

# International VIEWPOINT

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## ALGERIA UNDER THE FUNDAMENTALIST SHADOW



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## Israeli peace activist sentenced to eight months in jail

ON NOVEMBER 7, 1989, Michel Warshawsky, a leading member of the Revolutionary Communist League (section of the Fourth International in the Israeli state), was sentenced to 20 months imprisonment (see IV 174). Following a raid by the Israeli secret service, the Shin Beth, on the offices of the Alternative Information Centre (AIC), for which Warshawsky works, he was accused of having printed a booklet containing advice on how to deal with interrogation and resist torture, allegedly in collaboration with supporters of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. On appeal to the Supreme Court, Michel was finally condemned to eight months imprisonment with twelve months suspended on June 28, 1990. After the appeal court verdict, Michel gave the following statement to IV by telephone;

"It is necessary to take note of two things. On the one hand, the Supreme Court has confirmed the previous scandalous verdict, to the effect that the printing of a booklet on torture attributed to a Palestinian organization — although its provenance has never been proved — is a crime in itself. This amounts to the imposition of a de facto prior censorship on every publisher. On the other hand, the fact that the sentence has been cut from twenty to eight months is a defeat for both the Shin Beth and the previous court in its implication that, although we have done something bad, it should not be exaggerated, it is not "worth" twenty months in prison.

It is a warning to all those who wish to get "too near" to the Palestinians and their organizations. What is scandalous is the first verdict more than the one passed today; the existence of the emergency laws bequeathed by the British, which criminalize all illegal organizations — that is the national expression of the Palestinian people both inside and outside the country — and all those who support them.

"International and local pressure has been very effective and has also played a part in the reduction of the sentence. Thus, the court was ready to put off for a fortnight the application of the sentence, and the director general of the prisons has agreed that I shall be incarcerated in a jail considered as "easy".

"Now, the question is what the position of the Shin Beth will be. Its legal adviser at the tribunal seemed saddened by the verdict and it is possible that they will try to revenge themselves at the level of the prison, in two ways — through the conditions of detention, indeed even with provocations, and through the refusal of the reduction of a third of the sentence which is accorded even to ordinary criminals.

"There is no other recourse, except for asking for a presidential pardon, which we have no intention of doing because we do not consider ourselves guilty of anything. International solidarity must denounce the very basis of this verdict which rests on emergency legislation.

"I do not think that a single Palestinian has been condemned to such a heavy sentence for any similar "crime". It is a political sentence which seeks to warn progressive Israeli forces not to, in the words of the judge, "get too close to the Palestinians and their struggles". ★

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This number of IV is the last before the summer break — the next issue (no. 190) will be dated September 17.

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## The end of the beginning

IN THE article published alongside, David Seppo describes the economic crisis consuming the Soviet Union, and the beginnings of a real social debate on economic options. It is these facts – the economic crisis and the decline in the grip of the Communist Party over society – that form the background to the 28th CPSU Congress that opened on July 2. The congress is a congress of the bureaucratic nomenklatura. Some 40% of the delegates are party officials, 17% economic officials, and 6% from the military and police. The rest are defined as intellectuals (about 10%), workers (11.6%) and farmers (5.4%).

How can these people save their power and positions? That is the essence of the fierce debate between "liberals" and "conservatives". According to a leading supporter of Gorbachev, Leonid Abalkin, "only the market can save the party". But not all the assembled bureaucrats will find a safe niche in a market economy, while massive special interests, above all the Soviet military, will lose power and prestige. The representative of these discontented layers is Yegor Ligachev, who explained that "perestroika without the party is a hopeless matter."

The likely outcome of the Congress is stalemate, and with it political paralysis on the part of the CPSU. Political initiative will then tend to come from elsewhere – whether from newly revived state institutions (which Gorbachev heads as President) or outside the decaying centres of bureaucratic power.

The perception that the centre of political gravity may be shifting away from the CPSU has led some of the leaders of the social democratic "Democratic Platform in the CPSU" to consider splitting from the party.

Even if the "conservatives" are able to capture the party it remains doubtful whether the party has the strength to plunge the country back into the Stalinist past. ★

## Perestroika in crisis

ON DECEMBER 14, 1989, at the Second Congress of People's Deputies, Prime Minister Ryzhkov presented the government's "programme for economic recovery and further reform" which called for a two-stage transition by 1995 to a "regulated market economy". The first stage in 1990-92 is to stabilize the economy, especially the consumer market, reduce the budget deficit, and put in place the legal, regulatory and price mechanisms required for the full transition to the "regulated market" in the second stage, 1993-95.

According to Ryzhkov, the economy had already been significantly liberalized, but the mechanisms needed to regulate this autonomous economic activity, which sometimes took anti-social forms, were not yet in place. The reform, therefore, required a certain period of consolidation before moving ahead to the market.

DAVID SEPPO

**A**NTICIPATING criticism from the liberals, Ryzhkov explained that to introduce market relations at one go in 1990 or 1991 would inevitably result in galloping inflation, a decline in the role of economic incentives, reduced production, mass unemployment, increased social tensions. "In other words, this path leads to renewal through crisis."<sup>1</sup>

As expected the programme was attacked from the "left" as Soviet liberals are referred to by the press and even by political leaders: they called it timid, a hopelessly contradictory attempt to combine administrative and market relations. They found it vague on the concrete measures to reach the market. The "right", that is, the trade union bureaucracy and the self-proclaimed workers' organizations linked to the state-party apparatus, was more accommodating. S. Shelaev, then Chairman of the All-Union Council of Trade Unions, was slightly critical, insisting on a programme guaranteeing full employment and a referendum before adopting a retail price reform, including full compensation for all groups of the population. Nonetheless, in the end he agreed with V. Yarin, a leader of the United Front of Toilers and member of Gorbachev's presidential council: "Of course, we can criticize, add some concrete things, but it is time to get to work and turn the government's programmes into reality."<sup>2</sup>

As usual the views of the democratic socialist opposition whose (more-or-less) organized elements today include among others, the New Socialists and the Marx-

ist Platform in the CPSU, were not reported in the press.

Three months later, a special Third Congress of People's Deputies elected Gorbachev to a newly created presidency. Gorbachev immediately let it be known that he intended to use his special presidential powers "above all to radicalize the policy of *perestroika*", to move the Soviet Union at an accelerated pace to a "full-blooded domestic market". Measures originally set for 1992-93 would be introduced in 1990 and at the start of 1991. In addition, he stated that the strong presidency was necessary to guarantee "stable social order" noting that there was a growing alarm in society over the threat of destabilization."<sup>3</sup> Gorbachev had only partially succeeded in outlawing strikes in the fall. About the same time the Supreme Soviet passed as law "On Resolving Labour Conflicts" making it very difficult to strike legally. But both measures have had little practical effect.

This turn was not a total surprise. Soon after the miners' strike certain liberal intellectuals began speculating in print about the need for an authoritarian regime to carry through an unpopular economic reform. In the fall, after the trade union bureaucracy had organized a series of demonstrations against price rises and profiteering by cooperatives (jointly owned private enterprises) Vice Prime Minister L. Abalkin himself called for special powers for the government: "In

1. *Trud* December 14, 1990.

2. *Ibid.*, December 14 and 16, 1990.

3. *Komsomol'skaya pravda*, April 11, 1990 and *Rabochaya tribuna*, March 16 and 27, 1990.

conditions of natural calamity it makes no sense to hold meetings and discussions about how best to get to work. The government needs freedom and trust."<sup>4</sup>

### Sixty specialists meeting in the woods

A few days after Gorbachev became president, Interfax, the press agency of Moscow Radio, reported that Abalkin was heading a team of 60 specialists working on a package of laws to be submitted to the Supreme Soviet in April and to take effect by July 1. The work of this team, which was meeting in a government house in the woods outside of Moscow, was being kept secret for the time being "in order to avoid untimely confrontation in the society". But it was revealed that the government was contemplating opening soup kitchens to deal with the increased number of poor expected in the initial phase of the reform.

Interfax reported that government officials were looking closely at the Polish reform, which they considered the "most fitting for our country", giving rise to rumours that Polish-style shock therapy was in the works. (The fact that the Polish government had opted for a capitalist restoration was not noted). Economists who had seen some of the documents confirmed that they included freeing of wholesale and retail prices, beginning partly in 1990, "destatization" of up to 70% of the economy, with farms and small enterprises sold into private hands and large enterprises turned into joint stock companies, and the creation of programmes to deal with mass unemployment resulting from layoffs and bankruptcies.<sup>5</sup>

*Pravda's* economics editor reported that there would be partial indexation of incomes to protect the poorest strata, but warned that the time had passed when it was possible to stabilize the economy without "hard unpopular measures"....Serious social collisions are unavoidable."<sup>6</sup>

Gorbachev explained his shift by the necessity to put an end to a situation in which old and new economic forms coexisted antagonistically. The economic results of the first part of 1990 were indeed alarming. For the first time in many decades, the State Statistical Agency reported an absolute decline in national income of 1.7% during the first four months (though this was at least partly the result of the conversion of military industries and strikes, especially in the Transcaucasus after Soviet troop intervention in Azerbaijan), while incomes rose 13.4%. In 1988 and 1989 incomes rose by almost as much as in the entire previous seven years. The budget deficit continued to grow, and the increasing mass of money chasing after limited goods was causing inflation and shortages.

**4** The government was losing control. It

had increased the powers of local governments and enterprises, but while these hurried to exploit their new powers in their own narrow interests, they became increasingly demanding of the centre for resources, often backing up demands by ultimata and the threat of strikes. Ignoring formal restrictions and contract obligations, enterprises, especially in the consumer goods and service sectors, continued to seek profits through unjustified price rises, even while cutting back on production.

The tendency of enterprises to reduce plan quotas had grown to such an extent that the GNP in 1990 is forecast at 12 billion roubles less than originally envisaged by the Supreme Soviet. In heavy industry, an anti-inflationary tax on wage funds introduced in the fall of 1989 was, in fact, being applied only to a fifth of the enterprises originally targeted. As one analyst put it: "although we often say in anger that nothing has changed over the past four years, nevertheless our economy is different. It is capable of beating back directive attacks from the centre and of subordinating any laws to group egoism."<sup>7</sup>

But if the centre has lost its ability to direct the economy, it is nevertheless the case that the government itself has consistently encouraged centrifugal, corporatist tendencies in the economy. Although on one level its policy might appear as a series of errors and half-baked measures, on another it is the inevitable result of an attempt to reform the economy without democratizing the central power. This policy is dictated by the interests of the regime's main social base, the reformist wing of the bureaucracy.

On the one hand, government spokespeople and the press decry the "group egoism" of enterprise collectives, which is merely the rational behaviour of producers in a monopoly-dominated market over which government control has significantly weakened. (This is a long-term trend in the Soviet economy, but it has been greatly accelerated by the transfer of enterprises to "cost-accounting" [khozraschet] in 1988 and 1989). On the other hand, they have consistently blamed ministries for all the ills of the economy, condemned "ministerial dictates" and exhorted enterprises to fight for their autonomy, as promised by the new law on state enterprises, and for the retention by the enterprises of the greater part of their "cost-accounting" income.

There is no doubt that this appeals to strongly anti-bureaucratic sentiments in the population. Yet, it is clear that the majority of the population, and the workers first of all, do not want to submit the

economy to the spontaneous forces of the market. As liberal economist Kliamkin ruefully noted, they want social justice as well as efficiency, that is economic security, including full employment, price stability, a guaranteed decent minimum for all and strict limits to socio-economic differentiation. This requires a central economic power capable of submitting the market mechanism to the social goals decided collectively by the population.

If Gorbachev has concluded that this is an impossible combination, it is because he has refused to seriously envisage democratization of central economic power. As long as the centre that plans and regulates in a "planned market economy" remains undemocratic, the directives and regulations issued by it will be perceived as oppressive and exploitative by the producers, and therefore will be resisted. The bureaucratic centre's inability to motivate the economic actors to behave in a way consistent with centrally set goals has always been the basic contradiction of the bureaucratic economy. Gorbachev's reforms have only pushed these centrifugal tendencies to the extreme.

### Self-management system at all levels

The only basis for overcoming this without abandoning traditional socialist values is to democratize the centre, that is to create a self-management system *at all levels*. This in itself is of course no magic solution to finding a workable balance between centralization and decentralization, especially when the starting point is the present Soviet reality. But democratization of the economy does at least create a social basis upon which a solution that corresponds to the workers' interests is possible. This is the reform orientation advocated by Soviet socialists, but it has been consistently ruled out by the political leadership.<sup>8</sup>

The regime's treatment of the miners' movement is a good example of this policy. During the July 1989 strike, the government, aided by a strong media campaign, went to great efforts to canalize the miners' demands towards enterprise autonomy, a demand that to this day has brought them nothing concrete. Under various pretexts, the government and trade union apparatus also



4. *Moskovskie novosti*, October 29, 1990.

5. *New York Times*, March 20 and May 14, 1990.

6. *Pravda*, April 19, 1990.

7. *Rabochaya tribuna*, March 16, 1990; *Trud*, March 31 and May 25, 1990; *Komsomol'skaya pravda*, May 1, 1990.

8. See for example, the Marxist Platform in the CPSU, *Pravda*, April 16, 1990, extracts from which were published in IV 187.

managed to postpone a national conference of miners, a demand voiced in various regions of the country during the strike.

When an extraordinary congress of Trade Unions of Workers in the Coal Industry finally convened at the end of March, the representatives of the workers' strike committees walked out of what they called a "congress of apparatchiki and employers". In their declaration, the miners' representatives stated: "We had considered that the congress was to carry out the will of the strikers, in particular to dismiss the old central committee of the trade union. After that, it was to discuss the state of affairs, the situation in the mines, analyze how the government has been carrying out its decision on the miners' demands, work out a common course of action for proceeding from here and elect a new leadership to carry out that course." They declared their intention to form a real miners' union, without representatives of the administration. This would create the unity needed for the miners to deal constructively (and not merely by economic strikes) with the government. A national meeting is planned for June.<sup>9</sup>

The same basic orientation can be seen in the government's gradual abandonment of enterprise self-management, which was originally an integral part of its reform. At the Second Congress of People's Deputies, Ryzhkov had already called for an end to the election of management in state enterprises; this practice would only be allowed in leased and cooperative enterprises.

Increasingly the emphasis has shifted from self-management, viewed more and more sceptically by the press and by the leaders, to making workers "real owners" through leasing, buyouts and joint-stock companies. Of course self-management that is limited to the enterprise (and that was the government's orientation) is in itself no panacea, but as long as the enterprise remains national property, the door is at least open for combining enterprise self-management with self-management on regional and national levels. On the other hand, privatization, even if initially takes collective forms, completely rules this out.

In March, it seemed that Gorbachev and his colleagues had decided to cut through the contradictions by delivering the economy to the market. Of course, the government declared its intention to regulate this market — even the advanced capitalist countries do that — but one can be certain that this regulation would not be in the

interests of the working class majority of the population. The immediate beneficiaries would be the renewed bureaucracy and the burgeoning bourgeois/mafia layer.

Apparently the population has sensed this too. The news of the impending reform and the widespread rumours that it would be on the Polish model, significantly raised the level of social tension in a country where a major new strike wave is widely expected. The draft laws being prepared in the Moscow woods were late in coming. After a joint meeting on April 18 of the Presidential Council and Council of the Federation, largely symbolic advisory bodies, Gorbachev seemed to



V. Syssoiev

signal a retreat: "The shift to the regulated market must be worked out more carefully.... We have to seriously think about firm social guarantees that would be understood by the people."<sup>10</sup>

Gorbachev's press secretary explained that the president, warned he was risking "social upheaval of revolutionary proportions" was slowing the pace of the reform while maintaining the strategic course to the "regulated market". The July 1 deadline was pushed back to Jan 1, 1991 with the rest of 1990 to stabilize the economy and create the legal framework for the reform.<sup>11</sup> According to a senior Soviet editor: "they approached the edge, looked over and were horrified by what they saw.... The anger and frustration are already there and a few sparks could quickly light the proverbial 'prairie fire' in this revolutionary tinder box"<sup>12</sup>

A week later, Gorbachev left on a much publicized three-day visit to the Urals industrial region "to verify together with the toilers... the course of the ship of state before the major choice that lies ahead". In a televised speech from Sverdlovsk, Gorbachev told the workers that "your cries of alarm have reached us." There would be no shock therapy. Over and

over he reassured the workers that social programmes would be put in place to compensate for the effects of price rises and unemployment, and that the government, "will consult the working class on all major elements of the reform." But he also made it clear that there would be no retreat from the reform itself: "Let's think about how, when and what to do, what to prioritize, from what to begin. This is a question of life, work and practice. But as concerns the strategic choice, the direction of our policy, no one has yet proposed anything else serious, fundamental. There is a lot of talk, but no one has yet proposed anything of substance."<sup>13</sup> Gorbachev did not say, however, who decid-

ed what was or was not serious. Certainly it has not been the people. There has never been any public debate, let alone voting, on strategic alternatives.

"We are the only country in the world with strong anti-market attitudes, except maybe Albania," complains Otto Latsis<sup>14</sup>. What bothers the workers about the market reform, and to what degree are their concerns justified?

The most immediate fear is undoubtedly a severe decline in living standards due to price rises and layoffs. The Soviet press has reported widely on East European reforms, where the freeing of prices and ending of state subsidies have brought hyperinflation, bankruptcies and a 30-40% decline in living standards. According to Latsis, "the market system means free prices. But all we know how to do, including those who say that they are by all means for the market, is to shout in unison: Don't touch prices! It's as if we've invented a rose without thorns. But a market is a rose with thorns."

Of course, Gorbachev and Ryzhkov promise compensation. But economists are quick to show that the logic of the reform opposes full compensation. It would fuel inflation and weaken labour motivation. Judging by discussions in the press over the past months, a new consensus had formed among reformers to compensate only the least well-off, especially those on fixed incomes. Those with average and high incomes — that is, among others, the majority of industrial workers, would have to fend for themselves.

Summarizing a roundtable discussion of

9. *Izvestiya*, April 1, 1990.

10. *Trud*, April 20, 1990.

11. *Rabochaya tribuna*, April 24, 1990.

12. *Gazette* (Montreal), April 24, 1990.

13. *Trud*, April 27, 1990; *New York Times*, May 14, 1990.

