over the majority of those workers who do not necessarily accept socialism as their objective, but who would nevertheless fight for an improvement in their own position.

Most importantly, we in Britain have to re-establish a free and independent trade union movement by regaining the rights that have been suppressed by anti-trade union legislation. We might even go further and win new rights that would not only enable them to play a greater part in

collective bargaining, but also to negotiate issues that go beyond wages and conditions and so on. Then it would be possible to renew the reformist campaign to remove the harsh restrictions on social services. After the Second World War the idea was to do away with 'means testing' and to provide for everyone in need, but every successive government since then has perverted that idea by introducing some forms of 'means testing'. There are many people who are not prepared to support socialism, yet still support the demand for an increase in government-funded social services. There are also many social, economic, and democratic rights — personal and collective — which can be attained through the combined efforts of the working people. So I would not agree that we have exhausted the possibilities for reform in Britain.

B.R. I firmly agree that there is much more to be done through reforms. As you have correctly noted, the restoration and extension of trade union rights are of fundamental importance, and there is also the fight — and it can be won — for an improvement in the national health service and in housing. Any progress in this direction, however partial, is important and very relevant to working people.

A Threat to the System?

J.M. I would emphasise that these elements are linked to reforms which threaten the core of the capitalist system, and which confront workers with the question of socialism. The struggle for full employment is a case in point because it strikes at the heart of capitalism. As a socialist I don't believe that its structure can support permanent full employment.

At the end of the Second World War Britain's major political parties — Conservative, Labour, Liberal and Communist — were advocating a policy of full employment. At the time most capitalists were actively in favour of it, but eventually rejected it because it would strengthen the position of the working class and trade unions: hence it was sacrificed to capitalist interests.

B.R. Full employment under capitalism could only be intermittent and temporary because of the numerous variables involved. It runs counter to the basic tenets of capitalism.

J.M. True, the struggle for full employment strikes at the very heart of the capitalist system — private ownership of the means of production. In Britain now the Labour party maintains officially that we can improve things by working with the capitalists. This is a mistake. I see no evidence of any kind of radical programme in this field from the Labour party. But commitment to full employment is central because it always represents a challenge to capitalism and cannot, like other reforms, be accommodated within the capitalist system.

B.R. Absolutely. That is really the key that leads us to the role of public ownership. I don't think that anyone who believes in socialism can conceive of it as other than based on the public ownership of the major means of production, distribution and exchange. An essential element of socialist society must be the public planning of all our major resources, and you cannot plan major resources without owning them. You don't have to declare everything publicly owned, but without public ownership you

cannot manage the economy and society rationally. To assert differently simply confuses people. Unfortunately the type of public ownership that exists in Britain and other industrially developed capitalist countries (in some since the end of the last century), is administered by government civil servants who see it not as the basis of socialism, but merely as a means of appeasing popular demand in a way that does not threaten capitalism. On the contrary, it facilitated capitalism because many of the publicly owned industries in Britain were milked by the private sector. This is what led to disillusionment with the concept of nationalisation, when the abuse of public ownership was mistaken for its real substance.

J.M. It is interesting to recall that before the Labour government nationalised the coal, gas and electricity industries in 1945, recommendations for public ownership had been made by Official Committees of Inquiry, all headed by representatives drawn from big business who had realised that nationalisation could improve the efficiency of these industries at the taxpayers' expense. The nationalised industries were administered by a body called the National Economic Development Council. Big business dominated the scene, and its overriding desire was to maximise profits. This form of public ownership, therefore, was simply a means of making capitalism more efficient. One of Labour's weaknesses appears to have been that we failed to see public ownership as a means of fulfilling our socialist objectives and I think that the Labour movement in Britain has to address itself to this problem.

B.R. Indeed, the nationalised industries were meant to be like the private sector, and make a profit at the expense of workers' wages, even while burdened with debts far heavier than any private firm ever has. Yet nationalisation has done the country much good. Our coal industry is perhaps the most efficient deep-mining industry in the world. Despite the intolerable situations in which these industries have been placed, they are more efficient — by any criteria — than the private sector.

I would point out that our approaches to reforms largely coincide, yet I am a member of the Communist Party, and you are a member of the Labour Party. What binds us is our adherence to socialism. What do you think are the main differences or similarities between the Communists' approach to reforms and that of the Socialists?

Points of View

J.M. I think that there are certain traditional differences between the Communists and Socialists, but they are not related to the problems that we have been discussing today. They stem from the questions of political party organisation and what kind of structure you have within a socialist society. But I agree that regarding our subject the watershed today is between those in the working class movement who want to change to a socialist society and to this end favour radical measures, and those who have accommodated themselves to a social democratic outlook and are really interested in a series of reforms without changing capitalism. Now I believe that there are both nominal communists and nominal socialists; it is not those who wish to challenge capitalism, but those who accommodate themselves to it. The latter are to be found in both parties.

B.R. I draw a distinction between Socialists and Social Democrats. To me, a Socialist is the one who can be a member of both the communist and the other party, but, most importantly, accepts socialism in the true meaning of the word, basing himself on the Marxist analysis of reality.

In this connection the question arises of the prospects of Left cooperation in the drive for reforms that meet working people's interests. Many accept that this is needed. But in Britain the possibility of official collaboration between the Communist party and the Labour party, as parties, is still a long way off. However, there is considerable growth in united action on specific issues between, at lower levels, groups of Communists and groups of Labour party people, non-party people and so on. So I would say that it is possible to achieve a certain amount of collaboration between rank-and-filers, and on specific issues also between leaders at different levels.

J.M. One cannot talk about Communists and Socialists as though they are two very different groups. There are differences among Communists and among Socialists. But the areas where we can certainly collaborate — and this would extend to people who would not describe themselves as in any way being Marxists — are, firstly, the struggle for peace and, secondly, trade unionism.

We in Britain have the great advantage of a united trade union movement which is not divided on ideological grounds. From time to time there have been those who have sought to divide it not by an organisational split but by excluding Communists from the right to hold office. I believe, however, that we should extend the right of trade union membership and the right to hold office to all members of the union irrespective of their politics, their religion, their race or creed, or anything else. And it is within the trade union movement that there are so many examples in British history of collaboration and that must continue.

Similarly on civil rights, there is extensive cooperation between different trends within the labour movement, though I strongly doubt whether formal collaboration between the Labour and Communist parties in the immediate future is possible.

B.R. I agree with you about the possibilities of collaboration between members of the Communist and Labour parties in the trade union movement. An ideological struggle continues within it, but without disturbing the coherence of organisational structure. So we have an established practice of Communists holding leading positions in the Trades Union Congress. For example, one of the leaders of the Communist Party of Great Britain is the president of the Scottish miners. There is a member of the Political Committee of the Executive of the Communist Party of Great Britain who is also a member of the executive of the telephone communications union. So within the trade union movement a considerable amount of joint collective work between Communists and Labour party people and Socialists, and people who belong to no party, is actually occurring.

J.M. I want to draw your attention to the possibilities of broad cooperation between members of all parties, non-party people, and believers, in the struggle for peace and progressive reforms on the road to

disarmament. Recently there has been significant progress, and for this I believe we very largely have to thank the initiative shown by the Soviet Union. It seems to me that our task in Britain is now to challenge what has been the dominant policy of following behind the United States and change our approach to such issues as nuclear weapons, Star Wars, the high level of arms spending, South Africa and the Middle East. A majority of the people can be rallied around these questions.

B.R. I can add that during their joint actions on these issues people will be able to find out more about each other by comparing their views and discovering common ground. This will help to extend the practice of collaboration to other areas of social life.

Concluding our dialogue, I want to say that it has revealed a great deal of consistency in our views on the role of reforms in the contemporary world. These have not lost their importance either as a means of defending the daily interests of working people or as a stepping-stone to the socialist objectives of the working class movement. The art of politics would seem to lie in our consideration of this relationship in practical activities.

The Dialectics Of New Thinking And Action

Robert Steigerwald — Board
member, German Communist Party

HISTORY has reached a turning point brought on by many objective factors. The scientific and technological revolution is advancing rapidly — in the Federal Republic, within the framework of a state-monopoly system which, since the mid-1970s, has been trying to swing all domestic politics to the right. Many socio-economic and some of the general democratic gains of the working people are being rolled back so as to create the economic and political conditions essential to capitalist accumulation. This gives rise to new contradictions. There have been substantial changes in our society's principal productive force, and a new middle category of hired workers is taking shape. It forms the backbone of the Green alternative and of the radical democratic currents.

Human interference in the environment has reached unprecedented proportions in terms of both quality and quantity.

Human labour has entered spheres from which it was barred in the past. A scientific and technological potential has been created whose incompetent use threatens the very survival of the human race.

The gap between technological and social progress is the source of numerous global problems which can only be resolved through joint effort. The threat to human survival demands that we tackle them without waiting for the worldwide victory of socialism. It follows that the competition between capitalist and socialist countries makes it imperative for the two systems to cooperate.

However, even in countries where the scientific and technological revolution is occurring in concert with social change, theory and practice face new problems too. They include *the dialectics of immediate and long-term consequences of our interference in the environment, the correlation between knowledge and responsibility, the high level of risk-involving research, the ability of science to forecast the future and, in this connection, its theoretical basis, the necessary interfaces of its various disciplines, etc.* Generally, many old issues have acquired a new and different connotation.

We hold that the world, seen as an integral whole which has long been affected by man, is, in principle, knowable. But then an ethical question immediately arises: should we do everything the level of our knowledge enables us to do? This question can by no means be answered only in the affirmative. After all, man can use modern weapons to destroy all life on Earth. That is an insane 'prospect' we are fighting against.

On the other hand, it will soon be possible to make far-reaching changes in the mechanism of man's genetic heredity. Should we allow them and if so, under what circumstances? After all, we are not yet aware of all the possible adverse effects and dangers of such interference. There you have a new aspect of the problem of risks and of research bordering on risk.

How should people live in the future? How can one devise a reasonable structure combining people's requirements and ways of meeting them? This is a matter of lifestyles and culture understood in the broadest possible context, of providing a Marxist answer to these questions. Some of them (perhaps all of them) should also be discussed with due regard for their global implications too. Obviously, *the importance of philosophy is growing in today's ideological struggle.*

The complex and integral nature of the problems mentioned, the more or less general awareness that we have come to a watershed, and the need to really grasp not only the present but also the past and the future state of the world prompt the main socio-political forces to assume a definite stand. and they also produce a variety of consequences.

First, new ideological and political concepts are emerging. Throughout the social fabric, opinions are growing ever more differentiated, often resulting in head-on clashes. For example, a struggle is on within the monopoly camp between conservatives and liberal reformists; among the Social Democrats, there is infighting involving advocates of state-monopoly and social reformist working class-oriented concepts. There is now a similar differentiation among the Greens, and the Communists, too. are voicing different views.

Second, questions related to the world view, to philosophy, acquire a growing significance in such debates: the conscious orientation of social classes is always rooted in their world view. Because we are living at a time of transition, ethical principles — along with issues of knowing and mastering the world — are assuming a growing importance: Do we have the right to do all we can do? And, if we do not, what is acceptable and on what terms?

Third, the search for answers to these questions leads those who are not oriented on Marxism or oppose it to negative (George Orwell or Aldous Huxley) or positive (some concepts of the Greens) utopias.

Fourth, while some ideological groups profess to favour a Marxist orientation, they cannot overcome philosophical or political obstacles on the way to the current stage in the development of Marxism. They are trying to devise a kind of Marxism divorced from or directly opposite to Leninism, seeking to rely for support on revisionist currents within the working-class movement.

Members of such groups pose as anti-dogmatists, but these claims cannot be taken seriously. Whoever heard of 'anyone confessing to being a dogmatist? Upon a closer examination, they themselves are tied to several dogmas, invariably including the following:

— Marxism can be almost anything except what makes up its Marxist-Leninist content;

— Marxism-Leninism is, at best, an historically or geographically limited form of Marxism;

— there can be a forest but no trees, as if we are dealing with a word that only has a plural form.

The 'common sense' of the advocates of state-monopoly capitalism is revealed within the context of positivistic thinking. They claim that one should merely allow the forces operating under capitalism and connected with scientific and technological revolution to develop fully. Then, they argue, social problems will be solved or will become soluble — problems such as job creation, the financial resources to back social policy or assistance to Third World countries. Bourgeois ideologists welcome the scientific and technological revolution but deny the possibility of development beyond capitalism. They picture social progress as a linear follow-up on the advances of science and technology. This technological determinism can be described as positivistic worship of evolution.

There are two types of positivistic optimism — etatist and anti-etatist. The anti-etatists maintain that the state should withdraw from economic and social affairs (but not from the repressive sphere) and keep at a distance from them. If economic forces — the monopolies — are given free rein, everything will work out perfectly. Let the state guarantee economic and social freedom but increase its apparatus of coercion. Reaganomics and other conservative recipes are examples of such recommendations.

The *etatist* version differs from the above in methods, not objectives. The etatists argue that the desired result can only be achieved if the state is integrated into the economic and social mechanism. They refer to state regulation or government-guaranteed economic and social reforms. In the Federal Republic, there is a broad range of political currents — from right-wingers to Social Democrats — preaching various versions of state-monopoly reformism.

Some technological determinists regard capitalism and socialism as social systems of essentially the same quality. They reject a transition from capitalism to socialism as unnecessary and unable to really change anything. That is the basis underlying the *mythology of convergence*. This concept is least useful in an aggressive defence of imperialism: if the socialist system is essentially the same as capitalism, why should it be seen as an adversary to be destroyed? Nevertheless, such concepts (which sometimes take the shape of the myth about superpowers) have been

embraced readily by the middle strata looking for a 'third way', for an alternative which would be beyond both capitalism and socialism. At the root of these theories there are charges levelled at both systems. And so the recipes suggested are technologically deterministic because those who want to replace one kind of technology with another, even 'median' kind, remain tied to technological determinism.

There are different versions of such concepts. According to one of them, contemporary problems arise because people have ceased to imitate nature whose cycles guarantee balance. While the everyday philosophy which defends capitalism identifies its inhuman aspects with the tragic effects of the struggle for survival and in this way rationalises these manifestations, the alternative to this philosophy makes an absolute of the harmonious aspects of nature. This position is equally untenable because there is both 'tragedy' and 'harmony' in nature, both closed circles and development, both balance and imbalances. Therefore, this concept is a myth too.

Those adhering to the basic current within this philosophy acknowledge that nature knows not only closed cycles and balance but also development. But something has changed in nature with the advent of man and with the start of human intervention in the environment, particularly with what you Marxists call industrialisation and the scientific and technological revolution. This human interference is now far in excess of nature's regenerative abilities. Unless things change, a disaster is imminent. One must refrain at least from accelerating or expanding this intervention (call it technology, civilisation or their science — the definitions do not matter). Technology must be shaped in line with natural processes.

There is much that is acceptable in this line of reasoning. I, too, maintain that there exist grave environmental problems, the only question being whether the diagnosis is accurate enough, for we are looking for an effective course of treatment. I also agree with certain details of this 'alternative' concept. But when its authors attribute the threat in question to a dichotomy between the potential of nature and the rates and scope of scientific and cultural advances, when they advocate holding back progress, we say that these limitations stem from bourgeois prejudice, above all the idea that the impact of science and technology is independent of man. In other words, this is also a kind of technological determinism. A gap between the advances of science and technology and social progress develops when the former are motivated by considerations of profit. Capital uses them to exploit the working class and nature. Therefore, progress is gauged not by the development of the individual's abilities but by the degree to which profits increase. This path may lead to all kinds of disasters — from the destruction of the environment to nuclear war.

Marxists differ in their approach from the advocates of positivistic theories and concepts of everyday philosophy. Viewing these problems from a radically different angle, *we also take a fresh look at what is their essence — the human personality, the preservation of the human race and of human beings as individuals. More precisely, we are dealing with an ethical law which commands preservation of both the human race and the individual, with priority emphasis on the human race.*

The search for the right answers should imply above all due attention to the objective nature of the scientific and technological revolution, the demographic realities which make it necessary to develop economic production, consumption and the use of energy and other resources, as well as the diverse international circumstances under which these objective processes occur.

A critical attitude to alternative concepts makes the following question perfectly legitimate: *how can and must we develop the humanistic concepts of man we have inherited, while adapting ourselves to the scope and character of today's problems?*

If it is true that risk is a concept borrowed, broadly speaking, from the cultural sphere and consequently from history, then the problems of risks and of research bordering on risk assume a new dimension precisely because of the new technologies which cannot be treated any which way. Only by observing the existing interconnections can one preserve the human race in line with the ethical meaning of progress. Only in this way can one create a humanistic structure of human requirements shaped by a harmonious interrelationship between man and nature, etc.

Guided by the humanistic conviction that nothing is more valuable than the human personality, we vigorously oppose the threat of weapons of mass destruction. I am also against any meddling in the mechanism of human heredity, and I hold that any exceptions should be based on very strict criteria. This is by no means a biological position which postulates that the human personality can be reduced to this or that combination of genes. *Generally, how should we approach the dialectics of the social and the natural in relation to contemporary man? Which theory of the human personality is best geared to the contemporary situation?* Can one say, with all respect and affection for the concepts of man we have inherited from the past, that they are fully valid today? These are serious questions, and we should spend more time reflecting on them in depth. Marxists are yet to produce convincing answers to many of them.

