

International VIEWPOINT

Issue 240

December 7, 1992

£1.50 ; \$2.75 ; C\$3 ; 16FF

Spain: a decade of González



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at the crossroads



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without end

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International Viewpoint

A fortnightly review of news and analysis published under the auspices of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, in conjunction with the French language *Inprecor*, which appears on alternate fortnights

All editorial and subscription correspondence should be mailed to: International Viewpoint, 2, rue Richard Lenoir, 93108, Montreuil, France. Fax: 43 79 21 06.

Published by Presse-Edition-Communication (PEC). Directeur de publication: Christian Lamotte. Commission paritaire: 64324. ISSN: 1294-2925. Imprimé par Rotographie.

International Viewpoint is catalogued by the US Alternative Press Index

- News closing date: November 27, 1992

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Payment: French francs preferred. Cheques to PEC. Postal transfers to PEC, CCP No. 2 322 42T Paris. Bank transfers to PEC, BNP Robespierre, Account 230179/90. IMPORTANT: ALL BANK OR POSTAL TRANSFERS MUST ALSO BE NOTIFIED BY LETTER

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GATT: a battle in the trade war

ON NOVEMBER 20, 1992, European and American leaders reached agreement on cuts in farm subsidies, opening the way for the conclusion of the current round of GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) negotiations. However, the deal has run into resistance from the French government, under pressure from its hard pressed farmers.

In any case, the spectacular claims about the benefits of a GATT agreement for the world economy are unjustified.

NICOLAS BENIES

THE current GATT negotiations are known as the Uruguay Round since they started in Punta del Este in Uruguay on September 15, 1986. This round involves comprehensive negotiations aimed at liberalizing world trade, and reducing customs' duties and import quotas in two areas: agriculture and services.

The conclusion of these negotiations has been postponed several times. Now the deadline is the end of this year. At the moment attention is focussed on agriculture and in particular on the stance adopted by France whose Socialist government wants at all costs to avoid provoking the country's farmers a few months before elections. However, in fact, over services it is the United States that is being recalcitrant.

The GATT agreement was signed by 28 countries in 1948 with the aim of achieving free trade. It is often believed that the GATT is a structured international organization, but in fact it is more a sort of pledge of good behaviour. Now there are 102 signatories among them Hungary, Poland Czechoslovakia and even Cuba.

Round and round they go

The first "round" was the Kennedy Round (1964-67): in this 50 countries decided, on the initiative of the US, to lower their customs duties by an average of 35%. This was followed by the Tokyo Round (1973-79) (initially known as the Nixon Round), which brought together 97 countries who decided to lower subsidies on exports of industrial products, work out a "code of norms" (needed to avoid so-called qualitative limits) — which is still to see the light of day — and open public markets to foreign competition — which is being carried through in slow stages.

Thus the rounds have always taken a long time and their decisions have not necessarily taken effect. The onset of eco-

nomie crisis in 1974 knocked the Tokyo Round off course and involved a certain revival of protectionism.

In the present round, whose conclusion has also been postponed, there is a conflict between the European Community (EC) and the US over agriculture — Japan having no special interest to defend on this point — which became particularly sharp in October and November.

The American government wants to make the EC reduce agricultural output, and in particular that of vegetable oils. They are calling for a cut of three million tonnes which would "mean taking more than a million hectares out of production or turning them over to further grain production".¹ The result would be either an increase in the amount of unused land (already on the rise in Europe) or an increase in the grain surplus, which the current reform of the European Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is aimed at reducing.

The European countries most likely to be affected by the proposal — France, Italy and Belgium — resisted it, while Germany, a big producer of Colza, was reluctant. As a result the US decided to impose rises in customs' duties of 200% on a number of European agricultural products, including French white wine. The European side contemplated counter-measures and suddenly everyone was talking about a trade war.

In fact, the war has already started. The agricultural market is saturated; the only outlet for its expansion is the Third World, which cannot pay. Given this, the only solution is for the the US and the EC countries to divide up the market. Increases in agricultural productivity and good harvests have triggered the crisis and sharpened competition. The world's biggest agricultural exporter is the US which had 11.8% of the market in 1991 followed closely by the EC with 11%. There is inevitably a

struggle for markets between these two giants. Whatever the outcome of the current GATT negotiations, the competition will continue, since the interests involved are too powerful.

This is not, as commentators (and American propaganda) are suggesting, a debate between liberals and protectionists but between two exporting interests.

Behind the argument over oilseeds there is another, perhaps more important debate on the future of agriculture, concerning subsidies. All the developed capitalist countries subsidize their agriculture since world market prices are not high enough for farmers to survive. However subsidies take different forms in different countries. The US government provides "deficiency payments" to make up the difference between domestic prices and world market prices while the CAP pays a guaranteed minimum price to the farmer (the "intervention price") which is passed on to the consumer in higher prices. The CAP takes up about 70% of the Community's budget; it is thus highly expensive and leads to surpluses.

The EC has therefore decided to start dismantling the CAP next year. This means changing the way in which subsidies are calculated and moving to the American system. In France, and only in France, this reform has been presented as connected to the GATT negotiations and as a result of American pressure. This is completely untrue. The reform of the CAP is not a European concession to outsiders. The Americans are in fact only demanding something the Europeans have already decided on — a unilateral reduction in EC agricultural subsidies.

Rural exodus

The result of the reform of the CAP will be to bring European prices — in particular of cereals — into line with world market prices by 1995 or 1996. It will mean an acceleration of changes in farming patterns and thus a rural exodus. The editor of the economic weekly *L'Expansion* (June 4, 1992), Jean Boissonat, has coolly noted that "about 300,000 of the existing million farms will disappear".

The issue here is not that of defending the CAP in its existing form but to find a subsidy system that defends the environment. Paying people to take land out of production is an economic absurdity at a time of spreading famine and drought and an ecological absurdity because it increases the intensity of exploitation of the land still in production.

The current negotiations on the agricul-

1. *Le Canard Enchaîné*, November 11, 1992. From an article by Claude Roire which quotes projections modelled in Brussels on the possible results of a compromise with the Americans.

ture issue have shown up differences between the European governments. The French satirical weekly, *Le Canard Enchaîné*, recounts in its November 11, 1992 issue the anxiety aroused among EC Commission President Jacques Delors and the French government by the prospect of the EC's current president, British Prime Minister John Major trying to restart the GATT talks on terms favourable to the Americans. The deal reached under Major's auspices on November 20 was roundly denounced in Paris.

The British parliament has still not ratified the Maastricht Treaty on European union and the Danes have yet to hold their second referendum on the same subject, assuming that the latter will take place at all. There are big splits in Britain's ruling Conservative Party a significant part of which wants to break with the super free market policies of Margaret Thatcher and her successor John Major.

Maastricht on shaky ground

Meanwhile, the arrival of Bill Clinton in the White House may signal a change of tack by the US. In these circumstances, the neo-liberal inspired Maastricht Treaty looks shaky and some have claimed that it is simply stillborn.

The Franco-German alliance which lay at the heart of the Treaty of Rome of 1957 and of all the subsequent steps towards European union is being increasingly disrupted by contradictory interests. Germany needs American markets and is willing to sacrifice French farmers to get a deal with the US, while the French government has to take those farmers into account along with a powerful food industry which, for the first time, is being affected by the recession and is searching for new markets. All the more in that the East European market has collapsed before even existing.

It is facts such as these, far more than the GATT accords, which are throwing into question the future of European construction.

To fully understand what is going on in the GATT talks we have to remember that there is a comprehensive package on the table; to bring the agreement to fruition a compromise is needed on both agricultural exports and the export of services. However, it is the USA which is refusing to open its borders to the latter.

Services (also known as "invisibles" since they involve the entrance and exit of hard currency without any visible counterpart) is aimed at forcing the Third World countries to open their markets to exports of services from the developed capitalist world. At first, Argentina, Brazil and Mexico resisted. They know that such opening up could trigger the bankruptcy of

their own service sector in such fields as information technology and communications (in particular telephone technology). Protection against exports from the developed capitalist world is essential if these countries are to develop their enterprises.

The turn by these Latin American governments towards economic liberalism has facilitated the negotiations on services. They have agreed to open their frontiers at the same time as the American and Canadian governments are moving to create a zone of free exchange (the North American Free Trade Agreement — NAFTA) which Brazil and Argentina are tempted by.

Once again the debate is between the EC and the USA. In particular, the French government wants the US to allow increased access for French telecommunication to the American market. The US has refused since it wants to protect its telephone and communication's industries from foreign competition. Compromise here will be hard to achieve.

The negotiators are pretending that, if signed, the agreement will mean \$200bn more in world trade. Apart from the fact that no serious study has yet been produced to corroborate this figure, it has no credibility: increased competition means that someone will drive someone else out of the existing market rather than the market as a whole getting bigger.

Agreement or no agreement, competition is being exacerbated by the recession. Some have claimed that this is the worst recession since the 1930s, which is true for some sectors. The main immediate cause of the recession is the fall in demand which is seen in all the developed capitalist countries. This affects world trade, whose growth is also restricted.

Furthermore, the arrival of Bill Clinton makes compromise even more distant. The Democrats are traditionally more protectionist than the Republicans and also more sensitive to pressure from the trade union bureaucracy, which sees protectionism as a means of saving American jobs. Furthermore, Clinton's job is to try to reverse the US's decline, which the Gulf War hid without truly reversing, and to this end he will take an aggressive line towards his imperialist competitors.

Revival of protectionism

Fundamentally, this revival of protectionism is itself a result of the recession which leads everyone to seek to save themselves. This protectionism is taking on new forms due to the tendency for the world market to divide up into three big zones dominated by the three big powers — the United States, Japan and Germany, but protectionism is what it is. ★

Polish clergy seek to extend power

EVER more openly, the Catholic Church in Poland is pushing to assert its ideological and moral domination over society and the state. The big chiefs of the Church make no bones about what they want: "We find ourselves at a particular point in history — that of the return of Christian values to their proper place, both in the field of the functioning of society and in all our public activity"¹

The clergy's onslaught enjoys the support of many parliamentarians on the government side, who were elected with Church support.

JAN MALEWSKI

FOLLOWING up attempts to get its men into the key posts in the media, the Church is now attempting to assert its right to vet information. On October 15, there was a vote in the Polish parliament (the Diet) over whether the law on audio-visual communications should require editors to "respect Christian values in their system of broadcasts".

Bishops in a frenzy

The vote against drove the bishops to a frenzy. "What do these parliamentary deputies represent, who, in a country where the majority is Christian, reject a proposal that the mass media should reject

Christian values" thundered a statement from the Conference of Bishops. The bishops spelled out what they meant by values: "we have seen attacks on the Holy Father [the Pope] in the Polish press".²

During the vote on the law in the Upper House, the Catholic censors returned to the attack: "As a Catholic I cannot accept a law that does not uphold respect for Christian values. It is not a matter of indifference to know what system of values is being imposed on society: minorities must respect the views of the majority", as one explained.³ And the Senate agreed with him. If the law goes through a second reading in the Diet, then the censorship will be back, this time in Catholic rather than Stalinist form.

As the Catholic church still does not recognize divorce, another draft law is aimed at introducing the institution of separation.

This would mean that the ex-spouses would be forbidden to remarry and the separation could be overturned on a simple application by a former spouse to a court.

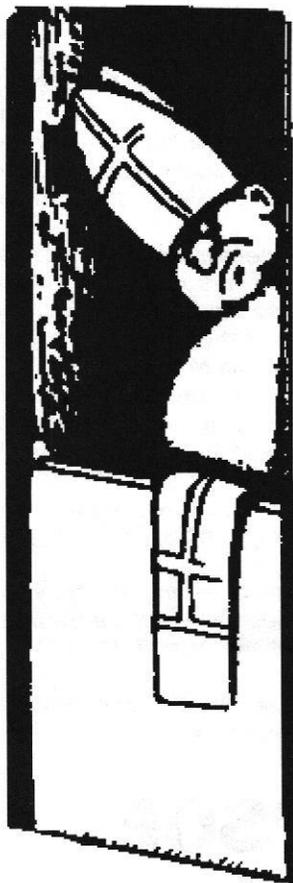
Persecuting single parents

The deputies supporting this scheme made clear their aim of "limiting the number of divorces" and "giving couples a chance to reflect on their decision". The draft law has gone to a parliamentary commission.⁴ The Polish parliament has also covered itself in glory by depriving one parent families of the tax reductions granted to married couples⁵. This will afflict above all single mothers.

The crucial obsession of the clerics however is the issue of abortion. In 1990 the church won its first victory over women: the scope of the abortion law was restricted by a ministerial decree which required that women seeking an abortion must go before two commissions and freed hospitals from their obligation to perform the operation. In December 1991, the doctors' congress adopted a Code of Ethics which forbids doctors from carrying out abortions.

At the same time, a law was passed giving the Chamber of Doctors the power to ban its members from practising. In July 1992, parliament rejected the demand for a referendum on this question.

Finally, on November 19, the parliamentary commission entrusted with examining the draft law on the "protection of the unborn child" definitively adopted the most restrictive version in front of it. The text allows for a two year prison term for anyone responsible for an abortion (the doctor or the women if she self-aborts) and includes under the heading of abortion any contraceptive method which takes effect after conception (RU-486, the coil,



and some up-to-date pills). The law could also mean a ban on all prenatal examinations.

This law could be put to the vote in the Diet at any moment, the decision on timing being in the hands of the Diet's president who is a leader of the National Christian Union (ZChN), and could well be passed.

In the name of a minority of the commission, Barbara Labuda of the Democratic Union intends to present a second time the demand for a referendum while Izabella Sierakowska of the Social Democracy (which originated in the former ruling Polish United Workers Party) will put forward an amended text, allowing abortion in certain cases — when the mother's life is in danger, when the child is likely to be born ill, when the pregnancy is the result of rape or incest or other crimes and when the mother finds herself in a particularly

difficult social situation or presents especially serious personal circumstances in writing.

After a long period in which they were paralyzed by their governmental alliance with the Catholic fundamentalists and their own differences over the issue,⁶ the liberal parliamentarians now support the initiative of the Union of Labour⁷ in favour of a referendum, alongside the Social Democrats.

The Committee for a Referendum was formed on November 7 with the support of all the Polish women's organizations.⁸ It aims to build up a vast movement throughout the country. While the present law states that only the Diet can decide (by a simple majority) to organize a referendum, the new draft Charter of Rights and Liberties submitted to parliament by President Lech Walesa allows for a referendum on the initiative of the president or of 500,000 signatories to a petition.

Majority opposed to abortion ban

Despite the big campaign claiming that abortion is more-or-less murder, the majority of the Polish people remain opposed to the criminalization of abortion.

A poll by CBOS⁹ on November 15 found that 81% (against 11%) of Poles were in favour of permitting abortion in cases where the life or health of the woman were endangered; 80% (against 9%) in cases where the embryo was affected by incurable illness or deformity; 74% (against 15%) when the pregnancy had resulted from a crime (rape or incest); and 53% (against 32%) when the pregnant woman was in a difficult social, material or family situation. Only in the case of unlimited access to abortion was there a majority against — 59% to 29%.

Prime Minister Suchocka is against a referendum: "This is an attempt to divide society. It may destabilize what we have built up with so much effort".¹⁰ She has, however, asked that the Diet should not vote on this issue before the final adoption of the state budget. Eager not to be left behind, President Walesa has not only expressed his opposition to a referendum but has said he will not sign a law permitting abortion.¹¹ ★

1. Call to prayer in favour of the "legal protection of the conceived human life" from primate Josef Glemp and the secretary of the Polish Episcopate, Archbishop Bronislaw Dabrowski, as broadcast by *Radio Warsaw*, November 15, 1992 and quoted in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, November 16, 1992.

2. *Gazeta Wyborcza*, October 17-18, 1992.

3. *Ibid.*, November 14-15, 1992.

4. *Ibid.*, November 9, 1992.

5. *Ibid.*, October 30, 1992.

6. Thus, the prime minister, Hanna Suchocka, the leader of the liberal Democratic Union is one of the authors of the anti-abortion law, while other DU

deputies such as Barbara Labuda, are involved in the struggle to defend abortion rights.