14. *Rabochaya tribuna*, March 27, 1990.

economists and officials in March, an article in the weekly of the Council of Ministers concluded: "We now evaluate the system more realistically....Three years ago, the starting point of discussions was that the reform would have to be introduced in such a way that the population's living standard would not suffer. But elementary calculation has shown that it is in no way possible to satisfy that demand."<sup>15</sup>

### Polls show support for rationing

Nikolai Petrakov, one of Gorbachev's personal advisors complained that, unlike Poles, Soviets prefer empty shelves to high prices; they will accept queues and rationing, but not free prices. Indeed, if at the end of 1988, 40% of the respondents in a national survey were for rationing, by the start of 1990 this had risen to 58%. Commenting on these figures, the weekly of the cooperators' movement, *Kommer-sant*, concluded that "while you cannot put an equal sign between the supporters of rationing and opponents of a market economy, nevertheless, in the course of a year an additional 50 million people moved further from understanding what means are necessary to change the situation in the country for the better. Opposition to the economic reform is growing, and in this case time is not working in its favour."<sup>16</sup>

Whether or not these people understand what is needed — or rather, what is not needed — to improve the situation is open to debate. But those who favour rationing in present conditions do so largely from elementary considerations of social justice: high prices may keep the shelves stocked, but most goods will completely cease to be accessible to the average and lower income citizens, as is the case today in Poland and Hungary.

Besides, rationing, in principle at least, allows for greater control over distribution (but greater central control if the control is authoritarian). As a citizen of Yakutsk explained: "Of course rationing is a disgraceful way to regulate social life...But it is in any case disgraceful when in such a rich country in peacetime we have empty shelves. I think that it is basically the corrupted part of society that does not want rationing."<sup>17</sup>

Another fear is unemployment. The government's earlier assurances that unemployment is incompatible with socialism have become much less forceful over the past months. Estimates of 40 million unemployed in the initial wave of

the reform were freely bandied about in March, in a work force of 125 million. Even with unemployment allocations and public works, many industrial workers would suffer income loss, as they shift to the low-paying service sector or public works. Moreover, many crucial benefits, including housing, seniority and pensions, are linked to one's place of work, a tendency that has been reinforced under the "cost-accounting" reform.

On a more fundamental level, this reform would put an end to job security and, with it, to the basic economic security that was probably the major social gain of Soviet "socialism". Economic security totally contradicts the logic of the reform. As one professor of economics recently put it:

"We are accustomed to seeing unemployment as a tragedy. To a certain degree it really is. But at present we have tens of millions of "unemployed at work" who are on staff and receive wages but only seem to work....Of course the unemployed should be given allocations. But one should understand that the size of the allocation cannot be much higher than the subsistence minimum. If you establish it at the level of the average wage, many will want to receive it rather than work and social parasitism will develop."<sup>18</sup>

For all the lofty words about making workers "real owners" through "destatization", the liberals, and increasingly the government, in fact, advocate a system based on alienated labour, one in which labour becomes a full-fledged commodity, subordinated to the laws of the market. "Destatization" does not mean socialization, but the creation of a private sector of small and medium enterprises and the transformation of large state enterprises into joint-stock companies.

Will the latter be cooperatives, where all stockholders are workers in the enterprise and hold equal shares, or will unequal stockholding be permitted and stockholders be allowed to sell their shares to people not working in the enterprise? Again the logic of the reform calls for full property rights. Many Soviet commentators do not hide the fact that they see these collective forms of property only as a sop to popular attitudes providing a necessary psychological transition to large-scale private enterprise.<sup>19</sup>

Of course, this is being sold as the creation of "people's enterprises". But how long would they remain the people's in a "normally functioning" market, where concentration is inevitable? This means

not only growing differences of income but also of wealth, that is the concentration of economic power in the hands of a minority increasingly able to determine the social and work conditions of the majority.

The platform of the Union of Worker Collectives of the Kuzbass, adopted in October 1989, specifically rejected exploitation.<sup>20</sup> But the liberal-dominated media is conducting a fierce ideological campaign to convince the workers to abandon their egalitarian values and opposition to exploitation. For example, *Izvestia's* weekly recently published a two page article arguing that the country needs rich people and that the poor are "losers" who simply cannot make the grade.

"The dictatorship of the proletariat won, the resistance of the bourgeoisie was crushed, property was socialized, money lost its value, exploitation of man by man is absent. Only one thing is missing — the benefits do not flow.

"Society is rich only when it has a lot of rich people. Nothing needs to be done. Only don't hinder those who want to get rich and who know how to do it."<sup>21</sup>

### Concept of "planned market" ridiculed

Of course these are not the government's official positions. But the liberals have the underlying logic of the government's own reform orientation on their side. Pavel Bunich described as "ridiculous" the term "planned market" which appears in the draft platform of the CPSU Central Committee.<sup>22</sup> "The term 'planned market' does not reflect real intentions" commented another economist. "It is half ideological tribute and half camouflage."<sup>23</sup> It is no secret that many senior Kremlin officials share this view. Genadii Gerasimov, senior spokesperson of the Foreign Ministry dismissed even the "regulated market economy" as a "self-contradiction".<sup>24</sup> And even Prime Minister Ryzhkov, while rejecting the liberal's "radical" proposals on political grounds, admitted their logic on purely economic grounds.<sup>25</sup>

On May 22, the joint meeting of the Council of the Federation and the President's Council approved a "perfected version of the reform". It provided for



15. *Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik*, no. 18, 1990, p.6.

16. Cited in *Komsomol'skaya pravda*, May 1, 1990.

17. *Rabochaya tribuna*, April 18, 1990.

18. B. Riazberg, "Trudnosti na kotorye nado reshit'sya," *Nedelya*, no. 20, 1990, p.5.

19. See, for example, S. Shpil'ko, "Eta strashnaya chastnaya sobstvennost'," *Nedelya*, no. 52, 1990 and P. Buich in *Trud*, December 12, 1990.

20. Photocopy.

21. G. Batygin, "Liudi i den'gi," *Nedelya*, no. 17, 1990, p.3.

22. P. Bunich, "Shto mozhet pravitel'stvo, shto khotet narod" *Ogonek*, no. 18, 1990, p.3.

23. Raizberg, *Nedelya*.

24. *New York Times*, May 26, 1990 p. A-4.

25. *Trud*, May 25, 1990.



popular consultation on all basic aspects of the reform, and particularly those affecting prices. The idea is that the government — probably including Ryzhkov, but not Gorbachev — should resign if the reform is rejected in a referendum.

The new measures are indeed less “radical” than what was rumoured in March and April (or were the March reports merely trial balloons?), and this new shift reflects direct and anticipated opposition from the workers. Retail prices will rise on average 43%: bread prices will triple on July 1 and from January 1 milk and sugar prices will rise 200%; meat 130% and non-food consumer goods 30-50%. But most retail prices will not be freed: 60% will continue to be fixed and 25% will be allowed to vary only within fixed limits. There will be compensation for all income groups: a 15% rise for the low and moderately paid and a 40 rouble monthly rise for all others.

### Calls to legitimate unemployment rejected

According to the government, this will compensate 70% of the retail price rise. Wages will also be indexed to the cost of living. Ryzhkov explicitly rejected liberal calls to legitimate unemployment and reaffirmed the government’s commitment to the constitutional right to a job. It is now estimated that there will be only 10 million unemployed by 1992, not the 40 million under “shock therapy” and that this will not be due to an absolute shortage of jobs, but to restructuring of the labour force. The government is contemplating expanding public works such as road construction and ecological clean-ups. At the same time, enterprises will be given more autonomy under this reform, with only 40% of production covered by state orders in 1991.<sup>26</sup>

The head of the trade union bureaucracy, G. Yanaev, has given his approval to the reforms.<sup>27</sup> He can claim that the government was forced to retreat in face of union criticism. The liberal Interregional Group in the Supreme Soviet called for a vote of no-confidence, arguing that these measures merely caused pain without bringing the market any closer; it is a price rise without a freeing of prices and even the rises were to be compensated, largely nullifying the effect of their rise.

There would be no economic benefit from this reform and as a result the very idea of a market reform would be discredited. The general population reacted with panic buying, which seems to have died down in a few weeks.

There was also talk of possible strikes. The announcement of the new measures has given a new strong push to centrifugal forces, as towns and regions move to set up trade barriers.<sup>28</sup>

While the new programme does appear to be a retreat in face of popular opposition, Ryzhkov admitted at various points in his speech to the Supreme Soviet that the liberal positions made sense on purely economic grounds. He had not a single word in his report about self-management, but many about entrepreneurship. At the same time he said nothing concrete about the new forms of property, except that they could be “of the most varied sort”, nor of the nature of labour relations. In practice the labour code, imperfect as it is, is not being applied under these new forms.

Ryzhkov also complained of the unjustified rise in income, of strikes and threats to strike, and of the fact that the law on the resolution of labour conflicts was not being respected. “The economy cannot function and develop in conditions of ‘meeting democracy’”. There was a veiled threat of the application of a “firm hand” to labour.

Although the government (or at least its dominant faction) shares the liberals’ basic orientation — it often seems that they disagree only on the timetable — for the time being at least, it has rejected their radical proposals on political grounds. The fate of this reform will be decided by the struggle between the inherent logic of this market reform and the accompanying political pressures from the liberal intelligentsia, reform bureaucrats and the new bourgeoisie on the one hand, and the counter-pressures from the working class and their socialist allies (as well as from the conservative forces dreaming of a return to the old system) on the other.

At this point, one can only conjecture

about what Gorbachev really has in mind. The idea of a referendum took many by surprise. Perhaps the government is thinking of a variant of the Polish scenario. In Poland, the rejection of the communist government’s market reform in 1987 led to negotiations with Solidarnosc leaders who eventually came to power and carried out the market reform with a “radicalism” that would have provoked tremendous social upheaval under the old government. But even if Ryzhkov is sacrificed after a “no” vote, Gorbachev today does not enjoy anything near the legitimacy of Solidarnosc. Or perhaps it is thought that continued deterioration of the economic situation will totally destroy any support for state regulation, and lead the workers to embrace the free market out of desperation.

### Yeltsin argues for worker protection

On a basic, “instinctive” level, there is no doubt that the workers oppose the underlying orientation of the government’s reform. It is telling that Yeltsin, today a very “radical” liberal, after having been a left socialist, has rejected the government’s reform, arguing that the market should be introduced in a manner that doesn’t hurt the people. It is also clear that Soviet workers are much more attached to socialist values and to socialist ideas than workers in Eastern Europe.

But from that one must be wary of concluding that this opposition will translate itself into political action for a socialist alternative. While at present the workers are strong enough to block the introduction of a coherent market reform on the part of this regime, without a positive alternative programme the effect of this opposition will be the exacerbation of the crisis, which will ultimately play into the hands of the liberal “democratic” saviours.

The left and socialist forces are stronger in the Soviet Union than in Eastern Europe and they are finally organizing, but they are nevertheless weak relative to the liberals, who control most of the media and offer a simple programme whose validity is “proven” by merely citing the high living standards in the developed capitalist countries — the underdeveloped ones are largely ignored — and by the fact that “the whole world embraces the market”. The Socialists, without any existing model to point to, can be painted as utopian “experimenters”.

It may be that the workers will have to experience a “real market reform” before the Socialists are able to become a genuine mass force in Soviet society. The next few months will certainly be crucial in that respect. ★

26. *Ibid.*

27. *Ibid.*, March 23, 1990.

28. *Newsweek*, June 4, 1990.

# Ukrainian — a language in danger

THE USSR SUPREME SOVIET passed a Law on the Languages of the Peoples of the Soviet Union in April 1990. In the June 14 issue of *Literaturna Ukraina*, Dymytro Pylypchuk outlined an argument that he thought should be heard in the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet for rejecting the law and adopting a law giving Ukrainian the status of the language of the republic.

The article appeared under the following epigraph: "In national policy, facts are islands in a sea of lies." The article itself contains many facts about the actual policies followed toward the languages and cultures of non-Russian peoples, and their effects. At every point the author contrasted the policy of Stalin and his heirs unfavorably with Lenin's national policy. The editors noted that the author had asked that his fee for the article be turned over to the fund for blockaded Lithuania. The following are major excerpts.

## DOCUMENT

**W**E HAVE always been told that in Lithuania, everything is in Lithuanian, just as in Georgia everything is in Georgian. But in the newspaper *Sovetskaya Litva* [the major unionist publication in Lithuania], we read a speech by the writer A. J. Juozenas-Baltusis at a session of the Supreme Soviet of the republic on granting Lithuanian the status of the official language:

"Where is this language? Such a loss makes you want to cry. As a writer for five decades, throughout all of Lithuania I have been looking for a typewriter with a Lithuanian keyboard. And, I, an old man, a Communist, a deputy to the Supreme Soviet, have been forced today to turn to a speculator-private businessman to change the keyboard on a typewriter that originally had a Russian keyboard, because that is the only kind sold."

It was a bolt out of the blue, when *Literaturnaya Gazeta* published the words of the well-known [Georgian] writer Otar Chiladze about the "ignorance of the Georgian language in, if not all, most institutions and organizations" in Georgia! And in the [Russian language] paper *Molodezh Gruzii* ["Youth of Georgia"], the senior academic at the Shota Rustaveli Institute for Literature of the Georgian SSR Academic of Sciences, Manana Girneishvili, wrote: "Most of our scholarly institutes conduct their work in Russian. They do not even have Georgian typewriters."

**8** In *Izvestnik Vyshei Shkoly* ["Higher Education Reporter"], we read that "in

Frunze [a major city in the Kirghiz republic], at the start of 1988, 42% of Kirghiz students were not studying through their native language. In the Mari autonomous republic, the native language has not been the language of instruction in the schools for nearly twenty years."

The journal *Narodnoe Obrazovanie* informs us... "Out of 144 schools in Kazan [a major Tatar center], only three are Tatar. In just the last 12 years, the number of students in Tatar schools in the republic has shrunk by 400%."

We thought that maybe only here, and in Byelorussia, was the language of the native people so disregarded in the schools. But in *Molodezh Gruzii*, we read the account of a high school teacher, S.H. Tikaradze: "In our district there is a school where 20 out of 30 students are exempted from studying Georgian."

## Increasing number cannot speak Ukrainian

Consider, good people, that out of 2,600,000 children in preschool programs in Ukraine, only 642,000 are being taught in Ukrainian. As a result, every six to seven years another two million are added to the number in the republic who cannot speak Ukrainian.

I would like the deputies of the Ukrainian parliament to consider one fact — out of every four children of Ukrainians, nearly three go through Russian language preschool institutions. The prog-

nosis is tragic. One of the largest peoples in Europe is disappearing.

In Ukrainian cities where millions of people live, such as Odessa and Kharkov, and where the native population predominates, there is not a single Ukrainian kindergarten, and in Dnepropetrovsk there are only two.

In Australia, where there are only about 30,000 Ukrainians, in the cities of Sidney and Melbourne, there are 12 Ukrainian schools, but in socialist Ukrainian cities where millions of people live, Donetsk, Dnepropetrovsk, Odessa, and Kharkov, there are practically none. In the capital of Ukraine [Kharkov], only one in five students studies Ukrainian. Not a single vocational-technical school teaches Ukrainian.

Through the Stalin-Suslov "deformation" of our ideology, several generations of Ukrainians grew up in the cities of the republic whose attitude to their native language was not only nihilistic but often aggressively hostile. Is this not a shame for socialism? After this, is it possible to talk about any socialist ideals?

Fifty years ago, 80% of students studied in schools with instruction in Ukrainian. Today, it is less than half.

A sociological study showed that in the Zaporozhia district, only 1.2% of Ukrainian engineers there used Ukrainian in speaking to subordinates.

## Shortage of non-Russian books

How could it be otherwise when in the Soviet Union (in 1987) for economics students and specialists only 10% of published reference books, only 7.4% of scholarly books and 2.7% of practical manuals are in languages other than Russian.

Likewise, the percentage of titles of textbooks published in Ukrainian in the Ukrainian SSR for university students decreased from 86.9% in 1946 to 8% in 1980.

Likewise, throughout the country, textbooks for university students in all disciplines in languages of the USSR other than Russian, represented only 5.1% of those printed, while those in foreign languages represented more than twice as much!

We beat the drum about the fact that in the Soviet period nearly 50 peoples with previously unwritten languages got their own writing systems, so that books and brochures have been published in 92 languages of peoples of the USSR.

But we forget to say that at the time of the all-Union census in 1926, 194 nationalities were registered (and about the same number of languages!), but in 1979, only 101 ethnic groups were mentioned.

Today, the encyclopedia says that there are about 130 languages in the USSR, but we overlook the fact that in a given year books and pamphlets are in fact published





in only 58 to 67 languages of peoples in the USSR, newspapers in 55, magazines in 44, and there are TV broadcasts only in 40. And only 39 were used in instruction in schools.

However, in the preface to the year-book *Pechat' SSSR v 1937 godu* ["The Press in the Soviet Union" in 1937], it says that in 1934-1937, textbooks were published in 90 languages of peoples of the USSR. How can it be that in 50 years, 50 languages have disappeared from instruction?

This was not a natural process. It was Stalin's jesuitical ideology, it was Suslov's jesuitical ideology, it was the repressive apparatus used against dissidents, it was the work of those who applied the ideological directives.

Likewise, in V. Shcherbitsky's<sup>1</sup> first year as first secretary of the CC of the Ukrainian CP, 3.3 million copies of Russian literary works were published in the republic. In the following year, 1974, it was 9.9 million, three times as much.

In the first year of Shcherbitsky's stewardship, Russification of university textbooks was pushed hard (in the first eight years of his rule the number of Ukrainian titles in this area decreased 5.7 times). There were massive closures of Ukrainian schools.

I would like to point out that Lenin sharply criticized the census of Russia's primary schools in 1911. "After two years, only the first volume has appeared" and "on the question of the native language of students there is only a report on the Russian language. The part on Byelorussian and Little Russian [Ukrainian] has been banned. The full data have been banned. It is forbidden to know the truth about the language spoken in the families of students."

### Census data not published in periodical press

And now, in the age of computers, the data of the 1979 all-Union census were published only six years later, and this is

the second year — in the age of *glasnost* — that the data of the 1989 census has not been published in the periodical press.

Not long ago, in response to my request, the ministries of education of several republics said that they had no data on the language of instruction.

We also know Lenin's description of Russia as a "prison house of peoples." Lenin wrote, "Nowhere in the world is there such oppression of the majority of the population."

But in Czarist Russia, Russian books and pamphlets represented 80.8% of publishing. In the first decade after the revolution, this decreased somewhat. But already in the 1950s, it had climbed back to the imperial level, and in 1987-1988, it had grown to 86.7%.

In one of Lenin's notebooks, with the heading "not for publication" there is a remark... "They are beginning to respect the party, if there is paper and technical resources." The administrative system with its chauvinist centralism not only "correctly understood" but transformed the order, adding itself "if there is paper, printing and technical facilities."

Today, any serious cultural activity is restricted by the center "because of the lack of paper." And the republics cannot use as they like that part of the all-Union pie that falls to them. Obviously, unlimited subscriptions for the central newspapers and magazines translates into tightening limitations on paper, not for the central publishing houses but for many publishing houses in the republics.

In 1988, out of 29.7 billion printed sheets of books and brochures published in the USSR, only 6.7 billion were printed in the non-Russian republics. It would be just, then, to demand that the little bit of paper given to the republics be used primarily for the national-cultural needs of the titular peoples.

However, in fact in the year referred to, in Ukraine 1,200,000,000 sheets were in Russian; in Byelorussia, it was 841 million, in Kazakhstan, 273 million; and in Moldavia, 249 million.

