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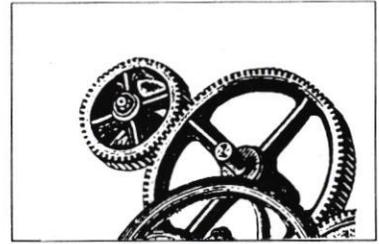
JESSE JACKSON'S RAINBOW POLITICS



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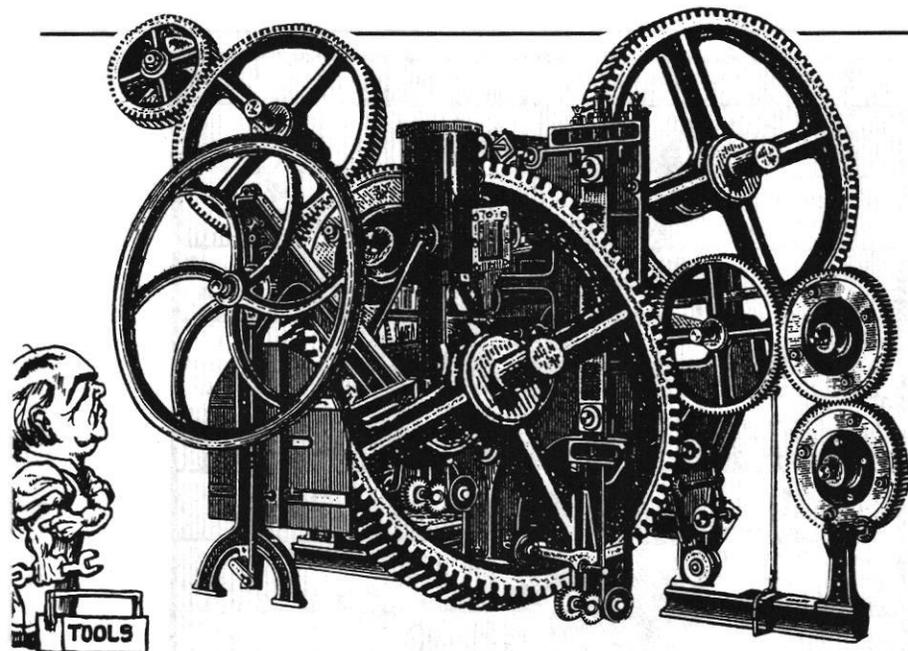
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A new stage of de-Stalinization in the USSR

IN THE RUN-UP to the Soviet Communist Party conference to be held at the end of June, Stalinist icons have been falling in the Soviet press like ducks in a shooting gallery. Never have official Soviet publications admitted so much of the truth about the poisonous heritage of Stalinism and so many of its dark secrets.

The following article examines why the Soviet leaders have unleashed this iconoclastic storm and summarizes what it has revealed.

ERNEST MANDEL

THE NEWSPAPER of the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic, *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, devoted an entire page in its March 13 issue to a letter from a reader, a certain Nina Andreyeva. It was entitled "I cannot compromise my principles." It was an open defence of Stalin and Stalinism and an attack against "the disciples of Trotsky and Jagoda" (a scandalous amalgamation as Jagoda was the GPU chief who had all the Soviet Trotskyists arrested).

The time seemed to have been well chosen. Gorbachev and his principal ideological collaborator (some say his guru), Yakovlev, were out of Moscow. The way seemed open. So, by a peculiar coincidence, many Soviet publications reprinted Andreyeva's letter without criticism or

comment of any sort.

It soon came to light that these periodicals had received instructions to reprint the article. Only one refused, *Znamya Yunosti*, a Byelorussian youth publication. All the others yielded, starkly showing that despite three years of *glasnost*, the habit of unquestioning obedience to orders from above continued to prevail. Three weeks later, however, on April 18 and 19, *Pravda* itself published two contributions, one from a number of intellectuals' organizations, the other from 38 writers. Several of the writers had a reputation of being "moderates" with respect to *glasnost*, if not "conservative liberals," notably the president of the writers' union, Markov. Both sharply attacked Andreyeva's letter.

They denounced the conservatives who

wanted to get the country back "to the years when the law was trampled on." They equated defence of the Stalin era with opposition to the reform course that the Gorbachev team was following, with the support of the CPSU leadership. They challenged their adversaries to clarify their opposition to *perestroika* and democratization.

After this, a veritable anti-Stalinist storm swept the Soviet media. Not a day passed without some daily or weekly paper or some magazine, revealing a particularly revolting aspect or episode of the Stalin era. It is impossible to cite them all here. I will limit myself to listing a few of the main revelations that were printed in millions, if not tens of millions, of copies and often picked up by TV.

Public revelations of Stalin's crimes

- Forced collectivization was a crime against the Soviet people and economy. It cost the lives of 10 million peasants. Stalin was the main person responsible for it. (*Argumenty i Fakty*, April 4, 1988.)

- Stalin facilitated the rise to power of the fascists and of Hitler in Germany. (*Nouvelles de Moscou*, April 10, 1988.)

- The bloody purges in the party after 1934 cost the lives of a million innocent communists. Stalin personally ordered and organized the purges.

- The purge victims who confessed crimes they never committed did so as a result of atrocious torture ordered and given "legal" sanction by Stalin. (Sources too numerous to be cited.)

- Stalin ordered the 1937 purge of the Red Army because he was opposed to the projects of Tuchachevsky and his officers for rapid mechanization of the army, for providing it with armored divisions and getting rid of its outdated cavalry, and for preparing it for mobile defence operations in the event of imperialist aggression. (*Nouvelles de Moscou*, April 3, 1988.)

- By decapitating the Red Army, by imprisoning the main innovators in Soviet aviation, Stalin delayed the modernization of the army for several years. He bears a crushing responsibility for the defeats suffered by the USSR in 1941 and 1942 at the hands of the Nazi imperialist aggressors. (*Izvestia*, May 3, 1988.)

- These defeats were aggravated by the blind faith he demonstrated in the Nazis' so-called interest in respecting the Hitler-Stalin Pact in order to avoid a war on two fronts. Thus, the Hitler-Stalin Pact was a crime against the USSR. (*Moskovskaya Pravda*, May 18, 1988.)

- Stalin openly violated the federal constitution of the USSR when he decided to eliminate Soviet republics and autonomous territories and deport entire nationalities at the end of the war.

- Up until his death, Stalin kept the Soviet population, not just in the countryside but also in the cities, on the poverty line,

with a standard of living that in eight years had scarcely improved over the wartime period.

● The penal system established in Stalin's time was inhuman. It was increasingly directed not against any political opponents but against the poorest ordinary people, including young people, the disabled and so on.

Penal legislation harshest in the world

Penal legislation was one of the severest in the world, much more severe than that of the imperialist countries. The USSR's prison population is one of the highest in the world, numbering millions today (despite the millions released under Khrushchev.)

The Soviet press has not hesitated to use the term "gulag." The case has been cited of a 12-year-old boy sentenced to five years hard labor in 1943 for robbing a canteen to get food for his young brother and his little sisters (their father was at the front and their mother had abandoned them.) He was released in 1945, and then arrested again in 1947 for stealing a fish. He got ten years hard labor! (*Nouvelles de Moscou*, May 1, 1988.)

● Stalin's victims should not only be rehabilitated. A monument should be erected to them that would not be a mere stone building. In this respect, Aleksandr Waisberg, a laboratory worker, said in *Nouvelles de Moscou* on May 1, 1988:

"Collecting signatures for a request to the Supreme Soviet to create a monument for the victims of the Stalin repression is one of the activities of the Memorial Group. In our opinion, such a memorial should include not just an architectural and sculptural monument but also a museum, a library, archives and a scientific research center — everything that could help to immunize social consciousness against Stalinism." (It seems that 10,000 signatures were collected in the space of a few days.)

● After 1928-29, Stalin's activity had a pronounced "anti-socialist character." (*Nouvelles de Moscou*, April 24, 1988.)

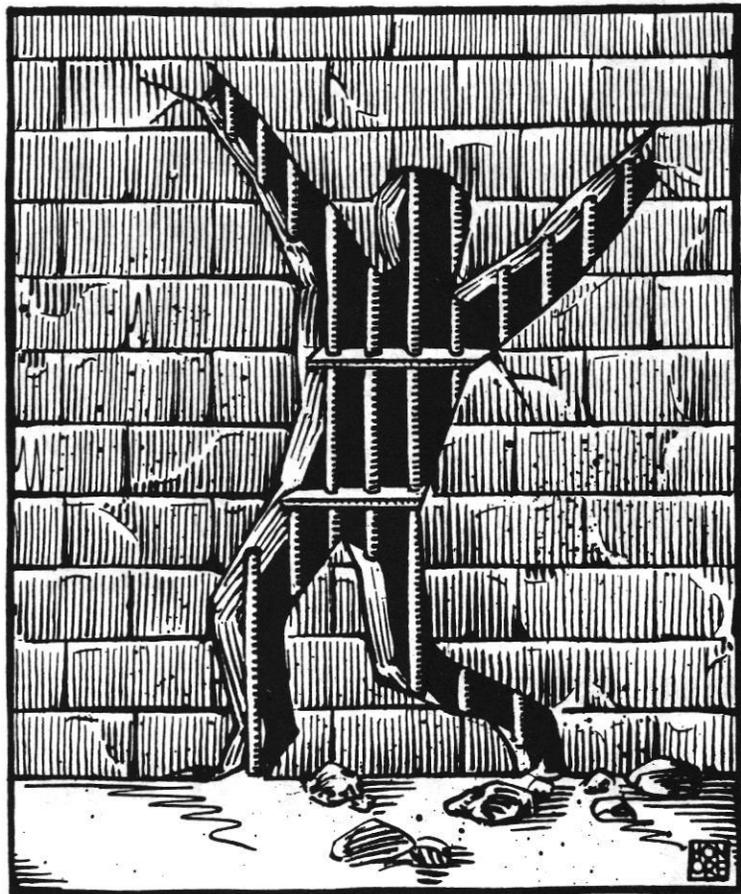
● "Power belonged to the Soviet state, but — in accordance with the distorting practice — in reality it was exercised by the administrative apparatus." (*Nouvelles de Moscou*, May 15, 1988.) The "administrative apparatus" is clearly a euphemism for the bureaucracy. In fact, from a Marxist standpoint, the two formulas are synonymous.

All of this culminated in two brief but devastating statements:

— "The Stalin and Brezhnev versions of socialism suited the reactionary forces in the West....Socialism was compromised."

— "Socialism and Stalinism are two incompatible ideas. Where there is Stalinism, there is no socialism." (*Nouvelles de Moscou*, April 24, 1988.)

4 This goes much further than the de-Stalinization of Khrushchev's time, of the



Twentieth and Twenty-Second Congresses of the CPSU. The revelations are much more numerous, more precise, broader; the shadowy areas have been greatly reduced. The publicity they received and the passionate response that they have aroused in large sections of the masses is out of all proportion to what happened in the period 1956-62. Clearly this is a more advanced stage of de-Stalinization.

Election and re-election of officials

What is more, you get the definite impression that Gorbachev and his team have consciously unleashed this campaign against Stalin and Stalinism as a weapon in the factional battle that they are waging to prepare the Nineteenth Conference of the CPSU, which is to meet on June 28.

In fact, the mysterious orchestrator who ordered the publication and massive reprinting of Nina Andreyeva's letter — regardless of whether it was Ligachev in person, or another, or others — wanted to block more advanced democratization measures projected by the group around Gorbachev for this conference.

These measures attack the sacrosanct "stability of cadres." Challenging this is what brought Khrushchev down. They call for subjecting these "cadres" to the test of election and periodic re-election. Finally, two "investitures" for five years each are proposed for officials, which is far from an "anti-bureaucratic revolution." It is also

proposed that there be several candidates for each leading post.

This is already enough to arouse fear, opposition and even indignation among the people in such positions. They are no longer resisting merely through obstruction, routinism and passivity, as a good part of them have done with respect to *perestroika*. In the area of democratization, the resistance is more open. Thus, after a month of hesitation, the tumult around the de-Stalinization has taken the form of a real debate.

Izvestia of April 29 reported a speech by the chief of the propaganda service of the the party committee for the Kuntsevski borough of Moscow, N. Kozhevniko, who said that Nina Andreyeva's letter contained a number of true statements. It commented:

"We are on the eve of the national party conference. What is more, the conference is in fact already underway. Just recently the publication of the two articles cited [Andreyeva's letter and the *Pravda's* editors' comment on it] has drawn a line between those who are working for radical restructuring and those who would like to stick to refurbishing the façade."

The adversaries of democratization did not back off. *Nouvelles de Moscou* of April 10 cites an eight-page letter that they got from the "Ignatov group," which amounts to an actual anti-*glasnost* platform. It characterizes *perestroika* and *glasnost* as a "revolutionary socialist" program that is leading the country and the people to an economic catastrophe, social upsets and finally to subjection of the country by the

imperialist states." The Ignatov group says that it was centralism (that is, Stalinist centralism) that "in the first five-year plans enabled our country to achieve incredibly rapid rates of economic development."

In its April 4 issue, *Molodaya Gvardia*, one of the bastions of conservatism, published an article by a veteran CPSU member, M. Malakhov. This defended Nina Andreyeva's and the Ignatov group's theses and carried them further: "We are going to end up with ideological laxity and anarchy," he wrote. He expressed indignation against "the tendency to condemn the people of my generation for all the failings in the economy and in life in recent decades. It was especially in the 1930s that we implemented Lenin's ideas [sic]."

"Conspiracy of silence against perestroika"

Malakhov openly defended the military intervention in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. He said that in "some socialist countries, there were negative forces, and counter-revolutionary forces raised their heads." This led Nikolai Shmelov to write in the magazine *Novy Mir* (April 1988): "You come reluctantly to the idea that a conspiracy of silence is developing, or has already developed, in the country against perestroika, in which there is an increasing convergence between the interests of a section of local leaders and a whole series of central bodies."

There's the rub, obviously. The Nineteenth Conference of the CPSU has to be made up of delegates elected in the party's local and regional branches. But these structures have by no means been renewed. They are totally controlled by the bureaucracy. Gorbachev has excoriated them, shaken them up, threatened them. Finally, he has had to seek a compromise with them.¹

The leading Gorbachevites — and undoubtedly the general secretary himself — fear that the pendulum will swing back unless the economic situation improves (and everything indicates that instead it is deteriorating).² They want to gain additional guarantees against backsliding of the sort that followed the fall of Khrushchev. They are calling for democratization measures affecting the party apparatus, or even democratization measures enabling the masses to go around the party apparatus.

For example, Aleksandr Gebran wrote in *Sotsialisticheskaya Industriya*: "Today, the preparation of the conference should not be left entirely [!] to the party apparatus." He poses the question of revising the rules for election of the delegates to the conference. He was supported in the same journal by Gavril Popov. Yuri Andreyev, a member of the leadership of the USSR writers' union wrote along the same lines in the magazine *Sovetskaya Kultura*. In the paper of the Central Committee of the Georgian CP, *Zarya Vostoka*, an appeal was made to all

workers in the republic to keep party meetings open to everyone, and to discuss the questions on the agenda of the conference at these meetings in the most meticulous way.