7. The Union of Labour bases itself on the tradition of the left in Solidarnosc. It has three deputies.

8. These being the League of Women, the Polish Feminist Association, Pro Femina, Neutrum and the Women's Family Planning Federation as well as some regional women's commissions of Solidarnosc.

9. *Gazeta Wyborcza*, November 17, 1992.

10. *Ibid.*, November 16, 1992.

11. *Ibid.*, November 19, 1992.

A decade of "Felipismo"

THIS October saw the tenth anniversary of the coming to power in Spain of the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) headed by Felipe Gonzalez. Announcing his candidature in the forthcoming elections to the party faithful, Gonzalez claimed that he needed ten to 15 years more in power "to modernize Spain". He has also recently indicated his willingness to form a coalition government if the PSOE loses its majority.

The political basis for this would be his determination to persist in the process of European construction associated with the controversial Maastricht Treaty. As he has explained "if Europe breaks up, this will not only mark the end of the Socialist project, but that of part of the perspectives of the whole of Spain".

Over the past decade, Gonzalez's modernization programme has combined an appeal to the progressive longings of a population newly freed from the Franco dictatorship and a firm commitment to free market principles and a centralized state. Strains in the balancing act this required began to become apparent in the mid-1980s, but rapid economic growth has given the PSOE regime a measure of stability.

The end of the Spanish economic "miracle" — signalled by the current discussions over devaluing the peseta — will undermine the credibility of Gonzalez's claims about the overall benefits of modernization.

Below we publish two articles looking at the relations between the PSOE and the union and social movements. ★

ty, given the community of interests between the government and the right, now with a Socialist government in power, they believed things would be very different.

Underpinning this belief was the relation between the union and the "fraternal (Communist and Socialist) parties", which was essentially one of dependence. This dependence, however, has had a different effect on the two unions.

The CCOO's subjection to the various tactics adopted by the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) between 1976 and 1982, and, concretely, the successive social pacts signed "to help the consolidation of democracy" exacted a high price in terms of loss of membership; as a result the CCOO lost the preeminent position it had held at the start of the transition from the Francoist dictatorship.

UGT rides Socialist wave

For the UGT, on the other hand, the close links with the PSOE were key to its leap from being a marginal force in 1976 to becoming the leading union in terms of the number of delegates obtained in the union elections in 1982, just after the PSOE election victory.

Both the high hopes and the close political links were to be reversed in the first five years of the Socialist government.

It was already clear by the end of 1983 that the promised "left turn" was not being carried through, being completely alien to a government team which fully accepted the prevailing liberal economic orthodoxies.

Their main priority was the carrying through of industrial reconversion postponed by rightwing governments lacking the necessary social support. Launched under the banner of the "modernization of the productive apparatus" time would show that this was nothing more than a huge operation of cutbacks and restoration of profitability involving a significant degree of deindustrialization of the Spanish economy.

Unions face PSOE "modernization"

THE election victory of the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) in October 1982 was greeted by much of the union movement, and obviously by the Socialist UGT union, with high hopes in the promises made during the campaign.

JOAQUIN NIETO & PAULINO RODRIGUEZ

THESE hopes involved both the improvement of workers' conditions and the role of the unions in society including their ability to influence public policy making.

An expression of these expectations was the rapid achievement of the Inter-Confederation Agreement (AI) for 1983 between the UGT, the CCOO (Workers Commissions — close to the Communist Party) and the bosses without direct government participation.

One reason for the ease with which agreement was reached was the practice that the unions had accumulated over preceding years in making social agreements. However another factor was that, for the first time in several years, the government of the day made no attempt to insert a reference to wage rises for 1983 and had promised a reduction in

the legal working week to 40 hours.

The unions' thinking was dominated by one big idea: until then the unions had taken part in such tripartite negotiations from a clear situation of inferiority.

Union election results

	1982	1986	1990
UGT	51,672	66,411	99,737
CC.OO	47,016	56,065	87,730
ELA-STV	4,642	5,372	7,488
INTG-CIG	1,651	1,062	3,527
OTHERS	18,765	22,393	16,903
GRUPO TRAB.	17,024	10,833	8,407
TOTAL	140,760	162,298	237,261

6

At the same time, it became clear that the policy was to reduce job security and demarcation as far as possible; this was expressed in a series of decrees signed in 1984 dealing with such matters as reductions in social security, including a reform of the pension system which took effect two years later.

The first distancing from government policy and the first critical reactions came from the CCOO. The failure of the PCE in the 1982 elections and its subsequent disintegration meant that the union, not wanting to share the party's decline, took an increasingly independent stance.

Furthermore, the splits in the PCE, especially the one that gave rise to the Communist People's Party of Spain (PCPE), meant increased pluralism in the CCOO, increased influence for radical views, previously restricted to the somewhat closed circles of the Union Left (Izquierda Sindical — IS).

At the time, the CCOO started an ongoing campaign of opposition to government policy. Its attitude to the industrial reconversion was ambivalent — with elements both of opposition and acceptance — expressed in a policy mainly aimed at negotiating a softening of the traumatic effects of closures.

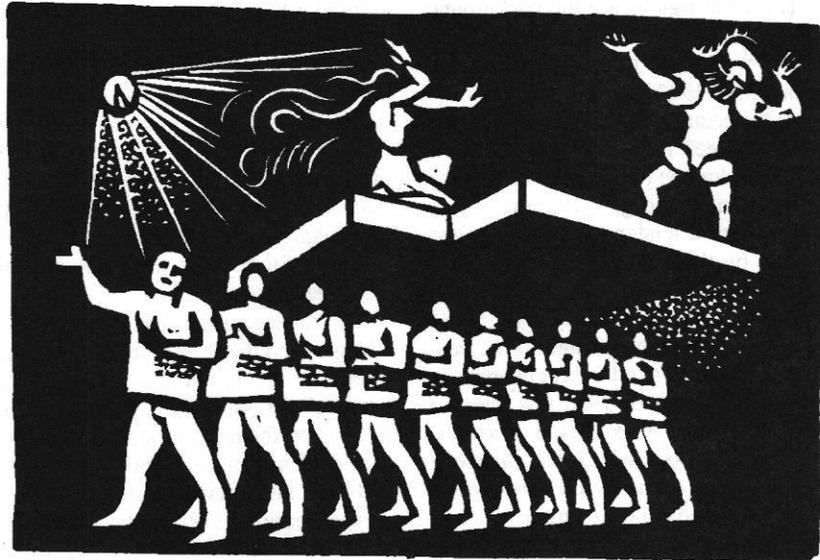
Meanwhile, the CCOO made the significant gesture of refusing to sign the Economic and Social Agreement (AES) alongside the government, the employers' organization and the UGT.¹ It also opposed the decrees lessening job security which the government approved with the blessing of the UGT.

The most significant expression of CCOO opposition to government policy, however, was the calling of a general strike on June 20, 1985 against the pension reform. However, the CCOO's opposition was conducted within strict limits.

The UGT, meanwhile, for the first five years of the Socialist government, opted for support for government policy, providing, indeed, its main source of social endorsement.

The UGT explicitly supported the government's industrial reconversion policy. The signing of the AES could only be interpreted as a statement of backing for a government policy which implied big attacks on broad sectors of the working class.²

Another aspect of the UGT's supportive attitude to the PSOE government was



highly relevant; the desire to outstrip the CCOO and become the country's main union force. This ambition rested on apparently reasonable assumptions: firstly, the possibility of translating electoral support for PSOE into members for the UGT — meaning a substantial crossover from the CCOO; secondly, the impact of the profound disarray in the PCE on the CCOO, and finally, the existence of effective support from the government for the UGT's pretensions.

1984-86 saw the highest level of confrontation between the two big union confederations since the start of the transition. Attacks succeeded one another and always in the same direction, by the UGT on the CCOO.

The first insistently repeated that the latter was a "Communist union" driven by a "belligerent attitude to the Socialist government that was never shown to the previous rightwing governments." The CCOO was accused of being "incapable of negotiation" and "indifferent to the interests of the workers owing to its anti-Socialist sectarianism".

In this respect, the AES was of crucial importance in the UGT's strategy; the exclusion of the CCOO from the collective negotiations was meant to pave the way for the proposed objective.

Evaporation of illusions

There are two specially interesting facts that are relevant here. The first was the considerable success (in the circumstances) of the June 20, 1985 general strike called by the CCOO. This took

place at a time when the anti-NATO movement was at its height. The social climate was marked by the evaporation of illusions in the PSOE's promises and growing opposition to various aspects of government policy.

The second was the results of the union elections in 1986. While this showed both a relative and absolute strengthening of the UGT — which increased its lead over the CCOO by three percent — it did not bear out the UGT's expectations for the collapse of its rival and the establishment of its primacy. At the same time the UGT's majority was overshadowed by evidence of widespread electoral fraud in smaller enterprises and the fact that the CCOO still came out in front in the larger enterprises.

In 1982, the UGT got 36.74% of the total number of delegates, and the CCOO 33.33%; in 1986 the respective figures were 40.92% and 34.49%. In 1990 they were 41.62% and 36.98%.³

1. What the AES was all about was well expressed by Felipe Gonzalez himself, who explained before the negotiations: "I am asking for the same sacrifices for my government as those made for the previous rightwing governments".

2. The AES capped the collective negotiations for 1985 and 1986. Most of the conventions were to have effect over two years with provisions for wage revision in the second year. Many of the conventions were "of limited scope", signed only by the employers and the UGT although in practice they were often of wider validity.

3. The figures are interesting from a number of points of view. On the one hand they show the increasing concentration of union influence in the hands of the CCOO and UGT. The total of delegates from these two big confederations rose from 70% in 1982 to 78% in 1990. Most of the gains were at the expense of smaller unions and the so-called "workers' groups".

On the other, we find a different development in Euskadi (the Basque Country) and Galicia. In the first case, the nationalist ELA-STV has become the leading union in the Basque autonomous community while in Galicia, the INTG-CIG made a big step forward in 1990, obtaining 23.9% of Galician delegates.

Annual growth of Gross National Product (adjusted for inflation)

1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
3,11%	5,48%	6,30%	4,41%	4,42%	5,04%

The 1986 figures are the background of the changes that took place in the union world and in union/government relations in 1987.

At the centre of these changes was the split between the PSOE and the UGT and the adoption by the latter of a policy of opposition to government policy along with a tendency towards united action by the unions in place of their previous confrontation.

Apart from the results of the 1986 union elections, the change in the economic cycle played a crucial part in these developments. 1986 saw the start of a long period of expansion which lasted until 1991 (see table). The change in the economic situation did not however mean a change in the government's economic policies; these remained firmly based on monetarist and neo-liberal principles and were profoundly anti-social.

Pressure continued on the workers, said to be the main culprits for inflation and job security continued to be undermined. State expenditure continued to be squeezed while unemployment fell only slightly to remain at a very high level.

The new period of relative economic prosperity was favourable to sudden — and scandalous — enrichment in some quarters and a growth in social inequality. Union proposals for a change in government policy, meanwhile, were bluntly rejected.

All these factors led to the reversal by the UGT of its long standing policy of close alliance with the PSOE, and the same factors were behind the general strike of December 14, 1988 which marked both the culmination and possibly the outer limit of the confrontation between the unions and the government.

Effects of 1988 general strike

The December 1988 strike made a big stir in a society unaccustomed since the start of the Transition to challenging authority — aside from the episode of the anti-NATO movement. The same event also saw the disappearance of the last remaining hopes for any positive social action from this government. People contemplated for the first time the possibility of a social movement that would fight directly for reforms by putting intense and constant pressure on the authorities to affect its behaviour.

Trade unions take on a decisive importance from that point of view. They are the only organizations capable of taking the initiative in such a movement and giving expression to the

various social forces that appear on the scene.

However, if the unions were to play such a role, they would have to work tirelessly to develop a social culture of militant opposition to the authorities, of a measure of control over representatives in elected bodies and involvement in organized mobilizations within civil society. Such tasks were beyond the union leaders.

The raising of demands for a "social change" and the struggle to compel such a change soon gave way to the union leaders' obsession with controlling the effects of the general strike. Eighteen months had to pass before that translated itself into a few concessions — such as negotiations over public sector pay that time has shown to be without content or of only short duration.

Meanwhile, the Socialist government gained the time needed to retake the initiative. Now, this has reached the point where, under the guise of meeting the provisions of the Maastricht Treaty on European union, a comprehensive anti-social programme is being pursued.

The half day general strike of May 28, 1992, called to oppose the latest government measures, was characterized more by the consequences of developments in the unions after the December 1988 strike than with the spirit of that earlier strike itself.

A brief episode of confrontation was succeeded by renewed efforts to limit the most brutal aspects of the measures without any challenge to their underlying logic. In this context, plans for social partnership schemes have flourished.

A rapid retrospective of the past decade can help us to see the pluses and minuses of the situation of the unions.

On the plus side is the passing of the confrontation between the two big confederations and, even more positive, the reality of unity in action. At the same time, this new ability to act has

been accompanied by greater centralization of decision making by the union leaderships to the detriment of rank-and-file participation.

It is also all to the good that the dependency on the "fraternal" parties has been much weakened and that the unions have acted independently. While the present situation can be reversed, this is a substantial change.

It is also the case that the past decade has seen real rises in the incomes of regularly employed workers covered by collective contracts, thanks to the rise in real wages since 1987. However, this advance has not been felt by less well situated workers, who have seen a 5% fall in the real minimum wage, not to speak of the legions of the unemployed.

As far as the attitude to other social movements and issues is concerned, the unions, and especially the CCOO, have started, with all kinds of hesitations, to address such questions as women's rights and defence of the environment.

It would also be reasonable to note the carving out by the unions of their space in society at least in terms of membership. This is even more true if we remember the strong pressure against unionism in recent years — especially in 1988-89.

Rise in CCOO membership

The CCOO saw a rise in membership of 34% between 1982 and 1990 (see table) This bulk of this growth was between 1988 and 1990, under the impact of the December 1988 general strike. At the same time, closer analysis of these affiliation points to some serious problems.

The whole of the CCOO's growth has been recorded in the service sector (where it has risen three times) and above all in the public sector, where affiliations have risen seven-fold. However membership in industry and construction has remained stagnant.

	Breakdown of national workforce*		Breakdown of CCOO membership*	
	1982	1990	1982	1990
Agriculture	7.65%	5.02%	4.10%	3.13%
Industry/				
Construction	41.95%	38.42%	75.50%	59.74%
Services	50.40%	56.56%	14.03%	29.99%
Others	---	---	6.96%	7.19%

◆ proportion of economically active population in each sector
* composition of CCOO membership according to sector

Building communities of resistance

IN 1982, the PSOE appeared to many social movement activists as a possible ally, especially around three questions: leaving NATO, winning a woman's right to abortion and changing the thrust of the National Energy Plan.

MANUEL GARÍ

While it is true that employment in services has been growing much faster than in industry and construction, this latter sector has none the less registered a 10% growth.

The CCOO's growth patterns are explained first of all by the entry into full-time employment in the public sector of a large number of relatively young people and by the new forms of union representation, and to some extent negotiation, in the public sector. The stagnation in industry and construction reflects a decline in big enterprises in favour of small and medium sized firms and the spread of insecure jobs which are hard to unionize.

It also has to be said that, at least in the case of the CCOO, the process of affiliation has become much more passive and the union itself more bureaucratized, while both the UGT and the CCOO have become increasingly financially dependent on public investment schemes, which weighs in the balance against their mounting any sustained challenge to the authorities.

The unions have not been able to hold back — not to speak of reversing — the tendency for the share of profits in the Gross Domestic Product to rise at the expense of wages. In 1982, the latter was 51.3% of GDP and profits 44.4%; in 1991 the percentages were 45.9% and 46.1% respectively.

Unions suffer striking defeat

In the same way, they have failed to halt the dizzying advance in insecure jobs.⁴ Life has not been made easier by the fact that, in its time, the UGT formally agreed to the legislation undermining job security. Overall, the unions have suffered a striking defeat in their stated aim of reducing the social inequalities accumulated over recent years.

