

International VIEWPOINT

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International VIEWPOINT

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Chilean people say "No" to Pinochet

FIFTEEN YEARS after the bloody coup d'etat of September, 1973 which brought him to power, General Pinochet has just been caught in a trap of his own making. On October 5, the plebiscite he organized resulted in a clear defeat: 54.68% to 43.04% in favor of the "No"s.

Electoral fraud, on everyone's mind since the August 31 designation of the general as the sole candidate, proved impossible: the gap between the "Yes" and "No" votes was too wide. Cheating in such conditions could have been worse than accepting the result.

ARIANE MERRI

SINCE the state of siege was lifted in September, the opposition has again taken to the streets, with hundreds of thousands of people demonstrating for a "No" vote. In a few days, the accumulated fear of 15 years of dictatorship literally evaporated, even as rumors of a new military coup grew more persistent with each poll showing the inevitability of Pinochet's defeat.

The evening of the vote, General Matthei, head of the Air Force and one of the four members of the junta, acknowledged the defeat even before the official results were communicated by the Ministry of the Interior. Tens of thousands were in the streets shouting aloud their victory and demanding that Pinochet step down immediately, "*que se vaya ahora!*"

But the dictator wasn't listening. He quickly declared that he will respect the constitution — a constitution cut to measure for him and approved by a fraudulent referendum in March 1980. According to this document, the "transition" between military rule and the passing of power to a civilian government will stick to the following calendar:

- From now until November 1989, everything will continue as before. Pinochet and the junta are to be reconfirmed in their respective functions from March 11, 1989, until March 11, 1990.

- On November 14, 1989, the presidential campaign will open. The constitution states that the current president of the republic— Pinochet — cannot run.

- December 11, 1989, presidential and congress elections will be called.

- December 14, 1989, will see the first round of the presidential election.

- February 10, 1990, a second round will be held if necessary.

- March 11, 1990, Pinochet will step down for the new incumbent.

That is what is planned. But today March 1990, or even December 1989, seem a long way off to many Chileans. A lot could happen before then, nothing is fixed for all time, and some things could be negotiated between reasonable people.

Pinochet's defeat was a personal slap in the face for the dictator, who honestly thought he could extend his rule into the twenty-first century, thus continuing the "movement begun on September 11, 1973".

Many regime partisans lukewarm about Pinochet

But many of the regime's partisans — civilians and soldiers alike — were lukewarm, even hostile, to his candidacy. Certainly not out of humanism, but because they thought that Pinochet was the most likely to become the focus of all of the hate engendered by 15 years of dictatorship. And that is exactly what happened.

A year ago, the opposition was on the defensive, divided. The popular movement that had taken to the streets from the first *protestas* in 1983 up until July 1986 was expectant, then generally disgusted with the shilly-shallyings of an opposition that had shown itself incapable of going forward or striking a telling blow against a regime in difficulties. The harsh repression following the failed attempt on Pinochet's life (claimed by the Manuel Rodriguez Patriot-



ic Front (FPMR), a breakaway from the Chilean CP) did the rest: the dictatorship was in fine fettle, the price of copper soared on the international market, the economic growth rate registered new highs, and the opposition retreated into contemplation of its internal affairs. It was in this context that Pinochet decided to push his advantage, putting himself forward as the only candidate of the plebiscite.

He campaigned for more than a year, making numerous trips, speeches, announcing tax cuts, house building and other clientelist measures designed to make it look as though his candidacy was the "natural" choice.

Keeping this in mind, he was going to reshuffle the government, putting his henchmen — those forming what is known as the "bunker" — into key posts.

His campaign played on some simple themes. In the political and ideological arena, there was God and the Devil; Good and Evil; Me, or Communist chaos. In the economic sphere, the choice was between a regime which brought Chile out of underdevelopment and the anarchy of the Popular Unity (UP).

It has already been stated that other supporters of the regime were less enthusiastic about the general's chances, knowing it would be easier to bring the transition to a successful conclusion with someone less historically burdened than Pinochet.

For its part, the United States was quick

to understand the situation, and given the role played by this country in setting up the military junta in 1973, its opinion, predictably, carries a lot of weight. While reinforcing their links with the military — the real political masters of the country — the Americans subsidized the respectable parties of the opposition, notably the Christian Democracy (DC), knowing that within their ranks would be found those civilians suitable for a future normalization. This is a transitional process already undertaken by other countries in the southern cone like Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay. It should be clear that the doctrine dear to Jeanne Kirkpatrick's heart, that of "totalitarian enemies" versus "totalitarian friends," has not been abandoned by a Republican administration suddenly touched by democratic grace — it has merely become more sophisticated.

United States revises policy for Latin America

The spread of revolutionary insurrections in Central America, the resurgence of large scale guerilla warfare in many of those countries, and, more generally, the chronic political instability and explosive economic situation of the sub-continent, have led to a reformulation of national security doctrine. US foreign policy for Latin America now entails the setting up of civilian regimes under a high level of military surveillance (the new Brazilian constitution is the most recent example), and strengthening low-intensity warfare.

This reformulation is clearly apparent in the paper put together by the famous Santa Fe group for George Bush's presidential campaign.

But dictators have a certain autonomy. And General Pinochet was not too pleased to see himself shoved aside for higher po-

litical considerations after so many years of loyal service. After all the years of being accustomed to hearing his inflammatory tirades against the Soviet Union and Cuba, it is not a little piquant to hear him inveigh against the "foreign interference" of the United States.

Claim that Pinochet "really won" the plebiscite

The day after the vote, those civilians who made up part of Pinochet's support were swift in drawing the lessons of his defeat in order to plan their futures.

But the "bunker" stubbornly hangs on. Fernandez, the Minister of the Interior, has been explaining that Pinochet was the real winner of the plebiscite, since he alone drew 43% of the total vote, while the opposition had to enter 16 candidates (the number of parties making up the Command for No, not including the CP) in order to get 54%. Associated with right-wing extremist parties like *Patria et Libertad* (Freedom and Homeland), those faithful to the regime are demanding a revision of the constitution allowing Pinochet to stand in the 1989 elections.

"Absolutely not," was the response of the two major right-wing parties, the Union of Independents for Democracy (UDI) and the Party of National Renovation (PRN), who hope to step into the vacuum left by Pinochet.

In any case, civilian parties count for very little as far as political decisions are concerned. These are the preserve of the military, which makes no bones about showing its contempt for "politicos".

All of the military hierarchy's policies are guided by two fundamental principles: first, to maintain the unity of the armed forces in the face of any tactical splits which might occur, and, second, to ensure

the uninterrupted continuation of the regime — of which they are the keystone — in the post-Pinochet period.

These two objectives are inseparable, the second being unthinkable without the first. This is why, despite the real or feigned reservations expressed by some about Pinochet's candidacy, the junta did finally decide on the General. None of the other three military chiefs [the junta is made up of the heads of the four branches of the military: the navy, airforce, *carabineros*, or military police and the army] could take the responsibility for a possible split within the armed forces, all the more so as the army, led by Pinochet, would be too difficult to control.

Are these reservations sincere or false? As a matter of fact, for the last year it seems that every two-bit military chief has let slip hints of their "ideal candidate," who bore no resemblance to Pinochet. General Mattei particularly specialized in the consummate art of intimidating now an opening, now its withdrawal.

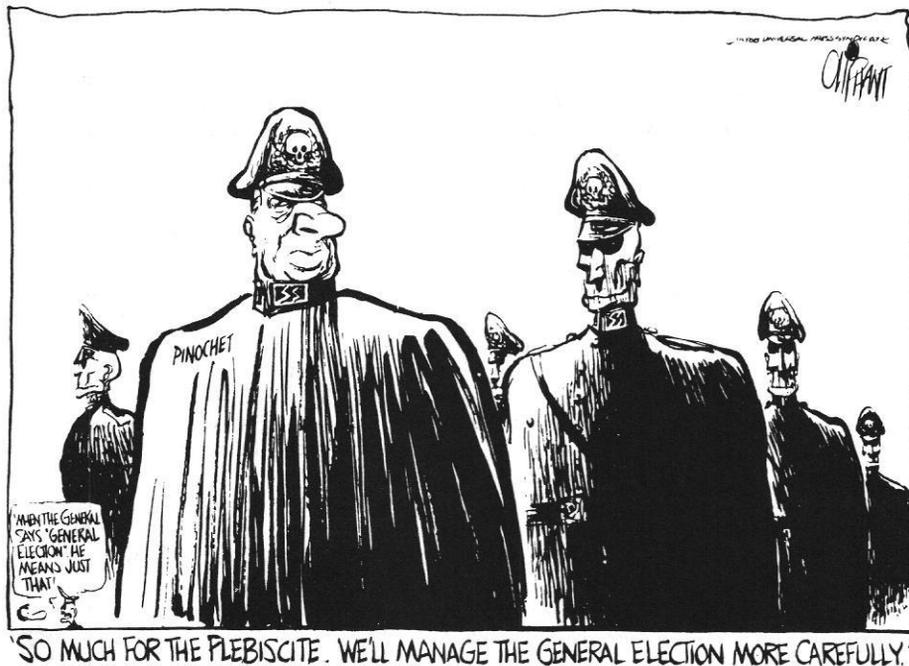
These declarations no doubt reflected the closed-door discussions in the ranks of the military hierarchy, but they also intentionally served to leave the question open as long as possible. The opposition was forced to deal with the possibility of a consensus candidate, and ended up making even more concessions. If a balance sheet is drawn, it is clear this tactic paid off: neither the junta nor the regime backed down one iota. They followed the schedule laid down by the constitution to the letter and they forced the opposition to accept the framework of the plebiscite, all without the slightest let up in the repression. Amnesty International has even estimated that the situation has worsened, due to the appearance of ultra right-wing paramilitary squads. Unquestionably the tactic that worked so well in the months before the plebiscite will be applied more than ever in this new period.

Military has total constitutional control

The 1980 Constitution, which will serve as the basis for the post-Pinochet period, governs political rights and institutional functions as with any constitution. But this one is especially embellished.

"Any act of a person or group aiming to attack the institution of the family, propagate violence, or conceiving of society, the state, or the political order as totalitarian or founded on class struggle, is illicit and against the interests of the republic."

This is the famous Article 8 which places the entire left outside of the law. But its application is at the military's discretion, and they are the only judges. In this way, the Humanist Party and the National Democratic Party — both of which had asked for legal status and submitted to all of the conditions required by the law on political parties (among other things, collecting 30,000 names) — found themselves refused on



September 12.

But the most important thing was without doubt the creation of a National Security Council (CNS). It is made up, like the junta, of commanders from the four branches of the military, plus the president of the republic, the president of the Supreme Court and the president of the higher chamber of the Congress. Even in purely mathematical terms, the military predominates, but its pre-eminence goes far beyond numbers.

This body has unlimited powers. They extend from advising the president to beginning an enquiry on any official with any relationship whatsoever to matters of internal security (an infinitely expansive concept if ever there was one) or to external danger to the state. The constitution in fact envisions a sort of "co-government", an unequal distribution of powers between the president and the CNS. In contrast, the two chambers of the Congress are reduced to whatever part remains to be played in terms of political decision-making.

Christian Democracy and the opposition

Two parties dominate the regime's opposition. On the right, the Christian Democracy, whose president Patricio Aylwyn leads the Command for No; and, on the left, the Communist Party. The center is occupied by the nebulous socialist parties (Almeyda, Nunez and so on) and others.

The Christian Democracy is unanimously in support of the transitional process. It is conscious of the strength it has as a result of the support of the United States, the confidence in it expressed by the business sector, and the easily obtained ear of a favorable military hierarchy. It has had a popular base, notably among the unions. But with the perspective of negotiations with military figures, the current leadership of the party has cut all those who were linked to the labor movement and thus subject to popular pressures out of the decision-making process.

In terms of the economy, the Christian Democracy is now reassuring business circles that they believe a return to the nationalizations of the Popular Unity period to be out of the question. The Chilean economic "success" will be continued.

Politically, the objective is a government somewhere between civilian and military dictatorship. It is significant that that the huge concert organized by the opposition in Santiago on October 7 was called the "Festival of Democracy and National Reconciliation". This is the catchword of the Christian Democrats: the reconciliation of the army and the people, who have moved apart during 15 years of a "misunderstanding". Obviously, a key part of this reconciliation will be total immunity for all murderers and torturers in uniform. If there was one unegotiable point for the military, this was it. The Statute of Limitations enacted in Argentina risks being a model of

anti-militarist subversion compared to that which will be concocted for these ends in Chile.

Last, but not least, a large part of the DC's strength is a direct result of the misgivings, about-faces, and confusion reigning in the CP. The Communist Party, because of its strength and its implantation, especially among the *poblaciones*, the miserable shanty towns that cover Santiago, is the only force which could contest the DC. But the CP has placed itself in an impossible position to do so. For two years, it has dogged the steps of the Christian Democrats, who have been able to consistently put it on the defensive.

Briefly, the course of events has been as follows: in 1983, the Chilean CP, one of the most opportunist and right wing of all Latin America (which is saying quite a lot) made a spectacular turn, calling for popular insurrection and forming an armed wing, the FPMR. The latter managed a series of spectacular attacks which attracted to it a good number of youth from the *poblaciones* who wanted a radical solution to the dictatorship and were turned off by the well-mannered politicians of the Christian Democracy. Then in September came the failed attempt on Pinochet's life. The repression took a heavy toll on the Front.

Shortly afterwards, the CP dropped its program of armed struggle, provoking a crisis in the FPMR. Then, although it had always denounced the electoral process of the plebiscite, correctly arguing the profoundly anti-democratic nature of the 1980 Constitution, the CP for the first time urged members to register on the electoral rolls "in order to prevent the electoral fraud being prepared", all the while maintaining its line on a boycott. Its position was untenable: the rest of the opposition accused it of being responsible for Pinochet's future victory, and the layers it influenced did not understand why they should register unless in order to vote. Finally, the polarization for or against Pinochet grew apace.

Confusion inside the Communist Party

At last, in June, the CP came over to the "No"s. The FPMR, which seems to have suffered a split as the CP tried to regain control, still retained a position of boycotting the plebiscite, although actually it didn't address the question directly, but called for mass mobilizations. It announced a truce as far as its armed actions went.

And now? The statements of the old Stalinist leader, Volodya Teitelbaum, recently returned from exile, leave little doubt. Asked by the Spanish daily *El Pais* on October 3 what he meant by a "popular democratic uprising," an expression which had caused much consternation among the bourgeois opposition, Teitelbaum answered: "I never pictured it as being an armed action, but a peaceful demonstration of the people, of the nation in the streets."

And he added:

"The provisional government which we propose is a democratic formulation, as it is neither a case of a government formed by a single party, nor by all of the left parties, but rather by all of the forces of the opposition, from the center, the right, and so on...It will have to be preceded by a series of discussions in order to arrive at an accord between all forces present. This agreement will also have to include, in one way or another, the armed forces." The quote renders any commentary on the true plans of the Communist Party unnecessary. There's no novelty here, either, as the internal leader Sanfuentes, when interviewed on June 30 for the same paper, said the same thing.