To raise the ante, the most advanced representatives of *glasnost*, such as A. Butenko, Otto L. Lacis, and Gavril Popov have written that there are two conceptions of socialism and of how to build it — a Leninist one and a Stalinist one. They are products of historical development and persist in the public mind as well as in social practice. It is necessary to choose between them, because they are mutually exclusive.³

Thus, the team around Gorbachev has deliberately chosen de-Stalinization as a "litmus test" for opposition to *glasnost* and democratization. It has done this because it is convinced that vertical structures and authoritarianism — which it considers not without reason to be one of the long-term hangovers of Stalinism — condemn perestroika to certain failure. It has done this because of its fear of a "backward march," for which it would pay the price, including in personal terms. It has done so drawing a balance sheet of Khrushchev's failure, which it attributes to a lack of involvement of the broad masses and to the narrow limits of the de-Stalinization and democratization of the time. It has done so knowing full well what it is doing, knowing that no small amount of confusion remains on the question of Stalinism and Leninism, that nostalgia for a "strong man" persists not only in a large part of the apparatus, but also among some sections of the people.⁴

The limitations and contradictions of glasnost

However, the very way in which the debate on de-Stalinization has been relaunched and carried forward reflects quite concretely the limits and contradictions of *glasnost*.

Everything is still coming from the top. Top authorities authorized the publication of Nina Andreyeva's letter and recommended its reprinting. The immense majority of the press obeyed. The top decided to counter-attack through the commentary published in *Pravda*. Once again, nearly everyone followed suit. The top level proclaimed, "there has to be discussion," and so there was discussion. The top said, "the elections have to be democratized," and so they are being democratized (in a very partial way.) The top added, "But you are not going to elect any open opponent of perestroika." (*Pravda*, May 13). And so no opponent of perestroika is being elected.

This is not the road of a democratization broad enough and deep enough to block the bureaucracy. This does not represent a renascence of a real independent politicalization of the masses. It may lead to that. It may facilitate it. It may even stimulate it (although even the leading Gorbachevites

seem at least to hesitate in this respect). This is obviously preferable to "one-voice dialogue," to the sterile, paralyzing, depoliticizing and reactionary monolithism of the Brezhnev era, to say nothing of the bloody and terror-ridden monolithism of the Stalin era. But this is not enough.

Behind these limitations of *glasnost* loom the contradictions that it bears within it: The contradiction between the principle of the sovereignty of the soviets and the one-party system, in which the "leading role" of the party is confirmed by the constitution (this role was hardly mentioned in the first constitution drawn up under Lenin.). The contradiction between democratization of the party and the absence of any right of tendencies (without recognizing the right to have a plurality of parties, tendency rights cannot be accepted, since any tendency would tend to become "a potential second party"). The contradiction between proclaiming unrestricted democratic freedom (freedom of the press, freedom of association, freedom to demonstrate peacefully) and the restrictions that a more and more bureaucratically led one-party regime inevitably imposes on the exercise of such freedoms.

Press continue to oppose strikes

But in the last analysis these contradictions are only the reflection of the social contradictions rending Soviet society. Two examples confirm this in a striking way.

The press — even the most liberal journals, such as *Ogonyok* and *Nouvelles de Moscou* — continue to oppose strikes. The spectacular strike in Yerevan — which lasted for many days and led to the election of bodies representative of the strikers and toppled the local CP leadership⁵, bodies that negotiated as equals with the CPSU Central Committee — was severely condemned in the press. The same is true of the Polish

1. In *Le Monde* on May 18, 1988, Michel Tatu correctly stressed that most of the CPSU regional leaders — he calls them "prefects" — were appointed before Gorbachev's ascension to power or were well advanced in their bureaucratic careers before being appointed by Gorbachev. "How can you make a 'revolution' (this word is being increasingly used today in Moscow instead of perestroika) with human material that is so un-revolutionary?" he rightly asks.

2. Gorbachev's latest piece of "bad luck" is a sudden shortage of sugar, an easily predictable result of increased buying by moonshiners after the cut in "official" vodka production.

3. On April 10, 1988, *Nouvelles de Moscou* published a letter from Ivan Nestavchev in Kaliningrad, who excoriated all leaders of the USSR in recent decades: "Why didn't you develop real people's power?"

4. A letter from a reader received by *Nouvelles de Moscou* said, "I share the opinion of those who think that the slogan of 'anti-Stalinism,' which seems democratic, is the slogan behind which are lining up, along with the professional anti-communists, the descendants living among us of the classes overthrown by the October revolution, as well as the descendants of the those who got rich from NEP, of the counter-revolutionary bandits and the kulaks."

5. This is what led to the firing of the secretary of the Armenian CP.

workers' strikes. In this respect, *Nouvelles de Moscou* identified itself entirely with Jaruzelski's views in its May 22 issue. It maintained a guilty silence about the measures of economic repression (firings) and police repression (beatings and arrests) against the strikers. By the same token, the press has published little or no information about these strikes.

"The problem is opposing social interests"

The question of real power for the Councils of Workers' Collectives recently set up in the workplaces is still more revealing. There is a real threat that self-management will be transformed into "democracy for the plant managers," Evgenii Torkanovski wrote in *Nouvelles de Moscou* of May 22. "In the chair, a willful leader can make a council into something other than a tool for the workers' collective, something subordinate to the plant manager, pliant to the will of the chief." And to make the point more forcefully, he wrote, "A cliché has entered deeply into people's minds that 'cooks' are no good as managers." Is there anyone who does not understand that the problem is not just mental resistance (although that is no doubt real) but also and above all *opposing social interests*.

The masses of workers are not taking part in this process. This is primarily because their interests and immediate concerns have not been satisfied. Moreover, they fear a backward march. As Grigori Kanovich wrote graphically in *Nouvelles de Moscou* of April 17, 1988: "Fear engenders flattery and obedience, imitation and servility." Indeed. But the masses will not be freed from this fear by exhortations from above. They will be freed from it only by regaining confidence in their own strength through independent action and organiza-

tion. The future of the democratization in the USSR depends on how extensive this is.

Having said that, this advanced phase of de-Stalinization represents a major new historical victory for our movement, as was already true of the clearing of the criminal charges against the defendants in the third Moscow trial, comrades Bukharin, Rykov, our comrade Christian Rakovsky and all their associates.

The terrible truth about the Stalin era and the price that the Soviet proletariat and people paid for it, as well as the world proletariat and all of humanity, is something that only our current declared from 1927-28 onwards and analyzed step by step in each of its principal stages. It is the only one that can unashamedly look the Soviet workers in the face today.

What can those who denied, covered up and justified so many crimes, who licked the boots of the murderers and slanderers — and this includes most of the social democratic leaders and left intellectuals of the Popular Front period — say today?

Our current is the only communist current whose banner is unstained by blood, filth or lies. The founders of our movement, comrades Trotsky and Sedov, the members of the Soviet Left Opposition, the heroes who remained unbowed until the last and were felled like oaks by firing squads because they understood the counter-revolutionary role of Stalinism⁶, acted as they did out of loyalty to communist principles, out of commitment to the cause of the working class.

Stalin's fiercest opponent was Trotsky

In so doing, they saved the honor of communism, they assured its continuity. No one can say that for a certain period all the

"We must continue the fight for clearing all the criminal charges against victims of the Moscow Trials, and first of all Leon Trotsky."

communists accepted or tolerated Stalin's crimes. Thanks to them, no one can say that communism leads inevitably to Stalinism, because Stalin's fiercest and most irreconcilable adversary, the one whom he considered his number one enemy, was the communist Trotsky.

Fight to rehabilitate all the Moscow Trials' defendants

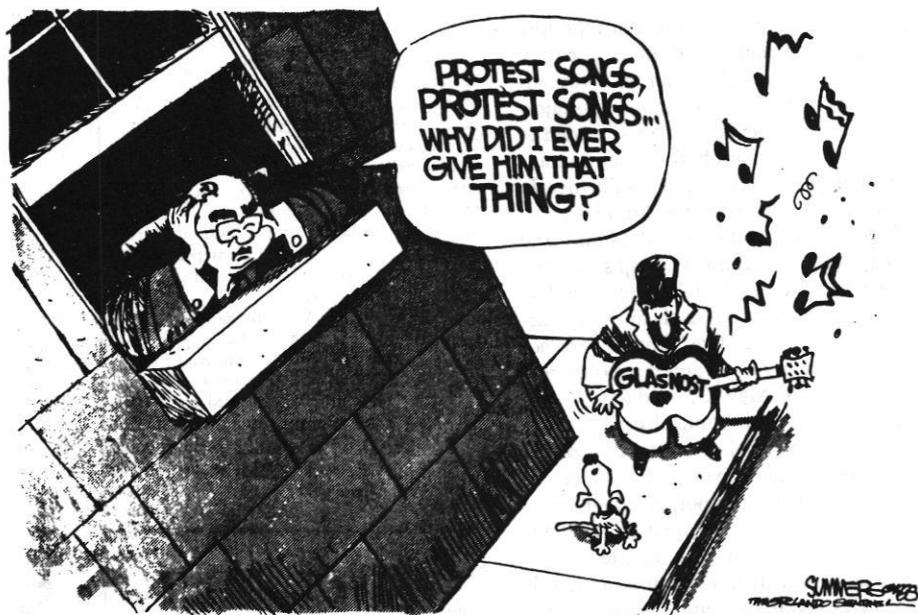
We do not claim any glory because of this. But from this moral capital, we will gain increasing political dividends. This exceptional capital will revive communism. Certainly, it will be a communism more self-critical, more sensitive to bureaucratic deviations and manipulation, more focused on self-organization of the masses. But it will revive communism in a stronger form in the USSR and on a world scale.

We must therefore continue the fight for clearing all the criminal charges against victims of the Moscow Trials, and first of all Leon Trotsky. This battle is not essentially about the past, truth, honor and justice — although the number of Soviet citizens acutely interested in these questions is constantly increasing. This fight is over the crucial principles for straightening out the present situation in the USSR and in the world workers' movement, the principles indispensable for the emancipation of the workers.

We have to continue the fight to assure that Soviet intellectuals, youth and workers can have access to all the documents of the period after 1923. The whole truth has to be revealed about the debates that rent the party and the International from that time. Everyone must be able to judge on the basis of the elements necessary for such judgement. The entire truth will be resoundingly reestablished.

The theses adopted by the Central Committee of the CPSU for the Nineteenth Party Conference state that at the time of Stalin's death, free political discussion had been strangled in the party. (*Pravda*, May 27, 1988). But this is what the Left Opposition said back in 1923! History will prove us right about Trotsky's role and ideas, as it has just done about the role and ideas of Stalin. ★

6. See the homage paid to the Soviet Trotskyists by Leopold Trepper, the leader of the Red Orchestra espionage network.



Socialist Party tries hard to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory

IF THE RULES of boxing applied to politics, François Mitterrand and the Socialist Party leadership could be prosecuted. They are doing their best to throw the legislative elections.

On TV the day after the first round in the legislative elections, viewers could see the unusual spectacle of Socialist Party representative Claude Estier proclaiming that it was a good thing that his party suffered a relative defeat — because too large a victory for the SP could have complicated collaboration with the other forces in parliament, that is, the bourgeois parties!

GERRY FOLEY

THREE SURPRISES emerged from the first round of the legislative elections. First, the abstention rate of 34.3% was the highest in the history of the Fifth Republic, if not since the Liberation. Second, the Socialist Party and its allies did substantially worse than expected. Third, the Communist Party vote rose sharply, to 11.27%, as compared to 6.78% in the presidential elections and 9.8% in the last legislative elections in 1986.

In all, the presidential-majority slate got 37.4%, exactly the same as the combined vote of the SP and its Left Radical allies in the 1981 legislative elections. The vote for the SP as such was 34.81%, and another 1.53% was cast for non-SP candidates on the presidential-majority Lists.

The presidential-majority vote was thus about three percentage points higher than Mitterrand's score in the first round of the presidential elections. But in these elections the polarization was already more advanced than in the first presidential vote, in which the far left got 4.5%.

The united slate of the right, the Union du Rassemblement et du Centre (URC) got 40.7%, as against 36.48% for Chirac and Barre, the candidates of its two components in the first presidential vote. So the right's gain in comparison to its first-round performance in the presidential elections was about the same as that of the presidential-majority.

The National Front (NF) vote fell by about a third from the presidential elections, from 14.39% to 9.71%, al-

most exactly the same as its score in the 1986 legislative elections. The ultra-right racist party clearly suffered from the parliamentary right closing ranks and its touchiness about alliances with Le Pen after the alarm over the NF vote in the previous elections. The first-past-the post system reintroduced by the previous right-wing government may cost it all, or nearly all of its parliamentary representation.

National Front remains a force in French politics

Despite the sharp drop in the NF vote, the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR, French section of the Fourth International) stressed in its communiqué on the elections that the neo-fascistic party's results confirmed it as a force in French politics. Moreover, the NF is not strictly an electoral party, and to some extent it may be able to use its exclusion from the national assembly to reinforce its "anti-establishment image." What is more, **7**

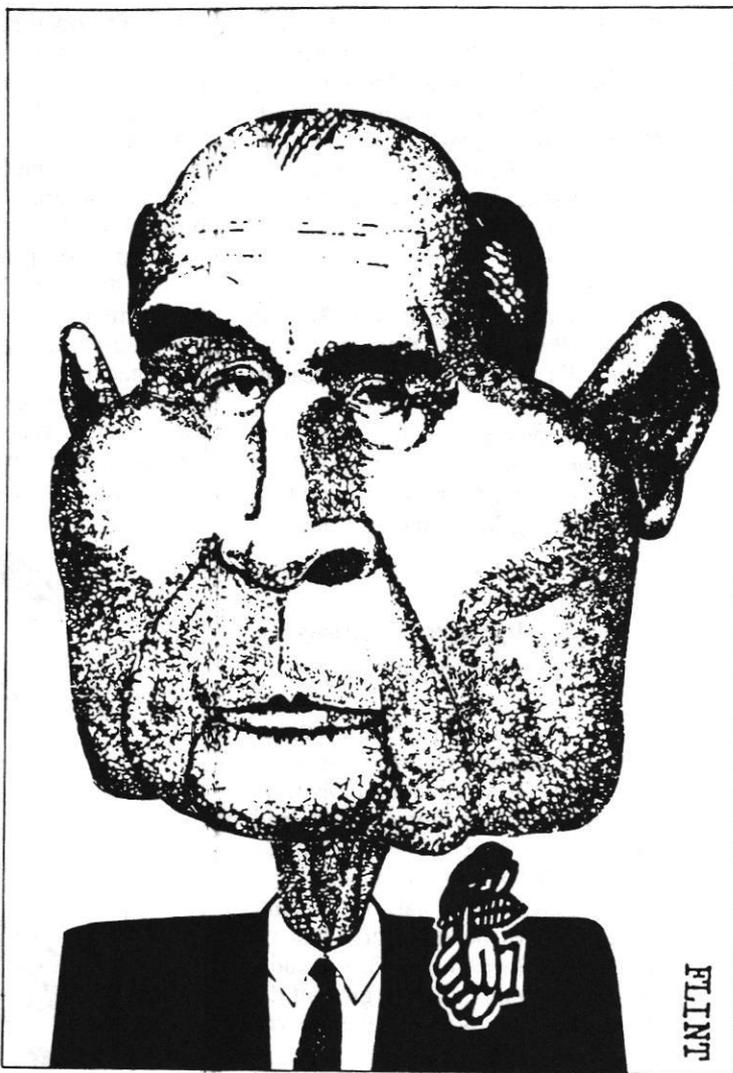


Illustration: Carl Flint

in a National Front out of parliament, the more fascist activist groups within it could have a freer rein.

Despite its setback countrywide, the National Front largely maintained its position in France's second largest city, Marseilles. Le Pen himself ran in a local constituency and slightly improved on his presidential vote, although he trailed far behind his SP rival, Marius Masse (about 32% to about 37%). In five districts out of eight, NF candidates came in ahead of the URC.