In 1984 and all the years of *perestroika*, the number of sheets printed in Russian outside the borders of the Russian federation has exceeded the number of sheets printed in all the other languages of the Soviet Union together.

### Number of Ukrainian periodicals dropping

In 1988, in the Russian Federation, 143 new Russian newspapers appeared, and

only three in other languages of the Soviet Union, although 23.9 million non-Russians live there.

At the same time, in Ukraine the number of Ukrainian newspapers and other periodicals dropped to 30, while the number of Russian-language ones increased to 28.

The 1979 statistics showed that out of the 23.9 million Russians living outside the Russian Federation in other Soviet republics, 19.4 million admitted that they spoke no other language of the Soviet Union.

The law I oppose is unconstitutional. Article 45 of the constitution of the USSR calls for *assuring* citizens the ability to study in their native language. The Law on the Language of Peoples of the USSR, instead of doing this, calls for *creating the conditions* for citizens of the USSR to study in their own languages.

It need only be added that Part Two of Article 7 of the Law on Languages of Peoples of the USSR strengthens the obligation to study the Russian language, and in Part Four provides for exemption from having to learn the languages of the republics.

Thus, the law that was supposed to protect the smaller, disregarded and poorly defended languages in fact promotes the already strong Russian language.

Every one of us has to understand that there is a difference between "education and training through the native language" and "teaching of the native language."

The latter means **instead of a rounded education in the native language giving only lessons in the native language** in schools and kindergartens. This cunning sabotage can be the first step to total abolition of the constitutional guarantees of Article 45.

### Leninist principles abandoned

The Leninist principle of "freedom of the native language" is transformed into the Law on Language of the Peoples of the USSR into a "free choice of the language of instruction."

In putting the stress on the rights of citizens to freely choose their language of instruction and not proposing the **right of citizens** to education through their native language, the Law on the Languages of the Peoples of the USSR in fact undermines Article 36 of the constitution of the USSR, which guarantees the possibility for people to use their native language. [The author concluded by noting Lenin's definition of slavery, ending "I appeal to you, let us get up off our knees."] ★

1. V. Shcherbitsky replaced Petr Shelest, who had made certain concessions to Ukrainian national feeling, opening the way for the Ukrainian renaissance of the 1960s. Shcherbitsky established a neo-Stalinist regime that only began to change in the fall of 1989, when he was removed from his post.

# Ukrainian solidarity with Lithuania

VSEVOLOD IS'KIV, a leader of the Ukrainian national democratic movement, RUKH, and a member of the Lvov city soviet, gave the following interview to Gerry Foley in Tallinn, Estonia, at the end of May, during the congress of the Estonian People's Front. The interview has been translated from Russian.

## HOW has RUKH responded to the blockade of Lithuania?

Today the question of helping Lithuania is very important for us in Ukraine, and especially for us in RUKH. In many cities, committees are being formed or have been formed to aid Lithuania. I can talk about Lvov most concretely. We have already turned over to Sajudis more than 10,000 rubles. We are continuing to collect money. I know that dozens of tons of gasoline have been collected. We have gone to factories that can offer help, either on conditions of exchange or whatever conditions are acceptable to factories in Lithuania in order to obtain other lubricants, everything that Lithuania needs in terms of fuel, crude oil and other things. We are collecting coupons, sugar, and of course medical supplies. We have done so much for Sajudis that they have opened up a little office in Lvov. And so the work is becoming more and more organized. There are about 50 people in our committee.

## How many committees are there?

I don't know exactly, but I know that efforts were made to form committees in every district, and so it is likely that they exist in most districts. I know that in many areas, RUKH is sponsoring them, but RUKH is not yet in a position everywhere to organize people for such aid, given the disinformation that there is in Ukraine. So, our help is more political and moral, and the amount of material aid is not so great. However democratic Ukraine is coming more and more to understand, and is beginning to get specific information about what is going on in the Baltic countries and particularly in Lithuania. This is leading to a turn in public opinion. Ukraine cannot yet detach itself from the Chernobyl affair and other problems related to its difficult position, and as a result

not everyone realizes that a blow to Lithuania is a blow to Ukraine, a blow to democratic Russia.

## Are the majority at least in western Ukraine favorable to Lithuania?

I know that the people massively support the struggle of the Lithuanian people, the Latvian people, the Estonian people and others who are trying to win their independence, to win social and democratic freedoms. I have no doubts about that. I would not want to make a distinction between western and eastern Ukraine. There is a problem of information. People [in western Ukraine] listen to Polish radio and the western radio stations. They watch TV from Czechoslovakia and Romania, and that produces an effect. These broadcasts don't reach the eastern Ukraine.

## Is there organized support for Lithuania in the Don coalfields?

Undoubtedly, but I don't know concretely about that. I talked with some people from the Armenian People's Front, and despite all the difficulties they have with the blockade they themselves are suffering in the Caucasus, they are also helping Lithuania.

## Does RUKH have any mass-circulation publications?

No democratic forces in Ukraine have any mass media, not even the strongest ones. There is *Narodna Hazeta*, but that has a circulation of ten thousand for 52 million Ukrainians. In Lvov, we have small, informal papers, six or seven of them, but they don't differ much from *Narodna Hazeta*. They appear two or three times a month. But it is easier for us in Lvov, because there is a youth paper there. It used to be called *Leninskaya Molod'* ("Leninist Youth"). Now it is called *Molodaya Halichina* ("Young Galicia"). Formally, it belongs to the Komsomol, but the Komsomol here has gone through such a transformation that it allowed us to present this paper as an organ of Rukh. It represented the positions on which we stand. Its circulation is more than 180,000.

In Lvov, Rukh won a complete victory in the elections. We won in the Lvov district, as well as in Galicia [western Ukraine] and in other areas in various degrees. But we won clear victories mostly in Galicia. The problem of information is the biggest problem. Today an intense struggle is going on with the new Soviet regime, if we can call it that, because I am also a deputy to the Lvov city soviet, and so I am part of the new Soviet regime, if

THE STATEMENT that follows was issued by the Lviv Committee for the Defence of Citizens' Rights on March 19.

THE MOMENT HAS COME for a decisive struggle of the oppressed peoples of the world's last empire, the USSR. The establishment of independent states has become the main prerequisite not only for achieving better living conditions and better conditions for the development of all the nations, but also an indispensable prerequisite for their biological survival. Ukraine is no exception. The threat of total destruction hangs over her, if she does not liberate herself from the colonial yoke in the coming years.

Lithuania is the first swallow to escape from the imprisoning imperialist cage. The courageous people of this small country have demonstrated great political maturity and great solidarity. Today, Lithuania is showing all peoples of the empire the best way to establish an independent state.

The breakup of the empire is inevitable. The way this occurs, in a civilized and peaceful manner or accompanied by violence and chaos, will depend on the capacity of all of us to take up the defense of the Lithuanian people against the violence of the imperialist forces.

In demonstrating our solidarity with the Lithuanian people, we are fighting for our own freedom.

People of Ukraine!

Remember that freedom is indivisible! Today, the front line of the struggle for your freedom is in Lithuania. So, we are not going to let the Moscow imperialists crush the young Lithuanian state.

We appeal to the workers' collectives and all the inhabitants of Ukraine to take a conscious civic position of solidarity with Lithuania.

In the event of a military intervention and violence against free Lithuania, we will respond by political protest strikes. ★

*The Lviv Committee to Defend the Rights of Citizens (Strike Committee)*

you like, a new democratic one. RUKH has come to power in Lvov. The party does not want to turn the [city soviet] paper over to us. We managed, by raising a lot of commotion, to get Kiev and Moscow to allow us to set up another paper.

We called it "*Za Vil' nu Ukrainu*" ["For a Free Ukraine"]. It has reached a circulation of 100,000. This is the first such paper, a government organ, that will present the program of the democratic bloc that is in power. And other parties can publish their papers. Such papers have already appeared, published by both the Republican Party and the Christian Democratic Party. ★

# Jewish flight from the USSR

**A MASSIVE GENERAL STRIKE** by Palestinians in February confronted international public opinion with the problem of large-scale immigration of Soviet Jews into Israel, where the Shamir government is trying to convince them to settle in the territories occupied in 1967. This problem is not new, but up until now the PLO leadership has sought to solve it through diplomatic negotiations with the USSR. However, as the Palestinians have learned several times to their cost, this method is not very effective unless it is combined with more concrete forms of pressure.

ANTONIO MOSCATO

**G**ORBACHEV is subject to all sorts of pressures, almost always much more effective than those of the PLO. First of all, there is an international campaign on human rights (which was started before he took the leadership of the CPSU and which has not been interrupted), which has pressed him to let citizens belonging to oppressed groups whose right to emigrate is supported by a state, or even groups of compatriots abroad, to leave the USSR.

The right to emigrate has been very widely granted not only to Jews but also to Volga Germans and Armenians. The Volga Germans were victims of Stalin, deported from their home areas during the second world war as "Germans" and therefore potential supporters of Hitler, although they had settled in Russia two centuries before, and supported Soviet power at the time of the revolution. They were allowed to emigrate on the basis of an accord with West Germany, which financed their move.

## Armenian emigration encouraged

The Armenians were authorized to leave both because of a campaign waged by the diaspora communities and in order to defuse a factor of instability (the departure of the least controllable elements and those who inhabited the areas bordering Azeri populations has been favored).

Over the last three decades, Jewish emigration has been subject to very inconsistent legislation. The rules have always been conditioned by negotiations with the United States (and therefore with the powerful Jewish institutions and the pro-Israeli lobby — although these do not automatically agree — which wield con-

siderable weight in American political life), but not directly with Israel.

On the other hand, especially over the last ten years, 70 to 90% of Soviet citizens who got an exit visa because of their Jewish origins stopped in Vienna or Rome to wait for a visa for the United States or Canada. In fact, among the small minority that agreed to go to Israel there were a certain number of persons who were not even of Jewish origin, but were just looking for more comfortable lodging than that provided by the Italian authorities in Ostia or Ladispoli (small satellite towns of Rome).

Today, the situation has changed radically. For various reasons, the USSR has begun a rapprochement with Israel, with which it has reestablished diplomatic relations. Face-to-face meetings between representatives of the Soviet and Israeli governments — which occurred already in secret in the Brezhnev years — have multiplied and gone public.

Moreover, Gorbachev and Shevarnadze have gone well beyond the formality of reestablishing public relations with Israel. They have agreed to discuss with Israeli representatives the conditions for what amounts to the deportation of the Soviet Jews, without admitting this to international public opinion. This, moreover, has rightly aroused the indignation of the democratic, anti-racist minority in the Jewish community in Israel.

To prevent the 90 to 95% of Jewish emigrants who show not the slightest interest in "returning to the land of their ancestors" from going to other countries, the Israeli leaders have pursued two courses. They successfully demanded that the United States block immigration permits granted by other countries. Secondly, they negotiated an air link between Moscow and Tel-Aviv to stop any running away to

alternative "promised lands". For its part, the United States made the establishment of a direct air link between the USSR and Israel a condition for the USSR getting "most favored nation" status in commercial relations — it was granted to almost all the East European countries in 1989.

The Soviet Union has hesitated somewhat, and for the moment has preferred to permit only rare direct flights, giving priority to flights through Bucharest (whose air link with Israel was never interrupted, thanks to the good relations that Ceausescu maintained with Tel Aviv) or via Budapest, where a link with Israel was recently re-established in the context of Hungary's rapprochement with the United States and European imperialism. What is more, in the wake of the 1989 upsets, Czechoslovakia, Poland and East Germany have resumed diplomatic relations with Israel.

This attitude is not only due to external pressures. In many of these countries (first of all Poland, where some decades ago a "Communist" minister, Moczar, had an army printing house reprint the *Protocols of Zion*), official "anti-Zionism" has had an anti-semitic undercurrent that has led a number of oppositionists to distrust any criticisms of Israel, even well-founded ones.

The same so-called Communist governments went on to characterize as "progressive" many Arab regimes that not only did not deserve this appellation but aroused a strong hostility among the Soviet, Czech and East German peoples because of the arrogance and corruption of their representatives, whose privileges made them resemble the local bureaucrats.

## "Fraternal aid" spent on weapons

What is more, the idea began to spread among citizens of the Soviet Union and the East European countries that their privations were the result of the generosity with which their governments had been offering "fraternal aid" to these regimes, which the latter used mainly to buy weapons.

Thus, Gorbachev and the leaders of the hybrid regimes set up from Berlin to Bucharest after the 1989 political earthquakes, have certainly not had to confront any popular pressure on behalf of the Palestinians. Instead, they are faced by a favorable attitude to Israel that has arisen on the rebound against the policy followed in the past. But this factor is not decisive (these leaders have been able quite effectively to resist many other demands by their peoples). The real problem is why so many Soviet citizens are ready to use any pretext today to emigrate, and why their number includes so many Jews.

First of all, you have to understand the worries of most Soviet citizens about the worsening of all their country's problems, when there is no hint of any solution on

# Is the crisis over?

**THE STOCK MARKET CRASH** of 1987 seemed to many to signal the onset of a serious recession. The recovery from the 1987 shock has given the impression that in some way the crisis of the International capitalist economy is over, an impression further strengthened by comparisons with the disintegration of the "command planning" economies. The euphoria over the "victory of capitalism" currently finds its most concentrated expression in Germany. In the following article, first published in the German socialist weekly, *Sozialistische Zeitung* of June 7, 1990, Winfried Wolf looks at the sources and limits of the prolonged period of growth.

## WINFRIED WOLF

**T**HE CAPITALIST business cycle is not dead. We have this on the best authority — that of a June 1989 study from the big business orientated Institut der Deutschen Wirtschaft (IW — Institute of German Economy). The report looked at economic development since the 1960s and concluded: "It cannot be said that the business cycle has been overcome." Overall economic development contin-

ues to take place through the classical sequence of upturn, boom, downturn and recession.

Nonetheless proponents of Marxist crisis theory are not quite out of the woods. There remain two specific questions put by the unbelievers and waverers. Firstly — where are we in fact now in the cycle? Where is the crisis, and why has it failed to appear? And secondly — what impact will the annexation of East Ger-

### *Continued from previous page*

the horizon. Alongside the economic and social problems, and because of them, the deepening of ethnic conflicts is undoubtedly arousing considerable anxiety. The most conservative and discredited sections of the apparatus (but also other layers of the population) have looked for scapegoats among "outsiders" — Armenians for the Azeris, Meskhetian Turks for the Uzbeks, and in turn the Baltic and Caucasian peoples and the Jews for the Russians (the same phenomenon occurred with the resurgence of anti-semitism in Poland in 1968 and 1981).

The result of this is general insecurity. Outside of the victims of actual pogroms (who, for the moment, include no Jews, contrary to what Zionist propaganda would have us believe), no one can have any confidence in the future. Migrations to escape the first persecutions have given rise to new tensions where these people have gone to find refuge ("they will take our houses") and new pogroms. The Armenians have suffered most from this so far.

In the biggest republic and the one with the largest population, Russia, resort to anti-semitism has been common practice. This is combined with a strong hostility to all other peoples. The Baltic peoples,

because they are supposed to be "rich." The Caucasians, because they are supposed to sell their flowers and vegetables at very high prices. Asians, because they are "swarthy." Why the Jews? Since 1939, they have had no weight in the Soviet apparatus (they were all removed, starting with Litvinov, the minister of foreign affairs in 1939, in order to foster the deal with Hitler), and from 1948 to 1952 they suffered a wave of persecution that was planned to culminate (after the "doctors' plot trial," which was stopped only after Stalin's death) in their deportation en masse.

Why portray the Jews, then, as Pamiat [the Russian far right organization] habitually does, as the shadowy plotters of all the regime's misdeeds? The reason is the same as the one that led Moczar in Poland in 1968 to present 10,000 Communists of Jewish origin, almost all of them very poor and hostile to the bureaucracy, as string pullers of a vast "Jewish plot."

The real reason that a crisis-ridden bureaucracy on the verge of bankruptcy uses this infamous resort is that anti-semitism corresponds to well-worn stereotypes rooted in the subconscious of the most backward and least politicized masses. This is why the unease that spread in the postwar period among Jews in the USSR (a country that for the first 20 years of its existence seemed to give a

many by West Germany have on the concrete economic situation?

### Analysts surprised by duration of upturn

From analysis of the cyclical development of the FRG since 1948 we can draw the conclusion that, on average, the cycles last about five years. Only the most recent cycle lasted longer — from 1976 to 1982/3. The present cycle also seems to be going on a long time — for seven years already, and now into its eighth. From a historical point of view there is nothing strange about this. In the last century there were a series of cycles that lasted more than 12 years. Nonetheless, the survival of this cycle into its eighth year has surprised almost all analysts.

There is a possible explanation: the "2KR formula" which in German stands for Credit, War, Armaments [Kredit, Krieg, Rüstung]. The general expansion of credit, that is the creation of artificial demand; the creation of special demand by the Iran/Iraq war; the fall in oil prices and worldwide rearmament, which also creates an exceptional demand — these three elements have played a crucial role in the prolongation of the cycle.

● The "Gulf War" between Iran and Iraq meant a new and specific type of recycling of petrodollars. The war, which lasted seven years, involved massive arms

positive example of a solution to the Jewish question, even in the eyes of a writer and journalist like Joseph Roth) has led to panic at a time when all points of reference seem to be collapsing, and many signs seem to point to an uncontrolled explosion of inter-ethnic hatreds.

In view of this phenomenon, democrats face unavoidable tasks. First of all, following the example of the Palestinians in the occupied territories, they have to bring pressure to bear on Israel so as to end the forced deportation of Soviet Jews to that country. The latter must be able to choose freely the countries where they want to go. At the same time, it is necessary to bring pressure to bear on all Shamir's accomplices, notably the imperialist governments, to remove any restriction on immigration of Soviet Jews. Like any other people, from Senegal to Sri Lanka, from Morocco to the Sudan, Soviet Jews must have the right to go where they want when they are forced to leave their country for economic reasons, or because of restrictions on their freedom.

These are necessary tasks. But they are insufficient to solve the problem at its source. There has to be a radicalization of the fight for democracy in the USSR, leading to a removal of the bureaucrats, who are trying to perpetuate their rule by fomenting hatred among the peoples. ★

buying — worth some \$250 billion, above all in the West.

This sum does not include the rising purchases by the neighbouring countries, above all Saudi Arabia. At the same time, in order to finance the war, Iran and Iraq and the states supporting them were ready to boost crude oil production and sales to the limit.

This meant a massive fall in the price of crude oil. The OPEC cartel was rendered ineffective. Between 1982 and 1989 the leading OECD states (Japan, West Europe, and USA/Canada) made more than \$500 billion out of arms sales and savings due to the oil price fall. We have seen a special sort of anti-recession programme, paid for by the blood of hundreds of thousands of people. Firms such as Daimler, Saab or Volvo were selling to both sides in the conflict, and the same policy of even-handedness was followed by the US secret service. As far as the West was concerned the war couldn't go on long enough. Anyway, the West is now rearming both states on a big scale.