Heavy cloak of fear been lifted

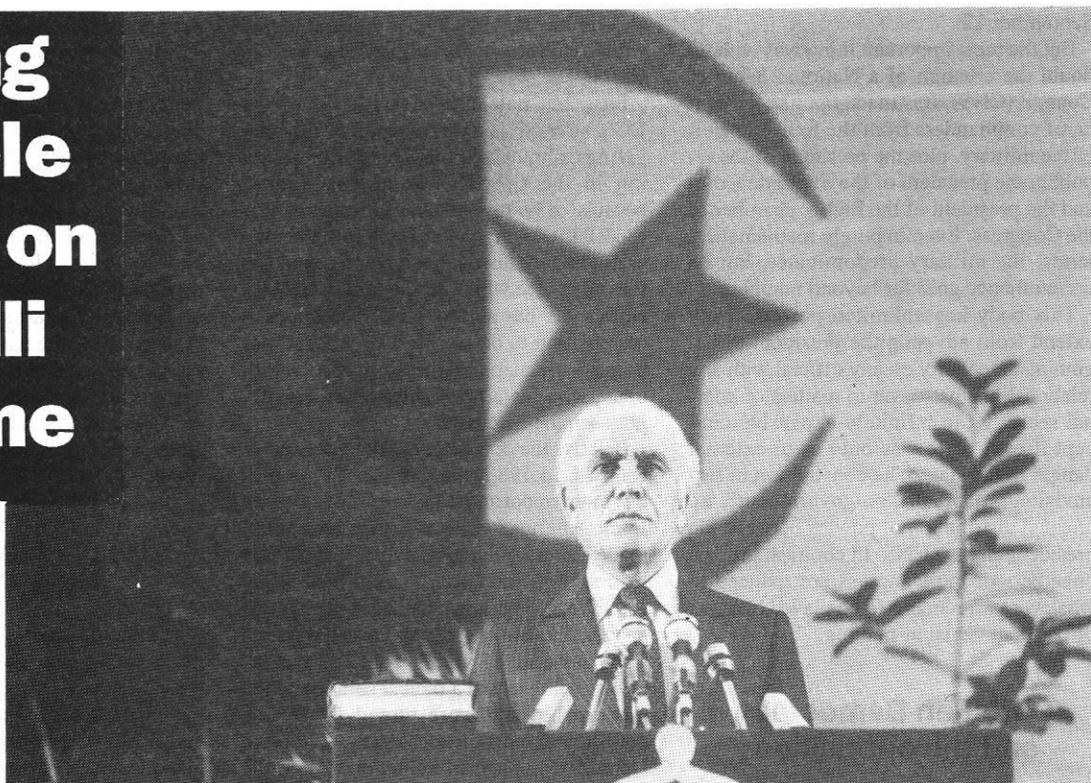
As if he'd suffered a severe attack of amnesia, Teitelbaum when asked about the balance sheet of the UP could only attribute to it the responsibility for its failure: "one sector of the UP, mixing up the stages, decided to speed through them, to go quickly to socialism. This was not possible in Chile at that time, and I believe that it even helped to nourish right-wing propaganda."

What's on the cards now? As we've seen, everyone desires a hitch-free transition and friendly relations with the military. This is for their own reasons — for instance, the CP wants recognition as a legal party. There is a broad consensus on the question. But the route to be followed resembles an equation with many unknowns. One of these is the tenacity of Pinochet and of his "bunker".

Another is the attitude that will be taken by the people's movement, and this could hold many surprises. As noted, since the end of August, a movement which had disappeared for two years has again taken to the streets, and the heavy cloak of fear seems to have lifted. The workers' movement is in recomposition with the refounding of the United Confederation of Workers (CUT) last August. The economic frustration of all those who live on the edge of survival and watch the newly rich beneficiaries of free enterprise display their wealth is one explosive charge; the democratic hopes and the simple desire to live of young people who have been the first to pay the high cost of repression is another. But, at the same time, the regime has left too many scars for people to easily throw themselves into adventurism. As in Argentina, the traumatic effects of repression weigh and will continue to weigh on the popular movement.

The vision of the demonstrators on the night of the plebiscite who, carried away in their joy, threw themselves into the arms of the *carabineros* to embrace them, the same police who would fire on them the next day, is a sobering picture. It is an image that should give rise to reflection. ★

Young people take on Chadli regime



FOR THE FIRST TIME since the military coup d'état on June 19, 1965, Algeria is under a state of siege and the army has fired on demonstrators in a number of cities. The brutality of the military repression is unimaginable for a population traditionally used to seeing the national media denouncing similar practices in Israel, South Africa and Chile.

In only six days, the national uprising of Algerian youth has already resulted in 500 deaths (176 according to official sources), hundreds of wounded and hundreds of arrests. These figures illustrate better than any analysis the absolute confirmation of political rupture between the mass of the people and the ruling class.

SAÏD AKLI

SINCE national independence, Algeria's National Liberation Front (FLN) rulers have never been so seriously shaken up by such an immense mass movement. Admittedly, this is not the first time in the ten years of President Chadli Bendjedid's regime that young demonstrators have shouted "Chadli, murderer!", or violently attacked symbols of the regime, of wealth and of shortages. But past demonstrations have never reached the scope of a national uprising.

After the confrontations in the Berber heartlands of Kabylia and the social struggles of 1979-80, the Chadli regime set itself the objective of breaking up all social opposition with a combination of repression and promises of a "better life". It has partially succeeded by isolating Kabylia, snuffing out the renaissance of the trade-

union movement and putting an end to the student agitation. At the end of 1982, it even allowed itself the luxury of breaking the momentum of the fundamentalist movement after earlier having used it against the "communist threat".

But it has never totally succeeded in completely smothering social opposition. Numerous confrontations between demonstrators and the forces of order regularly indicated the new political relationship of forces that were being established between the government and the masses.

Since 1982, Algiers, Oran and Kabylia have seen school student demonstrations on a number of occasions, which have often ended up in violent battles with the police. In 1983, the government's decision to demolish the shantytowns surrounding the big cities and to use force to send the in-

habitants back to their regions of origin, led to very violent and traumatic confrontations, with mass demonstrations in Algiers, Annaba and Constantine. In April 1985, the inhabitants of the historic neighbourhood of the Algiers' Kasbah were violently attacked by the police during six consecutive nights for protesting against their murderously unhealthy living conditions and the lack of water. November 1986 saw a student strike for better living conditions in the university's halls of residence. Thanks to brutal repression, this was transformed into a veritable youth uprising in Constantine and later in Sétif. The ferocity of the confrontations, the attacks against symbols of the government, the ransacking of big stores and distribution of food to the people very much resembled what has been taking place now for a week in Algiers and elsewhere.

In the last few years, football stadiums have become the venue for mass rallies, with supporters regularly shouting out socio-political slogans.

Peaceful demonstrations met police brutality

In February this year, the overzealousness of cops who were policing the Oran stadium provoked counter-violence from young people, leading to prolonged battles in the town's streets. In July 1988, the people of the small mining town of Ouenza on the Tunisian border, who were peacefully demanding water, came up against the traditional brutality of the police. Their demonstration was turned into a veritable riot, with the offices of the mayor, the party and the union being set ablaze.

A complete list of such confrontations would take up a lot of space because they have touched every region of the country. These popular demonstrations in general begin with basic social demands, but police brutality and the arrogance of the government systematically transforms them into very violent confrontations, where young people are always in the vanguard of the counter-attacks. The government has always succeeded in reestablishing order with a stick and carrot approach. First, by imprisoning hundreds of youth, quickly condemned in parodies of trials. Secondly, by temporarily satisfying the social demands that have been raised, either by undating the local market with current consumer goods, increasing the amount of drinking water or by distributing a few homes accompanied by a blast of publicity. But, in spite of the return to calm, each confrontation adds its weight to the profound process of political rupture between the masses and the Chadli regime.

Government revealed in its true colours

No-one can any longer doubt the bourgeois nature of this government. What remains of its populist ideological mask, less and less inclined towards socialism, leaves no more illusions. Each time such confrontations break out, they are followed very sympathetically by people in other regions. But after the success of the repression, the same lesson returns like a leitmotiv on a mass scale: the need to coordinate the protest movements. This lesson is not only understood by revolutionary militants. It is systematically and consciously expressed on a mass scale because the isolation and dispersal of the mobilizations is the main strength of the repression.

It is in this sense that October 1988 is only the result of a long process of apprenticeship in street demonstrations and confrontations against the forces of order by young people who, mostly born after 1962 [the end of the war of independence], have lived for a quarter of a century in a climate where all social opposition and democratic expression have been stifled.

The uprising of Algerian youth condenses all the accumulated lessons and experiences of recent years. Its strength lies mainly in its rapid extension to various districts of the capital, Algiers, and then to a whole series of other cities such as Oran, Annaba, Sidi Bel Abbes, Mostaganem, Blida and so on. Never has such a movement of popular protest been so widespread, developing into a genuine national uprising whose violence is only equalled by its spontaneity.

True to its tradition, the government sees the hand of "conspirators" everywhere, who are supposed to have been behind the organization and the coordination of the uprising. But the only guiding force behind this forceful and spontaneous popular up-

rising is the generalized disaffection to be found in every region of the country against shortages, the high cost of living, the stink of a corrupt system and the black market, the arrogant wealth of the *nouveaux riches*, the arbitrariness and violence of the police, and so on.

The Chadli regime has multiplied the reasons for mass discontent and exacerbated social contradictions. At the beginning of the 1970s, when the price of a barrel of oil reached close to \$40 and the dollar was beating all records, it had considerable currency reserves and resources available. But it wasted all this wealth with a short-term economic policy, abandoning efforts for industrialization and job creation and squandering public money on prestige construction projects, unproductive imports and giving a face-lift to buildings in the big cities. The regime completely failed to foresee the turn in the economic situation and the collapse of the hydrocarbon market.

February 1986 caught the government completely unawares, and the international economic crisis erupted suddenly into the daily lives of Algerians. The austerity that had been justified under the previous president, Boumediene, for boosting industrialization and the economic development of the country, was denounced by the Chadli regime with its promises of a "better life". But, very quickly, austerity reappeared with a much clearer class content and in an even more severe form because it had no economic counterpart. It hit the mass of people even harder, coming as it did hand in hand with the first results of Chadli's *infatih* [opening up] policy, which resulted in increasing the considerable accumulated wealth of the regime's dignitaries, private entrepreneurs and speculators of all stripes.

Wealth gap widened under Chadli regime

The ongoing campaign in favour of "business freedom" had not attracted private investment to productive and job creating sectors, in spite of its presentation as the nation's ultimate resort in preparation for the end of the oil boom and for overcoming the bureaucratic ossification of the state sector. The "saviours of the nation" remained basically attached to easy pickings and speculative practices that allowed them to accumulate considerable fortunes in a record time, which they ostentatiously spent on deluxe goods. This increase in wealth, characteristic of the Chadli epoch, contrasts more and more explosively with the austerity imposed on the mass of the people. The *infatih* promoted a price explosion and a flourishing black market. Shortages came back, wages had been frozen for several years, workplaces stopped taking on labour and began to make labour cuts and youth unemployment grew in line with a population increase that is one of the fastest-growing in the world

(850,000 births a year for 23 million inhabitants).

This austerity was especially hard for the large numbers of young people (75% of the population is under 25) born after independence and increasingly demanding in terms of their social aspirations. With the passing years, they realized that the Chadli regime offered them no future. As regards education, 55% of young people are excluded at diploma level; only 10% succeed in passing the *baccalaureate* exams. Jobs for young people are increasingly rare and there is almost no chance for them to find lodgings — without mentioning all the other legitimate needs of young people at the end of the twentieth century.

Youth in vanguard of the confrontations

Certainly, Chadli's *infatih* policy gave the illusion of social success in various trades, but many people realize that this was only an illusion that left everyone barely scraping a living. It is young people — excluded from the education system, unemployed and on the street or making some sort of living, and oscillating between a fascination for the model of Western consumerism or trying to fill an ideological gap by looking for a solution in Islam — who were systematically in the vanguard of the confrontations.

The situation at the beginning of September was particularly tense, exacerbated further by the effects of massive food price rises, an even greater lack of drinking water and the growing shortages of basic products. It was also characterized by various corruption scandals that the press tried hard to play down a month after rumours about them had become public. In this tense social climate, various rumours were circulating from the beginning of September of a call for a general strike at the end of the month and the situation of the popular protest movements around the country.

Chadli made a hard-hitting speech on September 19 against speculation, the fleecing of consumers, currency trafficking and incompetence. But he also attacked all those opposed to his liberal economic reform, which increased the already high voltage of social tension.

This speech had the opposite effect to that expected by his promoters. It was seen rather as a provocation against the mass of the people, given that the social ills that Chadli denounced were the product of his *infatih* policy, and the fact that in the field of political incompetence nobody could beat him for the gold medal in every category.

From this point, a small spark was sufficient to set off an explosion. Leaving aside its national breadth, the novelty of this popular uprising comes from the fact that it was the working class that provided the spark.

In November 1986, the fuse was lit by a student strike that was brutally repressed. The solidarity movement quickly extended

to students all over Constantine, to school students and then to all the other young people excluded from the education system who headed up some of the most violent street battles. Two days later, the uprising spread to Sétif in a similar form.

This really rattled the government, who then declared that they were aware of the explosive problem of youth unemployment and would immediately propose some projects to deal with it. But this revolt of the youth in the east of the country did not find a consistent political echo inside the workers' and mass movements. However, the massive repression was the impetus for a political broadening of the democratic movement into important sectors of the intelligentsia and favoured the political renaissance of the student movement. The new term in October 1987 was marked by a quasi-general strike of students against the selection procedures for university, which gave birth to a national coordination of their autonomous committees.

New willingness to fight among workers

The process of recomposition of workers' combativity, on the other hand, was much slower. The strikes by university teachers, hospital doctors and the pilots from Air Algérie were a sort of bridge between the mobilizations of students and intellectuals and the entry onto the scene of the decisive sectors of the working class. Mobilizations for the revival of trade-union branches indicated a new confidence among workers from 1987 on.

But the most significant indicator of this upsurge of combativity among workers came in February 1988 in Saïda, a small



town where a factory strike extended to the whole industrial zone, something that had never happened before. The strikers marched on the centre of the town where they succeeded in forcing the local authorities to hold a general assembly for a public discussion of their demands for wage rises.

The second important indicator of this remobilization came with a strike at a decisive workers' stronghold, the industrial vehicles complex of the SNVI at Rouiba, comprising 10,000 workers. They had previously staged a general strike in July, the first since the repression of 1982. The strikers, demanding a redistribution of "benefits", even tried to go into the local town of Rouiba but changed their minds because of fear of the repression. After a maintenance workers' strike at Algiers airport came up against repression in the week of September 17, it was again metalworkers at SNVI in Rouiba who were behind a strike wave at the end of the month that detonated the week of national uprisings by the youth.

The SNVI strike rapidly extended to other workplaces in the Rouiba-Reghaïa industrial zone, with strikers clashing with anti-riot squads. In the same period, strikes broke out in other cities and in the capital, Algiers — in particular that of the postal workers on October 1 and 2. This wave of workers' strikes, the biggest since the 1981-82 repression, prompted a government/party/union meeting where measures were announced to protect workers' buying power, get basic necessities into the shops, control prices and fight inflation and speculation.

But this response to the generalized social discontent expressed by the strike wave — which had been presented by *El Mudjahid* [the FLN's newspaper] on October 5 as just a regular meeting with no allusion to the workers' struggles — came too

late. On the night of October 4, the young people of Bab el Oued in Algiers took up the workers' challenge, and the following morning they began, in the streets of the capital, the week of the national youth uprising. A spontaneous uprising of outraged young people with no future. An uprising whose violence was only equalled by its spontaneity, in spite of the attempts to politically take it over by Islamic fundamentalists that began at prayer meetings on Friday, October 7.

The bloody military repression of this national uprising will mark popular consciousness for a long time to come. The military government was unveiled in all its savagery. It has shown that it will stop at nothing to safeguard the bourgeois order. Whatever the outcome of this bloody week, a decisive political turning point has begun in Algerian society. President Chadli's mediocre television performance, where he vaguely promised a plan of political reforms after a week of bloody confrontations, will resolve none of the basic problems raised by such a mass uprising. For some time already, the mass of the people have lost any illusions they may have had regarding the bourgeois and anti-social nature of the Chadli regime.

Cruel lack of political leadership

Now, they understand that the solution to their social problems means the overthrow of this bloodthirsty regime. There is one main lesson to draw from this week of uprisings. It is that the violence, the courage and the spontaneity of the youth, the fact that there were simultaneous demonstrations in a number of cities, and the link between the working class and young people are not sufficient in themselves if there is no political expression of workers' and peoples' self-organization. The youth uprising cruelly lacked such a political leadership, and the revolutionary left will have to draw out all the consequences of this. ★



“The regime has not only lost its credibility, but also its historical legitimacy”

TENSIONS BETWEEN the various republics and nationalities which make up the Yugoslavian federation have reached new heights with the recent violent demonstrations in Montenegro, one of the many Yugoslavian republics. The demonstrations are linking up with those taking place among the Serbian populations in the Vojvodina region, which has up until now remained relatively calm.

