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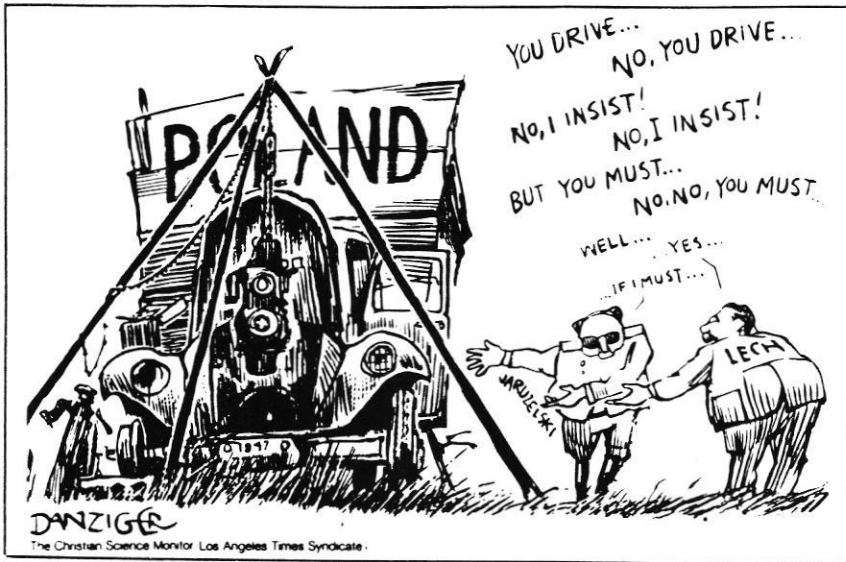
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THE FIGHTING along the demarcation line between the two camps had ceased, to be replaced by car bomb explosions, just as murderous and terrible but more treacherous, because they are unforeseeable and nobody claims responsibility. Other wars, within the two territorially defined camps, took advantage of the lull to explode.

There were wars between factions within the reactionary Maronite camp, between rival Muslim factions, between Palestinian factions, between the Palestinian camps and the Shi'ite movement, between Shi'ite factions, between forces allied to Israel in south Lebanon and the totality of anti-Israeli forces and so on. This was the period of the war for hegemony within the two great opposing camps in the lull in the fighting between them for control of the country as a whole.

Within the Maronite camp, an "enlightened" faction of the militia of the Lebanese Forces (FL) led by Hobeika, that wished to collaborate with the Syrians and reach agreement with the Muslim camp, was eliminated by the pro-Israeli faction under Samir Geagea.

Geagea went on to knock out the dominant faction of the Falangist Party, which had remained loyal to the Republic's President and son of the party's founder, Amin Gemayel, a traditional rival of the FL. Gemayel, who was approaching the end of his term of office — he was elected for six years in 1982 by a Lebanese parliament sitting under Israeli guard — found himself abandoned by the "legal" army, re-organized and supported by the United States, although this army had itself clashed with the FL on several occasions.

On the other side, the Amal movement, supported by Syria, relentlessly attacked the Palestinian camps to prevent Arafat's supporters from re-establishing themselves and threatening Syrian power in the region.

Lebanon: a region of permanent slaughter

IN THE last six months the Lebanese war has flared up again with renewed violence. Between 1986 and the start of 1989, what we might call the traditional war — that is to say the war between the reactionary Christian camp and the regions where Muslims are in the majority — abated somewhat. It is this war that has formed the only constant element in the multiple conflicts in Lebanon.

SALAH JABER

At the same time steps were taken to stop the growth of the Shi'ite fundamentalist current, Hezbollah, supported by an Iran, which, although allied to Syria, has its own specific projects in the region. Finally, on the pretext of re-establishing an order that had indeed been undermined by repeated battles between its own allies, Syria once again sent troops into West Beirut and the other regions from which it had been dislodged by the Israelis in 1982.

Washington burns its fingers

By 1988 it seemed that Syria was once more in control in the mainly Muslim areas. In order to consolidate this success, Damascus needed to install a friendly figure at the head of the "legal" Lebanese government, who would not question his subordination to Syria. The time seemed right. Washington had got its fingers burnt in Lebanon and seemed ready to

collaborate with the Syrians, provided that they reined in the pro-Iranian forces in Lebanon and worked for the release of the American hostages. The US and Syria reached agreement on a compromise candidate to succeed Gemayel as president.

Geagea's FL (and thus Israel), together with the "legal" army of General Michel Aoun, scuppered this agreement. Having reached the end of his term of office without an elected successor, Gemayel at the last minute gave General Aoun the task of forming an interim government in which presidential power would be vested while the post was unoccupied, under the rules laid down by the Lebanese constitution.

This appointment was rejected by the opposing camp who saw it as a kind of last minute coup d'etat, an impression that was reinforced when Aoun set about forming a government composed of military men who were, moreover, Christian.

The government already in place under Selim Hoss, a Sunni Muslim as is the constitutional custom in Lebanon, continued to function in the regions under Syrian control and with Syrian support. For the first time since independence in 1943, Lebanon found itself with two opposed governments both claiming to be the "legal" one.

The status quo lasted for a few months until the entry — or rather the return — to the scene of Iraq which had played no part in the Lebanese conflict from 1980 to 1988, when it was at war with Iran. Iraq had come out of the war — which at one time had threatened to bring it to its knees — rather well and was now determined to make their enemies, their brother Ba'athists in Syria, pay for their support to Khomeini's Iran during the war. Baghdad therefore decided to lavish arms, munitions, money and logistical support on the anti-Syrian Lebanese Christian camp.

Buoyed up by this support, the megalomaniac general Aoun thought himself

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capable of taking control of the whole of Lebanon. He even imagined that the great majority of Lebanese, including Muslims, would welcome his victory.

First of all he established his dominance in his own camp, making the FL knuckle under and taking over ports that they had controlled in the Christian zone. Then he decreed a sea blockade of the ports in the Muslim zone. This lunatic decision could only provoke clashes, that began with mutual bombardments of ports and airports.

"War for the liberation of Lebanon"

On March 14 the general — maliciously nicknamed "Napolaoun" by the semi-feudal leader of the Druzes and head of the Progressive Socialist Party, Walid Jumblatt — declared war on the Syrians and proclaimed the start of the "war for the liberation of Lebanon." He thereby unleashed a new cycle of violence that was going to beat all previous records for destructive fury and criminal absurdity, as the two sides bombarded each other with an unprecedented quantity of heavy calibre shells.

The whole of Beirut is increasingly coming to look like one of the cities razed to the ground in the Second World War. Previously this had only been the case with the zones near to the demarcation line. This was no problem for the prospective dictator, who had declared to the press that Beirut had been destroyed several times in the course of the centuries and could take it one more time. And thus he had decided, crouching in his bunker in the deepest cellar of the presidential palace.

At the same time, Iraq worked in the Arab world to isolate Syria and back up the offensive launched by Aoun on the ground with a diplomatic offensive. The most enthusiastic ally of Saddam Hussein in this undertaking is the Arafat leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, who had not hesitated to support Amin Gemayel when he was president. The Arafat leadership certainly has good reasons for holding a grudge against the Syrians and their allies, but are their memories really so short as to have forgotten that the worst massacres of Palestinians, including those of Sabra and Chatila, were carried out by the other camp? And it is almost indecent of Arafat's accredited adviser, Bassam Abu Sharif to describe the Syrian action in Lebanon as the "crime of the century", as if the Israeli army had arrived in Lebanon in 1982 on a trip to see the sights.

Internationally, just as Washington was taking its distance from its traditional allies in Lebanon, the "socialist" government in France decided to upstage its western partners and plunge into an intervention. But this policy has become entangled in serious contradictions. If the

French government under President Mitterrand is showing more interest in the Lebanese Christians' reactionary camp than ever before, even under Giscard D'Estaing, this has clearly got nothing to do with the President's religious sympathies. French imperialism's sole aim is to reinforce its reputation for effectiveness, by profiting from Syria's relative isolation. They do this all the more willingly in that the French are acting in concert with the Iraqi dictatorship, their special partner in the Arab world.

Publicly repudiated by the Tripartite Commission — Algeria, Saudi Arabia and Morocco — formed by the last Arab summit of Arab heads of state, the Syrian regime decided for the first time in 10 years to give its Lebanese allies the go-ahead to try to break through the traditional dividing line between the two camps. On August 13 a broad offensive was unleashed, that has to date had no notable success.

Syria's aim is not to invade the whole of the "Christian redoubt", an enterprise that would meet with the double veto of Israel and the United States. The objective is for the Syrian dictatorship to achieve on the ground, through its Lebanese and Palestinian allies (in this respecting formally the prohibition on sending its own troops over the "green line"), a sufficiently impressive military success to break the morale of the opposing side and persuade it to get rid of the "General-Liberator". Syria hopes to force Michel Aoun to resign.

Syrian offensive marking time

The first Syrian offensive however is marking time, while Iraq and France are increasing their military threats and stepping up their diplomatic offensive. Thus Moscow, whose client Syria is, has finally decided to intervene to calm things down, in line with Gorbachev's policy theme of universal "reconciliation". The Soviet Union is also the main supplier of arms to Iraq and is on good terms with Iran. It is thus in a unique position to work out a

new compromise formula for getting out of the Lebanese impasse.

Whatever the outcome of the current negotiations, however, they can only, even in the best of cases, signal a new pause, of greater or lesser duration, in the Lebanese conflict. Furthermore, if the war between the two large camps abates, this will merely allow the many other conflicts in the extraordinary madhouse that Lebanon has become to regain their full fury.

Lebanon is today controlled by a myriad of rival or enemy militias armed to the teeth. They are the instruments through which several states — the US, Israel, Syria, Iraq, Iran and plenty of others — either through proxy or to a lesser extent almost directly, wage war on Lebanese soil. Furthermore, the different militias have their own interests derived above all from the situation of war itself in which they operate like armed bands from the Middle Ages. Even if outside interference in Lebanese affairs were to cease, none of the militias that currently exist is in a position to impose its authority on the others. To do this would, besides, require an appalling bloodbath.

The infernal Lebanese imbroglio

The only conceivable way to resolve the infernal Lebanese imbroglio lies in the reintegration of the Lebanese state into the Syrian whole to which it belongs culturally and of which it was a part before French colonialism detached it in 1920. This solution requires the overthrow of the military-bureaucratic dictatorship in Syria, whose interests lie in hegemony over an "independent" Lebanon which offers all manner of lucrative sources of revenue — including those from hashish — that the bosses in Damascus would not get in the confines of their own state. (See IV 162, May 1, 1989.)

In the meantime, it is to be feared that the murderous escalation will continue indefinitely, in a country now firmly established in the list of regions of permanent slaughter on the planet. ★



Chinese workers speak out after Tiananmen massacre

IN LATE June, the American Trotskyist monthly *Socialist Action* sent a five-person delegation on a 10 day visit to China. We publish below a shortened version of one of the articles giving an account of their trip that appeared in the July 1989 issue of *Socialist Action*.

JIM HENLE

SOCCIALIST ACTION sent a five-person delegation (Mya Shone, Nat Weinstein, Rod Holt, Ralph Schoenman and myself) to travel to Shanghai and Beijing for 10 days in late June to find out from Chinese workers themselves what their feelings were about the regime, the students and their own living situations. We wanted to know what they had witnessed and what they thought about the future.

When we arrived in China, arrests were continuing, police were searching for activists. In Beijing, martial law was in full force, with troops stationed throughout the city. Reports of shooting incidents persisted, and the troops were especially aggressive at night. In Shanghai People's Park, government wall cartoons showed the army skewering "bad element" rats with bayonets. It could be dangerous for workers even to speak with us. Nonetheless, after cautious preliminaries, workers were often very eager to speak their minds.

Chinese workers work a 48-hour week. Wages are low — railroad workers we met made 145 yuan (around \$40) a month with 100-200 yuan bonuses supplementing this wage.

On the other hand, workers have job security and rent is nominal (around 2% to 4% of monthly salary). Retirement age for most men is 60; for women and some men it is 55. Health care is free, and, according to rail workers themselves, of good quality.

Many workers complained loudly of the lack of adequate housing. In Beijing, where high-rises stand over ancient



walled neighbourhoods, workers are allotted six square metres per person. Ignoring soldiers standing only a few yards away, residents of a cramped workers' neighbourhood complained of rats and roaches.

"The economic reform is hurting the people"

Mainly they blamed the government for the bad situation. When we asked who the new housing was for, we always got the same answer: "not for workers". Most of the new housing was for foreigners, officials and those whose factories were profitable enough to provide new housing.

Inflation is a serious problem, estimated at 30% per annum or more. In a neighbourhood restaurant in a workers' area of Shanghai, one group of young workers told us that prices, especially of vegetables, were going way up. Even the lunch we had ordered was becoming unaffordable for most workers. They felt that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was allowing the peasants and other entrepreneurs to get rich at the expense of the great majority. They said: "The Party's policy of economic reform is wrong. It hurts the people."

Today, a month's wages only last two or three weeks. We asked how they managed to survive. "You have to find a way," was the standard reply. They pointed out

that many workers were moonlighting or peddling to make up the difference. One of them even claimed that he could make more money by not working, and instead doing "business" — that is, petty trading and black market activities.

Since many goods are expensive and in scarce supply, extra money is often saved up for big purchases. Savings are deposited in state banks that earn, we were told, only 0.7% interest. Now inflation is eating away the purchasing power of those savings. This is another way workers are being robbed by inflation.

"The distribution of income is unfair" one well-off worker told us. He had worked a year in a moderately skilled post in connection with world trade. He makes five times what his father is making after 24 years as a teacher.

"The bureaucrats speak with their lips, not their hearts"

We met construction workers who earned only two yuan (around 54 cents) a day and worked only half the month. Many like them were farmers who were unable to make a living now under the single family "household responsibility" system. While some farmers are getting rich off the market reforms, many others are unable to make ends meet.

Some of the young workers could not even afford to get married. "There is no love," one said bitterly. "Only money is important." We asked these workers: "What can you do? People must be angry about inflation."

All of them exploded at once: "There's nothing you can do!" We asked them: "Don't workers ever get together to fight inflation, to demand raises from the managers?" "They do," they responded, "and they're promised raises. But the raises never come. The bureaucrats [this was the term they used] speak with their lips, not with their hearts."

The inflation follows the economic "reforms" the CCP has introduced. The reforms allow for the expanded role of the market, including an expansion of foreign investment. Widely praised in the capitalist press, the reforms did not gain much favor with the workers we spoke with.

We met one Shanghai worker, "Sam," who was extremely insightful about this and many other issues. On the reforms, he was adamant: "The reforms have no real effect [in modernizing China]. Ninety-five percent of private business does nothing for the people. Many people just buy from Guangzhao [near Hong Kong in the special economic zone in the Southern coast] and sell to Shanghai at a profit."

"If people were involved in production through better organization," Sam continued, "it would have a lot more effect than private business. It's the government's fault. So much of the economy is lost because people have nothing to do."

Everyone spoke about the corruption of

the regime. We were especially interested in this because the student demonstrators' call for an end to corruption seemed to have been a point of common ground with the workers. Some workers told us: "The salary of a plant official is not that high. But they make their money in bribery. There is always an official if you want to get anything done."

By all accounts, the advantages of privileged position were getting more blatant. For example, as plants compete on the market for raw materials, government officials who control raw material supply can sell favors. We were told that it is common for bureaucrats to buy a scarce item like a TV and sell it at black market rates.

Some of what people call corruption is actually legal. One young official complained that the government allows officials to eat everywhere free at a cost of \$48 billion yuan each year to the people. This is actually more, he said, than is invested in education. Meanwhile the regime vilifies student leader Wu'er Kaixi for once having lunch with a visiting student delegation from Hong Kong.

Corruption is an integral part of the bureaucracy. Sam was asked to characterize the system. "Is it bureaucracy?" we asked. "Bureaucracy is only one side of it," he responded, "Corruption is the other."

He continued: "Corruption is like a dead body starting to stink. Officials have to be corrupt just to be in the bureaucracy. To be a director of a factory you have to be trusted by those above. The whole system and government create corruption."

As times get harder, workers resent the growing privileges of the bureaucracy all the more. And they resent the political system which amounts to little more than a mutual-aid society for the bureaucracy.

"The dictatorship is what people hate"

When we asked Sam what was the cause of the uprising, he said, "Inflation is part of it, but many are getting used to inflation. The dictatorship is what people hate." Another worker told us: "We need more democracy. This is reasonable. Democracy is more than freedom of speech. We need input into decisions. We don't need a dictator, whether he's called 'emperor' or 'general secretary'."

The young workers we lunched with in Shanghai told us: "You have to be careful what you say, even among friends. We cannot say it openly, but in our hearts we

support the students."

