

# International VIEWPOINT

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## The aims and contradictions of Gorbachev's foreign policy

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## International VIEWPOINT

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# Gorbachev's conference: how much *perestroika*?

WHAT DID Gorbachev achieve at the Nineteenth Conference of the Soviet Communist Party? Most of the observers in the international capitalist press agreed that he got a display of "*glasnost*," with an unprecedentedly open debate, and that he did not get the changes in personnel that he wanted. The results in the second area are most difficult to evaluate, since fights over posts in a bureaucracy by nature tend to involve complex intrigues in which none of the contenders are likely to be very honest about their objectives.

It is clear, however, that there was frustration among the more reform-minded elements of the bureaucracy, especially in the intelligentsia, about the elections of delegates to the conference. That was expressed in such liberal journals as the weekly magazine *Ogonyok*, and the *Pravda* editors apparently felt obliged to try to respond objections of this sort in order to smooth the waters.

The institutional changes that were proposed and accepted do not seem to represent major new departures. The most interesting thing about the conference were the political signals it offered about the bureaucracy's anxiousness to limit *glasnost* and *perestroika*, and the problems it faces in doing so.

GERRY FOLEY

LIMITED as it was, the openness at the conference did impress much of the Western capitalist press, especially after the direct argument between the out-on-a-limb liberal Yeltsin and the conservative leader Yegor Ligachev.

In that sense, the conference achieved Gorbachev's political objective of presenting a facade of democratization. This confrontation, in fact, marked a dramatic contrast with traditional Stalinist monolithism. But there is a long way between unshamed totalitarianism and the emergence of possibilities for real workers' democracy, even if, as the bureaucrats realize, it can be a slippery slope.

The capitalist press, whose own ideology is formal democracy, tended to be easily impressed by some democratic gestures and formulas, some conflictual exchanges. After all, it does not demand more from its own rulers than democratic pretences and minimal tolerance.

In fact, Gorbachev's role in the conference itself presented a bizarre contrast to his declared objective of achieving a "state of laws," that is a system of rules and limitations that would apply to all. He appears in the transcripts of the proceedings in *Pravda* rather like the familiar omnipotent narrator of the nineteenth century novel, breaking into the speeches of the participants, challenging them, admonishing them. (It is interesting that the correspondent Paris daily *Libération* saw this as resembling the "presidentialism" of the Fifth Republic.)

In fact, in Gorbachev's introductory speech to the conference was marked by

warnings against attempts to abuse *perestroika*: "Consolidation of individual rights and liberties, an expansion overall of democracy and openness, must go hand in hand with the strengthening of legality, education in unconditional respect for law. Democracy is incompatible with either willfulness or irresponsibility or lack of discipline."

## Warning on "abuses of democracy"

The prime example of such abuses was the mass movement in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh: "As you know, recently we have more than once run into attempts to use democratic rights for anti-democratic purposes. Some people seem to think that in that way it is possible to resolve all sorts of questions — from redrawing frontiers to creating opposition parties. The Central Committee of the CPSU thinks that such abuses of democracy are in fundamental contradiction to the tasks of *perestroika*, and are at loggerheads with the interests of the people. (Prolonged applause)."

The other warning related to the forming of independent organizations. "Another remarkable aspect of *perestroika* is the tempestuous growth of social associations reflecting the whole range of social interests. This includes organizations of veterans of war and work, associations of scientists and engineers, societies of theatrical people, the Soviet Culture Fund, the Children's Fund, various societies con-

cerned with the preservation of nature, historical monuments, charity....

"Of course, it would not do to close our eyes to the fact that in the flood, some groups have appeared whose interests are far from the goals of *perestroika*, the interests of the people....I am confident that the party organizations and the workers can distinguish genuine contributors to the renewal of socialist society from those who are guided by goals alien to socialism."

The general secretary went on to refer to "the one-party system that has historically taken form and become consolidated in this country."

## Limitations of the "democratization"

"Statization" of all social activity had become a problem, Gorbachev as well as other speakers said, and more room should be opened up for the "civil society," for non-governmental organization. But in the above statements, he made it quite clear what sort of "independent organization" was acceptable, that is, organization of a completely neutral, technical sort, the kind taken for granted in all but the most repressive systems.

Permitting this is a step forward of course, but hardly corresponds to hopes aroused by the *perestroika* line. Moreover, erosion of the totalitarianism of Stalin's time has been going on for a long time in the USSR.

Thus, it is obvious Gorbachev wanted to draw a line that put the two examples of actual democratic action encouraged by *perestroika* — the development of independent organizations and the mass movement in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh — out of the sphere of what is permitted in the "democratization."

With respect to the Armenian question, the Soviet leader showed no qualms about continuing to use Stalinist "newspeak," saying that a movement of hundreds of thousands of people who called for recognizing the right of self-determination of the population of Nagorno-Karabakh was motivated by "undemocratic purposes." Logically, then, the incorporation of Nagorno-Karabakh into Azerbaidzhan by Stalin for the sake of diplomatic relations with the Turkish nationalist regime of Ataturk was in the interests of democracy. Black is white, and white is black.

Most of the speakers that immediately followed Gorbachev also stressed the limits of what is to be allowed under *perestroika*. V. V. Bakatin, first secretary of the Kemerovsk District party organization, and the first to speak after the general secretary,

said: "It was correctly said in the report that we will not achieve this [the goal of *perestroika*] unless we strengthen the CPSU on the basis of Leninist principles, if we give up its role of leader, if we weaken party discipline and indulge the attempts of some voluntary groups to put the party under their supervision. If we encourage attempts to deny the party the right to have its press."

### Cuckoo's eggs in the *perestroika* nest

G. B. Kolbin, the new first secretary of the CP of Kazakhstan, began by saying that the Kazakhs were especially happy about the "constructive" public discussions that had preceded the conference because "18 months ago the situation that developed in Kazakhstan aroused serious fears. In that period a real threat appeared to the transformations sought through *perestroika*." He was obviously referring to the protests against the removal of the former Kazakh party head [who was of Kazakh nationality], which were the first uncontrolled mobilizations under Gorbachev. They led to a purge in the local organization, and a press campaign against Kazakh nationalism. (It was notable that Gorbachev cited Kazakhstan as a model of a "multinationalism" in his report.)

It was Kolbin, among the first speakers in the discussion (reported in *Pravda*, June 30) who delivered perhaps the longest diatribe about cuckoo's eggs turning up in the nest of *perestroika*. "In the conditions of the development of democracy, peoples' activity increases, so-called informal leaders appear. In part, they present correct demands, pose really important, sharp questions, on the basis of which they draw around them advocates of a rapid tempo of *perestroika*. But along with the activities of these leaders, we run into instances of exaggeration, maximalism, proposals that are completely out of line with reality, and outright attacks on party and soviet organs.

"This category of people require constant attention from the leaders of all communists on various levels. Our task is to support their worthy desire to speed up changes but to direct this into the proper channel. There are others, I would say, pseudo-leaders, among whom you find some with party cards in their pockets. They deliberately mislead the public with hare-brained notions and seek to replace democracy with naked anarchism....What concretely can the organizers of all sorts of rallies, demonstrations offer people....

"These defenders of rights and liberties in their stupid ambitions somehow forget about the other important side of democracy. In their statements they fail to draw people's attention to the vital need of strengthening work and production discipline, and rather pander to those who stage strikes, disrupt plans for speeding up production. Such people are no help to *peres-*

*troika*; they are an obstacle."

It would seem that the allegedly corrupt and conservative Kazakh CP leadership of Dinmuhamed Kunaev was not replaced by crusading liberals.

A.M. Masliev, first secretary of the Kirgiz party, delivered a broadside against "irresponsible" criticism of officials in the Soviet press. "In all-union and republic papers and magazines, unobjective and unverified materials have started to be published. (Applause)"

He accused "some journalists" of going so far as to make evaluations of entire "elected party bodies" and of undermining fraternal relations among the Soviet nationalities. "They present themselves as the greatest advocates of *perestroika* and try to ignore the party organs and counterpose to them public opinion. (Applause)."

It is notable in *Pravda's* transcriptions how often such remarks got "applause." Another indication of the feelings of the delegates was the response to a reference to the anti-Stalinist work *Arbat's Children*. After this, the Soviet CP paper noted, there was "noise in the hall." The speaker, V.V. Karpov of the Writers' Union, responded by saying "Whether you like it or not, I am just saying that these works have aroused attention."

### Strong pressures and serious dilemmas

Karpov went on to denounce the harshness of criticisms being published, apparently by liberals, and a so-called struggle for positions in the press.

There were some disagreements, for example over Gorbachev's proposal for "certificates" of good standing of party members, which was presented as a means of fighting complacency and inactivity. A delegate identified as a worker from Leningrad opposed it. There were also some frank statements about present economic difficulties, as well as about the problem of Stalinism.

The statement by V.I. Melnikov calling for the removal of leaders he considered compromised has been much commented on, but it was quite exceptional in the conference, and may have been a slip, as some correspondents indicated. It is undoubtedly hard to avoid slips when some openness is not only permitted but required. That indicates a basic problem.

It was also said frankly that attempts to reform the system in the past had failed, and that the party could not afford another failure. In all, the report and discussion in the first days of the conference reflected very strong pressures and serious dilemmas for the rulers, as well as an attempt to assure that *perestroika* will remain in narrow limits. Certain interesting information was revealed, both about the state of the country and conflict in the bureaucracy, and more will probably come to light in the final transcripts. ★

# Chances of survival slim for Denmark's new government

**AFTER a four week governmental crisis, an unusual situation in Denmark, a new bourgeois minority cabinet was finally formed on June 3. This followed intense negotiations since the May 10 elections. More than a deadlock between the workers' and bourgeois parties, this reflected a deep split in the bourgeois camp about how to fight the workers in the sharpening crisis that lies ahead.**

**S**INCE 1982, Denmark has been ruled by a minority government made up of four bourgeois parties — the Conservatives, Liberals, Center Democrats and Christian People's Party. The parliamentary basis for this regime has been represented by the bourgeois majority in the Folketing [parliament], which has also included the Progress Party on the government's right-flank and the Radical Liberals on its left.

While the government can count on a majority for its general economic policy, including for its attacks on workers' incomes and its cut-backs policy, on a number of questions it has faced a so-called Alternative Majority, made up of the working-class parties and the Radical Liberals. This Alternative Majority has, for example, forced the government to conduct a different policy on environmental and military questions (on which there have been extensive popular mobilizations).

The existence of this Alternative Majority on military matters has forced the government in recent years to put footnotes in official NATO documents, first and foremost because of the opposition to the deployment of American Pershing and cruise

missiles in Europe (the so-called double-track decision). It was this majority that induced the Schlüter government to call an election on May 10, 1988 — only eight months after the previous parliamentary election in September 1987. Together, the Radical Liberals, the Social democrats and the Socialist People's Party (SF) had passed a resolution that henceforth any NATO ship would be informed that it was incompatible with established Danish policy to bring atomic weapons into Danish territory in peacetime.

## NATO question became main election issue

Even though the resolution did not demand an answer from ships that they were not carrying atomic weapons, the government and NATO chose to consider the resolution a break with NATO practice that no ship reveals whether it has nuclear armaments on board. The government opted to make the question an election issue, with the clear aim of liquidating the Alternative Majority on defence policy.

Although the Alternative Majority lost seven seats, it maintained its edge, with 79 seats out of a total of 175. The government parties made no gains, but the rightist Progress Party won seven more seats.

It was this unsuccessful attack on the Alternative Majority that was the background to the long governmental crisis after the election. Premier Poul Schlüter's problem was that a continuation of the four-party government would face an Alternative Majority on environmental and defence questions, and therefore could not look forward to a long life.

So, Schlüter opted for a tactical maneuver. The two small bourgeois parties in the government (the Center Democrats and the Christian People's Party) were maneuvered out, and instead a minority government was formed of the Conservatives (35 seats), the Liberals (22 seats) and the Radicals (10 seats).

The objective of this tactic was to lure the Radical Liberals away from the Alternative Majority on defence with the bait of ministerial seats. In the short term, the ploy worked. With the help of the Radicals, the new government has already solved the problem that led to the snap election by sending a letter to NATO countries' ambassadors saying that Denmark does not want atomic weapons in peacetime. In that way, they avoided the direct challenge involved in sending such a notice to the captains of every NATO ship.

Likewise, in a series of other areas it is clear that the Radical Left has abandoned the viewpoint of the Alternative Majority for the sake of participating in the government. This has already provoked uneasiness among many members of the party.

However, it is too early to talk about an outright capitulation by the Radical Liberals. Their declared aim in going into the

government was to open it up to "the left of center," that is, to bring in the Social Democrats. At the same time, the wide differences between the Radicals and the Progress Party remain, and there is no possibility in sight for overcoming them.

Against this background, the new government is functioning in a very unstable way, and has a slim chance of surviving very long. How long depends first and foremost on whether the Social Democrats want to maintain the government and really become part of its parliamentary base.

Until now, the statements from leading Social Democrats in the party and the trade-union movement have been totally contradictory. But the result will be determined to a large extent by whether the Danish left can organize workers' resistance into active opposition to class collaboration in parliament as well. ★

### Election results (seats) 1987/1988

	1987	1988
Social democrats	54	55
SF	27	24
Common Course	4	0 <sup>1</sup>
Radical Liberals	11	10
Conservatives	38	35 <sup>2</sup>
Liberals	19	22
Center Democrats	9	9
Christian People's Party	4	4
Progress Party	9	16

1. A party formed by a breakaway from the CP in the seamen's union with an anti-immigrant program. It got just under the 2% minimum for representation in parliament. Parties that top 2% get four seats.

2. The premier's own party.

## Left parties lose seats

**FOR THE Danish left, the May 10 election was not a good one. Altogether, the left parties lost six seats. In particular, this was a bad election for the forces to the left of the social democracy. For the first time in more than ten years, they suffered a definite setback, losing 3.1% of the votes.**

**With 16.3% of the vote today, the forces to the left of the social democracy are still an important factor and are bigger than at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s.**

**I**N THE PERIOD from 1977 to 1987, we saw a considerable strengthening of the Danish left wing. Its vote doubled from about 10% to 20%. The bulk of these gains were registered by the left reformist Socialist People's Party (SF), whose vote increased from 3.9% in 1979 to 14.6% in 1987.

The left wing's advance was in part an expression of the class polarization in Danish society under the impact of the capitalist crisis. But it was also an expression of the fact that by voting for the left wing a lot of workers were trying to compensate for the difficulties of stopping the offensive of the bourgeoisie and the bosses in open

struggle.

The culmination of the left wing's advance came in the 1987 elections, when it won almost 20% of the vote. That was a direct result of the Easter strikes in 1985, when for several weeks Denmark was paralyzed by a "proto general strike." Even though the strikes did not achieve their goal of toppling the bourgeois Schlüter government, they did give a strong impetus to the desire for workers' parties that would carry out policies in the interests of the working people.

### Dashing hopes for a working-class majority

Opinion polls showed a clear majority for the workers' parties, and the social democracy was forced to open up to a possibility of governmental collaboration with the SF. Since then, both the social-democratic and SF leaderships, each in their own way, have helped to dash workers' hopes for a working-class majority.

The social democrats have continually sought to open up the way for collaboration "across the center" (for example with the Radical Liberals), and time after time they have stressed the need for a tough austerity policy to save the capitalist system.

SF in general has held fast to the perspective of a workers' majority government, but at the same time has watered down its political context. From the SF's parliamentary angle, moving closer to the social-democratic perspective was supposed to make the possibility of governmental collaboration more "realistic."

However, the result of this has been on the one hand that the SF has been confronted with new demands from the social democrats and, on the other, that popular

support for a workers' majority has ebbed considerably. The result was that in the May 10 elections the workers' parties represented no clear alternative. This, combined with the absence of struggles, led to losses for the workers' parties, partly to the bourgeois parties and partly to abstention.

The biggest loss was in the SF vote. That was a result of the fact that the party's profile was very much subordinated to that of the social democracy (for example, in the campaign it did not want to come out in clear opposition to NATO, although this position has been one of the party's trademarks.) But it was also linked to the fact that the SF was most committed to a "workers' majority alternative," which many people thought offered no real alternative in practice.

Despite the setback, there is no immediate sign of opposition developing in the SF to the leadership's rightward course. In fact, at a congress after the election the leadership's line was endorsed by an overwhelming majority.

For the far left as well, the election was a defeat (see IV 142). But in contrast to the SF, it has prompted an extensive discussion on tasks and perspectives, especially in the Left Socialist Party (VS).

### VS majority for revolutionary regroupment

That was reflected clearly in the VS congress held two weeks after the election. A series of leading figures announced that they were leaving the party and appealing to join the SF. But there was also a majority for ending the party's right turn (the so-called "red realism") and putting the perspective of a "revolutionary Marxist party" on the agenda. In this connection the VS also expressed a desire for collaboration and discussions with the Socialist Workers' Party (SAP, Danish section of the Fourth International), among others.

The SAP has welcomed these developments in the VS, and is prepared to participate in a regroupment process with the perspective of building a revolutionary Marxist party. This is not because in the short term this will assure an advance for the far left and renewed representation in parliament. It is because such a regroupment can become an active and strong pole in the class struggle that can fill the vacuum left by the SF's right turn. ★

## Racist party doubles vote

**THE BIG WINNER in the May 10 election was the rightist Progress Party. It almost doubled its vote, reaching 9%. That gave the party 16 seats in the new parliament, an increase of seven. Since this coincided with Le Pen's success in the French presidential elections, many people have seen the Progress Party's advance as a similar phenomenon.**

**T**HE PROGRESS PARTY was formed in 1973 as a protest against the high taxes enacted by successive social-democratic and bourgeois governments. The initiator and unquestioned leader was Mogens Glistrup, who called for cutting taxes and equated this fight with the 1940-45 resistance movement against the Nazi occupation. Personally, he managed to pay zero taxes.