The non-Marxist way of thinking and action deserves not only criticism. If one rejects this or that concept out of hand, some valid aspects may be thrown out with the bathwater. More importantly, this may confuse those who have partly accepted valid viewpoints, and these people may embrace wholly false and even dangerous ideological and political theories. This is why in our critical assessments we should note and, in an Hegelian spirit, preserve what is positive in the views of others. That is a manifestation of the Marxist ability to learn.

The present situation makes it essential for Marxists to keep their ideological and political work at the highest possible level. It is not enough to refer merely to the historically justified main precepts of our theory, all the more so because we have grown used to a schematic interpretation of many of them. This attitude may easily lead us to ignore today's problems and become dogmatists. It would be wrong not to notice what is fundamentally new. And Marxism offers us the method and the means of studying these new phenomena. If we forget this, we risk a revisionist deviation. Marxists should be able to *reveal the dialectical interconnections between time-tested knowledge and the tackling of new problems*, between

the continuity and the further development of theory. The strength of Marxism is in its ability to steer clear of the Scylla of dogmatism and the Charybdis of revisionism.

Our ideological and political activities are influenced by the objective problems and processes I mentioned. They can be summed up in a simple formula: peace is not everything, but without peace there is nothing. This means that we should conduct all our debates and discussions with due regard for the fact that it is vitally important to ensure peace, establish broad alliances and win the positions essential to the achievement of this goal. Hence the great importance of promoting an up-to-date way of thinking and action to help create a coalition of reason. This is what underlies our approach to criticism and raises new tasks in our ideological and political work.

viewpoints

Marxism And Religion

The Causes Behind The Explosion Of Religious Extremism

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NOW that Islamic extremism is rife in Egypt, it may seem quite strange that our party has not studied and analysed this phenomenon with sufficient attention. Keeping silent about it was often regarded as an accomplishment at the same time, many members of our party see Muslim extremism as an inevitability which it is useless to combat.

Some forces outside the ECP have tried to use this extremism to intimidate the party, bring pressure to bear on it and tie its hands. Others have attempted to force the Communists to ally themselves with the regime and 'conscript' them to fight the growing religious menace. In response, certain Leftist elements within our ranks decided that any open condemnation of the extremist groups would play into the hands of the

For earlier articles in the 'Marxism and Religion' series, see: *WMR*, February, April, August and October 1987; March, June and July 1988.

authorities and, moreover, be understood as a 'flirtation' with the regime and betrayal of our interests.

This article is an attempt to tackle the subject in theoretical and practical terms and to discuss issues that not only colour all our domestic affairs but have also emerged as a factor of the ideological struggle currently under way within the ECP and the Left in general.

The gravest danger we seem to encounter in the course of this ideological struggle within our party is seesawing from one generality to another and ignorance of important, if particular, theoretical issues. As a result one hears pseudo-scientific revolutionary rhetoric which, upon a closer examination, loses its lustre.

A Brief Historical Outline

Let us consider the Marxist view of the origin of religion. "All religion," Engels wrote, ". . . is nothing but the fantastic reflection in men's minds of those external forces which control their daily life, a reflection in which the terrestrial forces assume the form of supernatural forces."¹ Marxism therefore sees religion as an objective historical phenomenon rooted in social realities and belonging in the sphere of social consciousness. It follows that to study this or that belief, one should delve into the underlying social realities which keep changing.

This is the principal thing, whereas we still refrain from studying religious phenomena because we interpret them as something that has long become immutable, and we maintain that any approach to this subject should be intransigent and aggressive.

That is a mistaken attitude which Marxist thought never postulated. Moreover, in describing religion as part of social consciousness, Marx stressed that deep inside it there was protest, the groan of the oppressed, an attempt at an illusory prospective compensation for the existing social ills which it was too early to overcome. Religious ideas featured prominently in the ideologies of a number of mass movements — those of slaves, serfs and other social strata. These movements were revolutionary in their essence, albeit coloured in religious hues: that was their outer shape which depended on the level of social development as such.²

Lenin also held that "political protests in religious guise are common to all nations at a certain stage of their development".³ Referring to the new Muslim trends which sprang up in India, Indonesia and the Arab countries shortly before the October Revolution, the Russian Marxist Georgy Plekhanov noted that the neo-Islamic factor was not simply a religion but a political current pursuing perfectly earthly and secular objectives.

However, *the classics of Marxism emphasised repeatedly that the same religious ideas were also used as a means of enslaving the popular masses.*

It appears that the changeability of a religion's social thrust (with its commitment to the dogmata of faith remaining unchanged) is connected with the scope and depth of the social change under way. The religious tide may ebb and flow irrespective of whether the believers are more or less ardently devoted to their creed. A great deal depends on how badly social progress needs a religious factor.

In interpreting this dialectic, *Hegel was wrong to claim that Islam had long departed from the stage of world history and relapsed into Oriental slumber and immobility.* The German philosopher described the situation as it was, but he forgot about the essential connection between the two fundamental elements (social consciousness and social being), about the fact that as a form of social consciousness, religion is susceptible to both negative and positive influences generated by definite social realities and that, consequently, it responds to them either passively or actively. Furthermore, a distinction should be drawn between the different components of religious consciousness itself — the elements of faith and other elements which have taken a religious form. That is how one can explain the absence of a causal relationship between people's attitude to faith and the ebb or flow of the socio-political activities involving this or that religious institution or movement. The two do not condition each other. One of them may increase and the other diminish, depending on the type of the socio-political change going on.

We are thus dealing with a complex phenomenon. Its analysis shows that Muslim extremism is not simply an expression of religious feeling and that it does not signify any automatic rise in the devotion to the faith. *Religious extremism is a political and social state of psychological and ideological mobilisation* which produces a rigid dedication to carefully selected dogmata and makes one pliant and ready to give up one's own will and views in favour of the dogmata or those who proclaim them.

In this case, a man deprived of his will, a narrow-minded fanatic, does not feel inadequate; on the contrary, he justifies his actions by a sense of superiority over those who are different from them. He is absolutely sure that he is superior because he is closer to God. Religious dogmata are his ultimate truth which determines his perception of reality. When reality clashes with the dogmata, the former is declared to be false.

Essentially, *an extremist position manifests itself in an inability to change reality and makes one turn to old 'dreams' in the hope of hiding from the inevitability of the class struggle and from the difficulties of an effort to change the world.* There is nothing new about this phenomenon, and it is not confined to Muslim extremists either. To quote what Marx said about this kind of people, "in such periods of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle-cries and costumes in order to present the new scene of world history in this time-honoured disguise and this borrowed language."⁴

That is a very apt description of today's extremist groups which do turn to the past and do borrow names and battle-cries from it. If you ask them about their vision of the future, they will talk about a simple return to the past, about reviving things long dead. It is as if they had a video cassette of a one-thousand-year-old show which they are ready to re-run as soon as they come to power. Having the 'stage-script' for the show they need no political programme. In fact, they do not need to exercise their mental faculties at all either.

A Bit of History and the Problem of Immunity

Egypt was the country where political Islam in its modern version was born: witness the emergence of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928 and this group's subsequent development. It arose amid a stifling economic crisis as a socio-political manifestation of a search for an alternative to the existing social order. Again, its establishment had no connection with the state of religious faith.

Islam in Egypt has its own distinctive features. The status of Al Azhar⁵ as a mainstay of Islam and the fact that its ulamas claimed to be champions of the oppressed (the 'groan of the oppressed') were reflected in the relationship between the new political and religious current and society. At this point one might note that the approach to the salient features of Islam in Egypt was often erroneous. Even some ECP researchers sought, if for tactical purposes, to emphasise the progressive and patriotic aspect in the history of Islam, in this way helping, in certain periods, the extremists who immediately used our arguments to prove that only Islam could resolve urgent social problems and undertake to effect social change. They still stress that only the Muslim faith enjoys a special immunity to the passage of time and has a protective reaction to outside alien influences.

These ideas fall on fertile ground not only among the people but also within the ruling élite and in different political quarters, thus strengthening the religious political current. Some bow and pay homage to it and live in its shadow (the Socialist Labour Party and the Liberal Socialist Party), others flatter and cosset it (the ruling regime), and still others avoid confrontation with it (the Wafd Party and, surprisingly, the ECP). But what are the real causes behind the rise of Islamic extremism in Egypt?

Let us consider this question in greater detail. There are two systems of education in Egypt — religious and secular. However, while the religious political current is quite satisfied with its 'channel of education', the civic movement receives little rational knowledge from its own, exclusively scholastic system of learning. What kind of knowledge can one expect to gain if the teachers rely on coercion even in primary school? No one encourages students to creatively grasp the subjects taught or to analyse the conclusions that are made. Secular education 'passes knowledge down from on high'. Perhaps that is the reason why extremist religious views are current even among Egyptian intellectuals.

Islamic extremism is also fed by the fact that many Egyptians go abroad to look for jobs, mostly to Muslim countries (Saudi Arabia, Iraq and the Persian Gulf states) where social institutions and social relations are more backward than in Egypt. Guest workers have to live by the local traditions which are mostly religious. These people return home in the belief that their faith was what brought them relief from poverty and privations.

Holding companies and other businesses controlled by religious political interests play an important social role. The financial resources of these interests are enormous, and they ascribe their successful commercial transactions to strict compliance with the Islamic doctrine. Besides, the 'Islamic economy' offers employment to many people who are compelled to promote religious fundamentalism. This sector of the economy has secured the financial support of a large part of the petty and medium

bourgeoisie and it receives financial assistance from the United States, Saudi Arabia and Persian Gulf states.

This brings us close to giving a reply to the question posed, but it would be incomplete if we failed to consider several factors which were directly involved in the escalation of Muslim extremism in Egypt.

Let us recall Nasser's rule and the inability of the authorities to find an effective solution to the nation's problems. Nasser's development model was a complete political and economic failure. The defeat in the 1967 war and the economic crisis that followed marked a turning point. The absence of democracy, the growth of corruption and a simultaneous drop in the living standards revealed serious defects of the system itself, not just some minor flaws in this or that part of the social fabric. The crisis affected not only the working masses but also small- and medium-scale entrepreneurs, that is, precisely those social strata which, under adverse circumstances, lose their revolutionary enthusiasm and turn mostly to what religion has to offer.

On the other hand, the masses of the poor regard parasitic incomes, corruption, extortion and the ostentatious luxury surrounding the 'new rich' as a degrading and insidious influence of Western lifestyles which, naturally, gives rise to protests. But since Egyptians are not yet sufficiently clear on the inner ties between the enrichment of one group and the impoverishment of others, between wealth and moral decay, and since they are not fully aware of the opportunities of a class struggle against exploitation, they embrace religion and become fanatics.

This was what gave rise to religious extremism, terrorism and increased reprisals against progressives. The ECP was the first target of persecution. Its dissolution in 1965 and the many years of its clandestine activities created a kind of political vacuum which was hastily filled by extremist Muslim organisations pursuing an ostensible anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist course.

The Position and the Struggle of the Communists

The Communist Party believes it necessary to get a clear picture of the actual alignment of forces in Egypt so as to fight from class-based positions for society's revolutionary renewal, not to surrender to circumstances or to avoid confrontation with religious extremism for fear of the alleged immunity the activists of political Islam ascribe to their movement.

To illustrate this point, let us consider the results of two 1987 election campaigns — to the People's Assembly and to the governing bodies of trade unions. Why did political Islam win the former but lose the latter? The answer is simple. The former campaign was not class-based, and so religious extremism gained the upper hand. In the latter case, class-based objectives of the struggle were in the foreground. As a result, the ideological influence of the religious forces was neutralised and they suffered a defeat.

The record shows that although Islamic businesses contribute noticeably to the advancement of the religious political current, they may become its 'soft underbelly' if we can win their workers over to the class struggle. We are seriously considering the organisation of strikes at such factories.

We cannot, of course, ignore the fact that the masses are quite impressed by the religious ways displayed by the members of extremist associations — the beards, the Muslim dress, the affected piety in everything, even in the rhetoric addressed to the ordinary people (they contrive to sound wise and authoritative). I am referring to this because some of our comrades pay no attention to everyday contacts with people. They confine themselves to talks addressed to individual groups, disdain popular customs and use abstruse language. This is not invariably so, but, unfortunately, such things do happen. People listen to a speech, but they cannot understand it or draw conclusions from it. Simpler turns of phrase in our contacts with the masses enable us to convey more accurately our class-based assessment of this or that development and to show how it differs radically from opposite views.

Some maintain that religious currents can be divided into moderate and extremist, and they approach them as such. That is only partly valid, and only at a certain stage. One must not forget that they all have the same objective — the establishment of a clerical regime, something we must fight against both now and in the future. It is particularly important for us in all our canvassing, political work and relations with our allies to be aware of the distance between faith and calls for political domination on behalf of religion. *We draw a distinction between religious faith and political religious ambitions, and we respect the feelings of believers while opposing theocratic trends openly and firmly.*

The way out of the current situation in Egypt lies in the class struggle for progressive social development. Convincing people that this struggle is essential and helping workers mature ideologically so as to turn them into a class for themselves and for society is the only way of combating the rising tide of religious extremism and the related attempts to plunge the country into the past. The prospects of this struggle are full of hope because they open the vistas of a genuine alternative both to the present situation and to a relapse into obsolete, clerical rule.

We are fighting a pitched battle which calls for both caution and boldness. In the course of this struggle, the ECP is ready to form a broad alliance with all secular, liberal and patriotic forces. We also hold that *it could be joined by enlightened religious currents which seek social progress and emancipation and reject the idea of clerical rule.* The advocates of such rule (after the model of the regime in Iran) are another matter. Islamic extremists suppress all free thinking and all opposition, claiming that they are aimed against religion. *A passive attitude to the extremist forces merely serves to encourage them.* Alliance with them is out of the question: they must be effectively rebuffed. True, some people in our party still maintain that we would thus support the government we are opposing. This dogmatic leftist position has led these people into keeping silent about the actual danger of religious extremism and, objectively, into defending it.

If a phenomenon is contradictory and full of contrasts, a revolutionary should not single out just one of its aspects while ignoring the others. We realise that there are certain contradictions between the ruling regime and the religious groups. But it is in fact a struggle for power within the framework of capitalist society. Both sides want to preserve it, although in

different ways. *Since the Communists reject the capitalist system as such, in all its types and modifications, we oppose the power of the big bourgeoisie whatever form it takes, whether it is presidential rule or a clerical regime.* Therefore, the ECP opposes both, following a definite tactic and taking primary and secondary contradictions into account. Religious extremism threatens everything that is rational, secular, liberal and democratic. Moreover, it threatens our national unity, the welfare of Egypt and Egyptian national policy itself.

By expanding our class-based activities and organising the struggle of the social forces, we can rise resolutely to this dramatic challenge which creates the superficial impression that secular solutions and civic action are useless. *Egypt's Communists are ready to demonstrate in practice how the pressing problems of our society can be resolved in line with the interests, demands and aspirations of the masses.*

¹ Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 300.

² See: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 175.

³ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 243.

⁴ Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 11, pp. 103-104.

⁵ An Islamic university in Cairo. — *Ed.*

Towards Parliamentary Democracy

Abdallah Layachi — CC Political
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(PPS)

SINCE its foundation in August 1974¹, the PPS officially participated, under its own name, in four elections: two communal in 1976 and 1983, and two legislative in 1977 and 1984. It won two seats in parliament: one for the PPS General Secretary in 1977, and another for a member of the Political Bureau in 1984.

These two victories had an obvious political significance. For the first time since a parliamentary regime was established in Morocco in 1963, they brought the working class party into the chamber of deputies, a noteworthy development not only for Morocco, because there is no other such representation in any other Arab country, with the exception of Syria.

Does that mean, however, that, in contrast to previous elections, these were held in a truly free and democratic atmosphere? Could one say that the election returns, officially announced and recognised by the authorities, reflected the will of our citizens and a true choice of our electorate? That is certainly not so.

The ruling classes (the big bourgeoisie, the big landowners and the feudal lords) have tried hard to preserve their social and economic privileges and so also their political and administrative dominance. That is

why the struggle for democracy in Morocco, as everywhere else, is a continuous battle, which, with its ebb and flow, unfolds *against the background of continuous class struggle between the forces of progress and reaction.*

The first parliament, elected in May 1963, in which the deputies had definite rights, and in which there was a relatively strong, if minority, opposition did not last the full four years provided for by the Constitution. A state of exception was declared in the country in 1965, following the large-scale violent protests in Casablanca, the capital of the Moroccan proletariat. For the same occasion the authorities suspended the constitution of December 7, 1962, 'granted' under the cover of a rigged-up referendum.