Like Kosovo, where since last July thousands of Serbs and Montenegrins have demonstrated, Vojvodina is an autonomous province of the Serbian republic. Both areas enjoy a large measure of economic and juridical independence, similar to that of the six Yugoslavian republics. A new constitution is now being drawn up, and it is in this context that the Serbian population of these two provinces is demanding to be integrated within the Serbian Republic.

One of the key factors in this resurgence of nationalism is the economic divide between different regions of the country — the standard of living varies strikingly from one part of the country to another — and it is no surprise to see class questions raised alongside demands of a more purely nationalist character. Unsurprisingly, the leader of the Serbian Party, Slobodan Milosevic, has shown himself quite willing to play on Serbian national sentiment, by stating that he is ready to take certain politically turbulent regions like Slovenia in hand. Recent events suggest that this sort of statement may be playing with fire.

This week's national Central Committee meeting, called specifically to discuss Yugoslavia's growing ethnic and economic crises, resolved little and sparked off a new round of mass demonstrations by Serbian nationalists and workers.

It is in this tumultuous context that the July trial of four young Slovenians arrested last May took place, indicted on the pretext of having “revealed military secrets” (see *IV 144*, June 27, 1988). Convicted by a military tribunal, the four have appealed and have been released on bail.

As soon as the arrests had taken place, an ad hoc human rights defense committee — the Committee for Justice — was set up, and it has mobilized thousands of Slovenians in defense of the four.

Ariane Merri spoke to Marko Hren, Braco Rotar and Tomaz Mastnak who are currently touring Europe for this Committee.

CAN YOU tell us the major issues at stake in the trial held in Ljubljana?

TM: In order to understand the Ljubljana trial, you have to take into account the political and economic developments that have taken place in our country since 1984. In very general terms, there are two political tendencies in Yugoslavia. The first is a movement towards democratization and modernization, and the second is a counter-tendency that wants to preserve the status quo, reproduce this system, and ensure that those who have more or less been in power since 1945 stay there.

The first of these tendencies, towards democratization, is being expressed primarily in Slovenia, in the north of Yugoslavia, but it is not limited to this region. The other is, for the moment, dominant in Serbia, in the south. So we can talk about a north-south division of the country in which the south — ideologically and politically speaking more conservative and more orthodox in the sense of the Bolshevik tradition — dominates the north, which is more developed.

When we speak of the democratization of our country, the first point to remember is that we are talking about a movement from below. It is the independent self-organization of our society, the result of independent initiatives and of independent social movements that have begun to put pressure on the political system to force it to modernize, to become more tolerant and more democratic.

The forces for democratization include both independent initiatives and certain Slovenian political structures. Among the latter, the important place held by the Slovenian Socialist Youth Alliance (SSYA) must be noted. Sometimes, we describe it as civil society's representative in the political system. It plays a mediating role between the social movements and the political system, where political decisions are made.

But the Slovenian Communist Party has also begun to modernize itself. It has become more liberal, it is trying to rationalize its activities, it sees itself as an advocate of social change, of a more liberal economy, more independent political and economic decision-making processes, and it is ready to conduct a dialogue with society. This was not the case ten years ago.

On the other side, there is this conservative force that has lost all political and ideological credibility. They are incapable of mobilizing any sort of social support. Their only activity is to assure themselves of the support of the repressive state apparatus. They hide behind the army and the police. However, it isn't the police that maintain law and order, so much as the army.

This has been the case since 1984, but it has been even more clear since 1986, the year of the SSYA's Congress, where what could be called an “alternative” political program was adopted. The army plays a decisive role: it is the most inclined to strug-



gle against this democratic movement developing in Slovenia and other parts of the country. We can speak of a direct conflict between democratic forces and the army, which has become the guardian of the status quo. The trial is nothing more than one more event in the ongoing counter-offensive of the army and conservative forces.

Let's go over the facts. There was a meeting of the Military Council in Belgrade. This body has a consultative power, it can advise the president of how to act in case of a war or grave danger, but it is not a political organ. In the course of this meeting last March, the Military Council adopted a declaration stating that a counter-revolution was taking place in Slovenia. This was obviously meant as a political declaration, and, as a result, the army began to discuss some practical means of repressing this so-called counter-revolution.

The Central Committee of the League of Yugoslavian Communists (LCY) met secretly in Belgrade two weeks after the meeting of the Military Council, and the secretary general of the Slovenian CP tried to refute these accusations. He polemicized against the Military Council, revealing in the course of his speech some of the procedures that had been used: a special delegation from the army's high command had been sent to the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Ljubljana to ask whether the police could control the situation if the army were to arrest some people on account of their democratic activities.

These and other details came out in Milan's speech...the minutes were made public, I don't know how. But the fact is that since the beginning of May, there have not only been rumors circulating in Slovenia that the army was getting ready to inter-

vene, but also photocopies of Milan Ku-

nate the various political and social groups fighting repression. The Committee has a huge number of affiliates and individual members — at the moment there are over 1,000 affiliated organizations and more than 70,000 individuals making about 100,000 people, mostly but not entirely from Slovenia.

When we talk about affiliated groups, you have to understand that it is very heterogeneous. On the one hand we have groups coming out of the social movements, and, on the other hand, we also have rank-and-file trade-union or Communist Party groups. The Committee includes students, workers, intellectuals, professional organizations, religious people, cultural groups, newspapers, and so on. It is the first time since the war that the Church has taken a clear political position. What we are dealing with here is an organization that represents the whole of society. All classes, all layers of Slovenian society are taking part in this. It is a democratic movement embracing the entire nation.

The Committee has mostly concentrated on analyzing the numerous violations of the constitution and of due process that took place throughout the inquiry and the trial, and it tried to aid the four defendants, now convicted. Among the activities of the group, there are regular meetings of the leadership or coordinating body — they meet at least once a day, sometimes twice. There are also the plenary sessions, with hundreds of people taking part, which are held at least once a week. And the demonstrations. For example, on June 26 in Ljubljana the biggest demonstration since the Second World War was held, attracting over 40,000 people.

The second important demonstration organized by the Committee happened on the anniversary of Yugoslavian independence,

can's secret speech being passed hand to hand. It was during this period of fear and anxiety last April and May that the arrests occurred. They were seen by the Slovenian population, as well as by other democratic forces, as the first step towards the restoration of "order" by force, and as a direct attack on democratization in Slovenia. This is why so many people were ready to resist this attempt to solve political and social problems by repressive means.

Three days after the arrests, a Committee for Justice was set up to coordi-

July 4. This date is generally celebrated by the authorities, but this year besides the official ceremony there was another, an alternative. And while the official parade drew a few hundred individuals, more than 10,000 people attended the one called by the Committee. And, especially important, the Committee had organized its alternative in collaboration with veterans of the national liberation struggle. This is the first time that the tradition of national resistance has made common cause with the democratic movement. Ordinarily, it has been used against the partisans of democratic reforms, who have been presented as enemies of tradition. It is important to point this out, because it shows that the regime has lost not only its credibility, but also its historical legitimacy.

■ **What was the position of the Slovenian authorities on the trial?**

MH: After the legal violations and the arrogance shown by the military tribunal during the trial, it was clear to everyone that the latter wasn't based on any true judicial arguments, that it was nothing but a political trial. That's why the Committee kept on about the question of legality and of due process, why we demanded a public trial, the chance for the defendants to be tried in their own language, and so on.

Then, when we found out about all the documents mentioned earlier, we began to spotlight their contents, exposing not military secrets, as they might have wanted to make people believe, but the political significance they held. The Committee tried to force the president of the Slovenian republic to make a public pronouncement on the document, which he did not do.

We put the question to him: is this document constitutional or not? His first response was that he couldn't say anything about it, he wasn't competent to do so, saying that only the president of Yugoslavia had the authority to make declarations about military documents, as he is also the commander-in-chief of the armed forces.

So we reformulated our question by basing ourselves on an article in the constitution saying that each citizen of the republic is the guardian of the constitution, which is also valid for the president. On that basis we asked him to give us his opinion on the document.

The next day, he sent us his response to our second demand, which was to say that he would never answer our question seriously — it was not timely because it would put the Slovenian people in serious danger and himself in conflict with the federal authorities.

Reading between the lines, his answer can be interpreted as follows: "Dear friends, it is anti-constitutional, but this isn't the right time to say so as it could provoke a conflict with the military, possibly escalating to an armed intervention." For us, this is evidence that the document is completely unconstitutional since it cedes to the army powers it should have only in

case of war or in "abnormal conditions," which can only be established by the president of Yugoslavia, by civil authority. The army can't do this itself.

■ **According to you, then, the political crisis in Yugoslavia is such that it could imply a showdown with the army?**

BR: The army's role in socialist countries is closely linked to the very nature of "existing socialist" regimes. I believe that this specific role developed out of the system of war communism established by Stalin, where there was no separation whatsoever between the political and military spheres. Military intervention could always discipline the population. That is equally true for Yugoslavia.

We're dealing with a highly militarized political regime. Almost all leaders are also in the army or the police. Tacitly, the army has the ability to intervene in social life. Some articles of the constitution, like some points of law, leave open the possibility for military intervention. A regional state of siege can be declared, anyone can be arrested on suspicion of offences against the state. And the limits of these laws are ill-defined, they can be implemented unconditionally, depending on the circumstances.

■ **Is the army ready to take power?**

TM: Society and the political system are already so militarized in our country that the army doesn't need to intervene directly. It is already present at every level of political and social life. As it is now, if martial law were declared, the army would take responsibility for the situation. Today it has the power, but not the responsibility it would have in the context of a military coup d'etat.

What we can point to is the army's attempt to intervene more directly in the case of Slovenia, which has never happened before in Yugoslavia. It would be a new and more advanced stage of militarization of society, and politicization of the military. And any step in that direction would have as its consequence the further destabilization of the country, the destruction of the economy, the further disappearance of political life and an aggravation of the situation.

■ **So, will things stay as they are?**

BR: The idea that the status quo is being maintained is a bit of an illusion, because this status quo is a balancing act that has gone on for decades, but now there aren't the resources to sustain it any longer. Attempts to keep it going are out of the question now.

I believe there are two quite similar currents: one in Serbia with Milosevic and Serbian populism, which one could call "open" Serbianism; and the other "Yugoslavist" current, which is in fact nothing more than disguised Serbianism, since it is mostly led by Serbs. The federation and its institutions have a very marked Serbian character.

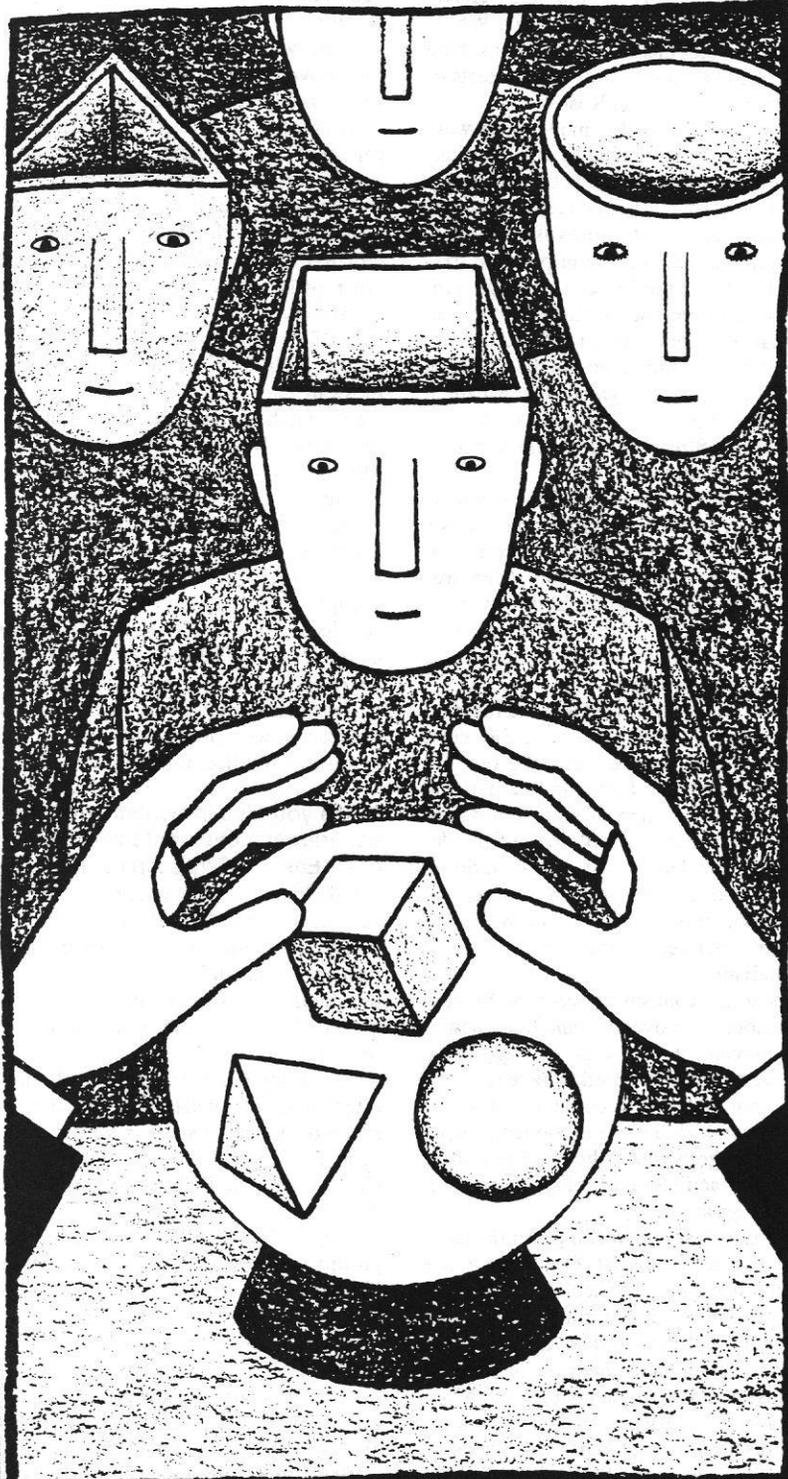
MH: All military officers are also Party

leaders. All civil authority is also military authority, so they don't need to take power, they have it already. This combination was perfectly symbolized by Marshal Tito, and following his death a movement for defining the respective roles of the military and the Communist Party and reinforcing civilian control came on the scene. Thus, it was proposed that the minister of defence be a civilian, and not a military man, which is the case for us.

BR: We believe that the separation of the political and military spheres would contribute to resolving the economic crisis in Yugoslavia.

For instance, a car factory in Maribor manufactures a certain amount of its production for the army, but the army declared that it could not pay. The Slovenian government could find no better solution than to propose a new tax to refinance the army so it could pay what it owed! The deputies voted down the proposal, then the government put pressure on mayors so that fifteen days later it succeeded in putting a new demand to assess a higher level of "solidarity" for the least developed regions of the country: Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia and so on.

MH: It is these new social movements,



the Slovenian Youth Alliance and the weekly *Mladina*, which have been working the hardest for this demilitarization of our society and of our country.

■ Antagonistic nationalisms in every republic of the Yugoslav federal state are on the rise...Are the independent movements capable of overcoming divisions that in the final analysis could serve the ends of the central authorities?

TM: What we're dealing with in Yugoslavia is two types of economic and political development, one Slovenian and the other Serbian. Many people don't understand what is happening in Serbia. We've attended several mass demonstrations there in the last few months, but also protests of the Serbian minority in Kosovo.

These Serb nationalist movements were instigated and encouraged by an authoritarian Serb leadership formed after Milosevic took power last autumn. Since that time, he has continually tried to provoke a climate of emotional patriotism and political irrationality. One of the first acts of his government was to conduct a purge of Serbian newspaper editors in order to have the media under his thumb. And the media began to lead a campaign against the Albanian population in Kosovo, and against Slovenians, calling Slovenian democratic forces counter-revolutionary.