Besides the demand for lower taxes and drastic savings in the public sector, the party's policy in the beginning was very dif-

fuse. For example, Glistrup called for cutting back the military and replacing it with a recorded telephone message in Russian saying "We surrender."

After a spectacular jump in the 1973 elections, in which the party won 15.9% of the vote, it started to develop toward positions like those of the traditional parties in a number of areas (for example on military questions and foreign policy). But, at the same time, it held fast to the demand for lower taxes and economies in the public sector. This meant that the party was less able to differentiate itself from the other bourgeois parties, and in the 1984 elections its vote dropped to 3.6%.

### A mood of weariness with politicians

The Progress Party's rise to 4.8% in 1987 and 9% in 1988 can be explained by a number of factors. In part, there has been growing dissatisfaction among bourgeois voters with the Schlüter regime's inability to deliver on its election promises, such as reducing the public sector and cutting taxes.

In part, with its populist demagoguery the party has been able to tap a mood of weariness with politicians, resulting among other things from having two parliamentary elections in a period of only eight months.

Finally, the party has cynically linked itself to, and promoted, fears that have developed in recent years about an influx of foreigners, among other things in response to periodic increases in the number of refugees from Iran and Lebanon.

About 55% of those who vote for the Progress Party declare that they have a "very negative" attitude to Muslim immigrants and refugees. Among those who vote for the other bourgeois parties, "only"



**Progress Party leader Mogens Glistrup after attempting to speak on May Day a few years ago (DR)**

25% feel the same way.

In the meantime, it is interesting to see which groups are being attracted to the Progress Party. In the 1970s, there was a sector of young voters. But today only 16% of the party's voters are under 30. On the other hand, 60% of its voters are over 50 (in comparison with only 40% of the population as a whole). Against this background, it is not surprising that almost a third of those who vote for the party are old-age pensioners. On the other hand, only 18% of its vote comes from workers employed in the public and private sectors.

While the Progress Party got 9% of the vote, it has only a few thousand members. The level of activity is very low, and only a

small proportion can be mobilized to go into the streets in election campaigns. The party's inability to mobilize its members was illustrated on May 1, when it called for a rally in the Faelledpark in Copenhagen. While 200,000 people participated in the commemoration organized by the workers' movement, only 50 people (protected by almost as many police) listed to Mogens Glistrup's diatribe against refugees and immigrants.

While the Progress Party's electoral advance was a victory for the extreme right, it is not an advance that can be translated today into an offensive in the streets. These gains still have too much of the character of a protest vote. ★

ten". And those who have insisted on pursuing the truth have been prosecuted, as in the case of a TV producer who wrote a book about what he had seen. *Internationalen*, the paper of the Socialist Party (Swedish section of the Fourth International), has also been prosecuted for "slander" simply because it reported on all the unanswered questions and dubious details of police leads.

Given all this, it would have been legitimate enough for the social democrats to investigate the police lead, distrusting the ability right-wing extremists of the police and the security police to investigate themselves. It might even have been reasonable for the social democratic party to start their own investigation to stop right-wing sabotage.

### Fighting the attacks on democratic rights

But this is not what has been done. On the contrary, it is obvious that the social democrats led their "investigation" precisely in order to continue the favourite theme of the security police and sections of the regular police force: the Kurdish connection. The theory that has been investigated is that the PKK murdered Palme, following orders from Iran. Apart from not being very credible, there is absolutely no evidence to back up this theory. Furthermore, the social democrats worked very closely with sections of the security police and police in this investigation.

This new scandal has broken at a time of general demoralization, when it is clear that the result of the yearly negotiations on work contracts will result in a loss in real wages for most workers, and when the accumulated effects of years of public service cuts is leading to an acute crisis of health-care and childcare this summer. It comes at a time when the political vacuum is growing, with the social democrats doing their best to tone down the differences between left and right before the coming national elections in September.

It comes at a time when the Eurocommunist party, the VPK, after years of compromises and acceptance of social-democratic austerity policies runs a real risk of losing all its posts in parliament. At the same time, there is still no strong and credible alternative on the left. The Socialist Party, which is running candidates for the national, municipal and regional elections, is working to build such an alternative.

In this work, the fight against the attacks on democratic rights and against increasing corruption is essential. The Socialist Party has raised a number of immediate demands after the Leijon scandal:

Make all the material relating to the Palme investigation public! Stop the prosecutions of those who have questioned police investigation! Release the nine Kurds from municipal arrest and give them a fair and open trial! ★

## More scandals follow Palme investigation

**LAST WEEK, Anna-Greta Leijon, minister of justice and a central member of the social-democratic leadership, was forced to resign. The reason was the discovery that the social-democratic party had led a parallel, secret investigation into the murder of Swedish premier Olof Palme in 1986.**

**MARIA SUNDVALL**

**T**HIS DISCOVERY was not an isolated event, but only the latest in a long series of scandals and revelations. It thus became symbolic of the increasingly corrupt legal practices and of the degradation of democratic institutions in Sweden.

To be sure, there have always been cases of corruption and legal scandals, but in the two years that have passed since Olof Palme was shot in the street it seems that there has been an explosion of revelations. Among many Swedish workers, this has caused demoralization and a loss of confidence in state institutions. All this has contributed to changing the political climate.

Among the scandals there have been cases of personal corruption among top civil servants. There have been financial scandals, such as the revelation that 450 million crowns (about \$75m) had been gambled away by employees in Stockholm's town hall buying shares and options. The Bofors arms scandal was another. Bofors is a big armaments company that was caught smuggling weapons to countries prohibited by Swedish law — but probably with the knowledge of the Swedish government.

Another factor contributing to the weakening of democratic institutions has been the introduction of new laws and legal practices threatening democratic rights. For instance, nine Kurds are being held under

"municipal arrest" without any possibility of a public trial. They have not been convicted of any crime, but are being held simply because they are sympathizers of the Kurdish organization, the PKK, which is suspected in two Swedish murder cases. In sharp contradiction to the law, today a third of refugees coming to Sweden for asylum are being turned away at the border. Now new laws are being prepared that will make it even more difficult for refugees to come into the country.

But the most important and glaring example of the changed situation is the Palme investigation itself.

First, the police hunted down the PKK for a year, without a shadow of proof against the Kurdish organization. This culminated in a big raid and the arrest of 50 Kurds in Stockholm — a raid that was condemned by the prosecutors as an attempt to "construct a Chile stadium in Sweden"! After this, the Kurdish lead was officially dropped. It is becoming increasingly obvious that extremely serious evidence pointing to the state apparatus — and in particular to sections of the police with well-known right extremist sympathies — are not being investigated.

The statements made by a number of people who witnessed policemen acting strangely at or near the place of Palme's murder have been dismissed or "forgot-

# The implications of the Soviet troop withdrawal

**SOVIET TROOPS** began their withdrawal from Afghanistan on May 15. Half of the 100,300 soldiers that the Soviet general staff has recently declared that it has in the country are to be withdrawn before August 15. The evacuation is supposed to be completed within nine months, that is, before February 15, 1989.

**SALAH JABER**

**T**HESE ARE the terms of the accord signed in Geneva on April 14 by the governments of Afghanistan, Pakistan, the USSR and the United States. Indirect negotiations under the aegis of the United Nations between the representatives of Kabul and Islamabad began in 1982. For a long time, they focused on the question of the timetable for the withdrawal of Soviet troops. The initial Soviet/Afghan proposal was to spread out the withdrawal over four years. On the other hand, the Pakistan/US side demanded a time limit of three months.

But the gap between these two positions was to narrow quickly after 1986. Then, suddenly, on February 8, Mikhail Gorbachev announced that the USSR and the Republic of Afghanistan had agreed to reduce the withdrawal schedule to ten months beginning on May 15, expecting the accord to be signed in Geneva on March 15.

The agreement was finally signed a month late because of differences that arose among the parties. It was not the final reduction of a month in the timetable proposed by Gorbachev that was involved this time, but new demands formulated by Washington and Islamabad that seemed to be obstructive.

As a new condition for signing the accord Pakistan raised a prior understanding on a provisional government to replace the one in power in Kabul. The Reagan administration, under pressure from Congress, revised the meaning to be given to the mutual disengagement of the two big powers. In exchange for cutting off US military aid to the Afghan rebel forces, Washington no longer demanded simply the withdrawal of Moscow's troops, but also the breaking off of Soviet military aid to the Kabul government.

Gorbachev had already given a peremptory answer to the Pakistani demand in his February 8 statement. "This is a purely internal Afghan problem. Only the Afghans

can settle it.... When it is suggested that the Soviet Union must take part in negotiations over this, and still more with third states, we answer clearly: Spare us this, it is not our problem or yours."

Faced with Washington's new position, Moscow threatened after March 17 to conclude an agreement on the withdrawal of its troops with the Kabul government alone. This was a thinly veiled threat to Pakistan, inasmuch as the Geneva accords also involved an agreement that Kabul and Moscow would stop supporting subversive activities on its territory.

## US and USSR agree on aid parity

Finally, a tacit agreement was concluded between the US and the Soviets on a "positive symmetry" of aid from each of the two great powers to their respective protégés. In other words, Washington pledged to measure out the aid to the Mujahideen in proportion to Moscow's aid to Kabul. Pakistan would continue to serve as a bridge for foreign aid to the Afghan rebellion, but the rebels were to shift their military equipment and the training of their troops into Afghan territory. The Geneva accords could finally be signed, although they were tacitly emptied of a good part of their substance.

The determination shown by Moscow to begin the troop withdrawal confirms the assessment we made a year earlier that Gorbachev was "genuinely anxious to disengage" from the Afghan bog, and that, to this end, if the US attitude stood in the way of an accord, "it is not out of the question that Moscow will try to pursue its strategy of disengagement all the way without an agreement."<sup>1</sup>

This judgement was far from a unanimous one at the time it was expressed. Many commentators saw Gorbachev's atti-

tude as only a "political maneuver," and stressed heavily the military value that they thought the "Afghan laboratory" represented for the Soviet army.<sup>2</sup>

For those who accept the view of "Russian expansionism," Gorbachev's decision must seem totally extraordinary. On the other hand, as was noted recently by a CIA expert: "Only those who might have argued in 1979 that the Soviet Union never really wanted to go in the first place, that such an act was atypical of Soviet behavior, can now say that they are less than deeply impressed by the implications of the move."<sup>3</sup>

## Withdrawal not the result of a military defeat

The discomfited advocates of the theory of Soviet expansionism are now trying to save face by saying that the Kremlin's decision was the result of a military defeat. But if there was a "defeat," it had been evident for a long time. As we pointed out a year ago, for several years it was the case that "the balance sheet of the intervention of Soviet troops shows an appalling bankruptcy."

The fact remains, however, that the strategy that Gorbachev has followed in Afghanistan since 1985 has unquestionably borne fruit, even though it is far from having decisively changed the relationship of forces. Besides, can anyone seriously believe that the USSR did not have the means to send more than 100,000 soldiers to control a territory of 650,000 square kilometers on its borders, when Israel dispatched as many soldiers in 1982 to occupy 6,000 square kilometers of Lebanese territory, and when in 1973 more than five times as many US soldiers were deployed over the 170,000 square kilometers of south Vietnam? Moreover, the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan never aroused domestic and international opposition comparable in scope and intensity to that experienced by the United States and Israel in the cases cited.

In fact, it is the economic and not the military vulnerability of the USSR that explains the course followed by Mikhail Gorbachev. For the United States, Vietnam represented a major stake in its policy of dominating the world market. At the same time, it was a windfall for its "military-industrial complex." However, for a Soviet bureaucracy frightened by the expansion of Islamic fundamentalism on its borders after Khomeini's victory in February 1979, the stakes in Afghanistan were essentially "defensive" and political.

The objective was not to "Mongolize" Afghanistan, or effect any "structural assimilation," but to prevent the development

1. See IV 117, April 6, 1987.

2. A sampling of such views by "specialists," such as Hélène Carrère d'Encausse, can be found in the special feature published in *Défis Afghans* 13, March/April 1987, under the title "Que veut Gorbachev?"

3. Graham Fuller, in the *Washington Post*, republished in the *International Herald Tribune*, March 8, 1988.

of a fundamentalist regime in Kabul, which was considered certain in 1979. The limitations of the Soviet deployment in Afghanistan continued to be dictated by this objective. Even with these restrictions the Soviet intervention represented a serious drain for Moscow. It increased the overall burden of military spending in a faltering and uncompetitive economy, in which the military industries did not represent any special private interest.

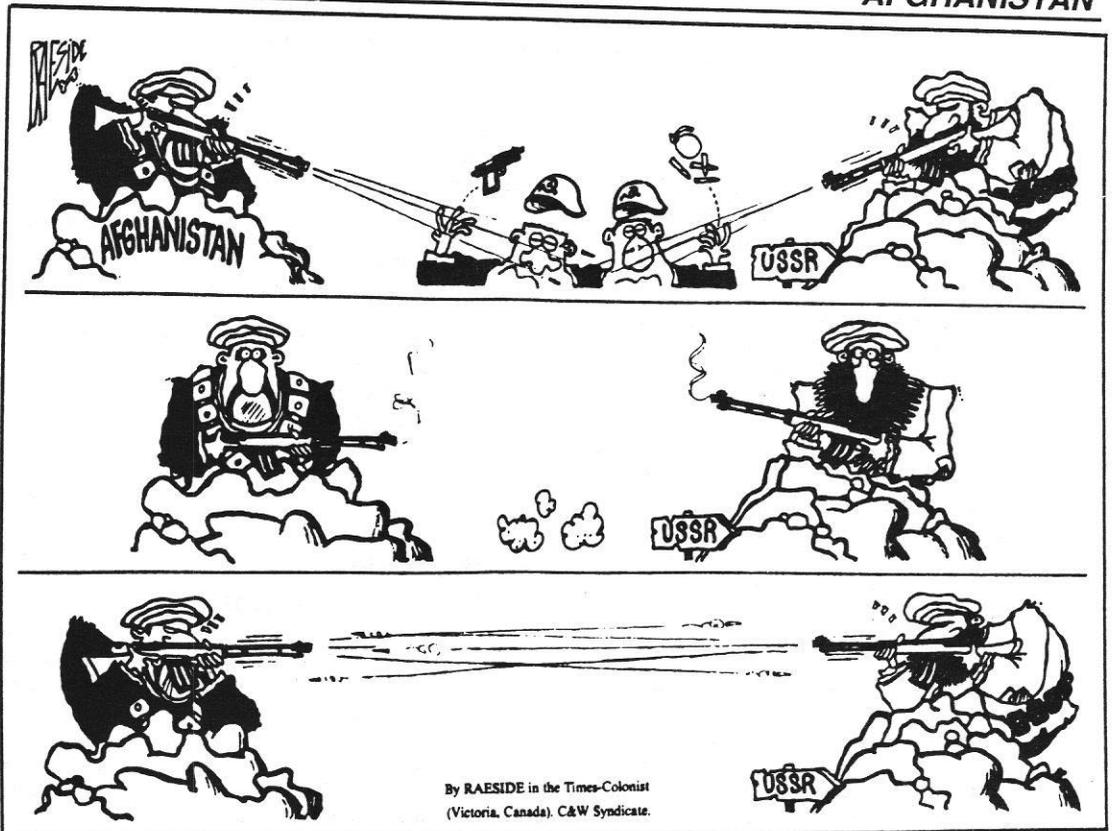
Moreover, settling the Afghan conflict seemed to be one of the main prerequisites for a detente with the United States, an objective put back on the agenda by a Gorbachev anxious to improve the external conditions for his *perestroika*. A secondary but still important consideration was that, far from stopping the Islamic contagion in the Central Asian republics of the USSR, the Afghan intervention had given impetus to it.

That the Soviet decision to withdraw from Afghanistan is an inseparable part of Gorbachev's overall foreign policy is attested to by the way that it has been presented by the Kremlin leaders themselves, as well as by their Afghan protégé. Since the inauguration in 1986 of the "national reconciliation" policy in Afghanistan, "Dr. Najibullah," the new president of the republic, has not missed an opportunity in Ho-Chi-Minh City, Havana or in the international publications sponsored by Moscow to note that this policy has "aroused interest among many people abroad, especially in Kampuchea and the five Central American countries. The idea of reconciliation has in itself an essentially universal human character."<sup>4</sup>

### "Gangrenous infections on the body of humanity"

In January, Shevardnadze, Gorbachev's minister of foreign affairs, told the Afghan press agency that this policy was "a reflection of great worldwide trends," and was having "a beneficial effect on the international climate." He went on to say quite clearly that "having been tested in Afghanistan, it is more and more frequently being adopted as a model for settling conflicts in other regions."<sup>5</sup>

Finally, in his February 8 statement, Gorbachev was even more explicit, resorting extensively to the surgical metaphors that he seems to like: "If the arms race...is an insane rush of humanity into the abyss, regional conflicts are bloody wounds that can create gangrenous infections on the body



of humanity. The earth is literally ulcerated by these dangerous points of infection, each of which causes not only suffering for the peoples directly involved but also for everyone else, whether in relation to Afghanistan, the Middle East, the Iran-Iraq war, South Africa, Kampuchea or Central America.... Achieving a political settlement in Afghanistan would be a breakthrough in the chain of regional conflicts...and would make it possible to raise the question: What will be the next conflict to be overcome? Because it would necessarily lead to that."