Sam was an active participant in the Shanghai protest demonstrations that followed the June 4 massacre. About half-a-million people were involved in Shanghai in street actions. A government train ran over and killed some protesters and vio-



lence erupted.

"Some of us," Sam told us, "were able to see the broadcasts in the hotels serving foreigners [on cable]. We saw that the people attacked after the government atrocities occurred. Then the government attacked again. Official TV showed pictures of people attacking trains, but put an earlier date on the film. So it seemed like the people initiated the violence. But in 10 years all of China will know the truth."

"Ninety percent of the people in Shanghai support the students," Sam continued. "Students stopped the transportation for four days by blocking over 150 main intersections in Shanghai." Workers couldn't get to work and used the breakdown of public transport as an excuse for staying home. Some students later told us that the workers were instrumental in shutting down the city. In Beijing we also found support for the students. We met a worker who had led a contingent from his factory to Tiananmen. He had also begun organizing an independent union.

For the moment the army preserves order. According to Sam, "The soldiers come from the country and are little aware of the political situation, so they don't care. Control and censorship in the army is very strict. Soldiers believe in the ruling stratum very strongly. Most officers are involved in the black market."

Fully three weeks after the massacre troops maintain a strong presence. We were told that about 400 rifles were taken from the soldiers, of which only 100 had been recovered. Sniper fire has been reported and there is a rumor that two soldiers have been garroted at night. Giant banners hang from the main buildings. "Combat bourgeois liberalism!" "Insist on support for the leadership of the Communist Party!"

Our hotel, the Jinglun, where the army opened fire on a group of tourists, now

sports a banner that reads, "Hail the Communist party!" In the workers' districts, notices read, "Don't listen to rumors! Don't go to underground meetings!"

Even in martial law Beijing, we were approached by people who told us that we must go and tell the truth of what happened in Tiananmen. While we heard outrage at the regime for its violence and exasperation at its power, we did not find a mood of dejection.

We heard workers' perspectives on how change could take place. A number of workers looked to the reform wing of the bureaucracy around Zhao Ziyang as an alternative. Several spoke of Mikhail Gorbachev as the model, a senti-

ment we also found among students.

The most extensive and most interesting conversation we had about reform was with the Shanghai worker Sam. He said that there should be a separation of the ruling party from the government and that the rule of law should replace arbitrary rule. He clearly saw the need for new leadership.

Crackdown pre-empted mass self-organization

Sam agreed with us that Zhao was part of the bureaucracy and would not be bold enough to provide the needed change. His support for Zhao was conditional and he even stated, "There should be more than one party." The workers, he recognized, needed an independent political voice.

In Shanghai a setback has been suffered. Even at the height of the movement, only the beginnings of workers' organization developed. Some independent unions and worker groups formed, but there were no mass committees.

While workers and students maintained order in Tiananmen Square in Beijing, the brutal crackdown pre-empted mass self-organization. Workers are now cut off from one another and from many of the ideas and experiences that can enrich their movement. Most workers we talked to had not thought things through like Sam. We told him we thought his insight into the government and the crackdown were especially clear and that he had a rare understanding of the situation.

"There are many people like me," he said. "Most just don't talk about it [the government massacre] in public. When people go home, everyone talks about it. Before the massacre people had little understanding of the situation, but now people are awakening. This awakening will be broad — and it will be deep." ★



The consequences of historic failure

FOR THE FIRST TIME for 40 years, a "People's Democracy" has a prime minister who is not out of the Stalinist stable. The nomination of Tadeusz Mazowiecki, a close adviser of Lech Walesa and director of the *Solidarnosc* weekly, is an indication of the crisis of bureaucratic rule in Poland and throughout the Soviet bloc.

The Polish bureaucracy has failed to overcome the aftermath of the revolutionary wave of 1980-81, or to "normalize" its rule. Furthermore, popular pressure has continued to mount, as shown by the results of the June elections and the continuous strike wave of 1988.

The Mazowiecki government is thus the final attempt of the bureaucratic leadership in Poland to keep ahead of events and gain a margin of manoeuvre in the face of popular opposition.

CYRIL SMUGA

THE ARRIVAL in the country's top position of a representative of *Solidarnosc* marks a break with the "round-table" policy agreed by the opposition leaders grouped around Walesa and the Jaruzelski leadership of the bureaucracy. The round-table agreement was conceived as a major concession that would head off the demands of the masses and provide the regime with a democratic façade. At the same time it would allow the implementation of a number of unpopular measures that involve more reliance on market mechanisms. But it failed to hold back the popular mobilization.

According to official statistics there were more days lost through strikes in 1988 than in any year since 1982. In the public sector

there were 202 strikes in which 55,000 workers took part. In the first half of 1989 both the number of strikes and of strikers doubled, despite Lech Walesa's January 19 appeal when he stated: "Today, Poland cannot afford strikes and I do not want to see strike pressures developing Conditions here are such that everybody can find a reason to go on strike, but common sense tells us that this is a road that leads nowhere."

In the first quarter of 1989 there were 254 strikes involving more than 100,000 strikers. In April and May there were 72 strikes, but their duration and the numbers involved increased. Finally, in June — the month of the elections! — and at the beginning of July there was a sharp increase in

strikes. There were 352 strikes, on occasion involving entire sectors (according to *Rzeczpospolita*, July 13, 1989). Throughout July and above all in August, strikes have been even more numerous, and have included regional general strikes, some called by the regional structures of *Solidarnosc*, others supported by those structures only after they were underway, and somewhat reluctantly.

The formation of a government led by an oppositionist is a new concession to the demands of the workers. It is not clear, however, that even this will be enough. The material situation of the population has worsened, and the desire to get rid of everything that even vaguely recalls the 45 years of bureaucratic rule is extremely powerful.

Twenty-five years of social explosions

The opposition has come to the forefront of the political scene under the double impact of the collapse of the Stalinist model and the awakening of the leadership of the Polish party-state apparatus to the reality of the situation. The leaders of the Polish bureaucracy have faced social explosions for 25 years and have already tried everything.

At the end of the war the Stalinists succeeded in establishing their state apparatus, relying essentially on the massive Soviet military presence and on bureaucratic repression.

In 1956 the mechanism of smooth de-Stalinization was disrupted by an explosion of workers' strikes. The Polish communists reinstalled at their head Wladyslaw Gomulka — previous party secretary, put on trial for "Titoist deviations" — then negotiated a compromise with the Catholic hierarchy and abandoned collectivization of agriculture. By isolating the workers' vanguard and emptying the workers' councils of their content, the bureaucrats managed to reestablish their system.

But once opened, the Pandora's Box of pluralism could not be closed. In 1968, faced with a youth radicalization and intellectual dissent inside the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR, the Communist party) itself, the apparatus resorted to a vile anti-Semitic campaign. Furthermore, cut off from the intelligentsia, the PZPR lost the ideological backbone that it had established with great difficulty at the time of de-Stalinization, sank into mediocrity and became a stamping ground for careerists.

In December 1970, faced with the strike that gripped the Baltic ports, the apparatus first sent in the troops, then changed its general secretary again, and finally gave into the material demands of the strikers. For 10 years, the new general secretary, Edward Gierek, tried to put over a consumerist ideology, holding out the mirage of an individual car for everybody, in response to a working class that aspired to the power that, on paper, belonged to them.

This experience ended in a big foreign

debt and an unprecedented economic crisis. At the same time, the consumerist aspirations that had been aroused but not satisfied led, in the summer of 1980, to the greatest upsurge in Poland's history. Solidarnosc was born, and the break between the bureaucracy and the working class was finally completed. The movement rapidly became politicized and began to raise the question of power. In December 1981, the apparatus once more resorted to force.

The imposition of martial law did not succeed in stopping the spreading discontent. But, by disorganizing Solidarnosc as an open mass movement, the repression allowed its leading circles to become autonomous. The Solidarnosc leadership gradually abandoned those elements of the union's programme of 1981 that opened the way for a socialist and democratic alternative — the aspiration towards the socialization of both the economy and the state, through a developed system of producers' self-management.

A new generation of militants

The attempt to resolve the crisis by reducing working class and peasant consumption and by the super-exploitation of the wage earners failed. The bureaucracy lost its remaining margin for manoeuvre and wasted all its reserves trying to damp down the smouldering strikes through gradual concessions on wages.

As popular radicalization began once again to rise and a new generation of militants appeared on the political and social scene, the top apparatchiks realized that their only hope was to reach a political compromise with the leaders of Solidarnosc, who, meanwhile, had become devotees of economic liberalism. The second requirement was to accept the conditions imposed by the imperialist bourgeoisie in order to open the way for foreign investment, to enable production to be refloated and ensure the survival of a state that was near to bankruptcy.

The result of the new awareness was entry into the International Monetary Fund (IMF); a resolve to get out of the diplomatic isolation into which the Polish regime had been plunged by the mobilizations in support of Solidarnosc, and which had forced the imperialist governments to take their distance from Jaruzelski; step-by-step internal liberalization; and, finally, the speeding-up of political and economic reforms once Jaruzelski managed to overcome the resistance of the apparatus. Confronted by a choice between the unknown and the certainty of failure, the Polish bureaucracy chose to leap into the unknown.

This leap however, insofar as it could be, was prepared by a slow but steady change in the respective roles of the various apparatuses within the regime. Thus, under the cover of militarization, Jaruzelski's team

management, re-organized the state administration, speeded up the transformation of enterprise directors into "managers" with considerable discretion in decision-making, and encouraged them to experiment, notably within limited companies.

The state's economic and administrative apparatus left Stalinist-style ideological hot air to the PZPR and developed its own pragmatic line of thinking similar to the free-enterprise theses promoted by the opposition leaders. The police and especially the anti-riot squads (ZOMO), as well as the bodies of plainclothes cops who make up the political police, were strongly reinforced. Under the leadership of General Kiszczak, and at the behest of his boss, these forces played a key role in the preparation of the political reforms. Finally, the Jaruzelski team got the Solidarnosc leaders to accept a modification of the constitution that would guarantee the president sufficient powers so that the bureaucracy would not be obliged to cling forever to the outmoded principle of the "leading role of the party." The Solidarnosc leaders acquiesced openly in the election of General Jaruzelski as president.

It is clear that the formation of a government headed by a member of Solidarnosc was not part of the plan at the start of the round-table process. Certainly such a government will be trying to preserve the fragile compromise reached six months ago. Furthermore, Jaruzelski's people — in the PZPR but also in the two satellite parties that the leaders of Solidarnosc, for their own purposes, have presented as being fundamentally different from the PZPR, when they are in fact all part of the same family — will be keeping an eye on the new government. Nevertheless, in the eyes of the troops, this is the second defeat suffered by the bureaucracy, after the electoral débâcle.

"Diluting the basic principles of our movement"

This threatens to aggravate the tensions in the PZPR, perhaps even provoking some elements of the nomenklatura to go over to the "enemy camp." After his election as first secretary of the PZPR, Mieczyslaw Rakowski underlined this point: "We are living in a period when it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between what is new, necessary and indispensable for socialism, and what is an opportunist concession that leads towards the dilution of the basic principles on which our movement is founded and out of which People's Poland was born."

Even worse, there is a tendency for the party to cease playing its new role as an ideological link between the nomenklaturists in the various apparatuses. Rakowski pointed out that "in many base organizations, activity has disappeared or is in the process of disappearing" before making the following appeal: "Comrades, while deeply analyzing the reasons for our weak-

nesses, errors and setbacks, we must not fall on our knees in front of our political adversary.... There are two million of us! We are a great army. We possess great strength. Today we are to a large extent prevented from acting, but that need not always be the case. We should not allow anyone to suppress us or bury us with demagoguery and the total denial of the historic results of the last few decades, which have seen revolutionary changes that have profited the nation, from which we originated and with which we are bound up forever." (*Rzeczpospolita*, July 31, 1989.)

Conflicts of interest inside the PZPR

But this has not kept divisions from showing up in a party that is wasting away. The average age of the membership is nearly 50. Furthermore, according to Mariusz Gulczynski, a political scientist and PZPR ideologue, 900,000 of the 2.1 million party members are leaders at various levels. The rest — apart from a large number of pensioners — are in the apparatus of the official trade unions (OPZZ), discredited by its role after the dissolution of Solidarnosc and with little base in the enterprises. This apparatus has been trying to make its mark by criticizing the government, and by supporting spontaneous strikes and trying to take the leadership of them in the hope of gaining ground against Solidarnosc. It also tried — without great success — to outbid Solidarnosc at the time of the round-table talks over the issue of the indexation of wages.

There are objective conflicts of interest between, on the one hand, the pensioners, whose biographies, according to Gulczynski, "finished at the moment of the crisis of socialism", and for whom, "to admit that what has existed was unjust would be to deny the whole meaning of their lives"; and on the other the nomenklatura, up to its neck in the adventure of privatization, and the OPZZ apparatchiks. This is one of the roots of the party crisis that came into the open at the PZPR's thirteenth congress in July.

On resigning as Central Committee secretary in charge of economic questions, Wladyslaw Baka criticized government policy on the struggle against inflation and the stabilization of the currency. He went on to explain that there was "a split over the conceptions and methods for the resolution of the country's socio-economic problems". While agreeing with the general policy — market economy, privatization — he criticized the way in which this was carried out. He denounced in particular "the creation of parasitic limited companies, who sell poor goods and raw materials, getting a fabulous profit out of them". He also insisted on the need to prioritize the development of workers' shareholdings. (*Rzeczpospolita*, July 31, 1989.)

However — and this is the new element linked to the changing role of the party in

the bureaucratic power structure — it proved possible to avert the explosion forecast by some of its well-known representatives, such as professor Jerzy Wiatr or Central Committee secretary Leszek Miller, by changing the norms of functioning. The resolution adopted by the congress specifies that: "Unity is only possible in conditions of developed internal democracy. This implies freedom of discussion, and the possibility for various tendencies and political positions to arise, including the right to put forward alternative programmatic platforms. This also does not exclude retaining the right of the minority to defend its positions." (*Rzeczpospolita*, August 2, 1989.)

The designation of Tadeusz Mazowiecki as prime minister is also going to exacerbate the tensions inside Solidarnosc, including in its leading circles. After their surprise at their overwhelming electoral victory, those leaders closest to Lech Walesa did everything to stick to the framework of the round-table accords, which were already partially obsolete.

Opposition helped elect Jaruzelski

The episode of the July 19 presidential election, as told by a Polish journalist, demonstrates this: "An analysis of the vote shows that Wojciech Jaruzelski's candidature was passed thanks to the joint effort of the coalition and a part of the opposition.... The coalition lost 12 votes against and 16 abstentions, 28 votes in total. These losses were made good by the opposition votes of one for, seven no-votes and the absence of 11 deputies.... The no-votes were made by representatives of the opposition who were at the bottom of the list of Assembly members (for example, Paszynski, Stelmachowski, Stomma, Trzeciakowski, Wielowieyski) — in other words,

being the last to come to the ballot box they knew that their vote would be decisive. Their decision was therefore a choice in favour of Jaruzelski, which also meant the implementation of the guarantees that the opposition elite had given not to obstruct this election". (*Przegląd Tygodniowy*, July 30, 1989.)

"Nothing has basically changed"

When it was learnt that Jaruzelski owed his election to the votes of members of parliament elected on Solidarnosc's ticket, an angry wind blew through the union. It is significant that it was following this event that, contrary to the decision to stick to an attitude of constructive opposition towards the government that General Kiszczak had been given the task of forming, Lech Walesa surprised all his collaborators by declaring in a communique dated August 7 this year: "The most recent decisions taken by the government concerning the nomination of the new prime minister demonstrate that the present monopoly will be maintained. This reinforces the crisis of confidence and, in the eyes of the society, represents the confirmation of fears that nothing has basically changed...."

"Once again, I protest against the formation of the new government by General Kiszczak. The only solution in the current situation is the nomination of a council of ministers based on a coalition of Solidarnosc, the ZSL and the SD."¹ (*Rzeczpospolita*, August 8, 1989.) What is more, in a speech he had said that he was a supporter of a government "without the Communists", something that the parliamentary leaders of Solidarnosc seemed to have willfully forgotten.

The individual behaviour of Lech Walesa is also the object of numerous public criticisms from other Solidarnosc leaders.

Thus, in the weekly *Tygodnik Solidarnosc* (issue 10, 1989), Maciej Poleski wrote:

"The symbol of the two dangers [the 'arbitrariness of leaders' and 'orthodox syndicalism'] could be embodied in Senator Andrzej Machalski. Here is a man who...., from spring 1989, has become head of the Executive Bureau of the Civic Committee. And although in the electoral programme of this committee one can read that Solidarnosc is opposed to the nomenklatura's appropriation of the means of production [the 'privatization' of the bureaucracy], Machalski, who had 'privatized' himself, becomes a member of Walesa's team. After this, the ORTUS limited company was founded by the ex-secretary of the CC, Waldemar Swirgon, who manages the economic activity of the LZS; and the UNICUM cooperative run by Andrzej Machalski. Is this not a typical case of 'privatization' of the nomenklatura?"