But the most basic defeat, which involves all the others, is the failure to obtain a serious change in government policy. This is not because its efforts have not been crowned by success, but because the necessary perseverance has not been there in pursuing the proclaimed objective.★

4. According to Ministry of Labour statistics on employment, 94.6% of contracts registered in 1991 involved various types of insecure working. Statistics worked out by Eurostat for 1989 (since which time things have worsened) put the Spanish State in first place in Europe for insecure employment. They show 30% of such jobs to 70% permanent posts. Next in line is Portugal with 13% and 81% respectively.

THE electoral victory soon provoked new tensions inside the movements, around questions such as the initial proposals for an abortion law, the nuclear moratorium of 1984, the co-opting of feminists onto the Women's Institute, the creation of new government departments dealing with the environment, and the delay in dealing with membership in the Atlantic Alliance.

This conflict would be centred on the relationship developed by the Socialist government — or, rather, by its supporters in municipal and autonomous governments — with the social movements that flourished in the big cities, especially those "new social movements" that exist as separate entities alongside the trade union movement, the nationalist movements and the international solidarity organizations.

For the far-left, whose growth occurred outside the institutions, the growth and evolution of the social movements through the 1980s has been and continues to be of great interest, insofar as these movements have provided an important challenge to the government's programme. This has been an ideological and ethical challenge as well as a practical challenge (campaigns, struggles) which has created space for political activity outside the institutions — the revolutionary left has thus increased its ability to take political initiatives, to mobilize and to establish close links with a wide array of social forces.

From a wider strategic view, it is necessary for proponents of a revolutionary alternative to make a detailed analysis of the evolution of the social movements and the autonomous popular organizations — for they represent the embryo of a civil society with its own voice representing a new majority in society, without which any project of social transformation is simply unviable.

The victory of the left in the 1979 municipal elections, and the PSOE-PCE (Communist Party of Spain) alliance, led to the demobilization of those forces which until then had constituted the principal non-

trade union urban social movement. Institutional work replaced mass work, and soon came into open conflict with it. A large number of local activists became involved with the running of local administrations in place of their grassroots community activities.

In 1983, the PSOE once again took an interest in the popular associations, with the aim of converting them into mouthpieces for its institutional work in society. Now the PSOE has a majority in the Confederation of Local Associations of Spain (CAVE), and it has reduced the role of the associations to that of consultation with no real participation — mediating the application of the Law on Local Governments and regulating municipal decrees flowing from this law.

On the other hand, abandoning all socialist policies in the area of land and public housing, the PSOE has empowered the associations, along with the trade unions, to enter directly into the real estate market to create and manage cooperatives — while depriving them of any activist function or limiting them to issues which do not come into conflict with the government (campaigns against drugs and for public security, and so forth). Moreover, given the local associations' real poverty, the PSOE has made them depend for their survival on the subsidies from the various administrations.

Marginalizing feminist activism

Before 1982 the PSOE was not interested in the women's movement, neither through its work as a party nor in its political programme. It only gave into pressures of the movement around a few questions relating to the Statute on Workers and the Constitution. After the formation of its government and during its ten-year tenure it has tried to develop an institutional feminism (supported by the media) and, through subsidies, nurture a kind of non-conflictual association — thus marginalizing feminist activism.

The creation of the Women's Institute (with little executive power and concerned mainly with the production of studies and the creation of new women's associations), the obligatory implementation of the directives and community accords that made up the Equality and Positive Action Plans, and a certain amount of financing from the municipalities and communities — all these reflected the implicit recognition that the women's movement was able to achieve. The governmental initiatives were intended to absorb or neutralize this movement.

Weakening fabric of social movement

The same association policy, which has some positive aspects insofar as it extends the organization of women, seeks to weaken the fabric of the social movement and see to it that it does not grow and come into conflict with the government's social and economic policy. It seeks to create, on one hand, an elite feminism and, on the other, its mass version, a vague controlled and elementary feminism.

There are two reasons why the feminist movement was able to resist the Socialist's policy. On one hand, there was the weakness of the law on abortion, which was limited to mere de-criminalization. On the other hand, there was the ongoing self-affirmation of the autonomous movement — against the government's discriminatory policies — through its own campaigns and debates.

The limits of the government's policies became clear: a highly underdeveloped network of social services (as much in healthcare compensation for abortion as in the shelters for battered women and the literacy and cultural campaigns); limited legislation after 1986 in the area of violence against women and for the reform of the penal code on abortion; growth of insecure and part-time employment for women workers; and considering as a gain for the entire society those measures which only applied inside the PSOE — such as happened with the "women's quotas".

The environmental movement, which had grown on its own both in the big cities and in the countryside, suffered its first blow in 1982, leading to the entry of a large part of its activists into the Socialist administration. The second blow came with the PSOE's ambiguous stance on nuclear energy, after the adoption of the moratorium.

The Socialists failed in their attempt to create their own associations, but not in its drive to attract a large part of the "conservationist" sector, which criticized certain measures but took the PSOE as its political reference point. The government came to

an agreement with the right, which it made a privileged interlocutor in 1987. It also worked with the newly-born Greenpeace until 1983 around the question of dumping nuclear waste in the seas.

The development boom of 1985 created a divide between the government and the radical ecology movement and organizations such as CODA and Greenpeace — which up to that point had been on good terms with the government. The talk of modernization, the aggressive policies around infrastructural and industrial development — showing no respect for natural spaces in Riaño, Anchuras and Cabañeros — jolted a large part of the movement back into autonomous organizing.

The radical wing, represented by organizations such as AEDENAT, grew in strength and widened its alliances to include "conservationists" around socio-political themes such as urban pollution, transportation, the energy question, the garbage problem and the question of what attitude to take into the Rio Forum — which provided a wide audience for its criticisms of the European Communities weak-kneed recommendations and the effects of the Maastricht Treaty.

Currently, the Spanish State is the worst environmental offender in the European Economic Community. A good measure of the attitude of the PSOE towards the environmental movement is found in the proclamations of the Secretary of State for Water and the Environment, Vincent Albero — who warns of the dangers of "ecological radicalism and fundamentalism."

After the electoral promise to hold a referendum on NATO membership, and the alliance between the peace movement and the PSOE — expressed in the Act of November 15, 1981 — the October 1984 government declaration and the PSOE congress two months later led to open conflict with the peace movement, thus beginning the decline of peace organizations with links to the PSOE.

Described as the final battle of the transition period, the issue of the Atlantic

Alliance gave the peace movement centre stage, and it was joined by a wide array of forces in an intensely political conflict. When pressure in the streets surpassed that exerted by the military, Felipe González was obliged to organize a referendum and the movement took on an openly anti-NATO and anti-government character that politicized the general atmosphere and enabled radical anti-militarists and the far-left to get a huge audience.

One of the results of the referendum was that the demand for participatory democracy was headed off by a plebiscitary form that the government put forward — with the resultant frustration of the more conscious elements of the society driving them into the ranks of what has been called "the new political abstentionism".

After the referendum, the expectations created in 1982 came to an end — a wide gap formed between the ensemble of social movements and the government; and new forms of political action emerged (during the student movement of 1986-87 and the general strike of 1988), including an anti-war culture that was able to express itself once again during the Gulf War.

Civil disobedience

But it also had a more far-reaching effect, much to the dismay of the government — the growth in forms of civil disobedience around questions of defense and security. The most developed form this took was conscientious objection, and then insubordination, among youth.

The anti-militarist movement against the 1984 Law on Conscientious Objection, the rejection of sentences passed down by the Constitutional Tribunal in accordance with this law and opposition to the 1988 Regulation on Social Benefits — all these forced the government to give amnesty to thousands of objectors and introduce a new Law on Military Service in 1991.

The government hopes to de-legitimize a movement which has gained wide support and an undeniable social and moral legiti-



macy. Government policy has been to suppress, divide and isolate the movement; when unable to do this, it has resorted to repression through the courts. The intransigence of the objectors and the general unpopularity of military service forced the government to free the Armed Forces from the work of judging the objectors in their tribunals — in order to prevent them from becoming further discredited. This produced tremendous confusion among civil judges when their turn came to apply the full repressive weight of the Law.

Before taking office, the PSOE showed little interest in the social movements, and when it did it was primarily concerned with harnessing their vote-getting potential. Its 1982 electoral platform reflected this superficial self-interested approach.

Party and society

For the party leadership and intellectuals, civil society was only sufficiently developed to allow the citizenry to express its institutional preferences through mediators and through elections. Some Socialists even went so far as to identify the re-building of the PSOE and the UGT union confederation as a prerequisite for the building of a new civil society — confusing the needs of the old social-democratic project with the needs of society as a whole.

With the arrival in power and the subsequent break with the UGT, the civil society theme only interested the Socialists insofar as it meant strengthening the position of the state in society, and strengthening their position within the state.

The new social movements in the Spanish State emerged at a different time and in a different manner than in the rest of the Western countries — as a result of the Franco dictatorship, the late introduction of the welfare state and the centrality of the social conflict between classes.

The speed of economic growth and social change is the main reason why movements and individuals hold values marked by a cross-section of both economic and social concerns. This reflects, as Murillo has noted, that Spanish society “is passing from a pre- to a post-industrial phase without having even gone halfway through the industrial phase itself.”

But above all, the new and traditional social movements in the Spanish State of the 1970s are distinguishable from the rest of the Western countries in that they had not yet gone through the experience of the representative democracy in which they had such great illusions.

In 1982, the distinguishing feature changed: the ensemble of social movements had not yet gone through the experience of the social democrats in power.

After the initial discouragement with the first moves of the PSOE government, the

Racist murder in Madrid

LUCRECIA Perez, a thirty-three year old Dominican left her country, her daughter and husband three months ago to come to Spain and work as a domestic in a rich Madrid neighborhood. Like other Dominican immigrants in the Spanish state, her goal was to work, save some money and return to her country.

On Friday, November 13 of this year, she was murdered by a terrorist attack in the Four Roses, an abandoned discotheque that served as home to her and other Dominican immigrants in a neighborhood where many old right-wing aristocratic families live.

There are about 15,000 Dominican immigrants in the Spanish state. Eighty percent are women like Perez who work mostly as domestic servants, are between 25-45 years old, have small children and come from the Barahona region in the south of the Dominican Republic.

The Association of Dominican Women in Spain (AMDE) and other Dominican immigrant associations have laid responsibility for the attack on the municipal authorities and the Interior ministry as well as the right wing forces who have led an anti-immigrant campaign around the slogan “Stop immigration. Spanish first!”

In fact, the bullets used to kill Perez were manufactured in the Santa Barbara factory — the same place from which the Spanish state security forces and army get their weapons. Furthermore, the killers assumed regulation military stances as they fired on the immigrants.

A series of mass protests against the murder have been taking place. ★

new social movements began in an uneven fashion to re-orient their intervention in society. Simultaneous to the “modernization” proposed by the PSOE there appeared an “updating” of the ideas and the aims of the organizations of the new movements.

More clearly than in the pre-October 1982 period, the social movements appeared as defenders of new values and rights, and as critics of a model of growth and society. The popularity of the demand for what became known as “the third generation of rights and liberties” presented great responsibilities to certain of the social movements that had not only lost their innocence but also had to swim against the tide right in the middle of the Reagan-Pope John Paul II era.

Unconventional activities

This could explain why these movements became “reactive” movements in the 1980s, as opposed to their “pro-active” status of the 1970s. Almost from the beginning of the Socialist mandate, the movements created new forms of unconventional political activity that involved a sizeable minority of the politicized part of the population.

The new social movements, particularly the peace movement, became in the 1983-86 period what Claus Offe has called “channels for demands not taken up by the system”. Thus they became new political actors who, without basing their legitimacy on the ballot box, struggle for political objectives that affect not only their own group, but also society in its entirety. This is the central challenge the social movements posed to the PSOE.

In its strategy towards the government, the movements have scored few successes; however, they have created social networks steeped in a new culture and involving wide layers of society.

A very positive feature of this decade has been the experience of alliance and convergence between the “old” and “new” movements — during such times as the Gulf War, the general strikes and the Rio Forum. The movements have shed light on the contradictions of modern society and the limits of the welfare state; and they have achieved social legitimacy thanks to its politics which go beyond the limits set by the State. ★

The Philippine Communist Party at the crossroads

Introduction by Paul Petitjean

IN the following pages, we print a long report by Walden Bello on perceptions among activists of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) of the state of that organization. Walden Bello is a Filipino currently living in the United States who has played a leading role in solidarity activities there through the establishment of the Forum for Philippine Alternatives ((FOPA). He has written a number of works on the Third World and is an executive director of the Institute for Food and Development Policy.

The following document is a revised version of a talk given in San Francisco on July 30, 1992, to a public meeting organized by the FOPA. Since its publication in the US magazine *Philippines Alternatives* the report has been reprinted in two other journals produced by the Filipino left: *Debate*, produced in the Netherlands, and *Kasarinlan* which comes out in Manila-Quezon City. The version published here is taken from *Debate* #4, September 1992. This level of interest is easily explained. Not only does Bello give a platform to some 20 CPP and National Democratic Front (NDF) cadres; he also throws light on some important elements of the crisis in which these organizations find themselves and thereby touches on some basic questions of principle.

In particular he pays considerable attention to the purges that stained the CPP in the southern island of Mindanao in 1985-86 and in South Tagalog, a region in the northern island of Luzon in 1988.

In both these cases, campaigns aimed at weeding out infiltrators sent in by the military (so-called DPAs, or Deep Penetration Agents), let loose collective paranoia leading to the execution of perhaps hundreds of innocent people. Bello describes this as a "crime against humanity" committed inside the revolutionary movement in the grip of a fatally self-destructive dynamic.

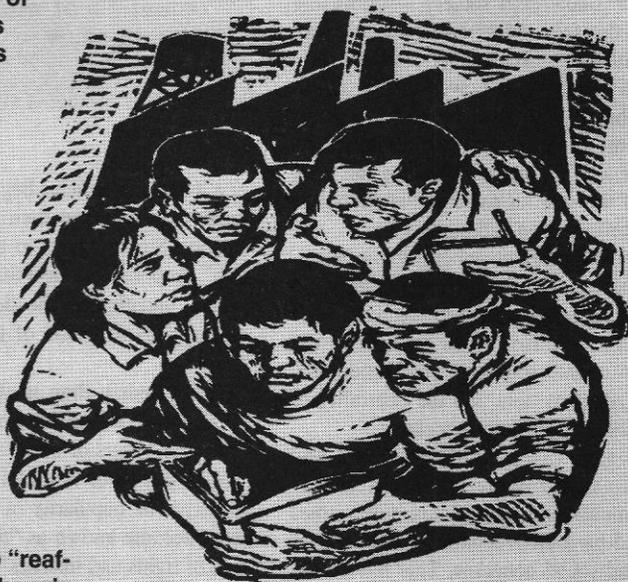
Walden Bello asked those he spoke to — some of whom were directly involved in these traumatic events — how such a catastrophe could have happened. The answers, however piecemeal, touch on problems common to other organizations engaged in armed struggle: legal guarantees inside a clandestine party, the effect of militarist conceptions, safeguards against outbreaks of collective paranoia, Marxism and the notion of "class justice", and respect for human life and human rights by revolutionaries.

Walden Bello's "report of an investigation" is all the more important in that it has come at a moment when the CPP is in the grip of unprecedented debate and internal political struggles. For some years now, a growing number of Communist party militants have been calling for a comprehensive discussion on the lessons of their struggle in the Philippines and on the crisis of the "socialist camp". The central leadership has postponed the opening of such a debate indefinitely; one attempt to stimulate such a debate — announced in the central committee's journal *Ang Bayan* in January 1991 — has been stamped on.

The stifling of debate has only made the internal crisis worse. *Kasarinlan* has just published two documents that show this. The first is a long text by Armando Liwanang, the CPP president, who wants to "reaffirm" the "basic principles" of the party and "rectify the mistakes". By this he means the strategic formulas of 1967-68, years when the party was formed, from which, according to this argument, ideas introduced later were "deviations". He attacks weighty groups in his own organizations such as the regional leaderships on Mindanao, the Visayas (a group of islands in the centre of the archipelago) and Manila-Rizal (the region around the capital) as well as the networks in Western Europe and North America. He is initiating a "rectification campaign" that smacks of a political purge.