Morocco went through yet another period of parliamentary and constitutional development, which was more anti-democratic than the first; when the state of exception was lifted five years later, in July 1970, the opposition refused to join in the game, with all the opposition. This time, however, parties and trade unions unanimously rejected the new constitution, by means of a referendum in July 1970, and boycotted the elections to the legislature held a month later under the new constitution.

It became obvious that the power was isolated from society, as never before, and there was every indication that the crisis gripping the country was coming to a head. The full gravity of the situation was brought out by the first and exceptionally bloody military coup attempt on July 10, 1971. The freezing of the activity of the lame parliament and the operation of the constitution was among the immediate effects of those tragic developments.

This situation continued until March 1, 1972, when a referendum was held to adopt a new constitution (the third in ten years). It was rejected by the opposition, which boycotted the referendum, because the new constitution was hardly different from the earlier ones. The power preferred to stage no elections at all out of fear of being left alone with its stalwarts.

Meanwhile, there was a second coup attempt, with the royal Boeing coming under machine-gunfire on August 16, 1972, something that made even the most sceptical people see that the events were not just a casual episode, but a real reflection on the acute crisis. Both coup attempts showed very well the latent dangers of the situation and the need for urgent measures to improve it.

It will be recalled that from the early 1960s on the power ruled by means of 'direct democracy', claiming that there was no need for 'intermediaries between the power and the people'. In practice this meant that the parties and organisations were deprived of any independence and rights enabling them to participate in any significant way in running the country and its affairs. This hegemonistic policy, which was aimed to isolate, if not to eliminate, any organised opposition, turned out to be ineffective and dangerous, as subsequent events showed.

The forces relying on the popular masses and expressing their aspirations did not allow themselves to be removed from the political scene and, in fact, consolidated their positions by beating back all the attacks against

them. Despite manoeuvres and demagoguery, which went hand in hand with various forms of repression, the masses continued to rally round their parties and organisations and to step up their struggle.

The power found itself isolated not only from the progressive forces of the nation, but also from the ultra-reactionary wing of the classes and social sectors which had produced it, including the fascist-minded elements. The internal crisis developed into acts of violence in the course of events of July 1971 and August 1972, and this almost plunged the country into chaos.

The authorities had to recognise, therefore, that the situation had to be urgently improved, and that this required a resumption of the dialogue with the opposition, especially since the latter was also worried about these developments. The power and the opposition forces agreed that the *country had to be rescued from the threat of a military dictatorship*.

Accordingly, the authorities reviewed their policy along two lines. There was the need, first, to make a *turn towards democracy* and, second, to give priority to the solution of the *national problem*, which was of exceptional importance for the people, something only the progressive and patriotic forces had advocated all along. This began a two-fold, dialectical process: democratisation and strengthening of national unity over Western Sahara, which had eventually been liberated from colonial occupation, and — it was our party's conviction — ought to be reunited with its historical homeland, Morocco, through a referendum, supervised by the UN and provided with all the necessary guarantees, i.e., a free, regular and absolutely honest referendum conducted without outside pressure. Moreover, democratisation had begun before the liberation of Western Sahara, and helped to speed up its completion.

Political tensions began to decline in late 1972. The first few steps to democratise the country were taken in full conformity with the November 1958 Charter of Public Liberties which provided for the freedoms of speech, the press, assembly and demonstrations; freedoms the authorities had earlier totally ignored.

Our party, then still banned, but acting in the open, succeeded in starting the legal publication of two weeklies under the common name of *Al Bayane*, first in Arabic, and then in French. In August 1974, we submitted our Rules to the competent authorities, and were thereupon recognised as *a legal political party under the name of Party of Progress and Socialism*. Despite incredible material hardships, the PPS managed in 1975 to turn the weeklies into two dailies, which became its official organs.

Consequently, the popular struggle, in which our party, even while banned, played the role of vanguard, had produced *a new political situation* by the mid-1970s, thus creating favourable opportunities for the activity of the progressive and patriotic forces.

Parliamentary life has resumed after a five-year break in the new situation, which is marked by national unity in the struggle for the country's territorial integrity and democratic change won in intense battles. Almost the entire opposition, including the PPS, took part in the 1977 and 1984 election campaigns, despite the fact that these were held on the basis

of the constitution, unanimously rejected in 1972, and with numerous violations.

Our party decided to take part in the elections without any electoral illusions. The ruling classes and their leaders are much too vigilant to allow such a vanguard revolutionary party as the PPS to have a representation in the parliament that would be adequate to its real weight in society. This also applies, even if to a much lesser extent, to the entire opposition, especially the progressive forces.

First, only two-thirds of the deputies to the parliament are elected by direct and universal suffrage. The remaining one-third is formed indirectly, through communal councils, trade unions, and chambers of commerce and industry. Their true character can be easily imagined, considering the fact that these bodies are themselves elected with scandalous violations.

Second, the parliamentary and communal elections are held on one-name tickets, in one round under the majority system, rather than in two rounds under the proportional system of representation. This arrangement favours the feudal lords and other sections of the élite at the expense of the progressive parties, our party in the first place.

Third, although theoretically all citizens of both sexes have the right to vote, no woman has ever become a deputy, which is hardly accidental. Besides, only persons who have reached the age of 21 are eligible to vote, and only those who have reached the age of 25, to be elected. There is an intolerable discrimination against the young, who make up 70 per cent of the population, a blatant injustice which does great harm to the progressive movement and to our party, most of whose members and sympathisers are young people under the age of 21.

There is yet another factor which is a great and almost insuperable obstacle to the working class party. It is the material, primarily financial, means, without which no serious election campaign is possible. We have virtually no such means at all.

Apart from the large expenditures usually accompanying the election campaigns, every candidate in Morocco is obliged by law when registering to put up a deposit of 2,000 dirhams, or roughly the equivalent of a worker's three-months' wages. The deposit is forfeited if a candidate receives less than 5 per cent of the poll. The main purpose of this financial subterfuge is to limit the number of candidates from the working classes and to erect an additional barrier to election campaigns by the PPS, their class party.

We find, therefore, that the election contests in a society like ours take place amid *total inequality of opportunity*, which also means inequality of chance, i.e., they are not fair and balanced from the start.

One should also take into account the fact that those who oppose the progressive forces have something more than money. They are in control of the state apparatus and the administrative machine. Their money, and the governmental and administrative levers, give them the possibility — and they make use of it — of applying pressure and intimidation, of resorting to bribery and fraud, i.e., of breaking every rule in the book.

They think that any means, even illegal and immoral ones, are good

enough to give them control of the parliament and to consolidate their power in the country.

One may well ask this question: why take part in stage-managed elections, when the party is aware, even before the campaign has got under way, that the officially declared returns will be a far cry from the actual poll, and that the authorities are capable of pulling out of the ballot-boxes, as if they were magic-boxes, all that corresponded to their prearranged plans, rather than to the will of the electorate? Our answer is: while being well aware of all these things, the party, by virtue of its nature, is oriented towards *its own goals*.

We believe, first of all, that, for all their shortcomings, the parliamentary, as well as the municipal and the communal systems, are an important gain reflecting the people's aspiration for democracy. This is a gain which our party has always fought for. Today, like in the past, we stand for a truly democratic parliament possessing unlimited legislative powers and elected by universal and secret ballot under a proportional system. And though this is still a distant goal, we consider it a new stage in the long fight for genuine democracy. For its part democracy is one, if exceptionally important, aspect of *our party's general line for completing the national democratic revolution which opens up the prospects of socialism*.

In its struggle for democracy and other objectives of its programme, the PPS relies on Lenin's view of the relationship between tactics and strategy. It is not right to neglect any success, however modest. On the contrary, we regard it as a result of mass action and the activity of the revolutionary vanguard party, which has the task of skilfully using this success to invigorate the popular movement and to win new and more important gains, without ever losing sight of the main strategic goal.

When our party announced its intention to take part in the 1976-1977 and the 1983-1984 elections, it was subjected to gloating criticism and diverse attacks by the leftists and other nihilists. It was accused of 'accepting the reactionary power', and of 'playing into its hands', in short, of making a deal with the 'class enemy'. For them, only one slogan holds good: 'The revolution is ripe, and it must be carried out at once'. They lose sight of the fact that without tactics, which the leftists scorn as the worst expression of opportunism, there is no strategy, and that the two categories are *dialectically interconnected*, with the former being necessarily subordinate to the latter.

So, the elections, in which our party was able to participate, enabled it to join the people in mounting large-scale political struggle. These elections offered great opportunities for consolidating our recently won legal status after long years of prohibition. The party succeeded in establishing stronger and more diverse ties with the broad masses, in explaining its programme everywhere, in giving its activists inspiring and valuable experience of the masses, in winning new members and extending its geographical representation.

The PPS's electoral argumentation follows two key dialectically interconnected lines: a well-founded criticism of the policy pursued by the authorities, on the one hand, and an equally well-argued exposition of its

own general line, on the other. We use election campaigns not only to demonstrate the total failure of the official policy in various spheres, but also to convince the people that the *PPS is capable of leading the country out of the crisis*.

The PPS constantly stresses that it is different from others; that it is not like the power, in relation to which it constitutes the most radical and most consistent opposition force; that it is not like the other political trends, including those which are together with it in the opposition, and with which it enters into alliances for the attainment of definite goals. The party formulates its own conclusions and positions on all the issues, proceeding from the interests and aspirations of the working people, which are closely linked with the supreme interests of the nation. The PPS's uniqueness is manifested most vividly on economic and social problems, which it regards from the positions of the revolutionary vanguard of the working class and the poor peasantry.

Finally, the PPS stands out as a *party of internationalists* in foreign policy. International problems, the peoples' struggle for freedom, independence and peace throughout the world are important planks of the party programme, and so also of its electoral platform. The main idea which determines our analysis and action in this sphere is that the national struggle is closely bound up with the worldwide movement for the emancipation and liberation of peoples, and for peace.

Everyday the party pursues its educational and organisational effort, addressing people through its newspapers and leaflets wherever they live and work: in their neighbourhoods, at the factory, in the fields, in villages, in the market-place, in cafés and in the street. But election campaigns create for it rare and *exceptionally favourable conditions*, enabling it to carry on an especially broad and massive struggle, and so to obtain much greater results.

Yet another factor which gave a particular scope to the 1984 election campaign is that, like other political organisations, the party got access to national radio and TV, an important democratic gain for the PPS and for all the national and progressive forces. We used these effective mass media to set forth our electoral programme for millions of citizens. These broadcasts enabled TV and radio audiences to discover the PPS for themselves, and for the first time to learn of its democratic demands from the party itself, not from the distorted versions of our unscrupulous critics, rivals and enemies. We ourselves and others were subsequently able to see the positive effect on public opinion made by the radio and TV address of PPS General Secretary Ali Yata.

Our party has, therefore, *emerged from the election campaigns with a heightened authority and more solid organisation*, and that especially because it did not engage in electioneering and did not make any lavish promises. What is more, it had warned against any illusions concerning the 'results', which are known to be patently rigged. But we called on the voters not to be seduced by the nihilistic slogans of the leftists, who urged a boycott of the elections because they were rigged, and because the bodies they produced would be neither representative nor effective. On the

contrary, we induced the people to take an active part in the elections and to vote for the candidates of the PPS.

We explained that, by taking part and voting in that way, the electorate would demonstrate their support for the policy which meets their aspirations, and signal their will for democratic change. The point was to help the people to understand that, whatever happened to the expression of their will, in itself it was an expression of *their complete disagreement with the policy of the ruling circles, and of their resolve to have a different policy* based on the legitimate interests of the people and the country.

We do not believe that the electoral struggle ends once the elections are over and the 'results' have been declared. It enters upon a new phase, which has now got under way for us within the national assembly.

The power has managed, by means of fraud, rigging, pressure and other violations, to fashion the present parliament to its own design, with an obedient and firm 'majority'. The progressive and patriotic opposition has been assigned the role of a 'minority' having no real influence on decision-making. According to serious forecasts, the PPS was to have won *at least 11 seats*, but it got only two.

However, that has not prevented our representatives from acting effectively in parliament. Our deputies have tabled amendments to every single bill proposed by the government. The Communists addressed questions to the ministers concerned on every point affecting the interests of the working people, and these ministers had to mount the rostrum of the Chamber of Representatives and to give their explanations.

Our MPs have tabled several bills. Among the most important ones were the bills on agrarian reform, tax reform, rent democratisation, and introduction of the completely proportional electoral system, with the age being lowered to 18 years for voting, and to 21 years for nomination.

None of these bills were passed, and that is quite natural, considering the existing balance of forces, but the parliamentary rostrum has enabled the party to explain some of its main goals and slogans, and to show with utmost clarity and forcefulness that there is an alternative to the reactionary policy of the ruling classes, whose failures are evident in every sphere, and that the alternative comes from the PPS. •

It is important to emphasise that all of the party's legislative proposals and initiatives in parliament are worked out in consultation with the broad social strata and they are widely explained in our newspapers.

Now and again, the initiatives of our deputies have met with *unanimous support* in the parliament, both from the government majority and from the opposition. For instance, when the United Nations decided to designate 1986 as the International Year of Peace, the national assembly held a special session, on the PPS's initiative, and adopted a unanimous resolution for peace.

In the previous parliament, Ali Yata, then our sole deputy, initiated a stormy discussion on the issue of political prisoners. Parliament adopted a unanimous resolution demanding their release, and set up a parliamentary commission authorised to visit the prisoners and to look into the conditions in which they were kept. After this, some of them were released from prison, but the rest, including 30 of our comrades, are still behind bars.

For the progressive and patriotic forces of Morocco, *parliament is a venue of meetings, dialogue and concerted action*. The unity which used to be occasional in the past, is now the rule. When major problems were discussed, the opposition, consisting of the PPS, the Socialist Union of Popular Forces, the Istiqlal Party, and the Organisation for Democratic Popular Action, took a united stand, and tabled common proposals or counter-proposals. That is what happened, for instance, during the debate on the government's draft budget for fiscal 1987/88, the five-year economic development plan, the law on value-added tax, etc.

But the unity dynamic was not confined only to parliamentary debates, as some had wished. It was also evident in other initiatives, in particular, at unitary meetings organised by the four parties of the popular movement on various issues, the main one being solidarity with the Palestinian people. This process has led to the formation of mass organisations which include, apart from members of the four parties, rank-and-file citizens prepared to stand up for common political, economic, social and cultural demands.

Morocco's progressive and patriotic forces have always sought to maintain relations of friendship, respect and solidarity with each other, but this is the first time that they have worked to form an alliance without any ideological or political discrimination in order to face up to the government on some basic aspects of its policy. Let us note the characteristic fact that it is the wrongfully elected parliament that has provided the soil for such developments.

Consequently elections, even those involving diverse violations, as well as the bodies possessing limited powers that have been set up as a result, do provide, in spite of everything, wide opportunities for the progressive forces' democratic struggle to score more decisive and telling victories, and the electoral record of Morocco shows just how true this analysis is. The great benefits the PPS has derived from these elections show that *its decision to take part in them was the right one*.

Of course, in this work the PPS repudiates all soporific and sterile parliamentary cretinism. Quite the contrary. It believes that for this work to be fully effective it should be integrated with the party's overall activities which consist in educating the masses politically and ideologically, in organising them, and in stepping up as much as possible their struggle aimed to bring about a democratic change opening up prospects for socialism.

¹ The PPS continues in the traditions of the Moroccan Communist Party and the Party of Liberation and Socialism. The Moroccan CP was founded in 1943; it was banned in December 1952 by the French protectorate authorities, and once again in February 1960 under a court ruling in independent Morocco. The PLS was set up in July 1968 and disbanded in August 1969. — *Ed.*

CMEA: Frontiers Of Scientific And Technical Cooperation

Günter Kleiber — SED CC Political Bureau member; Deputy Chair, GDR Council of Ministers; GDR Permanent Representative in CMEA

Of what importance for the GDR is its scientific and technical cooperation with other socialist countries in the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance?

THE economic strategy of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) is designed, it was said at its 11th Congress in 1986, for the dynamic growth of the entire national economy, which will, in turn, create a basis for high material and cultural standards of living. Here we are talking about the unity of economic and social policy. Every working person feels that his or her work is meaningful and knows that successes in production help directly to improve living standards and conditions in society.

The GDR economy has been forging ahead with intensification for almost two decades because of the party's consistent policy. Production is improved through higher labour productivity, not through increases in personnel, and raw material inputs are stabilised through more efficient use and more effective processing. Furthermore, we are also trying to balance, and even reduce, energy inputs.

This can be done only through scientific and technological progress closely linked to production, and research into, and development of, high technologies, which now determine the rate of advance in every sphere of the national economy and social life.

The party's basic idea in formulating the policy is that the class struggle, the historic contest between imperialism and socialism, and the worldwide competition between the two social systems have moved increasingly into science and technology. How attractive socialism is now largely depends on the attainment and eventual maintenance of the highest achievements in this area. These efforts develop into a revolutionary struggle which is crucial for the successful advance of socialism and the growth of its influence throughout the world.