"One misses the time when a leader of the August 1980 strike was seen to be forced to quit the National Commission because, to be able to buy a car, he had taken a voucher on the sly from the hands of the prefect of police in Gdansk...!"

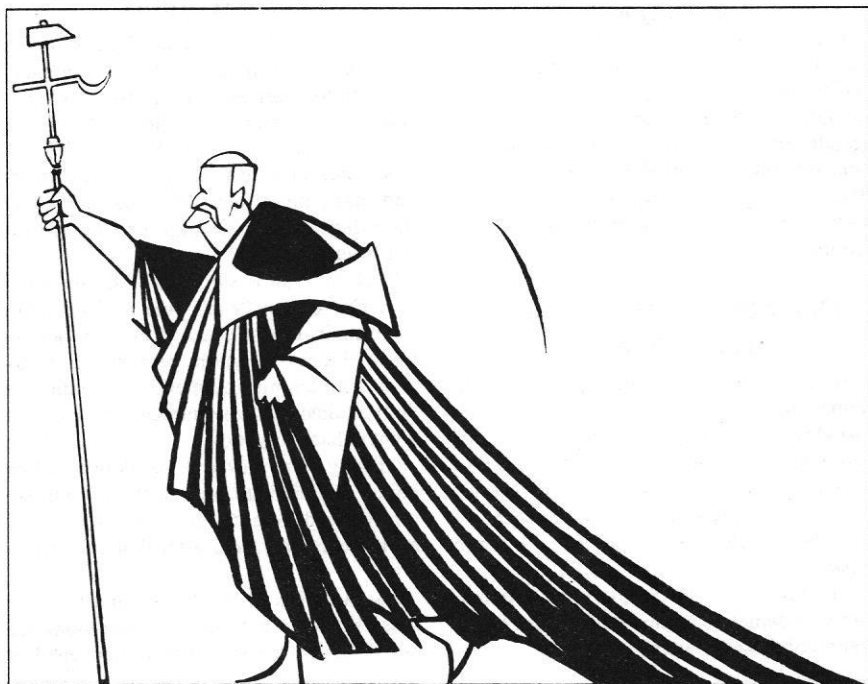
Tadeusz Mazowiecki's government, according to all the signs, will follow the economic policies of its predecessor, Mieczyslaw Rakowski. Lech Walesa has reaffirmed this in a recent interview with the Italian daily, *Il Messaggero*:

"Until now nobody has adopted the road that leads from socialism towards capitalism. And that is what we will try to do: return to the pre-war situation [when Poland was a capitalist country], after having gone through a long period of socialism.... Our economic and political models are those Western countries that have obtained good results." (August 22, 1989.)

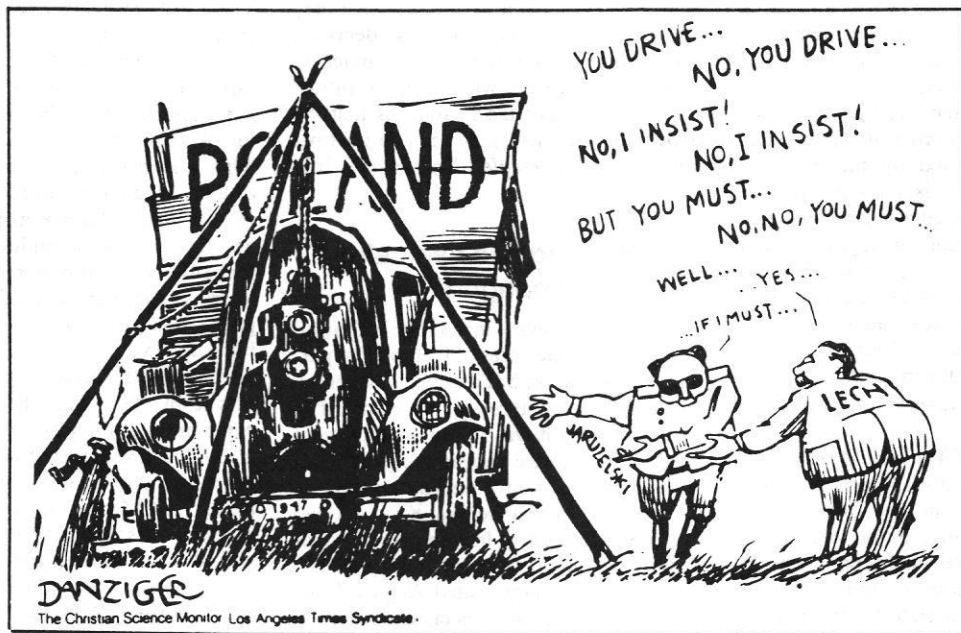
Walesa group follow IMF diktats

This is reinforced by the fact that, well before taking on governmental responsibilities, the leaders of the Walesa group had announced that they respected the IMF's conditions. Thus, Solidarnosc senator Witold Trzeciakowski had for several months been pushing an economic plan that was intended to meet with the approval of international financial institutions. It came out in favour of converting debts into shares in Polish companies — "this won't mean self-management, but rather a more modest form of participation".

The plan also explained that austerity policy was the only thing possible because "if the society does not agree, we risk being totally cut off from Western technology, which will mean a continuing collapse of



1. The ZSL (United Peasant Party) and the SD (Democratic Party) were founded by Stalinist leaders in order to give some reality to the regime's supposed pluralism and to compete with the historical political formations. As satellites of the PZPR, they played practically no role until 1989. The crisis of the bureaucracy, which affects the PZPR, has hit them also.



the Polish economy." (*Gazeta Wyborcza*, May 29, 1989.) And it is probable that, inside a future cabinet, Witold Trzeciakowski will obtain one of the important economic portfolios.

"Privatization of the nomenklatura"

At no time did Solidarnosc's leaders envisage refusing to pay the external debt! Poland received \$48,000 million in various loans from the beginning of 1971 through to the end of 1988, during the same period it paid back \$44,000m. However, its debt remains at \$39,000m, of which nearly \$12,000m represents unpaid interest rescheduled as principal.

Until now, the leaders of the Civic Parliamentary Group (OKP) have reaffirmed their general agreement on the direction of the market economic reform and on the need for privatization, while strongly underlining their differences with the "pathologies" of the privatization process that is underway.

Thus, when introducing the parliamentary debate on the record of the Rakowski government in the name of the OKP, Ryszard Bugaj, a well-known Solidarnosc economic expert, pointed to: "the pathological transformations in the ownership of the economy", and, in particular, "the rapid development, inside the state sector, of a number of limited companies that bring more losses than benefits to the economy", as well as "the known facts that show disrespect for the acknowledged principle that the leasing of state enterprises will be done by inviting tenders". Another OKP deputy, Adam Matuszczak, recalled that according to one recent study, nearly 13% of limited companies had only played an intermediary role.

These criticisms echo a great deal of anger among workers aroused by manifes-

tations of "the privatization of the nomenklatura", criticisms that have also been taken up recently by the PZPR. Moreover, they combine an idealization of market mechanisms with a revulsion against their concrete results. Testifying to the naivety of the conception of the market widely held among Solidarnosc's elected representatives, one of them, Marek Jurek, stated: "A number of us want privatization based on generalizing access to ownership, on a normally functioning stock exchange, and also on the participation of wage earners in ownership. What worries us is the fact that workers remain proletarian and that the 'nomenklatura' are transforming themselves into capitalists." (Quoted in *Rzeczpospolita*, August 2, 1989.)

This naive idealization of capitalism, equated with an abundance of goods, is widely held among Solidarnosc militants as well as more generally in the society as a whole. It is a by-product of the model of a consumer society launched during the 1970s by the bureaucracy, at the time led by Edward Gierek; years of Stalinist propaganda around the theme of "catching up and overtaking" the West; and, lastly, of the ideology developed by Polish economists from both Solidarnosc and the government.

Potential divisions among trade unionists

It can, in the first instance, give a boost to hopes for capitalist restoration. But the backlash risks being as great as the disillusionment, because the model of the market economy Polish-style — that is, an economy at the mercy of the IMF's demands — will be far removed from today's naive visions.

In addition — and Solidarnosc militants are very sensitive on this point — the realization of these projects is a potentially divi-

sive factor among trade unionists. This is illustrated by one recent event during the discussion to prepare the warning general strike of August 11 in the Gdansk region, whose goal was to force General Jaruzelski to accept a Solidarnosc member as prime minister. Alojzy Szablewski, the leader of the union at the Lenin shipyard who was opposed to the strike and then found himself in a minority, explained that, in any case, he would not apply the decision because "I haven't struggled to save the shipyard, just to have it endangered today. A strike like this could upset the interests of Basia Piasecka-Johnson [the American multimillionaire who proposed taking over the shipyard in a joint venture]". (Quoted in *Polityka*, August 19, 1989.)

"I am not looking to build a strong union"

The political and social choices of the Walesa leadership have not for the moment allowed Solidarnosc to profit from its legalization in order to rebuild a hegemonic unionism, as existed in 1980-81. Solidarnosc presently has 2.7 million members and many union branches balk at sending their dues to it, testifying to a lack of trust in the leadership.

Lech Walesa is satisfied with this situation. On August 19 this year he declared to a journalist on *Polityka*: "I am not looking to build a strong union, because a Solidarnosc with ten million members would be a club against the government, and I do not want to hang anybody."

"Today, you have to be Polish before being a unionist, and such an attitude imposes a different scale of values: first of all the economy, and after that everything else."

So, the crisis of the regime and the concessions that it is forced to make today are out of all proportion to what happened in

1981. But the level of self-organization of the masses is much weaker. During the strikes workers formed their own committees, but, without any impetus to centralize them and with distrust of Solidarnosc's structures remaining strong, these primitive forms of self-organization could not develop any further.

The question of power, objectively posed by the result of the June elections and the incapacity of the bureaucratic leadership, finds no political solution in the workers' movement. The broad coalition government that Mazowiecki is preparing to form will not be seen by workers as being their government, even if it could enjoy goodwill for a time.

Alternative policies for a workers' government

What policy would allow the working class to strengthen its self-confidence and the activity of the masses? This is the question that is faced today by radical political militants who are opposed to Lech Walesa's orientation.

It is easy to present a list of demands that a truly workers' government should meet, and that trade-union organizations, self-management councils and oppositional political groups could put up front.

Firstly, there are demands relating to the current economic situation, which are reminiscent of those advanced nine years ago, in August 1980: sliding scale of wages and social benefits; reduction of incomes above the level of double the average wage; suppression of privileges, and so on. Linked to this is the refusal to bow to the dictates of the IMF and other imperialist centres, and the non-payment of the debt.

And the demands concerning freedom should not be forgotten: ending censorship; dissolving the political police; union rights in the army and the police force; ending the monopoly over the media; election of all the economic leaders and, in the first place, of managers.

Then there are demands concerning the elimination of the PZPR's privileges as a political organization, and, in particular, those already put forward in 1981 during the referendums in a number of enterprises: that the enterprises should not pay the wages of the PZPR fulltimers inside them.

Finally, there are demands concerning the question of political power: free elections to a Constituent Assembly, elected on the basis of proportionality — a demand that is more relevant than ever given that the PZPR is preparing to propose a constitutional change via the present National Assembly which, it must be remembered, was only partially elected.

If the self-organized mass movement could be given a new breath of life around such demands, it could raise the question of a Solidarnosc government accountable to the rank-and-file committees and charged with implementing these demands. ★

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Condemnation of Prague Spring intervention

AN OFFICIAL spokesperson for the Gorbachev team has followed the Polish and Hungarian Communist Parties and condemned the military Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968.

Evgenii Ambartsumov, Gorbachev's adviser on relations with the socialist countries and departmental head at the Institute of the World Socialist System at Moscow, gave an interview to the Italian daily *La Repubblica* of August 13-14 in which he states categorically: "It was a practical error and a violation of Czechoslovakia's national sovereignty." In the same interview, Ambartsumov reveals that a member of the Soviet Communist Party Politburo, Voronov, voted against the military intervention. He was dismissed from his position.

Ambartsumov had previously sharply denounced the military suppression of the workers' councils and the removal of the Imre Nagy government in Hungary in 1956. In an article in *Les Nouvelles de Moscou* (June 23, 1989), he describes that intervention as a "cruel and despotic policy" originating in an "original Stalinism" that Khrushchev was never able to overcome. He compares the counter-revolution in Hungary to the repression of the Chinese democratic movement, and draws the following conclusion: "Zhao Ziyang, until recently the general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, and who was sympathetic to the students, will probably escape the grim fate that befell Imre Nagy, but the sinister shadow of Autumn 1956 hangs over China today." ★

Important works by Trotsky published in USSR

THE Communist Party youth organization's magazine *Molodoi Komunist* (Young Communist) published several letters from Leon Trotsky in its August 1989 issue. The letters, sent by Trotsky to the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party, initiated and supported the first Left Opposition, the so-called 47, which became public in October 1923.

These letters denounced the grip of the bureaucracy on the party and the opposi-

tion between a few thousand people "in positions of command" on the one side and the mass of party members on the other. Trotsky's letters thus appear as forerunners — 65 years ago — of the anti-bureaucratic denunciations current in the Soviet Union over the past two years. ★

Katyn massacre

THE Soviet authorities have always claimed that the German army carried out the massacre in the Katyn forest. Here, on the Polish-Soviet frontier, several Polish military units had to surrender to the Red Army. What had happened to these soldiers became clear from 1941 when the bodies of thousands of Polish officers began to be discovered. The number counted reached 11,000.

Two Soviet historians from the Institute of Social Sciences of the Academy of Sciences, Alexandr Akulichev and Alexandr Pamyatnykh, have now stated that those responsible for the massacre were from the Soviet NKVD. They have thus admitted something that every Pole has known for a long time. (*Les Nouvelles de Moscou*, August 11, 1989.) ★

Inter-regional group at the Congress of People's Deputies

ON JULY 29 and 30 this year the founding meeting of the Inter-regional Group met at the House of the Cinema in Moscow. It brings together 269 members of the Congress of People's Deputies, mostly from Moscow and Leningrad.

Among its instigators are important figures such as the Moscow leader Boris Yeltsin, the historian Yuri Afanassiev and the Nobel prize winner Andrei Sakharov. The Inter-regional Group publishes its own journal *Narodny Deputat* (The People's Deputy). It fights for party pluralism and for the political expression of the "radical left minority" that came out of the last elections as proposed by Yeltsin. (*Les Nouvelles de Moscou*, August 3, 1989.) A debate is continuing among the members of the Group as to what organizational structure they will adopt. According to a poll, 41.7% of the members wish the Group to

continue in the form of "discussion clubs", while the majority (55.4%) wish the Group to have a clearer political profile, with the elaboration of a platform. ★

Towards the formation of the People's Front of the Ukraine

ON AUGUST 15, the provisional leaders of the People's Front of the Ukraine announced that their founding congress would take place on September 8 in Kiev. The Ukrainian editor-in-chief of the weekly *Ogonyok*, Vitali A. Korotich, revealed that some 50 Ukrainian members of the Congress of People's Deputies have launched a campaign against the new Ukrainian electoral law which gives 25% of the seats in local soviets to the Communist Party and other "social organizations."

According to Korotich, the recent strikes of miners in the Donbas have terrified the party bureaucrats who are trying to hang on to their positions. ★

The secret protocols of the "Hitler-Stalin pact"

FIFTY years ago, on August 23, 1939, V. Molotov and J. von Ribbentrop, the foreign ministers of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, signed the notorious pact which was to open the way to the Second World War. The existence of a secret protocol to the pact, that sanctioned the partition of Poland between the two great powers and the Soviet occupation of the Baltic States (Finland, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia) has now been admitted in the Soviet press.

In *Les Nouvelles de Moscou* of August 21, 1989, the historian N. Eidelman under-

lines the unconstitutional character of the secret accords, which, unlike the non-aggression pact, were not ratified by the Supreme Soviet. He saw in these secret agreements, that were the culmination of the logic of collaboration between the Third Reich and the USSR, the end product of "the terrorist and totalitarian Stalinist policies of the 1930s."

All the documents concerning the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact have been known in the West since the end of the Second World War and the Soviet press has revealed nothing new. But the admission of the existence of the pact's secret protocols, and the vigorous criticism, clearly represent a new step forward for *glasnost*.