The second document published in *Kasarinlan* criticizes Liwanang's positions and calls for "resistance" to the "totalitarian tendencies" in the CPP. It puts forward one of the various points of view of those who hope to "go beyond" the party's "historical tradition", still embodied by Jose Marie Sison, the party's first president and for a long time the CPP's main theoretician.

Many critics are currently demanding the calling of a democratically organized congress to draw the lessons of contemporary experience, both national and international. In fact, the CPP has not held a congress since it was founded 23 years ago. Aside from the questions of Stalinism and strategy the issue of democratic centralism is also up for discussion — all the more so given the fact that conditions in which the central committee met six months ago to launch the "rectification movement" have been sharply attacked by various prominent party cadres. We will return to these documents and the development of the debate inside the CPP in future issues of *IV*. ★



THE following is Bello's report on the crisis in the Communist Party of the Philippines. He plans on eventually interviewing other members of the Philippine left such as activists in the independent socialist organization Bisig, the left wing Social Democrats and the Movement for Popular Democracy.

DOCUMENT

THE central question I posed was the following: Was the movement "in crisis"? Most said yes it was in crisis. Only two did not say it was in crisis — one giving his answer after thinking aloud for about two minutes, the other offering a vague reply.

As an indicator of the crisis, several respondents came up with the same set of figures: a 40 percent decline in "organized forces" and a similar 40 percent reduction in territories controlled by the NPA in the last few years.

Some qualified this figure by saying that in the last two years, there has been some recovery, especially in Mindanao, while others said that recently recovered territories were cancelled out by new territories lost to the Armed Forces of the Philippines. But among those who gave figures, most agreed that the number of organized forces still remains significantly below the figure for 1985.

But was the movement "marginalized"? To this, there was a more equitable division, with about half saying yes and other half responding in the negative.

What were the reasons for the crisis? There were different factors emphasized by different people. But let me discuss in some detail the principal reason pointed out.

One key factor cited was effective AFP counter-guerrilla operations. After Aquino came to power in 1986, the AFP was able to form three extra divisions or about 30 battalions, a move made possible by releasing units which had been previously pinned down in Manila by the necessity of guarding Marcos during the dictatorship.

This enabled the military to saturate a target area with troops and keep them there for an extended period even if the NPA turned up the heat in other guerrilla fronts to relieved pressure on the first front. This time there were reserve troops that could

be dispatched to deal with guerrilla activity in the second front.

This was the case in Central Luzon in the late 1980's according to a former member of the CL regional leadership. Under sustained military pressure, the guerrillas had to abandon and could not return to long established base areas. Deprived of guerrilla protection, revolutionary mass organizations in these areas could be maintained only with great difficulty, leading to a marked reduction in political activity and revolutionary morale.

Another reason cited by some respondents was related to intense militarization. This was war weariness in the peasant base. According to one former high-ranking officer of the NPA, "Peasants are shrewd. You can't expect them to keep fighting indefinitely if they cannot taste the fruit of their struggle — their own land — except on the distant future.

They weigh the costs exacted by their revolutionary participation — which might include children who were recruited into the NPA — against this promise, and you can understand why many might scale down their commitment."

While not discounting the impact of militarization, some respondents put more emphasis on internal failings, in particular on what they regarded as the "militarization" of the left's strategy. They said that up until 1990, the left's strategy for coming to power was heavily oriented toward a military seizure of power.

Assuming that there was a "revolutionary flow" in the late 1980s, the CPP focused the movement's energies on expanding the NPA, upgrading the size of its units to battalion level in preparation for mobile warfare, and acquiring heavy weaponry, like mortars, that would be decisive during a period that would be marked by what the leadership called the "strategic counteroffensive".

Neglect of mass movement

This emphasis on military work resulted in serious neglect of the mass movement of the peasantry in the rural areas, and little energy devoted to figuring out new creative forms of intervention in the legal and electoral arenas. The notion of the strategic counteroffensive, these respondents noted, was dropped only two years ago, in 1990.

Others saw the overemphasis, on military work as a manifestation of a deeper problem, which they traced to the inability of the movement's leadership to devise a strategy appropriate to the new period inaugurated by the Aquino assassination in 1983 and the EDSA uprising of 1986 which would take into account several key developments, including¹:

- The shifting of much political debate from the underground to above ground as

the dictatorship's capacity for control eroded;

- The key role played by the politicized middle class or middle forces in the anti-dictatorship movement, which necessitated careful united front tactics and new, sophisticated ways of popularizing the NDF program to appeal to these new forces;

- The continuing vitality of the tradition of formal, democratic electoral politics as a source of political legitimacy, not only among the middle class but also the peasantry and workers.

Related to this last point, some respondents felt that the orthodox CPP analysis is too economic or reductionist and does not pay enough attention to culture, consciousness and values. As one of them put it, just because economic indicators show that things are going from bad to worse does not mean that people interpret the totality of the situation from going from bad to worse. Traditional political attitudes remain strong, even among the organized masses.

Strength of traditional values

As one person in the NDF leadership pointed out, a number of NPA-controlled areas in Isabela and Cagayan went for Eduardo Cojuangco and Imelda Marcos in the recent elections.²

A reductionist analysis would not be able to explain this phenomenon, he said, but one sensitive to the continuing strength of traditional values would be able to understand that even politicized peasants have what he called a "split-level consciousness".

He also lamented the fact that Antonio Gramsci, whom he regarded as the Marxist thinker with the most profound insights into the role of culture in revolution, still has to make the CPP's reading list of indispensable readings.

Among other factors precipitating the crisis, a few mentioned the collapsed of socialism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. However, most of these respondents were quick to qualify that the impact of socialism's break-up was felt not so much within the rank and file of the party and NDF but mainly among middle level cadres about the crisis of socialism

1. In 1983 the leader of the opposition, Benigno Aquino was assassinated by the Marcos dictatorship. This led to mass anti-regime demonstrations throughout the urban centers. The political crisis reached a height in February 1986 during the presidential elections with a military rebellion and a peaceful mass uprising under the name EDSA in reference to the location of the army barracks.

2. Isabela and Cagayan are two provinces where the Communist guerrillas have been long present as have been powerful political clans" who had been tied to the dictatorship. Eduardo Cojuangco was a leading businessman under Marcos. Imelda is the widow of the dictator. Both were candidates in the 1992 elections.

said that it has had a profound impact on them.

Their attitude, he said, could be summed thus: "Why should we keep fighting for socialism if in the end people might just throw us out?" A combination of the internal crisis and the international crisis of socialism, he suspected, was behind the dropping out of organized underground life of many middle-ranking CPP cadres.

A final reason for the crisis of the left was what some characterized as "self inflicted wounds". They were referring to the "Anti-DPA Campaigns" in Mindanao from September 1985 to March 1986 and in Southern Tagalog in 1988.³ Whereas in 1988 and 1989, the CPP leadership still saw the two campaigns as justified while lamenting their "excesses", by 1990, the two campaigns were characterized as "madness" that swept the ranks, with no redeeming value.

This characterization is more than justified, for in Mindanao, several hundred cadre were reported to have been executed in these efforts to ferret out AFP agents that were feared to have infiltrated the NDF-NPA-CPP structure. The high estimate for those killed in Mindanao is 900, the low estimate 600. Since several reports place the number of those executed in Southern Tagalog at less 100, I will provisionally use 700 as the figure for total casualties.

"Madness"

The label "madness" is apt for another reason: whereas in other revolutionary movements, similar purges on such a scale took place after the seizure of power, in the Philippines it occurred before the seizure of power, something which is rare in revolutionary history.

It almost seemed as if the movement was intent on eliminating itself, for not only were precious lives squandered in Mindanao and Southern Tagalog but hundreds of trained cadres were eliminated on whose development the party had spent a lot of resources and time.

The people killed were indispensable parts of the backbone of the revolutionary movement, and it is hardly a cause for surprise that the NDF movement in Mindanao suffered such serious reversals in 1986 and thereafter.

Why did such massive purges take place? The respondents gave a variety of explanations, the most important of which were the following: The movement was ill-prepared to carry out an internal security campaign since the methods of dispensing

justice had not been institutionalized.

The party groups that carried out the investigation of suspected infiltration were the same groups that arrested the suspects, interrogated them, judged them and executed them. This violated the judicial principle that these different tasks must be carried out by different people to assure impartiality.

Tremendous frustrations

According to some respondents, these explanations are incomplete and the real cause lies deeper, that is, in the militarization of strategy. According to this analysis, the desire for quick military victories crea-



ted tremendous frustrations when NPA plan were foiled by the AFP.

Reports that some NPA officials were shot in the back during firefights then provided the spark that turned these frustrations into a feverish search for saboteurs in the ranks that ran out of control. The "insurrectionary line" as the basic cause of the purges is a line of explanation endorsed by a very influential CPP leader, who implies that they would not have occurred had the movement continued the emphasis on careful political organizing entailed by the classical strategy of "protracted people's war".

The problem with this analysis is that while the movement in Mindanao could be characterized as having followed the insurrectionary line, the same cannot be said of the movement in Southern Tagalog, which if anything, was marked by an adherence to the classical people's war strategy. Yet the same paranoid dynamics of the Mindanao

ahos (garlic) campaign marked the Southern anti-DPA campaign.

Probably a key part of the explanation is a phenomenon that was described by a number of respondents: collective paranoia. I tended to discount this until I began hearing the very graphic description of people who had participated either a victims or as executioners in the purges. Paranoia, it seemed, took on a momentum of its own in Mindanao after some reports of some suspicious cases of death in battle of NPA commanders.

Given the momentum of the paranoia, it is difficult to fault solely the CPP leadership, since there were times that when the leadership itself seemed to be carried by the momentum of paranoia sweeping the ranks. Of course, the regional leadership bodies in Southern Tagalog and Mindanao must bear a great deal of the responsibility, not only for initiating the campaign but for failing decisively to stop it once it appeared that it was getting out of hand.

But, to underline the complexity of the situation, one respondents said that had individuals within the national or regional leadership stepped forward to object at the height of the campaign in Southern Tagalog, there was a good chance that they might be arrested by the campaign committees and thrown into the stockade, if not worse. Indeed, a leading personality of the NDF said that he could not intervene lately for fear of being tagged a DPA and possibly losing his life. In such a situation, he said, his status and prestige would not count for much.

Momentum of paranoia

To give you a sense of the momentum of paranoia, let me recount the story of Teresa (not her real name), a young activist who was involved in the anti-DPA committee in one of the regions of Mindanao. At first, she was recruited mainly to be one of the recording secretaries. Then step by step she became a judge, as the head of the committee began to regularly consult her on the guilt or innocence of the people being arrested, many of whom she knew.

At this point, she said that she gave a guilty verdict, both because she felt that they were guilty, but also because she felt

3. "DPA" stands for Deep Penetration Agents" — army agents sent into revolutionary organizations.

that the campaign committee head wanted her to say that they were guilty, and she could not afford to do so for fear of her own security. Soon she was asked to participate in torturing people during interrogation, and she felt compelled, in fact, to hit the victims for fear that had she refused, the finger of accusation would be on her.

Out of control

Paranoia became normal, the number of victims mounted, and she became resigned to eventually becoming a victim herself. The campaign had, in fact, run out of everyone's control while everyone felt compelled at the same time to fuel it, and it was not surprising that it ended, like the French Revolution's Reign of Terror, with the party member most responsible for the executions — the head of the campaign — being himself executed.

The Reign of Terror, in fact, continually leaped to mind when she and others were recounting the events in Mindanao and Southern Tagalog. Just as in Mindanao, paranoia reigned, as the Revolution first consumed Danton, then Saint Just, then Robespierre himself.⁴

The parallel is important because, contrary to conservative propaganda, it is not only Marxist mass movements that are susceptible to self-inflicted bloodletting but probably all mass movements, be they Marxist, nationalist, bourgeois or fascist.

What it means for progressive movements, though, is that they must not only institute guidelines for the dispensing of justice, but equally important, guidelines for the scientific investigation and assessment of political phenomena.

And above all, guidelines for the preservation of common sense — common sense which would tell you that it would be endowing the AFP with superhuman powers to think that over a number of years it could infiltrate hundreds of people within a revolutionary movement who would not reveal themselves but behave day to day as earnest revolutionaries, who were so good that they fooled their wives, children and closest friends!

Such guidelines are especially important given the results of the two anti-DPA campaigns: in Mindanao, only about five people were proven to be likely enemy agents, and of these five, only three were guilty beyond any shadow of a doubt. In other words, to

net five AFP agents, some 600 lives were sacrificed. Not only was this criminal and tragic. It was also shockingly senseless.

Surely this was one of the worse internal security campaigns carried out in the history of revolutionary movements internationally! Having said that, one must also point out, however, that, except possibly for Manila-Rizal (where intensive arrests and interrogations occurred, though with few executions carried out), the anti-DPA campaign did not gain momentum in other regions, and in many cases, in Central Luzon, this was because the regional leadership intervened decisively early on to prevent paranoia from spreading by lashing discussion and debate to the mast of common sense.



The paranoia explanation does not, however, satisfy other respondents. One person, a prominent leader of the NDF, speculated that the ultimate cause might be Marxism's concept of "class justice". According to him, Marxism does not have a developed concept of individual rights; individuals have rights, in other words, only by virtue of their membership in the right classes or, failing that, in their holding the right politics.

Paradoxical events

Thus, if an individual is suspected or judged to be a class enemy, he or she has no innate rights to life, liberty and respect, and what happens to him depends purely on the tactical needs of the movement. Thus, one may release AFP prisoners for propaganda

points while, at the same time, executing CPP cadres who were judged as DPA's. And indeed, this seemingly paradoxical event occurred in Southern Tagalog during the 1988 purge.

I have gone back and forth on this explanation, thinking initially that it was the root cause of the Mindanao and Southern Tagalog events. Currently, while I think that while it was principally the absence of an institutionalized system of justice and scientific assessment that allowed paranoia to spread unchecked, a tactical view of individuals — a tendency to evaluate their worth mainly on whether or not they advance or obstruct the left's class-determined political objectives — also played a role.

An instrumental view of people is a tendency that affects particularly activists in the Marxist-Leninist tradition, making them vulnerable during moments of paranoia at the height of the revolutionary struggle to expedient solutions involving the physical elimination of real or imagined enemies. In normal times, the combination of a tactical view of people, ideological fervor, youth and the gun already carries a threat potential. Touched off by social paranoia, it can easily become an uncontrollable force, as it did in Mindanao and Southern Tagalog.

Thus, while not placing the principal emphasis on the class view of justice in explaining the purges, I fully agree with this particular NDF leader's recommendation that CPP and NDF activists must internalize the fact that individuals have innate rights to life, freedom and respect and other valued conditions that come

with their being human, that individual rights do not derive from class membership or political ideology.

This particular respondent, incidentally, felt extremely guilty that he did not intervene to stop the process for fear of his own life. His intervention might have saved lives, he said, but he failed to take what would have been the most glorious move in his life for fear of the consequences of defying the "power of collective consensus".

But fear and trembling, to pirate a phrase from Kierkegaard, was not the only story. There were also profiles in courage, like the Central Committee member who insisted from the very beginning that the Sou-

4) Robespierre, Saint-Just and 102 others were executed between July 28-31, 1794 following the coup d'Etat of the ninth of Thermidor (July 27 1794).

them Tagalog executions were wrong and persisted in his convictions even when the finger of accusation threatened to close in on him. And of course, there were the cadres who accepted their fate but still their loyalty to the Philippine Revolution even as they were being executed.

But, you ask, why do I dwell on this shameful episode of the Philippine revolutionary movement?

First, because it contributed significantly to setting back the movement. Certainly in Mindanao, the main factor reversing the revolution in the mid and late eighties was the anti-DPA campaign. Not only because of the loss of personnel but also because practically all political work in both the city and the countryside was suspended for months as the movement turned on itself during the critical period from September 1985 to March 1986, when the Marcos regime fell and the Aquino administration consolidated itself.

Second, for the sake of shedding light on tumultuous events that had such a crippling impact on the morale of hundreds if not thousands of people and directly or indirectly contributed to their leaving or lying low. Ignorance, confusion and rumor continue to surround not only the general public's perception of these events but also that of the ordinary NDF and party activist.