That is taken into account in the cooperation between the socialist states belonging to the CMEA. In 1985, they adopted the Comprehensive Programme for the Scientific and Technical Progress until the end of the century, with cooperation in every area designed for faster scientific and technical development and wider use of its achievements in production. This Programme has given the CMEA countries a concerted strategy for applying the key technologies and also a concrete concept of interaction between the scientific and producer potentials, based on the socialist division of labour and economic integration. It concentrates on five main lines: application of electronics in the economy, complex automation,

nuclear energy, new materials and new technologies to process them, and biotechnology; 94 major sets of tasks have been agreed for the purpose of producing a total of 2,800 products, installations, technologies, and so on.

What is the GDR's contribution to this programme? How does the country benefit from such cooperation?

The GDR's powerful scientific research and production capability is involved in most of the projects along the lines of the Programme. This is where significant potential is concentrated, such as almost one-half of the state financing for science and technology and, in addition, a large part of the factory fund reserves.

Our commitments, based on the Comprehensive Programme and enshrined in international agreements and treaties, are an integral part of the state plan for science and technology, which means that their fulfilment is backed up with a solid guarantee.

Naturally, this is linked directly to a desire for the rapid and efficient use of the end-results, which means that these need to be applied to production as soon as possible, and delivered to partners in the form of export products, or made available in the form of licences to those who take part in cooperation. This is the most efficient and stimulating way of financing projects and recouping inputs.

From the adoption of the programme until 1988, the GDR has supplied other CMEA countries with more than 3 billion marks' worth of new products, which have been developed or improved under agreed schemes. Our country has become an important supplier of licences within the CMEA. Experience shows that in the long term economic successes hinge on good performance by each individual partner. Only a consistently balanced international division of labour can help to create the prerequisites needed to close the gaps in a relatively short time.

Scientific and technical progress ranges over extensive areas. What are the priorities?

Our starting point — and here we are at one with the USSR and the other CMEA countries — is priority for the development of micro-electronics. The solution of all economic and social problems is determined by the success in this field.

We rely on close cooperation with our partners, but the GDR's contribution is a significant one, mainly in the development and manufacture of specialised technological equipment and electronic elements, but also in areas like modern computers, light conduits, information systems, and so on. Since 1987, we have been using integrated circuits for 256 kilobit memories made by Carl Zeiss Jena, while getting ready to put out higher-level products. For example, Carl Zeiss Jena has recently presented to SED CC General Secretary Erich Honecker the first integrated circuit for 1 megabit memories, which is, without doubt, a major achievement, even on the world scale.

We have also achieved some important results along other lines of

scientific and technical progress. By agreement with our CMEA partners, significant structural changes have been made in our machine-tool industry. The share of numerically controlled machine-tools, and technological systems with such equipment, has been growing in our production and export. We have reached an agreement with the Soviet Union under which almost one-third of the GDR's machine-tool deliveries until 1990 is to consist of flexible manufacturing systems or machining units, as well as plastic-metal working transfer lines. These facilities are already highly regarded in the Soviet machine-tool and automobile industries.

The importance for us of nuclear energy continues to grow and scientists and designers are now primarily concerned with how to increase safety at the existing plants and those under construction. There is, at the same time, an effort to cut costs and reduce construction time.

It is not easy to deal in a short interview with all the projects the GDR is actively involved in. I would point out the extensive international cooperation in the production of highly valuable ceramic, chemical and metallic materials, and in the research into the diverse field of biotechnology. It is now clear that biotechnology will have a revolutionising effect on many spheres of production and on life as a whole, which is why great efforts should be made not to fall behind the general rate of world development. We have taken this into account and want to explore every opportunity for international cooperation.

International Cooperation, with many partners, must cause certain problems, mustn't it?

Of course, it hasn't always gone smoothly. Scientific and technical advance in the world calls for great efforts on our part. This requires close cooperation between highly-qualified scientists, experienced industrial engineers and workers, and a concentration of material and financial resources. Waving a magic wand won't produce this, and so it is all the more important to take advantage of the international division of labour.

The task facing the CMEA countries is to introduce scientific and technical advances swiftly into production in order to fully satisfy internal and emerging foreign trade demands. But even greater efforts will have to be made to reach the world level and, possibly, to top it, if we are going to be up to standards that will shape up pretty soon. We want to be relied upon to fulfil our commitments, whether this relates to something we undertook to do within the division of labour arrangement, or to the export of new R&D designs. These are problems to be solved through the concerted efforts of the CMEA and bilateral cooperation agencies.

One can say quite confidently, however, that for all the shortcomings, our cooperation in this area has been effective, which is especially important in view of the continued attempts by forces hostile to socialism to slow down the development of the socialist countries' productive forces. This is exemplified by the notorious list compiled by COCOM (Coordinating Committee of East-West Trade Policy) which undoubtedly harms mutually advantageous cooperation between countries with

different social systems and erects artificial barriers in world trade. But our cooperation increasingly demonstrates that we are quite capable of invalidating the effects of this embargo through our own efforts.

Vietnam, Cuba and Mongolia, as well as the East European countries, are members of the CMEA. How has cooperation in science and technology developed with them?

Last summer's CMEA session approved specific programmes for cooperation with these countries. They are designed to solve pressing economic and social problems, to expand their participation in the international socialist division of labour, and to raise the efficiency of mutual relations. They have been given advantages in various areas, in accordance with the agreements. Many installations have been built, enlarged or overhauled in these countries, with technical and economic assistance from the GDR, in industry, agriculture, vocational training, public health, etc. We shall continue to help increase the production and export potential of the CMEA's non-European members and to develop mutually advantageous economic relations with them. Thanks to their progress in socialist construction, Vietnam, Cuba and Mongolia are becoming partners capable of greater cooperation and commodity exchanges.

There are also interesting and mutually advantageous lines of bilateral cooperation. The Republic of Cuba, for instance, is building up industries helping to increase economic efficiency in both our countries through the wider use of scientific and technological achievements. Joint production of electronic components in Cuba and their delivery to the GDR, as well as other projects in electrical engineering, electronics and biotechnology, are in line with the main thrust of the Comprehensive Programme.

How does scientific and technical progress affect working people's living standards?

Socialism has not only proved its capacity to compete in science and technology, but it has also demonstrated that this progress under the new system is designed to benefit the people. We have coped with the challenges presented by the scientific and technological revolution (STR), and the structural changes in the economy it tends to cause, without unemployment or any worsening of the living standards. In our countries, modernisation and automation of industries go hand in hand with full employment and guaranteed social conditions.

The growing labour productivity and good performance of the economy help to improve the people's material and cultural well-being. It is quite natural that technological changes do cause contradictions in the labour process, which need to be resolved, in particular, those involving training and retraining, changes in the character of labour and, sometimes, changes of workplace. But these problems are always solved together with those concerned and in the interests of the working people.

Could you give more details on the GDR's economic cooperation with the Soviet Union?

I have already talked about the exceptional significance of the Soviet Union, with its mighty material and intellectual potential, within the CMEA. Let me add that the Soviet Union has a quarter of the world's scientists. Under the Comprehensive Programme, many Soviet research centres take the lead in organising multilateral cooperation.

The USSR is our major foreign trade partner, but the GDR, too, occupies a leading place in its foreign trade. We have built up and enlarged numerous industries oriented mainly towards Soviet requirements under long-term agreements on specialisation and co-production. Thus, 70-80 per cent of our fishing trawlers, pressing and forging equipment, machines for making cable and rope, and equipment for the electronic processing of information is supplied to the USSR. Work on this scale helps to maximise production.

Economic, scientific and technical ties between our two countries have developed systematically and we are now working to coordinate our economic plans for the 1991-1995 period. The main channels of further cooperation are considered and formalised in the course of this work. The GDR will continue to supply up-to-date world-class machinery and equipment to meet the requirements of the USSR and other CMEA countries. The products of engineering, electronics and other manufacturing industries also play a growing role in our imports from the Soviet Union. In view of the GDR's limited raw material base, Soviet deliveries are vital to its economic development.

Direct ties between enterprises, combines and research centres in the two countries are becoming a stable element of cooperation, being aimed above all at intensifying economic development and making it more efficient. It is the view of both sides that this line is an exceptionally promising one.

Various agreements and contracts, which make up the fabric of mutually advantageous cooperation, help to strengthen both countries and to promote socialist economic integration, while also providing wide opportunities for personal contacts and for developing a sense of unity. The SED's economic strategy is aimed at raising scientific, technical and economic cooperation with the Soviet Union to a new level.

The GDR's exposition in Moscow last autumn was a significant political event. It was the largest GDR exposition abroad, and we regard it as an important milestone in the development of fraternal relations between our countries, which are characterised by the increasingly effective development of the material and spiritual potential of socialism and its advantages for the benefit of our citizens. The formation and development of the first workers' and peasants' socialist state on German soil is closely linked to the friendship between the GDR and the USSR and our deepening cooperation. Our people cherish the fraternal alliance with Lenin's party and country.

Much is now being said about the need to restructure the CMEA's activity. What are the problems that have to be solved in this context?

We believe that scientific, technical and economic ties between the CMEA countries should be constantly improved to make them as efficient as possible. We feel that the main problem is to realise the great potential our system has for purposeful and balanced economic administration and management, and to create the conditions for faster scientific and technical advance.

Accordingly, an agreement has been reached within the CMEA to further expand the coordination of economic plans as the main instrument of cooperation, with combines, associations and enterprises becoming more widely involved in the process, as I have said.

We support the establishment in the future of a single market for the CMEA countries, and the thorough study now of the prerequisites and conditions for so doing. Such a market will, of course, be characteristic of our social system and will show the advantages of the socialist planned economy.

There is no reason to doubt that the basic requirement for real progress towards the setting-up of such a market lies in fulfilling the demand for advanced means of production and consumer goods, done on the basis of high labour productivity and the scientific potential of all the participating countries. Here we return to the starting point of our discourse: the key task today is to explore the frontiers of science and technology in the spheres crucial to the economy and to make greater use of the results.

The Vicious Circle Of Economic Dependence

The debt crisis is one of the major international economic problems of our day. Since 1982 it has spread and assumed ever more threatening proportions, slowing down, stalling and in some cases even reversing economic growth in developing countries. Time has borne out the alarming conclusions contained in the Economic Declaration issued by the Eighth Non-Aligned Conference in Harare in 1986: conditions of virtual enslavement are being dictated by international financial institutions linked to US capital; the policy of imperialism is the main obstacle to genuine independence for the politically liberated peoples.

The economic plight of most developing countries has been caused both by external factors (the effects of colonial exploitation; the predatory activities of the imperialist powers, the transnational corporations and the banks; inequitable trade), and by internal factors (the weakness of their economic structures; natural conditions, etc.), the effects of which, in many countries, are being

compounded by the policies of their governments, which have subordinated national interests to the dictates of foreign creditors.

Two contributions — one from Pakistan and the other from the Sudan — show just what these policies mean in practice.

The Other Side Of US 'Generosity'

Kaneez Fatima — President,
Pakistan Trade Union Federation

ALTHOUGH international credit, as a form of relations between nations, was known in the Middle Ages, it assumed its true form only with the development of capitalism. During the early stages of capitalism, it was used mainly for productive purposes, but through the international system of loans and credits a large number of countries are now involved in the working of the capitalist financial market. Monopoly capitalism and the transnational corporations have given international loans and credits an imperialist character, and financial instruments are now used mainly for unproductive purposes.

Since the Second World War and the collapse of the colonial system, the imperialist powers have used 'aid' mainly as an instrument for international exploitation, and for extracting maximum profits.

Whereas, in the past, credit was given and received by private firms, under imperialism the states themselves have been directly or indirectly involved in these operations. That is why *the process has taken a much more political and strategic role, rather than an economic one*. The involvement of developing countries in international credit relations inevitably had an effect on the aims and functions of 'aid'. The 'foreign aid' received by Pakistan from the United States is used for the economic and political enslavement of our country, for taking over and limiting our production, for transforming our economy into a raw-material exporting accessory to imperialist states, and for the eventual establishment of unlimited control over our government policies. All of this has entailed the plunder of Pakistan's natural resources, exploitation of its labour, and its conversion into a market for foreign consumer goods, luxury items and military hardware.

Pakistan started receiving its 'foreign aid' back in 1950-1951. At that time, the share of grants and subsidies in the 'aid' was 70 per cent, and that of loans and credits only 30 per cent. Foreign capital also went into various development projects. In 1986 and 1987, grants and subsidies made up 14 per cent, and the rest were loans, credits and project aid, with only \$1.6 billion of the total committed credit of \$2.6 billion actually being disbursed to Pakistan; \$1 billion was project aid, and the rest was earmarked for imports and for the Afghan refugees. The \$1 billion project aid has not been specified in any official documents or yearbooks because the bulk of it went into defence projects (Pakistan's military expenditure is now close on 50 billion rupees').

By 1987, the country's total debt had risen to \$21 billion, or \$210 for every Pakistani man, woman and child. It should be noted that Pakistan's GNP is \$355 per head. Its debt servicing bill in 1986-1987 was \$1.04 billion.

Through the export of their capital to developing countries, the imperialist states transfer to them a large proportion of their own economic and financial difficulties, and ensure that they remain in the orbit of the world capitalist system. Third World countries, especially oil importers (including Pakistan), are hard hit by the sharp cyclical fluctuations in the world capitalist economy and monetary system. The crisis in the world monetary system, which has led to a deterioration in the terms of trade, the sudden increase in the rate of interest on foreign loans and the decrease in the actual loans and credits disbursed and used, has dealt a heavy blow to Pakistan's financial relations. The actual loans disbursed diminished further due to the fall in the rate of exchange of the Pakistani rupee against the dollar.

All this has further aggravated Pakistan's economic and monetary problems and undermined its independence. The harsh terms imposed by the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and US consortia are almost the last straw.

Hidden and open unemployment are both rising due to a 3 per cent annual population growth, and a decrease in the country's production, with stagnation in almost every sector of the economy, especially industry. The richer classes have oriented their capital towards foreign banks, which offer a higher rate of interest, or towards the smuggling of arms and narcotics, or towards the services and the supply sector, which ensure bigger and more rapid profits because of an increase in the import of luxury items. Between 85 and 90 per cent of the population live just on or below the poverty line; 73 per cent are illiterate; 22,000 children die every week from malnutrition, infectious diseases and a lack of medical facilities; 80 per cent of our villages are without drinking water or hygienic conditions, and 40 per cent are without electricity. Even the cities face an acute crisis. The prices of foodstuffs and other essentials have been rising at an average rate of 25 per cent a year, and inflation is rife.

The essence of the above is that *the standard of living of the people of Pakistan is rapidly deteriorating with every increase in the burden of foreign debt on the country.*

It is true that for rapid development of the economy, and industry in particular, it is essential that technologies should be transferred from the developed countries, and some sort of economic assistance will have to come from other countries for further industrial development and capital formation, but it has to be purely economic and technological in form, and not for non-productive and military purposes, as is the case just now.

The death of Zia ul-Haq in an air crash coincided with an exceptionally important period in the life of Pakistan, and the region as a whole. The internal political situation has recently been aggravated by a new wave of protests caused by dissolution of the National Assembly, the formation of an interim government, and the holding of general elections on a non-party basis, which were announced shortly before the president's tragic death. The foreign policy of supporting the Afghan opposition and of US-dictated

militarisation has been creating new economic and political difficulties for the country. There is a way out of the situation, and it is to reorganise Pakistan's economic, foreign trade and fiscal policies, and start depending on its own natural, labour and technological resources. Pakistan should repay its debts to foreign countries in order to put right its balance of payments, and should improve and widen its export potential through the development of a new up-to-date industrial sector, a mechanised agriculture, transport and the infrastructure along modern lines. All this requires new and greater investments. Where are these to come from?

Financial resources for the country can be obtained by finding new trading partners and markets for our exports. It is necessary to develop relations with the socialist and Third World countries for trade and industrial cooperation, and for establishing heavy industry and research complexes in the country. The flow of ineffective capital from the West should be limited.

Any economic assistance from the imperialist countries should be subject to stringent controls, and only permitted on terms which do not force dependence upon foreign capital. Resources from the oil-producing countries and from international credit markets should be taken only when the terms for these loans are agreeable, and when these are effectively used for developing the state sector. The expansion of tourism and transport and an improvement in the quality of Pakistan's export commodities would also help to increase its foreign exchange reserves.

It is also necessary to reduce military spending and other non-productive expenditures, and to substitute a conscript army for the professional army in order to release additional financial and technological resources for the country's economic development on an independent basis. The main resources for the stable development and the building of an independent national economy are local materials, financial and labour resources, purposefully planned and used for the benefit of the people of Pakistan, and not for that of foreign capital and local big capital.

Overcoming the country's dependence on US money in the form of limited economic and military 'aid' is the best way of enabling the people of Pakistan to choose their own government and to pursue their own policies in support of international brotherhood, peace and cooperation, for a better and consolidated fight for a new world economic order.

¹ One US dollar equals 17.25 rupees.

Prescriptions For Enslavement

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THE independence of most developing countries does not extend beyond the political framework, and they remain economically tied to their former colonial masters, and that is why the living standards are not improving and

are even, in many countries, worsening. Why have they failed up to now to escape from the shackles of imperialist exploitation?