The recognition of the anti-constitutional character of the accords will have an enormous impact on the Baltic countries, where it will be taken as a vindication of the national demands of the Estonians, Lithuanians and Latvians.

The process of revising the Soviet position on the 1939 pact began last year. For example, in the October 1988 issue of *Sputnik*, the historian Vassily Kulich analyses the disastrous effects of the accord on the international communist movement: "Stalin ordered the communist parties throughout the world to at once cease their anti-fascist propaganda and approve the agreement with Hitler. Stalin did not stop at dividing social democrats and communists. He began to discredit and disarm the communists in the West themselves. One or two years more and the western communist parties would have been wound up!"

Now is the time for the Soviet press to recognize another result of the agreement between Hitler and Stalin. The citizens of the USSR should know that after the pact was signed, the NKVD [Soviet secret

police] handed over to the Nazis several hundred German communists who had fled to the Soviet Union after 1933. Many of them had already fallen foul of the Stalinist terror and had been interned in concentration camps. *Glasnost* must not step back in the face of this repulsive crime, which was sanctioned by the "spirit of friendly concord" that underlay the agreement between the two dictators. ★

"United Front of the Workers of Russia"

BENJAMIN YARIN, a metalworker from the Sverdlovsk region and a deputy in the Supreme Soviet, and a member of the strike committee of the Miners of Kemerov in Siberia has called a founding congress of a "United Front of the Workers of Russia."

According to the Moscow correspondent of the Spanish daily *El Pais* of August 15, 1989, Yarin stated that: "neither the unions, nor the workers' councils, nor the party apparatus defend the workers. We have therefore created this Front to defend ourselves. It is not possible to make the working class pick up the bill for all the political and economic disasters of the past seven decades." ★

Attack on the independent press

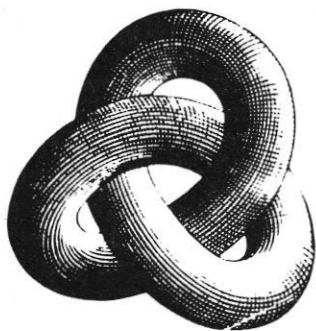
The August 26 *Pravda* carried a major article by Yuri Zhukov denouncing "anti-Sovietism" and Western influence in independent publications. The writer, who purported to be a veteran of the independent press in Lenin's day, took some time to get to his point. He began by recalling the flowering of independent journalism in the revolutionary period and the crushing of press freedom by Stalin. He noted that now the law on anti-Soviet propaganda was no longer used.

"However," he went on to say, independent publications were saying quite unacceptable things. Among others he mentioned a publication, "bought for a rouble and a half at Moscow University", *Slobodnoe Slovo*, which called on its readers to demand "a constituent assembly on a multi-party basis" and "the breakup of the empire."

He said such publications often had circulations of over 10,000 and were in fact financed by the West. This made them "foreign publications" circulated "without state permission" on Soviet territory. Furthermore, the state authorities had the duty to find out where they got their resources and especially their paper. "It's no secret that they simply steal some of it."

He concluded on the other hand that it was necessary to combat these "political opponents" with the "methods of *glasnost*", that is, to debate with them. But to do that, the Communist Party press had to apply the Leninist principle of "party loyalty." ★

Planificación, mercado y democracia



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Sharpening confrontation over national rights

THE SPREAD and radicalization of national movements continue to accelerate. In this respect, the publication of the Communist Party's new program on the national question on August 17, and the new campaign launched against the Baltic movements after the demonstration of a million people across the three republics on August 23, seem to be having little effect.

The upsurge has almost certainly gone too far to be halted without a major turn in the situation. In a feature on the Baltic movements in the July 27 Issue of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Bernd Nielsen-Stokkeby quoted a Latvian writer, "An airplane can be stopped while it is still on the runway. But we have already taken off. Now we can only fly or crash."

GERRY FOLEY



rise in tension in NKAO, and to a blockade of the oblast.

"Meeting in these conditions, the Congress of Mandated Representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh in fact represented only the Armenian majority. 'In order to stabilize the situation in the region until the Oblast' Soviet and Party Organizational Committee are restored to their functions,' it elected a National Council, endowing it 'in the name of the people with supreme authority in administering the oblast' in all spheres in the period between congresses [of mandated people's representatives]. 'In the decisions of the Congress, the National Council is characterized as the 'only people's organ of Communists and non-party people'."

A problem that has become deeply entangled

The dispatch continued: "'This National Council acts independently under the control only of the Congress. Its decisions are meant to be applied on the whole territory of Nagorno-Karabakh.'...It is...hard to understand how relations will develop with the [official] Special Administration Committee, which...holds full power on the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh."

The dispatch ends: "Of course, jurists have yet to give their assessments of the legality of the Congress and the compatibility of its documents with state legislation in view of the form of special administration operating in the NKAO. However, it is clear that the leaders of the Armenian part of the population of Nagorno-Karabakh are trying to find new ways to actively express their will in order to remind the authorities and public opinion of the issue they have raised.

"The problem of Nagorno-Karabakh has become deeply entangled. But the knot cannot be cut, as some would like to do. An attempt at such a resolution of the matter would inevitably offend many people. The problem of the NKAO must be resolved in a carefully weighed way, taking no chances."

Furthermore, on September 4, the People's Front of Azerbaijan launched a gen-

MORE AND MORE nationalities are raising their heads, such as the Gagauz Turks, who live mainly in the Republic of Moldavia. *New York Times* Service correspondent Bill Keller reported the following remark by a Gagauz farmer in Komrat in early August, "If the miners in the Kuznetsk Basin can make demands, you think we can't make demands too?"¹

It has, furthermore, become evident that the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh in the Caucasus has not been brought under control by the imposition of direct rule from Moscow. On August 23, *Pravda* published a TASS dispatch that reflected a continuing radicalization in the region and the nervousness of the Soviet authorities. Strangely, it was not pointed up in the international press. The dispatch began:

"The beginning of the week was marked in the autonomous oblast' by a return to work in the enterprises, building sites, buses, organizations and institutions of workers who had been on strike since May 3. However, normal work has not been fully resumed." Thus, apparently a general strike had been going on in the region for four months.

Not only that. The decision to end the strike was made by a body that suggests dual power, and which was treated very gingerly in the TASS dispatch: "The decision of the Congress of Mandated Representatives of the Population of Nagorno-Karabakh meeting last week in Stepana-

kert for a return to normal work was unquestionably positive. Other decisions of this Congress, as well as the circumstances in which it was conducted, merit more detailed analysis."

What merited "more detailed analysis" in particular was the question of what authority this body could actually wield. Supporters of the Karabakh movement have challenged the assumption of power by central authorities, declaring the measures contradictory to the Statutes of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the constitution.

"Irresponsible actions of rampaging elements"

One of the demands of the strikers was restoration of the rights of the local party and Soviet bodies. As *Pravda* explains: "In a meeting of the USSR people's deputies from the NKAO and oblast' leaders with the leadership of the country at the end of June, an agreement was reached that the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and the Special Administration Committee would determine the timing and modalities for a restoration of these bodies...."

"However, the continuing strike, the turning away of some local leaders from resolving important socio-economic problems for which they were directly responsible, the irresponsible actions of rampaging elements on both sides and ill-considered statements in the republic and local press destabilized the situation; and this, along with other factors, led to a new

1. *International Herald Tribune*, August 8, 1989.

eral strike in the republic's capital, Baku, which seems to have been widely followed, despite the arrival of all-Union troops. The internal Soviet central press said little about these events. However, they were reported prominently in the September 8 issue of *Nouvelles de Moscou*, which summarized the demands of the Front as follows:

"Registration of the People's Front of Azerbaijan as a social organization.

"Release the prisoners and end the prosecution of those arrested in the mass rallies last November.

"Annul the election results for people's deputies of the USSR held in Azerbaijan under the curfew.

"Lift the curfew and hold new elections."

Open national movements in Muslim republics

It is interesting that the demand for restoring Azerbaijani rule over Nagorno-Karabakh was not mentioned. Defense of Azeri sovereignty over the territory was central to the Baku demonstrations in November 1988 and in at least the first publications of the Azerbaijan People's Front.

A summary of the Azeri People's Front program published by the *Radio Free Europe* newsletter indicates that it was formulated on the model of the Baltic fronts, with the same headings. (See the translation of the Latvian front program on p. 18) However, it was also notable in the November demonstrations that Azeri nationalist, pan-Turkist and pan-Islamic sentiments were prominently expressed, along with anti-Russian feelings. One of the leaders of the November demonstrations, Nemet Panakhov was attacked specifically in the central Soviet press for threatening attacks on Soviet offices in Baku.

An important development this year is the rise of open national movements in the Muslim republics, including, besides the Azeri Front, the Birlık (Unity) in Uzbekistan, which issued an appeal calling for an end to the pogroms against the Meskhetian Turks. If the axis of the Azeri front shifts from opposition to the Armenians to opposition to Moscow, that would be a major turn in the situation.

It should be remembered that the Armenian movement has never put the blame for the Nagorno-Karabakh problem on the Azeris but always on Moscow, which it accused of manipulating the anti-Armenian protests. In its statement quoted in the TASS dispatch in *Pravda* of August 23, the Nagorno-Karabakh Congress of Mandated People's Representatives again appealed to the Azeris:

"The Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh, basing itself on the inalienable right of every people to determine its own political status, by the decisions of the Oblast Soviet, has clearly opted for leav-

ing the Azerbaijani SSR and joining the Armenian SSR. This in no way harms the real interests of the Azerbaijani people, because no people can be free if it rules over other peoples."

Clearly, the possibilities for dialogue could be improved if a democratic organization genuinely representative of the Azeris develops. International press reports indicate conflict between the Azeri Front and the republic's leadership. The latter has been allied with the Ligachev faction in the CPSU and was guilty of complicity in the anti-Armenian pogroms. It is also interesting that protests have been organized against the treatment of the Turkish minority in the "fraternal socialist country" of Bulgaria.

In the Baltic, where open mass movements have existed now for two years and swept the elections for the Congress of People's Deputies, the radicalization of national demands has been very rapid. In February, the Lithuanian Front, Sajudis, came much closer to demanding effective independence from the Soviet Union. On May 14, a conference of the three Baltic Fronts adopted a joint declaration moving in the same direction. It announced that the aspiration of the three fronts was "the state sovereignty of their nations within the framework of a neutral, demilitarized Balto-Scandinavia."²

Leaders of the Latvian People's Front announced in the first week of September that they expect the congress of the front in October to adopt the demand for complete political independence from the Soviet Union. In all three Baltic states, independence parties exist alongside the people's fronts and seem to have been growing, in particular in Latvia, where one of the principal leaders, Eduards Berklavs, was purged from the leadership of the Latvian CP in 1959 for "bourgeois nationalism." At the time, he was deputy head of government of the republic and represented a majority in the Politburo of the Latvian CP, which was purged along with him.

Tradition of resistance in Latvian CP

In fact, there is an important tradition of resistance to national oppression in the Latvian CP, marked by the open letter of 17 historic leaders published in 1972. Among other things, it said: "Over time it has become clear that Great Russian chauvinism is a carefully thought out course of the leaders of the Soviet Communist Party. Forced assimilation of the small nations of the Soviet Union is projected as one of the most important domestic tasks for the immediate future."³

The radicalization of the Baltic movements reached a peak with the anniversaries of the Soviet occupation of the three countries in June 1940 and their incorporation into the USSR in August 1940, in accordance with the Hitler-Stalin Pact of

August 23, 1939. The anniversary of the latter was marked by a demonstration of a million people joining hands from one end of the Baltic countries to the other, symbolically reasserting the violated borders. The parliamentary resolutions requesting incorporation in the USSR, dictated by the Soviet occupation forces, were repudiated. The Soviet authorities were obliged to acknowledge that the way was opened for occupying these countries by the secret protocols of the Hitler-Stalin Pact. Nonetheless, the central press continues to argue that the juridical basis of their incorporation into the USSR remains valid.

The confrontation sharpened as the Estonian parliament passed a law requiring minimum periods of residence for voting and running in elections in the republic and the organization of protest strikes by Russian workers against it. These strikes seem intended to put pressure on the central authorities, since, with the exception of transport, the industries involved are considered artificial and unwanted by the Estonians. The numbers of workers involved, according to all accounts, were relatively small. The Soviet unionist "Internationalist Front" demanded the suspension of the Estonian government and direct rule from Moscow until new elections could be held.

Baltic fronts not intimidated

At the same time, the CPSU's new program on the national question was published on August 17. Although it included conciliatory phrases, it offered no substantial new powers to the republics, only administrative devolution and increased cultural concessions.

On August 27, the Central Committee issued a statement denouncing the dangers of "nationalism" and "extremism" in the Baltic republics. It included an attack on the local CPs: "It has to be admitted that some of the party committees and workers have failed to face up to the difficulties.... and some have even played along with the nationalist moods, undermining opposition to the separatist plans."

This statement has been followed by an almost daily rubric in *Pravda* decrying nationalism in the Baltic, featuring letters from "concerned individuals" and party bodies, reports of actions by "unity" forces, and so on. Statements by Latvian and Estonian CP leaders have been published solemnly acknowledging the "importance" of the CC statement and the need to consider the dangers of extremism. But the Latvian front's move toward the adoption of a demand for independence and references in *Pravda* to supposedly outrageous statements by Sajudis representatives, indicate that the Baltic fronts have not been intimidated. ★

2. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, July 27.

3. Andres Küng, *En dröm om frihet*, Stockholm, 1972, p. 70.

Program of the Latvian People's Front

THE TEXT of the Program of Latvia's People's Front published below has been translated from No. 8/9, 1988 of *Briviba*, a Latvian exile journal published in Stockholm. There are some obvious errors in the original, for example the section on the national question appears twice as section IV and section IX.

With regard to the emphasis on agriculture, it should be remembered that Latvia has

excellent conditions for agriculture and husbandry, similar to those of Denmark, and the Soviet state's attempts to build heavy industry there have been of dubious benefit to the established population. The rural population remains essentially Latvian, while large numbers of Russians and other Slavs have been brought in to work in the new industries. We have had to cut the text by about 30 percent for space reasons.

SOVIET POWER was created and developed in order to realize the aspirations of all people — workers, peasants and intellectuals — for freedom, well being, social justice and equal rights of nations. However, Stalinist despotism and the ensuing years of stagnation led to substantial deformations in public-political, economic, social and cultural life. A profound gulf arose between the bureaucratic apparatus and the people; the society was impelled toward a crisis.

Today, a historic opportunity has been created to free ourselves from the heavy burden of the past, to revive the Leninist principles of socialism, and to mould the society in accordance with the interests, needs and wishes of the people. Restructuring began from above.¹ But it can be made irreversible only by energetic popular participation — by the guarantee of democracy and justice from below....

I. General principles

The People's Front of Latvia [Latvijas Tautas Fronte — LTF] is a social and

political mass organization and grouping of co-thinkers formed as the result of the patriotic and political activity of the people. It consistently supports and actively pursues a radical restructuring of Latvia and the principles of democratic socialism and humanism; it participates in the achievement of the people's wishes through the Soviets of Deputies and the establishment of a government of laws in accordance with the sovereignty of the republic. The LTF struggles against any monopoly of power or views.

2. The LTF strives to advance and reinforce the aspirations of all Latvia's inhabitants for democratization and moral renewal of the society, regardless of their social outlook, language, or of their party, religious or national affiliation.

The LTF's activity is incompatible with the expression of Stalinist, fascist or other authoritarian outlooks, with support for bureaucratic and commandist methods of administration, with the propagation of racist, nationalist, religious or other forms of hatred and intolerance and with any condoning of force....

3. The LTF works for the development of constructive national relations in accordance with the Leninist principles of self-determination and equal rights for peoples....

4. In accomplishing the tasks projected in its statutes and program, the LTF collaborates with the Soviets of People's Deputies and other state institutions, as well as with social organizations. The LTF does not strive to take over the functions of any state organ or replace other social organizations....

The LTF's activity is based on the principles expressed in the resolutions of the Nineteenth All-Union Conference of the CPSU, and the main proposals of the republic's Communists and working people to the Nineteenth Conference, as well as the resolution of the June 1988 expanded plenum of the Board of the Writers' Union of the Latvian SSR.

II. Democratization of the state and the society

1. The LTF supports the radical reform proclaimed by the Nineteenth All-Union Conference of the CPSU aimed at bringing Soviet government genuinely into line with the concept of a state of the entire people proclaimed in the constitution; instead of a political system that operates only formally in the name of the people, but which is in reality alienated from it. Genuine people's power and administration must be established. All elected organs from work collectives to the Supreme Soviet of the Latvian SSR must be made up of representatives who reflect the thinking of the workers and defend their interests.