Making public the truth about Mindanao and Southern Tagalog would not only be an important step in the CPP leadership's regaining of the cadre's confidence in its leadership. It is also the best weapon against the distortion that the AFP and the right have spread regarding the purges, a lot of which were picked up by such reactionary papers as the *Wall Street Journal*.

Never again

Third, because by carefully analyzing what happened, we can make sure it never, never happens again. These were lives snuffed out in their prime, an nobody can bring them back. This was, let us admit it, a crime against humanity. But it is a crime that must be placed within the context of a civil war in which the other side — the Armed Forces of the Philippines — was guilty of even graver violations, including the indiscriminate shooting of non-combatants, as in the Lupao massacre and the Mendiola massacre.

And finally, I dwell on this episode because the CPP's willingness to confront its responsibility for it and acknowledge its guilt should give us all hope that it has a future in the Philippine progressive movement. It must also be said in this connection that the CPP has made an effort to identify relatives of the victims and that the whole Mindanao Commission has offered to resign and be subjected to discipline action. While these actions can never make

up for the lives lost, they are nevertheless not insignificant.

Another development that gives me hope is the openness with which many CPP and NDF officials received our Forum's initiatives. A leader of one of the party's national commissions, in fact, asked if the Forum's activities could be more organically tied to the process of renovation within the party. I had to say, however, that the Forum was a pluralistic endeavor that was concerned with the whole whole progressive movement, not just one sector.

Having said that, let me just emphasize that the renovation of the party is important not only for the national democratic movement as a whole because of the CPP's centrality. Indeed, at this time it is not so much competition that marks the current attitude of most other sectors of the movement towards the CPP as concern for its future.

As one leader of Bisig put it, "We all have a stake in the CPP and the ND movement not disintegrating because this would weaken all of us. Whatever our differences, we have a stake in the renewal of the ND movement."

But before concluding, let me just address an opposite advanced by some other people. We shouldn't worry too much about the future of the CPP and the NDF, they argue, because they have already performed their historical function.

For one, the CPP and NDF have produced scores of politically conscious activists who are now the mainstays of non-governmental organizations and people's organizations whether or not they remain part of the ND movement. These NGO's and PO's, on this view, are now supplanting the traditional political organizations of the left as the backbone of the "new movement".

I disagree with this perspective. I think that although they are very vibrant, NGO's and PO's cannot step effectively into the role played by the parties of the left, which is to articulate a comprehensive vision and strategy for change.

The role of NGO's and PO's is to articulate sectoral and community needs, not serve as a thousand and one spontaneous substitutes for a comprehensive movement such as the ND movement. NGO's and political parties are complimentary, and if either tried to perform the role of the other, this would most likely lead to a decline in effectiveness of both.

In conclusion, let me say that although the CPP and NDF are in crisis, the problems of our people are so great that come what may, a powerful progressive movement will again emerge as a powerful player in Philippine politics. Will the CPP and NDF be key elements of this movement?

Or will they be marginal to it? The answer lies in the CPP and NDF's willingness to confront the extent of their current crisis and to courageously take the necessary steps to renew themselves. Now. ★

What will Clinton do?

REJECTED by 62% of voters, George Bush had the dubious honour of leading his party to its greatest electoral defeat since 1932 — bringing an end to 12 years of Republican administration.

The victory of the Democratic candidate Bill Clinton, with 43% of the vote, represents a profound reaction in American society to the crisis which has struck the world's biggest economy — to the point that the very basis of the "American dream" has been shaken, precipitating a generational change unseen since the 1960s.

But in the "post-Cold War" world, it is unlikely that these hopes will be fulfilled.

**GUSTAVO BUSTER
November 14, 1992**

OVER the last six months an important turn in US public opinion occurred. In June of this year, many commentators considered a Bush re-election inevitable. The victor of the Gulf War, the man who had buried communism and announced the advent of the "New World Order" — the culmination of the "end of history" proclaimed by ideologist Francis Fukuyama — seemed invincible to the point that such Democratic party powerhouses as New York Governor Mario Cuomo declined to enter the race.

Since mid-1990, the recession has revealed the extent of the tragic consequences of the "Reagan revolution" including the loss of over a million jobs and the accumulation of an \$11bn debt. Bush was forced to call on the Federal Reserve last March to lower its interest rates to 4.5% — the

lowest since 1973 — which ushered in a 2% rise in household consumption. This prompted the press to announce the end of the recession, in spite of the pessimism of the population recorded in numerous polls.

The response of the Republicans to their defeat consists — in the best conservative tradition — of accusing the US people of lacking the moral values necessary to confront the challenges to come. But Clinton's rise to power began after the Los Angeles uprising.

Ross Perot, the independent candidate who appealed to individual initiative, and ridiculed the Washington technocrats, finished by campaigning on the sole theme of appealing to the economic dreams of the American people.

Bush was simply out of arguments to defend his neo-liberal policies, which involve not only the ideological defense of the non-interventionist state, but also the systematic practice of revenue transfer through the fiscal system and subsidies to the military industry and the richest 15% of the population.

Social and ethnic polarization punched a hole through the Republican bloc. The Democrats were victorious in the industrial states of the North-East and for the first time in some of the western states, the South and in California.

No clear mandate

In spite of his victory, Bill Clinton is far from having won a clear mandate for his programme. In fact, 57% of the voters voted against him. This could very well be a determining factor for the future development of the US in the short term if the recession continues to push up the unemployment rate.

The Democrats increased their standing in the Senate by one seat. They lost nine in the House of Representatives. A quarter of the newly elected Congresspeople are from the 1968 generation, and overall the congressional renewal involves many women, Blacks, Latinos and, for the first time, a native American.

For the first time in twelve years, the president's party will have a congressional majority which will be ready to go further than Clinton along the road of change. It is also noteworthy that Bernie Sanders, the self-proclaimed socialist from Vermont, was re-elected to Congress.

Clinton's economic councillor, Robert Reich, explained that the economic crisis in the United States is basically the result of structural causes such as the outdated infrastructure that was

built in the 1940s and 1950s as well as the lowering standard of labour, which has led to a stagnation of economic productivity in the face of Japanese and European competition.

The Reaganite income transfers will be useless to the economy since much of that money left the country. According to Reich, the objective is to renew the infrastructure by, among other things, creating a national network of communication in optic fibres and investment in "human capital", by education and health policies.

The short term objectives are to raise demand. This involves an annual investment program of \$200bn and a fiscal reform to encourage new investments in creating businesses. But at the same time Clinton promised to reduce the public deficit, cut military spending, restructure the White House administration and raise taxes on the highest incomes.

Clinton's economic plan has been devised by a team of 555 economists. But there are clear weaknesses in it. The federal budget, without military spending, has risen by 10% a year in recent years, and Clinton's program will see it rise even more, leading to monetary anarchy which has already caused bank reserves to rise by 20% with practically zero interest rates.

Over the next twelve months, a conflict with the Federal Reserve Board can be expected. This body will demand higher interest rates and guarantees for budgetary balances.

On the other hand, Clinton's plans will not reduce unemployment which is the consequence of an unprecedented restructuring of the international economic recession. But it could also stimulate a process of re-unionization of the US working class — only 15% of the US workforce is unionized.

To get out of the crisis, there is one solution: speed up the creation of the North American free trade zone, NAFTA, between Canada and especially Mexico — thus allowing an expansion of the domestic market, and leading to a lowering of average wages. Whatever strategy is adopted, the balance of social forces will be altered. In this sense, Clinton represents the ambiguity of the current period rather than a solution.

Over the last six months, the Bush administration was unable to take advantage of its hegemonic position in order to end conflicts or to avoid the blossoming of new areas of tension. Clinton intends to approach the post-Cold War period by giving priority to US economic interests.

This will lead to increased inter-imperialist contradictions between the US, Japan and the European Community. The effects of this development have already been seen in the problems associated with the Uruguay GATT talks and the debates over the consequences of the reduction of the US presence in Europe and the Mediterranean.

Intervention in the Third World

The reduced threat of nuclear blackmail as a diplomatic argument has not, however, ended the capacity to intervene in the Third World, which is entering into a second decade of generalized poverty.

The stability of the old "socialist bloc" can no longer be counted on as the transition to capitalism has proved to be more difficult than imagined. The United States has seen its room for manoeuvre reduced, as has been shown by its aid to the former USSR compared to Germany, its response to the Yugoslav crisis, or the permanent threat of Saddam Hussein.

Clinton promised to take human rights seriously in the tradition of the Carter administration. There is already a marked difference in its attitude toward Haitian emigration.

But in the face of the growing world disorder, the management of international affairs cannot be guaranteed through a continuation of American foreign policy. Considering its weaknesses, the US must define its defense priorities and interests and renegotiate the terms of inter-imperialist cooperation in a context of growing commercial competition.

Clinton's moral discourse may be put into practice through a re-discovery of international organizations and the notion of collective security.

But it is not possible to remain the biggest imperialist power without



proving it, especially in a chaos-ridden world. As a result, foreign policy will take up more of the new president's time than he had expected.

The biggest danger Clinton must face is the widespread hankering among the American people for a return to an idyllic past; they have voted for a return to the days of uninterrupted economic growth.

In response to these expectations, Clinton has given himself 100 days to inaugurate the "new era": the end of racial and sexuality-based discrimination in the army; for the strengthening of women's rights, notably in the area of abortion rights; the

implementation of an ethics code, to bring an end to the corruption which has undermined federal institutions, including Congress; and public investment of \$20bn to boost the economy.

This "Roosevelt" model of an "activist president", in a period characterized by a world recession and the weakening of American world domination, could very well propel the American people to confront head-on the new president's Bonapartist cynicism.

Clinton has opened the Pandora's box and will be unable to close it. ★

Elections reflect crisis of perspectives

THE elections in Lithuania ended in a decisive victory for the main opposition party, the Democratic Labour Party (LDLP) and a defeat for the nationalist Sajudis movement of Vytautas Landsbergis. The winning party is the successor to the majority of the former ruling Communist Party which, under the leadership of Algirdas Brazauskas, aligned itself with pro-independence sentiment in Lithuania in the final years of the Soviet Union.

Brazauskas has promised to slow down economic reforms and improve relations with Russia, while pursuing a conciliatory line towards his defeated opponents and maintaining commitments to institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Coming after Iliescu's victory in Romania in September/October, the LDLP's success provides further evidence of the decline in enthusiasm for radical change in many countries of the former Soviet bloc. This decline reflects the crumbling of the prevailing illusion that support from the West and the adoption of Western-inspired free market programmes would provide a route to prosperity and freedom.

The following article is a shortened version of the first installment of an account by Gerry Foley of a six-week trip to the Soviet Union that first appeared in full in the November 1992 issue of the American Trotskyist monthly, *Socialist Action*.

GERRY FOLEY

THE first elections in the Baltic States since the break up of the Soviet Union had seemingly opposite results. On October 25, in Lithuania, the Democratic Party of Labour, the successor of the "national" wing of the Lithuanian Communist Party (and the model for CP successor parties in the other Baltic countries) won a sma-

shing victory over Sajudis, the national democratic front that led Lithuania to independence.

The DPL got over 44% of the votes and will form a new government in which they will be the dominant partner. Sajudis leader Vytautas Landsbergis reportedly announced that his organization will go into opposition.

The *New York Times* attributed Sajudis' defeat to "factionalism" and political divisions within it. But Sajudis' fundamental problem is that its programme — privatization — is clearly benefitting the old bureaucracy, not its mass base.

In the September 20 vote in Estonia, on the other hand, a coalition of right-wing anti-Communist parties emerged as the winners.

The Isamaa (Fatherland) won 30 out of the 100 seats in the Estonian parliament. The Popular Front (Rahvarinne), which had been the principal political force in the struggle against the ruling CP, got only 12% of the vote and 15 seats. The party of the big factory managers "Safe Home" (Kindel Kodu) got 18 seats, the second largest bloc.

The winning coalition essentially consisted of small groups of intellectuals with hard "free enterprise" ideas, who display more consistency than realism.

Despite the different results, both the Estonian and Lithuanian elections reflect the same process; the erosion and breakup of the national fronts that led mass movements against Stalinist rule in a number of former Soviet republics.

In the non-Russian republics, these groups existed for years as mass political movements, defeated the local Communist parties on a national or at least regional scale and took over national or regional governments.

They were based on the national intelligentsias of the respective republics and it was this support that enabled them to become mass movements overnight. They were able to address a mass audience immediately through the organs of the writers' and other creative workers' unions.

The national intelligentsias were a privileged layer, and in a general sense part of the bureaucracy. But they represented a contradiction within it, inasmuch as they had a vested interest in opposing "Russification", which was the policy of the bureaucracy as a whole.

Heritage of the revolution

The national intelligentsias represented a heritage of the national policy of the revolutionary Soviet state that Stalinism had been unable to liquidate; that is the right of every nationality to have a national culture and therefore the essential apparatus of a national culture, a press and a literature in the local language.

Once Gorbachev's reform policy and the divisions in the bureaucracy over it weakened Moscow's grip, the national intelligentsias launched a battle for the national rights of the nations on which they depended.

In a number of republics, totalitarian rule was shattered and a relatively free political debate became possible. In the process the national intelligentsias themselves split, owing to fear of radicalism and their programmatic emptiness.

Two years ago, before independence, a wide spectrum of political views could be found in the press and there was a dynamic political life. Now democratization has lost its momentum.

It is notable that none of the fronts have been able to develop a press of their own that could deepen and consolidate their political influence over society. In Lithuania, two editorial teams, one after the other, ran away with papers started by Sajudis. In Estonia, the front was never able to develop a newspaper of its own. From the outset the development of a free press has been obstructed and distorted by an inflow of emigré money.

The Estonians are a tiny nationality, about a million people, with a relatively large diaspora. (About 100,000 people fled the country during World War II.) Estonia's most prestigious daily, *Postimees*, is firmly controlled by the right-wing and most of the financing for the election campaign came from abroad.

The Latvian Front (Latvian Tautas Frontas — LTF) had the most substantial and lively paper of any of the national democratic organizations, the weekly *Atmoda*. This was stolen by its editor and turned into a commercial paper. A new series of *Atmoda* was started by the Front on a much more modest scale.

Widening social gulf

One issue of this consisted mainly of a long article by the LTF's president Romualdas Razukas. It lamented the growing abyss between a small section of the population that was enriching itself as a result of privatization and the great majority that was becoming impoverished.

Razukas wrote that the incumbent government, supposedly made up of supporters of the Front, actually represented the "liberal nomenklatura" and that the Front considered itself in opposition to the government.

Deputies elected to the Latvian Supreme Soviet under the Front's auspices had happily gone their own way once in the legislature. Half of the delegation of the harder-line nationalist group, the Latvian Independence Movement (LNKK) did the same. The LTF and LNKK are in an alliance for the upcoming elections.

It is the LNKK — which has called for the restoration of the 1940 Latvian republic and wishes to recognize as citizens

only those who lived in that republic and their descendants — that seems to be the dominant partner. Its programme would involve denying citizenship rights to most of Latvia's Russian-speakers, who make up almost half of the population.

Razukas believes that the front form of organization is outdated and hopes to turn the LTF into a party. He thinks that this party should be politically "centrist", by which he seems to mean that it should not have a definite programme, but should reflect the prevailing political climate.

It is possible that the LTF-LNKK bloc will succeed electorally for a time, so long as the Russian-speaking population is disenfranchised.

However, the LTF is losing its political role. At the same time, it is abandoning important political territory to the new Social Democratic Party, which is in the process of defining its programme.

The opposition trade union movement that developed in the orbit of the LTF, the Workers Union, now looks to the Social Democratic Party. It is composed equally of Russian and Latvian workers and is opposed to discrimination against Russians.

Evolution of women's movement

The women's movement that grew up in the shadow of the LTF is also going its own way.

This organization, the League of Women, began as an anti-militarist movement of mothers of soldiers protesting against the treatment of their sons in the Soviet army. It then appealed to mothers in other parts of the USSR to protest against their sons being sent to repress the Latvians. As the movement developed its leaders became interested in the economic problems of women.