This is the language of a future Nobel Prize winner, which the Pope himself could approve of. In the area of "peaceful coexistence," the late Khrushchev has been put in the shade.

The universal policy of "national reconciliation" and disengagement of foreign troops advocated by Gorbachev has already had the practical consequences that we have seen in the regions mentioned. What is generally forgotten, on the other hand, is that it has taken its inspiration directly from a rather inglorious precedent, that is, the US disengagement from Vietnam, and that it harks back to the foreign policy of the first decade of the Brezhnev era, before the US debacle in Indochina. The "interventionist" decade in Soviet policy that followed has tended to make people forget what went before. From this standpoint, Gorbachev's foreign policy is far less original than it might seem at first glance, even if it is a good deal more spectacular.

The major features of Gorbachev's Afghan policy seem modeled in every aspect on the US precedent in Vietnam. The Af-

ghanization of the Soviet war came after a Vietnamization of the US war, against the background of withdrawal of the interventionist troops in both cases. The "national reconciliation" touted by Gorbachev and Najibullah echoes the "National Council for Reconciliation and National Harmony" provided for by the US/Vietnamese accord signed in Paris in 1973.

### Spectacular measures for "national reconciliation"

There are even some similarities in the text of the accords, notably the peculiarity of not mentioning directly one of the parties in the conflict — the Provisional Revolutionary Government in 1973 and the Islamic Alliance in 1988. "The accord that ended the war in Vietnam," Henry Kissinger wrote in his memoirs of his White House years, "to my knowledge is the only document in diplomatic history that does not mention all the parties involved." It is no longer the only one.

A major difference between the two cases, however, is the attitude of the native forces. In this regard, the dangers are the opposite. The US strategy of disengagement from Vietnam ran up against the recalcitrant attitude of Thieu in Saigon, described at length by Kissinger in his memoirs<sup>6</sup>, while their enemies showed a great tactical flexibility. In Afghanistan, on the

4. *La Nouvelle Revue Internationale* 353, January 1988.

5. Interview given to the Bakhtar Agency, January 6, 1988.

6. As a good racist, he describes Thieu's methods as "detestably Vietnamese!"

other hand, the Mujahideen are the intransigent ones, while Najibullah is toeing the line of Gorbachev's strategy meticulously, even if he sometimes needs to be cajoled a little.

Since he came to power in Kabul with the Kremlin's blessing in May 1986, Najibullah has championed "national reconciliation." In line with this course, spectacular measures have been adopted. The main ones up to March 1987 were described in a previous article.<sup>7</sup> The subsequent steps have gone further in the same direction. In the following months, the regime passed a new law on investment in the private sector. The tax exemptions and other facilities it includes make Afghanistan one of the countries that offers the best conditions for private enterprise, were it not for the uncertainties that hang over its political future!

A new agrarian law raised the maximum land holding from six to 20 hectares on the most fertile soils. At the same time, Najibullah confirmed that "the size of the land owned by those who have played a great role in the realization of the policy of national reconciliation" — that is the collaborationist big landlords — "is not to be limited!"<sup>8</sup> The Islamic rules of inheritance were restored and even legitimized by the new constitution, which accords Islam and traditional practices a much larger juridical and legislative role than the preceding one.

This new constitution was adopted at the end of November 1987 by an ad hoc meeting of the *Loya Jirgah*, the regime's own version of the traditional assembly of notables that figured among the institutions of the Afghan monarchy. The official designation of the state was changed in a moderate direction, with the term "democratic" being eliminated. Even the emblem and the flag of the state have been Islamicized! More than a thousand mullahs and *ulemas* (theologians) have been "elected" to various positions in the institutions of the regime.

### Real and token measures for political democracy

Some real political democratization measures have been adopted, alongside others that were more symbolic than real. In particular, several thousand political prisoners have been released. The regime's desire for a political opening is not a pretence. Najibullah summed this up in the formula "anyone who is not against us is with us." He offered a share of legal power to anyone willing to cooperate with his government.

The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) no longer holds a monopoly of the leading posts. According to Najibullah, the only civilian posts that are still held exclusively by the party are the presidency of the republic and the ministries of defence, the interior and finance — in a nutshell, the key posts. In fact, several ministries have been given to non-

members of the PDPA who held responsible positions in the regimes that preceded the party's seizure of power in April 1978.

The most spectacular measure in this respect was the appointment in May of Hassan Sharq as premier. He was Prince Daud's chief of staff when the latter served as premier under King Zaher Shah from 1953 to 1963. He then became deputy premier under the same Prince Daud when the prince seized power, ousting his cousin the king and declaring a republic in 1973, before being overthrown in his turn five years later by the PDPA. From 1980 to 1986, Sharq enjoyed the gilded exile that the job of ambassador often represents. He was recalled to the country in the context of the new policy of "national reconciliation."

### Will the regime survive the Soviet withdrawal?

Following the advice so readily offered by Moscow, after December 1986 Najibullah stepped up his appeals to all the tendencies in opposition to his regime, and especially to the monarchist components of the Peshawar-based Islamic Alliance, offering to share power with them in the framework of a coalition. Up until now, these appeals have received little response. No major personality or tendency in the opposition, in particular in the armed opposition, has grasped the hand offered by the regime. Doubtless, however, some have been tempted to do so and still are. Why don't they do so then?

The first reason is the uncertainty about the regime's ability to survive the withdrawal of Soviet troops. If the regime collapsed, anyone who had accepted Kabul's offer would share its fate. The second reason has to do with the composition of the opposition itself, its heterogeneity. In fact, whereas the very homogeneous, if not monolithic, Vietnamese resistance could afford to maneuver politically, the Afghan Islamic Alliance is a conglomerate of rival organizations, held together by nothing but their fight against a common enemy.<sup>9</sup>

The most important components of the Islamic Alliance, the fundamentalist organizations, because of their fanatical ideological rigidity have little inclination to exhibit any tactical flexibility. The resulting atmosphere in Peshawar is of the various groups constantly trying to outbid each other, of great tension among the components of the Islamic Alliance, which is in continual danger of breaking up.

The heterogeneity of the opposition to the PDPA regime is a major consideration in Gorbachev's Afghan strategy. In fact, Moscow and Kabul are relying on divisions among their Afghan enemies to beef up their "national reconciliation" policy. They know that, aside from their role of channeling the hundreds of millions of dollars in aid of all sorts that they get from the United States and the reactionary Muslim regimes, the Peshawar organizations enjoy

very little popularity.

These organizations are not even very well thought of among the 3 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan, who they are trying by every possible means to prevent going home as the Kabul regime has invited them to. After the signing of the Geneva accords, this invitation is more likely to be listened to.<sup>10</sup>

The unpopularity of the leaders enscornced in Peshawar has been attested to by sources that can hardly be suspected of harboring sympathy for Kabul. For example, a Western diplomat stationed in Islamabad was quoted in the May 9 issue of the US magazine *Newsweek* as saying: "The leaders are not popular with the refugees. There's grumbling in the camps that the leaders are getting rich and passing the war in comfort in Peshawar, far from the front and from the refugee hovels."

A poll was recently carried out among the Afghan refugees in Pakistan and cited in the international press. The US researcher, Selig Harrison, a specialist on Afghanistan, referred to the results in an article in the April issue of *Le Monde Diplomatique*: "All the exile leaders have been discredited by persistent rumors of drug trafficking and diversion of US aid to the black market. Out of 2,287 refugees questioned in 106 out of the 249 camps, 71.65% wanted the former king — who symbolizes a period of relative stability and good neighborly relations with the USSR — to preside over the future government. Barely 1% wanted this role to be given to a leader of the resistance."

### Divisions in the Islamic Alliance

This poll confirmed what was said, a few months before his assassination in Peshawar, by one of the most eminent intellectuals in the Afghan opposition, Professor SB Majruh: "The Soviets know that the leaders in Peshawar will never represent a real obstacle because of their political weakness, so the only danger could come in the person of the king. Their intention was to eliminate this possibility by presenting it as a solution coming from the Soviet side. They hoped that this maneuver would also have the effect of aggravating the divisions in the Alliance."<sup>11</sup>

Whatever the Soviets' intention, that has indeed been the effect. The cordiality of relations in the Islamic Alliance has been illustrated recently by the episode reported by Western reporters stationed in Peshawar.<sup>12</sup> When he was accused at a meeting of the Mujahideen by the leader of one of the

7. *IV* 117, April 6, 1987.

8. "Comrade Najib's Speech at the Plenum of the PDPA CC," Afghanistan Today Publishers, Kabul, June 1987.

9. See *IV* 117, April 6, 1987.

10. Correspondents stationed in Peshawar have noted a sharp rise in the value of the Afghan currency on the local market, a clear sign of people preparing to return.

11. *Défis Afghans* 15, November 1987.

three traditionalist (monarchist) components of the Alliance of having ordered Professor Majruh's assassination, Hekmatyar, chief of the most powerful and most fanatic of the four fundamentalist organizations in the Alliance, pulled his gun and nearly shot down his accuser.

Disagreements have been increasing among the organizations in Peshawar since the signing of the Geneva accords. Disagreement over what attitude to take to the accords<sup>13</sup>, disagreement about what to do about the Soviet troops while they are withdrawing and so on. But the fundamental difference between the seven groups in Peshawar, the one around which all the others turn, is what attitude to take toward former King Zaher Shah, who is in exile in Rome.

### "Elections contrary to the principles of Islam"

What could be more natural when you consider that the three main organizations in the Alliance, all of them fundamentalist, were founded under the monarchy and in opposition to Zaher Shah, who was accused of being a puppet of Moscow and an anti-Islamic modernist? This fundamental difference is also reflected in the contrasting proposals about how to choose the political representatives of the Alliance.

For example, Hekmatyar, who holds the advantage in Peshawar because he gets the most foreign aid and has the best structured organization, proposed general elections among the refugees in Pakistan (for men only, of course). The chief of another fundamentalist group that split from Hekmatyar's group did not like this suggestion according to B. Delpuech, writing in a publication devoted to supporting the "Mujahideen."<sup>14</sup>

"Since Yunos Khaless expressed the opinion that democratic elections would be contrary to the principles of Islam, a theological-exegetical dispute developed over the way prescribed by the Koran. Assemblies of mullahs were even called together in Peshawar to come up with a solution acceptable to all."

For their part, the royalists favor the idea

of a *Loya Jirgah*, an assembly of notables, tribal chiefs and religious dignitaries, harking back to the tradition of the old regime. According to Delpuech, Mujaddedi proposed initially "to form an electoral college in which each of the organizations in the Alliance would appoint 15 representatives (10 theologians and five 'laymen')," on the model of the system of cooptation employed under the second and third califs of Islam.

Finally, the seven organizations in Peshawar decided for the time being simply to name the members of their government themselves. So far, they have only managed to agree on the "president" of this government, a certain Ahmed Shah, whose principal virtue is probably that he is a bland enough figure to be accepted by the seven organizations. This selection provoked a sour commentary from one of the royalist leaders in the Alliance: "Anyone who has not been chosen by all the Afghans will not be supported by the Afghan people."<sup>15</sup>

So by opting to make public overtures to the ex-king in exile in Rome from 1986 on, Gorbachev — whose line was reproduced by Najibullah — was on target. Informed by their services, both know that Zaher Shah (like Sihanouk in Kampuchea) enjoys the widest popularity among Afghans, and especially among the Pushtoon tribes who make up the great majority of the refugees in Pakistan. Is this only a "machiavellian" maneuver by Moscow and Kabul? Nothing could be less certain, especially for Moscow, which has nothing to lose and everything to gain from collaboration with the ex-king.

In April 1987, we wrote: "The minimum relationship that Moscow can accept with Afghanistan is one of the Finnish type. Within these well-defined limits, the Kremlin is ready to contemplate any sort of socio-political compromise, even a return of former King Zaher Shah from his exile in Rome, if he agreed to play the game."

This last condition means, however, that for the moment what Moscow is offering the monarch does not go beyond an honorary role, perhaps even a presidency of the republic devoid of its present powers, in

the framework of a regime where the real power will continue to be held by the PDPA. Inasmuch as today a big question mark hangs over this regime, Zaher Shah has nothing to gain by accepting the offer. He prefers to wait, relying on an erosion of the Kabul regime that would force the Soviets to turn to him as a "savior," thereby putting him in a strong position in relation to them. He has definitely not lost hope of reestablishing his throne.

Everything is going to depend, then, on what happens to the Kabul regime in the coming months. Will it fall or not? — that is the question that everyone is asking today. Many in the Western media think that they can proclaim peremptorily that Kabul will inevitably, sooner or later, experience the same fate as Saigon. That is, of course, the view of the opposition forces. Najibullah retorts, on the other hand, that his detractors are trying to count their chickens before they are hatched.

### Quasi-feudal mosaic of territories

One thing is certain: A large part of the Afghan countryside, and probably some cities as well, especially those closest to the Pakistani frontier, will slip entirely out of the PDPA's control. To a large extent, this has already happened. Even if these regions are put under a single political authority, this authority will remain purely theoretical. The tribal fragmentation of the country will be combined with a quasi-feudal mosaic of the territories of the local military chiefs, who are virtual warlords.

It seems probable, moreover, that the Uzbek and Tadzhik areas in the north of the country will remain firmly in Moscow's grip. What will happen to the territory controlled by Kabul? It claims to exercise authority over two thirds of the country's provinces, where a million and a half people are said to have gone to the polls between April 5-15 to elect the 299 deputies in the two houses of the Afghan legislative. In fact, the cornerstone of all this is the capital itself, Greater Kabul, which today, according to converging estimates, includes about 3 million people — that is, about a third of the population living within the country's borders.

Numerically and technically, the PDPA's armed forces certainly have the means to resist the inevitable assault of the rebel forces. But everything will depend on their



12. Among others, *Newsweek*, April 18 and *Le Monde*, April 19, 1988.

13. It is significant that the rally called in Peshawar by the Islamic Alliance to denounce the Geneva accords drew only 25,000 people (*Le Monde*, April 19, 1988), considering that the 3 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan are tightly regimented by the organizations in the Alliance.

14. *Défis Afghans* 16, December 1987/January 1988.

15. *Le Monde*, April 22, 1988.

Editor's note: Since this article was written, the Islamic Alliance announced the formation of its government on June 19.

internal cohesion, which is far from certain. Having returned from Kabul, Alain Gresh summed up the situation in *Le Monde Diplomatique* in June 1988:

"When questioned, an important cadre in the Central Committee of the PDPA responded unhesitatingly: 'We have to prepare ourselves for the worst. First of all, we have to reinforce the armed forces, whose potential has increased considerably in recent years. We have nearly 130,000 men in the regular armed forces — the army and the *Tsarandoy* (militarized police), and 60% of the 200,000 members of the party are in the army or the militias.'

"Wages in the army have been raised seven to 25 times, and there have been a lot of promotions with the aim of guaranteeing the loyalty of the soldiers and cadres. Tens of thousands of them have undergone training in the USSR over the last ten years. It is on them to a large extent that the future depends. The Mujahideen have neither the heavy arms nor the unity of command necessary to take Kabul. Only a swing in the army could offer them a decisive victory. If, on the contrary, the officers and soldiers remain loyal, the PDPA can fall back on its urban bastions and withstand assaults."

If the PDPA can hold out, it is possible that there could be a break in the Islamic Alliance, with a faction — the traditionalists — opting for a favorable response to Kabul's offers. That could substantially alter the relationship of forces throughout the country. Another faction, the fundamentalists, would continue the struggle indefatigably. Their outlook makes them incapable of accepting any compromise whatever, and they can find a human base for their activity in the large numbers of men who have developed a taste for guerrilla warfare, especially among the generation that remembers nothing else. In other words, in all the possible scenarios, the Afghanistan war is not about to end.

## "Women in the camps were virtual prisoners"

Two factors will have a considerable importance for the future of the Kabul regime, that is, for its internal cohesiveness. First and foremost is the attitude of Moscow. If the USSR gave the impression that it was abandoning the PDPA, that would certainly mean a debacle for the latter. But there is no sign today, any more than in the past, that this is Gorbachev's intention. As we wrote in *IV* in April 1987, we continue to think that the USSR could "keep a military force in Afghanistan quantitatively closer to what was there before December 1979 (5,000 military 'advisors') than to the massive military presence it has had in recent years."

The second factor, of course, is the feelings of the Afghan population. Again, we wrote in 1987 that "the Mujahideen will certainly find less recruits for a *jihād* for their Islamic state than they have found un-

til now for the fight to liberate Afghanistan from foreign troops." In its May 30, 1988, issue, *Newsweek* expressed the same idea. Melinda Liu, the author of the article, mentioned in particular the aversion to the Mujahideen among a section of the urban population:

"That apprehension was particularly acute among educated women, who have gained a measure of liberation from the conservative Muslim practice of *pardah*. 'Those people in the mountains, with their long hair and beards, after 10 years we are afraid they will be wild,' said one young Kabul resident whose fashionable Western-style dress contrasted dramatically with the head-to-ankle *chador* demanded by radical fundamentalists."

This inhabitant of Kabul has indeed good reason to worry, to judge from the fate meted out to women in the Peshawar refugee camps, which was described as follows in the February 1, 1988, issue of *Newsweek*: "Conditions are especially hard on the women, who end up virtual prisoners. Forbidden by their menfolk to wander among the thousands of strangers in the camps, they must remain indoors, even when wearing the veil of devout Muslim females."