A new electoral law must be adopted so that the People's Deputies on all levels are elected by a system of universal, equal, direct and open suffrage, assuring a

1. The Latvian terms for *perestroika* and *glasnost* — *parbuve* and *atklātums* — are translated directly into English as "restructuring" and "openness."



choice of candidates for every position, guaranteeing a free competition of views, and providing appropriate rules for the close monitoring of election results....

2. The LTF seeks a state of laws. The state is responsible to the citizens, but the citizens are responsible to laws properly established by the state. The people must participate in legislation, through public discussion and referenda. The practice of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet altering the laws adopted by the Supreme Soviet must be changed. The LTF recommends that the Supreme Soviet of the Latvian SSR form a commission to monitor legal functioning of the organs for upholding the law, the armed forces, the state security forces and the internal armed forces.

3. The LTF fights for the dismantling of the Stalinist and neo-Stalinist bureaucratic administrative system, the transformation of the USSR from a centralized federal state into a union of sovereign states, for the establishment of the republic's sovereignty proclaimed in the constitution of the Latvian SSR and for the renewal of the Leninist principle of federalism....

The relationship among the republics, as well as the division of authority between the federated republics and the USSR must be determined on the basis of law. The republics have to be given a right of veto in questions affecting their interests, as well as the right to independently establish direct relations with other states and international organizations....It is necessary to establish a citizenship status in Latvia's constitution and to adopt a law on citizenship of the Latvian SSR.

4. The LTF opposes all expressions of the administrative-commandist style and bureaucratization of the state apparatus. Every work collective must decide questions concerning its internal functioning independently. The LTF demands the subordination of all state officials to the Soviets of People's Deputies and real supervision by the population, as well as a thoroughgoing de-Stalinization and decentralization. Any selection for, or appointment to, a responsible post in the state apparatus must involve consultation with the People's Deputies and an independent commission....

The LTF does not recognize as democratic any exclusive right to lead the state and social life.

5. The People's Front demands the separation of the legislative, executive and judicial powers and a distinction between the functions of the party and the state in order to prevent a concentration of power in the hands of any person or group. Constitutional courts must be established as independent organs over-seeing the obser-



vance of the norms established for the state and social organizations, as well as the conformity of the actions of the highest state officials with the constitution and laws....

6. The LTF demands the full implementation of the principle of openness in the functioning of the state and the life of the society....

The jamming of foreign radio and TV broadcasts must be ended.

7....Possibilities must be guaranteed for all mass organizations, including the People's Front, to use the mass media to present and defend their ideology....

8. The political climate in the republic must be improved; insecurity, fear and an atmosphere of intimidation have to be avoided in the political and other spheres of social action. The most complicated questions have to be resolved by proper discussion and through argument. The LTF opposes all political demagoguery, smearing of opponents or victimization of persons for their political and religious views.

III. Human and civil rights

1. The LTF considers that the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights should serve as the basis for civil rights in the Latvian SSR, as well as the documents accepted by the USSR—the international pact on human and political rights, the international pact on economic, social and cultural rights, as well as the Final Act on European Security and Cooperation signed in Helsinki. There must be mass printings of these documents, and their substance must be reflected in the constitution of the Latvian SSR.

2. The LTF demands full respect for the

constitutional guarantees of the inviolability of persons, their lives and dwellings; privacy of correspondence, of telephone conversations, as well as of other constitutional rights. Citizens must be given rights to bring complaints in court against illegal actions by collective bodies. The principle that persons are innocent until proven guilty must be consistently observed. The laws governing detention and arrest of citizens have to be improved, since in practice these means have been exploited to put unlawful pressure on citizens. It is necessary to ensure that persons have the opportunity to call a lawyer from the moment of their arrest. Defense of the dignity of citizens must be assured by increasing responsibility for any violation of it.

3. The LTF demands that all citizens have access to information concerning them in any state institution and that they have the right to challenge the accuracy of such information.

4. The LTF demands that the Stalinist regime's crimes against Latvian refugees in the USSR in the 1930s and the inhabitants of Latvia in the 1940s and 1950s be declared crimes against humanity, and that the names of the organizers of these crimes and of other Stalinist repression be published, as well as those of the persons who carried them out. These people must be stripped of their privileges and state decorations and made to answer for their actions. All restrictions on the rights of the victims of repression must be removed, and they must be given moral satisfaction and material compensation and guaranteed state pensions.

5. The LTF considers it essential that all citizens of Latvia sentenced for crimes

serve their terms in their own republic, and that persons sentenced in other republics not be brought into the republic, and that they not be moved to the republic after serving their sentences.

6. The LTF stands for the right of citizens of the republic to have free contact with citizens of other states. Restrictions on going abroad and returning should be determined only by law. Refusal to grant a passport must be challengeable in the courts....

7. The LTF demands a revival of the rights recognized in the constitution of the Latvian SSR regarding military training in the republic, with citizens of the Latvian SSR, regardless of nationality, being able to serve their obligatory military service here.

To permit persons whose religious or pacifist convictions do not allow them to serve in the armed forces to serve an equivalent time in the social sector.

8. The LFT.... fights for peace and consistently stands for disarmament and the demilitarization of society; it supports declaring the Baltic and Scandinavian region a nuclear-free zone. The LTF stands for the removal of weapons of mass destruction from the territory of the Latvian SSR and for the reduction of conventional weapons.

IV. The national question

1. The National Front considers necessary a radical revision of the national policy that has been followed until now, which was based primarily on Stalinist dogmas and doctrines. Any nation, including the Latvian one, has the right to survive for an undetermined historic period. The LTF does not support a national policy based on the premise that social progress is inevitably linked to the withering away of national specificity....

2. The LTF considers that national questions must be solved by respecting the democratic rights of all the nationalities living in the republic and the principles of social justice....It categorically rejects any incitement to national hatred, or any violation or denigration of the national dignity of any inhabitants of Latvia. The defense of the native language and culture of all its inhabitants, regardless of their nationality, must be an obligation for every republic.

3. The LTF notes that the Latvian people have a fundamental status in the republic, because Latvia is the historic territory of Latvians, the only place in the world in which the nation, language and culture of Latvians have been preserved and developed. Therefore, the LTF considers it essential as a guarantee of the national self-determination of the Latvian people that the Latvian SSR introduce the principle for Soviets and other elections that at every level in the republic, regardless of the demographic situation, it is essential to reserve a stable and irreducible majority mandate for representatives of the Latvian people.

4. The LTF demands that the Latvian language be established as the state language in the constitution of the Latvian SSR. Latvian must be the working language of the state bodies and institutions of the Latvian SSR, while Russian is to be used as the language of federal relations. In citizens' dealings with the state organs of the Latvian SSR, it should be possible to use either Latvian or Russian, and they should be able to receive official documents in either Russian or Latvian, according to their choice. In the sphere of social services, citizens must be guaranteed the right to use either Latvian or Russian....

The LTF calls on the Latvian SSR to collaborate with the governments of other republics, on the basis of the principle of free choice, to return the victims of the Stalinist national policy to their native places and establish them there.

The LTF calls on the Latvian government to see to it that Latvian minorities outside Latvia and other national minorities inside Latvia are assured the necessary conditions for safeguarding their national identities.

6. As a result of excessive immigration, for the first time in their history, the Latvian people are becoming a minority on their ethnic territory, and this threatens their future existence and self-government. The LTF stands for an immediate halt to immigration but opposes the expulsion of inhabitants of any nationality....

7. The LTF considers that the main source of the problems in national relations is the policy of national nihilism practiced in the Stalinist and neo-Stalinist period, and in the interests of improving national relations it calls for analyzing the causes of national deformations and conflicts, for recognizing the deportations in Latvia's twentieth century history, for exposing Stalinist despotism's crimes against the Latvian people and other peoples....

8....It must be officially recognized that the incorporation of the Latvian republic into the USSR was accomplished by force and in disregard of what the Latvian people thought.

9. The LTF calls on all the inhabitants of the republic, regardless of their nationality, to unite in the struggle against the consequences of bureaucracy, Stalinism and authoritarianism, and to take an active part in discussion of political, social, economic and ecological questions in Latvian and Russian....

The LTF calls for recognizing that Latvia's sovereignty depends on insuring the national identity of every people established on the territory of the republic.

V. Ethics

2. The LTF is for giving priority to universal human values, for the subordination of politics to moral principles, in which people are not means but ends.

5. The People's Front recognizes the importance of religious organizations in the moral renewal of the society and the reinforcement of universal human values. In the process of the establishment of a state of laws, it becomes more important to establish and guarantee the legal rights of believers and religious organizations.

In the educational system, the LTF calls for a rejection of compulsory instruction in atheism and for the possibility, on a voluntary basis, of getting religious instruction.

VI. Culture, education, science

1.... The LTF rejects a simple division of culture into progressive and reactionary and opposes the imposition of crude ideological and political criteria on culture....

2.... The LTF defends the rights of the Latvian nation, on its ethnic territory, to safeguard its historically formed way of life and culture, to defend the survival of its nationality and language and the development of its distinctive national life....

3. The LTF stands for all cultural matters in Latvia being in the hands of the republic....

4. The LTF recognizes and seeks to strengthen the rights and possibilities of all inhabitants of the Latvian SSR to maintain ties with the peoples of other republics and foreign countries without restrictions, binding them in a single cultural process both on the social level and on that of state institutions.

The LTF considers that the cultural work of Latvians living abroad is part of the Latvian national culture. The LTF demands that persons and organizations abroad be guaranteed the possibility to participate in the preservation, restoration and development of Latvia's cultural heritage....

6. The LTF supports cultural autonomy for the peoples living in Latvia, and their efforts to obtain education in their native languages, to organize associations, exchange of information and a varied cultural life corresponding to the interests of all.

7. The LTF considers that the society must be given the possibility to familiarize itself with the cultural values created in Latvia, both in the older and more recent past. The LTF stands for a rounded study of Baltic culture in Latvia and abroad. The LTF calls for studying, preserving and popularizing the Latgalian and Livonian cultural heritage,² and for assuring the full development of the culture of ethnic groups in Latvia. The LTF considers it essential to rehabilitate the heritage of Baltic German culture and scholarship....

9. The LTF demands that the broad public be well informed. It recommends the formation of permanent teams of radio

2. The Latgalians are a distinctive part of the Latvian people and largely Catholic in religion. The Livonians are a tiny Finno-Ugric people living on the coast of the Kurland peninsula. They number only a few hundred.

and TV correspondents in the centers of international political and cultural life....

10. The LTF opposes incompetent and bureaucratic administration of culture, education and art, primitive concepts of the ideological purposes of culture, as well as financing of culture and education according to the principle of allotting left over resources to them. The LTF does not accept the commercialization of art, its subordination to market principles....

12. ...At the center of the teaching process is the personality of the child. The exaggerated imposition of ideology in preschool and primary school education must be ended....Regardless of the language of instruction, the Latvian SSR's educational system must be run in accordance with unified plans worked out in Latvia and programs involving equal periods of instruction in the high schools. The LTF is for university autonomy and an independent academic press.

The LTF demands the rejection of military training in the high schools, as well as exempting students from the draft and a fundamental reform of military instruction in the universities....

14. The LTF calls for changing the names of neighborhoods, economic and other organizations, streets, parks and other objects and territories that were arbitrarily imposed in the period of Stalinism, voluntarism and stagnation and for reviving old names and giving new ones that correspond to the values of Latvian history and culture....

15. Opposing the over-centralization of information and culture, the LTF calls for an end to the dubbing of central TV and radio broadcasts in Latvia's programs.

16. ...We cannot allow an incompetent voluntarist economic policy to prevail in the name of scientific and technical progress. Priority must be given in the relevant branches of science to developing agriculture.

17. The LTF is for the introduction of the principles of democracy and openness into science, and for the rights of scientists to freely express their points of view. It is for the independence of scientific expertise and judgment from manifestations of administrative and departmental self-interest.

VII. Social justice and humanization of the social environment

1. The LTF stands for the right of all citizens of the Latvian SSR to realize their maximum potential in freely chosen areas of work and to be paid in accordance with the quantity and quality of their work.

2. The LTF demands that all persons living in the republic be guaranteed a decent minimum living standard, taking into consideration the rise in the cost of living. Priority for satisfaction of human needs must be observed not just in words but in practice....

4. The LTF categorically opposes the

continuation of the caste of nomenklatura officials and considers that any privileges in the distribution of material benefits in the sphere of social services, and especially in medical care as well as recreation and social insurance, are incompatible with universal human morality and at variance with the fundamental principles of socialism.

5. The LTF proposes the task of achieving social justice in all regional development plans of the Latvian SSR as regards meeting social and cultural needs and in the distribution of agricultural and industrial products.

6. The LTF considers normalization of the demographic situation as one of the main tasks in solving the social problems and the national question. A system of effective juridical and economic measures must be introduced that will end the mechanical flooding of the population.

VIII. The economy

The LTF considers that the economy must be a means for achieving social objectives, that the economy must be fundamentally humanized, subordinated to the needs of the people and every person, through a radical transformation of the theoretical bases of economic life.

2. The LTF supports the pursuit of a course of radical economic reforms in the republic that will liquidate all factors and mechanisms obstructing the development of the people's economy — voluntarism, the monopoly of departments, arbitrary regulation of the work of cooperatives and individuals, etc. The LTF opposes the tendencies of the bureaucratic and departmental apparatus to delay implementation of the economic reform and to mutilate its revolutionary character.

3. The LTF actively struggles for the republic's economic sovereignty, that is, full independence with respect to the administration of production, development and distribution of what is produced. It is essential to increase the role of the Soviets of People's Deputies in the administration of the economy, in the development and maintenance of the productive and social infrastructure and in the defense of nature....

5. The LTF is for a radical and consistent restructuring of the system of administering the people's economy, giving the organization and direction of all social labor fully to the enterprises, which will exercise this authority in accordance with the law "On State Enterprises." [The central piece in Gorbachev's economic legislation]....

The LTF is for basing the development of the Latvian SSR solely on local labor....

8. The LTF supports recognizing agriculture as the main branch of the people's economy....

A long-term economic and juridical basis (99-year leases with guarantees of rights of use) must be assured for the

work of cooperatives and lease-holders. The LTF is for maintaining farms as national wealth in the system of social management.

9. The LTF demands that all economic programs and projects of major social importance be subjected first to thoroughgoing discussion in the written and electronic press....

All economic and building projects should be ratified by the relevant Soviet of People's Deputies....

IX. Ecology

1. The LTF considers that cleaning up the environment must be a major concern in preserving the moral and physical health of the people. To this end, it is essential to devote scientific study and concrete work to solving the complex of ecological questions, with a perspective of collaboration with other republics of the USSR and other states of the Baltic basin....

2. The LTF maintains that no public economic project should be undertaken, expanded or operated unless the resources are assured for cleaning the facilities.

The LTF considers it necessary to introduce effective financial sanctions against those guilty of polluting the environment, including from personal means. Effective inspection must be established over the generation of waste in the productive process, and data must be regularly published on pollution of the environment and those responsible for it. The people's economy must be oriented towards the forms of production least dangerous to the environment and relatively harmless use of energy resources, including wind power and small-river hydroelectric resources. Inspection must be established over the introduction into the republic of substances harmful to health (toxic compounds, chemical fertilizers, radioactive substances), including substances in transit through the republic.

3. The LTF is for an ecological cleanup of agricultural production and an ecologically sound and rational forestry. It is for creating new, and reviving old nature reserves on Latvian territory. Defense of the environment and biosphere must be extended also to the territories that are under the control of the army and the border guards.

4. The LTF is for the definition of industrial, residential and recreational zones corresponding to Latvia's geographical environment, for rational use of land in agriculture in accordance with the contour and climatic features of the region and with soil types, for the construction of improvements and roads corresponding to the territory's geographical and cultural-historical features. The LTF demands an ecologically sound use of the land in the extraction of useful minerals and in the building of power projects, with an obligation to restore the land to cultivation afterward.... ★

The armed struggle against Stalinism in Estonia

IN THE AREAS forcibly incorporated into the Soviet Union in the Second World War, one subject remains extremely sensitive even under *glasnost*: the armed resistance to Soviet annexation. In Estonia, a prominent figure in the Estonian Historical Society, Mart Laar, was indicted for what he said about the "Forest Brothers" in an article on the period of the Stalinist terror (see IV 157, February 20, 1989, for a translation). The Soviet central press continues to cry scandal about any defense of the "Forest Brothers," and this is an element in the intensified polemics about the Baltic peoples' movements.

The following article from the June 1989 issue of *Postipoiss*, the monthly paper of the Estonian People's Front in the Estonian university city of Tartu, gives a detailed account of the armed resistance to the Soviet conquest. It mentions the mass deportations estimated at nearly 100,000 (about a tenth of the Estonian people) only in passing. These are described in Laar's article. Some detail and repetition has been cut from the article for space reasons. The stress is in the original.