Le Pen has made clear his intention to capture the mayoralty of Marseilles, which would give him a major base for extending his impact on national politics.

Left electorate lulled into complacency

In a TV debate on election, one of Le Pen's daughters made the point that if the NF, with about 10% of the vote, and the Communist Party, with another 10%, were excluded from parliament, that would mean that along with the abstentions half of the country would not be represented in the next national assembly. That sounded like the beginning of an argument that the parliament would have no real legitimacy.

In fact, the Socialist Party's line of "opening," and "consensus" might naturally make people wonder about the point of having elections at all, or — to look at it another way — that all the parliamentary politicians decide things among themselves anyway.

Since the election trend was first announced, there has been speculation that the polls showing a large SP victory lulled the left electorate to sleep. That may have been a factor, especially since the June 5 election was only a first round, and the third time people have voted in the last six weeks. But the polls also showed a striking lack of interest in the debate between the SP and the right. The SP's consensus line seems clearly to have had a demobilizing and depoliticizing effect.

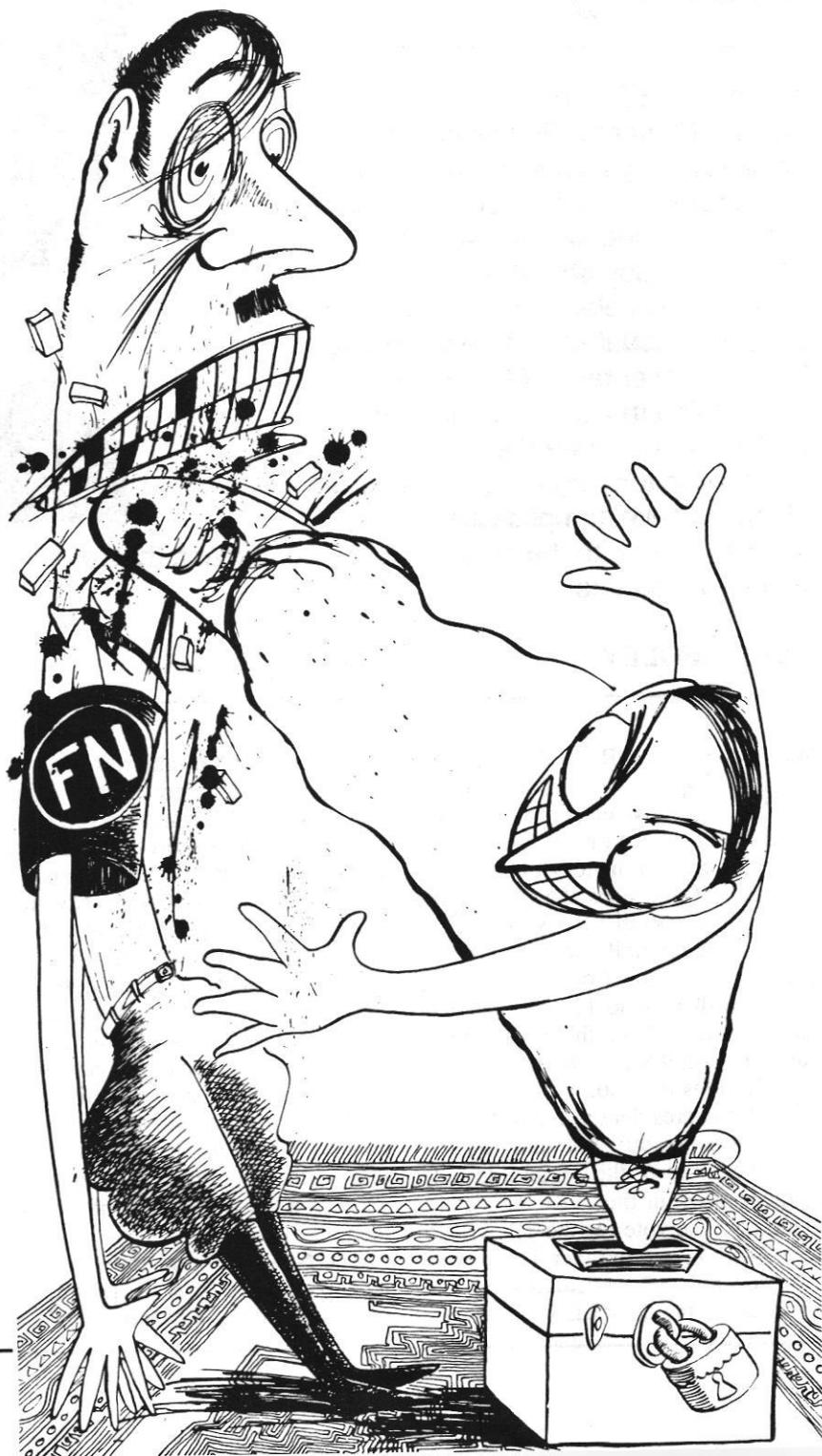
Some of the local SP politicians themselves have begun to make rude noises about the "opening." *Libération* of June 6 quoted Marcel Debarge, an SP leader representative of the party's traditional working-class base, as saying "I am for an opening of the fishing season and nothing else." Jean-Marie Leguen, SP first secretary in Paris

said, "The opening has come a cropper. We didn't get anything on the right, and we didn't mobilize on the left." Electorally, it is clear that the "opening" was a nonstarter. That, of course, is not the first of the SP leadership's concerns. Their objective is to prove to the bourgeoisie that they can be trusted to run the government. Lower down in the party, the mere voters matter more.

The abstention rate was not the only sign that the "opening" fell flat. The non-SP candidates on the presidential majority slate generally did badly. The vote of the Communist Party, which concentrated on denouncing the SP's

"slide to the center" greatly increased its vote. And in a number of areas the candidates of the far-left Juquin committees got significant votes. For example, LCR member David Assouline got 4.6% of the vote the seventh constituency of Paris. In Saint Nazaire, another candidate of the Committees got 5.42%. In the first constituency of Besançon another candidate got 5.36%, twice the vote Juquin received; and in the second constituency, another got 4.53%, coming in ahead of the CP.

For the second round, the LCR has called for an all-out campaign to defeat the right. ★



Provincial elections show strong opposition to government

THE RESULTS of the second series of provincial elections held in the Sri Lanka on June 3 were similar to those held on April 28. The level of participation was about 60 per cent in both votes. The ruling UNP got an absolute majority in all the provincial councils, but there was a very large vote for the four-party United Socialist Alliance (USA), the UNP's only challenger, since the second major bourgeois party, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and the Sinhalese nationalist group, the JVP, boycotted the elections.

These elections have been seen to some extent as a referendum on the Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord, since all the participating parties support the accord, while the SLFP and the JVP oppose it. The provincial elections are in fact a result of the Indo-Sri Lanka accord, which calls for devolved government as a means of giving administrative autonomy to the Tamil-majority areas.

GERRY FOLEY

THE ABSTENTION rate in the June 3 elections was highest in the western province, with only 53% of voters taking part. In the central province, 62% of voters went to the polls. The UNP got only 52 seats out of 102, a bare majority in the western province, and 35 out of 56 in the central one. In the western province, the USA got 42 seats and the Muslim got 6 seats and the Liberal Party, two. Inevitably, the elections are being seen as a referendum on the Sri-Lanka peace accord.

However, there was another important factor. These were the first elections in eleven years in Sri Lanka, the first opportunity for voting against the UNP government. The SLFP is claiming that many people who would normally vote for it voted for the USA in order to show their disapproval of the UNP government.

Ruling party claimed boycott was ignored

On the other hand, the government party is claiming that the fact that a majority voted, despite the SLFP's boycott call and a campaign of terror by the JVP (according to the London *Financial Times* of May 11, 23 UNP and USA candidates were assassinated before the April 28 elections),

showed that the SLFP has been repudiated.

But there are historical analogies indicating that when a major party boycotts elections, their legitimacy is dubious and that that can rebound against all the participating parties. That was the experience of the elections in the Irish Free State in the period following the Irish civil war, when the republicans did not participate. It was also the experience of the "Infamous Decade" in Argentina in the 1930s, when the Radicals did not participate. In both cases, the only opposition was the parliamentary left, whose collaboration led subsequently to historic setbacks.

India announces reduction of troops

In the April 28 elections in the north central province, the north-west, Uva and Sabaragamuwa, the UNP got a total of 88 seats as opposed to 64 for the USA. The Muslim Congress got three. In the UNP's traditional bastion of Sabaragamuwa, it barely scraped through with a majority, with 22 seats to 20 for the USA. The ruling party was able to point, however, to some districts where the rate of participation was high.

The period between the two series of

provincial elections was marked by a bizarre incident. The government lifted the ban on the JVP, claiming that a deal had been reached calling for the JVP to surrender its arms. Rohana Wijeweera immediately announced that there had been no agreement, and that the JVP would never negotiate with the "illegal, murderous Jayawardene regime."

The Sri Lanka press claimed that the security minister had been deceived by an adventurer falsely claiming to represent the JVP. But the incident does seem, at the very least, to show that the government was anxious to offer a hand of reconciliation to an organization that has claimed responsibility for many assassinations.

The second series of provincial elections also coincided with the Indian government's announcement of its first reduction of its Peacekeeping Force in Sri Lanka. However, it has not specified the number of troops that it intends to withdraw. At present, the Indian forces number about 52,000, substantially more than the Sri Lankan army. This is about the same number of troops as Britain had at the height of the conflict in Northern Ireland, an area with a population similar to that of the Tamil-majority area of Sri Lanka.

Indian army suffers heavy casualties

The Indian contingent was reinforced after the outbreak of fighting in October 1987 with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, who put up more resistance than expected, inflicting heavy casualties on the Indians. About 460 Indian soldiers have been killed. Clashes continue, if on a lower level. On May 29, 18 Indian soldiers were killed when their truck hit a landmine.

In the April 1 issue of the *Lanka Guardian*, Mervyn de Silva wrote: "What has happened is that the IPF [Indian Peacekeeping Force], hopelessly over-estimating its strength (and indeed, magnifying the importance of conventional military force...) has paid an unexpectedly large price for this enormous error of judgement — not just lives...but time."

Other commentators have stressed that the Indians badly underrated the Tigers' fighting capacity, and that the longer the conflict continued the harder it would be for them to maintain their forces in Sri Lanka.

In its April 1 issue also, the *Lanka Guardian* reported a poll by the Indian Marketing and Research Group showing that about half of the Indian population favored withdrawal of the Indian Peacekeeping Force from Sri Lanka.

It will be interesting to see if the announcement of the first withdrawal of Indian forces will have an effect on the next series of provincial elections that will be held on June 9. ★

● See also interview with Bala Tampoe on page 23.

AROUND
THE
WORLD

PEACE MOVEMENT

END convention

THE SEVENTH convention of European Nuclear Disarmament will take place this year in Lund, Sweden, from June 29 to July 2. The END convention has always been a focus for peace activists from all over the world to discuss the issues of the day. Previous conventions have been held in Brussels, West Berlin, Perugia, Amsterdam,

Daniel Guérin: farewell to a friend and comrade

ONE OF THE BEST KNOWN and most courageous of French left intellectuals, Daniel Guérin, died in late April at the age of 84. He was an activist and a scholar and leaves behind a number of works that remain basic references for revolutionary Marxists. In the latter part of his life, he was a leading figure in the gay rights' movement in France.

ERNEST MANDEL

DANIEL GUERIN died recently, after a long and painful illness. With him has disappeared one of the leading personalities on the French far left for a half century.

Guérin came to socialism through opposition to colonialism, which was not so common in the early 1930s. He remained an anti-colonialist activist all his life. You find the quintessence of this fierce loyalty to proletarian internationalism in the collection of his writings on this subject, *Ci-gît le Colonialisme* ["Here lies colonialism"].

However, very quickly this initial motivation was broadened by the fascist peril, which rose throughout Europe in the wake of the Nazis seizure of power in 1933. His book *Fascism and big business* was the first detailed explanation of the fascist phenomenon from a revolutionary-Marxist standpoint. It was largely inspired by Trotsky's penetrating analyses, which were far superior to those of the Comintern. Despite a slightly mechanistic approach, his analysis remains valid to this day, although we now have a great mass of documents at our disposal that were not available to Guérin at the time.

The young Daniel Guérin joined Léon Blum's SFIO [French section of the Workers' International, the social-democratic party of the time]. But the vulgar electoralism of the "old home" repelled him. Quickly, he moved to the left wing of the party, the celebrated "revolutionary left" around Marceau-Pivert. This current had its moment of glory in June 1936, but it did not manage to translate its revolutionary convictions into organized and organizational action. It ended up being expelled from the SFIO in 1938, when workers' struggles were in a declining phase.

In the Parti Socialiste Ouvrier et Paysan (Socialist Workers' and Peasants' Party), which was formed after this expulsion, Daniel Guérin was again in the left wing. In particular, he opposed the

harassment of the Trotskyists who joined this formation and the disciplinary measures that followed against them.

During this entire period, which was to continue into World War II, Guérin moved toward Trotsky and Trotskyism. He admired the Old Man's extraordinary clear-mindedness. But he accused him of suffering from a tactical rigidity that had supposedly encouraged his French followers to fall into sectarianism and maneuvers.

The last word on the detailed questions belongs to history. All this seems very far away today. But no one can deny, in the light of history, that the fundamental options were not tactical but political and strategic. On these, Trotsky was right. In the mid-1940s, Guérin himself largely recognized this. This is what led him to join the Fourth International for a brief period at that time.

The whole conflict-wrought process of Daniel Guérin's rapprochement with revolutionary Marxism, Trotskyism, over the 1933-40 period is described sincerely in his book *Front-Populaire, révolution manquée* ["Popular Front, aborted revolution"].

In the wake of World War II, Daniel Guérin produced his most valuable book, one that would continue to be a landmark in the writing of history in general and in the history of Marxism. *La Lutte de Classe sous la Première République* ["Class struggle under the First Republic"] extended the analysis based on the theory of the permanent revolution to the French Revolution.

Today it remains a task for young Marxist historians to re-examine the history of all the bourgeois revolutions — not as a three-cornered struggle between the nobility, the bourgeoisie and the peasantry, but as a four-cornered one in which a pre-proletariat, a semi-proletariat or even an incipient proletariat were beginning to appear as an independent social force.

At a time when preparations are underway for the bicentenary of the French Revolution, French Marxists should take inspiration from Daniel Guérin's clear-sighted work to continue this line of research.

From general history, Guérin turned toward sociology and the history of the workers' movement in several works devoted to the United States. I collaborated on one of them, *Où va le Peuple Américain?* ["Whither the American people?"], contributing an analysis of capitalist concentration in the USA. The book was published in 1950. My friendship with Daniel Guérin began then. It was renewed during the Algerian war. It was never broken off after that, despite our manifest political and theoretical differences. ★



Daniel Guérin



DENMARK

Fourth International anniversary celebration

A COMMEMORATION of the fiftieth anniversary of the Fourth International was held in Copenhagen on May 10. It brought together revolutionary Marxists from the Scandinavian countries and, to some extent, from West Germany. More than 400 people gathered in the voluminous hall in the Nørrebro community center, which had been decked with large red banners bearing slogans.

After a revolutionary song, the meeting was opened by Göte Kilden, a leader of the Swedish section of the Fourth International and trade-union leader at the Göteborg Volvo plant. He was followed by Hugo Blanco, the legendary Peruvian peasant leader, who stressed that there was no barrier between the fight for democracy and the fight for socialism.