The comparative fates of women in the two Afghan camps opposing each other since 1978 is one element among many others that confirms, if the socio-political evidence alone were not sufficient, that this is in fact a confrontation between a progressive and a reactionary camp.<sup>16</sup> The origin of the Afghan rebellion, it should be remembered, was a classical Vendée-type rebellion against a regime that had features reminiscent of Jacobinism.

The rebel forces represented, and still represent, a conglomerate of the traditional forces that the PDPA very clumsily tried to shake up or dislodge after it came to power in April 1978, and which were joined by the fundamentalists. The PDPA proposed eradicating illiteracy and promoting secularization, the emancipation of women, detribalization, radical agrarian reform and industrialization, trying to carry this out using dictatorial and bureaucratic methods. On the other hand, the rebel forces defended a continuation of the old medieval, obscurantist society, the role of the mullahs, the inferior status of women, tribalism, the domination of the big landlords and the perpetuation of social and economic backwardness, or even fought for a totalitarian Islamic dictatorship.

The intervention by Kremlin troops after the end of December 1979 had to be condemned and their withdrawal demanded, not because it was counter-revolutionary, as was the case in Hungary in 1956 and in Czechoslovakia in 1986, nor because we oppose intervention by Moscow's troops in all circumstances. In fact, we called for them to intervene in defence of Vietnam, as we have approved the intervention of Cuban troops in Angola, which was done with Moscow's help. The problem was that the

invasion of Afghanistan by Soviet troops as it unfolded could not have any effect other than to strongly reinforce the camp that Moscow thought it could crush.

However, the civil war that has gone on in Afghanistan since 1978 has not changed in nature because of the Soviet intervention. Even if for eight years it has taken on the appearance of a national war against the Soviet invader, to the great benefit of the reactionary camp, the latter, even more than in 1980-82, is made up essentially of the same political and social forces that were fighting the PDPA before December 1979.

## For a defeat of the reactionary forces

Likewise, although the PDPA has watered down its program considerably since 1986 and is more than ever a hireling of Moscow, its social and political nature has remained fundamentally the same since 1978. It can be described as progressive petty-bourgeois "democratic" in the social meaning of the term.

In this war, which the Soviet withdrawal is returning to the dimensions of a civil war, we cannot be neutral or still less support the reactionary camp. We are firmly for the defeat of the reactionary forces, although this does not mean that we identify ourselves in the least with the Kabul regime. We want to see it overthrown by a genuine revolution. The conditions for that are a long way from having been assembled today in Afghanistan. However, we are convinced that the withdrawal of the Soviet troops will improve the chances for this in the long term. On the other hand, keeping these forces in the country can only further the decay of Afghan society.

This is why we are for the withdrawal of Moscow's troops, even if this leads to a collapse of the Kabul regime. If it proves incapable of maintaining itself, with technical and financial aid from the USSR, against the motley gangs of the Afghan reaction, the past eight years have clearly shown that the attempt by Soviet troops to prop up the regime has drawn this army into an endless war.

As the resolution adopted by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International in March 1988 declared. "If, however, the government proves incapable of surviving the Soviet withdrawal, its fall would anyway be a lesser evil than the Soviet Union getting bogged down indefinitely in Afghanistan. In any event, in the long run, the withdrawal will benefit the development of a mass revolutionary movement in Afghanistan and in its neighboring countries."<sup>17</sup> ★

16. The new watered-down constitution of the Republic of Afghanistan nonetheless includes Article 14, which stipulates: "men and women have equal rights in all economic, political, social and cultural spheres." In an Islamic country this is a revolutionary assertion.

17. See *IV* 138, April 4, 1988.

# GABRIELA and the Filipino women's movement



**THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT** in the Philippines is young. But during these past five years it has evolved quite fast and actively. While many women's groups have emerged, the principal federation is GABRIELA<sup>1</sup>, which has gathered under its umbrella about 100 organizations comprising about 40,000 women.

Sister Mary John Mananzan, GABRIELA's re-elected national chairperson, gave the following interview to *IV* in early June. She has been involved in a broad range of activities, from the defence of consumer rights to international gatherings of women theologians. She is presently Dean of St Scholastica's College in Manila. Sr Mary John talked to Sonia Rupon about GABRIELA's organization, activities, problems and perspectives.

**CAN YOU** tell us about the nature of GABRIELA, and under what circumstances it was formed?

GABRIELA was born in 1984. Actually it was established at a conference called by the Center for Women's Resources. Let us go back a little bit. Before the 1970s, there was no such thing as a feminist movement in the Philippines. If we go into the reasons for that, first of all middle class women thought they were liberated, and so questioned the need to build a feminist move-

ment. The second reason is that the feminist movement projected through the media was a kind of hysterical feminism that turned off the Filipino women. It took the experiences of Filipinas invited to women's conferences abroad to see that it was a legitimate question. There they saw raised exactly the same issues that were being discussed in the meetings in the Philippines. The necessity to build a feminist movement then came to the fore.

And so in the 1970s, groups started to be formed. The very first was MAKIBAKA

## Interview with Sister Mary John Mananzan

(Free Movement of New Women). It already had a feminist tendency then, but I would say that it was oriented more politically than around feminism. Its main objective was how to get women interested and involved in national liberation. Unfortunately in 1972, it had to go underground. During the martial law period from 1972 to about 1978-79, there was really no movement, until 1978 when women's associations began to emerge. One of the very first was Pilipina, then came the Center for Women's Resources (CWR) and others like the Movement of Women Workers (KMK).

In 1984, the CWR had the idea of inviting all women's associations and the women's departments of other organizations to come to a conference. It was in this conference that the participants opted to set up a federation, which was given the name GABRIELA. It has to be said that in the very beginning the members of GABRIELA were more political militants than feminists, which is understandable. There were at the same time personalities involved in GABRIELA at the level of the national council, prominent women in the Philippines who did not even have any feminist perspective. What I'm trying to say is that there has been an evolution in the orientation of GABRIELA.

### ■ Can you talk a bit more about this evolution?

In 1985, I remember that the executive council of GABRIELA asked for a workshop which would tackle precisely the feminist perspective. And so we had a nationwide workshop where we invited all the various leaders of all the different organizations. We really hammered out the meaning of a feminist orientation, and we came out with the following principles.

A feminist association is different from an association of women. Women's associations could have objectives that benefit women, but these are usually on an issue to issue basis. Whereas a feminist organization must concern itself basically with the woman question. There must be an insight that there is discrimination, subordination and oppression of women that transcends class, race, creed, nationality and culture, and that the feminist is committing herself to the eradication of these kinds of discrimination, of oppression. So that is the bottom line.

As a third world women's association,

1. GABRIELA is the acronym for this broad federation, taken after the name of Gabriela Silang, a Filipino fighter during the revolution against Spanish domination, at the end of the nineteenth century.

we also emphasize the importance of the contextualization of the women's movement — that is to say, the women's movement in the Philippines must be in the context of the economic, political and socio-cultural transformation of society. It is not a movement apart from, isolated from, or secondary to — it is an essential part of the process. So we are saying that the economic, social and political transformation is the necessary, although not the sufficient, condition for women's liberation.

We realize that women cannot be fully liberated unless there is this transformation, but neither do we see the possibility of total human liberation without the liberation of women. Therefore we insist that we are not going to wait until society is liberated before we present the question but that it must be a totally integrated and a total part of the process of liberation.

■ **What is GABRIELA's membership? Is it represented sectorally?**

From 47 member organizations, GABRIELA has grown to around 100 affiliates... about 40,000 individual members. Ninety per cent are grassroots women. The peasant women who belong to AMIHAN would be around 18,000. Women workers in the KMK would be about 15,000. Urban poor women would number 3,000, and the rest would be all individuals.

■ **What areas of work is GABRIELA engaged in?**

Each one of the member organizations will have their own focus and their own activities, but we have summarized the strategies of GABRIELA into seven, for the sake of systematization. All these are not done by everyone, but one aspect or another is carried out by one of the associations.

These seven strategies include first of all organization, because we realize that an oppressed group cannot be empowered without organization. We organize according to sector, according to interest. And, presently, we try to organize according to regions and territorial areas. Right now we have four regions: Manila, Davao, Panay and Bacolod. We have also developed national commissions. The commission on violence against women opened two centers in the prostitution areas, BAGWIS in Ermita and BUKLOD in Olongapo. They try to organize prostitutes for their own welfare and educate them on health. The commission also heads the campaign on AIDS.

There is another commission on women and health that is monitoring primary health care clinics in different urban areas. There is also the commission on children, as there is absolutely no association protecting children. Here we tackle issues like child prostitution and train those who will be teaching in the day-care centers. We also have the commission on human rights and an international desk.

Our second strategy is around mobilization. Following from the principle that we have a context, we organize women not

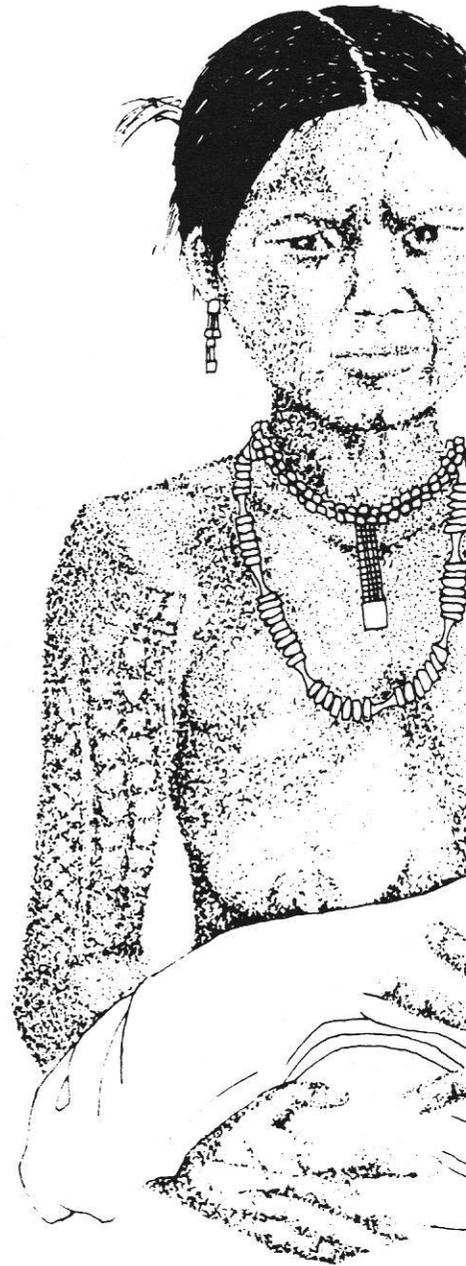
only around purely feminist issues — for example, mail-order brides, prostitution, rape, AIDS. We also mobilize women on national issues like foreign bases, the foreign debt and consumer issues.

The third is education. This is one of the most important strategies because women in the Philippines have internalized their oppression. Middle-class women are comfortable in their role in the house because they have maids. So they can actually be fulfilled even in their jobs precisely because there is some kind of a safety-valve to which their tensions can be channeled. They do not really suffer very much the impact of a double burden, for example. But it is there. Non-middle class women who would render such domestic services would not question that. For them this is the natural state of affairs. That is what their lot is all about. They even see wife-beating as their lot. So there must be education.

Education is done formally and informally, institutionally and non-institutionally. The informal and non-institutional way of education is what is being done in the different organizations. They each have an education desk, but the national office of GABRIELA provides the modules. Training for teachers is also provided by the national office. In the formal, institutional way, it is not really GABRIELA which does it. Like me, for instance. Since I am a member of GABRIELA and I am also head of a school I have seen to it that a women's course should be incorporated into the institution. There is now a consortium of schools that has agreed to the introduction of women's courses in the curriculum.

Right now in the school we have the introductory courses, which everybody must take, and the cognate course on women. There is also an ongoing project — the Institute of Women's Studies. This will deal with curricula and resource development, trying to get as much printed and non-printed material of all kinds to be open to women who come to the center; research and publication, as there is real need for writings from a Filipino point of view about the problematic of women; and an outreach program — a participative, intercultural course on women which we will try to offer in 1989.

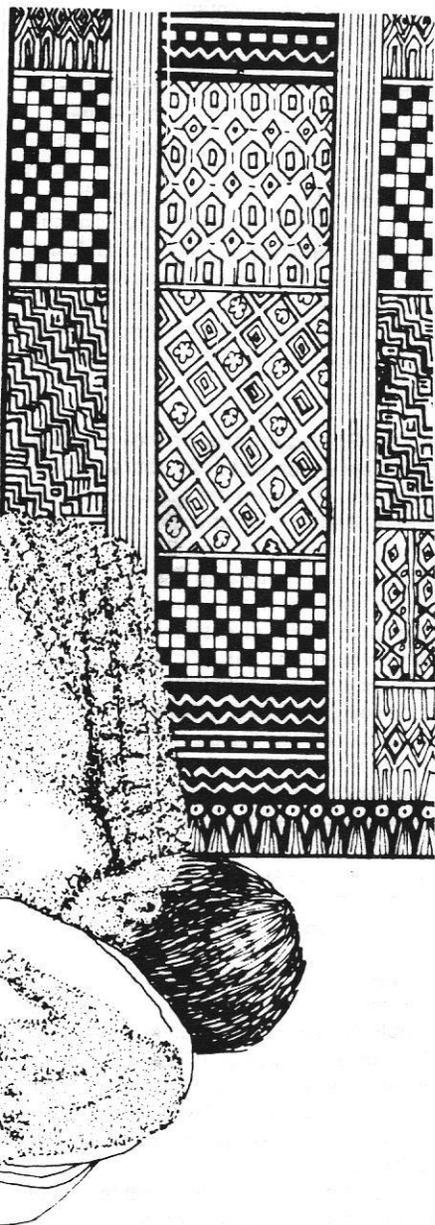
The fourth strategy is feminist scholarship. There is a difference between feminist scholarship and education. Feminist education is consciousness-raising, the opening of the minds, whereas in feminist scholarship we try to put the women's perspective into the different disciplines, like theology, psychology, history and so forth. The associations that do this in GABRIELA are the Association of Women in Theology and the National Organization of Women Religious in the Philippines. This is a very important aspect because the Philippines is 85 per cent Catholic and there really is a religious root to women's oppression. That is why it is vital that religion should be rethought in a very determined way from the



women's perspective.

The fifth strategy is legislative action. We used this strategy in the tapestry campaign which pushed for the rights of women to be included in the drafting of the new Constitution in late 1986 and early 1987. Women artistically presented their rights on tapestry, and it's success was not only in terms of mobilization but also in the fact that the constitutional commissioners did put an equal rights statement in the Constitution.

We realize today, however, that there is no use having it in the Constitution if there is no legislation about it, and so we are now busy preparing our legislative agenda — for example, on support mechanisms. We are formulating a bill to have the government set aside an economic development fund for women. Other bills that have been



ed community projects in the urban poor community. This consists in providing the women in these areas with a livelihood project with the objective of making it self-sufficient and providing for the salary of a day-care center teacher. This kind of module — a day-care center, a livelihood project and a primary health care clinic — has been done in four places, but Samakana (urban poor women's group) have targeted 36 areas.

Our last strategy is international solidarity. We realize that our struggle is not just national, but international. And it is good for our women to really see what is happening all over the world. Our WISAP program (Women's International Solidarity Affairs Philippines), which we sponsor every year, arranges exposure programs for women who come from all over the world.

#### ■ How did you celebrate March 8 this year?

Last March we had our usual women's week. We started it out with a torch parade, together with other groups. The theme was "Women say no to total war".<sup>2</sup> We realize that total war is the thing that makes the women suffer so much now in the Philippines. They are the ones affected by what the military and vigilante groups are doing.<sup>3</sup> After that we had a *tiangue* — a bazaar — for the first time at Quiapo, in the popular market center of Manila. It was at the same time a livelihood project for the women because they could market what they were doing in their sewing groups. It really interested people who wanted to find out what GABRIELA was doing. We also had a playgroup where we taught children from the neighborhood many games. It was very interesting. And then we had a seminar on women and health. We had as speakers a woman worker, a peasant woman, an urban poor woman — on the other side were the doctors and someone from the department of health. We listened to the women describing the different health hazards women face in their particular situations. The Medical Action Group outlined a health project for women which is more community- than hospital-based.

On March 9, we had a demonstration from Plaza Miranda to Mendiola. One significant thing was that despite GABRIELA's being alone in this march, there were about 5,000 women coming from different provincial contingents. A men's contingent joined and occupied the back portion of the march. I think it is good to show that we are not an anti-male movement, as we are really for an egalitarian society where men and women have the opportunity to develop a better society and not be adversaries.

A very important event which highlighted women's week was the women's tribunal on March 22. Since we had the 30 WISAP women with us already, we asked 10 of them to act as international jury, and we invited a jurist from India just for that. Twelve documented cases of violation of women's rights were presented. There was

one touching incident, a woman who was a victim of a hand grenade. Her eye was out, she is pregnant and half her body is paralyzed. Three women had to bring her up to the stage and she gave her testimony. The judges made a very good statement. Before the tribunal we had a liturgical service and they made me the *babaylan* (priestess). We kind of went back to the old times when there was a *babaylan*.

#### ■ When you say that GABRIELA was alone in the march, does this mean that other women's groups not in GABRIELA also had their own marches?

No, there was no other march. There were other activities, which GABRIELA also joined. Like for instance there was a symposium on women and labor, where some women from GABRIELA were speakers. There was another bazaar at the Cultural Center of the Philippines, and we also participated there despite having our own event in Quiapo. There were lots of cultural and musical numbers and other activities like book launchings. Yet we felt very much the need to do this march against total war, because this issue is very important for women. As a woman from Pampanga said, total war was not only preventing organizations from functioning, but the livelihoods of the people were being threatened too. The fact that they could not go out to the fields before 7am and after 4pm limited the work they could do.