● In the 1980s, Western arms expenditure massively increased. Between 1981 and 1990 in the US it doubled (to \$300 billion), whilst in West Germany there was a 50% rise. The economies were stimulated with vast sums. Thus in 1981-89 precisely \$1,100 billion more was spent on arms than in the previous decade. This also is a type of anti-recession programme.

The state gives out vast and growing orders to a number of key firms in the heart of industry and to some extent transforms them into arms manufacturers (General Motors, Ford, Daimler, now BMW). The profits are guaranteed; there is no entrepreneurial risk.

These programmes are financed partly through taxation of the average wage-earners, and partly by the poor, through cuts in social expenditure. And also by credit.

● This brings us to the third element in the 2KR formula — the huge expansion of credit. All the drivel about a "conservative economic policy" and "savings" conceals the reality of a worldwide policy of using every possible form of indebtedness to moderate tendencies towards crisis and delay its outbreak. Thus the public debt in the USA has risen from \$914 billion in 1980 to a likely \$3000 billion by the end of 1990. In West Germany over the same period it rose from \$560 billion to \$1,400 billion.

Over the past decade the USA, the world's leading economic power has gone from being the planet's biggest creditor to its biggest debtor. In 1990 the USA's external debt

reached some \$400 billion (the record holder in the third world is Brazil with a debt of \$120 billion). There are other countries where the state debt has reached a level that makes it a timebomb possibly implying state bankruptcy — this is true in, for example, Italy and Greece.

All these three special factors cannot operate indefinitely. Credit carries interest and growing compound interest. Iran and Iraq are broke; arms spending will remain constant at the present level — the highest since World War 2 — for this reason as well, and not at all because of the "world situation".

### Signs of recession in three imperialist countries

Does the end of the special factors mean the end of the boom? Yes and no. There are clear signs of the start of recession in three of the leading imperialist countries — the USA, Japan and Britain. There has been a massive fall in profits in the US between the first quarter of 1989 and the same period in 1990. This is especially true for the leading sector, the car industry, which has seen a real collapse this year. Similar signs are apparent in Britain, where they are interwoven with the crisis of the Thatcher regime.

Finally Japan; "Suddenly the whole world sees an uncertain future for Japan", according to the chief economist of the powerful Japanese Tokai Bank, quoted in *Die Zeit*. There are a series of material crisis tendencies at work. But the main accent in Japan, interestingly enough, is on general uncertainty which

has a lot to do with the stock market.

The Tokyo market has risen more steeply than anywhere else. The sudden falls seen this year have thus had a more dramatic character than elsewhere. Between January 1 and mid-May, 1990, the Tokyo stock market lost a quarter of its value. At the start of June it was still a fifth below the level at the end of 1989.

At the same time, the big business gurus on Wall Street and in London and Tokyo are voicing another fear: that the "reunification" of Germany will, after a short transitional phase, make the German economy overwhelmingly powerful. This will mean a sharpening of competition. It will be Japan and the USA who will lose out, and perhaps also Britain. Other EC countries, such as France and the Benelux countries (as well as Switzerland and Austria) may profit in the wake of the German rise.

We have often commented on the negative side of the annexation of the GDR at a human level. From the bourgeois economic point of view the conditions are favourable. There will suddenly be between two and three million unemployed in the ex-GDR. Most of these will be well-trained workers.

This in turn will put pressure on the West German working class to moderate their wage and social demands. Even skilled workers will not escape. Wage costs will fall, and profits rise. The GDR will also open up a relatively big additional market for capital and goods. While a large proportion of the accounts, wages and rents will be swapped 1:1 and while East German goods are out of the running, there will for a definite period of about a year be a supplementary market for West German industry.

All this means that the Great German Boom may last for some two years. This also means that, as in the 1960s, there will be a "divided" world economic cycle. In Britain, the USA and Japan there will be recession, but in Germany and the surrounding countries the period of growth will continue. But the bitter end may not be so far behind. If West German capital seizes on the GDR in a parasitic way and if investment is selective, then the prolongation of the West German boom will be nothing more than a straw fire.

The special stimulus provided by the 1:1 exchange of West for East German marks will lead to inflationary pressures. State spending on structural investment in the ex-GDR is almost entirely financed by credit, which implies in the long term a rise in interest rates. Finally, the basic tendencies towards crisis will find



# New threat to abortion rights

WHILST recent months have seen setbacks for hard line anti-abortionists in Great Britain (see IV 185) and Belgium (see IV 188), the right in West Germany is intent on rolling back the already limited access to abortion which women in the Federal Republic have. The right wing offensive has an added significance because of the impending unification of the West with East Germany, where women have already begun to mobilize in defence of the more progressive abortion legislation introduced by the old neo-Stalinist regime.

ANGELA KLEIN

**S**TREIBL, the successor to Franz Josef Strauss as head of the Bavarian government, has made the cessation of funding for abortions and the suppression of the legal possibility of abortion in cases of social distress a personal goal. So much so that he accuses the government of a lack of political will in pursuing one of the projects most dear to the right before their return to power.

The legislative measures proposed by CDU deputies to increase the administrative difficulties involved in having an abortion (for example through the separation of the place and time of interview and prescription) have met with the resistance of the FDP (Free Democrats, a liberal party in coalition with the CDU). At the end of 1989, the coalition government ruled out their consideration before the end of the current legislature.

Yet the content of these measures was still too soft in the eyes of the self-styled "protectors of life" of the CDU/CSU. Regions governed by these parties have prosecuted abortion-related trials at Memmingen in Bavaria, and now Koblenz in Rhineland Palatinate.

## Roundabout attack on legal provisions

In retrospect, it is obvious that the essential objective of these trials was not to establish whether the law had been broken (for example the carrying out of an abortion outside the framework envisaged by paragraph 218 of the current legislation), but rather to empty certain

provisions of this paragraph of their content — some tribunals have had the effrontery to seek to establish after the event if a situation of distress really existed. In reality it is a policy of massive intimidation of women and doctors to dissuade them from making use of their rights.

During these two trials, the authorities have seized files containing the names of 10,000 patients; they have gathered together hundreds of testimonies of women who have had abortions. They seek to use statistics to prove what is already officially affirmed in Bavaria; "abortion is no longer limited to certain categories. When 87% are for reasons of distress it is clear that very few abortions take place because of material difficulties". These are the words of Udo Steiner, a professor of public and administrative law at the university of Regensburg, charged by the Bavarian government with lodging a complaint to the supreme constitutional tribunal that the legal framework is not being respected.

When it is known that 200-300,000 women have abortions in West Germany each year, that the number of unemployed has for some years exceeded two million, that the number of women who live alone with their children has grown constantly and that the FRG [Federal Republic of Germany] has, with 13.8% of abortions effected legally, one of the lowest rates in western Europe (Ireland and southern Europe aside, only Holland has a lower rate with 9.7%), the statement that there will no longer be situations of distress in the FRG appears incredible.

## Long-term anti-abortion strategy

The Bavarian government's complaint is only a new logical stage of a systematic long term policy which seeks the rolling back of even the timid reform of 1974, and the complete suppression of abortion for social reasons. Beyond even this, it is abortion for medical reasons which is at stake.

The constitutional tribunal reflects the positions of the federal government, the

federal parliament and the regional parliaments, political bodies essentially composed of men who are being permitted once again to decide on the fate of women's bodies.

The regional government of Bavaria, by exercising this new political pressure on the federal government, hopes to get its legislation passed before the end of the year, lest the results of the next legislative elections should prove unfavourable to it. The detour via the constitutional tribunal, while delaying the process, will ultimately make it easier to deal with those political bodies which might prove obstructive to new attacks on abortion rights (a regional SPD government for example) as in 1975, when the constitutional tribunal declared unconstitutional the introduction of a time limit during which it would have been possible to have a legal abortion, which had been decided by the government with the approval of a majority of political opinion.

## Chameleons of East German politics

The recourse to the constitutional tribunal could have another justification for the anti-abortion lobby. A time limit for legally authorized abortion has existed in the GDR [German Democratic Republic] since 1972. Although chameleons like the DSU president, the pastor Ebeling, and the East German CDU wish to roll the tide of history backwards on this point, the women of the East are more and more resolved to defend their social conquests.

In the context of annexation, involving the imposition on the GDR of the whole of the legal apparatus of the FRG, a decision of the tribunal on this question would deprive women of the possibility of establishing by their mobilizations a relationship of forces which could lead to the opposite result — the adoption by the FRG of the more progressive social and legislative measures prevailing in the GDR.

In the FRG a large unitary front has been formed which, on June 16, organized a demonstration for the suppression of clause 218 of the penal code. It is both possible and desirable to organize common actions of women from the FRG and the GDR.

This demonstration found a large echo in the ranks of the trade unions and of the social democracy. The demand for the suppression of paragraphs 218 and 219 has been made central through the united action of the social democratic women (ASF, the organization of women in the SPD) and IG Metall. It won support at the last congress of the SPD in Berlin, in which it was said that "penal proceedings are not an appropriate measure to resolve conflicts linked to pregnancy. That is why we demand that the indispensable legal measures are not linked to repressive measures".

This formulation avoids calling for the pure and simple suppression of 218, which is an old demand of the autonomous women's movement. Its justification is a little tenuous — it is argued that the suppression of the clause would not eliminate the risk of judicial proceedings, for it would still be possible to invoke the clause concerning bodily mutilations. But the women of the ASF do not demand the suppression of this clause. On the other hand the formulation "suppression of the penal code" leaves open the possibility of introducing new legislation on abortion in the civil code. This is precisely what the ASF wants. Abortion must be made legal-

ly possible up to the 22nd week and the state must provide the necessary equipment in sufficient quantities. The 22nd week is, for the ASF, the limit when "the foetus can live independently outside the body of the mother. It is the limit of the right of women to decide". The old debate of the 1970s is then manifestly not yet over. But we cannot permit ourselves the sectarianism of those years. It is indisputable that the proposals of the ASF would constitute a great step forward for women. This does not render superfluous the struggle for the total suppression of 218, but makes a common campaign a burning issue of the day.★

vote in general elections in the whole of Germany needed to obtain representation in parliament.

That would mean that for the first time for decades a significant compact political force to the left of social democracy and the greens would be present in the German parliament, with the possibility of exercising pressure on both these parties.

This is considered as a source of nuisance if not a risk of political destabilization by the bourgeois parties and the West German SPD. They have started frantic manoeuvres in order to make that possibility more unlikely. They want do whatever possible to order to weaken and even destroy the PDS.

One of the manoeuvres they are employing to this end is an attempt to expropriate the PDS. The new, pro-capitalist majority of the GDR parliament (Volkskammer) has pushed through, without any debate, a law which seizes all the financial holdings of the PDS and puts them under state control, pending an enquiry on their origins.

### Funds and political opportunities

The argument used for justifying this law is that these funds are ill-gotten, the result of the exploitation of the East German people and a source of basic inequality of opportunity for the various political parties operating inside the GDR and tomorrow in a united Germany.

In the new German context this law is, in fact, a McCarthy-type attack on an organization of the labour movement, and an inadmissible limitation of democratic freedoms. We have especially to denounce the cynical hypocrisy which lies behind that movement.

Why is money originating from the bureaucracy's power and privileges more tainted and illegitimate than money originating from capitalist wealth, accumulated through the exploitation of the working class, that is, the extraction of surplus value?

In the GDR, there is a massive influx of CDU, CSU and FDP money, all coming from capitalist subsidies for these parties. Doesn't this upset the "equality of opportunities" between political parties — especially when the holdings of the main opposition party are being seized?

And what about the funds of social democracy, originating from out-

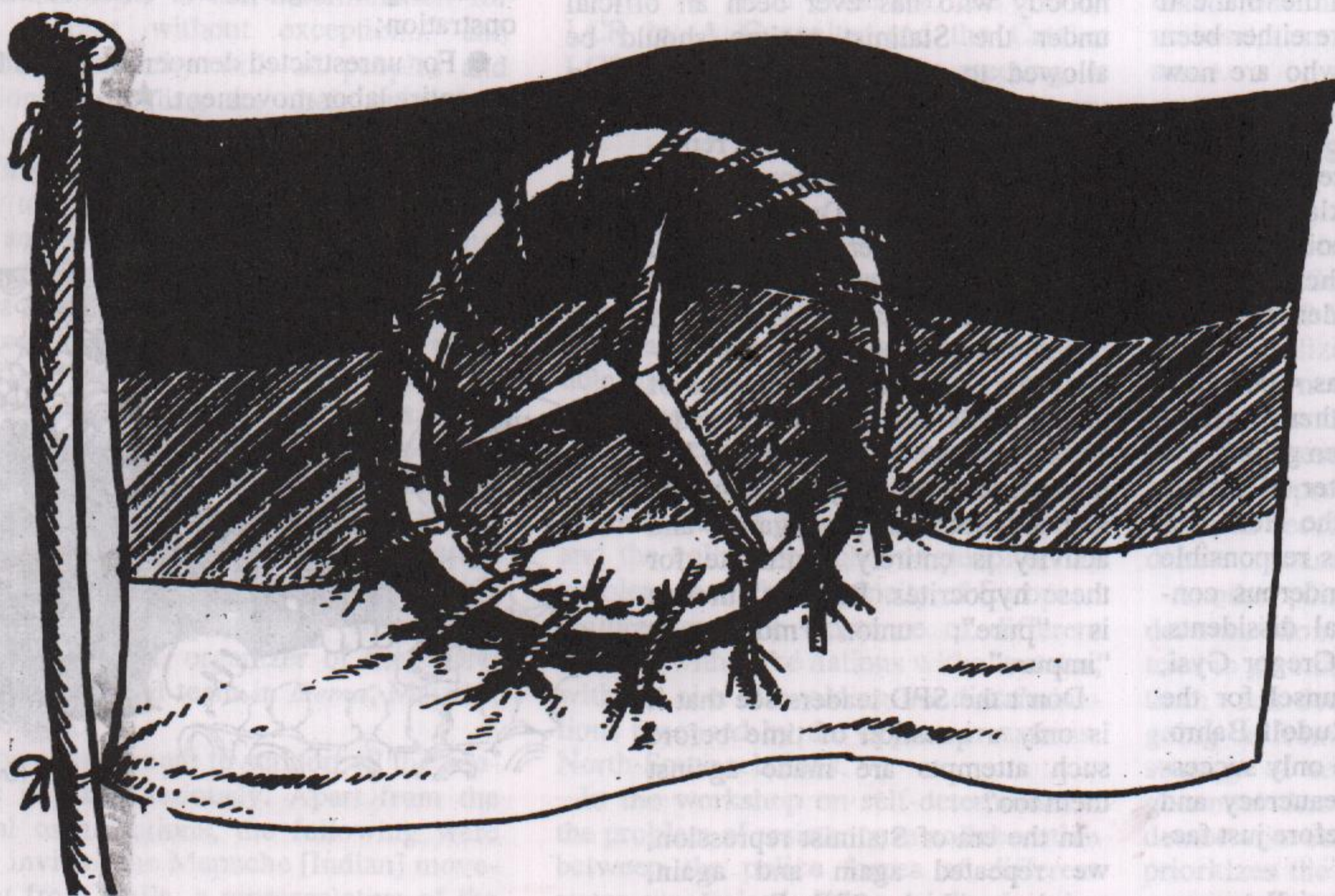
## The new McCarthyism

**THE absorption of the GDR by the FRG, whatever its rhythms and the moment of its finalization, poses several delicate problems for German big business and the bourgeois establishment. One of these, which has until now, received less attention than the monetary, economic and social contradictions which will be accentuated, is the future line-up of political parties in a united Germany.**

**ERNEST MANDEL**

**T**HE FORMER ruling party in the GDR, the SED (Socialist Unity Party of Germany — the Communist Party), has transformed itself into a new party, the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS). It is no longer a government party and is the main opposition party in the GDR. In the first free parliamentary elections, it received 16% of the popular vote. In the subsequent municipal elections, it received about 30% of the vote in such working class strongholds as East Berlin, Eisenhüttenstadt (the steel industry town), Schwebin, Neubrandenburg, Rostock and so on.

Public opinion polls also credit it with 2% of the vote in West Germany. If these projections are correct, and if the PDS maintains its mass base in the present territory of the GDR, it would just go beyond the threshold of 5% of the total



right corruption, not to speak of those originating from the CIA at the beginning of the Cold War with the purpose of splitting the international trade union movement? Walter Reuther, who co-headed the operation, has now publicly admitted this.

So, if we are to apply even a minimum of distributive justice, one would have to seize and investigate the financial holdings of all the German parties. This would make the functioning of all parties practically impossible and would be a big blow against political freedom and democracy as such. Of course, one should be in favour of all concrete measures which would establish and guarantee financial equality of opportunity between all parties but to seize the holdings of the PDS alone is a clear attempt to deliver a blow against that party's chances in a united Germany, if not to try to destroy it.

The fact that, for purely electoral reasons, the SPD is in the forefront of this attack shows how unprincipled that party has become, not only on the basic problems of workers' interests but also on elementary principles of democratic rights and freedoms.

### Bureaucratic privileges hated by the masses

Undoubtedly, the SPD's demand has a popular echo among the masses of the GDR. The privileges of the SED bureaucracy, seen as a product of exploitation of the toilers, are legitimately hated by these masses. Inasmuch as big cases of individual corruption, theft and so on are involved, they should indeed be the objects of inquiry and, if necessary, prosecution by the courts.

In that respect three remarks should be made which again underline the cynical hypocrisy of the anti-PDS offensive. In the first place, a major part of the financial holdings of the old SED have either been siphoned off by turncoats who are now members of the pro-capitalist parties or are integrating themselves into private firms, or have been privatized or confiscated. Many of the nomenklatura politicians have joined the bourgeois CDU and social democrats. Why are their financial holdings not also put under financial receivership?

The East German CDU has 4,000 full-timers. Who is paying for them? Aren't they also financed by ill-gotten gains?

The present liberal minister of justice held the same post under the Honecker dictatorship. As such he was responsible for the persecution and slanderous condemnation of many political dissidents. The chairman of the PDS, Gregor Gysi, on the other hand, was counsel for the defence of dissidents like Rudolf Bahro. So to say that the PDS is the only successor organization of the bureaucracy and the CDU/SPD are not is therefore just factually untrue.

In fact, the PDS is only partially a suc-

cessor organization of the SED. Not only is it no longer a state/government party, but it is also a party which contains many members who were not members of the SED. It is a party which has ideologically broken with the SED legacy to a large extent.

### No coherent balance-sheet of Stalinism

It is true that a minority of the old SED bureaucrats — those who cannot find a place in the power structure of a capitalist Germany — are trying to cling to the PDS as a last resort in order to survive politically and materially.

Without a complete and coherent balance-sheet of the roots and nature of Stalinism and of bureaucracy and the way to fight them efficiently inside the labor movement, the credibility of the PDS as a new organization cannot be assured.