This mass movement has some elements in common with a fascist movement. It is a right-wing populist movement, a combination of Stalinist or neo-Stalinist features with fascist characteristics. In their demonstrations, the people call for arms, for violence, they demand a military intervention, for the army to come in.

On the other hand, we have the mass — or nationalist — movement in Slovenia, but the differences between the two are very significant. In Slovenia, the national question is only a part of a broader democratic movement, it is only one of the demands of this democratic upheaval. So, in talking about a nationalist renewal in Yugoslavia, it is important to draw the distinctions between these two types of nationalism.

Concerning contacts between the Slovenian democratic movement and other democratic movements in the rest of Yugoslavia, well, we have always tried to have relations with them. We are in contact with small groups identical to those in Slovenia, especially in Zagreb where there are groups of feminists, pacifists and ecologists, and others in Belgrade.

But in the last two years, given the campaign mounted against Slovenia, it has been more and more difficult to find a common ground around certain things. We were very disappointed to discover that Milosevic even had supporters in some of the most well known democratic circles of Belgrade. It's very difficult to have a rational discussion with them about the question of Kosovo or the Slovenian problem,

because there is such emotional tension.

MH: Many of the independent movements that have appeared in Yugoslavia were organized in Slovenia, not only in Ljubljana, but also in other cities like Maribor, and even in little towns. Here there are generally environmental groups that come together around concrete ecological problems, such as nuclear power plants or pollution. Two feminist groups were formed in Ljubljana, along with gay groups, groups of pacifists and others.

All of these movements were organized under the cover of the Youth Alliance, or existing student or cultural associations that made it possible for them to organize legally.

At the beginning, in 1983-84, the alternative movement in Ljubljana constituted a single group which later split into seven, each on a different theme. In Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, there is also a group that was founded three years ago. It had trouble legalizing its activities, and stayed underground for a while. As in Slovenia, the alternative groups existing in Croatian towns are mostly active around environmental questions.

The Slovenian groups have very good relations with the Croatian ones, especially those in Zagreb. We're in the same boat, we've got the same worries. In other republics — like Bosnia, Serbia, Macedonia, or Montenegro — there aren't any organized alternative groups, only individuals.

The exception is Vojvodina, where some alternative groups — especially pacifists and ecologists, but also human rights groups — have come together under the auspices of the youth organization, which is very liberal. They were very active two years ago when they set up a whole campaign against the construction of a new nuclear power plant, but their activity seems to have died down a bit recently.

■ Are you also in contact with the independent movements which exist in other Eastern European countries?

TM: In terms of the relationship between democratic or independent movements in Yugoslavia and similar movements in Eastern Europe, it has to be said that it was the pacifist movement in Ljubljana that played the central role in setting up these relations.

This group has worked painstakingly to establish contact with the independent pacifist movements in all of the Eastern European countries, with the Hungarians, the Czechs, with the Poles and East Germans. And we are beginning to relate — at least in terms of written communication — to groups in the Soviet Union. We believe that these contacts are essential for a potential democratization of the Eastern bloc, and for any real democratic integration of Europe.

We understood that it would be very hard to set up an East-West dialogue, but we also realized that it would be even more difficult to set up an East-East one, and

we've tried to work on it since 1985-86. We've organized forums and seminars together, sometimes legally and sometimes not. We are very glad to see that these independent movements are getting stronger and stronger.

■ Getting back to the independent movements in Yugoslavia itself, are these relationships between groups systematic in nature?

TM: We get in touch with any initiatives that arise, any time, anywhere. But the authorities do their best to prevent any horizontal coordination between independent structures, whether these have a social, cultural, political, or labor focus. The powers that be encourage the division of Yugoslavia into hostile groupings, and at the same time want to artificially unite the country by force.

MH: The best example of this social segregation is the wave of miner's strikes in the last few years (see *IV* 118, April 20, 1987). It is hard to believe, but although these strikes broke out in every region of Yugoslavia, the miners had absolutely no ties with one another. Not one common structure ever saw the light of day.

BR: Between an atomized people, no real communication takes place. And insofar as the Committee for Justice has succeeded on this level, it is an important precedent. It has created a space for confident relations between individuals, destroying the ordinary distrust inspired by repression and informers. It's a completely new thing made possible because in Slovenia we are active publicly.

MH: That the independent movements of different republics share the same ideas and take initiatives together is very important, since the authorities always try to isolate each republic in order to pass movements off as nationalist. It's a very common tactic: any movement that appears in a given republic is called nationalist, anti-Yugoslavian, separatist and so on. So, it is very important that there are movements in Yugoslavia saying that it is a common struggle for democratization of political life in the country as a whole.

■ In Yugoslavia today, is the republic in danger of exploding?

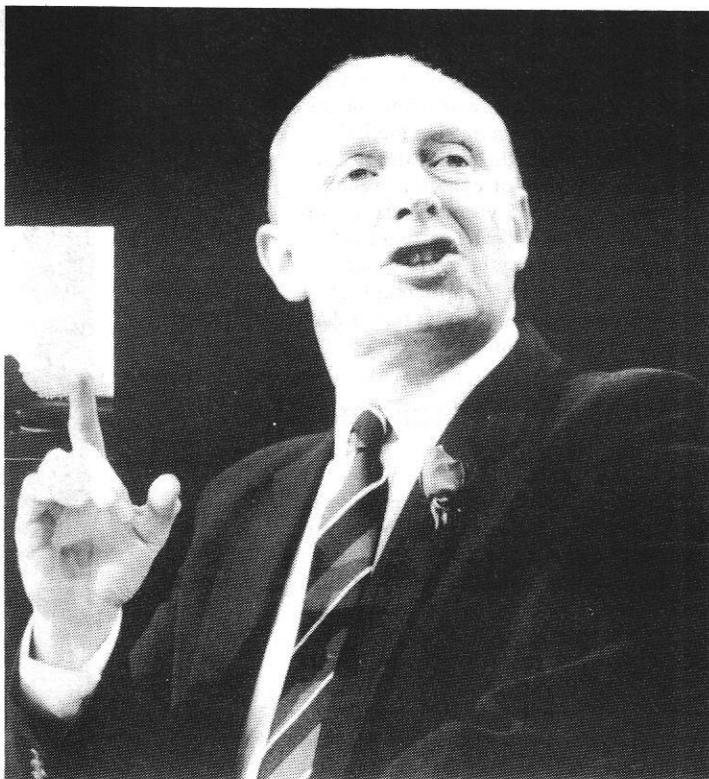
TM: I would like to repeat once more that the political and social forces that are being attacked by official authorities and accused of wanting to destroy Yugoslavia are the only forces in a position to build real links between the different republics in the country on a democratic basis. And those who claim that they are the sole guarantee of the continued existence of Yugoslavia — the army for example — are destroying it.

Any unification by violent means would mean an escalation of conflicts that could in the very near future lead to the destruction of the country. But, unfortunately, this seems to be too difficult for some political forces to grasp. ★

Labour Party conference: No easy time for Kinnock

THE DECISION of Tony Benn and Eric Heffer to run in the Labour Party leadership elections against Neil Kinnock and Roy Hattersley was never seen as a contest primarily about votes. Rather, it was a political stand to attempt to stem the tide of new realism that seeks to change the whole nature of the British labour movement.

THERESA CONWAY & PETE FIRMIN



WITH Margaret Thatcher part-way through her third term of government and pressing on with her attacks on the working class and its organizations, the leadership of the labour movement (trade unions and Labour Party) continues to refuse to lead any counter-attack, and is indeed adapting to her policies under the guise of "new realism".

The aim of Labour leader Neil Kinnock is to make the Labour Party acceptable to the ruling class as an alternative party of capitalist government to the Tories. He is prepared to drop all pretence at socialist policies and disassociate himself from all struggles against the employers and government. Since his election to the leadership in 1983, he has set himself the task of pushing back the gains made by the left on both policy and internal democracy in the period after 1979. The latest phase of this is a two-year Policy Review, designed to totally rewrite present policy in advance of the next general election. In his keynote speech at Labour Party conference Kinnock declared, "We have got to make market forces work better than the Tories".

Generally speaking, Kinnock has the support of all the major union leaders for this project. By selling out most of the major struggles since Thatcher came into government, they have not only assisted her in her aim of restructuring capitalism, but also spread the view that there is (at best) no alternative to waiting for a future Labour government. In order to achieve this the movement has to "moderate" its poli-

cies. Yet some unions still retain (at least verbally) a commitment to certain of the policies that Kinnock would like to drop. Thus, although the recent Trade Union Congress showed a continued move to the right, it did decide to oppose the government's Employment Training (ET) schemes and expel the electricians' union, the EETPU, now quite clearly a business union (see IV 149).

A homage to market forces

Labour Party conference began with the leadership declaring that the EETPU's membership of the Party could not be challenged, a statement no union leader was prepared to question. Most unions supported Kinnock's document "Democratic Socialism: Aims and Values", with its homage to market forces and the bland Policy Review papers that committed the Labour Party to little but "individual rights". Virtually every union voted for Kinnock and his deputy leader, Roy Hattersley, against the left in the leadership election. However, at the end of the day certain union leaders — in particular the general secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU) Ron Todd, upset what was meant to be Kinnock's showpiece conference. Todd, by no means particularly left wing, attacked the "modernizers" in a prepared speech at a fringe meeting, and became the key opponent of dropping unilateral disarmament

from Labour's policy, one of Kinnock's priorities in making Labour "respectable".

While the leadership won easily on most policy issues, it was defeated on several important questions: one woman on every short-list for parliamentary selection; for a national minimum wage and 35-hour week; opposition to ET schemes; and reaffirmation of unilateralism.

The decision on one woman on every short-list was opposed by the National Executive Committee explicitly on the basis that it would undermine short-lists of just one candidate, thus making it clear that this was a victory not only for women, but also on the question of Party democracy. The decisions on the minimum wage, 35-hour week and ET schemes were a warning shot fired at Kinnock by the unions — the TGWU in particular — about how far they were prepared to go. A motion calling for repeal of all the Tories' anti-trade union laws was passed with the leadership's support even though it contradicted the relevant section of the Policy Review and Kinnock's declared intentions. The message from some unions was: "we will support your leadership and most of your policies, but there are limits".

Result of leadership battle worse than expected

The results in the Labour leadership election were clearly worse than the left had hoped. Benn got 11.5% of the vote for leader and Heffer 9.5% in the deputy leader contest. Yet these raw figures do not give the whole picture. Estimates show that Benn and Heffer obtained the support of 25%-30% of those voting. In the newly

formed technicians' union, the MSF, Benn got 40% of the vote.

The leadership challenge acted as a focus for resistance to new realism, including for many militants outside the Labour Party. It meant that the policy debate was sharper in advance of conference than it had been for several years. It also meant that Kinnock had to beat a hasty retreat after publicly dropping the Party's commitment to unilateral disarmament in a television interview, when he felt in danger of losing trade-union support.

Left begins to organize seriously

The left in the Party began to organize in a way it had not done seriously for several years in terms of policy debates, taking the issues from these debates out to convince others of the need to support Benn and Heffer and linking up with struggles, such as the seafarers' strike. Where the left organized and fought seriously around the issues good results were achieved in the election. Certainly, it is the case that had there been no such challenge, the left would have been in an even weaker position after the Labour Party conference.

There were important weaknesses to the campaign. In particular, the ambivalence about whether to stand candidates against Kinnock and Hattersley meant that when the decisions were finally taken there was insufficient opportunity to take the debate into the trade unions. There was a reluctance on the part of the Benn/Heffer campaign to look beyond the union leaderships for support, taking the issues to the membership even if this meant a direct challenge to the bureaucracy. There were difficulties about the democracy of the campaign, with regional organizers being imposed on local campaigns with no discussion with them. These weaknesses are not particular to the Benn/Heffer campaign, but of the weaknesses of the Labour left. But coming out of Labour Party conference steps are clearly planned that will improve the situation.

The Campaign Group of Labour Members of Parliament (MPs) — of which Benn and Heffer are members — has launched "Campaign 89" on the basis of a twin approach: first, of campaigning within the party for socialist policies and elected representatives to carry them out; and, second, campaigning outside the Party together with other movements, "through the Socialist Conference network"¹, around such issues as the implementation of the poll tax² and Employment Training, and towards the development of alternative policies. It is pledged to take the debate on policy into the unions in a way that was not done this time — particularly around defence of unilateralism, economic policy and repeal of all anti-trade union laws. It is also committed to organizing national meetings of representatives of the regional

campaigns for socialism, trade-union broad lefts

While there is some discussion about the exact nature of these meetings, it is undoubtedly a sign that the Campaign Group intend to broaden their base over the next year and that they understand the need to turn to the unions. Although there has not been a clear decision to mount another leadership challenge in the Labour Party next year, this is being discussed openly. The conditions for this debate are much better than last year, because it is being discussed earlier, because it follows on from the positive challenge this year and, finally, because there are developments within the "soft left" that were not taking place a year ago.

This year's campaign could not be expected to turn around developments in the labour movement of the last five years, during which the left has failed to mount consistent resistance to Kinnock's project. But it has laid the basis for such a fight-back. Now that the left has begun to organize and put forward alternative policies, it would be a retreat to duck the fight for leadership.

Series of initiatives planned for 1989

The Socialist Conference itself, which unites activists inside and outside the Labour Party, plans a major programme of activity in 1989 including an Alternative Policy Review, an analysis of economic strategy, national and regional conferences of the left and separate conferences on the

poll tax, trade-union solidarity, Women for Socialism, Gorbachevism and other issues. These are intended not simply to be discussions of policy, but to promote action around the various issues. These initiatives, together with the Campaign Group's intention of fighting for elected representatives who will carry out socialist policies, provide a clear focus for the left in the coming year.

Undermining the sovereignty of conference

In terms of what happened at Labour's conference itself, through introducing a series of rule [constitutional] changes that had not been discussed in advance, the leadership have taken a gigantic step in undermining the sovereignty of conference and moving towards an individual membership party on the same lines as most European social-democratic parties. The most important of the rule changes are the

1. The Socialist Conference network has been organized through a series of national, regional and local meetings, sponsored among others by the Campaign Group of MPs and the Socialist Society, which has brought together the left both inside and outside the Labour Party to campaign for socialist policies. It is also sometimes referred to as the "Chesterfield Campaign", because it was in Tony Benn's Chesterfield constituency that the first national meeting was held.

2. A new local tax to be paid per head of the population, replacing the current system of local taxation on property. So, for example, three adults living in the same house will have to pay three poll taxes rather than, as at present, a single tax assessed on the value of their home. This is obviously going to hit poorest people the hardest, while giving yet another tax cut to the rich.

Illustration: Simon Rees





ones centralizing all membership applications and records, the decision that 20% of MPs have to nominate someone before they can mount a leadership challenge, the imposition of by-election candidates on local parties and suspending members under investigation. These are designed to produce a much more passive membership and will lead to an intensification of the witch hunt against the left. Further, it was made clear both during and after conference by Kinnock that decisions taken by the conference were fairly meaningless given the Policy Review.

Central battle over unilateral disarmament

A central battle over the next year will be maintaining the commitment to unilateral disarmament. Kinnock was always aware that this would be the most difficult battle to win, which is precisely why it has not been dealt with in the Policy Review so far. Although it was a serious defeat for Kinnock that conference voted to uphold this policy, his aim is to win at "stage two" of the Policy Review that will go to next year's conference. He and his supporters intend to use the preceding year to change the policy of key unions like the TGWU. In the meantime, Kinnock has made it clear that he will ignore conference decisions on this and everything else. This means that we have to look at the possibility of developing concrete campaigns for the implementation of these policies and to make sure the line is held at next year's conference.

Just as sections of the trade-union bureaucracy are reluctant to go all the way with Kinnock, a similar line is being developed by elements within the "soft left" who are beginning to recognize the way in which their support has been used by Kinnock to marginalize the left and push through policy changes.

The battle in the trade unions

While having no illusions in any of these forces, it is vital for the left to work with them around common objectives such as the defence of unilateralism, while trying to open up the fissures that these divisions between them and the leadership represent. They have to be challenged on their support for Kinnock in the leadership election and for the witch hunting of sections of the left, particularly supporters of the newspaper *Militant*. Kinnock himself has made clear that support for him as leader is inseparable from the policy issues.