HERBERT LINDMAE

ANY HISTORICAL study of the 1940s has to start from the fact that the *Estonian republic* was occupied by the Red Army on June 17, 1940. This ensued from the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of August 23, 1939 and the secret protocols appended.

The occupation forces established a regime of terror on Estonian territory, unleashed crimes against humanity and other outrages. They destroyed cultural values.

The Soviet occupation and terror regime aroused opposition, including armed struggle against Stalinism.

Based on the material published during the German occupation and the literature published by Estonians living abroad, as well as historical and journalistic publications in the Estonian SSR, it is possible to divide this armed struggle into various categories.

- Armed resistance to Stalinism before the start of the war.

- Armed resistance in wartime before the arrival of the German armed forces.

- Participation of Estonian troops and militias in the defense of the Estonian frontiers.

- The independent armed struggle of

Estonian national armed units after the formation of the new government of the Estonian Republic under O. Ties on September 18, 1944, until the conquest of Estonia by the Red Army.

- The armed struggle of the Forest Brotherhood in re-occupied Estonia.

The struggle before the start of the war

The June crisis itself did not pass without bloodshed. Late in the evening of June 21, a communications battalion opened fire on forces approaching its quarters. As a result of the events of June 17, the battalion had left its barracks and moved to a school on Tallin's Raua street. The battalion was disarmed on the evening of June 21 by Red Army soldiers with two armored cars. After that, the men of the communications battalion broke into the mobilization armory and rearmed themselves. Late in the night, the battalion's guard were asked to surrender. They refused, and an exchange of fire followed. Red Army armored cars took part in the conflict. The battalion obeyed the orders of the new minister of war and laid down its weapons. Two soldiers of the battalion were killed and three were wounded.

There were also casualties on the other side.

The prewar resistance was spontaneous and limited to self-defense and protection against arrest and deportations. It is known that the Stalinist repression began immediately, with the occupation of the country by the Red Army on June 17, before the Soviet power was declared on June 21, and before Estonia became a part of the Soviet Union.

Before 1940, fleeing these arrests, Estonian officers and soldiers took arms and ammunition. Many police and militia members also defended themselves against arrest. The first groups of Forest Brothers arose before the June deportations. For example, on June 12 a group of men who had been summoned for questioning by the NKVD in Tartu fled into the forest. Others who knew that they were going to be called in for interrogation also fled into the forest. *An extensive and organized Estonian Forest Brotherhood arose at the time of the June deportations.*

In war time

At the beginning of July [after June 21, 1941], organized armed action by the Forest Brothers spread throughout Estonia. The freedom struggle was a target of the notorious July 3 speech by the chairman of the State Defense Committee, J. Stalin, who called for the organization of a merciless war against all those who created disorganization in the rear, deserters and spreaders of panic and rumors. He also called for the annihilation of spies, disrupters and parachute troops. If the Red Army was obliged to retreat, it should not leave the enemy a kilo of bread. Anything of value that could not be taken away had to be destroyed. On July 8, 1941, the same instruction was issued to the working people by the CC of the Estonian Communist Party and the Council of People's Commissars of the Estonian SSR.

The call for destroying property and the outlawing of people forced the Forest Brothers to intensify their armed struggle to defend their lives, homes and possessions. By occupying town halls and government buildings, they tried to save their centers from the destruction that could follow from application of the order to leave nothing behind. Getting weapons was also an objective. According to A. Suve¹, in 1941 there were a total of 426 armed attacks on Soviet installations.

On July 2, the Forest Brothers took the Ahja town hall and post office. On July 3, they took over the forestry department at the University of Tartu as well as the Rannu and Puhja town halls and unsuccessfully attacked the Konguta and Saare town halls. On the same day, they occupied the Jogeva, Vaimastvere and Laiuse town

1. "Klassivoitlus Eeestis 1940.1950onail aastail" ["Class Struggle in Estonia in the 1940s and 1950s"], *Rahva Hääl* [the Estonian CP organ], March 20, 1988.

halls, took over the Altskivi town hall, and raised the Estonian flag over Alatskivi castle. On July 4, they took over the Vonnu and Meeksi town halls.

The first German troops entered the Tartu district on July 12, the northern Tartu district on July 25. July 8-10, the Tähvere, Puhja, Elva, Rannu and Rõngu Forest Brothers fought battles to defend the Ulila electric power station, to prevent it from being blown up. Reportedly, on the morning of July 10, the Nõo Forest Brothers clashed sharply with a destruction battalion that was burning down town halls and an old people's home.

The partisan struggle started in Tartu on July 10 early in the morning. Moreover, on July 9, at 6:30 in the morning, shots were fired into the air at Kivisild. At midday, there was an unsuccessful attempt to blow up the Ropka arms and munitions dump, from which the Forest Brothers got arms and ammunition. At 8:40 in the eve-

ning of July 20, shots were fired into the air at Vabadussild. After that there was prolonged cannon fire aimed at the southern part of Tartu. The city burned.

Reportedly, toward the night of July 11 the entire bank of the Emajogi river from the Tähvere center to the Ropka center was guarded by armed groups of partisans. The territory controlled by partisan units was provided with regular communications. At the same time, defense was organized along the Emajogi front from Vortsjärve to Lake Peipus.

Battles took place in the sector between Vortsjärve and Tartu. In particular, there were battles at Tähvere and Ropka against units of the Red Army trying to cross the Emajogi.

On July 11, the police prefect in Tartu took over and began to organize the police. On July 12, the partisan units in Tartu began to be organized into a partisan battalion including about a thousand men.

Advance units of the German armed forces came into Tartu on July 12, 1941.

The largest Forest Brotherhoods arose in the western part of Järvemaa, in the Albu and Kautla swamps and forests.

Concentrations of men were mobilized in Järva and Harjumaa, soldiers and officers who fled from Estonian army units and a group of parachute troops sent by Finland, the "Ema" unit. About 1,500 men fought at Kautla (beginning July 31).

The Germans entered Estonia on July 7-9. When they crossed the Estonian border, they were confronted with an established fact.

In southern Estonia, along the Emajogi-Viljandi-Pärnu line, the Soviet occupying power was effectively broken as a result of the partisans' resistance. Estonian national flags were flying, and institutions of self-

government were operating.

Armed struggle against the Red Army

In the expulsion of the Red Army from the mainland and islands of Estonia, Forest-Brothers' self-defense units participated along with the German armed forces.

In the anti-Stalinist armed resistance, more than 1,550 men were killed or remain unaccounted for, and more than 300 were wounded. Among the mass of documents in the archives of the Estonian Self-Government security police have been preserved charts and maps of the deployment of Estonian volunteer units.

These documents show that on August 20, 1942, 11,602 Estonian volunteers were on the eastern frontier. At the same time (February 1942), there were 40,837 under arms in the Self-Defense Forces [Omakaitse] (43,757 according to other data). In May 1943, there were already 22,849 Estonians in Hitler's armed forces.² At the same time, by way of comparison, there were 22,125 men in the Eighth Estonian Defense Force [Eesti Laskurkorpus].

Defense of the Estonian frontiers

At the beginning of 1944, the Red Army reached the Estonian border. At that point, the Estonian armed forces massed to defend the border. Thus, February 12-20, the Estonian Twentieth Division appeared on the bank of the Narva. Units of this division took part in the liquidation of the Riigiküla and Vepsküla-Stüvertski marshalling points and in the ensuing battles. In February, a general mobilization was proclaimed, which was supported by the acting president of the Estonian Republic, J. Uluots.

About 45,000 men were mobilized, forming six border defense regiments. Part of those mobilized were grouped in Self-Defense Forces [Omakaitse], fighting units and reserve regiments. The border defense regiments and the Self-Defense Forces units, along with other Estonian armed forces fought on the bank of the Narva as well as at Kaguja in eastern Estonia.

On September 18, with Professor J. Uluot's authority, a government of the Estonian Republic was formed in Tallin, headed by O. Tief. In the city, power was assumed by Admiral J. Pitka's battalion and other Estonian armed forces. The Estonian national flag flew from the Long Herman tower. At that stage, Estonian units were continuing to fight against both Red Army and German forces.³

Against the re-occupation regime

After the conquest of the Estonian



2. See E. Spruit, V. Timusk, "Tigeduse poliitika" ["Politics of Rage"], *Edasi*, February 26, March 1, 1989.

3. See M. Laar, "Eesti Soturitest II maailmasojas" ["Estonian Soldiering in World War II"], *Vikerkaar*, No. 3, 1989.

Republic's territory in the fall of 1944, the armed struggle of the Estonian Forest Brotherhood continued. It was fanned by the continuing outrages of the occupation regime. The Stalinist regime established after the expulsion of the German occupation forces resumed what it had only half finished in 1941. *It is estimated that between 1944 and 1953, about 30,000 persons were arrested in Estonia.*⁴

The March 1949 deportations were part of a genocidal plan. They were followed by forced collectivization.

At that stage, the Forest Brotherhood was very extensive and had many officers. The amnesty, arrests and liquidation in 1947 removed more than 15,000 men from the forest struggle, but far from liquidated it.⁵

The armed struggle against Stalinism was fundamentally a struggle of the Estonian people for liberation. In the summer of 1944, more than 90,000 Estonians participated in it.⁶ The fact that during the war people involved in it fought on the side of fascist Germany is strictly the fault of Stalinism. The Soviet occupation and terror regime made people forget 700 years of hostility to the German conquerors. It was hoped that the Germans would reestablish Estonian independence or that it would be re-established when Germany lost the war to the Western Allies.

The Hague and Geneva Conventions

The legal rules relating to armed struggle against Stalinism derive:

Primarily from the *international treaties* that regulate the legal system in *occupied territories*.

The legal system for occupied territories was established mainly by the Hague Convention of 1907 and the Geneva Convention of August 12, 1949, on defense of civilians in wartime.

The 1907 Hague convention concretized the norms and customs of international law concerning protection of civilians. Civilians as well as combatants are under the protection of international law. The lives and property of inhabitants have to be respected.

The Geneva convention on protection of civilians establishes that a nation occupying a territory is obliged to respect the residents and the inviolability of their property.

● Any destruction of property that is not absolutely necessary for the sake of military operations is forbidden. (Paragraph 53).

● The occupying country cannot force the inhabitants of an occupied territory to serve in its own armed or auxiliary forces in wartime. Any compulsion or propaganda to enlist is forbidden. (Paragraph 51.)

● No rules established by the occupying nation concerning non-criminal activity can have retroactive force. (Paragraph 65.)

● An occupying nation cannot prose-

cute, arrest or condemn inhabitants of an occupied country for activity that took place before the occupation or for the expression of opinion. (Paragraph 70.)

● Citizens of an occupied country can be found guilty and punished only by a competent court of the occupying country. Moreover, guarantees internationally recognized by civilized people must be observed — searches and court rulings have to follow established procedure. In the courts, the accused have the right to present evidence in their own defense; they can call witnesses and have a right to qualified lawyers of their choice. (Paragraphs 66, 71 and 72).

On August 12, 1949, it was recognized that the Geneva Convention applied to prisoners of war taken in partisan warfare. According to this convention, members of organized resistance movements in occupied territories are recognized as prisoners of war and enjoy the corresponding legal rights. The Geneva Convention was ratified on April 17, 1954, by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

On June 10, 1977, a protocol was appended to the Geneva convention, which recognized the applicability of the elementary human rights guaranteed by the UN charter to people engaged in armed struggle against foreign occupation.

And Nuremburg and Tokyo

The war crimes tribunals' statutes included instructions in defense of the inhabitants of occupied territories. Killing, torturing and deporting inhabitants of occupied territories were recognized as crimes.

The statutes of the Nuremburg and Tokyo war crimes tribunals were ratified by a UN General Assembly resolution of November 11, 1946. Consequently, they are now internationally recognized norms.⁷

According to the constitution of the Estonian SSR, provisions of international pacts and declarations ratified by the USSR are an inalienable part of the legal system of the Estonian SSR. Therefore, the legal evaluation of the anti-Stalinist armed struggle should derive from these acts of international law.

In its first two stages and especially in its final stage, the anti-Stalinist armed struggle was a partisan struggle in accordance with international law. In the conditions of occupation it has to be considered a struggle for national self-determination. These conceptions are also based on international law, which clearly applied to the partisan struggle in the German occupied parts of the USSR, also applied to occupied Estonia.

On trials

In an occupied area, only competent judicial bodies of the occupying power can pronounce judgment, and there is a right of defense in these courts. Summary

trials of participants in the anti-Stalinist armed struggle and bringing them before kangaroo courts was illegal. These persons could not be legally condemned because their guilt for violating the rules and conventions of the law of war was not established according to judicial procedure. This was not observed in the practice of the Estonian SSR. Thus, on December 7, 1988, the Estonian SSR declared illegal "the extrajudicial mass repression in Soviet Estonia in the 1940s and 1950s," regardless of whether persons sentenced by special judgment were guilty or not.

If special tribunals or other exceptional bodies are given the role of courts, then the punishment commissions and other kangaroo courts put together in the time of the German occupation have to be considered courts.

The fact that the anti-Stalinist armed struggle waged in Estonia was a freedom struggle against an occupation regime was not taken into account in the law, "Additional measures for the rehabilitation of victims of repression in the 1930s, 1940s and early 1950s," adopted by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on January 16, 1989. This law annulled the verdicts of three-judge and other special tribunals in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, that had not been previously quashed. All persons sentenced by these bodies can be considered rehabilitated.

But in fact not all. This law does not apply to traitors to the fatherland and punishment battalions formed during the Great Fatherland War, to Nazi criminals, members of nationalist bands, their satellites and so on.

Punishment of such persons, who were not guilty of violating internationally recognized norms and customs of warfare, is contrary to international law. It follows therefore that there is no right to apply to these persons the January 16 law of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet stating that traitors to the fatherland and members of nationalist bands and their satellites are not rehabilitated. Such persons must also be considered rehabilitated.

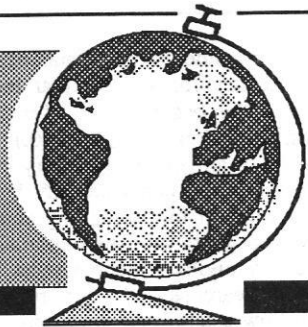
That does not mean justification of murder and other crimes. Naturally, summary executions and exactions accompanying the anti-Stalinist armed struggle have to be condemned, including participation in the mass murders committed in Estonia during the German occupation and the mass repression outside the borders of the Estonian Republic. Such actions are specifically defined as crimes against humanity according to international law. Criminals cannot be considered freedom fighters. ★

4. E. Laasi, "Kuritegu inimsuse vastu" "Crimes Against Humanity," *Kodumaa*, November 16, 1988.

5. E. Lassi, "Monede lünkade täiteks" ["Many gaps are filled in"], *Sirp ja Vasar*, November 27, 1987.

6. M. Laar, "Eesti soduritest II Maailmansojas."

7. A. Uustal. *Rahvusvaheline õigus* ["International Law"], Eesti Raamat, 1984, pps. 344, 349.

AROUND
THE
WORLD

WESTERN EUROPE

Sixth international youth camp

THE SIXTH international camp for young people in solidarity with the Fourth International took place July 8-15 near Barcelona. Almost 700 young people — slightly more than last year — came to the camp from Belgium, Sweden, Portugal, Great Britain, Holland, Switzerland, Italy, France, Ireland, West Germany, Denmark and the Spanish state. This last contingent was the largest, with over 180 young people from the Revolutionary Communist Youth (JCR) and the Basque youth organization, the IT.

The schedule of such a camp has to reflect the expectations of young people from many different backgrounds. It is necessary to discuss the major issues of the day, such as apartheid, ecology and anti-racism, understand current events, meet other young people working in a different environment and become better acquainted with the Fourth International and its activities.

Bearing these demands in mind, there were some thirty working groups on themes as varied as rock, drugs, the struggle of women in Europe, with specific reference to the struggles of nurses, Palestine and the intifada, work in the army and disobedience, the recent events in China, the lesbian and gay movement and so on. And there was also the issue of the ruling classes' plans for 1992.

There was big interest in the reforms in the USSR during the plenary session on Tuesday, and the discussion continued in the afternoon with a workshop on the work of the International in the countries of Eastern Europe. A South African militant and a representative of the Salvadorean Farabundo Marti Front for National Liberation (FMLN) were greeted at the plenary on national liberation struggles and our solidarity tasks.

Just as last year, a day was devoted to feminism and the struggle for women's liberation. The day ended with a women's festival. This year special emphasis was put on the issue of violence against women and how to reply to it.