Betty Heathfield, a leader of the British Women Against Pit Closures, gave a speech filled with hope for coming



workers' struggles. Despite the defeat of the miners' strike, she said, those who participated in it looked back on that year as the best in their lives. Their horizons had been broadened by it. They had learned to understand the struggle for Irish freedom, Black and women's liberation, among others. "We have no choice but to struggle," she said. There are also speeches by Gitte Hesselman, a member of the leadership of the Danish section of the Fourth International and Poul Petersen, trade-union secretary of the Danish Left Socialists (VS).

The Nicaraguan ambassador in Scandinavia, Ricardo Pasos Marciacq, expressed warm greetings to "those celebrating the anniversary of the Fourth International." Greetings also came from Tulio Lima, international secretary of the Salvadoran trade-union organization UNTS, Duke Moleigo from the ANC office in Copenhagen, Mahmud Issa from the Palestinian Workers' League, as well as from exiled Turkish, Iraqi and Iranian revolutionists.

A recorded speech by the Czech anti-bureaucratic fighter Petr Uhl was played. Ernest Mandel gave the keynote speech on the perspectives of the Fourth International and received a prolonged standing ovation.

A festival against racism was organized in the evening, with 500 people attending. It interspersed entertainment with speeches, the keynote one being given by Tariq Ali. ★

DENMARK

SAP headquarters fire-bombed

DURING the night of May 23/24, the headquarters of the Socialist Workers' Party (SAP, Danish section of the Fourth In-

ternational) in central Copenhagen was attacked. The windows were smashed and two fire bombs were thrown inside. A newspaper seller spotted the attack in time and warned the neighbors, so the material damage was limited.

The Socialist Workers' Party has become known for its consistent anti-racist and anti-fascist work. In Denmark, the government's policy toward refugees has become increasingly restrictive, and has even been criticized as inhuman by Amnesty International.

In parliamentary elections a few weeks ago, the anti-immigrant ultra-rightist Progress Party made big gains [see IV 142]. Against this background, the SAP has seen the fight against racism and xenophobia as one of its main tasks.

Recently, the SAP has been subjected to various threats as a result of its anti-racist work. On May 14, the Rock Against Racism festival (see report above) organized jointly by the SAP and the Socialist Party (Swedish section of the Fourth International) in connection with the celebration of the Fourth International's fiftieth anniversary received a bomb threat. And in the past week, the slogan "Kill SAP!" has been painted on walls in Copenhagen. The SAP sees this latest attack as an extension of these threats.

"This is an attack against the entire anti-racist and workers' movement," Michael Voss, a member of the SAP's executive committee said in a press statement. "We call on everyone to respond to this act of terror by extreme rightist forces by strengthening the anti-racist movement."

During the recent election campaign, a well-known far rightist, newspaper columnist Søren Kraurup, accused the SAP of terrorism because the party took part in demonstrations against racism. "The [May 24] attack shows that the real terror comes from the circles that stand a lot closer to Søren Kraurup," Michael Voss commented. ★

Maria Sundvall



The rainbow politics of Jesse Jackson

THE IMPRESSIVE scores achieved by Jesse Jackson in a long series of Democratic Party primaries have attracted considerable attention, not only in the United States but internationally. Undoubtedly, the fact that a Black leader associated with radical social movements could win a substantial vote among white industrial workers points to big social and political shifts in the United States.

Jackson's campaign is one of the more prominent attempts to offer a political focus for a variety of new social movements via the Rainbow Coalition. The California Democratic Party primary, which will be held just after we go to press, will be a turning point for the Jackson campaign one way or another.

The following is an analysis of the Rainbow Coalition from the pamphlet *The Rainbow and the Democratic Party — New Politics or Old?* edited by Joanna Misnik.

IN REALITY, there are two Rainbow Coalitions, each with its own idea of the Rainbow's purpose. The "pragmatic" Jackson supporters are primarily interested in strengthening their faction inside the Democratic Party. The "radical" Rainbow forces are attempting to advance progressive social movements through

Jesse Jackson's campaign, with many hoping to provoke a fundamental realignment in US politics.

One wing of the Rainbow is made up of those who focus

exclusively on jockeying inside the Democratic Party, trying to block its headlong rush to the right. This group is composed primarily of the Black machine and a handful of trade-union officials, almost none of whose national unions have endorsed Jackson.

The Black elected officials are the main force within the sector of the Rainbow that is trying to push the Democratic Party back to its undeserved image as the party of "the common people," the image crafted in Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal coalition. They are alarmed by how readily a Democratic-controlled House went along with Reagan's supply-side game plan, forsaking the party's championship of big government and the welfare state. They wish to reassert their presence in the party at a time when

their constituencies are largely ignored.

Using Jackson's impressive showing, they hope to deliver a message to the Atlanta convention that the loyalty of their constituencies cannot be taken for granted, but must be repaid. Now that the Black machine is backing Jackson, his campaign has embraced their narrowly focused objectives of internal party realignment. In his speeches, Jackson is forever counseling "our" party to expand its base as a key to success and urges defining the "new economic ground" as a key to a new coalition and a new Democratic Party."

The two wings of the Rainbow Coalition

But the Black machine is practically on its own. The bulk of organized labor, whose influence has waned in tandem with a shrinking membership and an inability to mobilize votes, is standing aloof from the fracas. The 1987 AFL-CIO [trade-union federation] convention made no presidential endorsement and asked individual unions to refrain from endorsements while the search for a "consensus" continued. This call for a consensus was in part devised to discourage Jackson endorsements from within the trade-union ranks.

It is not accidental that only the Jackson campaign is emphasizing massive voter registration among Blacks and working people. The mainstream of the party does not see its national hegemony secured by "reaching down," as they term it. Instead they prefer to compete with the Republicans for the "yuppie" vote in urban areas and white votes in the South. Bringing in large numbers of urban workers and people of color contradicts that strategy. To target that population would require a wholly different programmatic approach.

Also included in the wing of the Rainbow trying to stem the Democratic Party's rightward tide are the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA). For some time now, DSA has pursued a policy of pragmatic realignment inside the Democratic Party, in alliance with those in the AFL-CIO bureau-

cacy who are unhappy with labor's decreasing leverage on party policy-making. The group has long ago abandoned the perspective of a working class breakaway from the capitalist two-party framework and is content to declare that the Demo-



crats are, in DSA leader Michael Harrington's phrase, an "invisible labor party."

When the AFL-CIO gave Walter Mondale an unprecedented early endorsement, the DSA followed along and jumped on the Mondale bandwagon. The DSA agreed with its conservative labor allies, who saw Jackson as an unnecessary and disruptive rock to the boat.

A strident and unorthodox detour?

But some DSA members were uncomfortable in 1984 about giving Jackson's populism a thumbs down. In 1988 there is no Walter Mondale, no frontrunner from the center of the party, where DSA makes its home. So the 1987 DSA convention decided to endorse Jackson and join the Rainbow. Yet only a minority of DSA members saw the Rainbow as a new way to build a left inside the party. Most, though endorsing Jackson, urged the group to continue with its traditional-style coalition building.

For the DSA, the Rainbow is an embarrassingly strident and unorthodox detour. Jackson's popularity is with rank-and-file workers, and not the top echelons of organized labor with which the DSA traditionally cooperates.

To all the forces in its realigning wing, the Rainbow Coalition is a logo, something that flashes on the screen during television debates to identify Jackson and his general objective of representing all the locked-out. The real apparatus, in their minds, is the Jackson Campaign Committee, a much more traditional electoral structure that gets out the votes, raises money and piles up sufficient delegates to force a brokered convention where no candidate can win on the first ballot.

These delegates will then be horsetraded to the inevitable white nominee for concessions. The point will have been made to the "new outlook" Democrats that the "safe" constituencies are still a force to be reckoned with. This perspective has little in common with the one that conceives of the Rainbow as a hell-raising populist movement from below. The two wings of the Rainbow are not likely to agree on what to give and what to take at the Atlanta convention. Drawing up a list of negotiating points just might tear the Rainbow apart.

Because Jackson's 1984 campaign was an unwanted protest in influential party circles, leftists filled the vacuum in his apparatus. These included socialists and leaders of the issues movements. Assuming key posts, they helped push the campaign's general direction to the left. Their experience led to the idea of making the Rainbow Coalition a reality instead of a catchphrase.

In part, the impetus for such a permanent organization came from the demoralization after the 1984 convention. The 465 Jackson delegates, backed by 3.2 million primary votes, had seen all their platform demands

but one steamrolled into oblivion by the convention machine. Those whose political experience was largely outside two-party politicking were shocked at the backroom deals and betrayals. Many left the convention and sat out the elections, refusing to work for Mondale as Jackson had promised in his nationally televised convention speech.

These veteran social activists were not so naive as to have a purely electoral strategy. Most had concentrated their energies on building independent protest movements that are non-electoral in thrust, exactly because the Democratic Party and its professional politicians had proven not to be the fighting instrument needed for their advocacies.

Jackson had begun his 1988 campaign just as soon as the 1984 elections were over, keeping himself in the national limelight and maintaining a visible presence at peace and anti-apartheid protest actions. The convening of the April 1986 Rainbow Coalition convention was seen as a way to protect the momentum of the second campaign through an organizational form outside — or rather alongside — the Democratic Party as a first step to some kind of progressive movement.

The Rainbow is attractive to so many activists for some understandable reasons. Jesse Jackson's anti-corporate, peace-and-justice program is far to the left of what the Democratic Party has had to offer or is willing to accept. More importantly, this program is striking a responsive chord among Blacks and increasing numbers of whites.

A new anti-capitalist party?

The breadth of the October 1987 National Rainbow Coalition Convention in Raleigh, North Carolina, attended by 1,200 people, was impressive and unprecedented on the US political scene. There has never been a time in which Black, Latino, Native American and Asian-American groups have succeeded in forging a common organization with progressive trade unionists and the social movements.

The Rainbow attracts strong representation from the gamut of today's protests: anti-intervention in Central America; the anti-apartheid movement; justice for the



Palestinian people; liberation for women, gays and lesbians; relief for the family farmers; a safe, nuclear-free environment; rights for the disabled; as well as tenant, senior citizen and civil liberties advocacy. Nearly 50 per cent of the participants were Black activists.

The Rainbow appears to be the long-sought unification of all the isolated efforts to bring about social change. Jackson's solid base in the Black community seems to offer a way to overcome the limitations experienced in the 1960s and 1970s. A new unity of all progressive forces rooted in the social power of an aroused Black America would be able to wield a great deal more power than each of the movements has been able to muster separately.

The Rainbow includes a number of socialist and left organizations that hope the Coalition can ultimately precipitate a break from the Democrats in favor of a new anti-capitalist political party. Groups such as the National Committee for Independent Political Action (NCIPA) typify the "inside-outside" strategy of the not-really Democrats in the Rainbow. They hold the position that the way to break the Democratic Party apart is — to join it. They are urging people to register and vote Democrat!

"Inside-outside" Rainbow activists are concerned about the decline of the movements for change during the past decade. They mistakenly identified the shift to the



locked-out when they loyally lock-in their votes in massive numbers. All successes in shifting the social relation of forces — from the rise of the CIO to the civil rights and anti-Vietnam war victories — have been the direct results of unruly mass movements playing outside the acceptable channels of US two-party politics.

In the case of both labor in the 1930s and the social movements of the 1960s, it was precisely at the point when major sectors of these movements decided it was time to move "from protest to politics" and act as a pressure group within and around the Democratic Party that reforms began to slack off and eventually disappear. In fact, the brevity of these two periods of major change is due to this very co-option. Unable to defeat capitalist control of the party from the inside and claim it as their own, the reformers were themselves beaten and became the reformed.

Left Rainbow advocates may argue that all this does not apply. After all, they

right of establishment politics as a rightward drift in the population at large. Sectors of the movement, buying into the idea that Reagan had a mandate, became fearful and hesitant. This timidity was fed by the collapse of the Black movement into the Democratic Party and the failure of the labor movement to mount a defence against concessions, plant closings, unemployment and the general effects of the recessionary economy.

The difficult political climate led to conclusions of the type offered by Rainbow leader Sheila Collins in her recently published *The Rainbow challenge: the Jackson campaign and the future of US politics*. Collins explains:

"The election of Ronald Reagan in 1980 shocked many left activists into discovering the dialectical relationship between social movements and electoral institutions....Electoral politics was no longer seen as a substitute for movement-building, but as a necessary complement. Although it was difficult to do both simultaneously, there was a growing realization that the two forms of political activity were dialectically related." (pp.105-8)

This new "dialectic" for the 1980s is a high-toned way of sounding a retreat from what history has already taught. There isn't a shred of evidence to support the idea that the Democratic Party, in or out of power, offers fundamental concessions to the

have an organization separate and apart from the Democratic Party that enables them to resist absorption while they use the "tactic" of Jackson's candidacy to build a new, integral progressive force. Unfortunately this is not the case.

Electoralism versus campaigning

The Rainbow has only one tactic, one focus that glues all its components together: Jackson's race for the Democratic Party nomination. No other goals were established at the Raleigh convention. By definition, this subsumes the Rainbow into the Democratic Party and hands it over to those who want it to be nothing more than an army of foot soldiers for the Jackson Campaign Committee.

This problem is not something only those outside the Rainbow can perceive. The powerful New Jersey delegation to the Rainbow Convention led a well-received fight to democratize the notoriously top-down Rainbow structure. They were motivated by the fear that the Rainbow will be dictated to by official campaign structures, stunting its growth and threatening its ability to exist beyond 1988. Some structural changes were made, such as adding state chairs to the all-powerful Board of Directors and halving the minimum number of

members required to receive a local charter.

However, the Rainbow chartering system still requires a minimum membership in a third of a state's congressional districts. Using the districts as its basic unit shapes the Rainbow as a voter-registration, vote-getting operation. It is a foreign and unwieldy organizational structure for activists accustomed to city-wide mobilizing.

Eclipsing the Rainbow

Since the convention, Rainbow militants have seen unmistakable signs that running a "winning" Democratic campaign is at cross purposes with the broader progressive objectives assigned to their coalition. The Rainbow national office is in financial crisis and has a difficult time finding the bare-bones \$12,000 a month for its operation, headed up by only two full-time staffers.

Ron Daniels, Rainbow executive director, who was instrumental in pulling off the October 1987 convention, has been transferred to the Campaign Committee over the objections of some Rainbow leaders. Daniels had been a prominent leader of attempts at independent Black political action, most recently as co-chair of the now-defunct National Black Independent Political Party.

The Raleigh convention, recognizing that the national Rainbow is still mostly a letterhead of prestigious movement leaders, set sights on a vigorous membership drive. Prior to the convention, only four states and Washington, DC, had succeeded in meeting the membership level required to be chartered as a chapter. Provisional charters were hastily given out so that 25 more states could be officially delegated. Building a real rank-and-file organization was viewed as a key to any kind of permanence for the Rainbow. But the membership drive bogged down, sacrificed to the Jackson machinery and the monumental goal of registering two million new Democratic voters by March 8, Super Tuesday.

Forces like those in NCIPA have begun to oppose the eclipsing of Rainbow-building priorities in favor of straight-up electioneering. In a November/December 1987 *Newsletter* report of its national steering committee meeting, NCIPA complained:

"There were other criticisms....A major one is the concern expressed by a number of people about the influence of the Democratic Party over the Jackson campaign. Another was the fact that in at least some of his speeches, Jackson is not talking about the Rainbow Coalition, or even a rainbow coalition."

The Rainbow Convention was the most authoritative gathering of "the movement" in memory. It had the legitimacy to issue not one, but several, calls to action.