If they are to liberate themselves from the clutches of imperialism, *they must restructure the old, colonial system of the economy which they have inherited*, and that depends above all on transformations in the system of state power. But the fact is that in most developing countries there has been no essential change in its class nature.

Their bourgeoisie and their proletariat are weak because of the under-development caused by colonial exploitation. With a few exceptions, their capitalist class consists of merchants, compradores, speculators and contractors, and the industrial proletariat is not sufficiently strong, mature or politically organised. The intermediate and middle strata — mainly state employees, intellectuals and army officers — play the biggest role, and because of their class nature they are inclined to make deals over the people's interests for their own benefit.

That is the kind of situation we now have in the Sudan. The state apparatus is under the control of the commercial bourgeoisie, the technocrats and the compradors, while the working class as a whole, and the industrial proletariat in particular, is weak and has no decisive say in political, and hence economic, decisions.

That being so, the imperialist powers find it fairly easy to control the main sectors of the developing countries' economies with the help of their numerous and interconnected organisations.

The major financial centres of the capitalist world — the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development — play a key role in the neocolonialist enslavement of the young states, and many scientists have analysed their operations. Here is the view of the prominent Sudanese economist Sidky Caballow on the policy of these giant financial octopuses.¹

First, they seek a free hand in internal trade operations under the complete sway of market forces, without any intervention by the state, and with the government officially renouncing any attempt to stabilise prices and ensure the supply of basic necessities. That kind of policy leaves the poor and low-income groups to fend for themselves — and they are the majority in any developing country.

They want tariff restrictions to be lifted on foreign trade, subsidies to low-profit but socially necessary enterprises to be abolished, import quotas and bilateral trade agreements annulled, and operations conducted directly on the world market.

Second, the IMF and the IBRD insist on a lowering of the exchange rate of the local currency, holding out the prospect of boosted exports and reduced imports, i.e., an improvement in the foreign trade balance. But this is an irrelevant policy, because it starts from erroneous and illusory assumptions of greater flexibility in turning out export goods, and the existence of unused capacity and unsold surplus stocks of goods. The very opposite is found in the Sudan. A lowering of the exchange rate of the national currency, for instance, tends to increase the costs of production, because virtually all its components have to be bought abroad, while the export potentialities are extremely low. The country's prime task is to

develop its own profitable production to satisfy internal demand.

Third, they want the Sudan to reduce government spending without restricting the bloated state apparatus, including the organs of repression; they want cutbacks in spending on development projects, social services, education and public health. Subsidies for the prime necessities are being abolished, many workers are being laid off, and wages are being frozen. Meanwhile, there are reserves available to increase the revenues of the treasury, including fiscal reform and progressive taxation of incomes and real estate. One essential element would be to improve the work of the state sector by modernising management methods, raising professional and technical standards, and involving the working people in the management of production.

The Nimeiry regime, which was overthrown in 1985, looked to closer ties with regional and international reaction represented by Saudi Arabia and the United States. The country's economy was tied to the monetary and financial centres of imperialism. The exchange rate of the Sudanese pound was altered again and again, the drive against the public sector was stepped up in order to dismantle it, there was a virtual start of privatisation, and a policy of mass redundancies among workers and employees was conducted.

Let us look at the most important understandings and agreements between the Sudan, and the IMF and the IBRD in order to answer this question: did subordination to their policy lead to the promised 'leap forward' in the economy, or did it bear out the forecasts of the democratic forces that the recommendations of these financial outfits were aimed at keeping developing countries in the role of suppliers of raw materials and importers of manufactured goods, at supporting the local bourgeoisie, and at plundering national resources? The data given below show beyond any doubt that *dependence on the international financial centres leads to a further growth of the external debt*, and, in consequence, to open meddling by the capitalist powers in both economic and political decision-making. It is a fact that *the loss of economic independence is followed by the loss of political independence*.

The record of how the Sudan was dragged into the bog of dependence under IMF and IBRD pressure speaks for itself:

1978: a reduction in the exchange rate of the Sudanese pound from \$2.87 to \$2.50; credit cutbacks; increase in the prices of sugar, petrol and cigarettes.

1979: the introduction of a two-tier exchange rate for the pound: an official one of \$2.00, and another of \$1.35; the abolition of the barter trade system; the free circulation of foreign currency and the lifting of foreign exchange controls.

1981: the merging and subsequent drop of the exchange rates of the pound to \$1.11; the lowering of customs duties; the abolition of price subsidies for oil and oil products, wheat and sugar; the closure of several enterprises in the public sector.

1982: the official exchange rate of the pound is down to \$0.77; the free exchange rate is determined by the market and fluctuates between \$0.48 and \$0.57 per pound.

1985: the official exchange rate of the pound is \$0.40, and the commercial bank rate, \$0.29.

All of that happened under the Nimeiry regime, but let us see how things have proceeded under the 'democracy' of the Sadiq el-Mahdi government. The exchange rate of the pound was unified and lowered in October 1987, so that one US dollar equalled 4.5 pounds (a sudden depreciation of 45 per cent). The price of sugar leapt up by 67 per cent, petrol by 27 per cent, and cement by 33 per cent. Bank compensation was introduced to protect capital against inflation-induced losses, and to stimulate deposits and investments. The implementation of the public sector reform programme, agreed with the IMF, was continued.

These facts prove that since 1985 the financial and monetary centres have been able to impose on the country the same terms and measures as they did on the Nimeiry regime. Despite the change of government, the Sudanese pound is steadily depreciating, state subsidies for the basic necessities are being abolished, mass redundancies have continued, and the wages of workers and employees are still frozen. There is every evidence that this trend will continue. Such is the conclusion not only from past experience, but also from a logical analysis of the effects of the economic policy begun under Nimeiry.

The following could be anticipated:

The devaluation of the national currency will further increase the cost of all imports, including industrial and consumer goods and foodstuffs. The higher prices are bound to be followed by a higher cost of living, and this, for its part, will result in greater social tensions.

The rapid growth of inflation is inseparable from the overall growth of export goods' prices, and so it will be harder to sell them on the world market. This will mark the end of one of the main postulates of the policy of the international financial centres, namely: a lower exchange rate for the national currency allegedly helps to boost export earnings. In fact, the very opposite tends to happen. It is surprising that the IBRD has continued to insist on its policy, while admitting that it has failed in the Sudan. Its report (No. 5499 for 1985) says that a lowering of the exchange rate of the Sudanese pound has been the main thrust of the recommendations to revive the economy since 1978, but as bad luck would have it, these efforts have failed: after each lowering of the exchange rate the temporary improvements were rapidly wiped out by inflation.

The result was a sharp drop in the net national income and then a stupefying decline in the living standards of the overwhelming majority of the population. The Sudanese economist Faruk Kududa is quite right when he says that mismanagement and corruption in countries like ours are mainly rooted in the growth of the parasitic strata which appear when economic and financial recommendations from outside are put into practice, because there is an organic link between the transnational corporations and the flourishing corruption.

The situation in the Sudan *testifies to the failure of the capitalist way of development* and to the barrenness of traditional bourgeois thinking in framing policies and programmes for economic progress not only in our country, but also in the Third World as a whole. It is an expression of the

crisis of the old notions about the international division of labour.

It is wrong to reject the principle of credits and external assistance, especially for development projects, but we object to credits harming political and economic independence and being used for the benefit of the parasitic bourgeoisie, with the heavy burden of external debt servicing weighing heavily on the shoulders of the working people.

¹ Sidky Caballow, 'The IMF's Devastating Terms', *Al-Maydan*, June 20, 1988 (in Arabic).

Brief Commentary

What Is Behind The Royal Decision?

In July 1988, King Hussein of Jordan announced the severance of Jordan's administrative ties to the West Bank. The decision came as a surprise to many observers of the Hashemite Kingdom's policy towards the occupied Arab territories and the Palestinian problem.

JORDAN'S decision should be put in an historical perspective. In April 1988 the Amman government suggested six principles as a basis for the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the solution of the Palestinian problem and handed US Secretary of State George Shultz a document reiterating the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and supporting the idea of all-embracing talks within the framework of a competent international conference on a Middle East settlement.

Presumably, such a *démarche* should have involved the close coordination of actions between Jordan and the PLO — but that was not the case. Tensions grew markedly in our country last spring due to the aggravation of Jordanian-Palestinian relations. The Jordanian leaders, especially the prime minister, contributed to the difficulties. Some commentators believe that those developments were a reaction to statements by Israeli officials to the effect that Jordan was 'the Palestinians' traditional homeland'; others pointed to a marked improvement of the Syrian-Palestinian relations and the resultant worry of the Jordanian leaders over the possible revival of the tripartite alliance of Syria, the Palestinians and the Lebanese national patriotic forces.

But still another point deserves attention. The Palestinian leaders' talks with the Soviet leadership in April 1988, the Soviet Union's solidarity with the Palestinians' struggle and its firm resolve to contribute to a Middle East settlement were very important to the Palestinian people. The backing of their just cause gave a fresh impetus to the liberation struggle on the occupied Arab lands. All that dimmed the prospects' of the so-called Jordanian option, through which the United States and Israel would like to exclude the PLO from the settlement process. The results of the Moscow

talks also helped promote Syrian-Palestinian cooperation which, though short-lived, opened up good prospects, especially after the Algiers emergency meeting of the Arab leaders.¹

As everyone knows, the reactionary Arab regimes, including the Jordanian one, did whatever they could to block that summit. While making statements in support of the uprising, they went out of their way to prevent the Arab countries from working out a common stand, in order to gain time for the US Administration and Arab reaction to stifle the Palestinians' uprising. The Jordanian newspaper *Ad Dustor* even floated the lie that the so-called Shultz initiative had been launched with the Soviet Union's consent.

The Algiers summit took note of the clearly controversial character of the Jordanian leaders' statements: while criticising the US for its refusal to recognise the Palestinians' rights, they backed Shultz's proposals. What then is Jordan's true stand on the Palestinian problem? It seems quite positive on the surface. But why wasn't the PLO consulted as the decision was taken?

The authorities' decision to cut administrative ties to the West Bank called for the dissolution of the House of Representatives, the suspension of the Senate, the scrapping of the development plan for the West Bank² and cuts in spending on salaries to civil servants and other employees.³ The government stated that the Palestinians living in Jordan were royal subjects and that 'Jordan is not Palestine'. The Ministry of Occupied Territories Affairs became a department in the Jordanian Foreign Ministry. The move as a whole is presented as a response to the Arab and Palestinian demands to consider the PLO the only lawful representative of the Palestinian people.

The decree on the severance of administrative ties is technically unconstitutional because it was not approved by the House of Representatives. But that is not the point. The onus of responsibility (legal, administrative and financial) for the occupied territories has now been shifted onto the shoulders of the PLO, which, as Amman hopes, will have to coordinate closer its actions with Jordan and become more dependent on it. And the fact that the break with the West Bank has not been formalised constitutionally leaves the loophole for reversing the decision if need be, say, under the slogan of 'Arab unity' or under another plausible pretext.

The finances are an important aspect as well: although the PLO has resources to support the uprising and give aid to the West Bank population, now these activities will depend on the 'goodwill' of the Jordanian authorities, to say nothing of the resistance of Israel, which continues to view the PLO as a terrorist organisation.

It is perfectly correct that 'Jordan is not Palestine'. But are the Palestinians living in the Hashemite Kingdom Jordanians? This approach in fact ignores the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination because it fails to recognise the right to return and to preserve national identity for the Palestinians living in Jordan.

Here the question arises anew: is all this Amman's concession to the PLO under the impact of the uprising or does it want in this way to put the

Palestinian patriots between the Israeli hammer and the Jordanian anvil to crush the uprising and prevent the emergence of an independent Palestinian state?

The popular uprising on the occupied lands undoubtedly changed the situation in the Arab world and the character of the struggle between steadfastness and the capitulatory mood, the rise and stagnation in the Arab liberation movement. The uprising flared up and is going on in controversial circumstances. It began at a time when the right-wing forces had achieved some success, as was evidenced by the decisions of the Amman summit. At the same time the region has seen some positive developments in the recent period: the Arab petro-dollars carry less weight, the Lebanese national patriotic forces have become more staunch, the Sudanese people have defeated the dictatorship, the Algerian summit was a success and a ceasefire was called at the Iranian-Iraqi front. The Palestinian uprising has dotted the i's, so to speak, by resolutely brushing aside the capitulatory slogans and sentiments. The Palestinians led by the PLO have seized the initiative and are demonstrating to the whole world remarkable staunchness in fighting for their national goals.

The Soviet peace offensive, the furtherance of the principles of peaceful coexistence within the framework of new political thinking and the Soviet Union's active role in the political settlement of regional conflicts are exerting considerable influence on the situation in the Middle East. All those factors put together have had an impact on the formulation of a common Arab stand and contributed towards the abandonment of capitulatory positions and one-sided deals. The positive trends undoubtedly have an effect on the reactionary Arab politicians; they were a major factor behind Amman's decision to drop the 'Jordanian option' of resolving the Palestinian problem.

Hussein's latest political steps cannot be attributed to the effect of any single factor. The specific economic and political circumstances of Jordan, a small country which is in constant need of foreign aid, have to be analysed in order to understand the situation correctly. The Jordanian economy is extremely vulnerable: its foreign trade is equivalent to its GNP, which cannot but have an impact on politics.

Jordan is exposed to a greater extent and more immediately than any other Arab country to the effects of the Palestinian uprising. Having severed administrative ties with the West Bank but retaining the constitutional ones, Amman has not abandoned its erstwhile ambitions, its dream of a confederation. Only the schedule of its establishment has been revised: it is to be put together *after* and not *before* the emergence of an independent Palestinian state. To all appearances, the King has not dropped the 'Jordanian option' altogether but merely attempted to adjust it to the changed circumstances.

The alignment of forces in Jordan's ruling alliance, worried by the upswing in the Arab national liberation movement under the impact of the Palestinian uprising, has also influenced the latest developments. The socio-economic and political crisis in the country is worsening. Under pressure from the masses the leaders of the uprising have demanded that

the West Bank deputies to Jordan's National Assembly resign, thus effectively scuttling the 'Jordanian option'.

The decision to break off administrative ties is meant to contain 'the epidemic of the uprising' and to pacify our people, who have always been in solidarity with the Palestinians. But the uprising cannot be simply exported into Jordan; what it can do is give an impetus to the maturing of appropriate conditions within the country.

We have to bear in mind also the heterogeneity of the ruling élite itself and differences within it on the Palestinian-Jordanian relations. The demands of members of the bureaucratic bourgeoisie range from the total rupture of all ties to the continuation of Arab aid to the Palestinians in their confrontation with Israel. The comprador bourgeoisie has a pragmatic, cosmopolitan approach to the problem. They have an interest in the formation of an independent Palestinian state only insofar as their continued influence is concerned. The 'liberal bourgeoisie', which accounts for a rather small segment of the hierarchy of power, is confused and undecided.

What are the prospects now? The uprising has passed the test of staunchness. In the course of it the Palestinians have built firm foundations for their future state and the PLO is ready to assume government. But the problem goes beyond the demands to form a government in exile or to proclaim a Palestinian state: what is important is the political programme of such a government or state.

It is absolutely clear that *the problem can be resolved only if the Palestinians exercise their right to self-determination*. Attempts to conclude separate deals and other palliatives, just as extremism, are useless and have no future. The only way out then is to convene a representative international conference with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the PLO. Such a move calls for unanimity at least among the Arab states directly confronting Israel. The self-determination of the Palestinian people cannot be allowed to become a contentious issue between Arab countries: meanwhile, it was not even on the agenda of the Amman summit, called pretentiously 'a forum of concord and understanding'.

The present situation calls for a higher level of cooperation between Jordan and the PLO on a principled basis. There is a need for a close alliance between the PLO, Syria and the Lebanese national patriotic forces; the lack of such cooperation is the main factor holding back a comprehensive settlement of the problem and enabling Israel and the reactionary Arab forces to manoeuvre.

The heroic uprising is opening fresh prospects for the settlement of the Middle East crisis and for the struggle of the progressive forces in Jordan itself.

Salem Said
representative of the Communist
Party of Jordan on *WMR*

¹ The summit was held in June 1988. — *Ed.*

² See Yakub Zayadin, 'The Middle East: Solidarity Is Essential to Victory', *WMR*, No. 6, 1988. — *Ed.*

³ Amman pays a total of \$45m in wages to more than 20,000 employees working in the West Bank; the sum is going to be cut to \$35m in a year and to \$25m in two years. — *Ed.*

History And Our Time

On ICP History

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ITALIAN Communist Party leaders have recently recognised the importance of *discontinuity* in a political party's history. Meant to challenge the old concept of 'renewal in continuity', this polemic later suggested a review of the ICP history itself. Obviously, this history contained errors and substantial changes. But the ICP has always learned from its past mistakes and thus corrected itself. It is, on the whole, not a history that can be represented as a continuous course determined by official documents issuing from the Secretariat and the Leadership.