The leader of the League of Women, Anita Stankevica, told me that women had been hardest hit by the economic changes, in particular the closing of day-care centres and higher prices. She wanted to build a united, independent women's movement to fight to defend women's interests. The SDP is said to support this idea.

However, the programme of the SDP is very like that of the successor to the Latvian Communist Party, the Latvian Democratic Party of Labour. According to the chair of the Latvian Workers Union, the difference between the two was purely one of personnel. The DPL was made up of former or present bureaucrats, while the SDP were "new people".

In the case of most of the fronts, people talk about radicalization. The

intellectual layer that formed their original backbone is withdrawing — generally into new parties that, to one degree or another, favour compromise with the bureaucracy.

In the confusion and decay that exist in all the countries of the ex-USSR and Eastern Europe, intellectuals in particular are seeking ideas. An appearance of consistency can be important to the masses as well, until they see that certain politically consistent policies have consistently bad results.

At the moment, the "consistent" advocates of a market economy — as in Estonia — can have an advantage in some circumstances. However, despite Isamaa's impressive election victory, politicians in Estonia do not expect its government to last long. Its promise to return confiscated property to its original owners and its inclination to exclude Russian-speakers from political life and even drive them out will lead to massive crises.

But given Estonia's small size and the fact that the West's fundamental interest is in Russia, the Estonians can only maintain their independence with the support of democratic forces in their giant neighbour.

The Estonian front leaders understand these realities and their opposition to an ultra-nationalist rightwing offensive has pushed them into opposition to the government.

The Fronts originally called for a thorough-going democratization of the society and economy alongside the national demands. Although some of their demands have been achieved, at least for the moment, the national liberation and development of the peoples they represent is still far from being accomplished.

Troop withdrawals suspended

In fact, the gains of these nations are being more and more put at risk by the gradual return of the government of Boris Yeltsin in Russia to openly Russian chauvinist positions, exemplified by the recent decision to suspend troop withdrawals from the Baltic States and to use the presence of Russian troops to put pressure on the local governments.

Further steps towards national liberation require a programme that integrates national liberation and a programme for the fundamental democratization of social relations — workers' democracy.

Such a programme also has to be a national one — able to appeal to the majority in the oppressor nations as well. This would be the next stage of the political process set in motion by the rise of the mass national movements. ★

“We are going ahead with our eyes open”

IN THE last issue of *International Viewpoint*, we published an interview with Natalya Kuzental, who explained her belief in the importance of the trade unions for workers and democrats in Russia.

Below, Alexander Safronov and Volodya Fedorov, locomotive engineers at the Kiev depot (in Moscow) of the Moscow-Kiev passenger line, talk about their decision to take part in the formation of a new union.*

SASHA, you used to be chairman of the former state union committee at the Kiev depot of the Moscow-Kiev passenger line. Why are you now organizing a new union of locomotive brigades?

Alexander Safronov: I was elected chairman of the union committee in 1988 and quit after seven months to go back to being an engineer. The basic reason was that the union only existed on paper and was mainly involved in allocating various benefits. They weren't even thinking about defending the workers.

■ What concretely prevented you doing what you wanted in the union committee?

I told Olga Vakulenko, the chairman of the district union council, that the functions we were carrying out weren't suited to a union. She agreed but said there was no one else to do them. I asked when we were supposed to do our strictly union work, but she claimed we were doing it. In fact, I was allocating one food mixer, one refrigerator and one vacuum cleaner for 600 people. We'd get one car in six months or a year and it was a tough job figuring out what to do with it: veterans who had served at the front had priority, but so did workers with long seniority, and people who had been in line for a long time.

The other thing I was doing was giving union consent to dismissals for disciplinary violations, mostly drunkenness. If it was a first offence we usually sent them for a cure. But if the person was caught several times, the union committee would consent to the dismissal.

I was elected by the depot workers and I should have been working in the depot, going around the work places to keep abreast of the situation. But they didn't let me do this. I was called from the district council and told that I had to go to a seminar. So, off I went. I found it was a waste of time — there was a quota to fill for attendance.

The next time I went, signed up and went

straight back to the depot. But they got wind of this. There were few people in the hall — meaning I wasn't the only one who had better things to do with their time. Maybe the others went to the movies, but I was at work. So they started to re-register the attendance at the lunch break — so I had an argument with the district council. I threatened to quit, although they tried to dissuade me.

■ What did you think you should really be doing?

The system in the depot leaves the engineers without any social protection at all. If anything should happen like a late train, you had a whole hierarchy trying to foist the blame for the delay onto you. And you had to fight off the attack all on your own. The union, whose consent is formally needed for the punishment, is only there for the show.

I went through a lot of training to become an engineer. First you have to work six months on the machinery. Then, it's up to the administration if they want to send you to engineers' school. So, you get your licence to drive, but you're still not an engineer. The administration has to see how you work. That used to take a year or a year and a half, now it's much faster. Then they have to give you the go-ahead to take the exam. If you pass, you work a year to get your third class; another two for the second class and more for the third.

And what's the result of all this study? I'm a person without rights. The problem may result from the careless work of other services, but we are told “The engineer is the last person who can prevent a crash”. He is the only skilled person and it is his fault.

And that's why after seven months I quit my union job and then in February this year we formed a new union of locomotive brigades.

At the time there was also the wages issue. Before perestroika, if an ordinary factory wage was 200 roubles a month, we earned about 220. However we put in far more hours. While an ordinary worker put in an average 173.1 hours a month, we worked

220-230 hours. We had hardly any days off. They paid us up to time and a half, but this was calculated only on the basis of our basic wage.

People were afraid to complain because it was easy to get rid of them. They'd start calling you in for some minor infraction of the mass of rules — on the technical operation of the locomotive, rules on traffic, signaling, safety and so on. Often these rules contradict each other, so if you've followed one rule you've broken another.

■ How does the disciplinary system work?

There are three warning cards. Say you don't raise up the platform. They call you in to write up an explanation, take away your green warning card and give you a yellow one. In the same way, they can take away the yellow one next time and give you a red one. After that you have to take the exams again. Of course, if you are compliant, you can get away with all sorts of infractions.

It can take between ten and 15 years to get your first class, and in six months you can be demoted back to assistant. I have twelve years of work experience, five as an engineer. Both me and Volodya are active in the new union — I'm chairman of the local committee — and we've both been demoted to assistant.

Volodya Fedorov: They admit themselves that the demoted engineers, those that fought for their rights, are technically more literate than those now driving in their place.

■ What do you mean by compliant?

A. S.: I mean people who don't ask the bosses any questions. Questions like: why do locomotive brigades have so little time to rest at home with their families? Who do they work on their days off? Why aren't there enough people to cope with the existing volume of work, so that people have to work two and even three weeks without a day off? Why is there an order from above to cut personnel?

They began with the elimination of the conductors in the last car. Their job was to watch the passengers getting in and out. Now it's the job of the engineer's assistant. Many passengers have died as a result. But it was after the creation of our trade union and after we struck that documents specifying the number and the individuals to be cut started to arrive.

Here's another issue; for the third month in a row they haven't paid the wages on time. In April, our union committee sent an official inquiry to the administration. We got no explanation. That was April; you can

* The interview was conducted by David Mandel in Moscow in August 1992. In some English-speaking countries an “engineer” would be known as a “train driver” (an “engineer” being something else entirely!)

see how much worse the situation in the country has become since.

Anyway, last month, one of our engineers, Maximov, refused to work because he hadn't been paid his wages. It was his right. He gave management 13 hours warning.

It was a purely individual act. He called me after he had given his warning. He was hungry; he had nothing to live on. If he had consulted us, we would have tried to dissuade him from individual actions, especially on the issue of wages.

The administration could easily have found a replacement and let him have his day off. But instead they waited and then demoted him to assistant. The next day, we were paid our wages.

■ **Doesn't the union have to consent to demotions?**

In principle, though I'm not sure where things stand now. First of all, they don't recognize our union committee. According to the law, all transfers require the consent of the union committee, and the transfer of elected union officials requires the consent of higher union authorities. But we've just heard that the Russian Supreme Soviet has adopted amendments to the Labour Code depriving the unions of any rights in relation to discipline.

■ **I gather you've totally given up on the old unions. Why do you feel they can't be reformed?**

That's the position of the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia: force the old structures to work. The FITR united these same state branch unions. I read an argument by its chairman Klochkov where he argues that we don't need new unions. All we need to do is to change the people in the old ones.

But we think it isn't a question of people but of a system that has to be changed so that people can and are obliged to do the work they are supposed to: defend workers' rights so that they are able to work in a normal way.

What sort of union is it where management and workers are together? It's clear that the trade union leaders will defend the positions of the administration, on which they are dependent.

■ **When you were chairman of the former state union, what sort of pressure could the administration put on you?**

Actually, we had levers to pressure each other. You see, I had to sign the documents authorizing vacation pay for the director or chief engineer. The director, for example, doesn't just get vacation pay; he also gets 85% of his basic salary. I also signed the documents for the thirteenth month. An engineer, Zhirov, was unjustly given a severe

reprimand for failing to keep to the seven minute schedule between two stations although everywhere else he was on time. I argued for a lesser punishment, because after a severe reprimand, the next stage is out the door.

He refused. So I said: "The time will come for me to sign, and I'll refuse too". And I did. Then the management backed down over Zhirov.

■ **On what basis could you refuse to sign the director's document?**

Not only his, but all the workers' documents. All these things require union consent. The director could have got back at me through my union superior, the chairman of the district union council, Vakulenko or her assistant Chibisova. The latter I could more or less ignore, but it was Vakulenko who paid my bonus. My wage is guaranteed — that's the black bread. But if I want butter too, that's the bonus that is paid every quarter and that depends on my superiors.

■ **How did you come to decide to form a new trade union of locomotive brigades?**

Volodya: It began in February 1991 when the locomotive brigades of the Il'ich depot called a conference of representatives of locomotive brigades throughout Moscow. I was sent by the general assembly of our collective with the right to vote in its name.

■ **Whose initiative was this conference?**

I'm not really sure where it came from. Apparently it was the leadership of the branch union of the Moscow railroad, and probably the railroad administration itself, that wanted to take the growing dissatisfaction in hand. A lot of grievances had accumulated. And the miners had already struck for wage demands, the Moscow public

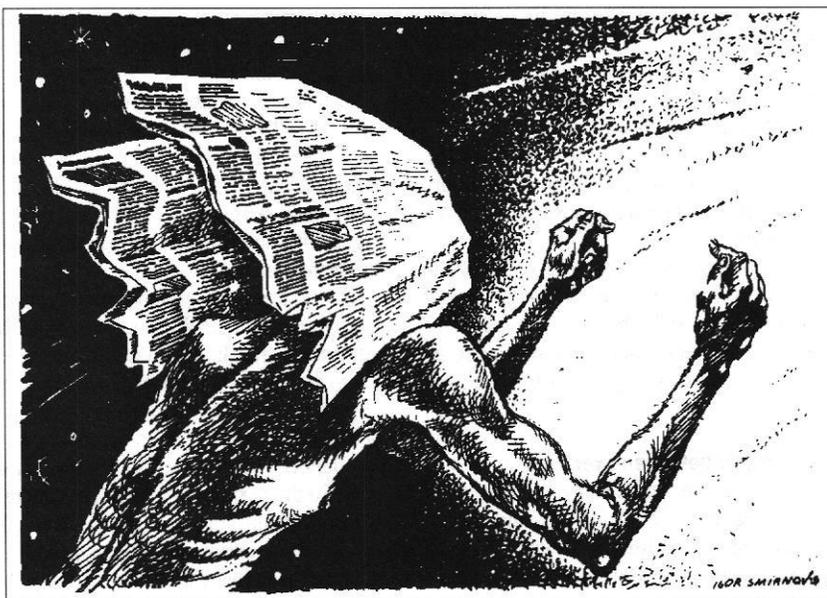
transport workers, the metro workers were starting. From Moscow-Kiev, besides myself, another engineer, an instructor and the director of the depot went.

It was well attended. The demands worked out by the Il'ich depot were adopted with some amendments. A Moscow Coordinating Council for the Social Defence of Railroad Workers (MCC) was elected from among the delegates — but only from the engineers and assistants. The representatives of the administration did not take part.

But the head of the Moscow railroad and the chairman of the central committee of the branch union did take the floor. They spoke of the tense situation on the railroad and expressed their support for the workers. And they sent off telegrams supporting our demands which remained unchanged to this day. Afterwards, however, they began to fight against us.

The MCC was mandated to negotiate these demands with the authorities. There were several meetings with representatives of the branch union central committee of the ministry and the railroad administration, but in the end they applied the brakes. The conversation took the following turn: "you don't legally represent anyone, and we won't negotiate with you". So we began to think about forming a union, one that the new law would require them to negotiate with.

We began with the preparatory work in the depots. Normally, planning sessions with representatives of the locomotive brigades and the administration are held every week. So we used them to ask, at the end of the meetings, for a few minutes to talk about the Coordinating Council and our organizing work. But after a month of this, the administration purposely began to drag out the meetings and refused to give us other premises.



We set January 27, 1992, as the date for our founding congress. In accordance with the December 18 resolution of the Russian Supreme Soviet, we held organizational meetings in those depots where we were strong. But we had already lost some of the people who had begun to work in the union — some had been fired, others were put in conditions that made it impossible to work and others just dropped out on their own.

In our depot, 35 people met on January 22, decided to create a local union and elected delegates to the founding congress. At the founding congress we adopted a constitution and elected a Russian committee that included representatives of eleven depots. We transferred the negotiating mandate of the MCC to it. According to the law, unions no longer have to be registered — their constitution and other documents merely have to be noted and deposited with the Ministry of Justice, which puts your name on its list and gives you a number.

■ How many members do you have now?

In our depot, there are 49 people who left the branch union and came over to us. About 50% of the workers are wavering, waiting to see the outcome of the struggle. If we win, they'll join. In all, there are 315 engineers and assistants at the depot. We have locals in some 16 Moscow depots. I don't know how many in the rest of Russia — they exist in Petersburg, Kaliningrad, Rostov, Magnitogorsk, Ekaterinburg and elsewhere.

■ What are the demands?

The first was for a wage rise. However, we've removed this demand for now, since after the freeing of prices, the administration itself began raising wages — these are, of course, nominal rises that are eaten away by inflation. There is also the demand for special wage supplements for those working in areas affected by the Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster. We also have demands related to time off and a shorter working week — this is also a defence against unemployment, as well as over pensions and health and safety issues.

Finally, we have demanded the abolition of the military-style railroad disciplinary code. At the moment it is suspended but not abolished.

All these demands were sent years back to Mikhail Gorbachev when he was still president of the USSR, then to Yeltsin and the Supreme Soviet. There was absolutely no result except that they began to attack our activists.

■ Did you get an answer?

V: No. So the MCC called for a strike on December 27, 1991, demanding that they at least negotiate with us. In our depot, we held a meeting on December 25 to prepare

for the strike. The Law on Labour Conflicts makes it very hard to strike. You have to assemble at least two thirds of the collective, and to do that in our depot is impossible. Actually, the law forbids strikes on the railroad, but if they refuse even to answer us? If they don't observe the law, why should we?

At the December 25 meeting, representatives of the Russian Ministry came, as did the central committee of the branch union, and they finally brought answers to our demands. So we decided to suspend the strike, while maintaining strike readiness. But communications are very bad and Moscow 2 — these are electric trains going in the direction of Yaroslavl — struck for two hours. They received the documents but the one with the decision to suspend the strike wasn't among them. We can't help wondering if this wasn't a provocation.

Sergei Stankevich, an advisor to Yeltsin, came, and we worked out an agreement to form a tripartite commission: representatives of the MCC, of the Moscow government and of the Ministry of Means of Communication. In the first two weeks of January we reached an agreement on all 15 points. Dates were set for their fulfillment, and the demands that couldn't be met were set aside for a future industry-wide agreement.

However, none of the demands were carried out on schedule. And for some reason, all the people who signed the agreement with us went on to other jobs. Then we founded our union and the whole process started again.