Just one example. If a call had gone out from Raleigh for a national mobilization in Washington for peace, jobs and justice



around the time of the contra aid voting, it could have resulted in a show of strength that would have greatly aided the besieged Nicaraguan people. The singular focus on Jackson's candidacy prevented ideas like this from even cropping up. There is growing awareness among those who joined the Rainbow hoping it would evolve into a new progressive movement that their vision will not be realized if they allow their energies to be swallowed by the imperatives of Jacksoneering. Writing in the February 1988 issue of *Zeta* magazine, longtime peace activist Dave Dellinger, now a leader of the Vermont Rainbow Coalition, addressed this concern:

"If the campaign does not... contribute to a wider and more unified activism, it will have been a distraction. That is why the national and most of the state and local Rainbows are involved in serious non-electoral work as well as electoral work. At a recent National Board meeting, some voices were raised in opposition to this dual policy. They suggested that non-electoral activities should be postponed because of the unprecedented possibility of electing an unusually insightful and progressive person of color to the nation's highest office. But in the end the consensus was to organize and participate in both.

"The philosophy behind this has been expressed frequently at Rainbow meetings: 'If Jesse Jackson is elected president and there is no strong and active progressive coalition, at grassroots and national levels, we can kiss him goodbye. No matter how exalted his intention and determined his efforts, without a groundswell of activism, he will be helpless to do more than jockey around the edges of power.'"

While some local rainbows may be preciously guarding a non-electoral dimension to their work, this is largely invisible on a national scale and is generally boycotted by more conservative Campaign Committee forces. Whatever initiatives of this type exist, the impetus for them is not coming from the Rainbow as such. They arise out

of the activist history of Rainbow militants in non-electoral work and organizations that they refuse to lay aside.

The cry of "Win, Jesse, Win" that punctuated the Raleigh convention and was its whole reason for being will be mute after this summer's Democratic convention. Some will answer the inevitable question of "what next" by urging the Rainbow to back the Democratic nominee in order to defeat the Republican right. It should be obvious that such a perspective is not a fit launching pad for an anti-capitalist progressive movement. It will be back to square one.

The unfolding Jackson campaign is straddling the contradictory aspirations of the two wings of the Rainbow. Jackson can ill-afford, and does not want, to shelve his history and image as a fighter outside traditional party politics. Too much of his organized base has been drawn in by that uniqueness. The support he has won from inside the party, however, pulls the campaign in another direction. And overall, the tug of looking presidential has made itself felt to the dismay of the left Rainbow.

The holy war that Jackson waged in 1984 against party rules governing delegate selection and the Southern duel primary system has been completely dropped. His protesting did much to expose how easily the established machine can thwart an insurgent. Though Jackson polled 20 per cent of the primary vote, he was accorded only 11 per cent of the convention delegates. His efforts resulted in lowering the minimum threshold for being accorded delegates in primary states from 20 to 15 per cent.

Jackson downplays Black oppression

This time around there isn't a whimper about how undemocratic the rules are, even though they have been revised to further guard against any upsets. The number of super-delegates (that is, party leaders and elected officials getting an automatic convention vote) has been increased to 15 per cent, from 568 in 1984 to 650 this year. No one watching the media-hyped Iowa caucus shenanigans would have recognized the Jesse Jackson who in 1984 wrote an angry letter to the Democratic leadership denouncing the caucus system of delegate selection as thoroughly undemocratic and open to manipulation.

The contradiction that is the Jackson campaign is symbolized by his 11 per cent showing in Iowa, a state that is less than two per cent Black. This result is the fruit

of years of fighting alongside beleaguered family farmers, 600,000 of whom have been driven off the land since 1980. The devastation of the family farm created a social crisis that has permitted some alarming inroads by extreme right-wing and fundamentalist ideologies. Jackson's one-of-a-kind populist appeal has helped the more radical wing of the farm-protest movement to block these developments and stem the rise of such groups as the Posse Comitatus.

It is this dimension of his campaigning that attracts the left wing of the Rainbow. Leading this protest movement into the tangle of the Iowa Democratic caucuses to get delegates is what satisfies the Campaign Committee variety of the Rainbow.

One central facet of the Jackson campaign should be highlighted. At the October 1987 convention, gasps were heard during Jackson's announcement speech when he declared that racial violence was the issue 25 years ago but had now been resolved. Many correctly viewed Jackson's new theme of race-blind "economic violence as the critical issue of the day" and "finding a new economic common ground" as an attempt to answer the so-called electability problem by underplaying the fight against racial oppression.

Jackson's intent may well have been to reassure whites that he could represent their interests and let the party mainstream know that he is not a Black militant firebrand. In fact, his campaign has downplayed the special oppression faced by Blacks.

"Serious" candidates cannot be colored

When the selection of two mainstream Democrats to the top positions in his campaign was announced, both stressed "a new pragmatism" to the press. New campaign manager Gerald Austin, manager of two winning campaigns for Ohio Governor Richard Celeste, explained that "people from all walks of life are supporting the guy, and that's a centrist campaign." Willie Brown, former speaker of the California Assembly, was named campaign chair. One of the Black Democratic leaders who didn't support Jackson in 1984, Brown told the media that "we will not appeal excessively to so-called Black concerns."

But Jesse Jackson is still Black. The media and the Democratic Party have not overlooked this fact. He is automatically discounted as a serious candidate no matter what double-digits he racks up in the primary voting. To some in high places, Jackson is an also-ran protester on the basis of his color.

The other side of this coin is that Jackson is eliciting a genuine response from white workers and farmers, who embrace his defence of the ordinary worker against corporate greed and the bloated military budget. His populism has brought to the surface a genuine potential for overcoming racial divisions and uniting the working class

around its common interests.

This has to be a cause for great optimism, particularly since it is taking place against the advice of the leadership of organized labor. A significant portion of white workers — many of whom voted for Reagan last time around — have decided to join the ballot-box protest launched by the Black voters in 1984 and “waste” their vote on a candidate with no “electability.”

Jackson's actual economic program is a vague call for reducing the military budget to pay for a public-works program, making the corporations pay “their fair share” of taxes, and government intervention to foster “re-industrialization, retraining, research and reconversion.” The concrete proposals Jackson makes are to cut the military budget by at least 10 per cent while maintaining “a strong defence,” and to return corporate taxation to pre-Reagan 1980 levels.

Muddled economic and foreign policy

Jackson denounces “greedy” corporations and demands that they “reinvest in America.” He has hung tough against the temptation to play into protectionist fever, a theme that has given a boost to Richard Gephardt's campaign. Jackson explains that US corporations — not the Koreans or the Japanese — are stealing jobs by moving production to the third world, where labor is cheaper. Jackson sounds a call for international workers' solidarity — “Slave labor is a threat to organized labor anywhere.”

His gut-level anti-corporate program is something of an empty vessel. It is increasingly being filled by advisers from the center of the party — such as those linked to the Democratic Socialists of America — who are tailoring him to look like a “responsible” leader. Jackson speaks of moving the corporations through incentives, but does not spell out what those would be. He has raised the “responsible” suggestion of a tripartite think-tank of business, labor and government leaders to thrash out some answers “together.”

While Jackson supports the right to unionize and has aided striking workers, he does not promote discussion of the kind of new directions needed if labor is to combat capital's assaults. He instead promotes his candidacy as the way to focus working-class protest.

The spirit of working-class revolt his campaign has tapped is channeled exclusively into Labor for Jackson committees. This outlook was a disappointment to rank-and-file militants who participated in the Rainbow convention. Their proposal — to utilize Jackson's campaign as a springboard to a conference on union organizing underway in the South — was seen as a diversion.

Packaging Jackson as a presidential possible has given his foreign policy pro-

nouncements the ring of a “responsible” statesman. This clashes with the strong anti-imperialism of many Rainbow members, who solidarize with freedom struggles from Nicaragua to South Africa. They find hypocrisy in Jackson's espousal of “the values of the free world and Western civilization.”

The Jackson Doctrine rests on “support for international law, respect for the principle of self-determination and human rights, and international economic justice.” On all three counts, the imperialist US government is the chief obstacle to these goals in the underdeveloped world, where US intervention has propped up dictatorial police-state regimes and pillaged national economies.

Jackson opposes aid to the Nicaraguan contras, supports the Arias peace plan for Central America, and advises cancellation of the mammoth Latin American debts to US banks. He urges a Marshall Plan for the Third World to raise the standard of living so that “they can buy what we produce.”

During NBC's nationally televised candidates' debate in December 1987, Jackson explained that with such a policy “we” can win Nicaragua. He went on to warn this nation, now fighting for its life because of US policy, that “if they choose to relate to the Soviets, they must know the alternative. If they are with us, there are tremendous benefits. If they are not with us, there are tremendous consequences.” For the Nicaraguans, the “benefit of being with us”

was the forty-year dictatorship of the Somoza family, which thousands of Nicaraguans sacrificed their lives to overthrow.

Taken as a whole, these utterances, along with Jackson's refusal to oppose US brinkmanship in the Persian Gulf, are no small matter. They are reminiscent of the Kennedy-era Alliance for Progress schemes, which in the name of “containing communism” sought to keep the heel of the US boot on our hemispheric neighbors. The idea that massive infusions of US aid and capital investment could build up these economies and “promote” democracy brought tragedy and poverty to the Latin American peoples. Within the first eighteen months of the Alliance, there were five coups against constitutional governments. The greed for profit of the US multinationals is antithetical to progress and democracy.

It is more than unfortunate that Jackson is so intently fixed on legitimating his candidacy for president of the world's mightiest imperialist power that he adopts the language that legitimates its counter-revolutionary objectives.

This contradicts the language used when he joins the movement to stop US intervention in Central America, demonstrating outside the White House gates. The two cannot be reconciled. ★

● “The Rainbow and the Democratic Party — new politics or old?” can be ordered for \$1.50 plus postage from *Solidarity*, 7012 Michigan Avenue, Detroit, MI 48210, USA.

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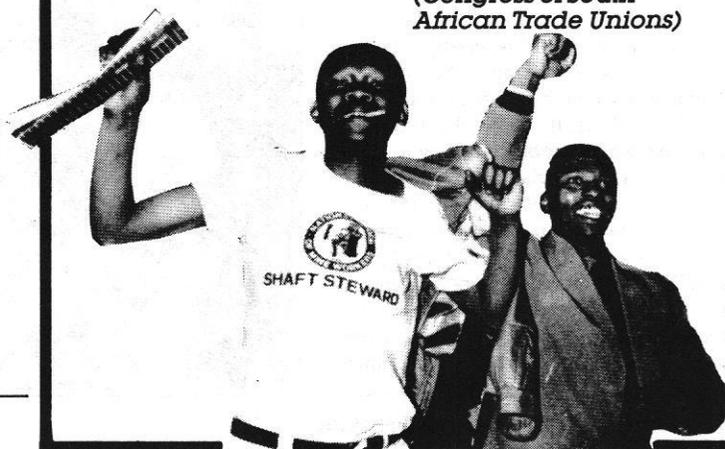
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Democrazia Proletaria in an impasse

THE ONLY major survivor of the New Left in Italy, Democrazia Proletaria (DP) remains a rather large organization with representation in parliament [see box]. In recent elections, it has made electoral agreements with the Lega Comunista Rivoluzionaria (LCR, Italian section of the Fourth International). The following is a report of DP's recent national conference.

LIVIO MAITAN

THE SIXTH National Congress of Democrazia Proletaria (DP) was held on May 5-8, exactly ten years after the founding of the organization. It was attended by 548 delegates and many Italian and foreign guests.¹ The preceding congress, held in 1986, strove to define the organization better politically and programmatically. The aim of the 1988 congress was to make more progress in this respect and to develop a political project for this phase in the struggle of the workers' movement.

The national leadership document that opened the discussion did go in this direction. It reaffirmed adherence to Marxism and the need for an anti-capitalist alternative, opposition to the policy of the traditional working-class parties, criticism of the union bureaucracies and support for the anti-bureaucratic tendencies manifesting themselves at various levels, and for self-organization initiatives, such as those of the COBAS (rank-and-file committees).

The document took its distance from the political movement of the Italian Greens.² It repeated the characterization of the USSR as a "specific historical social formation governed by a specific state-capitalist mode of production." At the same time, it said that it was not "a capitalist country like those in the West," and stressed the importance of the turn represented by Gorbachev's course, even if it is "inadequate."³

Finally, the national leadership's document included a new element, the idea of a "political and social movement for an alternative." It said that those involved in such an initiative would probably belong to "different political and social areas" and would be "structured in very different forms." Such forces were expected to be critical sections of the Italian CP (the "pro-Soviets" and "radicalized supporters of Ingrao")⁴, "democratic and left sectors of the Catholic world, groups involved in the peace struggle and solidarity with the third

world" and "New Left forces such as the Political Movement for an Alternative and the Revolutionary Communist League."⁵

The pre-congress discussion was marked by two developments, which also set their stamp on the congress. The first was the emergence of a minority current in the leadership, represented by deputies Edo Ronchi and Gianni Tamino. Their point of view was expressed in the Document of the 100.

This document starts off with a critical balance sheet of the DP as "a party that does not get major contributions from the outside, in which there is very limited renewal, which is lagging further and further behind in a situation that is undergoing rapid social and political change," which has only "a few working class cadres and an even more limited presence in the factories."

According to the 100, the DP can only

get out of the rut in which it finds itself, hovering under two per cent of the vote, if it assumes the profile of the driving force of a non-violent environmentalist-pacifist movement." DP should reject any idea of the "centrality of the capital-labor conflict." Such a notion would be fundamentally economist and would lead to ignoring or underestimating the other contradictions, such as those between men and women, between human beings and nature and between the North and South of the globe. All these contradictions should be put on the same level.

The 100 maintain that the political and social movement for an alternative that the majority proposes is only one of the innumerable slogans raised when there is a congress, without any real practical implications. They contend that the party should look towards a "rainbow-type" process, founded on a "federal pact pivoting around a DP/Greens axis, but open to other alternative forces.

Minority current question Marxist analysis

The document also rejected any hypothesis of building a new communist party and, in the last analysis, questioned the "party form" as such. It came out quite explicitly against democratic centralism, which the authors of the document said had "historically produced much centralism and little democracy." It proposed a new structuring of the leading bodies around the following three axes: First, a national assembly of delegates elected by the provincial federations, which would be the "party's real sovereign body" after the abolition of the "broad structure elected by the congress" (the national leadership). Second, a national executive, whose members would be elected

individually by the congress on the basis of their functions, and could be recalled by the national assembly of delegates. Third, a national secretariat made up of three national coordinators, elected directly by the congress from the mem-

Founded in 1978, Democrazia Proletaria now has over 10,000 members (DR)



bers of the executive.

The second development was the battle fought by the former secretary, Mario Capanna, who resigned in the wake of the June 1987 elections without at the time giving a clear enough explanation for his decision. Capanna, who did not oppose the majority project and was very critical of the environmentalist-pacifist people, had taken several spectacular initiatives without consulting the leadership, such as a hunger strike in solidarity with Palestinians in January.

As the congress approached, Capanna gave more and more interviews to the national press, in which he made no bones about his criticisms. Subsequently, he expressed them in an internal bulletin and in provincial congresses in Rome and Milan. He explained first of all that he would have preferred to resign earlier as a spectacular protest against his organization's marking time. He said that it had not applied the 1986 congress decisions consistently and had proved incapable of "coming up with dynamic proposals and initiatives."

He was not opposed to the political and social movement for an alternative, but he drew attention to the danger of seeing this as "a combination of fragments of political and social realities, with the supposition that the party is only one subject among the subjects." In his view, it would be wrong to exalt the "movements" in opposition to the party and to forget the historical lesson that the movements alone "have never managed to produce revolutionary changes."