#### ■ What problems are being encountered in the work of organizing women?

Among grassroots women, it is easy to organize. With middle-class women, it can be very difficult. However, the main problem now in grassroots organizing is the vigilante groups. There is a systematic propaganda against GABRIELA, lumping us together with all the organizations which they consider communist fronts. Quite seriously, we have been victims of vigilante activities. Three women members of AMIHAN were killed, two of them decapitated, and one who was pregnant was opened up. In regions like Panay and Davao, our members cannot meet. Chairpersons of the different organizations have been forced to go to the local precincts to surrender. If they do not do so, their houses are strafed.

#### ■ Do you know what importance is presently given to the women's struggle by the underground organizations of the National Democratic Movement?

There is a women's movement within the underground struggle, MAKIBAKA. GABRIELA is not part of MAKIBAKA, and vice-versa. My impression is that before the un-

2. In 1987, President Corazon Aquino declared "total war" against the communist guerrillas of the New People's Army and the National Democratic Front.

3. The vigilante groups are civilian anti-communist organizations, often directly linked to the army, spreading terror in the provinces and some parts of Metro-Manila. Amnesty International has published a document, warning against this very grave development. See IV 141, May 16, 1988.

submitted are bills against pornography, child prostitution and wife-beating. Something is happening on the legal side, and we also aim to organize women's lawyers for free legal aid for women whatever their problems, but especially for cases of rape.

The sixth would be welfare. We still lack welfare facilities, like a rape center, a center for battered women and so on. Initial moves were taken by Hilda Narciso, who was gang-raped by the military and who had to undergo three years of therapy. She publicly denounced them on TV, and as a result, other victims have gone to her. There are now about seven women with whom she is having group therapy. Their main objective now is to set up a rape crisis center.

On the other welfare activities that GABRIELA is doing, we have started integrat-

derground movement used to consider the women issue as a "secondary contradiction", but that the women involved in this struggle have been more successful today in persuading the whole movement to take the women's cause for its own and not to leave it to the women alone.

■ **What difficulties do women's organizations like the KMK meet, particularly facing a bigger counterpart like the trade-union federation KMU (Kilusang Mayo Uno or May 1 Movement)? How would these work together concretely?**

Regarding the KMK and the KMU, actually the relationship is such that the KMK is not under the KMU. The KMK serves as the women's desk of the KMU, but the KMK is an autonomous organization, with its own program and leadership, and even its own funding. There are women in the KMU who are not under the KMK. Of course there are practical problems, like in marches — are the women going to come together under one banner or are they going to join the different sectoral contingents? The understanding on this concrete point has been to still have a women's contingent, and when women join the different sectors they carry the GABRIELA banner with them too.

■ **How about the other women's groups? How do they differ from GABRIELA?**

Well, it depends. KABAPA, led by Aida Lava, also works with peasant women. We coordinate with them a lot, and their concern is specifically around women and peace. The others, like Kalayaan and Pili-pina, are important organizations and have their own activities. There is also Lakas ng Kababaihan, the women's contingent of

BISIG<sup>4</sup> and the more traditional women's groups. Now, one must also mention the governmental National Commission on Women. Remy Rikken's appointment to that office has given the commission a new perspective, and she has given it an interest in working with non-governmental organizations, because before they just worked by themselves. The National Commission has initiated a lot of consultations — for example, on research, on health, on mass media and so on.

In addition, a new initiative is the establishment of the Women in Development Foundation. Some women in government are here, including myself and other individuals. We had an Urduja congress<sup>5</sup> in the province of Pangasinan, where about a thousand women were mobilized. Two things were decided in that seminar: First, to form a women and development foundation that will be concerned about how women are affected by development, in what way women can analyze, criticize, the present economic scheme, and how they can take part in it. Second, we are preparing legislation, asking the government to set aside a fund for women's economic development, and to create women's bureaux in all departments of the government under a vice-minister.

■ **Has the fact that Cory Aquino is a woman helped to advance the women's struggle?**

I don't think she is there because she is a woman, but in spite of her being a woman. In an interview, she was asked if she was a feminist. She said she was not in an organizational way, but that she is for the rights of women. What one can see is a conviction that there should be legislation with special focus on women. She also proclaimed a

women's month. In actual fact, however, there is nothing new, nothing really different in her policies.

■ **Many readers of IV will be surprised that the head of GABRIELA is a sister...**

Yes, I suppose so. (She laughs.) There is also oppression of women in the church, you know! More than that, there is the whole question of the religious roots of oppression, even affecting people outside the church. Therefore, as a religious woman, I should be very much involved in seeing to it that religion should be a liberating force rather than an oppressive force towards women.

■ **The Philippines is one of the few countries which still does not recognize divorce... What are the discussions on issues like abortion and divorce?**

These issues have not really been tackled yet in the Philippines. In GABRIELA, it is the commission on the reproductive rights of women where discussions on these issues are beginning. I think it is a question of efficiency, here. If GABRIELA starts to organize on these issues, nobody will listen to us. Even now, this is the subject of black propaganda. For example, when we objected to the provision on abortion being in the constitution — without even posing any argument for or against abortion, but simply saying that a provision of this nature need not be in the constitution — we received a lot of criticisms. It is very difficult.

■ **Even in the feminist milieu?**

There is a TV show called Woman Watch. In this program there are discussions about abortion and divorce. In fact in one show which discussed divorce, all the women asked were in favour for divorce, for case-to-case divorce [based on individual cases].

I don't think a divorce law will be passed at this time even if women senators like Nikki Coseteng and Shahani are positive about case-to-case divorce. But I must say that abortion and contraception are not really being discussed, even if 80 per cent of middle-class women do use contraception and if there are many abortions going on. It is simply not discussed. There is no way yet to face the whole issue.

■ **Any concluding remarks?**

One thing I'd like to say. I think it is the women's movement that is the flicker of faith in the Philippines. It is only the women's movement that can transcend ideology when it comes to issues. When there was the issue on having women's rights in the Constitution, all of us came, from the right to the left. I think women can talk together more. ★

## **Women's Studies books**

**SISTER** Mary John Mananzan, OSB, has edited two books in the Women's Studies Series, published by the Institute of Women's Studies, St. Scholastica's College, Manila. The first of the series, *Essays on Women*, published in 1987, is a compilation of articles, speeches and extracts from dissertations that brings together facts and ideas about the status of Filipino women in history, the emergence and development of the women's movement and the ongoing debates. It likewise documents anti-women laws in the Philippine Civil Code, the situation of rural women, the sexual exploitation of women and children, prostitution and sex tourism.

The second book of the series, *Women and Religion*, published in 1988, has a more specific contribution as it delves into women's perspectives of religion. There are three parts to the book: a theoretical framework; testimonies on negative and positive influences of religion on lives of women from different backgrounds; and liturgical services that have consciously taken the perspective of women. ★

4. BISIG, meaning "arm", is the acronym for an independent socialist organization in the Philippines.

5. Princess Urduja of Pangasinan was the most famous of the women leaders of pre-Spanish society. Skilled in the use of weapons, she headed an army of women.

# Peruvian peasant movement needs solidarity

HUGO BLANCO, the Peruvian revolutionary leader, has been touring Western Europe since speaking at the rally to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Fourth International in Copenhagen on May 14.

Long the best known leader of Peruvian Fourth Internationalists, he joined the Partido Unificado Mariateguista (PUM) in 1986, along with the rest of the Peruvian section of the Fourth International. Since then, he has been a leading member of the PUM. He is also organizational secretary of the Confederación Campesina de Perú (CCP, Peasant Confederation of Peru) and head of its Human Rights Commission.

The following interview was published in the June 17 issue of *Die Linke*, the magazine of the Austrian section of the Fourth International.

## WHAT IS the main purpose of your trip?

In 1987, peasants in the Puno area occupied 146,000 hectares of land. But this land occupation was not recognized by the government, and there were clashes with the police. The peasants were able to defend their land. In order to legalize the occupation, Juan Rojas Vargas, as the chair of the CCP [the country's major peasant union] called a national peasants' strike. It was successful. Now the government is trying to intimidate the entire CCP, and wants to prosecute Juan Rojas Vargas. Recently, murders of peasant leaders have also increased. Shortly before the PUM congress, two of our comrades were murdered. They were also members of the CCP.

We are calling on President Alan Garcia to bestir himself finally to do something about the murders and to stop the prosecution of Vargas. I hope to get international solidarity for that.

■ **How do you explain the rise of Sendero Luminoso, after eight years of terrorism and losses of more than 10,000 dead and 15,000 injured? Is it the case that half of their cadres are women? Why are so many doctors, lawyers, professors and students in this movement? Does this lead back to the question of armed struggle, and how is this question seen today by the Izquierda Unida and the PUM?**

In fact, Sendero Luminoso is not so widely accepted. It gets more attention in the European press. However, it does get a certain acceptance because of the poverty in the country. The PUM views these isolated acts of violence as rather negative, because the population is not prepared for armed struggle on any large scale, and the present isolated actions serve rather as a pretext for repression.

If you look, for at example, at Ayacucho, where Sendero Luminoso is strong, and San Martín, where the Tupac Amaru group is strong, you see a completely intimidated and unorganized population. On the other hand, in Puno, there is a high level of organization, and there these two organizations have no influence. In the past, Sendero Luminoso had more influence, but since then, the peasant union has reduced it. In this conflict, some people were killed by Sendero Luminoso. Despite the murders, they lost support. They isolated themselves.

As regards women cadres in Sendero Luminoso, it has to be recognized that women and youth are very much integrated in it.

■ **President Garcia's economic policy has failed. Will the weakness of the regime and the increased resistance lead to the threat of a coup?**

I don't see why the military would want to carry out a coup when there is nothing in Alan Garcia's policy that contradicts their interests. It is true of course that the resis-



tance is reaching a high level and that this could lead to a clash in which the military might very well try to carry out a coup.

## ■ How is the resistance organized?

In the Peruvian left, as elsewhere in the world, there are various tendencies. There is a reformist one, a revolutionary one and an ultra-leftist one. On the reformist side, there is the "Revolutionary" Communist Party and the "Revolutionary" Socialist Party. They promote the hope that the "left" can achieve power through elections and change the situation in that way.

We in the PUM represent the revolutionary position. That is, we think that things can only be achieved through armed resistance. That does not mean that we are against democracy. But armed resistance is the only guarantee of democracy. In Peru, the peasants, workers, government workers, marginal groups and street peddlers are organized. Therefore, we believe that the structure of of National People's Assembly can offer an alternative to the present form of government. We think that it would be more democratic than electing those who have the most money or make election promises that they don't keep. It is much more democratic for each group to elect its own recallable representatives.

The left and the PUM are calling for refusing to pay the interest on the foreign debt. Alan Garcia has promised not to pay more than 10 per cent of export income on the debt. In fact, the payments amount to more than 30 per cent of that.

We are calling for nationalization of foreign enterprises. Because the right has organized such a strong campaign against the nationalizations in banking, the government has made one retreat after the other, and now nothing is left.

It would also be far more democratic if the population had the arms and not just some of the military and privileged individuals. It would be much more democratic if everyone could think and decide and not just those people with money. That is the sort of democracy for which we are fighting. We also believe that it is the workers who must liberate themselves. ★



SOUTH AFRICA

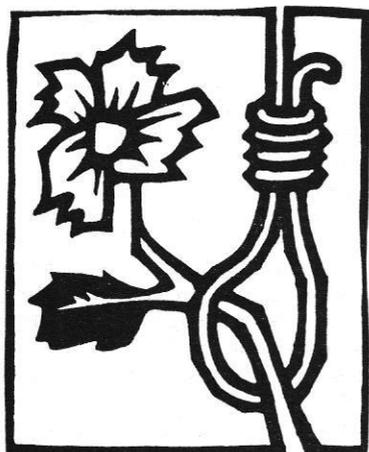
**Save the Sharpeville Six!**

INTERNATIONAL solidarity must be urgently stepped up if the lives of the Sharpeville Six are to be saved. The six, five men and a woman, are under stay of execution until July 19.

They have been sentenced to hang after being accused of participating in an uprising in the Black township of Sharpeville. They were found guilty of the murder of a Black town councillor in 1984, even though there is no proof of their involvement in the killing. The two prosecution witnesses have said that they were tortured by the police to give evidence. In spite of the blatant frame-up and international protests at the sentences, the judge at their trial rejected the demand for a retrial as "frivolous and absurd".

From 1984-86, over 2,500 Black people were killed in uprisings in the Black townships before the resistance was crushed by the introduction of the state of emergency, which has just been renewed for the third time. In the June 14 issue of the *Financial Times*, Anthony Robinson reports that since the introduction of the state of emergency, "hundreds of Blacks have been charged with criminal offences, including murder, for what opposition groups and many lawyers see as essentially political crimes.

"Twenty-six other people are facing sim-



ilar charges [to the Sharpeville Six] in the Northern Cape town of Upington, and 48 more Blacks are believed to be in Pretoria's 'death row' for crimes committed during the revolt. Last year, 164 people were hanged in South Africa, the overwhelming majority Black males." ★

PHILIPPINES

**Journalists detained**

IN THE Philippines, one Swedish and two West German journalists have been detained by the military. Obviously false accusations of murder, robbery and assault have been made against them with the help of bribed and beaten witnesses.

In the case of the Swedish journalist, Stellan Hermansson — who is also the chair of the Communist Youth, the youth organization of the Swedish Euro-communist party — he is accused of taking part in guerrilla actions in February. But copies of his plane tickets, as well as evidence gathered from friends and colleagues, show that he did not even arrive in the Philippines until May 18!

The goal of the military with this frame-up is clear: they want to stop all journalists in the future from reporting on the army massacres, on the terrorism of the vigilante groups, or on advances made by the guerrillas. They want to silence all information coming from the Philippines. They are also exploiting the organizational image of "external, communist infiltration".

That is why solidarity is urgent and important. We must not let the Philippine military make an example of this case. Protest telegrams or letters should be sent to Philippines embassies and to President Corazon Aquino, Malacañang Palace, Manila, Philippines. ★

YUGOSLAVIA

**Protest against arrests**

The following petition is being circulated to protest against arrests in Yugoslavia:

*On May 31 and June 4, two activists in the Slovenia alternative movement were arrested, as well as Ivan Borstner, a warrant officer in the Yugoslav army. They are all suspected of "having divulged military secrets", and all three are being held in a military prison.*

*The undersigned protest against these arrests, and are demanding the immediate release of Janez Jansa, David Tasic and Ivan*

*Borstner.*

*We support completely the three demands put forward by the Ljubljana Committee for Human Rights, already supported by more than 250 organizations, groups, journals, party and union branches and nearly 16,000 individuals in Yugoslavia:*

- *immediate liberty, allowing the three to appear as defendants;*
- *the possibility for the accused to freely choose a civil lawyer;*
- *the opening of an enquiry around the procedure and the conditions of the arrests.*

**This appeal has already been signed by hundreds of well-known personalities and politicians in France, Britain, Italy, Portugal, East Germany, Austria, the USA and the USSR. Further signatures and letters of protest can be sent to Yugoslav embassies and to Predsedstvo SFRJ, Palaca Federacije, 11000 Beograd, Yugoslavia. Send copies to the Committee for the Defence of Human Rights, SKUC, Kersnikova 4, 61000 Ljubljana, Yugoslavia. ★**

WESTERN EUROPE

**Right to vote for immigrants?**

FIRST, the good news. The Brussels Commission of the EEC has published a directive giving four million immigrants in Europe the right to vote in municipal elections in their country of residence by 1993.

Now the bad news. This directive will only apply to immigrants coming from other EEC countries. This means, for example, that in France it will only apply to 800,000 people, and in Portugal less than half of the immigrant population. Apart from the limitation to EEC citizens, such immigrants will only be able to vote if they have lived in the country during a period of six years, but individual states will have the option of prolonging this qualification to twelve years. ★

U S S R

**Perestroika's pin-up**

UNDER the heading, "My God, she's beautiful", the front page of the June 19 *Moscow News* proudly proclaimed that 16-year old "schoolgirl Maria Kalinina has won the title of 'Miss Moscow 88'; 1m 76 tall, 62cm waist and 88cm bust."

But this first major Soviet beauty contest apparently did not pass without opposition. Organizer Leonid Yakubovitch declared that the event met with obstruction from the Moscow Komsomol's (CP youth organization) director of the methodological centre "who hampered our work a lot". Yakubovitch also received a number of anonymous phone calls. In the first he was offered money if he abandoned the contest, and in the last the caller promised to break his legs if he went ahead! Perhaps the Soviet authorities should take note that sexism leads to violence. ★

# Debate continues on Moscow Show Trials

THE DYNAMIC of the rehabilitations of the defendants of the Moscow Show Trials is continuing in the Soviet Union, with calls now being made for the judicial rehabilitation of Leon Trotsky — and even the publication of his writings — by radical supporters of *perestroika*

The following extracts are from an article entitled "Debunking the myth of Stalin" by Evgueni Ambartsoumov in the June 19 edition of *Nouvelles de Moscou*.

THE MAIN defendant in the trial, accused in his absence — much to Stalin's regret — was Trotsky. Stalin hated him most of all, in 1926 calling him "destroyer of the revolution", while via industrialization and forced collectivization Stalin followed Trotsky's leftist conception to an absurd degree.