The victories that were won at conference were won because of the support of the trade unions, especially the TGWU. One of the issues that will be up for voting at next year's conference and will dominate discussion over the next year is the relationship between the trade unions and the local Labour Party branches and the question of the block vote.

With the block voting system, the unions not only cast 92% of the votes at the conference, but also cast them en bloc. Thus, the TGWU's 1.25 million votes all go the same way, regardless of how big the divi-

sions are inside the union. Nor is decision-making in the unions always a model of democracy.

The Labour leadership and the media have begun a hue and cry against the block vote even though they had no quarrel with it when it was being used to re-elect Kinnock and push through the policy review. Kinnock may use the opportunity to change the Labour Party into one of individual membership, thus breaking the organic link with the unions that has existed since the Party's inception.

Offensive on trade-union democracy

The left must defend the link with the unions, but the way the block vote is used is undemocratic. It must be democratized by ensuring that members of unions decide on policy — through union conferences — before votes are cast and in such a way that minority and majority positions can be expressed.

This must be a consistent position regardless of whether or not votes are going in favour of the left. The local Party branches should have more say in decision making than at present, but there needs to be maximum discussion about the appropriate formula so that the left can unite around specific proposals.

It is essential to go onto the offensive over the question of trade-union democracy at the same time as taking the fight to defend and extend socialist policies into the unions.

This means linking up with, and giving a lead to the struggles of workers and showing the connection between the betrayals of these struggles by the bureaucracy and their support for Kinnock. What demands are raised and what organizational structure is best equipped to take up this battle have yet to be debated out, but the left must recognize now that this is one of the vital tasks confronting it.

The contradiction in Kinnock's strategy is that so long as he refuses to lead any kind of extra-parliamentary fight against Thatcher's policies he will not win the level of support among voters necessary to win a general election, and is left relying on either a new economic crisis or Tory own-goals to make the present government sufficiently unpopular. Without either of these the ruling class has no need of Kinnock.

The working class and oppressed have shown their willingness to resist Thatcherism despite receiving no support from the leadership of the labour movement. The strikes by workers at the Ford car company, postal workers and the seafarers, the campaigns against the attack on abortion and lesbian and gay rights (the Clause 28 campaign) bear witness to this.

The left's fightback against new realism has to be centred on giving a lead to such struggles. ★

Solidarity important for the victims of political trials

ANXIOUS to develop closer ties with the EEC, the Turkish rulers have to be sensitive to West European public opinion. For some years, a return to appearances of more or less normal parliamentary rule has been going on.

Nonetheless, the level of repression remains quite high, as is described in the following interview with Thomas Stolt, a member of a group of observers of the recent mass trial of members of the far left Devrimci Yol organization. We have translated it from the September 29 issue of the *Socialistische Zeitung*, the paper of the United Socialist Party, to which West German Fourth Internationalists belong.

WHAT WAS the nature of your group?

There were ten of us, all members of the Turkish solidarity movement from various big cities in West Germany, and thus not a delegation of prominent personalities or lawyers. This was deliberate, although we don't want to belittle the value of the other groups of observers.

■ Why did you make this trip to Turkey?

We wanted to express our solidarity with the thousands of political prisoners, as well as with their families and comrades, in one of the biggest mass trials. We wanted to put pressure on the military court, inasmuch as we sought to get publicity and collect materials and impressions for our solidarity work here in West Germany.

■ What trial did you attend?

We attended the central mass trial against the independent revolutionary movement, Devrimci Yol (Revolutionary Way) in Ankara, in which the 723 people got a chance to defend themselves for the first time after eight years of imprisonment in the harshest conditions. In this trial, the prosecution, the Turkish state, in addition to demanding many long sentences and life terms, called for 74 death penalties.

■ What is Dev Yol?

It was the biggest independent revolutionary liberation movement before the September 12, 1980, putsch in Turkey and in Turkish Kurdistan. Its members fought for the liberation of Turkey from oppres-

sion and exploitation by the imperialist powers and their accomplices in the country itself. They propagated socialist ideas, and partially put them into practice in the small city of Fatsa (23,000 inhabitants) up until the generals' putsch.

■ How many mass trials have there been in Turkey up until now, and which ones are going on now?

The overall number of political trials in Turkey is almost incalculable. Just against members of Dev Yol, there have been 23 mass trials in Turkey. Many of the mass trials against the PKK [Kurdish Workers' Party], the DDKD [Eastern Turkey Democratic Cultural Center], Kurtulus, the TDKP [Revolutionary Communist Party of Turkey], Rizgari [a left Kurdish nationalist group] and the MLSPB [Marxist-Leninist Armed Propaganda Unit] have already ended with long terms of imprisonment and many death sentences.

In addition, there have been many smaller trials throughout Turkey involving hundreds of people. While we were in Ankara, besides the central Dev Yol trial, there was a trial on the Mamak military base against the general secretary of the TKP/TIP [Turkish Communist Party/Turkish Workers' Party]. After my departure, several members of our group went to the Fatsa trial in Erzican, where eight more death sentences were handed down. Fourteen defendants were sentenced to life, and 307 to terms ranging from one to 20 years.

The newly founded Human Rights Association in Turkey estimates the number of political prisoners at present at 18,000. According to the Turkish Justice Ministry's

figures of March 6, 1988, between September 1978 and April 1988, 61,220 people were sentenced by military courts.

■ What do you know about the conditions in Turkish prisons?

They are almost worse than you could imagine. Despite all the official statements, people are still being tortured in prison. Former prisoners have told us that up until the last they were tortured, beaten, and in some cases held in solitary confinement for up to six years. Practically all the time they were given just enough medical attention to keep them alive. Many people have been murdered in the torture chambers of the police and military.

Just in the "procedures" for the Fatsa trial, 16 people died in prison, including the elected mayor of that city, Fikri Sönmez, as a result of torture or during torture. It is not true that Turkey is on the way to becoming bourgeois democracy. The destruction of the broad opposition in the country is being continued by the pseudo-parliamentary regime, in collaboration with the military. The newly established State Security Courts are operating with the same methods and goals as the military courts, which still exist despite the lifting of martial law.

■ What possibilities do the accused have to defend themselves? Are the rights of the defence restricted?

The defence in general has as good as no rights to defend its clients effectively. Defence lawyers are now, as before, being arbitrarily excluded from trials or refused contact with their clients, which anyway is only possible by telephone. Many of them have been, and continue to be, charged themselves after attempting to defend their clients. It is different for trials that have attracted international publicity, or where there is a "danger" of this happening. It is therefore urgent to attend such trials.

■ What effect did your visit have on the trial?

The regime in Turkey is afraid of publicity. Although we were not prominent observers, our presence at the opening of the defence case at the trial was urgently awaited. Our mere presence offered Turkish journalists greater possibilities to report on this mass trial. They all knew that the military would do anything to prevent a common defence speech by the accused. That is what happened. Relatives of the prisoners from all parts of the country were body-searched twice. Afterwards the relatives, a Swiss delegation and ourselves, in all about 400 people, took our places in concrete hall the size of a gymnasium on the Mamak military base. But no one in the hall could understand anything. The microphone was cut off. Then it was put at "whine level." A half hour passed like that. We all sat there frozen and powerless.

Some protests from the accused were met by the military prosecutor with a threat of "special treatment." Then a defence lawyer

asked in a clear voice for the microphone to be repaired. That was the point when we overcame our inhibitions. We jumped up and shouted in support of the defence lawyer's proposal and then chimed in with the accused, who also leaped up as if their bonds had been broken.

After minutes of persistent applause for the accused, the irritated judges had the armed soldiers who were there clear the hall. In the afternoon all the microphones were in order. Everyone could hear the defence speech, and they even had to publish parts of it in the papers the next day.

■ Were you molested?

After this scene, which the military did not expect, they tried to intimidate us, having us followed constantly by Turkish plainclothes police. They searched the hotel rooms of the Swiss delegation, and arrested their Turkish interpreter for 24 hours. After he was released, we met in the evening and they told us that the military would beat us up if we tried to support the defendants and their lawyers in the court by applauding. The interrogators had told them that in the hope of scaring us off.

Although we did not follow this "advice," nothing of the sort threatened actually happened, since these mass murderers and their politicians were too afraid of publicity.

■ So you carried out other actions in the court?

Yes. But the other visitors also, at the beginning and in the pauses in the hearings clapped for the defendants, and got up and shouted calls for the release of all the political prisoners. On the last day of our visit, we threw red carnations to the prisoners. In the situation that had developed, the military could not prevent that.

We were also obstructed by West German embassy officials in Ankara. The embassy was supposed to get permission for us to make tapes and take photographs in the court. They deliberately failed to do this. It was only when the press representative of the Greens parliamentary group arrived on the second day of the trial and intervened for us with the embassy that we got this permission straightaway.

■ At the beginning of the year, the

Turkish government signed and ratified the European and UN anti-torture conventions. Does this mean anything in practice?

These signatures are a farce. Everywhere in the prisons and police stations, people are being tortured just as before. In all the political trials, "evidence" extorted by torture has been used against the defendants — in fact, the indictments are based on such "evidence." It is precisely this practice that the convention strictly bans. A reference to this already ratified convention by a defence lawyer at the trial we attended was curtly dismissed with the remark that it had not yet been fully made public in Turkey.

■ Why are these mass trials being held before military courts?

After the lifting of martial law in Turkey in the summer of 1987, such courts no longer have any validity. According to Article 145 of the 1982 Constitution, military courts can only try civilian defendants in time of war. But neither the government nor the military are interested now in changing this situation, since the political opposition in the country has not yet been broken, in fact it is growing. Moreover, military courts are able to give sentences twice as severe as civilian courts.

■ How is the political opposition organized in Turkey?

There are associations, such as the Human Rights Association, the Teachers' Association, the Students' Association, and so on. These associations, however, are still operating illegally, since they have not been officially authorized by the government. The Human Rights Association was founded in 1986, for example, to demand respect for human rights in Turkey and to monitor the situation. The association today already includes 15 regional groups. Other regional groups are in the process of being organized in 10 provinces. The work is directed by people from various political currents.

They are organizing campaigns for a general amnesty for all persons prosecuted and jailed for political reasons, against torture, against the death penalty, for the abolition of military courts and, last but not least, they are supporting the prisoners and their families in every respect. All of these demands are also being supported by the solidarity movement in West Germany.

This visit made one thing clear for us. Solidarity here with the political prisoners in Turkey and in general with the struggle of the working class and other working people and with Kurdistan must be extended. I think that especially the West German working class, which is made up of various nationalities, and the unions have to be called on to make greater efforts in this respect.

Anyone who wants more information can contact the Türkei Informationsbüro, Hannover, Postfach 910843. (☎ 511/2102007.) ★





From civil rights to Irish freedom

WE NEED to learn the lessons of two decades of struggle. These are not lessons of despair. Our movement has won important victories and forced concessions from the British. But these have not been enough. No set of reforms will change the reality of British occupation nor the dependence of that rule on the preservation of unionist domination.

There can be no real civil liberty without national liberation. The solution to our struggle requires a united, independent Ireland. Our task today is to plot a strategy that will end the present stalemate and make this a reality.

More significant than the concessions forced from Britain are the defeats our movement has inflicted on it and the continuing decline in its ability to impose a stable imperialist rule. The civil rights struggle was given its impetus by the gradual decline of unionist industrial and political power. The mass struggle accelerated that decline. It smashed Stormont, fragmented the unionist monolith into squabbling sections and frustrated all the attempts to put Humpty Dumpty together again. Despite imperialist counterattacks, the British have not recovered from these body blows.

A study of our history does more than list single gains and losses. It also tells us much about methods of struggle. The 1969 pogroms by the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), B-Specials and the Loyalist mob brought the gun firmly back into Irish politics. The pogroms, and the unbroken line of state attacks since then, give a full justification for armed resistance.

This necessity, and the danger and sacrifice associated with the armed resistance, has led many republican militants to see it as the central element of the struggle. This is not the case. Armed attacks have helped to disperse British military power, imposed a significant cost on their occupation and imposed a need to move in force in nationalist areas. They have not recorded any victories. These victories have been recorded by the united political struggle of the mass of the population.

Mass mobilizations are not an alternative to force. They are a different kind of force. The masses advance either through the threat or the actuality of a mass uprising. The British counter-measures — the pogroms, internment, Bloody Sunday — pushed far enough, would have brought them victory at the cost of hundreds of dead. But every time that the British launched a new offensive the sleeping giant of the working class in the South began to stir. After internment and Bloody

1968 IS THE YEAR of student revolts, of workers' occupations, of Vietnamese resistance to US imperialism and of the banner of socialism raised by Czechoslovak workers against Russian tanks. It ushered in a new era in the class struggle, when battles in the advanced capitalist countries, the so-called socialist societies ruled by a Stalinist bureaucracy and third world countries fighting imperialist rule began to converge.

That era has not ended. The tensions unleashed then are still at work on the world stage, and for that reason we will see many books, films and reviews about 1968.

1968 was also the year of the first civil rights marches in the North of Ireland. There will be fewer books about that, because few understand that the struggle of '68 is the struggle of today. This unbroken continuity is a measure of the threat we pose to imperialist rule. But the length of the struggle also means a bloody stalemate that we must resolve.

Sunday that giant came to life. The general strike and the burning of the British embassy pointed to a scenario of mass uprising against their interests in the South. This, coupled with opposition within the British working class and internationally, has limited the options open to imperialism.

Relationship between military and mass struggle

This mechanism has not been clearly understood. Many opportunities to build in the South have been missed. The military struggle, instead of being subordinate to, and supportive of, mass struggle, has been detached and on some occasions has cut across the mass struggle. The chief example of this is "Operation Motorman". The "Bloody Friday" bombings helped weaken a movement that had lost impetus and gave the British the excuse that they had waited for to occupy the "No-go" areas and reverse one of the greatest gains of the mass struggle — the development of areas from which British military power was excluded.

But the mass struggle had already been weakened from within. The republican movement was the central leadership of the struggle, but mass struggle could be built only through alliances with other forces. The direction republicans looked for in those alliances was towards the Irish capitalist class. Directly with the Social and Democratic Labour Party (SDLP) and indirectly with the Dublin government in the South.

But the aim of the capitalists is not a united and independent Ireland. Their experiment with an independent capitalist state based in just 26 counties had failed by the 1960s. This had not been a struggle against imperialism, but simply an attempt to gain a relative autonomy within the imperialist order. It was the search for a new imperialist stability within a partition framework that led firstly to an Anglo-Irish Free Trade Agreement and to the O'Neill-Lamass talks in the 1960s.

The new "realpolitik" was reflected among middle-class Catholics who were to form the SDLP. They wanted freedom for their class within a Northern state. The working class who made up the actual body

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of the civil rights movement saw it as a step on the road to a united Ireland. The capitalist role in the civil rights movement was one of destruction and sabotage. Within months of the 1968 October 5 march in Derry they attempted to dissolve the movement by calling a truce with unionist Prime Minister O'Neill. The Burntollet march by Peoples Democracy exposed unionist intransigence and made this impossible.

The history of the SDLP since then has been one of collaboration, splitting the movement, recruiting for the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR), and breaking a ban on participation on public bodies after internment. Their high point came with the power-sharing executive set up through the Sunningdale Agreement, when they sent the bailiffs against those they had encouraged to go on rent and rate strike.

We see the same picture in the South. Jack Lynch promised that he could "not stand idly by" during the 1969 pogroms. He didn't. The South quickly established a massive border security system to defend partition and launched sweeping restrictions on civil liberties to defeat republicans.

Latest link in chain of collaboration

The Hillsborough Agreement is the latest link in the long chain of collaboration. Irish capitalism now spearheads the attack on national self-determination. Garda-RUC links, mass raids, extradition, support for partition and a unionist veto — this is the programme of Irish capitalism. The British don't need to give anything in return — simply they fund a modest public relations campaign that promises reform is just around the corner.