Differences in the leadership

Given the context, this warning was quite pertinent. But this was not the issue that Capanna campaigned on. He preferred to create a stir over political-organizational questions. He opposed the electoral option adopted by the leadership, which, in his view, was at the expense of extending DP in southern Italy.⁶ He also concentrated on arguing for his personal initiatives, maintaining this stance during the congress.

1. Among the Italian guests were representatives of the Communist Party and the Socialist Party, who chose not to speak since they felt they were attacked too sharply. There was a group of "radicalized followers of Ingrao," that is a group of Communist Party members who sent a critical document to their party's Central Committee a few months ago (the "Letter of the 70"). Other guests included a representative of the Greens and one from the Independent Left, whose members were elected on CP slates, as well as representatives of many movements and associations (lesbians and gays, democratic jurists, the anti-mafia coordinating committee, tenants and so on).

Among the international delegations, the place of honor was reserved for the PLO (whose representative opened the congress), the ANC and the Sandinistas. A representative of Solidar nosc sent a message from Amsterdam. There were also representatives of the German Greens, the *rénovateurs* and the Parti Socialiste Unifié (PSU) from France, and the Greek Communist Party-Interior-Left Renewal.

The Lega Comunista Rivoluzionaria (LCR, Italian section of the Fourth International) sent a delegation, and a comrade from its Political Bureau, Franco Turig-

DEMOCRAZIA PROLETARIA

AT ITS RECENT Sixth Congress, Democrazia Proletaria passed the threshold of 10,000 members. About 5,000 of these are in the North, 1,700 in the central part of the country and 2,500 in the South. The strongest federation is in Milan with more than 1,500 members. Women make up 22% of the membership. DP has no youth organization. Some 13% of its members are under 24, and 23% are between 36 and 40. Regarding occupation, 56% are wage workers, 12% are unemployed and 9% are students.

In the legislative elections held in June 1987, DP won eight seats in the Chamber of Deputies and one in the Senate. It also has a representative in the European parliament. ★

The former leader of the Milan University student movement continued to give interviews, distribute letters, focus the attention of the press, and even to obstruct initiatives taken by the outgoing leadership in the framework of the congress.⁷ Such an attitude could not fail to provoke very sharp reactions from most of the delegates, over and above more general polemics about the way that the media should be used and about whether it was appropriate to resort to a charismatic leadership for this purpose.

The report to the congress by the secretary, Russo Spina, basically recapitulated the themes of the majority project, sometimes in a more systematic and rigorous way. The validity of Marxism, especially its criticism and rejection of capitalist society, were reaffirmed. At the same time, the thesis of the withering away of the proletariat was refuted. And, in opposition to the environmentalist-pacifist people, the idea of the centrality of the capital-labor contradiction was maintained.⁸

The DP has no existing "model" of a socialist society, but the report, as well as the majority project and some speeches, hailed the revolution in Nicaragua and the Sandi-

nistas' ideas about the transition to socialism and the institutionalization of socialist democracy.⁹

Initiatives proposed on NATO and 35 hours

The Movement for an Alternative was reformulated, for example, in the following terms: "Our proposal for a left alternative today is essentially a social course that combines the values of transformation with building mass movements and self-organization. We want to become increasingly a 'social' and a 'struggle' party, but one that will be able to step forward to the rhythm of the Long March, to look at things with a long-term perspective, with a world view." This implies that all impatience and shortcuts that could "impoverish the project" have to be rejected.

In referring to possible partners in discussion, Russo Spina made a more extensive analysis than the project did of the critical currents in the CP. One might share his assessment that the differences with the pro-Soviet tendency are ultimately graver as regards socialist democracy than as regards

liatto, spoke. A contribution to the pre-congress debate from a member of the LCR Political Bureau, Elettra Deiana, was published in the DP internal bulletin. I was invited to attend the congress as a member of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

2. The DP's member of the European parliament is part of the group that also includes the German Greens. An internal bulletin indicated that the balance sheet of this collaboration is not considered very positive.

3. The project stated that "the best attempt at analyzing" Soviet society was probably Charles Bettelheim's. It neglected to specify which of Bettelheim's many and contradictory analyses should be adopted.

4. The leader of the traditional CP "left."

5. The Political Movement for an Alternative (MPA) is a very small group that includes former members of the PDUP [a centrist formation] who did not want to go into the CP when the group fused with it. The reference to the MPA, as well as to the LCR, was repeated in the report to the congress. But the final resolution mentioned only the LCR. We do not know whether this was a deliberate choice or a technical error.

6. In the June 1987 elections, Capanna was elected to

parliament both in Palermo and Milan. He would have preferred to opt to represent Milan, and let a representative of the Palermo federation get into parliament. The leadership decided, on the basis of a previous accord, that he should opt for Palermo, and thereby leave a place for one of the Milan leaders, Luigi Cipriani.

7. For example, Capanna organized a meeting with the press to present his book on 1968 on the same evening that a round-table had been scheduled with a certain number of foreign guests. The result was that the round-table got a very small audience.

8. The reporter stressed "rapid growth, even in its most classical form, of the proletariat" on a world scale.

9. It should be noted that according to Russo Spina the Nicaraguan experience has proved that Rosa Luxemburg was right against the Bolsheviks, a conclusion that would merit at least a few words of explanation. In the project, we read that Nicaragua "is for us the most advanced attempt so far to achieve a non-violent society struggling against imperialism." Unfortunately, both to liberate themselves from the Somoza dictatorship and fight back against the contras and the imperialists, the Sandinistas have had no other choice than to resort to arms.

the nature of the USSR. But the balance sheet that he made of the Ingrao left seemed to lack rigor. Contrary to what he claims, this current has never differentiated itself substantially from Togliatti's conceptions.

Coming to the analysis of the situation in Italy, the report explained that the cycle opened in 1968-69 was initially an upswing for about a decade and then one of "retreat and stagnation," lasting about the same time. Today, a third phase has begun to take form — the period of stagnation is being overcome. However, "the political and social relationship of forces" remains "very unfavorable for the left and for the workers." It is necessary to set out long-term perspectives.

The reporter relaunched the proposal for a big national demonstration for Italian withdrawal from NATO on the fortieth anniversary of the signing of the Atlantic Pact in 1949. Another proposal was advanced in the project and reiterated in the final resolution. It called for organizing a European-wide strike for the 35-hour week on the anniversary of the 1890 international strike for a shorter workday. Finally, DP put forward the right to vote for immigrant workers, but the final resolution mentioned only local and European elections.

The debate brought out rather clearly the different components and positions in the DP. I will not go back over the environmentalist-pacifist people, who repeated the themes of their document but avoided overly sharp polemical tones. It is likely that in the context of an unfavorable relationship of forces (only about 30 delegates supported their document), they did not want a confrontation. At the same time, they could bring strong pressure to bear on the majority and get it to shift its positions. I will not go back either over Capanna's role. He spoke only on the last day, keeping a low profile. Very few people (including Senator Guido Pollice and, partially, the international department chief Luciano Neri) backed him up.

"DP unprepared for revolutionary crises"

However, a third viewpoint was manifested at the congress. The positions of this current were characterized by those who did not share its orientation as "workerist." It was represented essentially by leaders of the Milan federation, which remains by far the strongest. The secretary of this federation, Barzaghi, criticized the theses of the environmentalist-pacifist current much more severely and systematically than the reporter. Reaffirming the centrality of the workers' struggle, he rejected any perspective of a rainbow alternative or any sort of shortcut.

According to Barzaghi, DP suffers from a gap between its general statements and its activity on the social level, and from now on it will be necessary to put much more

stress on mass activity than on electoral work and even national campaigns. So far, he said, the working class has not suffered any major defeats, and the trend is toward new social conflicts erupting, even though it has to be said that we are still in a defensive phase. In this context, the DP has to realize that it is a small force fighting against the current, and it has to make a very big effort to become a different sort of party than it has been up until now.

Another Milan leader, Luigi Cipriani, took up similar themes. You have to be granted, he said, that there will be other revolutionary crises, and that it is necessary to prepare for them. But in its present state DP would be totally incapable of facing such tests. In order to prepare itself, it had to first of all recover the theoretical gains of Marxism, which are being challenged within its own ranks. Positions pointing in the same direction but tougher in form were put forward, for example, by a delegate from Bologna and by a railway worker from the Venice region.

"A party with a nice image"

Some delegates (from Rome, for example) interpreted the majority project in a way more favorable to the social movements, while others who also supported the project of the outgoing leadership and the report expressed a point of view that lay basically between the majority and the environmentalist-pacifist positions.

For example, Michele Nardelli, a national leader of the organization from the Trento region, came out for building a "culturally pacifist," and "non-violent" party, and rejected any idea of democratic centralism. A delegate representing the same region, Tonelli, argued that that it was necessary to build "not a combat party but a party of inquiry, one with a nice image... an image of goodwill, as personified by Secretary Russo Spena."

The document adopted by the congress of the Trento federation was even clearer. It included phrases like "working for a perspective of liberation and democracy means flying higher than the historic horizons of the left, combining the lofty values of political cultures and practices that are also different from those of Marxism.... To the cult of violence [sic!], coercion and force implicit in applying what is called the dictatorship of the proletariat, which permeates the communist culture, we counterpose consensus and hegemony [that is, the domination of ideas in the Gramscian sense] as the essential factors of transformation."

"Our struggle for transformation is a struggle not for power but for winning over the majority to the values of egalitarianism, solidarity and freedom as the basis of human happiness.... All peoples are sovereign in relation to the forms for their liberation, but the exaltation of violent forms coin-

cides with militarist political and moral conceptions and projects for society in which the fundamental role belongs to the coercive apparatuses."

Revealing discussion on statutes

The discussion on the new draft statutes lasted all night long, involving innumerable votes. It revealed other important differences. The Italian media played up the proposal that members of parliament should be limited to two terms in office. This seems reasonable after all, especially given that the national assembly of delegates will have the right to make exceptions to the rule (by a two-thirds majority vote). But other decisions were much more interesting.

The reporter for the commission responsible for examining the mass of amendments adopted in the local assemblies summed up the spirit of the statutes in the statement that they were completely different from the "Third International type." As is usual for the DP, the reference to the Third International was sweeping. It covered up the difference between the Leninist and revolutionary phase and the phase of Stalinist bureaucratization, and it is hard to believe that this was out of ignorance. The essential features of the statutes adopted were the following:

- The accent was put on anti-centralism and federalism.¹⁰

- The financial responsibilities for members were only token and left quite vague (an amendment proposed that only paid-up members have the right to participate in decision-making was rejected).

- The leadership system calls for a national leadership elected by the congress and a standing national assembly made up of members of the national leadership and delegates elected at the provincial level, which would meet twice a year.

- Factions and tendencies are banned (the draft explicitly banned only factions, but the congress voted to maintain the previous norms which stipulate "organizing components inside the party is forbidden"). The only right recognized is to consult and coordinate before congresses.

At the beginning of the congress, there was a proposal for giving special speaking time to a representative of the Document of 100. This was rejected, but the reporter for the outgoing leadership had spoken for three hours. The statutes stipulate that "in the event of alternative political motions and opposing slates, there should be proportional representation." (On this occasion, there was a single slate of a hundred candidates for 60 places.)

- Members of the outgoing national leadership are automatically delegates. Not

10. The organizations in certain regions — Friuli, the Trento region, South Tyrol, Sardinia — have a special status. They are considered "federated parties."

only can they speak, but they vote as well. Considering that at this congress there were 63 such delegates out of 548, and that many votes were quite close, the practical implications of such a system are clear.

Finally, while a majority of delegates managed to get a reference to communist society and breaking with the bourgeois system included in the preamble, the same preamble contained references to a "non-violent" and "pacifist" conception. This also revealed the existence of many different components in DP.

On women's participation in the congress, few of the speeches were given by women, about 10 per cent of the total, and they were generally limited to feminist questions. The leitmotiv was playing up the difference between the sexes both in the present struggles and from the standpoint of a new society. But seven women circulated a document which reaffirmed that "the difference between the sexes has to remain the point of departure for the various theories of the female condition," but rejected "the hypothesis that leads to constructing two different sexual models."

Positive action for women

As regards the thorny question of quotas, the solution finally adopted was that the number of women in congresses and the leading bodies should be in proportion to the number of women in the organization, plus five per cent by way of positive discrimination. If this quota cannot be met, the places not filled by women should remain vacant, thereby revealing a weakness of the organization and that the problem remained to be solved. In fact, while 22% of the membership are women, 24% of the delegates at the Sixth Congress were women, and 19 women were elected to the new 60-strong leadership, thus exceeding the quota.

The final part of the congress was the most disconcerting. The congress had already agreed a proposal from the congress' political commission to table the outgoing leadership's project and to submit a new resolution for a vote. The political commission resolution was given to the delegates the night before the final session. The object of the exercise was to pass a document that could be accepted by all the various components of the organization, or at least the most important.

The groundwork for this operation was laid by the speech of a regional councillor and member of the outgoing leadership, Emilio Molinari. While he belongs to the



Milan federation, he was definitely not on the same wavelength as the other delegates from that region. In his contribution to the written debate, he had already expressed a conciliationist position, which he re-launched in the congress in a very demagogic style.¹¹ Secretary Russo Spena's conclusions followed the same drift. He fudged over the themes in the introductory report and advocated a "recomposition, even if precarious."

The resolution, which was adopted by a very large majority¹², showed its true colors in the introduction. It stated that "the congress takes on board [sic] the secretary's positive report, which, on the basis of the congress document, the document of the 100 and other contributions and political materials drawn up by the provincial congresses, made possible an effective, frank and open debate that moved the party's political elaboration forward."

Concessions made in final resolution

What is more, the resolution made major concessions to the 100, for example, by downplaying the centrality of the contradiction between capital and labor and by characterizing DP as a "social party of inquiry," one that was "culturally pacifist" and "where diversity is expressed at all levels of richness."

The leading group's desire for conciliation showed up even more clearly when some delegates proposed replacing the expression "takes on board" with the word "approves." The reporter himself opposed this proposal — opposing the approval of his own report! Finally, the change was accepted after some very close votes.¹³

The election of the national leadership could not help but reflect the differentiations and conflicts. The main artisans of the final attempt at recomposition, Russo Spena and Molinari, got almost all the votes. But about 200 delegates out of the 489 voting did not vote for Capanna. The representatives of the Milan "workerist" wing got

The Lega Comunista Rivoluzionaria (Italian section of the FI) have had electoral alliances with Democrazia Proletaria (DR)

still more modest scores. And the environmentalist-pacifist current got only two seats.

In fact, the congress concluded in a morose atmosphere, with mutual recrimination and sour comments.¹⁴ Big difficulties arose immediately afterward in the election of the national secretariat. No solution was found, and the election was postponed for a month. The secretary was

not elected either, although it is almost certain that Russo Spena will be reconfirmed.¹⁵

No coherent strategy

Since its beginnings, DP has been marked by numerous conflicts, which have led to the formation of currents, different trends and pressure groups. The choices that it has had to make and still has to make unquestionably involve major problems:

- Should it build a real party, or should it rely on a convergence or federation of various mass movements?

- Do the fundamental conceptions of Marxism remain valid, should they be combined with other (pacifist, non-violent, environmentalist) conceptions, or be abandoned?

- Is the contradiction between capital and labor, between capitalists and wage earners still at the center of society today, or should it be put on the same level as "new" contradictions?