Zinoviev, Kamanev and the others were accused above all of preparing terrorist acts against Stalin and other leaders of the party and the government (including those who later were to themselves become victims of the repression). Afterwards, Stalin must have thought that accusations that were based on too individualistic motivations could perhaps result in giving an undesirable impression. At the trial of Piatakov/Radek, the charges followed another tack: in order to overthrow Stalin, Trotsky and the other oppositionists plotted with Hitler's Germany and the Japanese military, who they would reward with Soviet territo-

## "Trotsky stands equally with all the victims of Stalin"

Martin Walker, *The Guardian (weekly edition)*, June 26, 1988:

THE first public call in the Soviet Union for the rehabilitation of Leon Trotsky, and the publication of his writings, has come from a delegate to this month's extraordinary party conference, the radical anti-Stalinist historian, Dr Yuri Afanasyev.

"We must not stop the process of rehabilitation and judicial review at any level, or with any person. We have to rehabilitate all who were oppressed or wrongly accused and, as a matter of justice, Leon Trotsky stands equally with all the victims of Stalin," Dr Afanasyev told a Moscow press conference.

"On the question of Trotsky's political rehabilitation, I think there will be a breakthrough in this direction. But it will depend on the deepening of *perestroika* in our historical sciences, and on the internal political struggle that is now under way in our party," he added.

The rehabilitation of Nikolai Bukharin earlier this year, and of Lev Kamenev and Grigory Zinoviev last week, leaves only Trotsky as the outstanding figure of the 1917 revolution who is still dubbed a criminal and an enemy of the Soviet people.

"I believe the works of Trotsky, and indeed of Stalin and of Khrushchev, should be published and made accessible to all, to teachers and students and citizens," Dr Afanasyev said.

"It is very strange that professors and teachers try to criticize Trotsky when they have never read a word that he wrote. The same is still true of Bukharin and Kamenev and Zinoviev.

"We have to envisage a situation in the near future when their works will sit in the bookshops and libraries alongside contemporary archive material, available for all to read," he told journalists.

Dr Afanasyev was restored to the list of delegates to the party conference at the final meeting of the Moscow city party committee, after top-level intervention that is said to have been authorized by Mikhail Gorbachev.

One of the best known and most outspoken radical supporters of *perestroika*, Dr Afanasyev is director of the Institute for State Archivists, which over the past 18 months has become a centre for investigations into Stalin's terror. ★



ries. Therefore, all enemies of Stalin were Trotskyists and enemies of the people.

Trotsky, who was in Norway at the time, could not believe his ears. A Jew and an anti-fascist, he and his previous supporters were accused of having plotted with the Gestapo! The Hitlerite press thought that Stalin was throwing a smoke-screen over Trotsky's subversive activities and it appeared to them that Trotsky had been sent abroad to stir up the world revolution....

Some people think that the whole world believed in the Moscow Trials. That is wrong. Yes, the American ambassador, Davis, believed in them, [the writer]

Feuchtwanger half believed in them. They probably thought, like other anti-fascists, that the absence of any logic and the violations of democracy were unimportant, given that the Soviet Union was the sole important anti-fascist force, and because of this it could not be questioned. But an important section of foreign public opinion, including progressive opinion, received the Moscow Trials — like the mania for sabotage — with horror and disgust.

Sharing this attitude, André Malraux and André Gide became estranged from us. At the same time Arthur Koestler, who was proposing to come to the USSR and become a tractor driver, wrote his famous novel on the trials, *Darkness at noon*, still never seen by the Soviet people. The accusation of complacency towards fascism thrown by Moscow at the leaders of the Second International, for the sole reason that they demanded that the accused should not be executed, did not fail to leave a depressing taste in the mouth.

Appeasing his blood lust (Fazil Iskander was right to describe him as a vampire), Stalin himself undermined the basis of the international anti-fascist front that was being formed and increased the distrust of the democratic West towards the Soviet Union. The 1930s trials are the main reasons for our defeat in 1941 and for victims of the war being counted in their millions. The truth about these trials debunks the myth of Stalin that has poisoned more than one generation. ★

# The aims and contradictions of Gorbachev's foreign policy

WITH THE elimination of intermediate-range nuclear missiles, Soviet diplomacy achieved an unquestionable success at the Moscow summit. The consequences should not be exaggerated. The number of nuclear warheads that will actually be dismantled only represents a minuscule part (2%-3%) of all those accumulated on our planet, which threaten the physical survival of the human race.

The possibilities of a radical reduction in long-range strategic nuclear weapons remain very small in light of imperialism's

determination to base its military doctrines and practice on the pretence of "nuclear dissuasion". It was more of a public relations success for Mikhail Gorbachev than a real step towards nuclear disarmament, to say nothing of total disarmament.

We are more than ever convinced that such disarmament is unrealizable in the framework of capitalist rule in the imperialist epoch, and above all unrealizable in collaboration with the main imperialist governments.

ERNEST MANDEL

**H**AVING said that, the "public relations" dimension of the operation should not be considered as insignificant. For a number of years, the imperialists had succeeded in getting working-class and petty-bourgeois public opinion in the main imperialist countries (the USA, West Germany and Japan) to accept the idea that there was a threat of Soviet aggression in Europe and Asia, and that in these conditions the arms race they themselves began was justified.

In Britain, France and Italy this myth had less impact. But even in these countries, there was at least a section of workers that accepted the argument. For decades, the legitimacy of defending the USSR — the basic creed of the communist parties and their allies — was largely demolished. The effects of Stalinism, the military interventions in Hungary and Czechoslovakia and the Kremlin's adventurist course in Africa and Afghanistan were all grist to the mill of anti-Soviet and anti-communist propaganda.

Through an adept reorientation of Soviet diplomacy and propaganda, Gorbachev and his team have succeeded in totally changing this ideological/political situation. By taking the imperialists at their word on the "dual-track solution" for medium-range missiles<sup>1</sup>, for the first time since the Vietnam war, if not since the Nazi aggression against the USSR, they have begun to base themselves on appealing to Western public opinion from a strong political position, rather than starting from the need to defend initiatives and doctrines unpopular with the masses.

Because of this, the political climate has begun to change in a whole series of countries, in a way that can only benefit the whole workers' movement, including its

revolutionary wing. The demolition of the "evil empire" ideology and rabid anti-communism has undermined the bourgeoisie's ideological operation, put a brake on the conservative neo-liberal offensive and widened the space for a common anti-capitalist front. In the USA, this means more opportunities for an initial breakthrough for political class independence inside the broader masses.

## Imperialism on defensive diplomatically

Of course, nothing should be taken for granted in this respect. In the last analysis, everything depends on the capacity for political initiatives of revolutionary and anti-capitalist forces, on their increasing their weight within the organized workers' movement and the whole working class, and on the successive stages of the recomposition inside the workers' movement.

But you would have to be blind not to notice that, for the first time in many years, imperialism is seriously worried and on the defensive diplomatically. The fact that the West German social-democratic party, the SPD — for 30 years the main pillar of anti-communism and NATO in the European workers' movement — has made a spectacular turn towards systematic if not institutionalized dialogue with the East German Communist Party (SED)<sup>2</sup>, symbolizes this change in the political/ideological climate.

Gorbachev is now doing his best to extend the success of the Moscow summit by putting Washington on the spot again in the area of conventional disarmament. Imperialist propaganda's main argument against the Soviet follow-up proposals on nuclear disarmament is that they objectively go in

the direction of "disarming Europe", making it "indefensible", given the supposed "overwhelming superiority" of the Warsaw Pact's conventional forces.<sup>3</sup> Gorbachev and Shevardnadze reply: If that's what you're afraid of, let's agree to reduce conventional arms on the basis of a strictly controlled parity. Once again they have turned the tables back on the imperialists. So much the better.

However, reducing Gorbachev's turn in international relations just to disarmament initiatives would be a serious error. By the same token, a parallel mistake would be to judge the changes taking place in the relations of forces on a world scale solely by the political/ideological climate prevailing in West Germany, the USA, Japan and the other imperialist countries.

In reality, the disarmament offensive and charm aimed at Western public opinion by the Kremlin is only one piece in a puzzle that is beginning to take shape. The Kremlin is engaged in negotiating a broad agreement with imperialism. Its objective is to establish a pattern of "advanced peaceful coexistence," which involves its making manifold political concessions in exchange for economic advantages. The "third world" liberation movements and the unfolding revolutions in many key areas of Latin America, Africa and Asia risk being

1. On the various aspects of this problem, see the articles by David Seppo in *IV* 128, October 26, 1988.

2. This article obviously also reflects, at least partially, the interest that the West German, or even European, bourgeoisie have in considerably expanding its exports to the USSR and West Europe.

3. This "superiority" is a blatant obfuscation. The best book on this question, Jacques Sapir's *Le Système Militaire Soviétique* (Paris, La Découverte, 1988), concludes that the NATO forces are superior, if the quality of weapons and concomitant factors other than purely quantitative ones are taken into consideration.

left to pay the bill for this search for a global accord.

To understand the reasons for this project, the starting point cannot be an idea that Gorbachev is taking his inspiration from a "revisionist" ideology, or the ridiculous theory that the Soviet leader is trying to re-introduce capitalism into the USSR. As under Stalin, Khrushchev and Brezhnev, the bureaucracy is operating essentially pragmatically, trying to resolve immediate problems in accordance with its own material and social interests. Doctrine and ideology are adapted to suit the needs of *realpolitik*, rather than the *realpolitik* flowing from "revisions" of "doctrine".

Gorbachev's fundamental motivation, which is shared by most of the other "tendencies" or "currents of opinion" in the top echelons of every section of Soviet bureaucracy, is that it is urgent to overcome the stagnation and dysfunctioning of the Soviet economy. It is urgent to radically reduce the senseless waste of material and human resources.

Gorbachev, his main economic advisor, Aganbegyan, and his main ideologues never stop repeating that if *perestroika* — understood in this way — is not put into practice, the USSR will become little more than a second-rate power, and will fall technologically and militarily so far behind the imperialists that it will not be able to catch up. Therefore, the "detente" policy followed by Gorbachev has a twofold objective corresponding to this motivation.

The first aim is to reduce the costs of the arms race, which have become unbearable for the USSR.<sup>4</sup> Parity in military spending between the USSR and the USA means a double burden for the USSR as compared with that of the USA. Because its national income is only half that of the United States, an equivalent military expenditure would represent 14%-15% of Soviet national income compared to 7.5% for the United States. Above all, the USSR wants to avoid the financial costs of a further militarization of space (Reagan's "star wars" projects).

This means neither "disarming" the USSR in the face of imperialism, nor dismantling Soviet armed forces. Rather, the goal is to modernize as cheaply as possible by gradually de-emphasising nuclear spending, and maintaining technological parity with imperialism in the area of conventional arms (or, rather, regaining parity, because the USSR seems to be already seriously behind in this area).

The second aim is to dismantle the trade and technological blockade that American

imperialism imposed on the USSR after its intervention into Afghanistan — if not since the beginning of the "cold war" — and to obtain large-scale credits from the imperialist countries for the modernization of the USSR. Stalin sought in vain to get such credits at the end of the second world war. The fact that Washington refused them at a time when the Soviet economy was very weak was undoubtedly one of the main reasons for the "structural assimilation" of Eastern Europe by the Soviet bureaucracy, and the division of Europe into "two camps." This was scarcely something that Stalin decided after the victory of Sta-

territories occupied by the Israeli state, Lebanon, the Iran/Iraq war and its repercussions in the Persian Gulf), Afghanistan and Kampuchea.

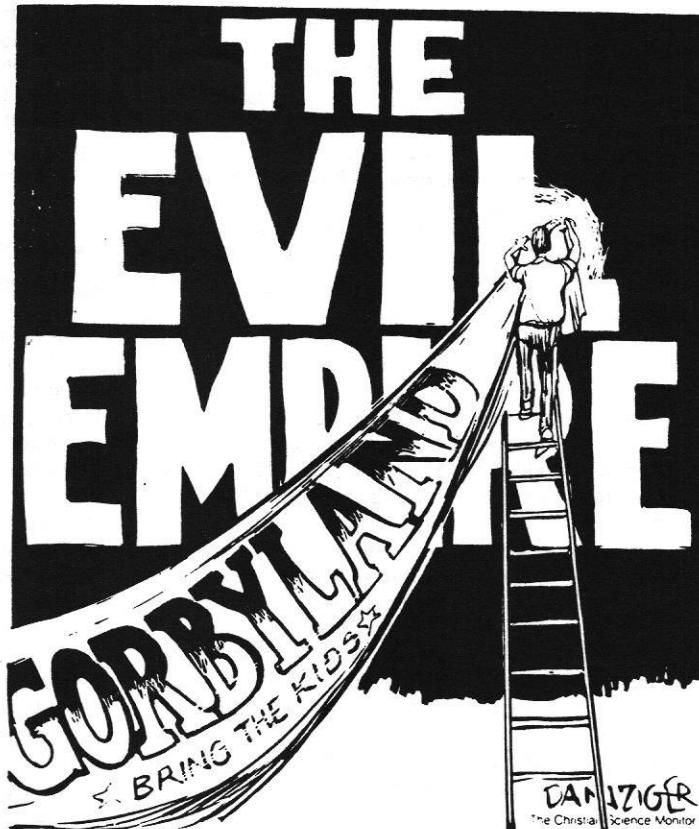
The concept of "regional conflicts" is ambiguous, if not obfuscating. It haphazardly throws together phenomena as different as genuine people's revolutions with a permanent revolution dynamic (Central America); independent, stormy mass movements against national and social oppression (South Africa, Palestine); civil wars between petty-bourgeois nationalist governments and pro-imperialist reactionary forces (Angola, Mozambique); resistance to national oppression led by progressive petty-bourgeois forces (Eritrea) or politically retrograde forces (Afghanistan); wars between bourgeois states (Iran/Iraq), and so on. Moreover, this is not an exhaustive list of all the different phenomena in question.

So it is not possible either to make a peremptory and sweeping judgement about the Kremlin's gradual disengagement from these "regional conflicts", nor to approve or disapprove of it en bloc without making any distinctions.

We support the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan and the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea, for reasons that we have explained for a long time.<sup>5</sup> We do not challenge the negative consequences of this withdrawal from the point of view of the working class, but we are convinced that prolonging the presence of these troops would have even more negative effects than the withdrawal itself.

Gorbachev has decided on this solution for Afghanistan not only to reduce the costs of a military operation that has no hope of success, not only to make negotiations with Washington and Peking easier, but above all undoubtedly because the Afghanistan war had become increasingly unpopular in the USSR. A recent opinion poll there showed that 57% of the population supported the withdrawal of the troops.

The same applies to the occupation of Kampuchea by Vietnamese troops, which represents an unbearable political and economic burden for a society on the verge of famine and a government facing a growing crisis of authority among the masses. It seems certain that Moscow is exercising increasingly open pressure on Hanoi from



lingrad, as apologists for the cold war wrongly suppose.

The amount of credit sought is very considerable, in line with the needs of overcoming USSR's present technological backwardness. Stalin hoped for \$5 billion from Roosevelt-Truman. Gorbachev is probably looking for ten times that from Reagan's successors, even if this is spread out over a number of years (obviously the 1989 dollar is worth much less than the 1944-45 one). We should remember that West Germany just granted \$2 billion worth of credit to the USSR. So, the objective cited above does not seem entirely fanciful.

The search for an overall accord with imperialism inevitably involves close collaboration between Washington and Moscow to settle what are commonly called "regional conflicts". Today, this concerns above all Central America, southern Africa (Namibia, Angola, South Africa), north-west Africa (Ethiopia/Eritrea), the Middle East (the

4. J. Primakov recognized this openly in *Pravda* on January 8, 1988.

5. See in particular the Statement of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International on Afghanistan in *IV* 138, April 4.

6. See *Le Monde Diplomatique*, June 1988.

this point of view.<sup>6</sup>

Moscow's change in attitude toward the civil war tearing north-east Africa apart is of a similar scope, even if it does not concern a conflict identical to those in Afghanistan and Kampuchea. The behaviour of the Mengistu regime in relation to oppressed nationalities, above all the Eritreans, is indefensible from any point of view, whether from Leninist principles or humanitarian concerns.

### Mengistu — a narrow-minded nationalist

Advancing the idea that safeguarding Ethiopian "national unity" takes priority over the fight against famine, cold-bloodedly running the risk of millions of people dying rather than allowing supplies to get through to the rebels, means acting like a bloodthirsty despot, not like proletarian revolutionary or an anti-imperialist. If you compare this attitude with the one that Lenin took at the height of the civil war in Russia, to the "Nansen mission's" fight against famine, it becomes clear what a vast distance there is between a real communist and a narrow-minded nationalist like Mengistu.

Again in this case, the Kremlin's "disengagement" seems necessary and justified even from the standpoint of proletarian internationalism, if the aim is not simply to reduce the USSR's unproductive military spending.

The Iran/Iraq war and the Gulf conflict is even more complicated. The immediate and unconditional ending of this senseless, fratricidal war is manifestly in the interests of both the Iraqi and the Iranian masses, and in the interest of both the Arab revolution and Iranian revolution. If the USSR throws its weight into the ring with this aim, in particular by stopping its supplies of arms to the two belligerents and putting pressure on the countries of oriental Europe to do the same, we could only approve of such a "turn". (For the time being, the USSR is directly or indirectly the main source of arms for Iraq.)

However, a blockade of Iran alone, imposed in agreement with Washington and under the aegis of the United Nations, would be seen by the Iranian masses, who in fact are becoming more and more war weary, as the USSR directly aiding an imperialist aggression against the Iranian revolution. It would further discredit the Iranian non-Islamic left. It would reinforce the hold of Khomeinist fundamentalism on the masses. The reactions of the popular masses in Pakistan be similar. This is what is making the Kremlin hesitate.