In the third place, it is not true that the bulk of the holdings of the old SED is still in the hands of the PDS. A considerable part of these holdings have been abandoned, being either in the hands of the state, now run by the CDU/SPD, or in the hands of the CDU/LDP, or already in the hands of the private sector.

But this whole conflict poses a more fundamental question. The SPD's attempt to cash in on the popular hostility to the bureaucracy's privileges by the expropriation of the PDS, is literally suicidal from the point of view of the whole international social democratic current of the labor movement. Historical experience has proven again and again that to encourage McCarthyite reflexes is to unleash a whirlwind which will not stop at the doorstep of your own little comfortable villa.

In Romania some thousands of anti-communist demonstrators have asked that nobody who has ever been an official under the Stalinist regime should be allowed to stand for elections for ten years. That would force the SPD to dismiss quite a lot of its present representatives in the GDR, to start with the former mayor of Dresden.

In Britain, there have been attacks on the National Union of Mineworkers for having received "tainted money" to finance the miners' strike. Already the seizure of union funds has become a widespread practice in that country. But international funding of anti-union and anti-socialist propaganda and activity is entirely legitimate for these hypocrites. Bankers' money is "pure"; union money is "impure".

Don't the SPD leaders see that it is only a question of time before such attempts are made against them too?

In the era of Stalinist repression, we repeated again and again, together with the SPD, Rosa Lux-

emburg's formula: "Freedom is always the freedom of those who think otherwise." The SPD leadership will only ignore this formula in the GDR today and in the united Germany of tomorrow, at a high price for itself and for the future of democratic freedom in general.

When the McCarthy offensive was unleashed in the USA, first against genuine Stalinists whom we had consistently fought against politically, we pointed out that they were unable to defend themselves in a credible way because they had themselves condoned the political repression of our comrades of the SWP [US Socialist Workers Party] during the Second World War.

But in spite of that fact, we defended the Stalinists against the McCarthyite cops, and rightly so, because very soon McCarthyism proved itself to be a machine for the repression of elementary freedom of thought and action of practically everybody outside the extreme right-wing forces.

### Solidarity takes precedence over differences

We applied the golden rule of solidarity with all tendencies of the labor movement, regardless of political differences. In the name of that same proud and principled tradition, we now call upon all tendencies in the German labor movement and left to unite their forces:

- Against all discrimination with regard to the PDS or any other tendency in the labor movement;
- For the abolition of all discriminatory anti-communist legislation like the law forbidding dissidents to exercise certain professions (Berufsverbote);
- For the abolition of all legislation restricting the right to free unarmed demonstration;
- For unrestricted democratic rights for the entire labor movement. ★





# Nationalist organizations meet in Barcelona

THE SECOND ASSEMBLY of CONSEO (Conference of Stateless Nations in Western Europe) took place in Barcelona on May 26-28, 1990. The previous conference was in 1985. The CONSEO was set up by the main national liberation movements in Western Europe (A Cuncolta from Corsica, Herri Batasuna from Euskadi, A Crida from Catalonia, Sinn Fein from Ireland, Engann from Brittany, the Galician National Bloc and so on). Its stated objective is to create "a platform for exchange and collaboration" between all the nations without states.

## ALAIN NAZIER

THESE organizations, whether political, social, cultural or civic, have come together around a platform centred on "the explicit recognition of belonging to a people with its own identity and to a European nation without its own state, the demand for a Europe in which all peoples and nations are granted full recognition and can participate in conditions of equality and sovereignty in projects aimed at better understanding and mutual cooperation...the right to self-determination for all peoples without exception... and explicit solidarity with all peoples and nations struggling for their emancipation..."

This second conference was an opportunity to look at where the struggle has got to, and to debate the international situation after the collapse of Stalinism in the East and the coming of 1992 in Western Europe. This was "a moment for reflection and debate amongst the diverse — and heterogeneous — living forces...who, faced with all the questions about the future of Europe, are trying to bring forward positive alternatives based on the right to self-determination and 'respect for the intrinsic equality of each existing people' to the prevailing confusion". (Aurell Argemi, organizer of the CONSEO's technical team in *Dema*, May 24, 1990).

The commitment to support all the peoples is taken seriously. Apart from the usual organizations, the following were also invited: the Mapuche [Indian] movement from Chile, a representative of the

Ecuadorian Indians, the Armenian liberation movement, the PLO, the Kurdish liberation front and an Estonian exile from New York. From Western Europe invitations to participate or observe were widely distributed to nationalist political or cultural movements by the members of the international committee. The Basque Trotskyist organization, the LKI, was invited by Herri Batasuna, the French LCR by A Cuncolta, and the Catalan LCR helped to organize the meeting, at which about 300 people were present.

### European unification and nations without states

After an evening session at which the Armenian and Estonian speakers explained their respective situations, the delegates divided into four working groups to consider the following themes: the restructuring of the European market and its economic consequences for the nations without states; self-determination and the collective rights of peoples; the problem of the homogeneity of European cultures and the existence of different cultures within the nations without states, with the aim of avoiding the discriminations practised by the oppressor nations; North-South relations.

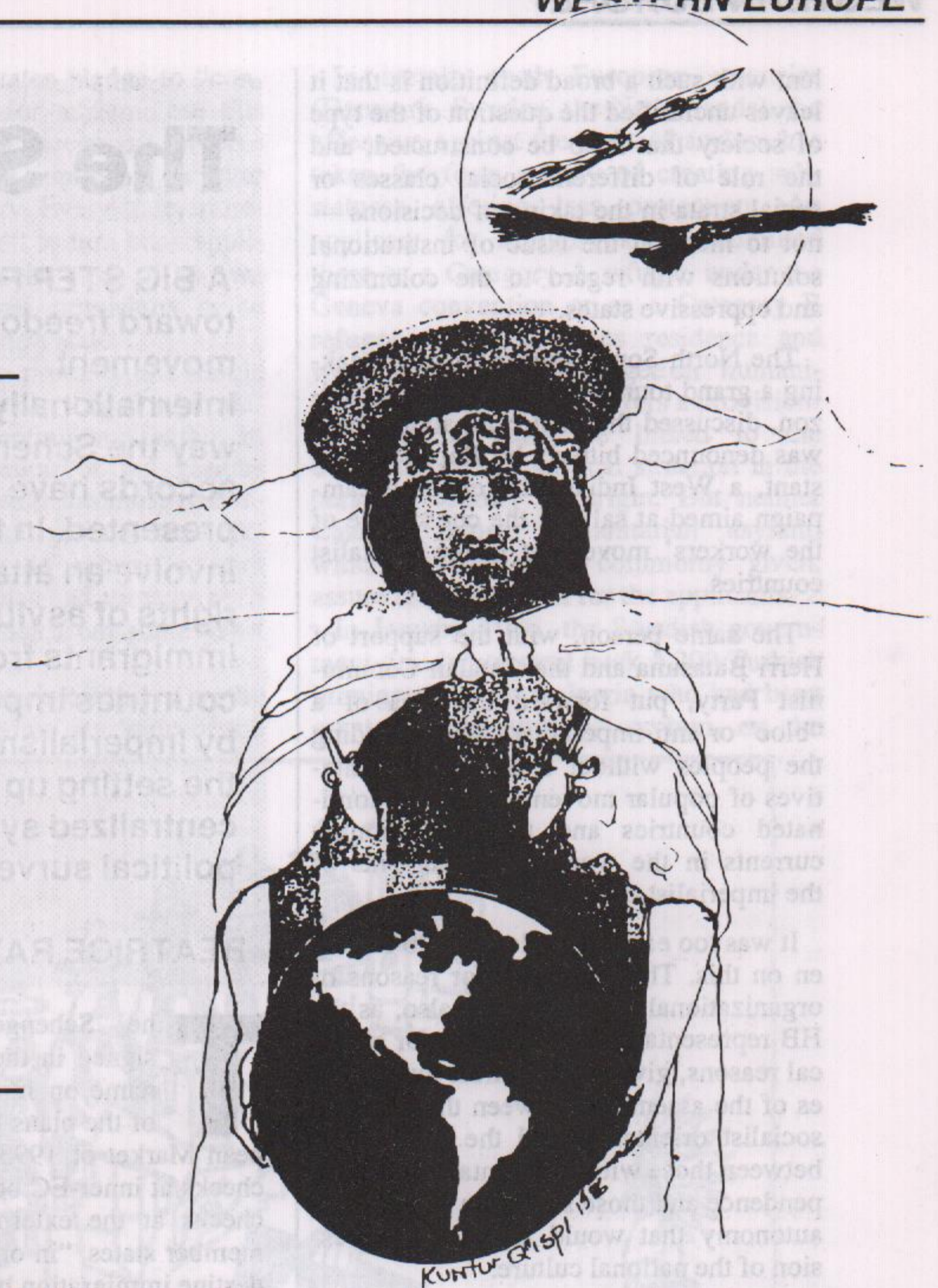
In the workshop on self-determination the problem of resistance to collaboration between the police forces of different states was raised. What might the ele-

ments of a common strategy with regard to this be, given the differing situations of the various stateless nations? What role might Europe play for these nations? There can be no doubt that, on the economic level, there is a reinforcement of the capitalist system, but things are less clear from the point of view of political national demands, at least according to some.

### Towards the Europe of the peoples?

Are we going to see a movement from the Nation-State towards the Europe of the Peoples? Will the movement towards the "federalization" of Europe allow the peoples a new margin for manoeuvre? Would federalism on the German model permit the resolution of the political problems of oppression and the issue of harmonious economic development? The debate remains open.

Another discussion centred on self-determination. It was A Cuncolta which tried to give the most concise answer. For them self-determination is a process going on from day to day for which "the strategy of self-organization is the best guarantee that no regime can escape from democratic control...the approach which prioritizes the means of struggle... is an approach for the future." The only prob-



lem with such a broad definition is that it leaves unclarified the question of the type of society that is to be constructed, and the role of different social classes or social strata in the taking of decisions — not to mention the issue of institutional solutions with regard to the colonizing and oppressive states.

The North-South workshop, after making a grand tour of the international horizon, discussed the debt campaign, which was denounced bitterly by Raphael Constant, a West Indian lawyer, as a campaign aimed at salving the conscience of the workers' movement in the capitalist countries.

The same person, with the support of Herri Batasuna and the Catalan Communist Party, put forward the idea of a "bloc" or anti-imperialist front (including the peoples without a state, representatives of popular movements in the dominated countries and the revolutionary currents in the workers' movements of the imperialist countries).

It was too early for a decision to be taken on this. This was both for reasons of organizational weakness, but also, as the HB representative pointed out, for political reasons, given the political divergences of the assembly, between those with a socialist orientation and the others, and between those with an orientation to independence and those seeking a future in an autonomy that would allow the expression of the national culture.

As the representative of the Bloque Gallego remarked, to redefine North-South economic relations means thinking about the character of development, since it would no longer be based on the exploitation of the Third World.

### Genocide of Native Americans

It was finally decided to launch campaigns for the demilitarization of the Mediterranean (but why only the Mediterranean?) and against the 500th anniversary of the "Discovery", that is to say the great European raid on the "New World" and the ensuing genocide of the Indian peoples. A postcard to be sent to the United Nations has been designed for this.

The assembly ended with two main decisions. One was to open up to the whole of Europe, not just the EC. The other was to adopt a Universal Declaration on the Collective Rights of Peoples, with the ambition of restoring individual rights within a community and defining democratic relations between peoples

Such a solidarity movement opens the way for a wide-ranging democratic struggle to which all the oppressed and exploited can hope to give a social content. ★

## The Schengen Wall

**A BIG STEP FORWARD toward freedom of movement internationally, that is the way the Schengen accords have been presented. In fact, they involve an attack on the rights of asylum and of immigrants from countries impoverished by imperialism, as well as the setting up of a centralized system of political surveillance.**

BEATRICE RAYMAN

**T**he Schengen accords were signed in the town of the same name on June 14, 1985, as part of the plans for the Single European Market of 1993. They will replace checks at inner-EC borders by reinforced checks at the external frontiers of the member states, "in order to prevent clandestine immigration by nationals of states not belonging to the European Community."

The signing of this agreement between Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxemburg, West Germany and France was suspended in December 1989 because of reservations on the part of West Germany, which considered that it was unacceptable to exclude East Germany. At the time, the establishment of a "Europe without frontiers" was also called into question by Luxemburg, the Netherlands and Belgium.

The Dutch and Belgian deputies condemned the threat to liberties posed by the creation of a centralized system of files on people, as well as the lack of guarantees for asylum seekers. But negotiations resumed in April 1990, and an agreement including East Germany in the Schengen accords, in the framework of the unification of Germany, could be signed before July 1 and go into force around January 1992.

All the negotiations among the five states have been conducted in accordance with the principles of secret diplomacy, outside any parliamentary supervision, without consulting organizations that defend the right of asylum or the UN High Commission for Refugees and without any coordination with other states.

Such "clandestinity" is especially unacceptable because, after parliamentary rati-



fication, the rules established by the Schengen group, which have important implications for the right of asylum, will prevail over the laws of the member states, and in one form or another are likely to be extended to the rest of the Community. In fact, Spain, Italy and Greece have already asked to be included in the Schengen group. But their candidacies were rejected on the grounds that their immigration policies were "lax"!

In addition to the "classical reasons" used to "justify" a refusal to admit certain foreigners, the Schengenians have come up with some new reasons for keeping people out. Initially, the accords led to reestablishing a visa requirement for most non-European nationals. A hundred and four countries are affected by this. In West Germany and the Benelux countries, visas were already required for residents of countries from which asylum seekers often come. Under the pretext of the struggle against terrorism, France rushed to include a visa requirement in its laws in September 1986.

Foreigners residing regularly in a member country will not need visas for trips of less than three months duration within the Schengen area. But they will be obliged to register in the countries they visit no later than three days after their arrival.

The scheme will give the police the right to pursue any "wanted" person throughout the common territory. It calls for the setting up of a central computer file on persons sought for extradition, missing persons and persons sought for their own protection or to prevent threats, persons wanted to appear or to testify in court, as well as undesirable foreigners who are not to be allowed to enter or stay

in the area covered by Schengen. In each of the signatory countries, a databank will be set up identical to the central one.

Two secret codicils establish a list of countries whose residents have to be systematically watched from the point of view of "immigration" and "security." Entry into the EC fortress can be denied to anyone considered liable to represent a "threat to the public order, national security or international relations" of one of the signatory countries. In line with this, residence permits for foreigners living in France can be put in question on the grounds that they would be "persona non grata" in another country of the Community. In the present form of the scheme, foreigners denied residence permits would be on police wanted lists as long as the police had no proof that they had actually left the territory.

### Carriers considered responsible

In contravention of the Treaty of Rome, which "forbids the expulsion or turning back at frontiers of persons whose lives and liberties are in danger", (Art. 33), in the Schengen Europe asylum seekers will no longer have any guarantee of access to the common territory. They may be turned back even before their dossiers are examined. The carriers will be considered responsible on the arrival on the common territory for foreigners who do not have the required documents, and they will be subject to "penal and/or administrative sanctions."

Lacking competence to assess the validity of applications for asylum, officers of transport firms will be inclined, in order to "limit risks," to accept only those foreigners who have every sort of guarantee, which is rarely the case for people who fear for their security and are fleeing their countries. The penalization of "companies at fault," like other actions provided for by the Schengen accords, is already being applied in some European countries. Lufthansa was recently condemned by a Frankfurt court for having taken foreigners on board who lacked the required documents.

The states granting the visas will be responsible for dealing with applications for asylum. In the case of illegal arrivals, the country responsible will be the first whose borders the applicant crossed. When applicants are denied the status of refugee in one country of the group, they "can" still apply to a neighboring country, but that country "can" henceforth "refer to the previous denial" to refuse to examine the application.

In the present witch hunt against "false asylum seekers" in all European countries where there is immigration, this "possibility" for rejecting applications without consideration is apt to become the rule, and close the doors of member countries to applicants once rejected elsewhere.

The contracting states pledge to "consider" applications for asylum, but this obligation does not necessarily involve authorization for the applicants to enter or stay in the territory. Every state, moreover, retains its "right to turn back applicants for asylum on the basis of its own rules or international provisions or to transport them to a third state."

With the Schengen protocol, the Single Europe of the bosses has forged a formidable weapon for selecting its clientèle. In bringing the legislation of the various countries into line with the most restrictive, the European bourgeoisies have taken the opportunity to mount a joint assault on a right that had already been under piecemeal attack from some West European states.

The Schengen group's offensive on the right of asylum fits into the logic of the

In certain north European countries (Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands), the offensive against the right of asylum has taken the form mainly of creating sub-statuses offering less protection. An applicant for asylum can be admitted there as a Category A refugee under the Geneva convention or as a Category B refugee, which involves residence and work permits; or as a refugee on "humanitarian" grounds, which offers a provisional right of residence linked to the evolution of the political situation in the person's country of origin. But neither Category B nor "humanitarian" asylum, which are the most commonly given, assure real protection for the applicants.

In January 1990, the Swedish government decided to send back 5,200 Turkish immigrants from Bulgaria who had been granted "humanitarian" asylum, on the



attacks on immigrants raging in most European countries. Applicants for asylum are being equated with "potential illegal immigrants," swindlers, or even terrorists or drug traffickers, while all too often European government leaders support the countries that daily violate human rights and force people to flee.

In France in November 1989, Pierre Joxe, the minister of the interior, did not hesitate to condemn "thousands of foreigners who abuse the right of asylum" and "come to France not because their liberty is threatened but because they are unemployed." He added that the number of applicants for asylum "has grown to unacceptable proportions in the last two years." However, the major inflows of refugees into Europe in recent years have come from countries with which France and other continental EC members have not had any special ties, and which have not traditionally fed migratory movements.

grounds that they came under the category of an "ethnic minority that felt discriminated against without really being in danger."

However, the attacks against asylum have not been limited to the setting up of sub-statuses. In the Netherlands in 1987, out of 8,556 applicants, 237 were granted Category A status, that is 2.8%; 444, Category B status, that is, 5.8%; and 450, "humanitarian status," that is, 5.5%. The other 86.7% of applications were rejected outright.

Since October 1986, following an offensive by racists, Denmark, which had been one of the less restrictive countries as regards the right of asylum, became one of the most tightly closed states in capitalist Europe. It began to demand visas from applicants and make airlines responsible for the arrival on its territory of people without the right papers.

In September 1988, in a "referendum of shame," citizens of the Swedish town of

Sjöbo voted overwhelmingly (67.5%) against accepting refugees in the territory of the municipality.

In West Germany, the right of asylum is expressly guaranteed in the constitution. But since 1980, the authorities have tightened checks on the border, stepped up dissuasive measures and prolonged procedures in order to limit the number of refugees and select out candidates for asylum.