11. Molinari's speech included remarks that we might share, for example, a questioning of the far-left's interpretation of "Marxism" in the 1970s. Unfortunately, the conclusions they drew from this went in the wrong direction. Likewise, he was right to criticize formulas such as "the DP is the party of the COBAS." But we cannot go along with him when he raises similar criticisms of the COBAS to those of the CP (saying that he agreed with the remarks of the CP representative at the congress on the COBAS).

12. A group of delegates from Brescia, Bergamo, Bologna and Milan came out against it.

13. According to the press, the amendment was accepted by 193 votes to 191 and 11 abstentions. According to other versions, the difference was larger. I had to leave the congress a few hours before the end and I still do not have the official minutes. I hope that readers will excuse an inexactitude or possible error on this final session.

14. For example, according to some papers, the head of the DP parliamentary group, Franco Russo, said: "The DP's problem is that it is not capable of making a choice."

15. After this article was written, we learnt that Russo Spena was elected national secretary. At the same time, a national secretariat of nine members was elected, but without the participation of the ecological-pacifist current or those around Capanna. There are no women on the secretariat.

● Should the workers' movement continue to pose the problem of power in the perspective of a revolutionary qualitative leap, of destroying the bourgeois state apparatus and replacing it root and branch by a qualitatively superior socialist democracy, or is it possible to envisage a gradual transformation of society?

● In a new society, should it opt for democratically centralized planning, or for "self-centralized economic development"?

From this summary of the congress, it should be clear that leaders and members of DP offer very diverse and even opposing answers to these questions. Even when there seems to be a consensus, the interpretations of it are not at all the same. Two examples are particularly significant in this respect. The first concerns the question of power. As I said, the preamble to the statutes adopted by a large majority is quite eclectic and leaves the door open both for those who hold the Marxist conception of the state and revolution and to the gradualist-reformist interpretation of the non-violent and the environmentalist-pacifist currents.

The project of the outgoing leadership talked about "breaking up the state as a centralized complex representing the combination of all bureaucratic, military and ideological apparatuses." But at the same time, it introduced the idea of building up as of now "a counter-power alternative to capitalist compatibilities as a new consciousness of ourselves and our own needs." The report did not clarify this question any further. More generally, it is significant that although DP often claims to be Marxist, there are no references to Lenin and Leninism in its documents.

"Self-centralized economic development"

A second example is that of a central theme in all DP's programmatic documents — that is, self-centralized economic development. To use the words of Russo Spina's report, this is supposed to involve "re-appropriating the ends and means of production through decentralizing and deverticalizing the territorial economy at all levels by encouraging local self-sufficiency as much as possible." It's a safe bet that no two members of DP would explain this concept in the same way.

In fact, at the congress itself there was a whole gamut of positions. They ranged from quite a vague notion of a "cooperative economy, that is a socialized and democratically-managed one tending to operate on a world scale" (the leadership's project) and a decentralization option carried to the extreme, underestimating the needs of centralization inevitable in any planning, to gradualist notions of progressively building up an alternative economy, and even to outright reformist conceptions relying on the organization of cooperatives and voluntary associations. This last idea harks back

to the better traditions of the old reformist socialism.¹⁶

Finally, there was another approach revealing the conceptions that are going around in DP. Since DP has roots in real movements, it cannot minimize the importance of immediate objectives. But at the same time, its members are conscious of the fundamental problems that arise, often acutely, in present-day societies.

No concept of transitional demands

Thus, they have been impelled to carry out telescoping operations reminiscent, for example, of those engaged in by the *Il Manifesto* current when it was founded, which put the accent on the "timeliness of communism." They alternate and combine projects for the immediate future with ultimatic ones. To bridge the gap, whether they realize it or, they end up with gradualist notions. They are led to this in particular since they make no use at all of the revolutionary Marxist concept of transitional demands.

The motley picture presented by the DP congress obviously reflects the reality of the organization, but it also reflects a broader reality. It reflects the reality of an organization that emerged from the convergence of former leaders and cadres of far-left groups in the 1970s, but with an overwhelming majority of members who did not come out of such organizations.

Secondly, DP has a large and diversified working-class component, from activists whose experience is formed out of work in workers' strongholds such as Alfa Romeo in Milan to activists involved in the present struggles at Rome airport. But it also includes many more activists who come from the various mass movements.

Democrazia Proletaria is marked, moreover, by the presence of a strong component of Catholic origin. This current can contribute political and cultural experience that is enriching for Marxists and transmit a valuable moral inspiration for renewing the workers' movement. But at the same time it is marked by idealist or semi-idealist conceptions that are not helpful in defining a strategy and a revolutionary program.

The statistics on the age groups of members that were presented to the congress also elucidate another dimension of DP's problems. Almost 60% of its members are under the age of 35. That means that they did not experience the 1968-69 period, and have been formed mainly in the 1970s and 1980s, a period of growing difficulties, retreat and ideological disarray in the workers' movement. They cannot have the same memory, the same approaches and the same reflexes as those who awakened to political life during the big upsurge (who make up less than 30% of the total membership, but are a large majority of the leading group).

Caught up over a long period in constant

struggles that were often victorious, the older activists have had a hard time adjusting to the new phase that set in after the 1974-75 economic crisis and even more so to setbacks in subsequent years. They had a feeling of swimming against the stream, while previously they thought that they best expressed the "spirit of the age." This is why they often talk about "crossing the desert," and "terrible years."

This is obviously exaggerated when you consider that in Italy struggles have never ceased, political and cultural battles are still being waged on a large scale, and police repression, for the most part, has fallen on the initiates of the Red Brigades and other militarist formations. Such gloomy views can only evoke smiles from activists of other times and countries who have suffered far more severe trials. But they express a certain underlying pessimism and a weariness that is by no means justified by age.¹⁷

Bourgeois leaderships face repeated crises

I said that the congress that has just concluded also reflected a broader reality. In fact, other sectors of the revolutionary left, in particular in Europe, are running up against the same kind of difficulties.

Despite the setbacks and structural weakening that the workers' movement has suffered, it is far from having been smashed. On the contrary it has unleashed great struggles in most countries in recent years. Mass student, anti-war, environmentalist and other movements have developed. The bureaucracies of the big workers' parties and unions are facing sharper and more widespread criticism and are often being outflanked on a mass scale. The bourgeois leaderships are experiencing repeated crises and have not succeeded in rolling the clock back.

Inevitably, in these circumstances, the fact that after an ebb the revolutionary left is continuing to mark time and has not succeeded in gaining recognition as a credible political alternative is engendering doubts, uncertainties and feelings of disarray. These sentiments throw up two opposing solutions, both of which are wrong. One is to try to "broaden out" through risky operations that are generally mirages of concrete policies. The other is to pull back into your own well reinforced armored shell.

The understanding that the problems troubling Democrazia Proletaria affect other revolutionists keeps us from having a condescending attitude toward them. But that does not prevent us from saying clearly that the orientation outlined at the recent congress offers no basis for beginning to overcome the present difficulties and for solving the big problems that we will have to face. ★

16. Some delegates themselves made this parallel.

17. Russo Spina, who often used such expressions, is only 42 years old.

"We have to reorient our thinking to the entire Indian subcontinent"

BALA TAMPOE is general secretary of the Ceylon Mercantile Union (CMU), a major union in Sri Lanka. He gave the following interview to Gerry Foley in Paris in mid-April before the provincial elections (see page 9), the background to which he describes.

The interview deals with political and social developments in Sri Lanka since the onset of the war between the major Tamil separatist organization, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam ("Eelam" is the Tamil name for Sri Lanka) and the Indian Peacekeeping Force.

HOW HAS the political situation in Sri Lanka developed since the outbreak of the conflict between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Indian Peacekeeping Force (IPF)?

In the north, the IPF is in the process of liquidating the Tamil Tigers as a terrorist force, not liquidating it physically. In the south, the Sri Lankan army and the police are in the process of liquidating the terrorist threat from what is considered to be a military wing of the JVP. In the meantime, President Junius Richard Jayawardene is going ahead with provincial elections in some provinces. The new four-party alliance of the LSSP, Communist Party, SLMP (the Sri Lanka People's Party) and the NSSP will participate in these elections.

■ What are these parties?

The SLMP is a breakaway from the SLFP [Sir Lanka Freedom Party, the more Sinhala nationalist of the two big bourgeois parties] to the left. Its most prominent personalities were Mrs Bandaranaike's second daughter and her husband, VJ Kamaratunga, who was a popular film actor and a very charismatic personality. He was going to be the presidential candidate of this new alliance.

A significant fact about the new alliance is that it also has linked up with two of the Tamil groups in the north, who are also for working within the framework of the Indo-Sri Lanka accord — the PLOTE (People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam) and the EPRLF (Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front).

Those two organizations have announced that they want to run in the elections. And

the EPRLF has already been recognized under the law by the Commission of Elections, and is going to take part in the elections if it can.

The NSSP [Nama Sama Samaja Party] is linked to the Militant Tendency in Britain. It was expelled from the LSSP [Lama Sama Samaja Party, a labor party built by a Trotskyist leadership that degenerated] immediately prior to the 1977 general election. They are a small party with some implantation in the trade unions. I would say that they have a couple of hundred members.

All of these parties accept the Indo-Sri Lankan accord; that is the positive common factor uniting them all.

■ How big is the Communist Party in Sri Lanka?

It is hard to say exactly. It is not very large. But it has its old limited bases, some in the south and also in the western province. This so-called military wing of the JVP has carried out political assassinations of some of their leaders in the south and one prominent Central Committee member in the western province. Last month, the LTTE assassinated the CP's most prominent trade-union figure in the north, who was also a Politburo member. The SLMP is seen as linked to the CP and faces the same threat. The LSSP counts for very little, and the NSSP is not a

national force.

■ So, you have both the Sinhala chauvinists on one side and the Tamil separatists on the other who are prepared to deal with the four-party group by force.

That's right, on the basis that they are traitors, either to the Tamils or to the Sinhalese, and on the accusation that they are really collaborating with JR Jayawardene and with the Indian army.

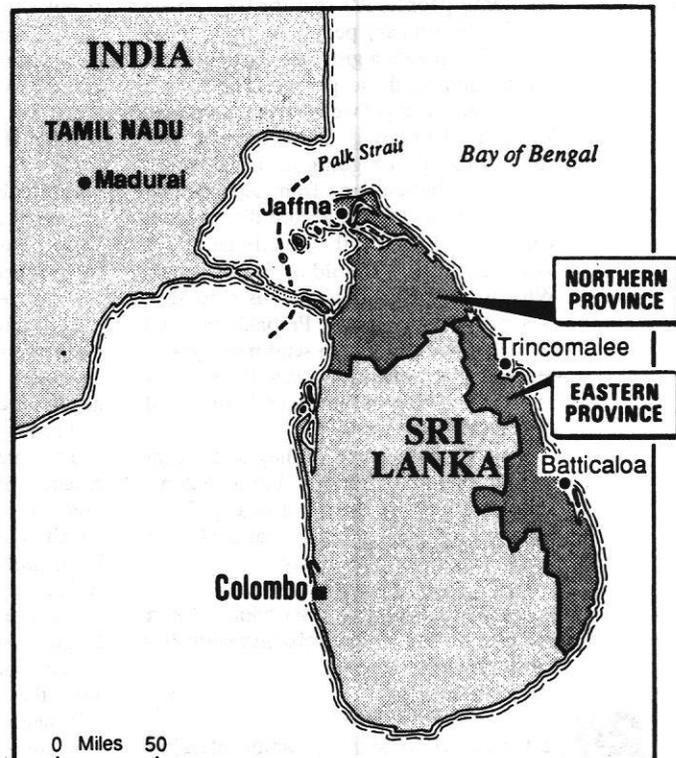
■ Are there any Tamil groups besides the LTTE that oppose the accord?

No. The TULF [Tamil United Liberation Front, the former Tamil parliamentary group] has taken an equivocal position. They are obviously for the accord, but don't want to say so openly, because the LTTE has denounced it. They want to reach some understanding in the future with the LTTE, but they won't get it.

■ Will the Indian government allow the LTTE to survive?

I think that the Indian government is definitely serious about eliminating the LTTE as a military threat in the north and east. There is no doubt about that. And they have succeeded to a very, very great extent in the north and to a lesser but still considerable extent in the east. But considerable numbers of LTTE people escaped from the north, concentrated in the eastern province jungles, and from there they come out marauding from time to time, strike at innocent people, Sinhala villagers, blow up buses, and go back into the jungle.

I wouldn't call that guerrilla activity. That is plain terrorist activity against the civilian population. In the north, there are isolated incidents that maintain the atmos-



Sri Lankan organizations

CMU — Ceylon Mercantile, Industrial and General Workers' Union
 EPRLF — Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front
 JVP — People's Liberation Organization
 JSS — UNP-controlled trade union
 IPF — Indian Peacekeeping Force
 LSSP — Lanka Sama Samaja Party
 LTTE — Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
 NSSP — Nama Sama Samaja Party
 PLOTE — People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam
 SLFP — Sri Lankan Freedom Party
 SLMP — Sri Lanka Mahajana Party
 TULF — Tamil United Liberation Front
 United Socialist Alliance — including the CP, LSSP, NSSP & SLMP
 UNP — United National Party (ruling party of JR Jayawardene)

phere of fear among the Tamil people. That is, there are isolated assassinations of people said to have collaborated with the Indian army, even women, some of whom are said to have married Indian soldiers. The Tigers have made announcements, put out posters and things.

■ **So, they have a policy of opposing any sort of fraternization with the Indian army.**

Entirely. Their policy is openly and directly one of treating the Indians on Sri Lankan soil as the enemy. And any collaboration with the enemy, fraternization with the soldiers, collaboration in any form of civilian administration set up with or by the Indian forces is regarded as treachery and will be punished with death.

I must say that the Indian army has not eliminated that threat. And that's real for the Tamil people. It's real for the Sinhala and Tamil ordinary people living in those areas. So, there's a growing sense of frustration among those people. The Indian army is here and yet we have not got peace. What are they doing? Now, there is very strong propaganda going on in the south against the Indian army from sections that are not opposed to the accord directly, but who say, "What are they really here for? Why don't they get hold of Prabakaran? Why don't they get hold of his second in command? How is that Prabakaran and his lieutenant are able to send messages to Madras?" Obviously, they say, Indian forces are conniving in the Tigers' continued existence.

I believe that's correct. They don't want them to function militarily, but they don't want to eliminate them politically. They want to keep them going so that the Indian presence remains a necessity.

■ **Are you saying that the policy of India is to establish a protectorate over Sri Lanka?**

Yes, definitely.

■ **They want to be in a position of being**

arbiter in Sri Lanka politics?

I think that they want to do that in the first place to protect their own territory from hostile, foreign penetration into Sri Lanka, which was, I think, becoming a real danger under Jayawardene.

He did turn to the Americans, to the British, to the Israelis, Pakistanis and others. He did get some kind of assistance, direct or covert. Even today, I think, where the LTTE movement is concerned, the Americans would like to keep the LTTE going as a threat to the Indian forces, and thereby still keep the door open for some other solution.

■ **In this context, what was the interest of the Sinhalese groups that assassinated the leader of this new four-party alliance? Why would they have gone after him in particular?**

I would say that he was undoubtedly the most charismatic political figure in the present situation. He was a very popular film actor. He was a very handsome personality. And he was a very nice man. I knew him personally. I have never felt that he was an opportunist or the sort of scheming politician that you find so commonly. And on the ethnic question, there is no doubt, of all the Sinhala politicians, he was the one who came out quite clearly and openly for proper understanding with the Tamils. He went to the north before the Indians came in, when two Sinhala soldiers were captured there to negotiate their release.