But the camp had its social aspect as well. In the beautiful setting of the natural park of Montseny there were parties in the evening in the bar or in the improvised discotheque. For the first time a lesbian

and gay festival was held at the camp. The JCR of Catalonia organized a big concert in Barcelona attended by 800 young people.

Before agreeing to meet again next year, the closing meeting tried to answer the question "why the revolution?" asked by some of the young people, and to define the meaning of being a revolutionary youth today. ★

NICARAGUA

French revolutionary youth brigade

THIS summer, for the first time, a brigade directly tied to the Fourth International went to Nicaragua. Organized by the French Revolutionary Communist Youth (JCR), founded ten years ago around the time of the Sandinista revolution of 1979, the aim of the brigade was to show support for the Nicaraguan revolution and to strengthen links with the July 19 Sandinista youth (JS 19).

During a four-day long political meeting of revolutionary organizations, the JCR were able to discuss the situation in Salvador with a representative of the Salvadorean FMLN. Also present at this meeting were members of the JS 19, a representative of the Association of Rural Workers (ATC), a member of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) and a representative of the Women's Association (AMLAE), Luisa Amanda Espinoza.

Eighty members of the JCR brigade left

last July for the Matagalpa region to the north of Managua where they divided between two villages, La Palestina and La Parranda to work in state production units (UPE) on land that had been expropriated. They helped with the planting of coffee, in the canteen for the agricultural workers as well as in the creche.

During the year-long period of preparation for the brigade in France, \$3,000 were collected for the creche and \$5,000 were donated to the ATC.

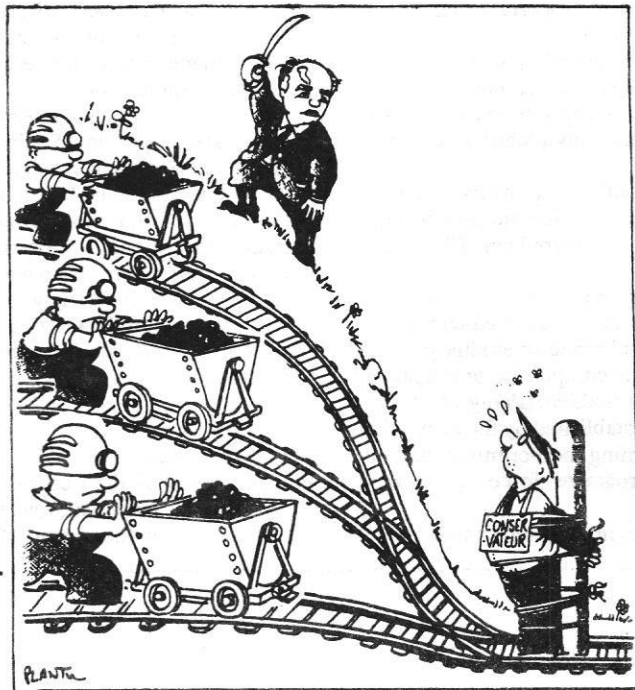
In Managua for the celebrations of the tenth anniversary of the revolution, the JCR took part in the big demonstration in the main square under their own banner, alongside the Sandinista Youth.

On their return to France, the participants in the brigade are ready to get actively involved in solidarity work, both with the Sandinista revolution and the struggle of the FMLN in Salvador. ★

SWEDEN

Doubts remain on Palme verdict

AN isolated vagabond, Christer Petersson, was condemned in late July for the assassination of Swedish premier Olof Palme. He was widely considered an unlikely suspect, among other things because the shooting required skill and planning that did not fit with his marginal existence. Furthermore, he appeared to be the perfect scapegoat, if influential elements had connived in Palme's murder, as some circumstantial evidence indicates. [See IV 165, June 12, 1989.] Nonetheless, the opinion makers in Sweden denounced all those who questioned the verdict. In its August 3 issue, *Internationalen*, the paper of the Swedish section of the Fourth International, commented: "It is not the doubters [of the verdict] who can be branded as over-imaginative. Until the questions about this case have been answered, the refusal to look at reality has to be attributed to those who believe that Olof Palme's murder has now been cleared up." ★



Economic crisis forms backdrop to election campaign

TEN YEARS after the triumph of the revolution, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) has moved into top gear to win the elections scheduled for February 1990. A setback for the Sandinistas at the elections, or a descent into chaos following on massive economic sabotage by the capitalists, could create favourable conditions for the counter-revolution and allow the United States to relaunch armed aggression on a massive scale.

ARNOLD BERTHU

THE ECONOMIC situation is really disastrous. Industrial production fell by 30% in 1988. Agricultural production has also seriously declined. The gross domestic product (GDP) has fallen by 10%. Unemployment has gone from 25% in 1987 to 30% today. The purchasing power of the workers fell by 85% in 1988.¹

Nicaragua is in an economic depression and the standard of living of the masses, and in particular those sectors that form the base of the revolution, has been seriously affected. Apart from the problems in getting basic foods and other essentials, living conditions have deteriorated in general because of the restrictions imposed on social spending, whether on education or health.

The deterioration finds concrete and disturbing expression in a new rise in illiteracy and infant mortality, even if these have not reached the level of Somoza's time. The crime rate has also risen.

There are, however, other factors to be taken into account in arriving at a complete picture of the life of the Nicaraguan population. The fact that the war has effectively ended is a major boon. The Contras are no longer in a position to carry out assassinations or create a situation of insecurity in the regions where they previously operated (which never included the most heavily populated part of the country, the Pacific Coast). The masses are aware that the removal of the Contra menace is the result of the policy of the Sandinistas, given human and material support by the popular base of the revolution. Also to be taken into account is the prevailing climate of freedom of expression, criticism and organization.

The main reasons for the crisis are the war and the economic blockade; the

extreme backwardness of the country before 1979; the total dependence of the Nicaraguan economy on the world market; and the weight of debt (\$6.7bn in 1988; if Nicaragua had paid all the interest due it would have amounted to 103% of the value of its exports!). These are things the Sandinistas could have no direct influence over.

The economic crisis was acute even before 1988, but the political and economic measures with which the Sandinistas hoped to meet the problems have led to a depression. In 1986-7 Nicaragua found itself on the edge of the abyss. Inflation was completely out of control and was above 1,000% while defence absorbed 50% of the budget.

Effects of economic and social measures

The Sandinistas reacted effectively on the military front, dealing the Contras a decisive blow in March 1988. But the economic and social measures have hit the masses hard without making a real improvement in the economic situation.

One of the first measures, adopted in February, aimed to radically reduce the amount of money in circulation. Every Nicaraguan had to exchange their money for a new currency — one new cordoba for 1,000 old cordobas. Over a certain sum, the money could not be immediately exchanged but was to stay in a closed bank account pending investigation of its origin.

The latter measure was well received by most of the population. It hit some of those living off speculation and in particular the Contras who were not able, or did not dare, to change their money. This step reduced the amount of money in circula-

tion by about 20%. This change in the currency corresponded to a big devaluation of the cordoba and the unification of exchange rates. Previously there had been two exchange rates — one for exports and one for imports.

That state of affairs allowed both private and state enterprises to import goods at a cost lower than the real market price, which increased the trade deficit. Purchases of fertilizers and tractors were notably inflated by this. The "relatively modest" prices of these goods meant that they were not used or maintained with the necessary care.

Differences with standard monetarist policies

Other measures to reduce the money supply were taken at the same time through reducing state spending. This also included straightforward sackings, described in Nicaragua by the term *compactacion* (slimming down). The prices of fuel, water and electricity were raised.

These measures were along the lines of those followed in other Latin American countries under the aegis of the International Monetary Fund. But, as even Sandinista economists critical of the measures pointed out, the February measures differed from the standard monetarism on one basic point — wages. The average wage rose by around 500% to cover expenditure on 45 essential products (the "shopping basket").

Several factors made these measures ineffective. The devaluation led to a big rise in the price of imports essential for production, leading firms in turn to raise their prices on the internal market.

The firms, including state firms, have even anticipated expected increases in the costs of transport and imported goods and materials needed for production. In a context of an almost complete freeing of prices and a continuing lack of necessities, households were obliged to buy at a high price. All this gave a new boost to inflation which reached 944% between February and the end of May 1988.

In June 1988 came new measures of a more orthodox IMF type — a new devaluation of the cordoba and a wage freeze, to tackle what were rather simplistically held to be the causes of the inflationary spiral.²

The wage freeze did not stop the inflation, which had reached a total of 25,000% by the end of 1988, but the situa-

1. Between 1979 and 1983 the Nicaraguan GDP made progress, then from 1984, when the American aggression increased qualitatively, it fell. The evolution of the GDP over this period is as follows: 1980; +4.6%; 1981; +5.4%; 1982; +0.8%; 1983; +4.4%; 1984; -1.4%; 1985; -2.6%; 1986; -0.5%; 1987; ?; 1988; -10%. But it is not only Nicaragua that is in crisis. According to the United Nations Economics Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (1989 report), production per head of population has fallen in the 1980s by 28% in Guyana, 26% in Bolivia, 20% in Guatemala, 16% in Haiti, 17% in Nicaragua and 14% in Salvador and Honduras.

tion in the popular households had become dramatic. Consumption had fallen in absolute terms, and the shortage of essential goods had almost disappeared, since the tradespeople were no longer able to sell their stocks which had become too costly. Sandinista economists have provided figures which show the vertiginous drop in wages. At the end of 1988, wages made up only 5% of production costs in industry and 9% of current state expenditure.

Harsh criticism of monetarist measures

The monetarist character of the 1988-89 measures has drawn very harsh criticism from militants who support the Sandinista regime. One of the most outspoken public criticisms is that of A. J. Acevedo Volg, a member of the Nicaraguan Association of Economists. In an article in the March 1989 issue of the pro-Sandinista *Bulletin socio-economique* he writes:

"The partisans of an orthodox, fundamentally monetarist, economic policy inside the revolutionary government... believed that one of the basic causes of inflation was that, despite the accelerated and dramatic depreciation of their purchasing power, (nominal) money wages were still too high in relation to the supply of available consumer goods, and represented therefore excessive demand that had to be restrained."

"Nonetheless, while recommending wage 'restraint', they decided to leave free prices that are the source of the revenues of the unwaged economic actors. [This supplementary income then allows these sectors to increase their] demand for these very same consumer goods whose quantity is limited. But this is not said, because this other type of demand is not considered to be inflationary. If followed, the proposals of these economists would lead to a radical redistribution of income in favour of those sectors who get theirs through the movement of prices, (and these people are not necessarily productive) to the detriment of wage-earners."

Continuing his indictment of the economists that he calls "orthodox", Acevedo Volg adds: "For them the only source of inflation is the workers' struggle to halt the deterioration of their real wages, or the desperate struggle for survival of the 'non-competitive' small and medium sectors who press for access to credit and for better prices. But, even if they don't shout about it, they never consider as inflationary the fact that the entrepreneurs working in different sectors of the economy — finance, transport, commerce, large-scale industry and so on — retain total liberty to benefit... from more than average profit margins."

The violent tone used by Acevedo gives some idea of the seriousness of the type of arguments put forward by a number of economists with influence on the govern-

ment starting in June 1988.

Between February 1988 and the start of summer 1989 the regime has tried out five packages of economic measures. The most recent (January 1989) tied to the effects of the terrible depression have, it seems, limited the growth of inflation. But the remedies used have caused a protracted depression and a radical lowering of the standard of living.

The measures introduced in January 1989 take further the policy of reducing the number of functionaries and workers employed in the state sector (at least 35,000 jobs have gone) without the raise in real wages that is being demanded by the unions, including the Sandinista unions.

This new package has been accompanied by a series of overtures to the Nicaraguan capitalists and the private sector in general. These steps are probably based on political reasoning related to the present situation. The Sandinistas want to avoid the formation of an internal opposition front, including the whole of the capitalist private sector that would pick up the torch from the Contras and actively support the opposition parties. The new concessions have been made to neutralize potentially hostile capitalist sectors and to get a resumption of aid from the European imperialist countries.

End of land appropriations announced

In February 1989, in the name of the nine commandants, Daniel Ortega and Jaime Wheelock announced the end of land expropriations (which had benefited the small peasants) and stated their readiness to restore confiscated land to efficient private owners.

For example, a compromise has been reached with the Pelas family, whose San Antonio refinery was expropriated in June 1988; they have now been guaranteed the right to a part of the revenues from the exports of the company. The Nicaraguan authorities have furthermore promised that they will not expropriate the famous rum producing firm "Flor de Caña" that belongs to the same family.

These are symbolic decisions, since last year the nationalization of the possessions of the Pelas family was intended to serve as a warning to every Nicaraguan capitalist involved in the flight of capital. In his

2. The June declaration was accompanied by the following measures: the repayment rates on loans owed by the various types of enterprises are indexed monthly in relation to inflation. The idea is to limit credit and stop the financial system from being a source of inflationary increases in purchasing power. This measure has drastically limited the possibilities for individual small and middle peasants, artisans and agricultural and artisan co-operatives to borrow. A significant number of co-operatives have had serious difficulties in buying enough spares, fertilizers and raw materials. The recessionary effect was immediate.

The second big measure was the freeing of the prices on all but 4 products (rice, sugar, oil and soap) whose prices can only be raised after a periodic review

speech on the 9th anniversary of the revolution, Daniel Ortega underlined the importance of this measure, insisting at the same time on the fact that the Sandinistas have been building socialism since July 19, 1979.

It is possible that the new line of concessions plus social partnership has prevented the entire capitalist sector from aligning with the political opposition, but it is very unlikely that the Sandinistas will get the capitalists to change their attitude to the economy and re-invest their profits in the country.

Tactical aspect of the Sandinistas' approach

It is necessary to consider the tactical aspect of the Sandinistas' approach. Confronted by the employers' economic sabotage, the Sandinistas could retaliate and resume expropriations. Thus, in mid-June, the authorities confiscated three coffee plantations belonging to the leaders of the Employers' Federation (COSEP) from Matagalpa accused of sabotage and of working with the American embassy.

The economic problems, however, have led to outbreaks of popular discontent. There have been a number of strikes since February 1988; in spring 1988 in construction and automobile repair, in autumn in some industrial plants and more recently among teachers. The demands have mainly been for wage rises and saving jobs. Protest movements have also arisen in the countryside. In March 50 workers on a state farm near Matagalpa protested against the decision of the Ministry for the Development of the Agrarian Reform to return their enterprise to private ownership. The same was true of a group of co-operators from the National Union of Agriculturalists and Stockbreeders (UNAG) whose farm was going to be given back to a capitalist.

These movements were of small size, but are the tip of an iceberg. Although they have not been subjected to repression, they have been denounced vigorously for playing into the hands of imperialism and the right-wing opposition. Some strikes have been led by the unions tied to the two Communist parties, who have, furthermore, been in a front with the right-wing parties for a year.³

This counter-revolutionary attitude muddies the waters and feeds the accusa-

and with government agreement. Only urban public transport and medicines remain partly subsidized. The cost of long-distance travel rose ninefold.

The third measure was that wages were to be only partly indexed. In industry firms were authorized to top up wages through productivity bonuses. But it is clear that overall workers' wages have fallen strikingly. The situation is worse in the state sector. A ceiling of 30% was put on wage increases, while prices were rising at 5 or 6 times that level. Nonetheless, to allow them access to three basic food products state functionaries have received since July 1988 a monthly ration of 5kg of rice, 5kg of beans and 2.5kgs of sugar. For the lowest paid 43% this represents a doubling of their salaries and is significant for the others.

tions against the strikers. However, despite the bad role of the two CPs, and some right-wing unions, it is not possible to accept the amalgam made by some Sandinista leaders between often justified actions of workers and peasants and the right-wing. The discontent, furthermore, also expresses itself inside the pro-Sandinista organizations themselves. But the fact that none of the street demonstrations organized by the right, with the support of the CPs, has had mass attendance — the biggest assembled 8,000 people — shows that, if the workers are ready to protest against certain government measures, they are not ready to give their support to the “peaceful” counter-revolution.

Economic strangulation and the military threat

In this very complex situation, the basic fact about popular sentiment is that the majority of the masses retain confidence in the FSLN. This is certainly not a blind and uncritical confidence and it can be damaged by specific economic or political measures (such as the release of the former Somozist guards). Nonetheless this confidence rests on the enormous capital gained by the FSLN, a confidence sustained by their ability to convince the masses to accept sacrifices to defend the revolution.

The military defeat of the Contras has led the Bush administration, in agreement with the Democrats, to look to the development of an internal oppositional front while keeping the Contras going as a means of pressure. The message is clear: economic strangulation and the military threat will be maintained until there is a substantial change in Nicaragua — that is,

the removal of the Sandinistas and the restoration of a capitalist state. The Nicaraguans desperately need international economic aid, since they cannot reconstruct the country from their own resources.