Since 1980, visas have been obligatory for citizens from Sri Lanka, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Turkey, India and Bangladesh. In 1981, transit visas were made obligatory for Afghans; and in 1982, for Ethiopians. A law passed on January 14, 1981, made airlines liable to fines if they brought in foreigners without the necessary visas. This was a particularly effective measure, judging from the fact that between 1981 and 1983, the number of applicants for asylum entering through Frankfurt airport dropped from 2,976 to 630.

Legally, the border police can only reject a request for asylum if the refugee in question has resided in a third state for more than a year. However, in recent years many people have been illegally turned back by the West German police. Refugees have been turned away without any official decision, forced either to continue their flight in the same airplane or to return to the country from which they came.

### Five year wait for asylum applicants

At Frankfurt airport, if the border police suspect that a plane is carrying refugees, the checks are carried out on board. Since 1980 applicants for asylum no longer have the right to work during the time their applications are being processed (although getting very limited social welfare benefits), and this period can last for five years.

They are often housed in camps and obliged to remain there. What is more, with the massive influx of refugees of "German stock" coming from the East European countries, "non-Germans" have become "undesirables," as attested by a series of measures taken by the Ministry of the Interior to encourage them to return to their countries of origin.

In France, on May 21, the parliament passed a law legalizing the "accelerated" processing of dossiers. To wipe out the backlog, the budget of the Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons (OFPRA) was increased to 52 million francs in 1989 to 142 million in 1990. Some 120,000 dossiers were supposed to be processed in 1990, as against 31,167 in 1989, with a bonus for officials who handled them quickly. In addition, a 100 million francs were allotted to the budget of the Ministry of the Interior to assure that those rejected were actually removed from the country.

This policy can only lead to summary treatment of applications, designed to systematically deny applications for asylum. "Every day we see hasty rejections of requests for asylum, without any interviews with the applicants, and based on an interpretation of the Geneva Conventions so restrictive that Jews fleeing Nazi Germany would have been excluded from its protection, had it existed at the time," a leader of the Committee to Defend the Right of Asylum said in December 1989.

The Europe that today claims it is threatened by an invasion from the third world, in order to justify adopting more and more restrictive measures, in fact only took in 5.8% of the world's refugees in 1988.

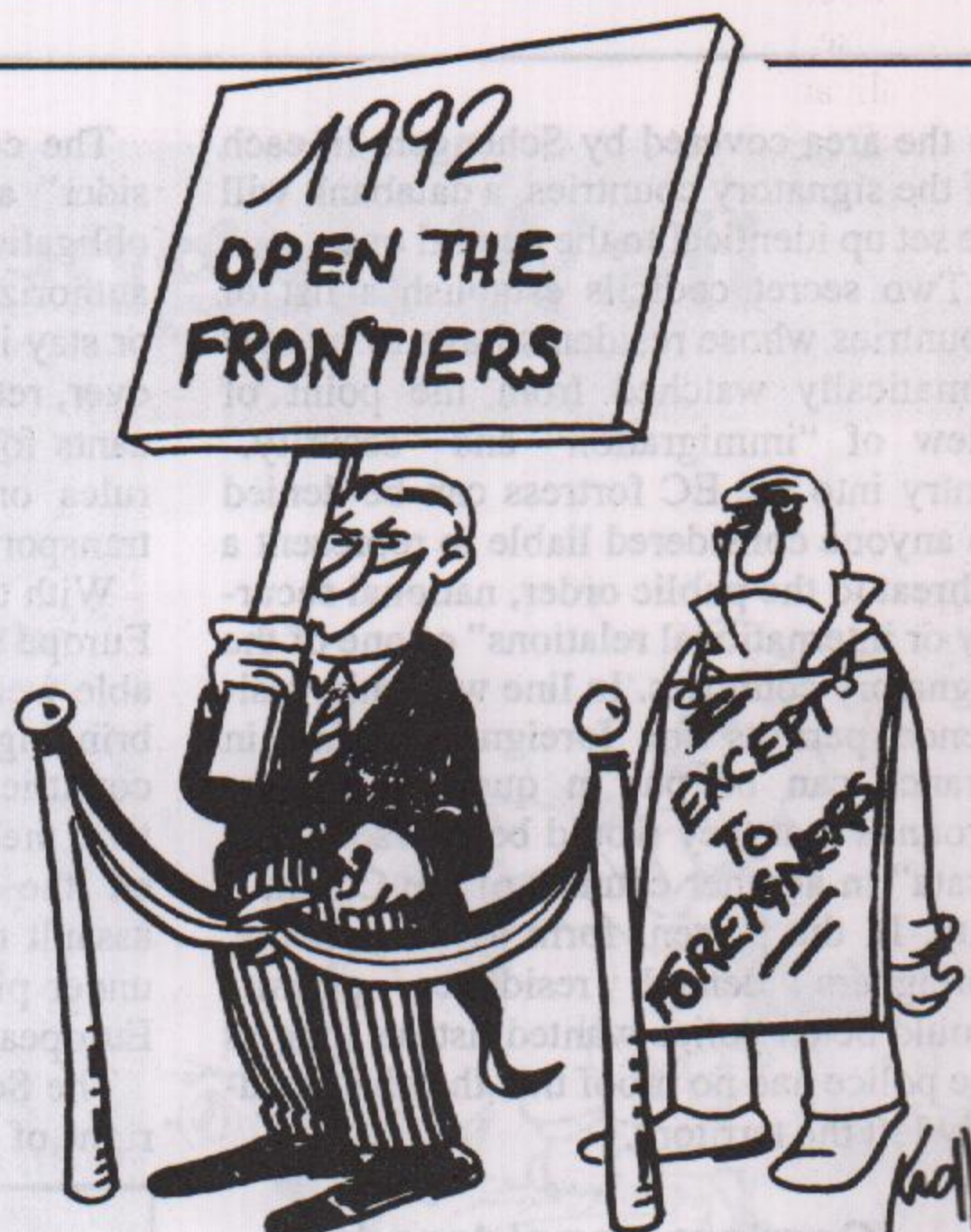
At the same time, desperately poor countries sometimes had to take in nearly 3,000 refugees a day. In 1988, Europe accepted 737,600 refugees. According to the minimal estimates of the UN High Commission for Refugees, there are presently between 18 and 20 million refugees in the world, most of them taken in by the poorest countries.

### Poor countries take in most refugees

Somalia, the Sudan and Pakistan have taken 4,137,000 refugees from Ethiopia, Uganda, Zaire, Chad and Afghanistan. Southeast Asia has taken 160,000. Central America has taken 346,000 refugees, mostly coming from neighboring countries and further south. Does the arrival of 3,000 Tamils in the Netherlands justify the visions of an invasion that we are being bombarded with? Refugees represent a very small burden for the countries of Europe. Among the countries that are today members of the Schengen group, in proportion to the native population, refugees represent 0.31% for France, 0.37% for Belgium and 0.21% for West Germany.

The increase in the number of applications for asylum in the European countries (104,000 in 1984; 183,000 in 1987) has not been accompanied by a greater number of refugees being accepted but by a decrease. The European governments are granting refugee status with an eye-dropper and forcing all those rejected into illegality and insecurity.

Some applicants who have not been recognized as refugees because of an overly restrictive interpretation of the Geneva Convention, but cannot be sent back to their countries of origin, where, it is admitted, they would be in danger because of the political situation, find themselves in a nightmare world.



They are not sent back, but are forced to live illegally, without residence permits, without jobs, without resources, with no protection against the unbridled exploitation of modern slavers, and in fear of any police identity check, which could lead to their expulsion from the country, since they are in an irregular situation.

In 1987, in West Germany, refugee status was granted to only 9.4% of the 87,539 applications dealt with. In 70% of the cases, the requests were rejected. In France, according to OFPRA, the percentage of rejections has risen from 30% in 1983 to 72% in 1989. The rate of rejection, moreover, varies enormously in accordance with the geographical origins of applicants. In France, for example, in 1988, 89.5% of requests from citizens of Southeast Asian countries were accepted but only 10.5% of those from Africans.

### States conspire to strengthen barriers

Since 1975, the TREVI group (Terrorism, Radicalism, Extremism, International Violence), bringing together the interior and justice ministers of the EC countries, has been meeting as discreetly as the Schengen group, to coordinate collaboration between police and intelligence serves with the aim of, among other things, harmonizing visa systems and criteria for the granting of asylum.

Through the Schengen accords, the discreet labors of the TREVI group, and the adoption of more and more restrictive laws, a Europe of discrimination and exclusion is being prepared for us.

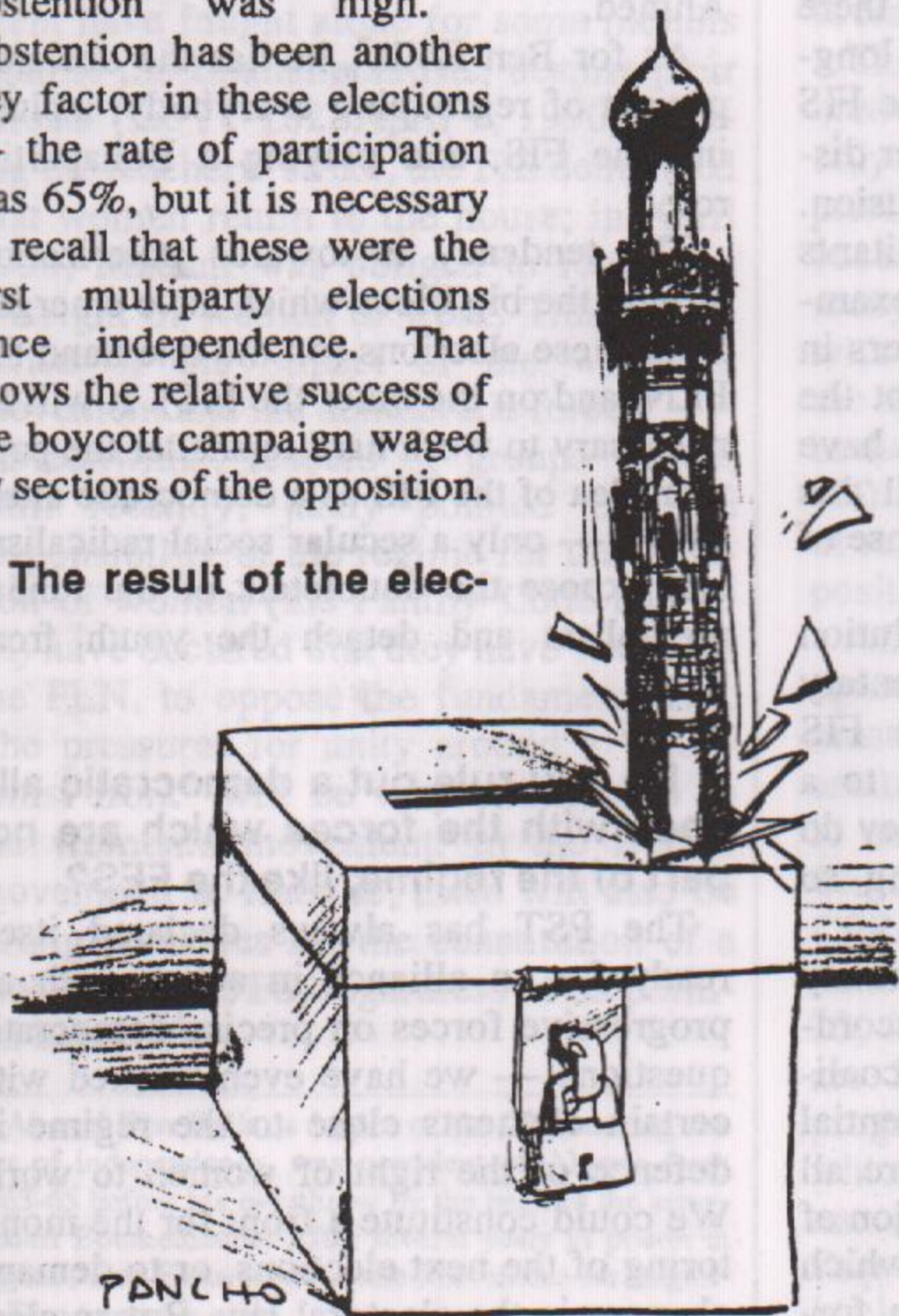
If we want a Europe where refugees will have the same living conditions and the same social and political rights as the native populations, a Europe of freedom of movement and equal rights, of solidarity and unity between European and immigrant workers, we will have to get ready to fight for it, against the plans for 1992 already set in motion. ★

# The fundamentalist earthquake

## HOW do you analyze the results of these elections?

We still do not have the full details of the results. Officially, the FIS has won 55% of the municipalities and 32 wilayas out of 46<sup>1</sup>. The FLN says it is in second position, with 30% of the municipalities and 14 wilayas (districts), and the Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD) is in third position with 5% of the municipalities — the independents, finally, have won some municipalities. But, in reality, the results of the FIS are better than this indicates, to the extent that all the big and medium towns have been won by the fundamentalists (with scores of up to 70 or 80%) — the FLN has maintained its influence in the rural municipalities and the hinterland which are less populated and were less affected by the October 1988 riots and their aftermath. The FLN got votes from those who fear the FIS, often even people in the opposition — whereas the FIS has extended its appeal beyond the fundamentalist movement and won support from the popular masses who wanted to show their rejection of the regime. Oran, the biggest city in the west, where the fundamentalists barely exist as an organized force, was won by the FIS. We don't know yet how many votes this represents, and the rate of abstention was high. Abstention has been another key factor in these elections — the rate of participation was 65%, but it is necessary to recall that these were the first multiparty elections since independence. That shows the relative success of the boycott campaign waged by sections of the opposition.

### ■ The result of the elec-



**THE impressive victory of the fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) over the ruling National Liberation Front (FLN) in the Algerian regional and municipal elections of June 12 has sent shock waves through the country and beyond. The following interview with Chawki Salhi, spokesperson of the PST (Socialist Workers Party) of Algeria, was conducted on June 19 by Natacha Monlapin and Cecilia Garmendia.**

tions appears as a "protest vote" against the FLN. If the non-fundamentalist opponents of the regime had participated in the elections, instead of calling for a boycott, would that have significantly reduced the level of support for the FIS?

Only the FLN and the FIS were able to contest the elections on a nationwide basis. Even if it had participated, the Front of Socialist Forces (FFS), of Hocine Ait Ahmed<sup>1</sup>, would not have been able to contest all the 1,241 municipalities and fulfil all the administrative formalities. These elections were from the beginning false and unjust — they were held to give a majority to the FLN, on the basis of its national apparatus. Only the FIS was equally capable of contesting all the localities, for it has an organized presence as much in the town as in the countryside. The regime monopolized television coverage throughout the campaign — the other participants were reduced to a miserable poster campaign on the little official hoardings.

The FIS, however, has held demonstrations and meetings with its members in the towns, the neighbourhoods, and so on. The government let them do this, thinking that these events would turn the people towards the FLN through fear.

■ From the analysis you have put forward, the boycott slogan would seem to have been counter-productive...

It is necessary to take account of the electoral law and the man-

ner in which the voting took place. The FIS used a lot of unsavoury methods to boost their vote, but that does not mean they would not in any case have achieved a good result. If the boycott had not taken place, the FFS, the PST, or the others who did not contest the wilayas where they could have fulfilled the administrative conditions, would not have stopped the victory of the FIS — it would perhaps have been less impressive.

If the boycott slogan had not been advanced we would be in a position of despair today — the high rate of abstention shows that political reserves exist which have not yet been expressed, and underlines that the electoral law distorts reality.

■ How do you explain the appeal of the FIS? On the negative side, it can be interpreted as a rejection of the FLN, but on the positive side...

Beyond the factors which underlie the upsurge of such currents around the world, the Algerian fundamentalists have benefitted essentially from the fact that all public political activities were shackled by president Chadli in the year which followed the events of October 1988<sup>2</sup> — banning of meetings, administrative complications for the legalization of organizations, and so on.

Through the network of the mosques, during this period, the fundamentalists were capable of maintaining a high and very virulent level of propaganda against the regime. This has won them, for example, an important audience in the popular neighbourhoods of Algiers. They take a very radical stance against the regime, whereas the opposition tolerated by the media — who were not muzzled like us — take a very much more moderate tone. When the leader of the FFS, Ait Ahmed, returned to Algiers, he declared that Chadli was "the president of all the Algerians", whilst the FIS, through the mosques, was accusing the FLN of every evil. Since last February, Ait Ahmed has adopted a more vigorous approach,

1. Hocine Ait Ahmed is the founder of the FFS (Front of Socialist Forces). A leader of the FLN during the war of independence, Ait Ahmed went into opposition after independence. The FFS' stronghold is in Kabylia, the Berber region to the east of Algiers, from where Ait Ahmed originates.

2. On October 5, 1988, rioting broke out in Algiers and in the rest of the country to protest against price rises in basic necessities. The government declared a state of siege for the first time in the history of the country since independence — the subsequent repression cost more than 500 lives. Chadli restored calm through promising democratic reforms.

demanding the election of a constituent assembly, insisting on the rights of women and of Berbers, and so on. The FFS then engaged in a resolute opposition and its activity extended itself beyond the Kabylia (Berber) areas. But the FIS had a head start, thanks to its anchorage in the popular quarters of Algiers, in particular, which went further back, and because it was identified with the events of October.

On this subject, it is necessary to note that the international media continue to claim that the victims of October were Islamic fundamentalists, which is false! Those tortured and imprisoned as a result of the riots were above all militants of the left, of the Party of the Socialist Vanguard (PAGS, the Algerian Communist Party) — the Islamic forces were minuscule at this time. But because of the absence of a plausible alternative at the end of 1988, they stepped into the vacuum with big demonstrations against torture and for democracy. The FIS appeared above all as the party of the people of the most deprived quarters of Algeria — this image has contributed to the extension of its influence.

The FLN, for its part, has suffered a terrible blow in the last period, when the misappropriation of \$26 million by a former prime minister of the regime was made public — it has attempted to counter this campaign by pointing to the acts of violence committed by the fundamentalists, notably against women. This very virulent campaign momentarily isolated the fundamentalists, including in the popular neighbourhoods. But their demonstration on May 17, 1990 which was enormous — only the FLN was able to do better, after the event — led to a terrified somersault by the regime; it understood that people were strongly attracted by the fundamentalists. The regime ran a very awkward electoral campaign, announcing that it had "returned". This has led to a renewed rejection of the FLN, which we can see now, burying the fear of the FIS which had predominated until then.

■ **Faced with the corruption of the regime, the FIS was able to use a moral argument — with a religious content.**

Rejection of the government was central to the vote for the FIS; the corruption of the FLN, but also the desire for liberty, for sovereignty, in short the democratic factors. Paradoxically it is an authoritarian and retrogressive current which has attracted the votes of those who wish to see the end of the dictatorship. At the electoral level, the FIS has achieved a level of support going well beyond those who subscribe to an Islamic discourse.