On February 17, we held a plenary meeting of the Russian committee of our union of locomotive brigades. We invited the government and our branch union, but no one came. Representatives of eight depots voted for a strike on March 2. But again we had problems with communication. At Moscow-Kursk, the whole depot struck, but they changed the schedule at our depot. As a result I could not contact the members and nothing much happened at our depot. On March 3, however, two brigades refused to take their trains out.

At that time, representatives of the Moscow-Kursk line were negotiating but couldn't reach an agreement. But when the administration heard that we at Moscow-Kiev were striking to support them, they signed at once. But that agreement is also not being carried out.

The next day our administration removed the two brigades. We declared that the administration had violated the Labour Code, had gone beyond its legal authority, and we wanted the matter discussed at a general assembly of the work collective at the depot. They refused in a very coarse way. So the next day, we struck for the restoration of our comrades to their jobs. 53 people struck during the 24-hour period. So the administration restored the two brigades

to their jobs but took the union and its committee to court on the basis of the USSR Law on the Resolution of Labour Conflicts.

The court found our actions of March 3-6 illegal. We appealed to the Supreme Court, arguing that there had been a mass of procedural irregularities and, moreover, that the decision violated the Russian Declaration on Human Rights as well as the Russian constitution. We lost the appeal and learnt that the declaration was only a declaration and not to be taken seriously. Remember that in February 1991, Yeltsin told the miners that they had every right to threaten a strike, since "that's the right of every human person". So a right is not always a right!

■ What's the situation now?

Four engineers, including myself, have been demoted to assistants. Three assistants have been demoted to mechanics. The other 40-odd people received severe reprimands, reprimands or just notices. Yet even the Law on Labour Conflicts states in article 15 that strikers who end their strike before it is declared illegal bear no material or legal responsibility. Our strike was declared illegal by the court two months after it ended. And I said: "Even if you had the legal right to do it, you have to get the union committee's consent to punishments". But the director just answered "I don't recognize your union". Even so, half the strikers were members of the branch union.

So now, we are working on reversing these decisions through the civil courts, but we are coming up against all sorts of judicial irregularities. The prosecutor even told us that the Labour Code applied only to the branch unions, not the new unions, which were formed after the code had been adopted. In other words, they pick and choose the laws according to what suits them.

The administration has now gone to court to claim that our union wasn't formed in accordance with the law. That's absurd, and yet the court agreed to hear the case.

One of our big problems is absence of information, even among the locomotive brigades. And the public is being told we are asking for huge wage rises at their expense. The government raises prices and the public blames us. An *Izvestiya* journalist phoned me to ask for information. When I phoned back to ask when the article would come out, she says "well, you see, it's a very delicate question..." This is the kind of censorship that exists.

That's why it's hard to ask for a wage rise now. People link the increase in the price of railroad tickets with the engineers' demands for higher wages. They don't realize that I have nothing to do with the rundown of the railroads. All I do is to try to deliver the passengers safe and on time.

A. S.: And as soon as they raise our wages, they'll raise the price of tickets. And

prices of other goods that go by rail will rise. My parents are pensioners. Will they raise their pensions? So I'm not interested in raising my wages at their expense.

■ **In the light of all this, how do you view the present regime?**

V.F.: In general, it's hard to figure out who up there is doing what.

■ **Has anything changed for you since the defeat of the putsch last summer?**

In my opinion, nothing.

■ **What about work, your relations with management?**

All is as it was, they were Communists, they remain Communists.

■ **Well, let me put it this way: do the people carrying out the economic reforms want trade unions?**

A.S.: No way! Let me tell you about the mafia. Our railroad needs money. So what do they do? They say, let's allow a cooperative on our territory and it will pay us part of its profits as rent. Well, the cooperative worked there for a couple of years and is now moving on, taking even the boards with it. So then they set up a small private enterprise to repair locomotives and cars. At the depot's expense they supply it with fuel, electricity, lubricants and cranes. No one gets anything from it except the mechanics who work there. No one knows where all the rest goes. When I was in the chief engineer's office, I accidentally learnt that this small enterprise was receiving work that normally went to the depot. Everything is done secretly.

■ **Who runs this small enterprise?**

In practice, it's the chief engineer.

■ **Well, do you support the economic reform?**

Is there any question here? The nomenclatura used to sit on our necks and continues to sit on our necks. They grabbed a lot and continue to grab, to steal. Who do you think the reform is for? The pensioners who have to stand in line for pensions? A set of living room chairs and sofa costs 42,000 now. I'll never earn enough to afford that.

■ **What do you think about Yeltsin?**

V. F.: If he wanted to, he could take measures to stop the offensive against the labour movement.

■ **Do you think that some kind of workers' party is the answer?**

We should start at least with the unions. We need strong unions and a strong federation. The Independent Miners Union held a rally the other week to mark the anniversary of their founding. I liked how the lads from Donetsk (in Ukraine) asked the Russians not

to load any coal for the Ukraine after July 20, when their strike was to start. You see their solidarity, how they have managed to organize themselves?

■ **Many people are now criticizing the Independent Miners Union of Russia (IMUR), saying they have sold out to the government, they have become a new official union in return for the high wages that the government granted the miners at the beginning of the year.**

When our comrades went to Sergeev, the head of the IMUR, to ask for his union's support against the repression following out strike, I didn't like his answer: "why should we defend you? Didn't you break the law?" But they have given us some technical support. Time will tell.

Of course, we need a party, but I don't think that can work now, because the workers aren't prepared to support parties. But unions are another matter.

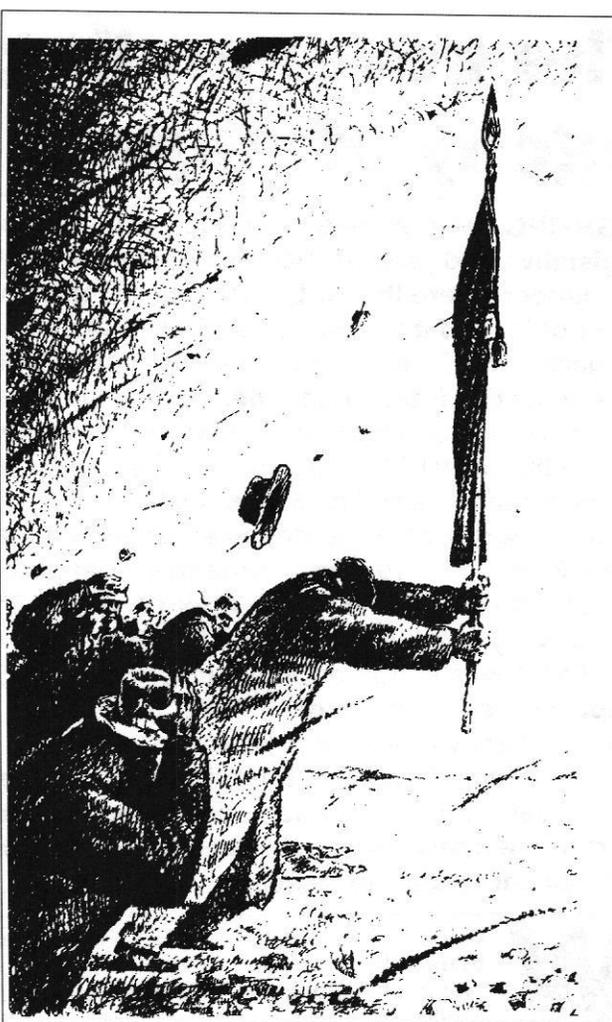
■ **What about the other railroad workers? Is anything happening there?**

The mechanics? Well, if the administration is feeding them through these small enterprises — they are all over the railroad. This is without any question theft of state resources. And also, to tell the truth, many of the mechanics are scared. But there are comrade mechanics who have left the branch union. For the time being, they aren't joining anything else. But if, for example, they decided to form their own working group, we could work with them.

I wanted also to say that our union is not only there to look after the narrow interests of our members. We have made a lot of proposals on how to improve things generally in the depot but they don't want to listen.

■ **You said they were laying off workers; what about management?**

No way! It's frightening how their numbers are inflated. And now they've set up a computing centre. What do they have to compute there? But they go ahead and announce: "We are starting to lay off locomotive brigades".



A.S.: We are financed from the state budget, but they are trying to force us into a self-financing regime, at least in part. So I'm not indifferent when I see that they are idle and issue ridiculous orders that I have to carry out.

■ **How do you see the future of your union?**

V.F.: Our comrades can no longer work under the old conditions. They will fight, even if they are threatened with being laid off.

A.S.: But they know we are trying to create a real union and they want to crush us to discourage the others. Take yesterday. The instructor was riding with me and he says: "Sasha, don't go to court. Forget all this business and tomorrow you'll be working again as an engineer".

V.F.: And last December, the boss said to me: "We'll be allocating six apartments soon. What's your housing situation? I answered "What do you mean? We're four people in three small rooms". He offered to "help me out". I said: "But I'm not in the line". "well", he said, "that problem can be resolved".

A.S.: So we know what we're up against and we are going ahead with our eyes open. They've given us warning. ★

The never-ending agony of Angola

FIGHTING has resumed in Angola, after the holding of legislative and presidential elections in which the main contenders were the MPLA (People's Liberation Movement of Angola) and its president and head of state José Eduardo dos Santos, and Jonas Savimbi's UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola).

The MPLA won an absolute majority in parliament (63% with 34% for UNITA) while in the presidential elections Dos Santos beat Savimbi by 57% to 40%.

The armed conflict started even before independence from Portugal in 1975 in a three way fight between the MPLA, UNITA and the FNLA. After its victory in this war, the MPLA very quickly found itself fighting a new war; this time the FNLA was a fading force, but UNITA, with South African support, was increasingly strong. Some areas of Angola have not known peace for 30 years.

International Viewpoint interviewed Christine Messiant a specialist on Angola, which she visited in October. The first part of the interview is published below; the second part will appear in our next issue.*

WOULD it be right to define this as an ethnic or regionalist conflict?

This would be a great over-simplification. That element exists and has grown in importance during the war and the so-called "transition period" opened up by the Estoril accords of May 1991. However, we should not confuse cause and effect and impute the ethnic conflict to some kind of atavistic "tribalism". That conflict is the result of the concrete history of the political struggle since the start of nationalism in Angola in the 1950s.

Then, the UPA-FNLA was organizing in the Belgian Congo among the Angolan Bakongo in opposition to the MPLA. The small group of men who formed UNITA in 1966 did so on a socio-cultural basis, as a sort of subordinate elite to that of what they saw as the domination of the urban Creole elite within the MPLA.

To this opposition between elites for leadership of the nationalist movement, and, later, for control of the state, other political differences were later added, including shifting international alliances within the context of the Cold War.

This fundamental opposition, which among some UNITA leaders amounts to real hatred for Creoles, has persisted through all that organization's ideological twists and turns. During the election campaign it expressed itself by claims that UNITA represented the "African people and its culture" in

the face of a "ruling caste" distant from "the people" and "Africanness".

Throughout the period of the nationalist armed struggle, the UNITA guerrillas — despite the sympathy they enjoyed in Protestant circles among the Umbundu, from which most of its leaders came — were very isolated and did not organize the population of the Umbundu regions, which were firmly under Portuguese control. Without significant international support and very weak militarily, the small group that led UNITA resorted to collaboration with the colonial army.

After the Portuguese revolution of April 25, 1974, with the formation of a transitional government bringing together the three movements, UNITA played the ethnic card. And it was only after the struggle between the three movements, which divided the population on the Umbundu plateau along social and ideological lines, degenerated into armed conflict, that the violence of war gave the conflict an ethnic anchor.

Subsequently, the development of UNITA's guerilla force and its war with the ruling MPLA, cannot be understood without reference to the considerable support it received from South Africa and then directly from the USA. However, it also drew succour from the despair of sectors of the population conscripted by the Luanda regime to fight a war they found incomprehensible, since they had been abandoned to poverty by the same state they were meant to be defending.

Angola facts

ANGOLA has a land area of 1,246,700 square kilometres and a population of about ten million. The largest ethnic groups are the Kimbundu of the region around the capital Luanda, the Umbundu of the inland areas and the Bakongo of the regions abutting on Zaire to the north and east. The term Creole refers to those Angolans whose families were involved in the Portuguese colonial structures.

Traditional religious beliefs remain strong, but the Creoles adopted the Catholic religion of the Portuguese, while dissident anti-colonial elites turned to variants of Protestantism. Methodists, for example, have been strongly represented in the MPLA leadership. The disasters of the latter's reign have led to a revival of Catholicism.

Civil war, with heavy outside involvement, has ravaged the country since independence in 1975. In particular, apartheid South Africa, unwilling to see a stable Angola under an anti-imperialist government in its vicinity, intervened heavily to support UNITA. In response the MPLA government sought Soviet-bloc aid, expressed particularly in the sending of Cuban troops and advisors to the country.

Latterly, and especially after the South African defeat at Cuito Canavale in 1988, the USA has assumed patronage of UNITA. ★

This is why, when the agreements were signed, the UNITA was able to gain support outside the Umbundu populations. Even in this period, therefore, it would be incorrect to view UNITA simply as an ethnic party.

At the moment of the ceasefire, it presented itself as the party of those "humiliated, oppressed and despised" by the MPLA ruling caste, a line that struck a chord in many regions. This rejection of the Luanda regime is particularly intense on the high plateau where the population has been especially deprived of essentials and where the MPLA has been responsible for fierce

* Christine Messiant works at the Centre d'Etudes Africaines of the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris. The interview took place on November 18.

repression against villages and communities suspected of supporting UNITA. The people here give solid support to UNITA as their only possible hope.

The fact that the making of an "ethnic" conflict requires a whole series of conditions is shown by the fate of the FNLA, the supposed "representative" of the Bakongo. This movement was indeed such a force at the start of the nationalist struggle, but now it has lost this role and the Bakongo's votes have gone either to the two big parties or to a number of small groups. The change is also related to the MPLA's policy of integrating FNLA leaders after 1978 and the Bakongo's involvement in the country's socio-economic life.

■ But what about the MPLA?

That is another matter. The MPLA's Creole founders imbued it with a universalist, socialistic, national-Jacobin and anti-tribal ideology. The party also represents an alliance with a number of other elites, both in the towns and the countryside. The contradictions underlying these alliances can show up inside the MPLA in various forms favoured by the lack of democracy inside that movement.

After 1974, the MPLA won support that was to be decisive in its struggle with the other two movements in the urban population, both among the waged petty bourgeoisie of the colonial state and the working class. This support was rapidly squandered by the subjection of the urban movement and the repression of dissident groups and then the bloody suppression of an internal coup attempt.

This "normalization", which alienated a section of its social and political support, laid the basis for the transformation of the MPLA from a national liberation movement into a "Marxist-Leninist" party which falsely announced itself the "sole representative" of the Angolan people.

Integrated into the new single party were social, political and ethnic groups which, while hostile to the official ideology, accepted normalization because they felt more threatened by the MPLA's enemies or because it seemed the only way to keep their social position in the party-state.

This was true of the majority of intellectuals (in their majority Creole), the bulk of the former colonial apparatus (mainly Creole and Kimbundu) and latterly of a part of the FNLA's Bakongo leaders, cadres and supporters. The need to preserve unity despite these divisions was one of the factors behind the development of a nomenklatura system, enjoying considerable privileges and increasingly distant from the society in terms of living standards and interests. It also became more and more implicated in individual and group corruption with all the centrifugal forces attendant on power networks.

■ How did the MPLA exercise its control over society?

The key is oil, which now represents 80% of Angolan exports. It is based on an enclave economy, basically off-shore and out of range of the war, and has never been managed according to the "socialist" norms of the rest of the economy. Exploited in partnership with foreign companies, oil has provided Angola with considerable income, which has been used mainly to finance the war, satisfy



the needs of the state-party and maintain the cohesion of the nomenklatura.

Oil income has served to maintain and reinforce a "caste" which abandoned ideological references to Communism years since. For years now, the regime has stopped trying to meet the essential needs of the population, relying instead on the oil money.

In recent years this has meant an increasing and now almost total loss of concern for the rural areas. Health and education provision have declined, public services such as electricity, water and transport, have been effectively privatized. The "people's stores" in which essentials were sold at prices compatible with salaries, have been emptied in favour of imports which benefit privileged circles.