It is not surprising that 20 years of trying to form alliances with Irish capitalism have ended in failure. What is surprising is that

in 20 years the anti-imperialist movement has not had the strategy of alliances that centrally targets the working class in the South. Throughout this period, the actions of that class have had an immense importance in defending the northern struggle. The spontaneous mobilization of southern workers has, at key points like Bloody Sunday, marked the limits of what the British can do and their ability to employ the level of force that would crush the resistance.

In two decades in the South the national question has led to mass demonstrations, attacks on British interests, mass industrial action, the fall of governments, the election of prisoners to the Dail. Yet there has been no ongoing mass movement based in all 32 counties, although the H-Block struggle did develop the outline of such a movement.

There are a number of problems. There is no mass party of the working class. The capitalist parties have the support of the majority of workers. The trade-union leadership represents a reactionary and undemocratic bloc within the workers' movement. Above all, the mass sympathy of workers in the South is not by itself sufficient to build a movement. They themselves suffer from imperialist economic exploitation and face unemployment, austerity and the emigration boat. To win the consistent support of workers the anti-imperialist movement must reflect these concerns.

There is no doubting the revolutionary aspirations of the present leadership of the republican movement. This is itself a result and a gain from our struggle. Yet this leadership is largely confined to the North. It can only advance by taking up the leadership of the working class and oppressed in all 32 counties. To do this means a thorough-going critique of the present political and trade-union leadership, an intransigent defence of the working class against austerity measures and an intransigent defence

of democratic rights.

Our history also shows us the means of building mass action. Mass action is built around demands. Not just any demands, but the demands that represent the tasks of the day for the working class and oppressed.

An alternative method of building called "popular frontism", pioneered by the Communist Party, is to search for the "lowest common denominator" — in practice the demands that the most right-wing forces will accept. The analysis of the Communist Party influenced the formation of the Civil Rights Association. Civil rights demands were chosen to ensure the support of middle-class forces, but they also represented the immediate tasks and point of attack for the working class.

The SDLP never joined another united movement after [SDLP leader] Hume and company succeeded in dismantling the civil rights movement. Yet movements like the Northern Resistance Movement, the Political Hostages Release Committee and the H-Block/Armagh movement were able to mobilize tens of thousands of SDLP supporters and prevent the leadership collaborating in key British initiatives. They identified correctly the tasks facing the working class — defeating internment, defending political status. Republicans and socialists uniting around these tasks were able to build mass action.

Demands alone are not enough

But demands by themselves are not enough. There are also many campaigns that have had absolutely correct demands without successfully mobilizing. An example is the Relatives' Action Committees. They fought around the same issues as the H-Block movement but lacked the open democratic structure of the H-Block committees. It is only when political, trade-union and community groups can affiliate as organizations and democratically discuss demands, strategy and tactics that a movement develops the vitality of mass struggle.

Democracy is important because it allows change. The demands and strategy of the movement can adjust to shifts in the struggle. It's absence in the Relatives' Action Committees meant that when the struggle moved on, the leadership fragmented. Also, it broadens support because oppressed people can bring their own concerns and demands and lobby for their inclusion in the programme of the united front.

The movements of the struggle have not been united fronts. They have essentially been defensive formations organizing around immediate issues. A new movement would need a more long-term strategy. It would need to take up broader issues of democratic rights (women's rights, for example), and to articulate transitional demands that begin to pose for the masses the need for revolutionary change — a concrete example would be the call for an all-

Ireland constituent assembly.

This gives clear pointers for building the mass movement today. The Sinn Fein/SDLP talks will not lead to these. Hume, Haughey and company are 20 years older and wiser. They will not be caught a second time, especially in the absence of pressure from an existing mass movement. In fact, the starting point for mass action — the immediate questions of defence — involve confronting these figures, as the present imperialist offensive is based on their support for the Hillsborough Agreement.

Opportunity to relaunch the mass movement

The twentieth anniversary of the civil rights struggle gives the opportunity to relaunch the mass movement. Such a movement must start with the task of immediate defence. It must oppose the Hillsborough Agreement and the effects of its implementation in both parts of Ireland: state and judicial repression, extradition, job discrimination, support for the unionist veto, the erosion of political independence and civil liberties in the South and the extension of British rule into the 26 counties.

A democratic structure would enable the movement to build on the support of political parties, trade unionists and community groups. It would also allow a very important debate to take place. There are issues other than these questions that would concern many sections of the working class and oppressed. These include: opposition to emigration as a state policy; austerity; the super-taxation of workers; the domination of foreign multinationals; the attacks on neutrality and government support for the imperialist war-drive; the rights of women to control their own bodies; discrimination against gays; and the Irish language.

Without this programme a new movement can mobilize about 50 per cent of the northern nationalists and about seven per cent of the southern working class (those actively supporting the H-Block movement). To go beyond this it needs at least to allow oppressed layers to bring these issues into the movement and discuss their inclusion in the overall programme.

Also, a full-blown united front structure would present an overall alternative to the capitalist policy of collaboration with imperialism. It would confront the confessional nature of both Irish states by calling for the separation of church and state and, even more centrally, lay down a challenge around the call for an all-Ireland constituent assembly — not as some constitutional manoeuvre after British withdrawal, but as the actual mechanism to force that withdrawal by beginning to construct, at local and national level, the actual institutions of a free society and putting to the test all those who give verbal support to Irish freedom.

It should be evident that the stalemate with the imperialist forces has roots that go far deeper than the present phase of struggle. One central problem is the political programme of the main revolutionary leadership, the republican movement.

Republicans are absolutely correct to identify the national question as the key issue of the Irish revolution. They are incorrect to see it as the only issue. The correctness of their analysis can be seen by the way in which the northern struggle has continuously dominated Irish politics for 20 years, confirmed republicanism as the revolutionary leadership and resisted successive moves of British repression. The insufficiency of that analysis is shown by the fact that after 20 years they command the active support of only two per cent of the southern population and 15 per cent of the northern population.

There have been many changes in the republican movement and the establishment of a left leadership, but it remains essentially a revolutionary nationalist movement aimed towards the Irish people as a whole. They want the support of southern workers, but do not aim to organize the working class as a class nor recognize their central role in building a successful revolution. There remains a real confusion about the role of Irish capitalism that is at the centre of the present strategic crisis.

Imperialist oppression is seen as being expressed through the military occupation of the North. Austerity, unemployment, church rule and multinational control, also the product of imperialist rule, are not clearly understood as elements of the national question. This leads to a disjointed approach. The republican movement gives support to workers' struggles, but doesn't fight for the leadership, and sees it mainly as a way of winning support for British withdrawal rather than of linking the immediate demands of workers to the demand for national independence. It also leads to a minimalist approach to socialist politics. The leadership have a quite consistent support for socialism, but see its implementation as an issue that will arise after independence. They adopt a "stages" approach to history, and focus narrowly on what they see as the present "stage" of national liberation.

Constant progress in republican politics

History doesn't work like that. Twenty years ago, republican and civil rights leaders decided that we were in the "stage" of democratization of the North. They tried to block the emergence of the national question, but the struggle itself put this on the agenda, and only those able to adjust to the new reality remained in the leadership.

There has been a constant progress in republican politics over two decades. New questions have been posed, and have led to tensions and divisions. These have threa-

tened the unity of the movement, and the prospect of splits has meant that the movement by itself has not been able to resolve the issues. The solution came from outside the movement, from the mass struggle. This threw up new questions, subjected different positions to the test of the class struggle and minimized the effect of splits by rejecting those who failed the demands of the struggle, providing new forces to take the place of deserters.

A successful revolution must involve the majority of the militants in the republican movement. It must also involve their mobilization around a political programme much more radical than that presently held by the movement. The experience of mass struggle helps political progress towards this goal, but it is not enough by itself.

Marxist programme part of a living process

A political programme for revolution does not arise spontaneously from the experience of any one struggle. It has to be based on the results of many struggles all over the world and scientific analysis of the mass experience of the working class throughout its history. This programme is the programme of Marxism. It can't be preserved in a static way in literature. It is part of a living process and can only be defended and developed by an independent party of the working class. This tradition of independent working class action is the second great tradition of the Irish revolution — the tradition of Connolly's socialism — and it is this that Peoples Democracy is dedicated to building today.

Marxism provides a totally different analysis to that of republicanism. For us, the national question is not an issue on its own but is bound up in a world-wide class struggle. Imperialism is not simply the British military occupation, but the ownership and control of all of Ireland. The Irish economy is not based on the needs of Irish people, but on imperialism's need for tax-free profits, unrestricted exploitation of natural resources, a strategic military base and the source of a reserve army of labour that can be exported on the emigration boat to wherever it is needed.

The class interests of Irish capitalism are expressed through this framework of imperialist control. Too weak to survive alone, they welcome imperialist aid in their exploitation of Irish workers.

Partition is the mechanism of this control. It fragments the working class into different states, different religions and different interest groups, while strengthening clerical and reactionary forces both North and South. Above all, it is a denial of democracy. In the absence of the central democratic right to self-determination, all other democratic rights are eroded. Repression, states of emergency, the use of special powers and military power have sustained both states since partition.

For the working class, partition is both the barrier that blocks the road to workers' power and the issue of democratic rights that can enable it to take the leadership of an alliance of all the oppressed. All the oppressed layers of Irish society suffer from imperialist exploitation, but only the working class has the power and organization to defeat imperialism.

We see the Irish struggle as a process of permanent revolution. The call for a united Ireland is a revolutionary demand. The means to make this a reality require the self-organization of the working class, the construction of a new revolutionary leadership and alliances with all other progressive forces. Socialism provides the programme around which this movement can be built. It both makes Irish freedom possible and ensures that the revolution will move onto workers' power.

Peoples Democracy's politics come not simply from our twenty years of experience in the struggle, but also from our membership of a world-wide movement — the Fourth International — that springs directly from that section of the Bolshevik Party opposed to the betrayals and distortions of Stalinism. Our view of Ireland is informed not simply by the ebb and flow of events in our country, but also by the place of the Irish struggle in a world-wide battle against imperialism.

Imperialism's vicious and bloody response to 1968

1968 was a year of revolution, not simply in Ireland, but around the world. In the advanced capitalist countries a youth revolt marked the end of the boom years and the beginning of a deeper conflict between capitalists and working class. The Vietnamese people, aided by a mass solidarity movement, defeated US military power. The reform movement in Prague, crushed by Soviet tanks, demonstrated that mass working-class resistance in Eastern Europe would mobilize behind the banner of socialism and cleanse it of the stains of Stalinism, thus feeding a new interest in, and support for, socialist politics among Western youth. It was these shifts in the international balance of forces, joined to the burning resentment of an oppressed nationalist minority in the North, that brought about the explosion in Ireland.

The last 20 years have seen a vicious and bloody response by imperialism. This has brought them gains, but not shifted the overall balance. The 1987 stock market collapse shows that attacks on workers' rights and mass unemployment have not stabilized the imperialist economy. Since Vietnam, the US has never recovered the power to simply send the marines in to crush revolution. This decline has prevented the defeat of the Nicaraguan revolution. Since the Prague Spring, Solidarnosc has mobilized the Polish workers and resisted all attempts by the state to suppress it. The

Soviet bureaucracy has been forced to institute reforms that have had the unwelcome result for it of unleashing the first signs of a workers' opposition. In the past weeks, stock markets have tumbled in London and Wall Street. A new generation took to the streets of Prague to demand the removal of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Contra mercenaries came limping over the Nicaraguan border, pushed back by the Sandinista revolution. We are still living the era of 1968. The revolutionary overthrow of imperialism is still on the agenda.

Nowhere is this more true than in Ireland. 1968 blew apart the unionist all-class alliance and brought down the sectarian state that guaranteed stable imperialist rule. Twenty years later, even after the direct cooption of Irish capitalism through the Hillsborough Agreement, imperialism has still not found a solution.

We should remember that unionist premier, Terence O'Neill, had mass nationalist support when he promised reforms. It was when the promises were found to be

empty that the explosion occurred. Today, Irish nationalism won the same response when they promised that the Hillsborough accord would end the nationalist nightmare. Instead we had the Stalker affair, the Birmingham 6, the Gibraltar assassinations, British soldiers clearly guilty of murder being acquitted, extradition and more repression. Both Fianna Fail and the SDLP face uncertain futures.

It is not the strength of imperialism or lack of sacrifice on our part that has led to a bloody stalemate. Rather, it is our failure to build the political programme and the structures of mass and class action that can bring victory.

We must face these challenges now. A united, democratic, united-front structure must be built. The basis of mass resistance to the Hillsborough accord should begin in all 32 counties.

By uniting in action, socialists and republicans can find the common ground on which to debate and to forge the defeat of imperialism. ★

Irish women: fighting on two fronts

THE INTERACTION between the civil rights struggle and the activities of the organized feminist movement that exists in Ireland is the theme of this interview with Sue Pentel, a member of Peoples Democracy, the Irish section of the Fourth International. Sue is a founder member of Women Against Imperialism and an activist in the feminist and trade-union movement. The interview is taken from the October issue of the British magazine *Socialist Outlook*.*

IS THE Irish women's movement a new feature?

Irish women have always played a prominent role in working class and anti-imperialist struggles. Individuals are well known: Anna Parnell, Maud Gonne, Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington, Constance Markiewicz. Less well known is the importance of their work to the struggle as a whole in organizations such as the Ladies' Land League, Inghinidhe na hEireann (Daughters of Erin), and Cuman na mBan.

They were involved in such work as the revival of the Gaelic League, the organization of the Patriotic Children's Treat (a protest against Queen Victoria's visit to Ireland at the turn of the century), the 1916 rising and the Civil War.

But there were also women's struggles in this period: the struggle for the vote carried out by the Irishwomen's Franchise League, and Inghinidhe na hEireann who produced the first-ever Irish women's paper, *Bean na hEireann*. This group of women saw their

battle-cry as "Freedom for our nation and the removal of all disabilities to our sex".

There have been feminists active in Ireland in the past. What is new is the breadth and scope of the development of the women's movement that emerged in the late 1960s and which, despite all its weaknesses, has had a massive impact on Irish society.

■ Has partition created divisions in the women's movement?

The short answer is yes. It is much more difficult to build unity in two different jurisdictions, particularly in a situation where women are under attack. In the South, women have been attacked economically and socially because of the cutbacks of the Haughey administration, and have been defeated on issues of reproductive rights by the right-wing — [the anti-abortionists] SPUC and their allies.

In the North, women living in the occu-

problems — harassment, state violence, imprisonment, poverty, housing — which, on the face of it, are very different from the problems of women in the 26 counties.

All of these problems stem directly from problems exacerbated by partition: the weight of the churches North and South; the backwardness of the economy; poverty and backward social attitudes.

Despite containing different currents, including reformists who are content to work within the confines of the two statelets, Irish feminism has attempted to organize at a 32-county level since the early 1970s, with a series of national conferences, a national unity initiative in the late 1970s, and national campaigns right up to the present day, such as Armagh [solidarity with women political prisoners] and the Defend the Clinics campaign [family-planning clinics].

So politically, Irish feminists have had no choice but to face up to the problem created by partition: the development of an anti-imperialist current shows their ability to transcend these and begin to fight to build a 32-county movement of women fighting for their liberation.

■ Historically, there has been a very uneasy relationship between women outside the republican movement and feminists within it. Could you explain this briefly?

The involvement of women in the national struggle is part and parcel of that struggle. Only when feminists have been active and built a relationship with anti-imperialist women has there been joint activity and the opening of debates.

The debates can be seen as a very healthy part of the process of development. Perhaps the tension is best understood as a conflict about priorities: for a republican the priority is the war of national liberation; while for a feminist the priority is the struggle for women's liberation.

Historically, these differences have emerged around different campaigns — the suffrage, the Armagh women, the Defend the Clinics campaign. Before the campaign around the Armagh women and the emergence of a 32-county anti-imperialist/feminist current, there was quite a high level of hostility in some sections of feminism against the idea of armed struggle. While this still exists among some small sections of "feminists", many young activists of the 1980s have a general anti-partition perspective, and are interested in the political developments on women that have taken place in Sinn Fein.