In a period of great changes the history of a political party cannot be anything but a history of changes, especially when it concerns an organisation which has set itself the task of effecting changes, and is working to accomplish it. This is especially important to a mass force such as our party, which is active in a country that has undergone an intensive socio-political transformation.

In the course of its history the Communist Party of Italy has changed its name to the Italian Communist Party (thus emphasising its national character), and the country's tricolour appeared next to the red banner in the party emblem. Not only the symbols changed but also many of the political and organisational foundations. Formed in 1921 on an extremist ideological platform, the party had already acquired an entirely different profile at the Lyons Congress in 1926. It renounced the simplistic extremism of Amadeo Bordiga, its leader at the time, and instead espoused the comprehensively evolved theory of the Ordine Nuovo (New Order) group headed by Antonio Gramsci. In a comparatively short period, the narrow working-class-oriented programme and the insurrectionist objectives were replaced by a policy favouring a firm alliance between workers and peasants, and between the north and the south of Italy, one intended to counter fascism with a united militant front, capable of attracting to its side the broadest possible range of forces. The elaboration of effective theory was naturally unthinkable without self-criticism which found expression in the great philosophic work by Antonio Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere* (Prison Notebooks).

In *Quaderni* Gramsci critically analysed the evolution of the Italian state, the stark contrasts between its great intellectual accomplishments

and its shabby political life, and the country's history in all its diversity. He retraced the stages of this complex evolution, exploring not merely the political practice of different periods but also the peculiarities of the language, literature, folklore, theatre and philosophy.

Needless to say, such a comprehensive analysis of cultural phenomena ran counter to the sectarian political line proposed to the communist parties by Stalin and other Soviet leaders in the second half of the 1920s. This fact was pointed out by Gramsci in his letter to the Soviet leaders, which revealed the wisdom and insight of the Italian politician. Regrettably, his remarks evoked a negative response on the part of Togliatti and other ICP leaders in exile in Moscow. Their stand was, of course, to a certain extent one of necessity, but it is equally clear that it could hardly lead to the elaboration of a constructive political line.

The ensuing fierce ideological struggle alienated numerous valuable personalities (Silone, Tasca, Tresso, Ravazzoli and Leonetti) from the ICP leadership. For all the fine details, the split was really caused by the adoption of Stalin's analysis of the international situation, according to which the 1929 depression allegedly accelerated the 'general crisis of capitalism', precipitating, among other things, revolutions on the European continent and the downfall of fascism. On the basis of this prospect, Stalin proposed to speed up the rates of industrialisation and collectivisation in the USSR in order to counter the international developments. He also intended to intensify the struggle within the fascist and fascistized countries, while breaking off every alliance with the Socialists and the moderate forces, and accusing them outright of conniving at fascism.

Such an analysis proved ruinous. It gave rise to the policy of 'exacerbating the class struggle' in the USSR, which resulted in the repressions of the 1930s and the division between the Socialists and the Communists in Germany, in turn paving the way for Hitler.

In Italy that 'turn', though not lasting, was nevertheless long enough for the fascists to be able to arrest Communist leaders who had been sent secretly to Italy to work in the underground. Despite the fact that a high price had to be paid for the errors of that period, the small Communist Party established itself in the eyes of broad sections of the population as the most combative and resolute anti-fascist force. That fact was to be of no small importance subsequently in promoting the revival of militant traditions among young factory workers and students and their drawing closer together with the Communists. At the same time differences occurred within the ICP itself between the older generation, who were connected with the policy of Stalin and the Communist International, and the new generation of young leaders which had emerged in Italy.

Different interpretations based on the most diverse value judgements and cultural criteria evolved within the framework of the same 'monolithic' policy. The powerful spiritual charge of the Resistance movement during the Second World War prevented these diverse tendencies from surfacing but failed to stifle them. The consolidation of Stalinism and the expansion of its influence on East European states after the war deepened the differences existing in the ICP. This caused political contradictions after

1951 when Togliatti defied the decision of the party leadership and refused to accept Stalin's invitation to head the Cominform.

We believe that a decisive moment in the history of the party came after Stalin's death. Togliatti initiated a 'policy of renewal', promoting younger people, moulded in Italy, instead of the older emigrant leaders. In this way a full 'nationalisation' of the party leaders was carried out, renewing and strengthening its 'Italian roots'. However, this ingenious political operation by our outstanding leader soon encountered obstacles: the 1956 events in Hungary caused grave internal differences between the old and the new leaders.

In the last years of his life Togliatti reviewed his judgement of Stalinism and its consequences, as is attested by his *Yalta Memorial*. In fact the document was not intended for publication but after Togliatti's death in 1964 Luigi Longo showed great political insight in deciding to publish it. It showed clearly the shift in the political axis of the ICP, reflected in the position adopted by the party four years later in connection with the Czechoslovak events.

This process of clarifying the party stand on international problems was also a result of the peculiarities of internal policy and the party cultural life. What is meant here is first and foremost the relationship between democracy and socialism from the point of view of both theory and political practice. Togliatti struggled relentlessly for democracy and contributed a great deal to the working out and application of the country's democratic constitution. But the theoretical and political clarification of the relationship between this type of struggle and one for socialism was delayed considerably. Consequently the possibility arose of 'dual' interpretation, whereby socialism could in fact be interpreted as the 'overcoming' of democracy. Quite a few members of the old guard (Pietro Secchi for one) continued to regard it precisely in that way and insisted on a corresponding re-orientation of the struggle. Such an interpretation of socialism as 'post-democracy' largely coincided with the Stalinist view of the problem, in which the democratic strategy was reduced to pure tactics.

The matter was clarified politically only by Enrico Berlinguer with his notable declaration of the 'universal character' of democracy. The theoretical explanation was less forthright, though nevertheless indispensable for an explicit revision of old ideological and cultural premises and a profound reconsideration not so much of quotations from the 'classics of Marxism' as of the profound changes which had occurred in the world in recent decades.

The axis of the evolution of modern capitalist society has shifted significantly. The industrialised capitalist countries have abandoned their pursuit of *absolute* surplus value along with ruthless legal and political discrimination against working people. The main line of development has become the pursuit of *relative* surplus value, higher labour productivity and hence the maximal use of new technology and the expansion of services. Universal suffrage has been established and the former contrasting of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' with narrow bourgeois democracy gave way to the task of developing the entire potential of democracy. That potential may prove to be truly revolutionary, if society is governed on the basis of

majority consensus and consequently, on our ability to win it. Gramsci spoke about such a consensus and hegemony and there is every reason to believe that these two concepts could form the essence of political life in conditions of advanced democracy of the type which was born in Italy in the time of the Resistance movement.

Though *Quaderni del carcere* is not an ICP document, it certainly constitutes an essential part of its political history. It is in them that we read: "The way the party writes its history shows what it is today and what it wants to be. A sectarian relishes with mystical enthusiasm anecdotes of inner-party life which acquire for him an esoteric significance, whereas a true historian assigns to every fact the importance it has within the framework of general developments, laying the emphasis on the real efficiency of the party and its influence, be it positive or negative, and in this way facilitates some actions and impedes others."¹

¹ A. Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, V. III, Torino, 1975, p. 1630.

Annals of Courage

A Quarter-Century In The Prison Cell

Napoleon Ortigoza Accuses General Stroessner

CAPTAIN Napoleon Ortigoza, a 56-year-old former chief of staff of the First Armoured Division of the Paraguayan Armed Forces, has been granted asylum in Spain after spending a quarter-century in Stroessner's prison cells.

When I met this man, who holds the unhappy 'record' for political incarceration in Latin America, and he learnt that I represented the Paraguayan Communist Party on *WMR*, he did not display any reserve or prejudices: we embraced warmly and conversed as old comrades and fellow-fighters in the struggle to liberate Paraguay from Stroessner's dictatorship.

"I was a member of the ruling Colorado Party," he said, "but when I saw the injustice, the persecution and the poverty of our people I began to oppose the regime."

Despite his nervous and physical exhaustion Ortigoza was amiable and attentive, and readily told me the facts about how he had been framed up, about the sentence and the physical and moral tortures to which he was subjected. He was kept in solitary confinement in a tiny cell about two metres long and one metre wide, fearing all the time for his own life and that of his family. "I accuse General Stroessner of gross violations of all human rights," he says. "His treatment of me is an affront to the Paraguayan Armed Forces."

The Frame-Up

The body of a military cadet was found near Asunción on December 7, 1962, and the physicians at the inquest declared it to be a case of suicide, which had allegedly taken place at about 7 p.m. that day. His parents testified that their son had been taken away from home on orders from Colonel Ramon Duarte Vera, chief of the Central Police Department of the capital at the time, who said that he had been instructed to do so by the director of the military college. The facts clearly indicated that the cadet had been killed by police agents.

However, a teenager who had been detained by the police said that he had seen two uniformed men beating up the cadet in the suburbs, and his statement led to the arrest first of Captain Ortigoza's driver, and of Captain Ortigoza himself a few days later.

"At the police investigation department," says Ortigoza, "I was stripped of my military uniform. Duarte Vera accused me of killing the cadet and demanded that I should confess to the murder: those, he said, were General Stroessner's orders. I said that I had never seen the young man before, and flatly denied the charges. Thereupon, the police chief ordered me to be tortured. I was bound hand and foot and thrown into a cesspool. That lasted for two days. After that, every day about midnight I was taken to the torture chamber, beaten up, and had my head held under dirty water until I fainted. In a semi-conscious state I signed a 'confession', which was later used as evidence of my complicity in the murder.

"In addition, I was accused of taking part in a conspiracy against General Stroessner's regime. Another 20 army officers were later arrested, the best of those who were then serving in the infantry, in the armoured units, and in the artillery. We were all sentenced to four years' imprisonment in order to intimidate anyone contemplating opposition to the regime."

When the four-year term ended, a military tribunal sentenced Ortigoza to death.

"Stroessner continued to insist that I was the ringleader of a conspiracy against the regime and that I was refusing to confess. He was obviously trying to kill me, and I think that he is still trying to do so."

The Franciscan priest Johas Arqueta learnt of the death sentence passed on the captain, and told in a broadcast of Catholic Radio *Charitas* that unless the death sentence was quashed, he would be forced to reveal the name of the actual murderer in violation of the canon law on the secrecy of confession. Within a few days Arqueta was forced to leave the country, but the priest's statement made Stroessner commute the death sentence to a 25-year term of imprisonment in solitary confinement, in a cell known as the 'wardrobe'.

"Just then, General Andres Rodriguez, related by marriage to Stroessner, now commander of the First Army Corps, told me: 'Tell us what you know about the conspiracy, and you can forget about the cadet — I shall help you. It was a suicide. If we need a murderer, I'll find one'. I told him that I knew nothing about any conspiracy, but had merely heard rumours about some of the generals building up to remove Stroessner."

All the generals were subsequently removed from their posts, and Rodriguez made a career for himself, establishing himself as the decrepit dictator's potential successor.

What the Ortigoza Case Shows

Captain Ortigoza was kept for a quarter-century in the 'pantheon for the living', as one of the prisons of the Third Police Commissariat of Asunción is known, where many Communists, among them Antonio Maidana, Julio Rojas and Alfredo Alcorta, were kept in solitary confinement for nearly 20 years. Hermes Saguier, leader of the Authentic Radical Liberal Party, was also incarcerated there. Here is what he said about Ortigoza: "I was highly impressed by that man's courage. Every morning he shouted in his cell that he was innocent and continued to hurl abuse at the regime, displaying an incredible strength of spirit."

The most elementary principles of the penal code are being cynically violated by Stroessner's 'justice'. When the sentence was handed down, Ortigoza was not even allowed to make a statement, and his lawyer was barred from visiting him in prison. But the lawyer was convinced that it was his professional duty to get at the root of the matter, and he began to investigate the murder on his own. Asunción papers carried reports of his statement about the private conversations he had had with the parents of the dead cadet. It turned out that they were aware of Ortigoza's innocence, but had been cowed by the authorities into publicly upholding the official version, which shielded the real criminals.

Upon the expiry of his term of imprisonment, Ortigoza was placed under house arrest, and there was soon an attempt on his life. He was very lucky to escape and was forced to seek asylum at the Colombian embassy. Under public pressure, and after long delays, he was allowed to leave the country.

The Ortigoza case is not unique either in Paraguay or in Latin America, and it shows the brutal and terroristic nature of local fascism, itself an expression of the policy of the most reactionary forces of internal and international finance capital, the TNCs, the Paraguayan oligarchy and senior army officers, who have made their fortunes from bribes, smuggling, drug dealing, speculation and other criminal offences. Stroessner, the chief of this 'institutionalised mafia', is capable of committing the most heinous crimes in order to maintain the corrupt pro-US regime.

He pays lip service to democracy, while cruelly trampling on it. At the UN General Assembly Session on Disarmament, Stroessner spoke with great feeling about human rights, and claimed to be a president who had come to power as a result of 'free elections in the country', where there is 'respect for human dignity', and where political parties 'enjoy wide liberties'. It was a speech, incidentally, the Paraguayan bishops called a 'pack of brazen lies'.

Our country has been turned into a 'peaceful graveyard', a vast prison-house where, under the tyrant's rule, 350,000 Paraguayan patriots have fallen victim to persecution, kidnapping, torture and assassination. But power based on brutality is precarious. Stroessner feels that he is losing his

grip, and so keeps a helicopter, piloted by his son Gustavo, in readiness at his residence.

Replying to a question about Paraguay's political and social problems, Ortigoza said that he was now looking closely into things about which he had previously had no idea. He intends to study civil and criminal law, to take a close look at the manipulations of a regime which imprisons innocent people, and to dedicate himself to the defence of human rights. He is worried by the fever of consumerism and individualistic attitudes which are being glamoured by the commercial mass media.

He expressed his disappointment with the positions taken by some leaders of the opposition to Stroessner's dictatorship: they keep fighting each other instead of joining forces to put an end to the tyranny and remove from power all those who oppress the Paraguayan people. Ortigoza wants to see an accord between all those who favour democratisation, because it is their disarray that helps preserve the dictatorship.

On the conflict in Central America, Ortigoza said he wanted to see a peaceful, political settlement of the controversial issues in the region: "Violence breeds violence, and armed intervention is hardly the best way to remove the evils besetting our peoples. Peace is the condition for the development of any society."

Ortigoza welcomed the establishment of constitutional democratic governments in some countries of the Southern Cone after long years of dictatorship, and feels that it is an incentive for freedom-loving Paraguayans who want to win democratic rights for their own people. With a quarter-century of imprisonment behind him, he has, of course, been unable to fully appreciate the advance of the people's democratic movement in the country, the mounting resistance to the regime, the growing trend towards anti-dictatorship unity, and the striving of all the opposition parties and many public bodies for democratic change.

What then are the conclusions suggested by this meeting with Captain Ortigoza? Solidarity is a mighty force which must be used to save the lives and secure the freedom of Paraguayan political prisoners, and to establish the whereabouts of the many who have disappeared, among them Antonio Maidana, Augustin Goiburu, and Esther Valestrino.

Paraguay's experience shows that the tyrant can be defeated if the mass struggle is combined with support from the officers who have refused to submit to the regime.

Captain Ortigoza's courage, strength of spirit and resolve to carry on the struggle are an inspiring example for the Paraguayan patriots.

Hugo Campos

CC member, Paraguayan Communist Party

Who Is Master In The Land Of Fjords?

FROM a rocky hilltop near Stavangerfjord I could see the cyclopean structures in the Norwegian Contractors' shipyard. These huge concrete columns, or 'legs', will stand offshore to a depth of over 200 metres. They will then don a giant steel 'cap' of derricks, cranes and multi-storeyed rigs . . . For fifteen years the Norwegians have been using such platforms in the North Sea to extract oil and gas from the continental shelf.

Much in Stavanger shows that it is becoming the 'oil capital' of Norway. On the outskirts, the buildings of Statoil, a state oil company, merge into the hills. The transparent walls seem to absorb the rays of a grudging northern sun. Nearby stands the state oil directorate and the Rogaland Research Institute which is concerned with the technology of production, personnel training and ecology. I could also see the oil workers' union headquarters close by, and the neat little white houses clustered around the harbour of 'old Stavanger', a town of seafarers and fishermen. A massive anchor serves as a memorial to those who put to sea from here. The town has won a UNESCO award for its succesful blend of new construction with old architecture.

But the architecture of Stavanger reflects more than just its past or present. Gazing at the big glass-and-steel offices of the foreign companies and banks, which seem to dominate the old town, I wondered: Who actually reaps the rewards of this great offshore oil venture?

The Norsemen's Oil Saga

The 1960s discovery of oil and gas deposits in the North Sea proved a windfall for the 4,000,000-odd inhabitants of Norway. Showing colour slides, engineer Erik Bergh from Statoil's press department told me a modern saga about Norwegian oil.

Its development demanded huge capital investment, sophisticated machinery and skilled manpower. None of these were available in sufficient quantities. The Norwegians had to turn to the foreign monopolies, which were vying with each other in offering help. The sad experience of other countries, which had given foreign capital complete control over their resources, made the authorities cautious. True, Phillips, Shell, Mobil, Esso, British Petroleum, etc, did get concessions. But when oil production began in 1972, the state company Statoil was set up. Gullfaks, the first oil-field developed independently without outside help, is the Norwegians' pride.