There exists, obviously, a hard Islamic core which has a moral discourse and which demands the application of the Sharia, the Islamic law — but religious feeling is a very much more important

element than fundamentalism. There is an enormous revival of spirituality and religious feeling in Algeria today, going beyond even those who voted for the FIS.

■ **Are there really divergent lines inside the FIS, as the press claim?**

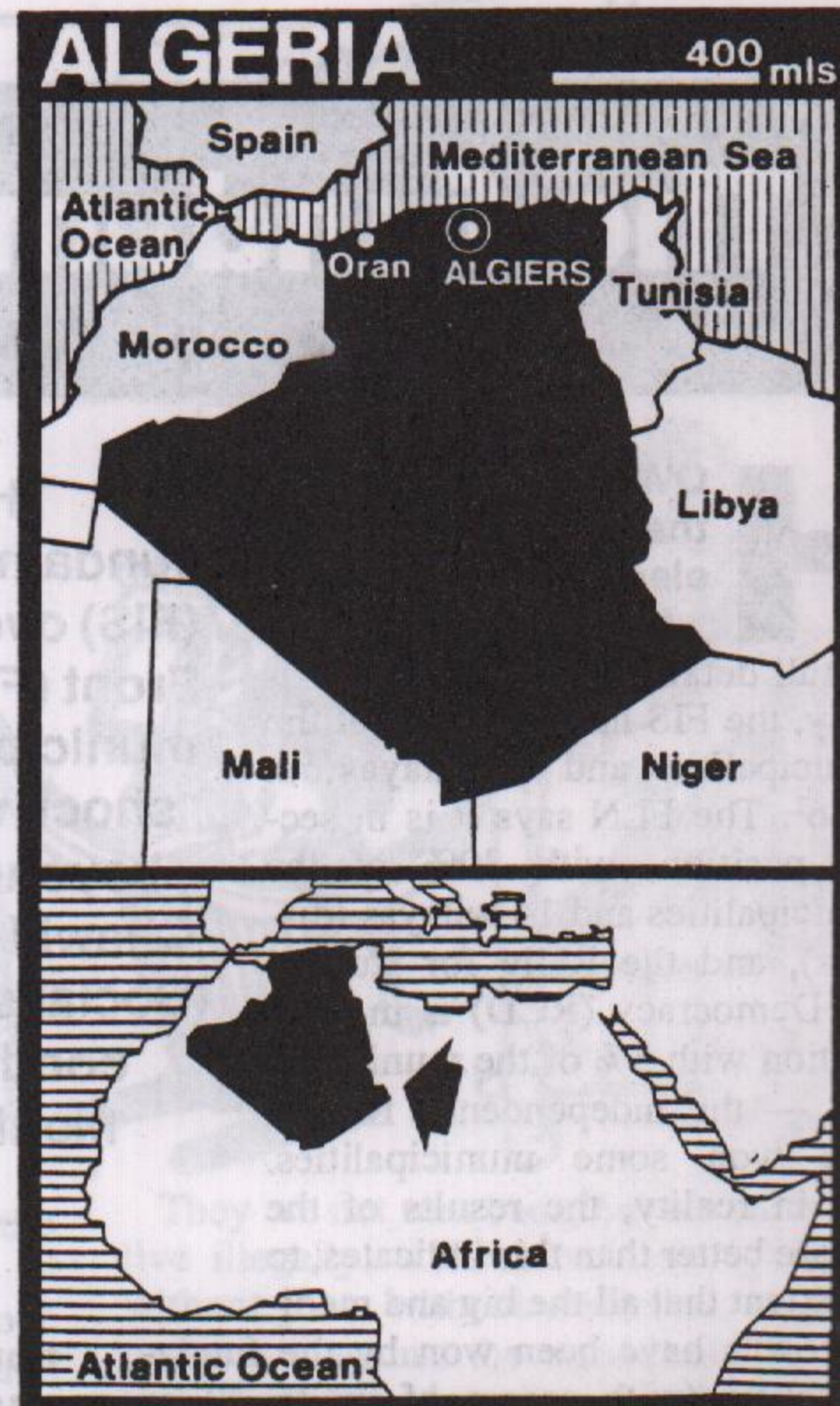
There is a hard fundamentalist core inside the FIS which does not correspond to its very much wider electoral impact. At the level of the FIS leadership, there exists a very clear difference between, on the one hand, Ali Belhadj, one of the most popular orators in the poor neighbourhoods, who bases himself on the revolt of the young unemployed, the dispossessed, and so on, and whose stance against the regime is very radical; and on the other hand, Abassi Madani and other notables who are very much more moderate and would be ready to make a deal with the regime. The electoral victory has reinforced the Madani current. The wave of violence which shook Algeria last April — against cinemas, young women and so on — was the work of a radical fundamentalist tendency which did not accept the electoral caution advocated by Madani. But in the euphoria today, there is no contesting Madani's predominance — those who preach a "democratic" and conciliatory attitude have carried the day.

■ **What attitude is the regime going to take towards the FIS? And vice versa? Will the parliamentary elections that the fundamentalists are demanding be held?**

Public opinion is very shocked, there are a lot of rumours, and there is no longer any political expression, from the FIS or the FLN. The strike of newspaper distributors has aggravated the confusion. But in the neighbourhoods, the militants of the FIS are reappearing — for example, during the strike of roadsweepers in Algiers, their supporters have swept the streets. Some street demonstrations have taken place in certain areas, but all this has had little echo and there is no sense of any particular tension.

The FIS is demanding the dissolution of the assembly and new parliamentary elections. But the leaders of the FIS explain that this is not equivalent to a demand that Chadli should go — they do not want to be perceived as being so aggressive for the moment.

Chadli, some maintain, would be ready for a cohabitation with the FIS — according to others, he wants a broad "coalition" with the FIS, a sort of "presidential majority". It is not yet known where all this will lead. In any case, the intention of the FLN is to discredit the forces which appealed for a boycott and to push for-



ward the RCD — which, for its part, would be in the forefront of this alliance.

Aït Ahmed has also the intention of creating an alliance, a third force, which would appear as a bourgeois democratic alternative to both the fundamentalists and the regime, but he does not dispose of the necessary means of propaganda and suffers from demoralization among those of his supporters frightened by the result of the boycott. If the parties defeated in the elections (the RCD, the PAGS, and so on) regroup, they could become a true force of support for the FLN and permit the regime to maintain itself. This is opposed, obviously, to the project of Aït Ahmed.

As for Ben Bella<sup>3</sup>, he has the declared project of regrouping everybody, including the FIS, and playing a Bonapartist role.

The tendency is towards polarization around the big blocs which have emerged from these elections (on the one hand the FLN, and on the other the FIS). It will be necessary to work hard to shatter the popular idea of the FIS as a democratic alternative — only a secular social radicalism can expose the doubletalk of the fundamentalists and detach the youth from them.

■ **Do you rule out a democratic alliance with the forces which are not part of the regime, like the FFS?**

The PST has always declared itself ready for an alliance in action with all progressive forces on precise democratic questions — we have even worked with certain elements close to the regime in defence of the right of women to work. We could constitute a front for the monitoring of the next elections, or to demand changes in the electoral law. But an elec-

toral alliance involves different problems. We must fight for an electoral program that defends the interests of the workers. Above all, we do not wish to sanction a program of economic liberalization.

In the context of the electoral pressure which will exert itself, from the bipolarization which exists, we will certainly not give any sanction to the pro-imperialist bourgeoisie in the name of some kind of modernist alliance against the FIS. We are not going to make an alliance with the current dictatorship of Chadli against the future one of Madani!

Since the elections, we have witnessed a revival of strikes, even if trade union activity has not improved. The road-sweepers, for example, went on strike to protest against the allocation of housing made to the managers. The FIS attempted to break their action, whilst making promises to them. The postal workers have gone on strike, as have the petrol pump attendants, teachers, and so on. There is then a curious social climate, given the general political depression. We must continue to fight on the democratic terrain against the current regime and against the dictatorial plans of the FIS, not leaving the monopoly of radicalism to the fundamentalists.

We must, beyond this, counter those who, panicked by the victory of the FIS, could be tempted to abandon the struggle for socialism. There are even people who have resigned themselves to the dictatorship of Chadli, and hope to bar the route to the FIS by abandoning the struggle for democratic elections, which would be suicidal.

### ■ How is the women's movement reacting to the victory of the FIS?

Our comrades in the women's movement have fought alone for some months against the fundamentalists, despite their threats (see IV 182, April 9, 1990). During the teachers' strike, the FIS demanded that women return to the house; in April 1990, Madani was obliged to recognize the right of women to work. This is evidence of the impact of the women's movement and the democratic forces!

Meanwhile, leaders of groups which, until recently, justly pointed out the responsibility of the regime for the situation of women (the Family Code and so on) have declared that they have voted for the FLN, to oppose the fundamentalists. The pressures for unity around a "modernist front" will be very strong also in the women's movement. In the Berber movement, in Kabylie, there will also be strong pressures for the constitution of a bloc with the FFS, regardless of its political basis. ★

3. Ahmed Ben Bella, a leader of the FLN during the war of independence, was president of Algeria from 1963-65 before his overthrow by the head of the army, Houari Boumediene. After several years in prison in Algeria, Ben Bella founded the Movement for Algerian Democracy in exile.

## A Chilean miracle?

**THE TIME** when the Latin American bourgeoisies were prone to nationalist outbursts — at least in the economic field — is past. The Economic Commission of the United Nations for Latin America (CEPAL) no longer seeks the causes of the ills afflicting the sub-continent (where the income per inhabitant has fallen by 8% in ten years) in unequal exchange or the debt. Now, ultra-liberalism is in fashion, and, in line with the United States, all hope is placed in IMF-dictated adjustments. The Chilean "miracle" is the example to be followed.

In the article below, Pedro Vuskovic, who was Minister of the Economy under the Allende government of 1970-73, examines the CEPAL's analysis of the Chilean development.

### PEDRO VUSKOVIC

**T**HE SUMMARY of the preliminary balance-sheet of the Latin American economy prepared by the CEPAL secretariat reinforces the image of the success of the "Chilean economic model", an exception in Latin America. CEPAL is taking on a heavy responsibility in supporting, clearly or implicitly, an economic policy which has certainly produced good results in recent years. The report does not analyze the situation with the technical rigour that one would expect from a body of this type, but it does give the opportunity to open a debate on the missing or under-estimated dimensions of the "Chilean model" — their effects over a longer period of time and their consequences for different social layers.

The idealized image of the "Chilean model" is widely accepted. This is not only because the model has benefited the privileged layers of Chilean society, but because it has also been taken up by many who once attempted to come up with alternative programmes to those of the dictatorship. This latter category also includes the timid (because uncomfortable) position now adopted by a number of representatives of traditional left-wing positions.

All these sectors have come together to agree that the new civilian government must remain in the economic framework established under the Pinochet regime. It is not by chance that the authoritative Chilean daily *El Mercurio* put the CEPAL report on its front page and, in its economic supplement of December 23, 1989, affirmed that: "although there are important differences between the programme of Patricio Aylwin and that which would have been applied if Hernan Buchi [the candidate of the dictatorship, beaten in the elections] had won, it is clear, on the other hand, that the eco-

conomic fundamentals were not at issue."

However, it is too soon to close the subject, especially given the implications of the Chilean model for other Latin American countries, on which it will have not only economic, but important social and political consequences.

There are three points which need to be discussed: firstly a genuinely objective evaluation of the economic policies of the military dictatorship; secondly, what, if anything, is original in the "Chilean model" in comparison with other recent Latin American experiences; and finally the degree to which the economic policy implies definite social consequences and political measures.

Let us look at some statistical examples. In recent years, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has grown above all in relation to the low point reached by the region's economies. The unemployment rate has declined and there has been a recovery in investment. Inflation has stayed relatively low, exports have evolved in a favourable manner and the external debt has been reduced.

It is possible to have certain reservations about the reliability, in statistical terms, of these indicators. We well know, for example, what the criteria used in official statistics about (un)employment or poverty are worth, or the sort of manipulation that price indexes are subject to.

But independently of that, an analysis of the evolution of the Chilean economy over the last decades requires a longer perspective. We then see that the objective situation of Chile has gone backwards with respect to all the projections and proposals for national development. In fact, the Chilean economy today generates a product per inhabitant which is only slightly higher than in the Allende epoch at the start of the 1970s. The

weight of Chile in Latin American industrial production is not only no better than in the 70s, but represents hardly a half of that in 1972. Parallel to this our dependence on outside has been enormously increased, starting with the moment when the key sectors of the national economy passed into the control of the big multinationals.

In recent years unemployment has noticeably fallen. But in 1989, the Programme for Labour Economy of the Academy of Christian Humanism contradicted the official figure of 7.9% provided to please the dictator. According to the report, real unemployment was 16.6% in the capital — 21% for women and 25.7% for youth from 15 to 24 years old. While some sectors have been modernized, the "informal sector" continues to provide 30% of the jobs in Santiago.

Inflation is moderate, but its effect on real wages is disastrous. In the course of 1989, "the improvement in the employment situation has not been passed on to wages....Real wages began to decline in July. At the end of the third quarter, the general index of pay, according to the National Institute of Statistics, was 0.2% down on the previous year."

Agriculture has been orientated externally, and has contributed to the growth and diversification of exports. But, at the same time, the agricultural surface area devoted to production of food for the home market has diminished, and there has been a sharp deterioration in the nutritional standards of the Chilean population.

The foreign debt has declined, but the

reduction is due to the conversion of debts into direct foreign investments — in other words by the transfer of national assets. This increases our external dependence, and, tomorrow, the profits of these enterprises will leave the country just as if we were paying interest on the debt.

The attempt to present Chile as a — singular and contradictory — case apart in a Latin America in generalized crisis, and as a model that the other countries should follow, lacks historical perspective. In fact Chile continues to experience a crisis similar to that in other Latin American societies, and follows in practice policies of the same kind as most countries in the continent — policies based on the same "neo-liberalism" inspired and controlled by the International Monetary Fund.

In Chile also, the idealization of the market, the demonization of the state, privatization at whatever price, the priority given to any activity which may lead to increased exports and attacks on, and resistance to, social rights and demands are the means for preserving "macro-economic equilibria".

The Chilean economy has the same characteristics as the other countries in the region, without any original features. The question is why this same conception of economic policy, basically imposed from outside, has resulted in successes from the point of view of overall growth and financial stability in recent years in Chile, while it has not had this effect in the rest of the Southern Cone.

The explanation of this phenomenon probably lies in the dictatorship's "politi-

cal" capacity to impose these programmes in a very radical fashion and make large layers of the population take the consequences, through repression — even if the discontent shows through at the electoral level.

### Modernization of limited economic sectors

In Chile, the modernization effort has been concentrated on a part of the economy, and has benefited a part of society, while the rest of the population has been impoverished and pushed to the sidelines, by a strategy of economic and social segregation. This is why the famous figures of success can only be analyzed with regard to the serious deterioration in the living conditions of large layers of the population and the framework of regressive tendencies in the redistribution of profits. The potentially inflationary effects of the excessive income gains of some sectors of the population are combated by reductions in real wages. It is the workers who are paying for the "economic stability".

This is a very serious question and it cannot be resolved by CEPAL's commentary, which simply invites us to note "the negative aspect" of the "contradictory effects of growth" and the need to correct "some obvious defects". The real challenge is for Chilean society to confront the inequalities and injustices inherited from the programmes applied under Pinochet. Not to do this is to risk ignoring the aspirations for democracy and unity of the great majority of Chileans.

Today, it is not adequate to keep the main lines of the previous economic policy because of some positive results. It must be recognized that these political programmes have been a source for the constant reproduction of inequality and poverty. The question must at least be asked of how to maintain growth and stability in an alternative framework, which would not inevitably involve marginalization on the one hand and concentrations of wealth on the other.

Neither the advice of CEPAL according to which it would be possible to pursue "good economic conduct" while correcting "some obvious defects", nor the programmatic notion of "more solidarity with the poor" are enough to change the situation.

Such questions — as has been seen in the election campaign — take on a particular significance with the arrival of a civilian government and the hopes for the democratic reconstruction of Chilean society. Other Latin American experiences have shown us that certain basic conceptions of political economy near to that of the Chilean model quoted are far from favouring an economic policy conducive to democracy. ★

### The other side of the coin

**THE economic results from Chile show that, after the deep crisis of 1982-83, the country has entered into a phase of solid and stable economic recovery. It is not possible, however, to speak of the "success of the Chilean model" without taking into account its social consequences. In this sphere, the figures show the price that the least fortunate sections of the Chilean population have paid for the growth.**

**While Chile's competitiveness on the world market has grown in recent years, this is not due to an improvement in the competitiveness of the enterprises — which fell by 10% between 1982 and 1987 — but to the devaluation of the exchange rate of the Chilean currency. The other side of such a devaluation is a corresponding fall in the income of wage-earners. Real wages are today lower than before the 1982-83 crisis.**

**The cake has been redistributed to the detriment of the poor. According to an inquiry conducted in Santiago, in June 1988 a third of the workers receive less than \$60 and two thirds about \$120 per month. The average monthly wage is \$160.**

**More than 50% of the population has a family income of less than 41,470 pesos (some \$166) and lives below the poverty line — fixed by the CEPAL at 44,320 pesos (\$177). In 1988 the average wage was 15% below its 1970 level. The minimum wage, currently set at \$47, lost 30% of its real value between 1981 and 1989.**

**Another significant fact — spending on public services (health, education, housing) has not stopped falling since 1981. Family benefits have been considerably decreased, along with spending on education. ★**



# US Socialist Workers Party leaves Fourth International

**THE LEADERSHIP of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) of the United States, together with the leaderships of other organizations belonging to its International current, have decided to end their fraternal links with the Fourth International<sup>1</sup>. In a letter sent to the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International, dated June 10, 1990, they put it in their own words: "For almost a decade now, an accelerating divergence has marked the course and character of our respective parties and the International Executive Committee [of the Fourth International]. These incompatible trajectories have been an unambiguous public fact for some time".**

**LIVIO MAITAN AND BRAULIO CHAVEZ**

**I**NDEED, for around ten years the majority of the SWP's leadership have followed a political and theoretical evolution which has led them further and further away from our conceptions, our orientations, our line of march and our organizational methods. This has gone hand in hand with a growing distance in relation to our international bodies and activities, in which the SWP has practically ceased to participate since the last World Congress (1985).

It was in 1928 that some leaders of the Communist Party of the United States, the foremost among them being James P. Cannon, rallied to the struggle of the Left Opposition against the bureaucratization of the USSR and the Communist International. Expelled from the party, they formed the Communist League of America (CLA). Ten years later, the Socialist Workers Party, which succeeded the CLA, was one of the principal organizations which participated in the founding of the Fourth International.

## Major contribution to work of Fourth International

During and immediately after the Second World War, the SWP, and more directly some of its leaders, made a major contribution to the functioning and reconstruction of the International, which had suffered very considerable losses as a result of Stalinist and imperialist repression.