The case of the territories occupied by Israel is clearer still. For a long time, the Kremlin's aim has been to get the Zionist state to make some minor concessions to Syria and the PLO in exchange for a definitive recognition of Israel by the Arab world, including the PLO.<sup>7</sup> To achieve this

end — which for the moment is unrealizable, in view of the Zionist establishment's resistance to making the slightest concession of this sort — Moscow has been putting forward the idea of an international conference including the Soviet Union. In this way, it hopes for nothing more than to recover some political influence in the region.

However, the insurrection of the Palestinian masses is giving this policy of open collaboration with the imperialists in the Middle East a severe buffeting. Gorbachev, who is even more pragmatic than Khrushchev or Brezhnev, will therefore hesitate before committing himself fully to this course. He will wait to see how the events unfold.

On the other hand, "peaceful solution" of the conflicts in southern African and Central American has unquestionable counter-revolutionary implications. Through their merciless economic blockade and the military aggression they support, the imperialists have the Nicaraguan revolution by the throat. The Salvadoran and Guatemalan revolutions are facing massacres perpetrated by the local agents of imperialism.

The internationalist duty to aid this developing revolution is clear. The argument that this is too expensive for the USSR is hypocritical and dishonest, if you compare the amount of the aid given to Nicaragua with what the Soviet Union gives to bourgeois governments in the "third world."

So the mounting pressure on the Sandinistas today — which will be put on Cuba in the future — to seek an accommodation with Washington reflects a definite political choice. It means that Gorbachev is giving priority to an overall "detente" agreement, rather than to the strategic advances that the bureaucracy could gain from an alliance with revolutions that are already victorious or that could be in the not-too-distant future.

### Washington's condition for detente

The clear signal that Washington is sending is: Drop any idea of extending the revolution in Latin America, or there is not going to be any lasting detente. If Dukakis becomes Reagan's successor, this is not going to change much. In response, Gorbachev has been sending more and more signals to the effect of "Message received and understood."

In Angola, the original scheme for a compromise agreement that would couple withdrawal of Cuban and South African troops has been seriously put in question again by the fact that Pretoria seems to be moving toward an additional demand — inclusion of its stooges in the counter-revolutionary tribalist organization UNITA in the Luanda government. The Kremlin's attitude to this seems at least hesitant.

"In an interview, the Soviet deputy foreign minister, Anatoli Adamishin made it

plain to *The New York Times* that Moscow favored a 'political solution' to cut the Angolan-Namibian knot. If invited to participate directly in these negotiations, the Soviet Union would 'consider it very attentively,' he asserted, which says to me that Moscow is eager to cut costs. 'Where there is a will, there is a way,' said the up-and-coming Mr. Adamishin, adding wryly, 'including economic considerations of such concern to you'."

The southern African affair is the most serious. The Nicaraguan and Salvadoran revolutions are besieged fortresses. But in Nicaragua, as weakened and small as it is facing the imperialist giant, the revolution is armed and holds power. These are not inconsiderable advantages. In El Salvador, facing a blood-thirsty and merciless enemy, while the revolutionists do not hold power they are at least armed. So, they cannot be liquidated en masse as ARENA's fascist co-thinkers did in Europe.

### Outcome of "global deal" will depend on other forces

The oppressed Black masses of South Africa do not have these advantages. They are not armed. They do not have a scrap of political power. But the impressive trade-union self-organization that led to the success of the general strike of June 6-8, 1988 shows a very promising potential for struggle. Pressure from the Kremlin for a deal with the "liberal" wing of the South African bourgeoisie, the agent of imperialism in the country, could be a real stab in the back to a young and enthusiastic workers' movement if it won the trade-union leaderships, in return for political concessions, to accepting the maintenance of capitalist super-exploitation through imposing self-limitation on workers' struggle.

However, in both cases — Central America and southern Africa — Washington and Moscow are not the only players. They cannot impose a counter-revolutionary "normalization" that would maintain imperialist domination of these two regions through local agents. The autonomy from Washington of the local possessing classes in Central America is very marginal. The relative autonomy of the supporters of apartheid is much greater, but it still has its limits.

On the other hand, the real autonomy from the Kremlin of the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran revolutionists, to say nothing of the South African mass organizations, would make it much harder for Gorbachev to carry through a capitulationist turn. The situation of the Central Americans is grave, but not desperate. The situation of the South Africans is much stronger. The out-

7. "In return, but behind the scenes, Moscow, which has not given up hope of reestablishing its relations with the Jewish state, is reportedly calling on the PLO to 'recognize Israel and take into consideration its security needs.' Mr. Gorbachev told Mr. Arafat that openly in Moscow at the beginning of April." (*Les Echos*, June 8, 1988.)

come of a "global deal" will depend in the last analysis on the capacity of these organizations to maintain and increase their autonomy from all those social forces (including the international social democracy) that advise them to make rotten compromises and put pressure on them for that.

The difficulties Washington is encountering in its attempts to achieve the "regional settlement" that it wants in Central America have been quite adequately summed up in the *Washington Post*:

"Few parts of the world are in greater turmoil than Central America, and no part of US foreign policy is in a greater mess. It is a region the Reagan administration had rightly seen as crucial. There it hoped Marxist revolution was to be tamed, reform advanced, and the whole region secured within an expanding democratic orbit.

"But the struggle has gone poorly. Marxists appear today closer to consolidating power in Nicaragua. Guerillas and death squads eat away at the center in El Salvador. Armies shrivel the realm of elected government in Honduras and Guatemala. Democratic Costa Rica trembles. A drug lord in Panama scoffs at Washington's efforts to curb him...

"What went wrong? Each country is different, but the common aggravation of their difficulties can be traced to the onset of leftist revolutions....In Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua....Inevitably the revolutions evoked a US response, which itself became part of the problem....

"The upshot is that neither a conservative nor a liberal US administration has a workable security policy beyond improving local containment and hoping that Mikhail Gorbachev will somehow help out..." (My emphasis, *International Herald Tribune (IHT)*, June 21, 1988.)

## Gorbachev holds two trump cards

In order to improve the relationship of forces for his negotiations with the imperialists, Gorbachev holds two trump cards that he can play in succession. The first is normalizing relations with China, or even reestablishing a *de facto* alliance with Peking (a military alliance like that of the 1950s is unlikely). It is known that Deng Ziao-Ping posed three conditions for such normalization — withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan; withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea; and withdrawal of the Soviet missiles aimed at Chinese cities from Siberia and of the Soviet troops concentrated along the Amur river.



The first of these conditions is being met. The third may rapidly be so. As for the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea, the Kremlin seems to be actively working on that.

## Perspective of German reunification

A rapprochement between Moscow and Peking is therefore possible in the near future. A Gorbachev/Deng Diao-Ping summit seems to be in preparation, although the Chinese are still dragging their feet, in particular because they wonder how long Gorbachev will remain in power in Moscow. But their fear of a gradual remilitarization of Japan nonetheless prods them in the direction of such a rapprochement. They know that US imperialism can hardly opt for protecting China against Japan. But the USSR could do it.

The second trump is a more radical one than the first with respect to the changes that it could touch off on the international scale. It is giving the green light to West Germany for qualitatively more advanced economic integration with East Germany. Moscow can hold out such a perspective — along with that of a spectacular expansion of the *Ostgeschäft*, West German exports to the USSR — in exchange for big German credits, especially if US credits are not forthcoming.

Such proposals would not fall on deaf ears in the event of a grave economic recession in the West and serious long-lasting threats to the prosperity of the West German economy and therefore to the relative stability of bourgeois rule in West Germany.

It has already been noted with disquiet in Washington that the West German foreign

minister, Genscher, took a different position from that of Reagan and Thatcher, or even from Mitterrand, toward Soviet proposals in the area of conventional disarmament. The temptation to go it alone will be all the greater for the German bourgeoisie if Gorbachev were also to dangle a longer-term perspective of German reunification.

However, such a turn in the bureaucracy's foreign policy obviously has extremely grave implications for the ruling SED in East Germany. It has an interest, like all the East European bureaucracies, in greater access to the West European economies. The Hungarian government has hailed the fact that it has managed to conclude a deal with the EEC that virtually eliminates duties on Hungarian goods exported to Common Market countries as a diplomatic triumph. East Germany has achieved *de facto* but not *de jure* a similar status, through re-exporting from West Germany the goods that it exports to that country.

## Pressure on Gorbachev not to go too far

However, seeking such trade advances and increasing the imports of advanced Western technology that goes along with them is one thing; losing political power is something else again. German reunification cannot come about without the SED leadership losing that immediately or in the long run. Hence, it may find itself confronted with some painful choices, if Gorbachev's course in this regard were to take a more definite form and accelerate. Hence its growing internal divisions, which can produce some surprises. Hence the pressures on Gorbachev not to go too far down this road.

In fact, what is at stake, behind all these

still "piecemeal" changes in the relations between the USSR and the "people's democracies," in the context of changing East-West relations through "advanced peaceful coexistence," is whether or not the system of domination of East Europe by the Kremlin established at the end of the second world war is going to be maintained.

This system was, after a fashion, codified by the Brezhnev doctrine of "limited sovereignty." By intervening militarily in Hungary and Czechoslovakia (after doing so in East Germany in 1953), the Soviet leaders showed in a brutal and cynical way that they were definitely the real rulers of these countries. The "theoretical formula" of an "internationalist duty to preserve socialism" was only window-dressing for the naive or the ignorant.

Who has given Kremlin masters a monopoly of knowledge and truth that would enable them to decide independently of, and in opposition to, the majority of the working class — or even independently of the Communist Party of the countries in question and their leaderships — that "socialism" would be threatened unless there were a foreign military intervention?

However, the skeletons are coming out of the cupboards to haunt Gorbachev and his associates. On a recent visit to Yugoslavia, he was induced to sign a communiqué that included the following statement. (No doubt this was due to pressure from the leaders of the League of Yugoslav Communists rather than from his own bad conscience — he is an old associate of Andropov, who was marked forever by the treacherous role he played in the Soviet military intervention against the Hungarian revolution.)

### Hungarian opposition calls for rehabilitations

"The two parties accord special attention to strict respect for the obligatory universal principles of the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act and other documents of international law that ban aggression, violation of frontiers, conquest of the territories of others, all forms of threatening and using force, interference in the internal affairs of other countries, regardless of the pretext." (*Pravda*, March 19, 1988.)

How could anyone fail to see in these last lines an allusion to the military intervention in Czechoslovakia and Hungary? The Hungarian opposition, moreover, did not miss this. It immediately called for the re-



habilitation of Imre Nagy, Pal Maleter, Geza Loczonzy and other Communist leaders who were treacherously arrested and killed by representatives of the Kremlin.

### Centrifugal tendencies in the "socialist camp"

The reaction in Czechoslovakia was still stronger. Alexander Dubcek, leader of the CP at the time of the Prague Spring, has just called for rehabilitation and the reintroduction of internal democracy in a Communist Party with its doors reopened to the 500,000 members who were expelled during the "normalization."

However, all these movements in different directions, all these centrifugal tendencies in the "socialist camp," present Gorbachev with insoluble dilemmas. He cannot consolidate, or even maintain his position in the apparatus if he sits back and watches the breakup of the "camp." He cannot intervene using force without dealing a fatal blow to the credibility of *glasnost* both internationally and in the USSR itself. He cannot resign himself to the presence at the top of the "people's democracies" of conservative ruling teams allying semi-openly with his own opponents with the CPSU apparatus.<sup>8</sup> He knows quite well that opening up a crack for democratization, even a small one such as he has opened up in the USSR, means opening the way for a torrent.<sup>9</sup>

Moreover, unlike what is happening in the USSR and in China, any deepgoing reform in the direction of broadening the market mechanisms in Eastern Europe comes in a context where there is direct imperialist economic pressure.

Underlying the question of the Soviet bureaucracy's overall relationship with Eastern Europe is the problem of its relations with the imperialist bourgeoisies of Western Europe as a whole. While for the moment Gorbachev is giving priority to an overall accord with Washington, he is not unaware of the growing tensions in the Atlantic Alliance, which arise, in the final analysis, from the relative decline of US hegemony over the capitalist world.

As a result, any prolonged delay in the economic aid it expects from Washington will increase the Kremlin's temptation to play the "Europe vs. America" card. This would mean a fundamental revision of its attitude to the EEC, involving its approval of the institutional consolidation of the Common Market and

even its expansion, notably to include Austria (for the moment this has not happened).

The implications would be far-reaching, again for the SED (and its appendage, the West German CP), but also for a whole series of communist parties in West Europe, which have been, and continue to be, deeply committed to an anti-EEC course, as well as for social-democratic left wings that have become accustomed to following a similar option.

More broadly, no one should close their eyes to the fact that Gorbachev's foreign policy involves a general alignment with social-democratic strategy in West Europe, whose negative effects on the ongoing class struggles will soon manifest themselves. By the same token, this will widen the political space for the revolutionary forces involved to give consistent support to these struggles, and will bring about new differentiations within the traditional workers' organizations.

One of the peculiarities of the Soviet bureaucracy and its clones in Western Europe is that they find themselves forced to combine extreme pragmatism in political options with an *ex-post facto* rationalization of these options at an ideological level. As Karl Marx already explained, "the bureaucrats are the Jesuits of the state, the theolo-

8. Thus, *Neues Deutschland*, the central organ of the SED, was quick to reprint the famous letter by Nina Andreeva [to *Sovetskaya Rossiya*], which Gorbachev and his team consider an out and out anti-*perestroika* and anti-*glasnost* program. (See IV 143, June 13, 1988.)

9. It has to be pointed out that the international bourgeoisie is very worried about this, and fears its "destabilizing" implications for the whole of Europe. "The West is likewise reluctant to act as the orchestral conductor of the political reforms in East Europe." (*The Guardian*, weekly edition, May 29, 1988.)

gians of the state. The bureaucracy is the priesthood of the republic."<sup>10</sup>

Without in the least sharing the illusions of historical idealism — that is, without believing that the origins or the cause of Gorbachev's new foreign policy lie in the realm of ideology — it is necessary to follow the transformations of the official doctrine very attentively. They offer a rather faithful reflection of the initiatives that are underway or projected. This makes it easier to place such moves in a broader framework. There is not the slightest doubt that the official doctrine implies a fundamental change in this area. In *Pravda* on January 8, J. Primakov refers to a "new philosophy of foreign policy."

The point of departure for the new conceptualization of international policy by Gorbachev's ideologues is the notion of a growing globalization of the foremost contradictions and crises of our time, a globalization that puts the entire world in the same boat, without any class distinctions. This notion was already present in Gorbachev's report to the last congress of the CPSU. It was further developed in the last part of his book, *Perestroika*. It is being carried to its ultimate conclusions in a series of positions adopted by some of his ideologues, in connection with the Moscow summit and its aftermath.

It is not only the problem of nuclear disarmament, but also those of the threats to the ecosphere (biosphere) of the human race, the problem of the rational exploitation of energy and mineral resources, the demilitarization of the international economy — or even overcoming the underdevelopment of the third world, or at least the problem of hunger — that are presented as difficulties that can be solved by an accord between the USSR, the main imperialist powers and the largest third world states. (The bourgeois nature of the latter is no longer disputed.)

Underlying this revision of the Marxist theory of imperialism is the idea that the imperialist bourgeoisie, or at least major factions in it, have a common interest with the working class, the "socialist camp" and the third-world peoples in finding a "global" solution to these problems.

Let us leave aside the question of the suicidal nature of nuclear war (even for the imperialist bourgeoisie) and the conclusions that could be drawn from that about the behavior of certain factions of the bourgeoisie — rational, semi-rational, irrational, or even suicidal.<sup>11</sup> Leaving aside this very important problem, which is more

complex than the Gorbachevites make it, the only "rational kernel" in all this verbiage about "common interests" above class differences and class interests is the common interest in expanding East-West trade.

But here precisely there is nothing new. Already at the time of Reagan's hysteria over the "evil empire," far from trying to starve the "enemy," the Republican administration was forced by the United States' agricultural crisis to expand its exports of maize and soya beans to the USSR. The fact that the European and Japanese imperialists have captured a larger slice of the *Ostgeschäft* pie has made Washington (and Wall Street) more attentive to the siren songs from Moscow.

### Political blackmail and ideological revisionism

At the same time, the temptation to engage in political blackmail has scarcely been abandoned. President Carter's foreign security advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, estimates: "It follows that any major extension of credits and any major Western investments in *perestroika* should await truly significant cuts in military spending....The progressive elimination of the Soviet military threat, pointing toward the gradual and peaceful [sic] dismantling of the Soviet empire, could then justify some of today's hopeful conclusions." (*Los Angeles Times/IHT*, June 7, 1988.)

The least that can be said is that "common interests" are hardly evident in such commentary, or in the thinking that inspires it or the class objectives that underlie it.

In order to justify the bold concept of "globalization" of interests and political

and other projects, the Gorbachevite ideologues have been led to formulate a series of still more audacious "revisionist" hypotheses.

### "Advanced coexistence" and "peaceful monopolies"

Thus, the Gorbachevite ideologues seem to have come out in favor of US troops remaining in Europe, at least if we can believe a story by American journalist Flora Lewis: "At the [annual] conference [of the New York-based Institute for East-West Security Studies held in Potsdam, West Germany], the Soviet delegate spoke firmly of the need for 'special measures' to keep the Americans in Europe; of the importance of 'anchoring' the United States in the old continent, so that it would remain responsible for keeping the peace [sic] here...."