Eastern European aid totally insufficient

The Soviet Union measures out its aid through an eyedropper. Clearly all aid from the Soviets and the other Eastern bloc countries is useful but the level is totally insufficient. The USSR has few strategic interests in the region and is using Nicaragua as a means of negotiation and pressure on the United States for the solution of other “regional” conflicts. They will not allow the Sandinistas to be overthrown, but beyond that the Sandinistas will have to look out for themselves. Commandante Victor Tirado wants to see this as a positive sign (see *IV* 168), but his optimism hardly hides the danger which looms as a consequence of the end of Soviet military aid and the small amount of economic aid.

There is a second international factor that is having a negative impact on Nicaragua. Even if the European capitalist states (though not Thatcher’s Britain!) exercise a certain amount of restraint on American aggression, they are also blackmailing the Nicaraguans.⁴ The blackmail consists in linking the possibility of a restoration of lines of credit and aid to important concessions by the Sandinistas to the capitalist sector, concessions which imply the extension of capitalist exploitation and therefore social regression. The Social Democrats — with the possible exception of the Swedish Social Demo-

crats — and the European Christian Democrats, who all have important interests to defend in Latin America, are conducting this blackmail under the cover of a campaign supposedly for democracy.

In fact the democratization that they propose is the liberty for the Nicaraguan capitalists and multinationals to exploit the Nicaraguan masses on an expanded scale through more unemployment, privatization, social expenditure cut-backs and so on. They hope to see Nicaragua lose its power of attraction for the peoples of Latin America.

American and European imperialism are intervening in the build up to the February 1990 elections with financial means vastly superior to those at the disposal of the Sandinistas.

The United States and the Christian Democrats — with the Germans in the front line — have already given the Nicaraguan opposition \$3 million for its electoral campaign. International solidarity with both the Sandinistas and the Nicaraguan masses is thus of vital importance in these elections. ★

3. The photo of Altamirano, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Nicaragua (CPN, pro-Moscow) applauding Contra leader and ex-Somozist colonel Bermudez, was published in all the press whether Sandinista or oppositional. It is entertaining to recall that when Ernest Mandel visited Nicaragua at the end of 1984, the PCN’s journal *Avance* ran a headline on the front page: “The proof that the FSLN is a petty bourgeois party: It receives Ernest Mandel, leader of the reformist and counter-revolutionary Fourth International.”

4. After Ortega’s visit to 11 European capitals the few governments that decided to give something, under the auspices of Sweden, decided on a contribution of \$50m. Just previously, the American Congress had given \$66m to the Contras. Thus: \$50m from Europe for 3.5 million Nicaraguans and \$66m from the US for 10,000 Contras!



Ten years after the Nicaraguan revolution

IN characterizing the nature of the Sandinista regime, we speak of a workers' state or of the dictatorship of the proletariat supported by the peasants.¹ This characterization does not imply that the working class constitutes the principal social base (in numerical terms) of the Sandinista regime, nor does it mean that the working class effectively exercises political power.

The situation is in fact much more complex.

ARNOLD BERTHU

TODAY, as before the revolution, the working class is a minority within the Nicaraguan social formation. In 1978 and 1979 there were 40,000 industrial workers, concentrated mainly in small and medium enterprises, and around 60,000 waged permanent agricultural workers (a group of fairly recent origin). Today, the number of paid workers in agriculture has grown, and they have achieved a higher level of organization. In contrast, the number of industrial workers has fallen (above all since 1987), to the extent that one could speak of a "declassed" industrial class, to use Lenin's expression

characterizing the state of the Soviet working class in 1920-21.

The Nicaraguan working class has not only declined in numerical terms, but has also experienced a situation of rapid turnover of employees in the enterprises, as well as a great deal of coming-and-going between the formal and informal sectors. This could not but have a negative effect upon its class consciousness. Workers in the public sector, for their part, have grown and their degree of cohesion and class consciousness has been strengthened.

Long and difficult transition towards socialism

In order to understand the current phase through which the Nicaraguan revolution is passing, it is necessary to analyze the objective conditions at the time of the seizure of power which have determined the long and difficult transition towards socialism of a small, backward and peripheral country.

In June-July 1979, an authentic social revolution took place: the Nicaraguan masses, under the leadership of the Sandinistas, destroyed the bourgeois state apparatus and in its place put a decisive instrument for bringing about revolutionary social transformations. This instrument was the dictatorship of the proletariat supported by the alliance of the workers and peasants. The birth of this new state, based in the full sense of the term on the people in arms, allowed the conquest of national sovereignty, the progressive realization of the tasks of the democratic revolution (agrarian reform, recognition of the rights of self-

organization and self-expression for the masses, a national assembly elected for the first time by universal suffrage and so on), as well as incursions into the domain of private property (nationalization of the system of credit; expropriation of the Somoza clan, accounting for about 20% of the economy; establishment of a state monopoly of foreign trade and so on — see note 1).

The FSLN, which has led this process, has been able to show that the dictatorship of the proletariat is synonymous with a formidable extension of the rights of self-organization and expression of the masses. The new revolutionary state, whilst effectively excluding the bourgeoisie from political power, has simultaneously made concessions to the anti-Somozista bourgeoisie on the economic plane: the maintenance of a significant capitalist sector in agro-exports, industry and commerce (see box). These concessions were indubitably necessary (see the resolution of the Twelfth World Congress of the Fourth International on Nicaragua, passed in 1985). They were made from a position of strength, by a new state apparatus supported by an armed people. In the course of the first years of the revolution, the conquests of the masses were progressively consolidated and remained fundamentally intact. At the same time, the Sandinistas firmly maintained a multi-party system, as well as pluralism in the trade unions and in the media.

Ten years after the seizure of power, revolutionary Nicaragua constitutes the most advanced experience of the twentieth century, from the point of view of democracy. This can hardly be doubted, if we compare Nicaragua with the Soviet Union ten years after the revolution.

Comparisons with other workers' states

In the Soviet Union, in 1927-28, political life had been reduced to its most basic expression: a single party directed by a bureaucratic clique; the absence of any mass organizations independent of the state; the disappearance of any effective political life in the soviets; the onset of massive internal repression within the Communist Party (and also the expulsion of its leaders such as Trotsky). On the economic plane, if the end of the imperialist aggression and the civil war had permitted a certain economic recovery, this was at the price of increased social inequality. The layer of rich peasants (the kulaks) and

1. The dictatorship of the proletariat supported by the alliance of the workers and peasants (and the urban semi-proletarianized masses) is necessary in order to conquer genuine national sovereignty, to realize the tasks of the revolution and to begin profound economic and social transformations. But, given the context of the relative isolation of the revolution, to which is added the backward and dependent character of the capitalist development of the country, it is insufficient for leading these transformations to their final goal, socialism.

The mixed economy in Nicaragua

| | State or collective property | Capitalist sector | Small and medium producers ¹ |
|--|------------------------------|-------------------|---|
| Agriculture ² | 25% | 17% ³ | 58% |
| Industry ⁴ | 40% | 30% | 30% |
| Internal trade | 38% | 12% | 50% |
| Public services and credits | 100% | - | - |
| Participation of all sectors in GDP ⁵ | 45% | 25% | 35% |

(1986 figures)

1. Includes most of the cooperative sector.

2. As calculated by Baumeister, *Revista nueva Sociedad*, no. 96, Caracas 1988.

3. Large properties of over 200 hectares.

4. Proportion of GDP (source INIES, *Bulletin socio-économique*, Managua 1988.)

5. According to Vilas, *Transición desde el subdesarrollo*, Nueva Sociedad, Caracas, 1989, p. 102.



private merchants prepared to grab the regime by the throat with the threat of a grain strike. One could also mention the Chinese state at the end of the 1950s (not to speak of Eastern Europe at the same time, with the exception of Yugoslavia).

Superficial resemblance to *perestroika*

In Nicaragua, in 1989, in this minuscule country confronting the principal imperialist power, the situation is fundamentally different and in favour of the masses (despite all the difficulties of everyday life and certain errors in the area of the economy). If one compares the situation with that of Cuba, 10 years after the revolution, the degree of socialization of the economy was very much more advanced than in Nicaragua, but the political system was becoming ossified (single party, state-controlled trades unions), despite a very high degree of mass activity and support for the revolutionary regime.

Finally, how long will the concessions which the Sandinistas have made to the capitalist sector last? The confiscations of June 1989 show that a new extension of socialization should not necessarily be ruled out. If the consequences bear a superficial resemblance to *perestroika*, they have little in common with the reforms of the so-called "socialist" bloc (as seen particularly in China, Poland, Hungary and the Soviet Union), for their starting point is totally different: the maintenance of a capitalist sector in Nicaragua since 1979 and the terribly backward character of Nicaraguan economic development. ²★

2. The sectarians and ultra-leftists are incapable of understanding this. For example, the small Morenista party in Nicaragua (the Revolutionary Workers' Party (PRT), a member of the International Workers' League) has maintained for ten years that the petit bourgeois FSLN is in the process of rebuilding a bourgeois state destroyed by the masses in 1979! "Since 1979, the FSLN has imposed on Nicaragua a left Bonapartist regime, that is a strong bourgeois regime which is based nonetheless on the mass movement against imperialism", claimed *Correo Internacional*, the journal of the International Workers' League, in January 1989. Happily, despite its ultra-left sectarianism, the PRT (like the ex-Maoist Popular Action Movement (MAP)), has not joined the so-called "bloc of 14" coalition of opposition parties, comprising the parties of the right together with the two Communist Parties.

Chronology

- **July 19, 1979:** The overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship and the destruction of the bourgeois state at the end of a prolonged popular insurrection, combined with a military offensive by the FSLN. Birth of a workers' state. A coalition government is constituted comprising the FSLN and the anti-Somozista bourgeoisie (with the latter in a minority). The FSLN is in full control of the new state. They expropriate the property of the Somoza clan (comprising some 20% of the economy), nationalize the system of credit, establish a state monopoly of foreign trade, and legalize and encourage the development of mass organizations.

- **Spring 1980:** Governmental crisis develops between FSLN and anti-Somozista bourgeoisie: a reshuffle follows which benefits the former.

- **From 1980 to 1984:** Growth of social expenditure, enormous progress in terms of literacy (the rate of illiteracy falls from 62% to 13%), increased access to health care, eradication of diseases such as polio. Limited agrarian reform; transformation of the Somoza properties into state enterprises (APP), followed by the development of co-operatives, but little redistribution of land to the landless peasants and squatters. Subsidy of basic necessities. Radical reduction in working hours. Investment in industrial projects, above all those linked to the agro-export sector.

- **November 1984:** Elections. The FSLN is victorious. The masses have confirmed in the most striking manner their adhesion to the revolution and their confidence in its leadership.

- **1984-1985:** Escalation of American aggression: mining of ports, development of the Contras, total economic blockade. The response of the FSLN: the extension of the arming of the masses, the development of civil defence, the reinforcement of the army (EPS).

- **1985-86:** Radicalization of the agrarian reform to the benefit of the landless peasants and squatters. 50% of the state budget must now be devoted to defence.

- **1986-1987:** Falling off in the activity of the Sandinista Defence Committees. Development of an acute economic crisis.

- **August 1987:** Esquipulas II Accord.

- **February 1988:** A series of heterodox economic measures are taken. Dislocation of the Contras following an EPS offensive in the north; followed by the opening of negotiations with the Contras, with the Sandinistas being in a position of strength.

- **June 1988:** Monetarist-type economic measures taken. Inflation reaches 25,000%, recession.

- **October 1988:** Hurricane Joan.

- **January 1989:** New economic measures aimed at controlling inflation.

- **February 1989:** As a result of Esquipulas II, the Costa del Sol accords are signed by five Central American presidents. The Sandinistas announce that elections will be held in February 1990, in exchange for the disarmament of the Contras in Honduras. An end to land expropriations is announced. Economic dialogue.

- **April 1989:** Agreement between US Republicans and Democrats on continued aid for the Contras, thus preventing the implementation of the Costa del Sol accords. A part of the capitalist sector begins to sabotage the new agricultural campaign. Daniel Ortega tours Europe seeking the renewal of foreign aid.

- **June 1989:** Resumption of land confiscations in response to capitalist sabotage. Twenty parties register to participate in the elections. ★





Tenth anniversary of the Nicaraguan revolution

THE SANDINISTAS saw the commemoration of the revolution's tenth anniversary as an important means of verifying and measuring the degree of popular support. The result was conclusive: 300,000 people, or one-third of Managua's population, participated in the rally held in the centre of the capital.

ARNOLD BERTHU

THOUSANDS of internationalists, who came from the four corners of the world to participate in work brigades and solidarity meetings, testified equally to the success, which did not make it onto the front pages of the bourgeois press.

A number of comrades from various sections of the Fourth International (FI) were present again this year in Nicaragua.

Over the last ten years 700-800 comrades and sympathizers of the Fourth International have participated in work brigades, usually organized by broad-based solidarity movements. This demonstrates the importance given to the solidarity work being carried out by sections of the International in their respective countries.

On the occasion of the tenth anniversary, the Sandinistas organized a number of big public activities. Outside of the July 19 event itself, which a number of representatives from FI sections were invited to, there was a two-day international meeting of solidarity committees where several hundred delegates discussed solidarity perspectives. An international book fair was also held with over 90 publishers participating, including the publishing house of the LCR (French section of the FI), La Brèche, Pathfinder Press from the USA, Spanish and French *Inprecor* and *International Viewpoint*. A number of Trotsky's works and FI publications were sold.

Symposium on "Democracy and Revolution"

But the main event of the anniversary celebrations was, without doubt, the symposium on "Democracy and Revolution" organized by the Sandinistas in Managua on July 17-18. Among the speakers were Rosario Ibarra, ex-presidential candidate for the Workers' Revolutionary Party (PRT, Mexican section of the FI); and Eric Toussaint, leader of the Socialist Workers' Party (POS/SAP, Belgian section of the Fourth International).

It was more than just an event. The symposium brought together a very broad political spectrum: representatives from Latin American bourgeois governments

(the Mexican PRI, Guatemalan Christian Democracy and so on); spokespeople for the so-called socialist countries (USSR, Poland, Hungary, East Germany) and from some of the non-aligned countries (India and Libya); a number of socialist parties (Spanish state and Sweden); various progressive intellectuals and artists; as well as representatives of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), the Cuban Communist Party, the El Salvadoran Democratic Revolutionary Front/Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FDR/FMLN), the Chilean Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR), the African National Congress (ANC) and sections of the Fourth International from Mexico, France and Belgium. In all, nearly 2,000 people participated in the two days of discussions.

Sandinistas aim for real discussion

The political spectrum demonstrated that the Sandinistas' aim was not to try to win over those present such as the Mexican and Guatemalan government representatives, but to have a real discussion. Moreover, Daniel Ortega himself, in his opening speech, made a point of reaffirming his conception of democracy. He said that "the July 1979 armed insurrection was the most democratic act of the Nicaraguan people in its whole history", and he criticized the façades of the "democracies" in the rest of the continent.

The intervention of our comrade Eric Toussaint was along the same lines, denouncing the campaigns and pressures against Nicaragua today. "It is shameful that the European Community is also involved in this campaign".

Among other things he also stressed that "one of the key differences between Nicaragua and the so-called socialist countries — with some of them currently undergoing profound reforms, some of

which are opening up important areas of freedom — is that here the people are armed. The state, under attack from the Contras and in a situation of destabilization, has not however taken arms back from the masses.

"Going beyond participatory democracy"

"On the contrary, it distributed more arms to them, and the right of citizens to rebel against any attempts to roll back their victories is inscribed in the Nicaraguan constitution. The consolidation of the transition to socialism implies gradually establishing the exercise of power by the masses themselves, going beyond the participatory democracy that exists today in Nicaragua."

For Rosario Ibarra, "the experience of Sandinism shows that it is possible, even in conditions of a blockade and aggression, to combat bourgeois ideas in the framework of multi-party democracy, and to defend the revolution with arms only against those who attack it guns in hand. It has to be understood, finally, that the famous formal freedoms are not restricted to bourgeois democracies. Above all, they are the conquests of humanity that we, as revolutionaries, must defend precisely when the bourgeoisie is trying to suppress many of them. Opposing these demands leads to opposing the democratic aspirations of the masses."

As Eric Toussaint concluded, in the last analysis "one of the objectives pursued by the bourgeois powers is to eliminate the power of attraction that Nicaragua exerts over the peoples in the region. I am convinced that the bourgeois powers will once again be deprived of a counter-revolutionary victory.

"Nicaragua will continue to draw the sympathy of the peoples! Long live the tenth anniversary of the Sandinista revolution!" ★