The Trotskyist organization in the United States played an important and sometimes decisive role in the class struggle of

its country. Its militants led, for example, the truckdrivers' strike of the 1930s, which marked a turning point in the battle for the renewal of the trade union movement. Its internationalist battle against the participation of US imperialism in the Second World War, when other organizations of the left were swept along with the patriotic wave, led to repressive measures against it which went as far as the trial and imprisonment of its best known leaders. In the 1950s the SWP did not flinch before the reactionary rise of McCarthyism.

## Understanding black nationalism

At the beginning of the following decade, opposing itself to the dominant tendency of the time, including amongst the left currents, it grasped the revolutionary potential of Malcolm X and the black nationalist movement and took the initiative in solidarity actions on their behalf. The SWP also played a leading role in the movement of solidarity with the Cuban revolution, principal target of the reactionary policy of Washington in Latin America. Finally, during the war in Indochina the members of the SWP played a major role in the building and mobilization of an anti-war movement which, without doubt, contributed in an important way to the victory of the Indochinese peoples.

All this, moreover, allowed the SWP to overcome the setbacks of the previous decade and to considerably augment its forces, particularly through an influx of

young militants, thus making it one of the most stable organizations of the US left as well as enabling it to play anew an important role in the construction of our international movement. For example, it participated very actively in the internal debates which took place between 1969 and 1976 on the orientation in Latin America, the Portuguese revolution, the war in Angola, and so on.

From the beginning of the 1980s the leadership of the SWP initiated a turn which progressively distanced it from the general analyses and conceptions of the International. More precisely, it was at its 1981 national congress that it began to introduce new programmatic ideas. In November of the following year, Jack Barnes, the principal leader of the party, accentuated this line of march in a public speech in which he characterised the great majority of Trotskyists in the world as sectarians. Another landmark of the "new course" came at the time of the debates for the 12th World Congress. At this Congress the SWP emerged, with other organizations, as a minority current — around 10% of the forces represented — opposing itself to the rest of the international on all the most important questions<sup>2</sup>.

## Jack Barnes on permanent revolution

It is in fact the fundamental theoretical and political conceptions of revolutionary Marxism that the SWP puts in question. On the subject of the theory of permanent revolution, Barnes said, amongst other things, in his above mentioned speech: "Permanent revolution does not contribute today to arming either ourselves or other revolutionists to lead the working class and its allies to take power and use that power to advance the world socialist revolution. As a special or unique frame of reference it is an obstacle to reknitting our political continuity with Marx, Engels, Lenin and the first four congresses of the Communist International. It has been an obstacle in our movement to an objective reading of the masters of Marxism, in particular the writings of Lenin".

As one of the resolutions of the 12th World Congress states, it is not an abstract doctrinaire fidelity which leads us to reject this speech — it is the experience of the victories and defeats of revolutions throughout these last fifty years which confirms the living actuality of a theory originally formulated, and then complet-

1. Since 1940, because of reactionary legislation adopted by the United States, the SWP has been formally unable to be a section of the Fourth International. This did not prevent it from participating for some decades in the activities and the debates of the International.

2. The other organizations which have, along with the SWP, severed their links with the Fourth International are the Communist Leagues of Great Britain, Sweden, Canada, Australia, Iceland and New Zealand. For the most part, these are small minorities which have at different times split from sections of the Fourth International.

ed, on the basis of concrete revolutionary experiences, like the Russian revolution of 1905 and the Chinese revolution of 1927.

The questioning of this theory had implications not only for the historic analyses put forward by our movement on the Russian revolution or the views of Trotsky on the Chinese revolution, but above all for a series of concrete analyses and political attitudes related to current developments. For example, the leadership of the SWP has advanced the perspective of a bourgeois democratic revolution in South Africa and envisages a whole historic phase in which capitalism will develop itself, breaking "the reactionary obstacles and the limitations and prejudices of the feudal society". It also led them to take a non-critical attitude to the Khomeini leadership in Iran, even after it began to repress the organizations of the workers movement, including Trotskyist militants.

Our conception of the defence of the USSR and of the political revolution has also been, if not rejected, then palpably blurred. In fact, divergences have appeared on the necessity of destroying the existing bureaucratic apparatus, with the SWP leaders for a period sketching a fairly vague idea of gradual democratization. Moreover, they have rejected the programmatic text of the 12th World Congress on socialist democracy, opposing in particular the idea of the necessity of political pluralism in societies in transition to socialism.

### **In defence of the Cuban revolution**

The divergences have crystallized around the question of Cuba. The Fourth International has always considered the defence of the Cuban revolution as an international task of the first order, and has never put the Castroist leadership on the same plane as the bureaucratic leaderships of the other workers' states. Today, it estimates it more than ever necessary to alert working class and anti-imperialist opinion to the dangers which weigh upon Cuba from US imperialism. On that question there are no differences.

However, for ten years now the SWP has adopted a totally uncritical attitude to the Castro leadership, seeking to downplay all the programmatic and political differences which separate the Castroist leadership from the Fourth International (notably the attitude towards the bureaucratic castes in power in the Soviet Union and in the other bureaucratized transitional societies, the conception of socialist democracy, the conception of the party and its functioning, the relationship between the party and the mass organizations, and so on)<sup>3</sup>. It has gone so far as to approve without reserve, as a step forward for the revolution, the execution of Ochoa and the other leaders in July 1989. In short, the Castroist conceptions and prac-

tices have been indicated as a "model" which must inspire the proletarians of the whole world. In the current context of the United States, such an approach has contributed in great measure to pushing the SWP towards replacing active political and organizational construction in the mass movements with a fundamentally propagandist orientation.

The regression on the problems that we have evoked could only end up in a radically changed attitude to the problem of the Fourth International, and the project of constructing a mass revolutionary international. Behind the screen of the incantatory perspective of a "new international", this has led to a double result, or, to put it better, to a double illusion or self-mystification. On the one hand, the SWP sketches a project of convergence in a new international of the most disparate revolutionary forces, seeming to ignore the fact that these forces, to start with the Cuban leadership, have not the slightest intention of building in any form whatsoever an international communist workers movement.

On the other, in the effort to give a little concrete content to the "new" world movement, it groups around it a kind of monolithic propagandist current, composed of little organizations and groups of whom it paints a picture which has no relation to their real stability, and still less with their integration in the workers' movement of their respective countries.

All these changes on the theoretical and political terrain have gone hand in hand with no less important changes in terms of the principles of organizational functioning. To impose these new conceptions and orientations, the SWP leadership has carried through a veritable purge of the party.

### **Purge of supporters of Trotskyist programme**

Some hundreds of cadres, who were not ready to renounce the programme and methods of the Fourth International, have been first suspended and then expelled on the basis of grotesque accusations, without any respect for statutory norms or the most elementary principles of an organization based on democratic centralism (such as the right to express without limitation divergent opinions, criticize leaders, form tendencies, and so on). After having examined the appeal of the victims of the disciplinary measures, the 12th World Congress condemned the behaviour of the SWP leadership and demanded — unhappily without success — that all the expelled members be readmitted<sup>4</sup>.

Such procedures have also been applied on an international scale. Every national organization has the right to question the ideas and orientation of the International, at the level of all its bodies. Since 1985, however, nothing of that kind has really been done by the SWP leadership, who

have even deliberately ignored the fact that a new World Congress has been called and a preparatory discussion opened. Contrary to normal practice, they did not even invite the leadership of the International to the Convention held at the beginning of June, and have limited themselves to communicating to us their departure.

The evolution of the social and political situation in the United States has without doubt weighed on the regression of the SWP. In the context of the reactionary and conservative offensive of Reaganism, the spectacular retreat of the trade union movement, the prolonged decline of the struggles of an increasingly defensive working class and the weakening even of the anti-war movement and the movements of solidarity with the peoples in struggle against imperialism, it is incontestably difficult to build a revolutionary organization.

### **Uncritical exaltation and propagandism**

This situation makes it tempting to counteract all the negative pressures by a propagandist reply, a tightening of the organizational framework, a continuing slide towards a sectarian practice and the uncritical exaltation of the revolutionary experiences of other countries. But, far from being a solution, such an approach can only increase the difficulties, and compromise, in the last analysis, the future of an organization by putting in question its reasons for existing, and isolating it from any real movement. The results are there — after a decade of the "new" course the SWP has lost the influence which it had in the left in the United States in the course of the 1970s, and registered a drastic reduction in membership as well as the successive resignation — or expulsion — of the majority of its leadership.

The regression of the SWP and its split incontestably represents a defeat for the Fourth International. At the same time, there are in the United States some hundreds of cadres and sympathizers who defend the ideas of revolutionary Marxism and are linked to the Fourth International, whilst belonging at the moment to different organizations<sup>5</sup>. Their task is extremely hard. But they will continue to conduct their struggle for the reconstruction of our movement in that country. ★

3. A report on Cuba was adopted by the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International at the beginning of June of this year and will be published in a forthcoming issue of *International Marxist Review*.

4. The 12th World Congress also adopted a report on the construction of the Fourth International which contained in part a critique of the conceptions and orientations of the SWP.

5. According to the decisions of the last World Congress, the following organizations in the United States are linked to the Fourth International; Socialist Action, the Fourth Internationalist Tendency and the Trotskyist current of Solidarity.

AROUND  
THE  
WORLD

## ROMANIA

**Strike wave  
and privatization plans**

ONE of the reasons cited for the National Salvation Front's massive victory in the elections was that the Front had taken steps to meet basic working class demands concerning food supplies, wages and working conditions, including the length of the working week. Certainly the fact that the government could mobilize thousands of miners to evict its opponents from the centre of Bucharest suggests that the NSF has considerable credibility among sectors of the working class.

However relations between the NSF and its working class supporters have not been all sweetness and light. Over recent months Romania has witnessed a series of big strikes including: 15,000 miners in the Jiu Valley (the same who occupied Central Bucharest) in early March to demand implementation of agreements on wages, working conditions and benefits; a series of transport strikes in the larger cities also in March; a strike by more than 10,000 shipping and dockworkers two days after the NSF election victory, along with further transport strikes in Timisoara and Iasi; strikes in a number of big factories protesting about such things as lack of spare parts and inhuman working conditions.

In most cases the government has, at least in words, acceded to the workers' demands. But for how much longer? According to the *Financial Times* of June 29, Adrian Severin, a supporter of "shock therapy" for the economy, has been brought into the government along with other prominent economic "liberals", with special responsibility for economic reform.

The NSF's economic specialists have devised a plan whereby 70% of the country's enterprises are to be privatized in the next three years, 30% of them in the first year alone. ★

## ROMANIA

**Ion Iliescu on pluralism**

THE Romanian leader Ion Iliescu explained what he thought of political pluralism to a student audience on January 20, 1990. ★

"There are many people who reduce democracy to the existence of several parties, as if the confrontation between several parties was the guarantee of democracy. In my view this is an outmoded historical schema. Who does not know that in the interwar period countries with multiparty systems promoted fascism. Thus, the existence of several parties did not guarantee the defence of democracy....Throughout most of the civilized world and in countries with a long historical tradition, one can talk of the outmoded character of the existing political structures and even of the way in which political parties are organized. These parties, fatally, represent sectarian, group or narrow social interests....In this sense the notion of a party, as a narrow concept, represents an out-of-date category."

(from *La Nouvelle Alternative* May 1990). ★

CZECHO -  
SLOVAKIA**Petition in defence  
of trade union rights**

A PARLIAMENTARY discussion is being prepared on a law on trade union rights in Czechoslovakia. The first drafts suggested significant restrictions on union rights, including the banning of political strikes. A number of left-wing groups responded by preparing the following petition:

*The signatories listed below state:*

1. Their opposition to the draft law on the right to strike published in *Prace* on June 6, 1990, which restricts in an unacceptable fashion the basic rights of working citizens, as set out in international agreements respected in all democratic states.

2. The justice of the rejection of this draft by the existing trade unions.

3. Our surprise at the notion of banning political strikes coming from a government which was born out of political strikes.

We demand:

4. A broad public discussion of not less than six weeks duration after the publication of the draft in the major media before any decision by the Federal Assembly.

We call on:

5. All political parties and movements to open up their publications for this discussion.

6. The government to put its means of communication at the disposal of this organized discussion.

Signed by the participants in the conference of left forces, including representatives of: The Czechoslovak Anarchist Association, Left Alternative, Democratic Forum, the Czechoslovak Social Democracy, Socialist Forum, Obroda-Club for Democratic Socialism. ★

## ZAMBIA

**Anti-price rise riots  
expose Kaunda's  
populist pretensions**

AFTER several other African countries, it is the turn of Zambia to experience popular riots. The reason for these disturbances, which started at the end of June, was the decision of the Kaunda regime to raise the price of maize flour as a part of the austerity plan imposed by international institutions. Official figures of several dead have been given following on from the student demonstrations and the looting of shops.

A false rumour that Kaunda had been toppled by a military coup caused great confusion in the country – thousands came out into the streets to celebrate the event. Most of the urban centres were affected by these movements. Corruption and the absence of democratic liberties seem to have also played their part in the upsurge. The offices of Kaunda's party – the only party allowed – were sacked.

These events are of exceptional international importance, given some specific features of Zambia. First of all it is a southern African country whose regime has claimed to be progressive and an ally of the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa.

These riots will clear up this confusion and undermine the credibility of Kaunda's populist rhetoric. The "socialist" Kaunda has labelled these riots as "criminal disorders" and stated that "the party and government will be severe with all those, including children, who were involved in the destruction of goods."

Furthermore it is primarily a mineral exporting country – copper makes up 90% of its exports. British, United States and South African investment play an important role in this industry. The stakes at a regional level are therefore considerable.

Zambia is a subjugated country, and profoundly dependent. It has an external debt of \$7 million. Despite the socialist professions of faith of the regime, the system is as despotic and corrupt as in all the other neo-colonial African countries, while unemployment and destitution are continually growing. ★

# The last bastion begins to crumble

AMIDST scenes strikingly reminiscent of those which presaged the downfall of other Eastern European bureaucratic dictatorships last year, hundreds of Albanians had sought refuge in foreign embassies by July 6, following street demonstrations and clashes with the security forces.

**BERNARD GIBBONS**

**A** CLEARLY disconcerted regime blew both hot and cold in response to the events. On the one hand, the refugees were denounced in classical Stalinist jargon as "hooligans, criminals, vagabonds, former prisoners, and depraved adolescents". At the same time, however, the Government indicated its readiness to immediately issue 13,000 exit visas to defuse the crisis.

The events in Eastern Europe over the past year have created difficulties for what is now the only one party regime in Europe. On April 17 Albania's leader, Ramiz Alia, told the 10th plenum of the ruling Party of Labour that Albania would not object to the reopening of diplomatic relations with the USA and USSR. Albania has also announced its intention of opening relations with the European Community and joining the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Albania was the only European country not to join the Helsinki conference in 1975).

## New leader seeks continuity with Hoxha

Seeking to retain continuity with the isolationist policies of his predecessor Enver Hoxha, who died in 1985, Alia said the key question for Albanian foreign policy remained "how to maneuver in the world arena to protect the interests of the homeland". However, in contrast to Hoxha, the new leadership tends to attribute Albania's problems to internal factors rather than to "revisionist-imperialist encirclement".

Following this, the May 7 and 8 sessions of the People's Assembly passed new laws on human rights, travel, relig-

ion, foreign credits and other matters.

The number of crimes punishable by death has been reduced from 34 to 11, while the right of all nationals to obtain a passport to travel abroad on request has been recognized (although a lack of hard currency and bureaucratic wrangling will make it difficult for most Albanians to take this up).

Although private criticism of the authorities will no longer be punishable, public criticism will continue to be treated as an appeal for the forcible overthrow of the government. Religious belief is now to be considered "a matter of individual conscience", but there is apparently no plan to reopen churches

and mosques closed down during Albania's "cultural revolution" in 1967.

On the economic plane, Alia has indicated that the taboo, enshrined since 1976 in the constitution, on accepting foreign credits, loans and investments, will be reconsidered, providing such agreements do not infringe Albania's national sovereignty. There is to be greater financial autonomy for enterprises. Tourism will be expanded and a first resort is to be opened this summer.

## Regime encourages high birthrate

Beyond the immediate impact of the events in Eastern Europe, Albania faces a combination of social, political and economic problems after 45 years of hard line Stalinist rule. This tiny country (3.2 million people spread over 29,000 square kilometres) has the youngest population in Europe with an average age of 26. The regime has encouraged Albania's high birth rate and, as in Ceausescu's Romania, abortion is banned. But the demographic explosion has not been matched by economic growth.

Albania possesses rich mineral resources and considerable electric power potential, but its two major exports, chrome, of which Albania is the world's second largest producer, and oil, are now less profitable due to extraction quotas and because the price of oil has fallen.

Industrial equipment is obsolete, agriculture backward (two thirds of the population still live in the countryside), and services inadequate. The need for technological inputs accounts to some extent for Alia's new opening to the west; moreover, political liberalization could lead to an influx of much needed foreign curren-

cy from the considerable Albanian diaspora.

Despite its pretensions to homogeneity and rectitude, the Tirana regime has frequently been riven by complex factional struggles. Whilst the closed nature of the regime makes any accurate assessment of the current balance of forces impossible, it seems that Alia is playing a centrist role between the conservative forces (supposedly headed by Hoxha's widow; Nexhimje Hoxha) and the innovators who are said to be led by the Politburo member in charge of culture, Foto Çami.

The promise of liberalization does not yet seem to have moderated the violent methods habitually used for settling internal disputes in the Albanian bureaucracy — a Yugoslav newspaper reported on April 25 that Alia had been slightly wounded in an assassination attempt.

Despite obvious disaffection amongst sections of the intelligentsia and youth, there has been no evidence until now of any organized opposition to the regime within the country, nor of any resistance on the part of the working class through strike activity. Pre-Stalinist Albania, furthermore, had a very weak tradition of party politics. Democracy only existed from 1920-24, and the population lacks political reference points. In this context, it is hard to foresee the kind of short term collapse of the regime that we have seen in the other bureaucratic states in Eastern Europe.

## Prospect of serious unemployment

Nonetheless this brutally repressive regime can hardly afford to be complacent. Its role in the wartime period — when it led the struggle against Italian occupation — means little to the youth of today who recall neither the struggle for liberation nor the famine and privation of the post war period. Lacking the safety valve of emigration, the regime is finding it increasingly difficult to provide full employment for the burgeoning population.

Nor would any mass unrest be confined to Albania's borders; the effects of any democratic breakthrough in Albania on the almost two million strong Albanian population of Yugoslavia's Kosovo region would be greatly feared by the Belgrade government. Whilst attacking Yugoslavia in the press, Tirana still hands over Kosovar refugees to the Yugoslavs and has not made any territorial claim to the area, perhaps because of the continuing strength of Islam in Kosovo — Albania remains the world's only officially atheist state.

Unless the hardliners triumph, which seems unlikely, future political developments in Albania should open up the kind of space the workers and peasants of that country need to overthrow Stalinism's last bastion in Europe. ★