"I always supposed," said an influential West German, "that Moscow believed the best thing was to have Soviet troops in Western Europe, but the next best thing was to keep Americans here." "The next best thing is also the best thing," answered the Russian." (*New York Times/IHT*, June 13, 1988.)

Aleksandr Bovin, an *Izvestia* editorial writer has declared: "The new Kremlin team has essentially [sic] altered the Soviet attitude toward international affairs....We have stopped looking at world events exclusively through the prism of the East-West conflict. We put to the fore human values in general, human interests in general."<sup>12</sup> (*Die Zeit*, June 3, 1988.)

In the Soviet magazine *Mirovaia Ekonomika i Mezhdunarodnye Otnoshenia* (No. 8, 1987), I. Ivan wrote that a reconversion of arms production to civilian production would increase the growth rate of the US economy and the bourgeoisie's profits. He does not seem to have heard about the crisis of overproduction (excess capacity) in civilian industry. Neither does he seem to have considered for what mysterious reasons US big capital deliberately preferred to have less profits rather than more. The idea that Gorbachev's advisers know better than the US monopolists themselves how to maxi-



By BAS in Tachydromos (Athens) C&W Syndicate

10. Karl Marx, *Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrecht in Marx-Engels-Werke* (MEW), vol.2, p.248.

11. See my article in *Quatrième Internationale*, July 1987.

12. See also Boris Kourachvili in *Les Nouvelles de Moscou*, June 5, 1988. He pleads in favor of "replacing the age of inevitable struggle, which has held the stage in the first half of the twentieth century, with that of social and class conciliation that will probably hold the stage in the twenty-first."

mize the latter's profits is a bit grotesque.

Underlying this conception of "advanced coexistence" is a whole "soporific" view of the internal contradictions of capitalism that excludes the possibility of depressions and revolutionary crises. It projects onto the world scale the forecasts that Bernstein made for Germany (and for Europe) in the famous "revisionist" debate of 1898-1904:

"Although the deepening general crisis of capitalism is becoming permanent, the conflict between the productive forces and production relations has assumed a chronic character, and does not threaten to let off a revolutionary explosion in the foreseeable future.

"Since the beginning of this century, the capitalist socio-economic formation has undoubtedly and largely owed its stability [sic — two world wars, the 1929 slump, fascism] to the system's capacity for a revolutionary transformation of the means of production." (Ivan Antonovich: "Dialectics of an Integral World," in *International Affairs* 5, May 1988. Antonovich is vice-rector of the Academy of Social Sciences under the CC of the CPSU).

Often more Catholic than the Pope, some SED theoreticians are going still further than their Soviet colleagues. They are now talking about "peaceful monopolies" [sic] or the possibility of making these monopolies "peaceful." For example, Rolf Reissig, director of the Institute for Scientific Communism under the CC of the SED has written that "it is possible to have a capitalism oriented toward peaceful coexistence and competition between systems." He has also written, "While the military-industrial complex is in conformity with monopoly capitalism, it is not under all circumstances necessary to this system." (*Tages-Anzeiger-Magazin* 10, Zurich, 1988.)

## Pressure from imperialism and the Soviet masses

In the SED's official theoretical magazine, *Einheit* (No. 2, 1988), the same Rolf Reissig wrote unabashedly that broad (!) strata of monopoly capital are interested in advancing the "technical-scientific revolution" outside of the military sphere and avoiding "the waste of enormous resources for arms."<sup>13</sup> Because of East Germany's position as a "border guard of the camp," a whole generation of cadres has been educated in the idea of "the revanchist aggressiveness of monopoly capital." We can bet that these ideas will provoke a general turmoil and deepgoing political and ideological disarray.

This picture should be completed by indicating that in place of the "non-capitalist road of development" that Khrushchev pro-

jected for the main countries of the third world, the Gorbachevites write openly that, with a few minor exceptions (Angola, Mozambique, South Yemen and Ethiopia; Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala are absent from this list) the development of the third world is, and will remain, capitalist for a long period, and that the USSR and the national liberation movement have to work within this framework. (G. Mirski: "On the road to be chosen for the developing countries," in *Mirovaia Ekonomika i Mezhdunarodnye Otnoshenia* 5, 1987.) The hint is clear.

On the basis of all these data, can we conclude that Gorbachev's foreign policy represents fundamentally a "right turn" in comparison with previous Soviet foreign policy? Should we carry such a judgement further, saying that logically, since foreign policy is the extension of domestic policy,



glasnost and perestroika should be condemned en bloc, in the same way as "advanced peaceful coexistence"? That would be hasty. A warning has to be issued against such oversimplifications, which are similar to the "yes, yes" or "no, no" that Leon Trotsky already condemned in the final part of *Revolution Betrayed*.

Like his domestic and economic policy, the course that Gorbachev is following in the international arena is made up of a body of contradictory elements. To understand the reasons for these contradictions, it is sufficient to remember that Gorbachev is operating from a position of weakness on two fronts. He is coming under growing pressure at once from imperialism and from the Soviet masses (or, if you prefer, from the mounting social crisis in the USSR, which is being at least partially aggravated by the beginnings of independent activity and consciousness among the workers).

Once you understand that, the elements of the puzzle that emerge successively and in a disparate way become comprehensible.

To this can be added the no less contradictory evolution in the third world, where the liberation movement overall is on the defensive but retains a capacity for fighting back and above all an autonomy that are still remarkable.

## The dangers of over-simplification

In these conditions, condemning everything that is taking place in the USSR as "rightist," or even counter-revolutionary, is indefensible. If Gorbachev is "on the right," were Brezhnev, or even Stalin "on the left"? If everything that Gorbachev is doing has to be seen as consistent "teachery," are the rehabilitation of the Moscow trials defendants, or the *de facto* toleration of strikes then "rightist," in comparison with the repression of Stalin and Brezhnev?

But on the other hand, an overall "yes, yes," or even a "yes, but," are likewise inadmissible from the standpoint of the interests of the Soviet and world working class. We cannot approve of economic measures that lead to the re-emergence of unemployment and a decline in real wages, or of rotten compromises at the expense of the Central American and South African revolutions.

The only valid judgment then is a nuanced one, case by case, problem by problem, as I have formulated it throughout this article. Too bad for the over-simplifiers. They will be proven wrong by the events, as they were in the past and as they are being today by what is happening in the USSR.

The judgment should not remain an academic, platonic one. It leads to a definite conclusion —

defend the Central American revolution, broaden, internationalize and generalize the movement of mass solidarity against apartheid<sup>14</sup>; encourage, stimulate and reinforce throughout the world the class autonomy and independence of the workers' movement from all states and all governments. And at the same time it is necessary to seize every opportunity to promote a wide-ranging debate and wide-ranging unity in action with all anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist forces. For a variety of reasons, the Gorbachev experience facilitates this. ★

13. The small rational kernel in this thesis is that US imperialism, stretched by its enormous and persistent trade deficit and a new less serious public spending deficit, has an interest in keeping the arms race within certain limits. But it has scarcely any interest in radically cutting its military spending, to say nothing of eliminating it.

14. This movement's possibilities were strikingly confirmed by the impressive united anti-apartheid demonstration of 50,000 people in Amsterdam on June 12, 1988.

# Call for rehabilitation of German communists

**THE CAMPAIGN** for the rehabilitation of the victims of Stalin's purges has not only had a response from the Soviet embassy in West Germany, but led to a further controversy about rehabilitating the German communist leaders who perished in exile in the Soviet Union. On February 15, four signatories of the appeal (for the full text, see IV 137, March 21, 1988) sent an open letter to the Soviet ambassador asking him to accept a copy of the appeal with the signatures of those supporting it.

In the letter, the four — Lev Kopelev, Jakob Moneta, Peter von Oertzen, Professor Herman Weber and Winfried Wolf — stressed: "The signatories of this appeal are all friends of your country and of the peoples of the Soviet Union. Precisely for that reason, they are sorry that people who played an outstanding role in the Russian revolution, who were among the founders of the Soviet Union and the Communist International, were condemned by the Moscow trials and are still considered traitors, despite their service to your country and their wider services to humanity."

The authors of the open letter (except Lev Kopelev) were received in mid-May by a representative of the Soviet embassy. The following is an account of the discussion that took place and the subsequent press conference.

**T**HE EMBASSY first secretary, Ivan Piskovoy, received a delegation including Jakob Moneta, Peter von Oertzen and Winfried Wolf. He said that all those who had been unjustly condemned and murdered under Stalin's rule would be rehabilitated, not only the victims of the three [Moscow] trials, who would shortly be juridically rehabilitated by the Supreme Court of the USSR.

The first secretary offered his assurance that the commission appointed by the Politburo to oversee this would continue its work. He asked, however, for understanding that this would be a long process, and there were still many enemies of *glasnost* in the Soviet Union and that too much publicity would harm the process.

The first secretary reacted also to the Open Letter to the Soviet ambassador. He pointed out that the members of the Politburo of the German Communist Party (KPD) who were killed at Stalin's orders (Hermann Remmele, Leo Flieg, Heinz Neumann, Hugo Eberlein, Herman Schubert, Fritz Schulte, Heinrich Stüsskind) had already been rehabilitated in the biographical dictionary of the history of the workers' movement published in 1970 in East Germany. In it, he said, they were described as friends of the Soviet people who in the USSR had been "arrested and condemned on false charges."

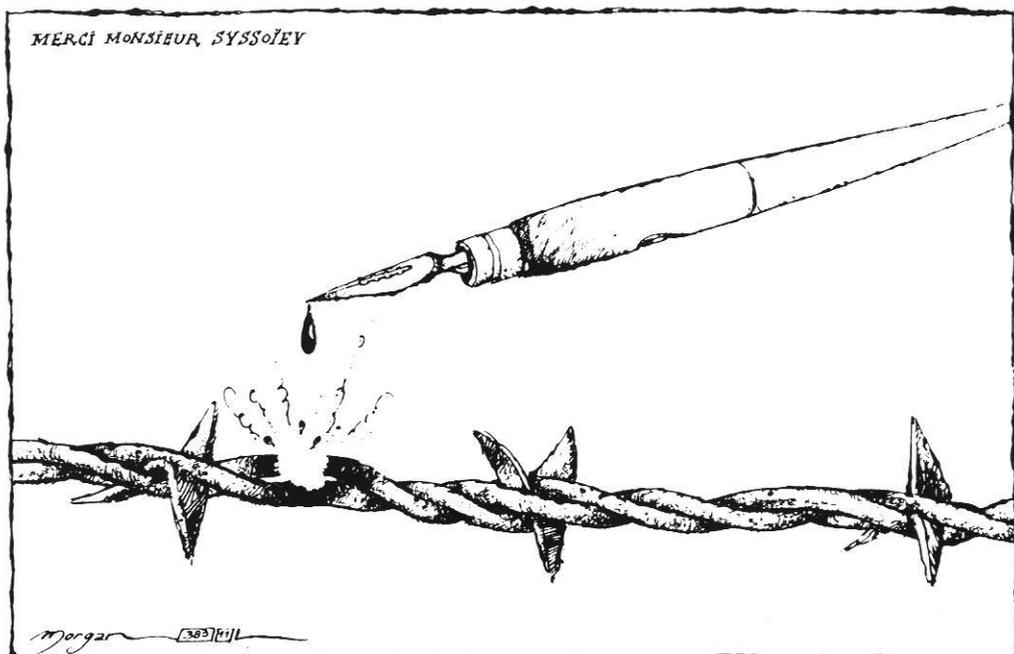
Peter von Oertzen, from the National Executive of the SPD, said that German-Soviet scholarly collaboration should also be stepped up in the historical field in order to bring out the whole truth about this chapter of the past. The Soviet embassy official took up this appeal, adding that such a com-

mission should have the task of uncovering the injustice done to Soviet soldiers in the German Reich during the second world war.

After the visit to the embassy, a press conference was held in which Ulrich Briefs from the parliamentary group of the Greens and Professor Herman Weber, a specialist in the history of the KPD and author of several books on this subject, took part. The latter explained that inclusion in the biographical dictionary that First Secretary Piskovoy cited could not be considered rehabilitation, since in these entries it was not stated in what conditions the leading members of the KPD lost their lives in the Soviet Union. Moreover, shortly after its publications, the dictionary was withdrawn.

Professor Weber described it as the "tragedy of the German communist movement that more German Communists died at the hand of Stalin than by that of Hitler." In order to wipe out this tragedy and once again make communism a hope, a telegraphic recognition of the services of the pre-1933 KPD leaders was not enough. A public and political rehabilitation was necessary, for example through a posthumous restoration of their membership in the party, as is now being discussed for Bukharin in the Soviet Union, and a public settling of accounts with Stalin's policy, including toward the German Communists.

So far, nothing like this has happened. At the press conference the signatories of the appeal expressed their hope that the West German CP, if it supported Gorbachev's reform course, might publicly come out for rehabilitation of the German communists and the victims of the Moscow trials. ★



# Military takes center stage

**A SAD SETBACK** for democracy in Haiti was the way the press presented the June 19 military coup that ousted a formally elected president who had been in office only four months. The spectacle was certainly a dreary one. But is this coup really the end of the anti-dictatorial movement that led to the downfall of Jean-Claude Duvalier, the playboy heir of Papa Doc?

The following article analyzes the factors that ended the rule of the "constitutional" president, Leslie Manigat, and the prospects for the new, openly military, government.

**ARTHUR MAHON**

**P**OLLS carried out before November 29, 1987, when the presidential elections were supposed to be held, showed that Leslie Manigat had no chance of setting himself up in the National Palace. The elections were drowned in blood by Duvalierist and army commandos, with, it seems, the consent of the CIA. The army remained in power.

When the military decided to hold a parody of an election on January 17, the four main candidates in the November 29 elections called for a boycott. For the ambitious Leslie Manigat, supported by the Christian-democratic international organization, this was an un hoped-for chance. He accepted the accord offered by the military, who took care of getting him "elected" by 2 per cent of the voters.

Leslie Manigat had accepted being the prisoner of the army. But he thought he was cleverer. After all, he had a brilliant precedent to look to. François Duvalier had in fact become president in quite similar circumstances. He, nonetheless, managed to escape the grip of the army by relying on the Tontons Macoutes [a private militia of criminals].



Duvalier restructured the officer corps, put his right-hand men in key places and subjected the army to his will. But unlike Duvalier, Leslie Manigat had virtually no base inside Haiti. The anti-Duvalier section of the bourgeoisie had counted on being able to exercise power directly after November 29. It gave Manigat only the most timid sort of support. The new president therefore was hardly more than a front for military rule. The Haitians remained totally indifferent to his downfall.

The army decided to put Manigat in the National Palace because it found itself isolated internationally after November 29. It needed a civilian facade and a president who could get US aid flowing again. However, doing this involved twisting the arms of some in Duvalierist circles, who were very hostile to such a solution.

## US refuses aid increase

In fact, 1987 had seen the joint victory of the Duvalierist barons and the military (who, while they are mainly Duvalierist, retain special interests of their own). Together, they managed to contain the mobilizations in the summer of 1987 that had threatened the military regime. Together, they had also kept the anti-Duvalier bourgeoisie from being victorious on November 29. Some of them thought that after two years of difficulties and humiliations, they had been cheated of their victory and the rewards that should have accompanied it.

Moreover, Manigat suffered a grave international setback. The US congress refused to increase its aid program, which had been cut back by two thirds (from \$107 to \$35 million). Increased aid from France, Venezuela and Taiwan, and promises of aid from West Germany and Cana-

da, could not fill the big hole left by the cut in the US appropriation.

In these conditions, the compromise made with Manigat lost a lot of its advantages. Several factors precipitated his downfall. In trying to increase his room for maneuver, the president entered into direct competition with the Duvalierists. They did not tolerate his attempts to place his own henchmen in public administration, where jobs are highly valued. They looked on the government's attempt to subordinate the police to the Ministry of Justice, in accordance with the constitution, with a very jaundiced eye, and they blocked it.

The government's announcement of a plan to "reorganize the neighborhood committees and vigilance brigades in a controlled rather than a freewheeling way as before" reminded them of the formation of the Tontons Macoutes. And Manigat's maneuvers to base himself on divisions in the army were also very badly received.

## Divisions in army undermining regime

The countryside and popular neighborhoods have not been a theater of mobilizations, as they were in 1987. The pressure of the army, strong and often murderous in the provinces, has played a dissuasive role. But above all, after the big mobilizations and disillusionments of last year, a period of reflection and reorganization has set in popular circles.

However, during the Manigat presidency, despite his threats and the intervention of the repressive forces, strikes multiplied in the factories of the Port-au-Prince industrial zone. This social instability was compounded by the insecurity created by the terrorist commandos seeking to destabilize Manigat and intimidate the population. This led the bourgeoisie to view Manigat's departure without too much displeasure.

Finally, pressed by the World Bank, which made putting the customs services in order a condition for granting credits, Manigat tried to attack the problem of smuggling. This meant confronting a whole section of the army that makes big profits from contraband. And it proved capable of mobilizing large sections of the population in the port cities who also profit from this traffic.

After several turbulent weeks, in the course of which Leslie Manigat tried to turn alternatively for support to one section of the army involved in smuggling, represented by General Namphy, and a section specializing in drug traffic, represented by Colonel Paul, the president was driven out of power and out of the country on June 19.

The big winners seem to be some Duvalierist dignitaries, who have regained important positions in the state. But the divisions in the army, having almost led to a physical confrontation, are undermining the military regime. It is now more isolated than ever internationally. ★