"In our sector of the North Sea," said Bergh, "dozens of giant platforms tower over the water. Each takes 1.5 million tons of concrete to build, and as much steel as eleven Eiffel Towers. But it pays off very soon. Oil production (roughly 70 million tons) exceeds domestic needs by 10 times. So Norway exports much of its oil, and all of its gas (about 30 billion cubic metres), to Western Europe."

What does the new industry mean to Norway? It has become a mainstay of the economy. Suffice it to say that oil and gas account for 37 per cent of all exports and bring in seven to eight times as much profit as fishing, agriculture and forestry combined. Up to a quarter of capital investment is directed here, and economists warn of the need not to forget the other industries. The country cannot lean on only one 'leg of oil', however strong that leg may be.

Like any saga, perhaps this too embellishes the reality. The country still depends a lot on foreign capital. The foreign debt amounts to about a third of the GNP. Even the state's participation in oil production seeks more to protect the Norwegian bourgeoisie from foreign competition than to care for people's interests. But is there any real possibility for national control of the oil and gas wealth?

"Yes, there is. The Communist Party of Norway (NKP) now has a blueprint for this," says Dagfinn Karlsen, leader of the Stavanger Communists. A weather expert by training, he joined the party while still a young man. For several years now he has been leading the small, but active, local branch.

The Communists above all advocate regaining North Sea and other offshore deposits from big capital, both foreign and Norwegian, by gradually winning back exploration and production rights: this would enable Norway's oil industry to expand under the aegis of Statoil, or other state firms. The earnings would go into modern industries, job creation, and personnel training and retraining. This approach was first defined by last year's 19th NKP Congress, and it has found a response in the working-class movement.

"We are not going to take other people's credit," says Karlsen, "but if the ruling Labour Party proclaims in its policy documents the primacy of state companies in Norway's oil production, this reflects the influence of the Communists' proposals as well."

As the centre of the oil boom, Stavanger has seen dramatic changes — good and not so good. I was told about these by Terje Lie and Tor Aase, young researchers from the centre for sociological studies, who have each published several notable investigations. The burgeoning industry had avidly absorbed manpower from the whole western coast. Such an outflow had undercut the traditional industry — wood-working — and created difficulties in fishing and agriculture, which lost 20 to 30 per cent of their workforce. And yet oil had in the main done away with unemployment: many new trades had appeared along with small field-servicing firms. But Terje and Tor felt uneasy about the social differentiation caused by the influx of foreign workers: Americans and British are the top earners here, followed by the Norwegians, whilst less skilled and lower paid work falls to Pakistanis, Turks and others.

The oilmen, a new contingent of the Norwegian working class, are well organised. At union headquarters I talked to deputy board chair Hermann Lund, whose desk sported a pennant with a derrick emblem.

"Our union," he said, "is a cross-trade body, and this gives it added weight at the talks on pay and conditions, both with private firms and the

state administration. As a rule, we find mutually acceptable solutions, trying to avoid head-on collisions . . .”

This is quite in line with the policy of class collaboration followed by the Social Democratic leadership of the trade union movement. But it isn't always sustained — wildcat strikes do occur. The 1986 spring labour conflict in the oil fields proved a major action by the Norwegian workers, and the people of Stavanger still remember it vividly. The food supply workers went on strike first, demanding a pay increase. The oilmen backed them up. When five leading unions declared support for a solidarity strike, the employers announced a lock-out of 100,000 people. The class encounter ended in a compromise deal on a wage increase and a reduction of the working week.

. . . From ancient times the sea has provided the Norwegians with a source of income, from Viking plunder, and later trade, or from fishing. Now it has given Norway oil. To become its true master and dispose of this wealth for the good of all is no easy task while national and foreign capital prevails. But the way towards this aim is realistic, and of all the political parties, the Norwegian Communists are its most consistent advocates. And not just in oil production.

How to Protect Yourself from Housing Sharks

For the rich it's simple but for the majority of workers and employees the housing problem in Norway is acute. How can they challenge the 'housing sharks' and real estate speculators? Here housing construction cooperatives come to their aid, selling them flats two or three times cheaper.

I had a look at one such cooperative in Lillestrom, 30 kilometres from Oslo. This small town differs little from its counterparts except that more than 50 per cent of its houses have been built by the local cooperative. Former NKP chair Martin Gunnar Knutsen has been heading its board for a number of years.

We drove around the town, stopping occasionally at this or that group of houses.

“Here you see the modest two-storey buildings of the first post-war years . . . And here are better ones with balconies — see how many flowers there are? — that sprang up later . . . And over there, closer to the outskirts, we're building comfortable one-family cottages . . .”

I gleaned some very interesting information on the housing cooperatives movement from *BBL posten*, the Lillestrom cooperative monthly. This movement arose after Norway's liberation from the Nazi occupation, when the Norwegian Union of Housing Construction Cooperatives was also formed. A great deal has been done since, but the demand for housing still outstrips supply. The last union congress pointed out that 570,000 new flats need to be built by the end of the century. This works out at 40,000 flats per year, the rate now being 25,000 to 30,000.

State participation in the financing of construction is an important social gain of the working people. For this purpose a Housing Bank has been set up which provides long-term credits to the cooperatives and individuals. The bank charges lower interest than private banks, but it is still quite high

— 11 per cent. The tax on building materials, reaching 20 per cent of their cost, weighs heavily upon the builders. And if the state in 1985 invested about 2 billion kroner in housing construction, it got from this tax of 2.1 billion kroner in revenue.

The Communists have the working people's interests at heart. Martin Knutsen is one of those who generously give their knowledge and experience to the cooperatives. Early in the 1970s he was elected chair of the Lillestrom cooperative for the first time, but not everyone wanted a Communist at the head of the board, and so another chair took over. He turned out to be so inferior to his predecessor that members of the cooperative preferred to vote Knutsen in again, and he has now held the chair since 1982.

"One of our advantages as a cooperative," says Knutsen, "is that we can meet 50 to 60 per cent of building costs with a loan from the state Housing Bank. This is reimbursed over 30 years, with a deferral for the first five. Besides that, we try to turn capitalist competition to our advantage persuading the companies to offer us better terms in building costs and time. Therefore more people can buy a flat through the cooperative. We halve the cost for them, and you pay only after you move in."

The cooperative owns about 4,500 flats in and around Lillestrom. It has another 5,000 members on the waiting list. But delivery won't be prompt: it takes time to develop the business.

"What counts most for us," says the communist chairman, "is to provide good flats for people with limited income — not profits from housebuilding or management."

How smoothly does the board operate considering that it is made up of members of different political forces, including Social Democrats and Conservatives?

"Of course, there are disputes," explains Knutsen, "but we do find acceptable solutions. I think the cooperative movement can serve as a practical example of the communist policy of establishing alliances with other political forces, alliances meant to defend working people's interests

The public has responded positively to such communist proposals as a lower rate of interest on Housing Bank credits and an extended repayment period. The NKP is the only party to demand abolition of the tax on building materials. This tax amounts to 20 per cent of their cost. The bourgeois media ignore these initiatives, but when they are made known to the working people, the Communists' prestige grows.

'On Her Knees Before the US'

"Will Norway jump on to the Common Market bandwagon?" a national televised debate asked recently. It was interesting to see how enthusiastically the capital-hired politicians urged Norway not to forego a slice of the 'cake' of a Single European Market, to be created by 1992. Their opponents rejected the need to join, pointing to Norway's quite successful economic performance outside the EEC. They also warned of the EEC tendency to unify foreign policy and restrict its members' national independence.

It seemed that the people had decided when the Norwegians voted in a 1972 referendum against joining the EEC. Yet politicians and the monopoly press continue to press for a 'change of heart'. They keep reminding the public that two-thirds of Norway's exports go to the EEC countries, and claim that the economic consequences of non-participation would be grave. But the Norwegians remain unimpressed by these arguments. Opinion polls show that most of them still oppose EEC membership.

Norwegians' particular sensitiveness to independence in world politics also plays a part. They are a small people who for centuries suffered from foreign rule and gained independence only in the early 20th century and take any attempts to limit national sovereignty very seriously.

While in Norway I happened to witness crude attacks on its independence from the United States. The story, now widely known, is as follows. About four years ago Japan's Toshiba company sold the USSR several milling machines, numerical control for which was supplied by a Norwegian state company, Konigsberg Vapenfabrikk (KV). The Pentagon suddenly perceived in this ordinary transaction a breach of the rules of COCOM,¹ and a threat to 'Western security'. Soviet submarines had been fitted with screw propellers that give off much less noise and the Pentagon attributed this to the Japanese machine tools with Norwegian electronic equipment. The US Congress raged against these 'betrayers' of Western interests, and legislators suggested denying them access to the American market.

The absurdity of the charges soon became evident. It turned out that the reduced screw-propeller noise had been noted by the Pentagon back in 1979, several years before the deliveries from Toshiba and KV. The mass media published the opinions of a number of Japanese, Norwegian and US experts who denied the accusations of any impropriety by pointing to the high technological level of Soviet industry. "We are surprised," wrote the bourgeois newspaper *Dagbladet*, "at the unwarranted and malicious attacks on KV, the Norwegian government and our country."

But a 'sensation' had been created. Both the company's management and Norway's cabinet pleaded 'guilty', looked into all the deals KV had with the socialist states, and closed down its office in Moscow. The defence minister rushed to Washington to beg for congressional pardon and to ward off economic sanctions. Gro Harlem Brundtland, the Prime Minister, sent a personal letter to President Reagan, apologising and reassuring him of her loyalty to the common cause. The Norwegian communist newspaper *Friheten*, under a headline 'The Prime Minister on Her Knees Before US Imperialism', stated bitterly: "We are exactly where the United States wants us to be: US monopoly capital rules us technologically, economically and ideologically."

The Pentagon-White House operation succeeded. The Storting immediately passed a stricter law on trade with, among others, socialist countries, and the Paris-based COCOM, to reinforce its restrictions, held a session at the 'scene of the crime' — in Norway. Oslo's spinelessness left most Norwegians with an unpleasant feeling, unmistakable both in the Storting and the press, that still lingers among ordinary people.

No to Nuclear Weapons

On Carl-Jahangate, Oslo's main street, right across from the Storting, I saw a mobile news-stand with the slogan 'No Nuclear Weapons'. It had a whole array of books, pamphlets, leaflets, posters and badges. A tall man with a grey pointed beard gave them out to passers-by. For Ole Copeitan, secretary of his organisation No to Nuclear Weapons, distributing its materials is a customary job. For several years he has been regularly wheeling out his news-stand to the Storting. His promotional work dates back to the famous 1950 Stockholm Appeal against nuclear weapons, which was signed by over 500 million people throughout the world.

At the organisation's headquarters on Youngsgate, in several rooms with laden bookshelves, women staff were packaging literature for despatch to other cities when we came in. From my conversation with Copeitan I understood that No to Nuclear Weapons is one of the country's largest and most influential peace organisations. Protests against the US Pershings and Cruise missiles in Europe has brought many new people to its ranks when it revealed Norway's dependence for its security, and even its very existence, on the NATO and Pentagon decision-makers who have little or no respect for its national interests.

What contribution does the organisation think Norway could make to nuclear disarmament? No to Nuclear Weapons' top-priority demand is for a nuclear-free zone in Northern Europe. The idea has won unprecedented support among all Nordic countries. "Over 2.5 million people in these countries, including 570,000 Norwegians, signed an appeal for a denuclearised North even in the early 1970s," recalls Copeitan. "The bourgeois government stayed deaf to this mass expression of popular will. Yet public sentiment did cause the Labour and other parties to act, and the peace movement's role was especially evident. Last year the Nordic countries' first team of government experts was specifically established for this purpose."

The organisation's other two main demands are 'Free the Norwegian Sea of nuclear weapons' and 'Bar nuclear-armed ships from Norwegian ports and territorial waters'. Over 20 coastal municipalities and communities have already taken such decisions.

In the streets of Oslo you can see posters demanding an end to all nuclear tests and the abandonment of the US Star Wars scheme. The negative attitude of most Norwegians to these plans have persuaded the Social Democratic government to decline all invitations to cooperate in SDI.

"Communists always figure among the participants in demonstrations and other acts of the peace-loving forces." With these words NKP Central Board Secretary Gunnar Wahl stressed the top-priority thrust of the party's activity. "As an equal and active part of the peace movement, we conduct explanatory work in its ranks, mainly on an individual basis. We point out, for example, the political forces and people whose economic interests create a threat to peace. And if the former belief in an 'equal responsibility of the two superpowers' has been visibly shaken, some of the credit definitely goes to the Communists and, of course, to the powerful impact of the Soviet peace initiatives."

Now the Communist Party of Norway has focused on the danger of NATO's plans for a naval build-up, (including in the northern seas) as 'compensation' for the elimination of medium- and shorter-range missiles in Europe. This, it points out, could add to the dependence of Norway on other powers.

It is impossible to see everything in such a short time. Much was missed or was left outside the frame of the meetings and discussions that I had. And yet the question: 'Who is master in the land of the fjords?' repeatedly came up as one of the most important in political and economic life. The people of Norway have to fight hard to maintain their interests against foreign capital, and to decide independently the main areas of national development and international policy. Their desire to be masters of their own lives, as I could well see, is expressed in many ways: they want their natural resources to become public property; they wish to see the establishment of cooperative bulwarks against private enterprise on the housing market; and they are participating in the broad movements against EEC membership, for a nuclear-free North and for peace and nuclear disarmament.

Anatoli Antonov
WMR staff member

'The coordinating committee for control over exports to the socialist countries.'

surveys, letters, and diary

In Step With The Times

Fraternal Parties Congratulate WMR on its 30th Anniversary

GREETING the journal on behalf of the *CC of the Communist Party of Austria*, Party Chair **Franz Muhri** writes: "Positive changes on the international scene have given a fresh impetus to improvements in *WMR* in particular, in attracting a broader range of authors and giving coverage to new subjects. Above all, it is noticeable that our international periodical is discussing with even greater openness the issues inherent in its title — *Problems of Peace and Socialism.*"

The *CC of the Bulgarian Communist Party* congratulates the international staff of the journal and speaks highly of its role "as an important conduit and a collective forum for exchanges of information and experience on the urgent problems of communist theory and practice. We welcome the journal's efforts to analyse the new realities of world development in depth and to inform the readers more thoroughly of the investigations and experience of fraternal parties in the course of their theoretical and political renewal. We also appreciate its contribution to the creation of new standards of comradely discussion and to mutual understanding and cooperation between communist parties and all the other left and democratic forces for peace and social development."

The *CC of the Communist Party of Denmark* says in a message signed by **Party Chair Ole Sohn**: "We see the record of our common journal as a most precious contribution to the international workers' movement. We thank all the fraternal parties participating in the journal for their spirit of cooperation. At this new stage in the international struggle, we look forward to a further enhancement of the role of the journal in, and its help to, the ideological development and reinforcement of our movement. We see international collaboration and exchange of opinions as an integral part of solving the new problems posed in our time through the development of up-to-date new political thinking."

In its message of greetings to the *WMR* Editorial Council the *CC of the Communist Party of Greece* notes the special part played by the journal in covering the new problems of our time and expressed the hope that it "will continue to contribute towards the achievement of the strategic and political goals of the fraternal parties and the international communist movement. That this can be accomplished is guaranteed by exchanges of opinion, the critical and self-critical analysis of the work of the journal by the April meeting in Prague, the positive steps taken recently in analysing theoretical issues in the spirit of new political thinking and more substantive information about the life and work of all the detachments of the communist and working class movement."

The message of greetings sent in by **Cheddi Jagan**, *General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party of Guyana*, on behalf of the Central Committee, takes note of "the valuable work which the journal has been doing over the past three decades". It continues ". . . The journal was always able to analyse with clarity the whole complex picture. It has not only provided theoretical analysis but also valuable information, which has helped our membership to keep abreast of all the developments in the world communist movement. We also wish to note the great improvement in *WMR* articles over the past two years. The journal has become richer in content and provided more articles provoking discussions in our movement. This is in keeping with the profound changes now taking place in our movement at this stage of our history."

Rene Theodore, *General Secretary of the United Party of Haitian Communists*, says: "The past thirty years have seen tireless work by the *WMR* in theoretical thought and the practical struggles of the Communists and the entire progressive movement of the peoples of the world. Thanks to the journal, we recognise our theoretical common ground and the

prospects for revolution, which strengthen solidarity among the fraternal parties and make it possible to link the struggle of each of them to the struggle of the working people the world over. We welcome the changes now taking place towards an improvement in the work of the journal and will, for our part, endeavour to make it even better known in Haiti."

Rigoberto Padilla Rush, *General Secretary of the Communist Party of Honduras*, notes: "the current serious efforts made by *WMR* to keep abreast of the times and thus fulfil the recommendations of this year's Meeting". He continues: "We want *WMR* to be an adequate spokesman for the ideas of the Communists and all the other vanguard and progressive forces standing for renewal, self-determination, social progress and universal peace."