The only way to resolve these tensions in a productive way is within an autonomous movement that openly debates how to build a 32-county movement of women. It cannot be resolved within one organization or simply by asserting that socialists see the women's struggle as an integral part of the national struggle. The links between women's issues and the daily struggle must be made continually — and only a strong

women's movement can do this effectively.

■ How did an anti-imperialist feminist movement develop?

The current developed on a 32-county scale out of the debate around the importance of the Armagh women political prisoners to Irish feminism. The debate was started by a group called Women Against Imperialism — a group founded by women who were both feminists and active anti-imperialists, and who recognized the importance of the leading role of women in support of the prisoners. When Women Against Imperialism started in the late 1970s, most of the activists in the Relatives Action Committees were women. They marched, they picketed, they pushed the struggle forward — and yet their concerns as women were ignored, as were the women in Armagh gaol.

Women Against Imperialism was directed at opening up the women's question inside the anti-imperialist movement as much as opening up the debate on anti-imperialism inside the women's movement.

In fact, the campaign around the Armagh women had a profound effect on both movements. The debate on women in Sinn Fein and the creation of Sinn Fein's Women's Department, and the sympathy for the anti-imperialist struggle in the women's movement were the long term result.

■ How has the debate on feminism and nationalism developed?

The debate has gone beyond the question of armed struggle. In post-Amendment Ireland [the constitutional amendment prohibiting abortion], active feminists are concerned with survival and finding allies. Since its adoption of a progressive attitude to women in general, Sinn Fein is able to contribute to that debate and feminists within Sinn Fein need not feel so isolated.

Unfortunately, because of the collapse of the organized anti-imperialist/feminist current in the women's movement during the hunger strikes, the debate that started has not really developed very far. We in Peoples Democracy see this debate as essentially about the strategy for building a 32-county movement and the need for this movement to be based on the working class and anti-imperialist movements.

■ What is the women's movement's attitude to Armagh/Maghberry today?

There is still a small current in the women's movement that is hostile to republicanism, but the atmosphere in the women's movement has changed greatly in the last ten years. Most feminists now would be generally supportive of women political prisoners and concerned about issues such as strip-searching. When Mairead Farrell was assassinated in Gibraltar there was a wave of indignation inside the women's movement. The killing happened during International Women's Week in Belfast,

when a large number of feminists from all over Ireland went to Maghberry to picket in support of republican women in prison there.

On International Women's Day itself, a large meeting of feminists in Belfast's Queen's University unanimously observed a minute's silence for Mairead, who was also a student at Queen's when she was killed; a public statement of outrage was signed by hundreds of feminists in Dublin the following week.

■ How do feminists relate to the war of national liberation?

Aside from reformists and those who are sectarian towards republicanism, the right of the Irish people to take up arms would be generally accepted by feminist activists. Many of these women would recognize the need to fight against partition and to reunite Ireland.

There are differences on the type of actions that take place and the strategy that is necessary to defeat imperialism. But for many women the necessity for the armed struggle was illustrated during the hunger strikes, and thus the debate inside the women's movement of the early 1980s has moved on from the false "feminism versus nationalism" polemics of the early 1970s.

The discussion now is much more about the role of women's questions inside the general anti-imperialist struggle; how women should organize; the importance of building an autonomous, independent women's movement; and the need for feminists to build progressive alliances.

This debate, vital for Irish feminists, is really only beginning. Interestingly, it is not only women who are discussing these questions, but these debates have also opened up inside other milieus such as Sinn Fein, the anti-imperialist movement as a whole, the trade unions where there is a strong group of feminists, and to a small extent the Irish language movement...

There are no easy answers. Irish feminists face a unique combination of problems, some of them reminiscent of those of third world women, exacerbated by the ongoing British military presence — yet in a country that is in the heartland of Europe!

Our strategy must therefore be based on the realities of the situation in Ireland. We cannot afford to sit around and wait for a mass explosion of feminist consciousness as developed in Europe. Nor can we simply expect that the fact of women's involvement in the armed struggle will in itself bring automatic acceptance of the need for women's liberation. Only an independent movement of Irish women looking at their own concerns will be able to develop their own model of development, based on a 32-county anti-imperialist perspective. ★

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Zhao Ziyang's new clothes

AS SOON AS he became head of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1987, Zhao Ziyang announced a plan of economic and political reforms — expansion of production and free markets; factories run by plant managers rather than party leaders; and increased openings for international commercial exchanges and foreign investments.

A parallel could be made between the policies that the Chinese leaders apparently now intend to follow and the course taken in the Soviet Union under *perestroika*.

This radical break with the policies pursued in

Mao Zedong's time opened up a major debate at the Thirteenth Congress of the CCP between the "reformers" and the "conservatives." This discussion is far from having abated, and the results of the reforms that have already been undertaken are central today to the political and economic life of the People's Republic of China.

The following article analyzes the various currents within the CCP. In our next issue we will publish the second part, which looks at the economic reforms and the administrative cells of the Party.

A MARAVER

THE THIRTEENTH Congress of the Chinese Communist Party was held in Peking from October 25 to November 1, 1987. There were 1,959 delegates representing 46 million party members. The main points on the agenda were electing a new leadership in the context of a general change unprecedented in the party's history, and adopting a strategic political line of reform representing the ideological end of Maoism.

The congress itself was preceded by ten months of intense factional struggles between conservatives and reformists.

In January 1987, in the midst of the student mobilizations that took place in all of the country's most important cities, an internal political crisis resulted that led to the fall of the party's general secretary, Hu Yaobang. The conservative offensive that continued until the meeting of the National People's Assembly (NPA) in April led to a radicalization of the reformers' tactics. They managed to gain dominance in the pre-congress period, after retaking the political initiative in a general counter-offensive in May.

Consolidating this dominance and assuring its continuation beyond the life-span of Deng Xiaoping was the principal objective of the Thirteenth Congress. In order to do this, it was necessary to give an overall coherence to the positions developed by the reformers over the last nine years since the Third Plenum of the Ninth Central Committee, in a strategic project for building socialism in the People's Republic of China.

At the same time a more favorable relationship of forces for the reformers developed in the leading bodies. With the retirement of the Long March generation, the reformers have seen an increase in their influence as well as in the specific role of

Deng Xiaoping as the supreme arbiter and inspiration of the party. This is an essential aspect of the situation, because the struggle in the last few months of 1987 showed that in order to consolidate its dominance and settle the problem of succession, the reformist faction needs take the maximum advantage of Deng's authority as long as he is alive.

Reforms being called a "second Long March"

The political reform that was the cause of the internal mobilizations and struggles in the party over the last months of 1987 made its appearance for the first time in the general program of Chinese communists, with a series of concrete measures that are

to be put into practice over the next few years and on whose success the entire reform project depends.

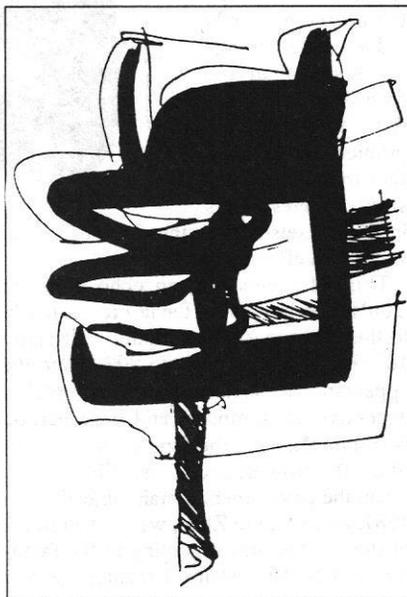
In fact, the chief problem for the economic development of the country is above all social and political. It is how to re-establish the masses' confidence in the party after the Cultural Revolution; how to rekindle their enthusiasm and mobilize them behind the current changes, which are already being termed a second Long March; and how to keep the reform from losing momentum and becoming embalmed in a series of administrative decrees.

At a time when throughout the world "actually existing socialism" is at a crossroads, when we are seeing the emergence of such extensive reform projects as the Soviet *perestroika*, the Cuban "rectification campaign", and the relaunching of market socialism in Hungary, the Chinese leaders have made a major effort to define a project ideologically. In the economic and political fields, it is the most radical so far of these schemes.

The launching of a campaign against "bourgeois liberalism" at the January 14, 1987, meeting of the Political Bureau and the subsequent immediate resignation of Hu Yaobang signaled a general offensive by the conservative faction, which was joined by a section of the People's Liberation Army.

Using their control of the Propaganda Department, the conservatives began to circulate an overall critique of the economic and social situation. The reforms, they explained, had caused inflation and growing social inequalities by introducing a capitalist sector into the planning process. The operation of this sector was corrupting the population ideologically.

In order to confront this problem, it was



essential to regain political control of the situation. This required repressing all street demonstrations, such as those conducted by the student movement; reinforcing the socialist sector of production and putting an end to such activities as the stock exchange and direct relations between factories and peasant markets. Finally, it meant re-imposing socialist moral values among the intellectuals and throughout society.

Deng Xiaoping's direct intervention, through the reprinting of a 1962 article in his in the *People's Daily* in mid-February, broke the momentum of the conservative offensive. He demanded that the campaign against "bourgeois liberalism" be kept out of the economy and the army, and that in practice it be restricted to the party's internal life. Already at this time, the damage done to the reform project was quite considerable. In particular, a general lack of confidence had been created among the intelligentsia and factory managers about the future of the reforms, reviving the traumas of the Cultural Revolution.

The conservative faction found itself in an insoluble dilemma. It needed to take advantage of the campaign against "bourgeois liberalism" in order to propagate its positions in the run-up to the next congress, and so win a broader social base of support. This would enable it to bring in a younger generation without affecting the balance of forces established at the February 14 meeting of the Political Bureau.

But, at the same time, any move toward breaking the consensus and expanding the campaign entailed a risk of being accused of factionalism and above all of bringing back political instability — in flagrant contradiction to its program of "order and discipline."

Foreign investors rooting for the reforms

By openly siding with the reform camp, the international press increased these dangers and reduced the room for maneuver, since it would portray any new conservative mobilization as a personal challenge to Deng. This would have grave repercussions on the confidence of foreign investors, who already had significant material interests in the reforms.¹

The fifth session of the Sixth National People's Assembly on April 11, 1987, gave the conservative faction a unique public platform for its campaign against "bour-

geois liberalism," thanks to the political weight of Peng Zhen, president of the body and principal spokesman of the conservatives in the January crises. The discussion of the report on the government's work that

Zhao Ziyang was to present offered the possibility of a controlled confrontation with the reformers on ground favorable to the conservatives.

Perfectly aware of this state of affairs, the reformers side-stepped the trap. Zhao's report took up the full range of the conservative's criticisms, making explicit references to the political basis of the consensus arrived at in January, which could be nothing other than the reform.

On the economic level the government's work was characterized as "readjustment...to reinforce and continually improve macro-economic control." The budgetary deficit had been fought with by an austerity policy compensated for by price and wage controls. The government had paid particular attention to reducing spendthrift consumption by certain bodies and factories "greedy for comforts, luxury, pomp and ostentatiousness...creating distortion in the circulation of currency and draining public funds."

As for the growth rate, one of the conservatives' key criticisms, Zhao pointed out that "investments in building infrastructures in the factories owned by all the people rose only 7.3%, a percentage far lower than the 44.6% of 1985. Today, the principal problem is due to the fact that the expansion of investments in fixed assets outside the plan has not always been effectively controlled."²

This all seems like an echo of Chen Yun's speeches during the last rough patch, to the effect that high inflation (officially 10% but in reality close to 20%³) and the appearance of social differences (notably excessive consumption and bureaucratic corruption⁴), were the fundamental causes of the the growing social instability.

But the government's main objectives in 1987, according to Zhao, were "the reform of the mechanisms operating in the factories and of the system of management in

each of them. This is to be done by promoting horizontal economic association, accelerating banking reform to the appropriate degree, by a further expansion of the producers' goods market, by transforming and gradually perfecting the organization of work and wages in factories through methods of controlling investment in fixed assets." This was to be accomplished "while actively preparing the ground for the next phase of complementary reforms."

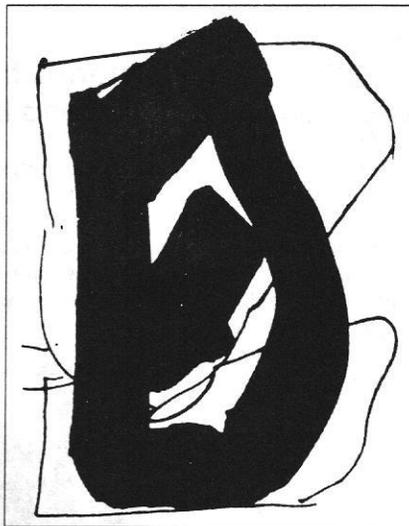
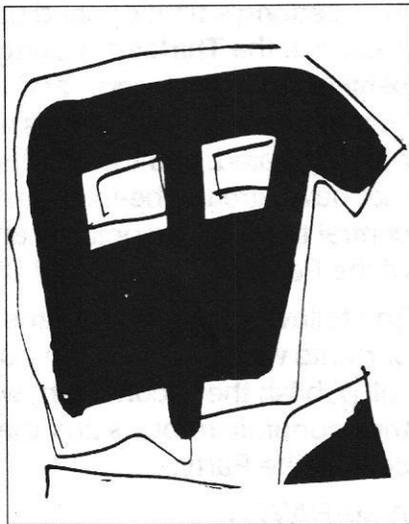
Separating political and technical management

The first of these measures, reform of the management system in the factories, has already been submitted by the government to the NPA in the form of bill for a "law on state industrial enterprises." It would separate political and technical leadership, and increase the autonomy and responsibility of managers. It would distinguish ownership from management forms by introducing some types of leasing and subcontracting. But the active opposition of the conservatives blocked its adoption.

In the ideological sphere, according to the report, the student mobilizations "were essentially the product of an overflowing of the bourgeois liberalization current...that is why we say that the struggle against bourgeois liberalism is fundamental for the success or failure of socialist modernization and the nation's destiny."

But this was the final concession that the reformers would make. "Here," continued Zhao, "I would solemnly reiterate the following point:

"Throughout the struggle against bourgeois liberalism, the general pattern of putting the stress on advancing the productive social forces and giving impetus to the development of socialist civilization in the material and spiritual spheres, around a



1. In 1986, foreign investments dropped by 47.8%, to \$3.3 billion, from \$6.3 billion in 1985.

2. Report on the government's work submitted to the Fifth Session of the Sixth NPA. *Beijing Informa* 16, April 21, 1987. [The Spanish-language edition of *Peking Review*.]

3. Li Rongxia, in "Reform of the price system in Guangdong," *Beijing Informa* 37, September 15, 1987, notes that "in 1986, the cost of living index dropped from 22.5%, a historic record, to 3.4%, the lowest among the big cities."

4. According to *People's Daily*, in the last two years the new companies, associations and enterprises have bought nearly 200,000 cars, and spent 7 to 8 million yuan on gas and maintenance in addition to the cost of buying these vehicles." *Beijing Informa* 35, September 1, 1987.

common axis of economic modernization, will not change. The orientation of reform across the board will not change."

Finally in the arena of political reform, Zhao picked up the conservative gauntlet and reported on a study designed to formulate a series of concrete measures for the Thirteenth Congress. However, he declared that "the question of democracy will never be downgraded under the pretext of fighting bourgeois liberalization."

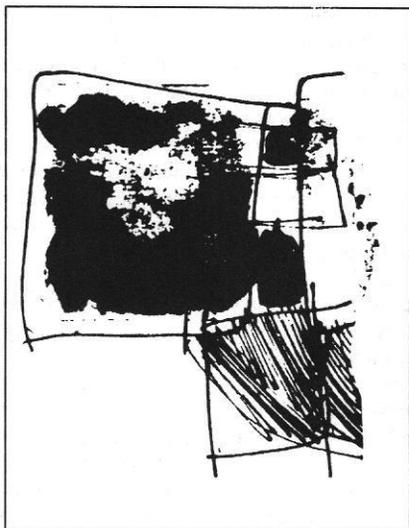
The success of this tactic by the reformers forced Peng Zhen to make a wrenching readjustment to defend the conservative faction in a press conference with journalists from Hong Kong and Macao.⁵ In the first place, in response to the veiled charge of factionalism in the NPA for blocking the law on state industrial enterprises, Peng took the credit for having been the first to propose the system of personal responsibility of factory managers. But he claimed that at the time, with Zhao Ziyang's agreement, this had been sidetracked because there were still divergences and gaps with regard to certain articles of the law.