The total absence of the so-called formal democratic rights has been followed by the disappearance of much vaunted "real" rights. In the really existing Angolan system, working is largely a waste of time, since wages are derisory in relation to the cost of living. Money wages form only a small part of real

income, the rest being made up of gifts of goods or the profits of resale of goods on the parallel markets.

The system is sharply divided between the beneficiaries of the regime and the rest. But the latter still depend on the system for everything. Given the lack of rights and the worthlessness of wages, living standards are assured by integration into circles of privilege. The parallel economy, fed mainly by the nomenklatura, is also an effective means of social control.

This is why it is so difficult to change this system, when, with the fall in oil prices and the pressure of international creditors, the regime is forced to contemplate economic reform. Such reform threatens to upset the systems of income distribution and meets resistance both at the top — among those who benefit from the system of distribution of goods — and below, among the system's dependents.

The dependence of those at the top on the redistribution system, allied to the fear of being obliged to undertake some measure of political liberalization that lay behind the failure to implement the reform plans announced in 1987.

As for those "below": a wave of strikes erupted around the currency reform in October 1990. This involved an exchange of old for new kwanzas and the obligatory retention by the state of 95% of the sums deposited. However, the strikes petered out. But, given that the system as such still existed, the "natural" demand was not for increased wages but to obtain gifts in kind on an individual basis.

This led to an extreme fragmentation of the struggles, some of which gained their immediate aims. However, these gains were rendered meaningless by the successive devaluations and the disappearance of the gifts. (The pre-election period, on the other hand, saw a dramatic improvement in supplies by the government). The social mobilization also lacked any political expression.

■ What was the Cuban role?

They were closely associated with the policy and active in setting up the bureaucratic and repressive regime; they were present in all the cogs of the state, had advisors in all the ministries and were involved in the development of the police and security apparatus, particularly after the repression of the 1977 coup and in the struggle against UNITA. As with all other foreigners, they took part in the black market and smuggling.

But there was another side to the considerable Cuban presence (more than 300,000 Cubans passed through the country). They fought alongside the Angolans against attacks from Zaire and South Africa and their

military assistance was essential in the winning of independence by Namibia. Unlike other foreign presences, they also played a positive role both in the army and civilian life. Many of them died in combat alongside Angolans and Cuban doctors could be found working in forgotten corners of the country shunned by Angolan doctors. Thus popular feeling about the Cubans is not straightforward.

In fact, their role in the country's political life was not long lasting (for example, from 1982-83 onwards, Hungarians were taken on to advise on the economy). Furthermore, the Cubans themselves often learned a lot from the experience — they realized that this was more than a simple battle against the South Africans and their puppets. They were involved in the only survey undertaken in Angola on the national question (in 1984-86) aimed at providing information on the internal reasons for the war. Many were also genuinely shocked by the realities behind Angolan "socialism".

All in all there was marked disillusion on the Cuban side. After UNITA had been militarily "neutralized" they stopped taking part in the fighting inside Angola, aware that there could be no military solution to the political problems.

■ Has the MPLA looked for a political solution or has it continued to restrict its response to UNITA to the military level?

The combination of the nomenklatura system and the international pressure for economic measures that would strike at the most disadvantaged sections of the population make it increasingly hard for Angola's leaders to make a priority out of "resolving the problems of the people", even if UNITA's advances have made them aware of the need.

The only way in which UNITA could be reintegrated would be in the context of a policy aimed at meeting the urgent needs of the population. UNITA can only be detached from its bases of support if it is recognized, if a cessation of the fighting is negotiated with it and if real moves are taken towards democratization, which force UNITA to show its hand.

But it is intrinsically impossible for the regime to undertake political reforms that would undermine the single party and their control of the state. As a result the military solution was pursued as long as was feasible.

■ How would you assess the balance of forces at the start of the negotiations that led to these elections? In South Africa, and in particular in ANC circles, the victory over the South Africans at Cuito Canavale is seen as the turning point.

The "solution" to the Angolan crisis has taken place in two stages. The New York agreement was signed at the end of 1988 after the South Africans had suffered a sharp

defeat at Cuito Canavale. The outcome of this battle, along with other broader international factors, played a crucial role in the reversal of a South African policy aimed at destabilizing Angola and keeping control of Namibia.

But the South African military defeat also occurred at a time of deep crisis inside Angola, whose main ally, the USSR had signalled its willingness to work for a "regional solution" to the conflict — expressing thereby its own desire to cut back on international commitments that were beyond its means. The USA was ready to assume support for UNITA from the South Africans, essentially through Zaire.

Despite Cuito Canavale, the New York agreement between South Africa, Cuba and Angola enshrined a linkage between Namibian independence and the departure of Cuban troops; Angola had previously firmly opposed this in the face of Washington. While the two great powers had been involved in the working out of the agreement, it did not put an end to outside involvement in Angola — above all as far as the USA was concerned.

The MPLA regime felt that the withdrawal of South African aid to UNITA would allow it to win final military victory and avoid negotiations with its enemy or democratization. In fact, at that very moment, the USA began to step up its aid to UNITA.

After the defeat at Mavinga at the start of 1991, the regime in Luanda had its back to the wall, and it was only then that negotiations began and the MPLA accepted the demands placed on it concerning political pluralism and elections. And it was after the US-led coalition's victory in the Gulf War that the Estoril agreement was signed on terms highly favourable to UNITA. The MPLA's only real achievement was that it was to stay in power until the elections, during a transition period much shorter than it had wanted.

■ How did the Estoril agreement favour UNITA?

The timing of the accord is significant; just after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Gulf War, "democratization" and the triumph of the West and its allies were seen as one and the same. In Angola, this meant that UNITA was the hero of "democracy", having fought against a "totalitarian pro-Soviet" regime. The USA built up Savimbi as a freedom fighter.

The MPLA then presented the initiative as its own idea. But if you look at the agreements, it is clear that the only real beneficiaries are the two armed camps; measures that would really give an opening to civil society and other political forces are absent.

The management of the transition period was entirely in the hands of the MPLA and UNITA; the former remaining in government but with a consensus-based Joint Politico-Military Committee (JPMC) bringing toge-

ther UNITA, the government and the three international observers entrusted with overseeing the implementation of the agreement.

This was a big advance for UNITA. Inside the JPMC it had equal weight to that of the MPLA, and could count on the support of the USA observer. It can block any movement, without being directly responsible for unpopular government decisions. It has also won some of the prerogatives of a government: control over its own territory (since the extension of government authority can only take place "progressively and with its agreement") and police.

Above all, it achieved quick elections — 15 months after the agreement as opposed to the three years preferred by the government. This meant that there would be no time for any other force to arise to challenge UNITA's ability to capitalize on the discredit of the government.

This opened the prospect for UNITA of arriving in power legitimately and democratically. In the discussion at the negotiations, UNITA worked to assure its own "rights" but also to limit the political field to its bilateral "dialogue" with the MPLA. Indeed, it was able to refer to the agreement for justification when it refused to take part in a "multi-party meeting" called by the government in January 1992.

The government meanwhile limited its commitment to democracy to voting through some laws laid down in the agreement and engaging in consultations with other political forces and "society" as far as this seemed opportune. The measure of these laws is given by that on the formation of parties. This required 3,000 documented signatures in 15 provinces — under conditions of strict MPLA and UNITA control in the areas they rule. This stipulation was abandoned at the last minute since no one had been able to meet it. Other rights, such as that of information and circulation were similarly without substance.

Only during the election campaign itself was free speech possible in the time reserved for parties — and of course the public media remained firmly under government control. Finally, enormous sums of money were channelled into the MPLA's political campaign, managed by a highly professional Brazilian team. Suddenly all kinds of government projects were underway alongside gifts to electorally significant groups and personalities.

As a former minister had said "how could the MPLA lose when it had the administration, the banks, and the means of information in its hands?"

The UNITA and its US backers had based their calculations on an assumption of a safe 40% ethnic base for UNITA, on the discredit of the regime, and on UNITA's monopoly on opposition to the MPLA. Now, after their defeat, they are emphasizing the MPLA's ability to misuse the resources at its disposal as the existing government.

In reality, however UNITA's election defeat and its reaction to it has now revealed to the whole world its anti-democratic nature and its incapacity to transform itself into a political organization which, if in power, could tolerate opposition and respect democratic rights. In fact, it was even unable to carry out the simple negative task of not alarming a population that is sick and tired of war.

■ **But UNITA had massive outside help in its appointed role as the democratic David against the "communist" Goliath in Luanda.**

No one can believe that the USA "did not know" that the image they were promoting was false. The fact that UNITA is a total stranger to democracy has been clear since its creation. It rose in revolt against its exclusion from power, not against the single party system. In the "liberated territories" under its control, the dictatorial, indeed totalitarian nature of Savimbi's organization was there for all to see.

Referring to what it presented as "truly African" symbols and methods of rule it functioned as a sect, organized around a personality cult and with power concentrated in the leader's private circle. Opponents both real and potential were murdered and there was systematic "punishment" of "errors" involving imprisonment and public humiliation.

The population under UNITA's control were subjected to a totalitarian and terrorist regime. Evidence of bonfires on which people were burned alive, sometimes accused of witchcraft, are only the most extreme sign. The fact that Savimbi's methods have been so effectively hidden from the outside world is a reflection of the power of his allies.

The fact that a large part of the Angolan population has accepted his rule has much to do with their isolation from the outside world and their total dependence on his organization. The polarization during the war, and then the failure of any third force to emerge during the elections, meant that the voters closed ranks around the two parties.

The same logic was at work in the MPLA. They had fought a war against UNITA and its allies — such sworn enemies of the people as apartheid South Africa, the USA and Zaire. The MPLA could only feel revulsion at the idea of Savimbi coming to power. This feeling also operated among the people as a whole and played a part in the MPLA's election victory.

In this climate of polarization the small circles of activists and intellectuals inclined to take part in the formation of an alternative to the party-state system agreed to postpone their criticisms and took part in the denigration of "groupuscules" and democracy as such, seen as a weakening of the MPLA camp against UNITA. ★

BOSNIA — confusion in the peace camp

THE November 4-6 international peace movement conference, held in Ohrid in the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia, failed to develop a common strategy to end the war in former Yugoslavia. In their final resolution, 400 participants from over 20 European states effectively called for European military intervention in the region.

On the positive side, the conference demonstrated that European governments, the UN and the EC are so conscious of their impotence and confusion over former Yugoslavia that they are increasingly open to the initiatives and propositions of the peace movement. The Council of Europe even helped finance the conference.

Unfortunately, the decline in the west European left and the peace movement makes many peace activists increasingly uncritical of initiatives from the major powers.

A good indication of the new partnership between the Council of Europe and some parts of the Western peace movement was the final resolution of the conference which demanded "UN/EC protected zones in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the UN protected areas of Croatia" where "discussion about the future political status of these areas" will be "suspended...until normal life has been restored and the atmosphere of fear has been removed". In these protectorates Western soldiers would ensure "demilitarization, the restoration of justice and impartial administration [and] the reconstruction of economic, social and civic life".

This demand for "protectorates from below" over Bosnia-Herzegovina and one third of Croatia (plus further "local zones" as the conflict inevitably spreads following Western intervention) is presented as a "civic network" project "which could build on existing twinning relationships of many European towns with towns in these areas as well as on numerous civic networks".

The final resolution invokes the magic combination "United Nations" and "civic initiatives" several times as a kind of mantra for peace and success.

Unfortunately there are no such magic solutions for suffering Bosnia. The peace movement should think again — *Adam Novak*. ★

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Oregon voters defeat anti-gay/lesbian initiative

ON THE SAME DAY as the United States presidential election, voters in the state of Oregon defeated Measure 9, known as the "Abnormal Behaviours Initiative" which was an attempt to amend the state constitution to declare that homosexuality is "abnormal, wrong, unnatural and perverse".

GARY BILLS

THE ballot measure attempted to lump homosexuality with other "behaviours" that should be discouraged such as pedophilia, sadism and masochism. Civil protection of homosexuals from discrimination was maligned by Measure 9 supporters as "special rights" for gays and lesbians and the measure would have barred the use of state funds and facilities from being used to "promote, encourage, or facilitate homosexuality".

The real impact of the measure would have been to allow discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation — in employment, housing, medical care and benefits (including coverage won in union contracts) — the elimination of AIDS hot-lines and information services and the banning of books from schools and public libraries that did not advocate "traditional family values".

Conservatism in rural areas

The measure was defeated by a margin of 57% to 43% but a breakdown of the vote indicates the conservatism that exists outside the urban centres. Around the Portland area, the initiative was rejected by a margin of almost three to one; in the rural counties, the measure got a majority vote.

The major sponsor of the measure was a group calling itself the Oregon Citizen's Alliance (OCA), local representatives of Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition and other rightwing fundamentalist Christian groups such as Operation Rescue, Eagle Forum, and Coalition of Women for Traditional Values.

This group is an incipient fascist group, probing, by electoral, non-electoral and legislative means, for a political base for

the most reactionary agenda. It was the major organizer of support for the Gulf War, through its "Home-front Coalition" and "Defenders of Liberty Parade". It is in the forefront of attacks on women's right to abortion. It has run candidates for state offices on an extreme reactionary programme against both Democratic and Republican candidates.

Christian totalitarian agenda

The OCA sought through this initiative to attract and mobilize the most bigoted and reactionary forces within the petty bourgeoisie and working class in classic fascist form. They themselves have a "Christian" totalitarian agenda that they seek to force on the population while they accuse gays and lesbians of trying to implement a secret agenda of their own.

The big bourgeoisie and its media did not support this initiative but a victory for the OCA would have given it more political leverage of the type it believes it already has in the Republican Party as demonstrated at that party's convention this year. Lon Mabon, the OCA's head commented on how encouraged he felt by the Republican convention, saying that it felt just like an Oregon Citizens Alliance convention.

However, after the elections, Oregon Republican Party officials began talking about splitting the party to avoid its takeover by OCA forces. It is clear that many bourgeois and liberal elements in the Republican Party do not agree that the OCA's is the best way to advance their agenda at the present time.

The bigotry that the OCA and other similar rightwing groups encourage has resulted in an anti-gay ordinance in Springfield, Oregon and a large increase in hate crimes directed at minorities, women, and gays

and lesbians. The worst of these was the firebombing of a home in Salem, Oregon by racist skinheads which resulted in the death of a black lesbian and a gay man. Nationally, attacks on gays and lesbians now rank as the number one hate crime.

In Colorado, where an anti-gay ballot measure was passed, there has been a significant increase in violent attacks on gays and lesbians. One man, accused of being gay, was killed in a store while his pregnant wife waited in the car.

The backers of Measure 9 made a special target of teachers and children. They pushed heavily the notion that homosexuality is something taught and glorified by teachers — especially gay teachers, who, according to OCA lies, are prone to pedophilia. This line of attack had a measure of success in frightening some parents.

After the defeat of Measure 9, the OCA has stated that it will use this fear to "fine-tune" its next attack on the rights of gays and lesbians. Another initiative is planned in two years.

This initiative polarized Oregon's population. Forces both pro and con are reacting to the deepening crisis of capitalism. Measure 9 campaigned heavily in rural counties where the timber industry is in deep slump. They sought to blame homosexuals for the pressures working class families are feeling — from taxes, joblessness, crime, low pay and benefits and a deteriorating school system.

It is encouraging to note that, as the debate developed, the discussion became less and less about homosexuality and more about those pushing the initiative and what they hoped to gain from its victory.

The heightened political tension around this battle, which was not limited to Oregon, has mobilized many for the battles yet to come.

Union opposition to reactionary measure

Opposition to Measure 9 came initially from the public employees union who, in 1988, fought an OCA ballot measure which nullified anti-discrimination laws protecting public employees. They, along with forces in the Democratic Party, helped found the No on 9 coalition.

This coalition had a clearly reformist perspective. They analyzed the issues in cultural, legal and religious terms rather than attempting to expose those beneficiaries of the existing social system who hope to gain from attacking gays and lesbians. Campaign strategy was formulated by public relations firms and lobbying groups.

Many gay activists and supporters would have preferred a strategy that answered the lies spread about homosexuality by Measure 9 supporters and many campaigned on this basis. ★