The message of greetings from the *CC of the Lebanese Communist Party* remarks: "By participating in posing problems and analysing new phenomena of our age, in propagating the ideas of peace and democracy and studying questions of the national liberation movement and socialism, in exposing the forces of war and aggression and strengthening and broadening the worldwide front of peace, *WMR* has become a unique forum, the importance of which is growing from day to day.

"We are confident that the editorial staff will carry on the process of renewal initiated by them. That process should encompass both theory and the practical approach to the phenomena and realities of life, and also forms of relationships between the various detachments of our movement and between it and other forces."

"In spite of certain shortcomings, omissions and an occasional lack of creativity, the road travelled by the journal during these thirty years is evidence of its great usefulness to the entire international communist movement from the point of view of politics, information and theory," says the *CC of the Palestinian Communist Party* in its message of greetings. "The journal has responded to the more important problems and needs of our time, especially those related to the development of the theoretical legacy of Marxism-Leninism, to general conclusions from the Communist Parties' experience and to the broadening of cooperation among them."

Jorge del Prado, *General Secretary of the CC of the Peruvian Communist Party*, says: "We think highly of *WMR*'s brilliant and loyal defence of Marxism-Leninism and its range of creative potentialities, and of its scientific application in specific national circumstances, and consider it to be an especially important and immutable characteristic of the journal's history. . . . *WMR* has become the front line for the struggle against the ideological onslaught of imperialism, which is out to discredit the absolute viability and effectiveness of existing socialism." He continues: "Note should be taken of the consistency with which *WMR* has posed for discussion fundamental problems of the world revolutionary movement by sponsoring various activities. We believe that in the changed situation this task should be tackled more energetically in the broadest possible democratic framework and in the spirit of polemics that would contribute to a frank and productive discussion."

The *CC of the Syrian Communist Party* says in its message of greetings: "Our interdependent and controversial world and the need to resolve its

problems and overcome its difficulties are posing ever more complex tasks to *WMR* and increasing its role and importance as a common forum and the parties' meeting place for exchanges of experience and for conducting a dialogue on new problems and phenomena Being an international forum, the journal can ensure cooperation between the world revolutionary movement and the national patriotic and peace movements and organisations and contribute to the strengthening of their relations, the cementing of their ranks and the overcoming of difficulties."

"By consistently expressing and defending the ideals of peace, democracy and social progress, the journal has won a reputation as an international forum of Marxist-Leninist thought and a useful vehicle of cooperation in theory and exchanges of information and practical experience among Communists," the *CPSU Central Committee* says in its message of greetings. "The role of *WMR* is now increasing in our complex, controversial and interdependent world, when unity through diversity is manifesting itself to an ever greater extent in the international communist movement, as in other areas." The CC of the CPSU wishes the fraternal party representatives on the journal and its authors and staff further success in their work, in creative discussions of the complex problems of our day, and in the constant quest for new ideas relevant to the more important avenues of the struggle for peace, human survival, socialism, social justice and the freedom and independence of all peoples.

Alonso Ojeda, *General Secretary of the Communist Party of Venezuela*, and **Eduardo Gallegos**, *the party's secretary for international affairs*, say, in the message of greetings on behalf of the CC: "The journal has become more topical in content and made a move towards broadening its range of authors and securing the cooperation of notable personalities and representatives of other detachments of the working class movement, which we greatly appreciate We are confident that the improvements made by the journal in its work, in accordance with the decisions of the April 1988 Meeting of Representatives of Fraternal Parties, will become increasingly pronounced in the light of the new rich experience accumulated by all the parties represented in the *WMR* collective editorial staff in Prague."

"When the journal was established, the Communist Party of Vietnam took the decision to publish and distribute it in the country even under wartime conditions of resistance to the aggressors," the *CC of the Communist Party of Vietnam* says in its message of greetings. "As the journal has been developing since then, it has become an accessible forum for broad exchanges of information about the theoretical and practical activities of fraternal parties, which contributes to the creative enlargement of the treasure-house of Marxism-Leninism through joint efforts and to the intensification of the world revolutionary process and the peace movement."

A resumé of the greetings, which are still coming in, will be continued in our next issue.

'The Cinema Can Help Make A Revolution'

We have already reported in issue No. 9 of our journal that, at the 26th International Film Festival in Karlovy Vary, a special *WMR* prize 'For Peace and Socialism' was awarded to the feature film, *Lorca, The Death of a Poet*. Its director, film maker **Juan Antonio Bardem**, met **Jorge Bergstein**, representative of the Communist Party of Argentina on *WMR* and member of its editorial board. Below is a transcript of their conversation.

Juan Antonio Bardem. The passing years have somewhat dampened my revolutionary film-making ardour. At first I thought that cinema alone was enough to make a revolution but later on I came to realise that all was not as simple as that. The cinema can nevertheless be of help in making a revolution. That is the ultimate objective of everything I have been doing, more or less successfully, for many years now. I became a film maker at about the same time I joined the Communist Party in 1943 and I have always sought to give a critical account of reality, analysing it and getting to the heart of the matter. I have come to the conclusion that the capitalist society I live in can be improved only if it is radically transformed.

Jorge Bergstein. Your picture about Frederico Garcia Lorca has a special significance in the context of world developments — the revolutionary transformations in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries towards 'more socialism and more democracy', the struggle of the dependent countries for their national liberation and the advances in nuclear disarmament and peaceful coexistence. How do you, as a committed artist, participate in these processes?

Bardem. I was fortunate enough to be among the participants in the Moscow Forum 'For a Nuclear-Weapons-Free World, For the Survival of Humanity' last February. Among those invited to it were outstanding personalities from all over the world, including film makers, artists, writers and performers. The meeting was a success in all respects, but also undoubtedly a personal success for Mikhail Gorbachov. Not only those of us who support the changes in the Soviet Union but also sceptics and those who have no use for communist ideas were convinced of the sincerity and the clarity of the objectives set by perestroika. I have to confess that I went there not merely because I had been invited. Being a Spanish Communist, I wanted to help the Soviet leader in his efforts because I felt instinctively that the work he had taken on as peacemaker was difficult and called for support inside and outside his country.

When I returned home I published in the *Mundo Obrero* weekly of the Communist Party of Spain an article whose title gives an idea of my Moscow impressions, 'A Small Diary of a Return to October 1917'. Incidentally, I called it small because the comrades on the editorial board thought the initial text too long and it had to be cut. But made my point: the weekly has spoken out in favour of Soviet revolutionary perestroika. The new policy pursued by the CPSU has for us, as Communists, revised the revolutionary dream. This is one of its major achievements. A

successful revolution is one thing, but victory and the creation of a genuinely free world where 'socialism' and 'democracy' were synonymous means a return to the revolutionary atmosphere of the Smolny Institute and the reanimation of that spirit of complete freedom — of expression, struggle and the confrontation of ideas. The October Revolution is not just a page in history but an ongoing process of revolutionary creative activity.

As a Communist, I feel responsible for everything that the Communists have done anywhere at any time, that is to say, I do not shirk any of my responsibilities. I've never claimed that others did and are doing wrong, or that we did right. The Communists have a common cause in which there is room for everything — merits and accomplishments, mistakes and setbacks. Now that the land of the October Revolution is critically analysing its past, I, together with many of my friends, see it as a stimulus for us to consider 'sins' we may have committed through omission, silence or, sometimes, through ignorance.

We are going back to our sources, to revolutionary Leninist democracy, and now that the period of stagnation in the CPSU and in some other parties, including ours, is over, why not support new ideas and a new generation willing to further the cause of revolution? We can no longer retreat because there is nowhere to retreat to. This is something everybody should be aware of.

As for the policy of peace, I am happy that the impetus to achieve this noble aim has manifested itself in the foreign policy of the CPSU, one that forces the Western powers to ease international tensions. This is not done in a sombre way, but joyfully. The openness and sincerity of Soviet foreign policy disarms Western military strategists in the eyes of public opinion. People simply stop believing them. The image created by Western propaganda of the Soviet Union as an aggressor, is falling apart. After the long years of the Cold War, poisoned by mutual enmity and suspicion, people have realised that it is possible to preserve life on earth and prevent bloodshed.

Bergstein. Your picture is undoubtedly a militant one. I was much impressed by the sequences showing the crimes committed by the fascist army in 1936, reminiscent of what is happening now in some Latin American countries.

Bardem. This is perhaps the first film to show how the military coup took place in Spain. You remember the scene where the insurgent military declare the republican military, who show respect for constitutional power, to be the rebels. We also see organised repression ordered by the ringleaders of the coup. The cruel wind of the Civil War caused numerous deaths but the official executions, particularly those carried out on orders from the military command, are the responsibility of those who led the coup. A reactionary in Spain has accused me of revanchism, of settling ideological and political accounts in retrospect, but this isn't revanchism at all. It's simply that after forty years of viewing history from one angle, the time has come to look at it differently. I think that the new approach is justified and correct.

Bergstein. What sources did your team use when recreating the scenes of struggle?

Bardem. When we got down to making this film, a very laborious process, we asked the Ministry of Defence to help us. I sent the public relations man at the Ministry of Defence a formal letter asking for information about the events in Granada in June 1936. I referred to them neither as 'the great national uprising' or 'a regrettable rebellion by the military', but the ministry would not help us in any way. For this reason we had to miss out certain scenes from the film. We turned to our friends among the officers for consultation on battle scenes, but they didn't know much about them either, never having taken up arms against the republican government. We had to invent certain things, not arbitrarily but in the spirit of historical truth.

We also made use of works by some historians, especially Ian Gibson. He mainly supplied the historical facts, for example, "Early in the morning of August 19, Federico was put into a cell together with two banderilleros and a lame school teacher . . ." But as to what they talked about, we had to invent something plausible. The same refers to the circumstances of Federico's death. I confess that we deliberately softened it because it must have been even more humiliating and outrageous. There was an individual in Granada who had for years boasted that he had put five bullets below Federico's waistline.

Bergstein. In your picture you thank the inhabitants and various institutions of Granada for their cooperation . . .

Bardem. The people who acted in the film were for the most part ordinary folk who willingly agreed to take part in it, naturally, for some reward. Quite a few came not so much to make money — which was, by the way, very modest — but because they wanted to do something for Lorca, to pay tribute to him. Granada's inhabitants, among them some well advanced in age, took part in the filming, even though some of the work was quite hard, especially in the battle scenes. That is why I expressed my sincere gratitude to them in the credits. Incidentally, the preview was held just for the citizens of Granada. The picture was a great success there, after all, the poignant events depicted in it are still fresh in people's minds and conscience.

But we also confronted hostility. Witness the following incident: My assistants spotted an old 1935 make of car and went to talk the owner into lending it for filming. He wanted to know why they needed it. When he heard it was for a film about Federico Garcia Lorca, he flatly refused to do anything for us. It seems incredible that fifty years later some people should still hate Federico.

The film coincided with the 50th anniversary of Lorca's assassination, although we failed to release it by that date. We sought to refute the idea that Lorca was simply another unfortunate victim of the Civil War, that it was an accident of sorts, as if he had succumbed to a bad cold.

Bergstein. Or a stray bullet . . .

Bardem. Precisely. No, it was in fact premeditated murder and certainly not the only case. Approximately 2,000 people were shot in the two months after the rebellion. They were not just ordinary people but mainly intellectuals, professors, leading politicians and public figures. There was a certain pattern to it.

Bergstein. I was impressed by the humanism of your picture and the unidealised image of Lorca.

Bardem. He is shown the way he was, brave and faint-hearted, valiant and bewildered, as people happen to be when they find themselves in complex situations. We sought to retrace in the picture his link with his time. In his famous interview published in *El Sol* in June 1936 Lorca said, literally, that he "did not believe in that bullshit of art for art's sake". He thought that "the artist should cry and laugh together with his people". He had a clear idea of the role that the wealthy intelligentsia he belonged to had to play. "We are destined to make sacrifices, so let us accept it," he said in the interview.

Bergstein. Was he a militant personality in the broadest sense of the word?

Bardem. He was aware that he fought for justice, although he did not know how that evolution of the world was to proceed. He had the convictions of a fighter but often lacked sufficient knowledge to be able to see clearly all the complexities of class battles. And yet he was unreservedly on the side of the working people and always repeated that he belonged to the Party of the Poor. Though not a member of the Communist Party, he participated in its actions. He was in close contact with his people, not, as some would say, just as a lyrical poet locked away in his ivory tower. It's enough to read his 'A Poet in New York' to realise how vehemently he opposed exploitation and tyranny, how strongly his spirit desired freedom and justice and sympathised with the downtrodden and the oppressed. His death was not an unfortunate accident. He lost his life fighting for a better future, and that was what we wanted to show in the film.

The Reader Wants To Know

Exporters Of Capital Against Their Will

Last July the member countries of the Andes Group (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela) signed an agreement in Lima to establish a Latin American Reserve Fund with headquarters in Bogota. At our readers' request **Juan Tutui**, a CC member of the Peruvian Communist Party, discusses the reasons behind the formation of that organisation.

THE region has been hit by its worst crisis in the past ten years, Enrique Iglesias, President of the Inter-American Development Bank, believes. Our countries, weighed down with severe socio-economic, political and other problems, are in addition saddled with an unbearable burden of foreign debts, which have now reached a total of almost \$420 billion. In the past five years alone our North American creditors received \$146 billion in

depreciation pay. Before 1981, the debts were paid back with imported capital (investment plus new borrowings) but in 1982 the internal resources of the debtor countries began to be used: foreign debt servicing gobbles up 35 per cent of their export revenue. Paradoxical as it may seem, underdeveloped countries have become net exporters of capital.

But in actual fact it is not export but tribute. And can there be any hope for economic development or financial stability given all the obstacles confronting developing countries from usurious international capital? It stymies any attempt to discuss debt problems collectively and demands that its terms be strictly respected, i.e., that its prescriptions be used to 'restore order' to our countries' economies. The creditors are so intransigent that even the Baker Plan approved in Seoul in September 1985 does not work. That plan called for greater flexibility in putting our economies 'in order' and for linking measures taken under it to the region's development goals. The Baker Plan was known as 'order and growth'. But the funds we were promised never materialised. Even the money we had been getting dwindled, while the international banks continued to rake in immense profits, and our situation drastically deteriorated.

The peoples of the continent have been seeking unity ever since they gained independence from the Spanish Crown but the United States has always been in the way. The idea of regional solidarity is a political and even ethical imperative in the critical periods like today's. Unity is essential, if only to guarantee that our countries are still ready to talk and act collectively. Most governments agree that it is necessary to create a 'common economic space' as a means of effectively alleviating the burden of the crisis.

Acting in this spirit, the governments of Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador and Peru signed the Andes Pact (Cartagena Treaty) in 1969, which was joined by Venezuela in 1973. Pinochet took Chile out of the Pact in 1976. The Andes Group has survived and achieved some progress in spite of countless difficulties.

The Andes Reserve Fund established by the Group granted the member countries more than \$2 billion in credit to rectify their balance of payments deficits, to support their currencies and to create more stable economic conditions for them to expand their exports and rationalise their imports. The top beneficiary was Ecuador, which donated to the Fund \$62.5 million and received \$296 million. This shows that unity of action at the international level can help resolve problems facing individual countries.

The Latin American Reserve Fund (LARF),² which was established last June 10 to replace the Andean Regional Fund, was conceived as a means of helping its member countries advance towards integration and economic emancipation and of offsetting the burden of foreign debt. Its initial capital is \$0.5 billion and its basic task is to provide credit for individual countries in order to help them resolve their currency problems and support their balances of payments. The Fund's importance is hard to overestimate.

A country's balance of payments depends on its ability to secure loans and meet its debt obligations. Between 1973 and 1981 the underdeveloped countries' balance of payments deficits were met to a large extent by loans secured from transnational banks. Domestic reserves, as mentioned above,

were tapped in 1982 to the detriment of development.

What are the destabilising economic factors in our countries? *First*, they have to meet their external debts (paradoxically, the countries of the region are 'exporters of capital' against their will); *second*, the terms of exchange are inequitable (prices for imported equipment keep growing while those for exports are going down) and the demand for our exports is declining; *third*, due to protectionism, the basic exports of the countries of the region cannot compete with the heavily subsidised exports of industrialised states; *fourth*, high interest is charged on loans.

These destabilising economic factors are manifestations of speculative tendencies in the policy of imperialism, which would like to shift the burden of its own economic troubles onto the shoulders of peripheral states with dependent capitalist economies. The LARF is a counter to the predatory policy of imperialism, primarily US imperialism; the reserve fund should contribute to the integration of Latin American states at present and to their economic independence in the longer term.

'The plan also stipulated our countries' 'flexibility towards foreign investment, economic deregulation and the opening of our domestic markets to imports: it perpetuated the terms laid down by our creditors.' — *J.T.*

'The pact is not confined to the Andean zone: Argentina, Brazil and even Chile would like to join it. — *J.T.*



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