Denying the differences in the party leadership

Likewise, Peng denied the differences in the party leadership between reformists and conservatives: "We are all Marxists... comrade Deng Xiaoping has said the following:

'With regard to the reform I am a reformer; with regard to the four fundamental principles, I am a conservative'."⁶

Peng disclosed that in 1982, in order to consolidate the social support of the conservatives, "many comrades" had suggested that he be co-opted onto the Standing Committee. He said that he had refused because of his age, since he recognized the need to rejuvenate the CCP leadership, even if that meant he



and other conservative leaders retiring. But he was explicitly in favor of keeping Deng Xiaoping.

This was definitely a retreat and an acceptance of the bases of the January 14 consensus. Once again the initiative for preparing the Thirteenth Congress was left in the hands of the reformers. The conservative offensive had taken one step forward and two steps back.

The reformers' counter-offensive was signalled by Zhao Ziyang's May 13 speech to leaders of the Propaganda Department, the press, party schools and research insti-

tutes. In a tone different from that used in front of the NPA, Zhao criticized "those people who call for stepping up the fight against bourgeois liberalism in the economic sphere. They are irresponsible, they are politically wrong and they are violating organizational discipline." He then went on to refute one by one the conservatives' arguments.

The economic situation, he said, was not only not bad but had shown a sustained growth, even during the 1985-86 readjustment period. At no time had the new forms of industrial management threatened the collective ownership of the means of production. One could not counterpose a "pure" planned socialist sector to a "corrupted" capitalist sector. The campaign against bourgeois liberalism could never be a substitute for political reform, and so on.

Finally, Zhao defined the situation that the party had to confront. "If we do not persevere in the Four Principles, we will inevitably fall into bourgeois liberalism. But if the reform is not carried through, conditions will inevitably

be created that would favor that. This is because only reform can develop the initiative and creative capacity of the people and advance the productive forces, thereby making it possible for socialism to demonstrate its superiority... reform has become a trend in the socialist countries, and without it they would have no way out of their difficulties."

The second scenario of this counter-offensive was the May 26 meeting of

the Commission for the Rectification and Consolidation of the Party. In his speech, Zhao Ziyang repeated his earlier arguments and demanded that the only criterion for promoting cadres should be their positive contributions to the reform.

Bo Yibo, vice-chair of the commission, said that the unevenness registered in carrying out the campaign were the result of "formalism" and fear of criticism on the part of many members who lacked confidence in the political stability of the reform. But he stressed that the leaders would not appeal again for any "mass

movement," as the factional struggle methods of the Cultural Revolution are termed, and that the campaign would be limited to criticism and self-criticism. In a party of 46 million members, the Rectification Cam-

campaign has led to only 33,896 expulsions.⁷ This figure speaks for itself.

The gigantic Hinggan forest fire in Manchuria gave the reform faction the opportunity to underline the objectives and reasons for political reform. Thousands of hectares of woods and entire villages went up in flames, while the Ministry of Water and Forests exhibited a glaring inefficiency and bureaucratism.

The minister and his deputies were dismissed in the midst of

a flood of editorials calling for a law in the framework of the political reform that would clearly define responsibilities at the various levels of the state and party administration and put an end to over-centralization and bureaucratization. On July 1, the *People's Daily* reprinted Deng Xiaoping's speech, "Reform of the leadership system in the Party and state," which opened the debate on political reform in June 1980 in the Political Bureau.

Fight for control of Propaganda Department

However, the fight over control of the Propaganda Department was the most important test of strength that the reformers had to win. It was not by chance that it was from this strategic position that the conservatives, led by Deng Liqun, had launched their campaigns against "spiritual pollution" and "bourgeois liberalism." A few months before, they had blocked an attempt to put a new team led by Zhu Houze in charge of the department.

Experience had shown that any consensus reached by the party leadership immediately opened a fight over how to interpret it, first of all in the press and the media. For that reason, it was essential for both factions to reinforce their respective weights in the propaganda apparatus in advance of the congress.

The meeting of provincial propaganda chiefs was held in Peking on October 9-12,

5. "Peng Zhen with Hong Kong and Macao journalists," *Beijing Informa* 17, April 28, 1987.

6. The Four Principles are the following: To maintain the socialist road; to defend the people's democratic dictatorship; to defend the leadership of the Communist Party; and Marxism-Leninism/Mao Zedong thought.

7. "Zhao: Reform and opposition to bourgeois liberalization." *Beijing Informa* 29, July 21, 1987.

and was the best indicator of the relationship of forces on the eve of the congress. The main reporter was Hu Qili, who was Hu Yaobang's right-hand man up until the latter was ousted and the most liberal leader in the leadership. He called for "democratic dialogue," using the media not only to propagate the new reform policy but also to collect opinions, criticisms and news about the spontaneous initiatives of the people. Without such input, he stressed, it was impossible for the party to move forward politically.

Normalizing relations with Moscow

Four days later, on October 16, the *People's Daily* printed his speech. At the same time, it was reported that Deng Liqun was leaving the Propaganda Department. This move was preparation for his retirement and election at the congress to the Central Consultative Commission.

The reform faction's final effort was to avoid leaving any weak point in its foreign policy. Zhao Ziyang made a grand tour of Eastern Europe in June, reestablishing party-to-party relations with the reformer bureaucracies in the region and putting his own program in a broader historical perspective. At the same time, he took a step forward in normalizing relations with Moscow.

Shortly afterward, the Hungarian Janos Kadar and the Yugoslav Stefan Kerosec went to Peking as special guests and confidants of Deng Xiaoping. Shortly afterward, in a gesture to the conservative section of the army, Yang Shangkun left for the United States. His mission was both to reaffirm the policy of peaceful reunification with Taiwan and criticize US interference, as well as to discuss the program of buying arms to modernize the army.

In order to guide this reformer counter-offensive ideologically and capitalize on it, in June Deng Xiaoping published a compilation of his recent speeches under the title *Fundamental Questions in China Today*. For him, the debate between conservatives and reformers over the Four Principles, his condemnation of the student movement, his support of "creative freedom" for intellectuals and his criticisms of the economic functioning of the Special Zones fitted into a broader reform program, culminating in the problem of political reform.

The book ended with his dialogue with a member of the Presidium of the League of Yugoslav Communists, Stefan Kerosec, entitled, "The reform must be speeded up." It was an impassioned defense of his political program for the Thirteenth Congress, not only as the principal living party leader but also as a responsible international-class statesman in an age of historic changes.

As a solution to the problem of the reform faction, which is seeking to develop connections between its social base and the population in general, throughout the sum-

mer the press began to publish the first results of opinion polls carried out by the recently created institutes of social research. The *People's Daily* left no room for doubt on August 17, when it reported that 93.8 per cent of people questioned were in favor of the reform.

With "mass movements" ruled out and autonomous mobilization banned after the student movement got out of hand, the need to demonstrate social support for the reformers' program was met with a classical resort to political marketing gimmicks, the polls.⁸

When the Seventh Plenum of the Twelfth Central Committee met on October 20, the results of the spring counteroffensive were clear. There were no great debates over the draft of the report that Zhao Ziyang was to present to the congress in the name of the Central Committee. Likewise approved was a document by Deng Xiaoping, "General ideas on reforming the political structure," which was to follow up Zhao's report with the first concrete measures for applying the political reform.

Claiming to be the "legitimate heirs of Mao"

The necessary changes were made in the statutes to allow Deng to continue to chair the Military Commission, despite his departure from the Standing Committee and the Political Bureau. This spared him from being replaced by a younger leader, a fate that had befallen the most prominent conservatives. It was another recognition of his role as arbiter in the party and a reinforcement of the balance between the two factions that the Thirteenth Congress was to confirm. The stage for the congress was now set.

The first part of the report under the headings "Our historical successes and the tasks of the present congress" and the "First stage of socialism and the fundamental line of the Party," and the final summary entitled "For a new victory of Marxism in China," sought to lay down the methodological foundation for the reform program, and, on the basis of this new perspective, to explain the history of the Chinese Communist Party.

The Sixth Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee in June 1981 had already tried to do this in its "Resolution on certain problems in the history of the CCP." Its objective was, after the defeat of the Gang of the Four, to claim to be Mao's legitimate heirs. But the heterogeneity of the alliance of tendencies and factions that made up the leadership at that time did not allow it to develop a program that went any further than condemning the Cultural Revolution or to claim a legitimacy of its own.

Zhao's report, to the contrary, makes the Third Plenum of the Ninth Central Committee the beginning of a new stage in the history of the CCP under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping. It is the concrete results of

this new stage in building socialism that are the basis of the party's new legitimacy. Mao's legacy is reduced to his leadership of the struggle against the Japanese and founding the People's Republic. Thus, Mao Zedong thought has to be developed in the context of a new creative impetus of Marxism, which is summed up in the formula of "building socialism with special Chinese features."

So as to leave no doubt, a list was given of the concrete results, both practical and ideological, achieved by the reform faction. They were the following:

A sustained economic growth that had made it possible to double the GNP in nine years. The preservation of political unity and stability on the basis of a consensus, whose two basic elements were the reform policy and the Four Principles. An analysis of the stages in building socialism in China and the need for promoting and building a planned market economy in the first stage. The development of socialist democracy and of a legal system that laid down the bases for a new state apparatus, separate from the party, in the formation of a new model of socialist society. The cultural and ideological enrichment of the country in the framework of the principle of "creative freedom," designed to lay a new socialist spiritual civilization. The elaboration of a new military strategy for defending the country and the reorganization of the People's Liberation Army. Progress in the process of national reunification through the policy of "one country, two systems," which opened the way for the agreements with Great Britain and Portugal respectively for the recovery of Hong Kong and Macao, and the radical reformulation of a perspective of negotiating with Taiwan. And, finally, the reintegration of China into the concert of nations, with an independent foreign policy for peace and the development of the third world.

Rediscovering the revolution

The central task of the Thirteenth Congress was to deepen and accelerate the reform, recognizing the time that had been lost because of the weakness of the initial economic base and the political errors that had been committed. The time factor was having its effect on the speed of the technological revolution, the fight for markets and the restructuring of the international economic system.

However, the internal timetable of the reform would be determined by China's level of development and its internal contributions, that is by the stage of building socialism in which it was carried out. In order to define this, Zhao went back to the debate on the nature of the Chinese revolution in the 1920s, both in the Communist International

8. "First organization of public opinion polls," *Beijing Informa* 36, September 8, 1987.

and the CCP.

"We had an immense semi-colonial and semi-feudal country. After repeated struggles among the various political forces over more than 100 years, starting in the middle of the last century, after the many failures of the old democratic revolution and the final victory of the new democratic revolution, it was shown that China could not pass through capitalism and that the only way out was, under the leadership of the Communist Party, to overthrow the reactionary domination of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic capitalism and take the socialist road.

"Now, the fact that our society has emerged from the entrails of a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society, and that the level of productive forces is well below that of the developed capitalist countries, poses the need for going through a very prolonged first stage in order to make industrialization a reality, as well as to achieve the development of the market, the socialization and modernization of production accomplished in other countries under the conditions of capitalism."⁹

The characterization of this first stage of socialism was not, however, deduced from an *a priori* general schema but from an analysis of the concrete conditions of the Chinese revolution. It was differentiated both from the transitional period when the people's democratic dictatorship

(according to the Maoist terminology) was established, in which the bases for a socialist economy did not yet exist, and from the following stage in which socialist modernization is to be achieved.

"The main contradiction we have to confront in the present stage is between the growing material and cultural needs of the people, on the one hand, and backward social production on the other. The class struggle will persist for a long time within predetermined limits, but it is no longer the main contradiction."

This new conception is directly opposed to Mao Zedong's theory of uninterrupted revolution. This holds that the contradictions between the structure and superstructure in a backward socialist country like China are reflected in the periodic appearance of privileged social strata with their own interests both inside and outside the Communist Party, which "follow the capitalist road" and may even go so far as seizing the leadership.

It was only possible then, to go forward in the process of building socialism by taking the class struggle as the main contradiction, by exposing and destroying these pro-

capitalist strata through great mass mobilizations taking the form of cultural revolutions. The history of the Chinese Communist Party was interpreted as a succession of factional struggles between "two lines," the socialist one, represented by Mao, and various pro-capitalist, reformist variants.

The "left and right" errors, according to Zhao's report, are not the result of a "two-line struggle," but of a misunderstanding of the nature of the Chinese revolution. "In the specific historical conditions of modern China, to deny that the Chinese people can take the socialist road before capitalism has fully developed is a mechanistic position...a source of 'rightist' errors. On the other hand, the opinion that the first stage of socialism can be jumped over without a

selves to the state of the latter."

If the productive forces are characterized by their backwardness in this first stage of socialism in China, the relations of production are marked by the uneven and combined character of their development. Although the socially-owned sector represents 50 per cent of the economy, it is put into question by the low level of the socialization of production, and should, according to Zhao, be reduced to 30 per cent.¹⁰ The domestic market and the market economy are poorly developed. The natural economy and semi-natural economy have a considerable weight in the GNP.

In the superstructural sphere, the report again poses the reformers' determinist thesis that the weakness of the socialist economic system" brings on an acute

insufficiency of a whole series of economic and cultural conditions necessary for the formation of a highly developed socialist democracy." It advances the gradualist view that when these inadequacies are overcome, it will be possible to institute more extensive democratic forms, even if a new model of socialism is made an ideal for the future. Having reached this point, Zhao Ziyang's report posed the classical question: What is to be done?

Above all, he answered, it is necessary to concentrate on developing the productive forces and modernization through a general application of the

reform in all areas. This is the mechanism that will make it possible to resolve the contradictions between the relations of production and the superstructure in a socialist society without going through cultural revolutions. This is what will make it possible to reintegrate the Chinese economy into the world economy, so that it can prosper thanks to the policy of open doors for the scientific-technological revolution. This is to be paralleled by the development of a "planned market economy" in which the dominant role will be played by the publicly-owned sector.

In the political sphere, what is projected is building socialist democracy step by step, in a coordinated way and on the basis of unity and stability. In the cultural and ideological sphere, this is to be reflected by the emergence "of a spiritually socialist civilization" with a high moral content. ★

9. The quotations from the Zhao Ziyang's report are taken from the Spanish version published in *Beijing Informa* 45, November 10, 1987.

10. *People's Daily*, October 3, 1987. Meeting between Zhao and Arthur Dunkel, director general of GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade).



development of the productive forces is a utopian attitude...a source of 'leftist' errors." Against the first type of error, the report proposes the defense of the Four Principles; against the second, the reform policy.

The only valid criterion is seeking the true facts, because, as the report stresses, "building socialism in an oriental country as large as China is something new in the history of the development of Marxism." The vision and horizons of Marxism had to be broadened to take in the new realities of our time. Marxism had to be free of short-sighted dogmatism and utopian tendencies, in line with the theoretical work of Marx and Engels, who established scientific socialism on the basis of their critique of utopian socialism.

Zhao summed up the kernel of the new reform method against Mao in stressing that "Marxist historical materialism has always considered that in the last analysis it is the productive forces that determine all social development. The productive relations and the superstructure can only contribute to the development of the productive forces when they adjust them-

International VIEWPOINT

THIS YEAR — as our readers will know — marks the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Fourth International. It is also twenty years on from the explosive events that shook up the international political scene in 1968. And this week sees the 150th issue of *International Viewpoint*, a magazine that provides a unique window on the world, in the programmatic and political tradition of Leon Trotsky.

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We are optimistic about the possibilities for extending our readership — particularly our individual subscriptions — in the coming months. While the present political situation in many countries of the world may not appear particularly hopeful, the undercurrents and changes taking place

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