He met the LTTE leaders in Jaffna. He went with them to a Hindu temple — all open acts which certainly aroused hatred against him among the Sinhala racists.¹ But he did have a political effect on the Sinhala people, because he was such a well-known, popular film star. So in that context, when the CP decided to bring about a new alliance with the LSSP and the SLMP, they chose him as the figurehead.

■ **What is the alliance's objective?**

They held a seminar on December 26, purportedly against terrorism but really to prepare the basis for setting up this new alliance. This was done on the footing, as I said, of acceptance of the accord and contesting the provincial elections. So, it is really a new electoral alliance with the limited purpose of going into the provincial elections. The objective is not to press for a general election, while they continue general propaganda for that.

They are falling into line with JR Jayawardene's policy of holding provincial elections and putting off a general election, which I don't think he will hold in the end. He'll probably have another referendum. He's also trying to amend the constitution to run for a third term. So, he's not going to let go, as long as he's fit to hang onto the top position. There is no doubt in my mind about that. So that this group of parties that call themselves the United Socialist Alliance are really not aiming high. They want

some sort of a political platform, and they think that the provincial elections will provide them an opportunity to get that.

Kamaratunga was nominated to head the alliance as their presidential candidate if there was a presidential election, which is supposed to be at the end of the year. They announced that on January 31, and the new alliance was to be formally inaugurated sometime in mid-February. On February 16, he was assassinated.

The so-called military wing of the JVP is said to have put out a statement saying that Kamaratunga was bumped off for two reasons: one that he was going to divide the forces opposed to JR Jayawardene in the presidential election; the other was that he was a traitor, who had supported the accord and the presence of Indian troops in Sri Lanka. So, they openly admit that they bumped him off.

This is a bit peculiar, because the JVP has never formally admitted any of the terrorist operations that have taken place. There is a good reason for that. They want to come back into the electoral field as a recognized political party, and they are really pressing through their allies on the Sinhala right to have the proscription of the JVP lifted, and recently seven political parties headed by the SLFP called for the lifting of the proscription of the JVP. They can't very well come back into the political arena having openly acknowledged the political assassinations that have taken place. The press claims that there are frictions in the JVP, and that may explain some contradictions.

■ **In these provincial elections, would you be in favor of a critical vote for the left alliance?**

No. We think that these elections are a purely diversionary move by JR Jayawardene. No real democratic content is going to come out of this as long as the emergency continues, as long as the Prevention of Terrorism Act is there, as long as thousands of people are kept in jail, as long as the Indian army is in the north and the Sri Lankan army is on the rampage in the south. You cannot have any kind of meaningful, genuine democratic setup established in these conditions.

That is why our line continues to be against the government's repression, against the emergency, for the repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act and for the release of political prisoners. At the same time, we are explicitly saying that we don't support the government in the elimination of what they call terrorism. We certainly totally disagree with the terrorist parties. We denounce their massacres. We consider this terrorism to be reactionary and counterproductive. But the main enemy is not the terrorists. It's the UNP [United National Party] government and the forces allied to it.

1. The Tamils are mainly Hindu; the Sinhala are overwhelmingly Buddhist and consider the island the bastion of their religion.

■ Do you think that this line of the United Socialist Alliance of participating in the elections is playing along with the government line?

Exactly, and that is reason why they have become a target for forces that are opposed to the UNP on a racist basis. So, we can't support them. We can't support that line. I attended this seminar on December 26, and I said openly there, "We cannot support your line because it is not directed forthrightly against the government's repression, which has gone on for ten years, and it is in those ten years that all these terrorist forces have emerged in the north and the south."

■ There are two aspects to this, then. One is that you don't support this alliance because of its line on "terrorism." At the same time, you are opposed to participating in elections until the state of emergency is lifted.

Yes, we say that any type of election held in this context is not a democratic election. So that in several respects, the situation is similar to, say, Bangladesh, where the opposition parties have boycotted elections, on the basis that so long as Ershad is there, you can't have a genuine election. I would say, by and large, the same applies under JR Jayawardene under the present state of emergency. And I would imagine that he will have another referendum. It will be rigged.

■ A referendum on what?

To keep the parliament going again for another six years without a general election. That is what he did in 1981. He wants to preserve the artificial two-thirds majority that was kept going by the last referendum. He's still changing the constitution, since he has a two-thirds majority. He's now planning for a third term.

So, all genuine democratic forces have to be mobilized directly against the repression. That cannot be done by going into his electoral games. That's our view. So, our aim is much more limited. It is to re-establish some kind of unification of working-class forces.

■ Are there any promising developments on that front?

In the last three months, there have been significant breaks in the trade-union front of groups that were under the JSS, that is, the UNP-controlled pseudo-trade union. In an important factory just north of Colombo, the entirety of the work force, including the white-collar workers, have broken away after ten years from the JSS and joined the CMU. South of Colombo, in a glass factory, again a JSS-controlled group of workers have broken away and joined the CMU.

Then in the giant British transnational Unilever the entire white-collar section of the workers, who were also in the JSS union, have dissolved that union and joined the CMU. There has even been a develop-

ment like that in north-central province and the central province. In this area there is a transnational company that collects tobacco grown by local producers and processes it for export. They have depots. Now a number of the workers in those depots got together and they broke away from a JSS union, and have come and joined the CMU.

So, there are signs that the the UNP control is breaking down in the private sector. In the government sector they maintain their main hold because they can use their political position to discriminate.

■ What about in the north and east?

It's impossible to do anything there. The presence of the Tigers on the one hand and now of the IPF makes any free democratic political activity on the trade-union front or on the political front impossible. It is possible to do groundwork, but no public activity. The LTTE has totally destroyed all opportunities for independent mass political activity of any kind. They have totally militarized the situation.

■ Being opposed to participating in elections, presumably you are calling for a campaign of direct action?

Yes. But we are not opposing elections. We say that they won't serve. Our aim is to ultimately mobilize direct action for restoration of democratic freedoms, mass action.

■ Mass action is possible under the present circumstances?

The possibilities are limited. But on May Day, there will be some sort of demonstration. But they will still ban demonstrations. However, I do see the point at which such things can take place, because even within the armed forces there are divisions.

■ What effect is the involvement of India in Sri Lanka politics likely to have on this?

In India ultimately the state forces are going to come under increasing internal pressures. Within the whole context of the Indian subcontinent, there is growing instability. We are caught up in that. But we now see ourselves as part of the Indian subcontinental development, not just a Sri Lankan development any more. That's the historic fact. We've got to recognize it and deal with it on that basis. For instance, increased links between our working class and the Indian working class are very important. I have contact with trade-union leaders in India, particularly in the transport sector. They are very concerned about the situation in Sri Lanka.

■ Does that mean that you would be in favor of democratic integration of Sri Lanka into the Indian republic?

Not quite that, because that would be on a bourgeois basis. And I don't think that we could ever be really democratically incorporated into the Indian republic. But we are caught up in the whole crisis of the Indian

state itself.

■ What is your position on the Indo-Sri Lankan accord?

We don't support it, but we don't oppose it. It's just like the provincial elections. You don't say, "Don't take part." We are not taking a negative position, either on the accord or on the elections. Let that process take place. We tell the working class, and those who are interested in escaping from the situation that this is not the way out.

I have begun to rethink our whole future within the framework of the Indian subcontinent. World War II brought about the creation of a separate state in Sri Lanka, in India, in Pakistan and in Burma. The Fourth International itself first organized the section as the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India, Burma and Ceylon. This was done because Britain was the paramount power in all these colonies.

History has proved that even after Britain left they couldn't function as separate states indefinitely. Now Bangladesh has come into being. So, Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, and to some extent Burma have got interlinked destinies for the future. But it's such a complicated situation, ethnically so diverse and with so many different religions that the role that the proletariat of these different countries can play still is very limited, very limited.

■ In Sri Lanka itself, do you see any favorable political developments among the Tamil population?

It is difficult to say that. You know, they are so frustrated. They had four years of this kind of instability, disruption of their daily lives, disruption of their economy, loss of their accumulated reserves and impoverishment. So for them to think in positive terms for the future is very difficult, particularly with the Indian army there and, as I said, this continuing terrorism of the LTTE.

But there is a growing feeling — which even some Western journalists whom I met have reported to me in discussions — that the LTTE has taken the wrong road, and that it is not leading to anything like an independent Tamil administration in the north and east. So, there is disillusion among the Tamil people in the north and east, and the working class in those areas is still too scattered and confused by these developments to be an effective factor.

■ What is the attitude of the Tamil population toward the Indian army now?

Clearly, from all the information we have, there is no love for the Indian army. There is dissatisfaction with the way they behave. They don't like the presence of foreign troops. Nobody likes the presence of foreign troops. But the widely prevalent view is they should remain there. They don't want them to go. Because they fear worse if they will go.

■ How much Tamil collaboration is there with the Indian forces?

Very little, from the civilian population. But, as I mentioned in my last interview², especially some of these Tamil groups that are hostile to the LTTE and have supported the accord have acted in collaboration with the Indian forces. They helped them to a considerable extent in destroying the LTTE bases in the north and in capturing some of their key people. To some extent, they have done that in the east too. Nearly all the top commanders of the LTTE in the east have been captured.

In an area in southern part of the northern province, some of these smaller groups have formed the Three-Star Alliance, and with the support of India they have some control there. Of course, the LTTE makes out that these are merely collaborators of the Indian army, and I doubt that any of them have anything like mass acceptance among the Tamil people. They would have their bases of support, but those would be very limited. I don't think that they are an important political factor.

■ What about political movement in the south. In your last interview, you talked about Sinhala Buddhist groups that were breaking from Sinhala chauvinism. Is there any further development of that?

Nothing manifest. Certainly the wage question is engaging a lot of attention now among the people in the south. The bank union for instance has won a very big victory by a go-slow and work-to-rule campaign. They have got a substantial increase, up to 40 per cent in some sectors of the bank union. There is definitely growing agitation now for wage increases. And that is likely to bring the working class increasingly into action. That could lead to political developments, because they'll come up against repression.

■ Are the four parties in the United Socialist Alliance playing a role in this trade-union militancy?

They are involved, but they are not very effective, because they do not have much of a base, including the Communist Party. The CMU has more of base, even among the industrial workers, than all of them put together.

■ Do you consider the SLMP a bourgeois party?

No, I would call it a petty-bourgeois radical party with socialist aspirations and ideas and some influence of Marxism in it. They tend to align themselves with the Communist Party's national orientation. The development of this current is linked to CP work in the SLFP. I know that there were some Communist Party people who went into the SLFP and then came out with the SLMP.

"progressive bourgeois forces."

And petty-bourgeois forces. Mainly the petty-bourgeois forces.

■ What's is the CP's attitude toward Sinhala nationalism?

They are careful about that. But they are really now taking the line of opposing Sinhala racism.

■ Do they oppose the status of Sinhala as the only official language?

Well, they support the provisions of the accord that make English and Tamil official languages along with Sinhala, particularly Tamil, and then some degree of autonomy in the north and the east.

■ What is the vehicle of the mass campaign you propose. Is it the CMU?

We had a March 5 demonstration in 1987. Now for May Day we are having it on the same theme as we had on March 5 last year — that is, for human and democratic rights and peace and justice in Sri Lanka. That's our slogan. Now in the trade-union field, even with other unions, that's the line we put across. Very recently, around the beginning of April, the Union of Postal and Telecommunications Officers moved in this direction. The leadership formerly supported the UNP government, but with the just about to be implemented threat of privatizing telecommunications, they have now taken an independent stand.

They called a meeting of other unions that they regard as independent, like the CMU, and mooted the idea of setting up a council of independent trade unions. Now the bank union is also such a union, although they didn't come to the discussion. But we do look to trying to form a broader grouping of genuine independent trade-union organizations.

■ On the trade-union level?

That's right. And then to link them with even the politically controlled trade-unions of these four parties in the United Socialist Alliance in any move that we can develop. But we don't think it is going to be possible with their taking the line of going into the provincial elections.

■ So there is no possibility of a united front with these other parties, at least until after the elections?

Exactly. They are adding to the confusion in the working class. As you can see, both on the right and on the left of the political spectrum, there is confusion and diversion. So, any working class would find it difficult to cope with such a situation. And we've had ten years of the present regime. Now, there is an entire new layer of workers coming into existence after these ten years, largely uncorrupted but also very unsophisticated. Also, because of the expansion of the economy and increased foreign trade and types of foreign-linked enterprise, there are large numbers of new people in employment.

■ Has this created a difference in the industrial structure of the country? Or is it just an expansion of the traditional industries.

No. It is a change because this government has linked us up very much more than the previous government ever could with the international capitalist system. This means development of semi-manufacturing, but export-linked and processing factories.

Even things like flowers, fish and tobacco — everything is being exported. The country is in a sense being impoverished. The people are not even able to get their own produce, because most of it is now taken and exported.

■ Ceylon used to be relatively self-sufficient in food. Is this no longer the case?

No, anything but that. The free-economy policy means that when strikes cause problems, they will immediately import from abroad. Now there is a dispute going on in the big tobacco giant British-American subsidiary, where there is a CP-controlled union. And they are having a collective agreement dispute. And there is a go-slow on, of a kind. Well, the government has given them a licence to import cigarettes, if necessary. So they can immediately draw on their foreign resources to deal with a strike.

■ You don't have a phenomenon like other south Asian countries of the development of assembly plants?

No. It is more commerce than industry. Banking and things like that have expanded, internal banking. The banking services are much, much larger than they were before. There are thousands of new people in the banking services. And that is why the bank workers' union has become such a strong union now.

■ Is the Sri Lanka trade-union pattern like the Indian one, with in general unions are linked to parties and every time there's a split in a party, there is a corresponding split at the trade-union level?

Yes, now take the SLMP. It merely broke away sections of the SLFP, and those who adhered to the SLMP were grouped together in what was called the SMLP trade-union federation. There are no real independent trade-unions there. But there is a federation with nominally some trade-union units, which are not really trade unions. Then even the NSSP, when they broke with the LSSP, they broke away groups of LSSPers who were in control of some unions. In some cases, they captured the unions. But in other cases, they just got fragments.

■ Do you call for a united federation?

We have advocated that all along. We've never got it. The most that we have tried to do is bring about some kind of consultative agreement among the major trade-union

groups. But today it's not every effective. Most of these centers themselves can really offer very little. The most they can do is some picketing.

■ **This proposal for a united federation is something very remote?**

Very remote. The whole political complexion in Ceylon has to change for that. And if at all it is going to be through a new generation of workers. But certainly, in the new generation of workers, the support for the LSSP, CP and others is very, very limited. For instance, I take a cross-section of new workers who come to us. Of course, these breakaways from the JSS, they are the new workers who in the last ten years have organized under the JSS. But they didn't all vote for the UNP. I asked them, How do you vote? Invariably, I find that a fair proportion had voted for the UNP, a fair proportion had voted for the SLFP, a small but significant minority have voted for the JVP. Nobody has voted for the CP or the LSSP in those sectors of workers. And of course, a fair number have not voted at all. So, the significance and potential of the CP, LSSP and old left in the new working class is very, very limited. I don't think they have a future.

■ **Politics must be much more localized than at any time since World War II.**

Yes. But I think we are passing through a major historical change, when we have to reorient our thinking to the entire Indian subcontinent. Now, we are definitely promoting our contacts with the Indian trade-union movement. I have had some discussions with the Hindu Mazdur Sabha leaders. The general secretary, for instance, is the top leader of the Indian Railwaymen's Federation, with 900,000 members. I have direct contact with them through the National Transport Federation, and with the Indian Seamen's Union, the Indian dockers and so on. So, as far as the CMU is concerned, we are also making our own membership conscious of the need for links with the Indian proletariat.

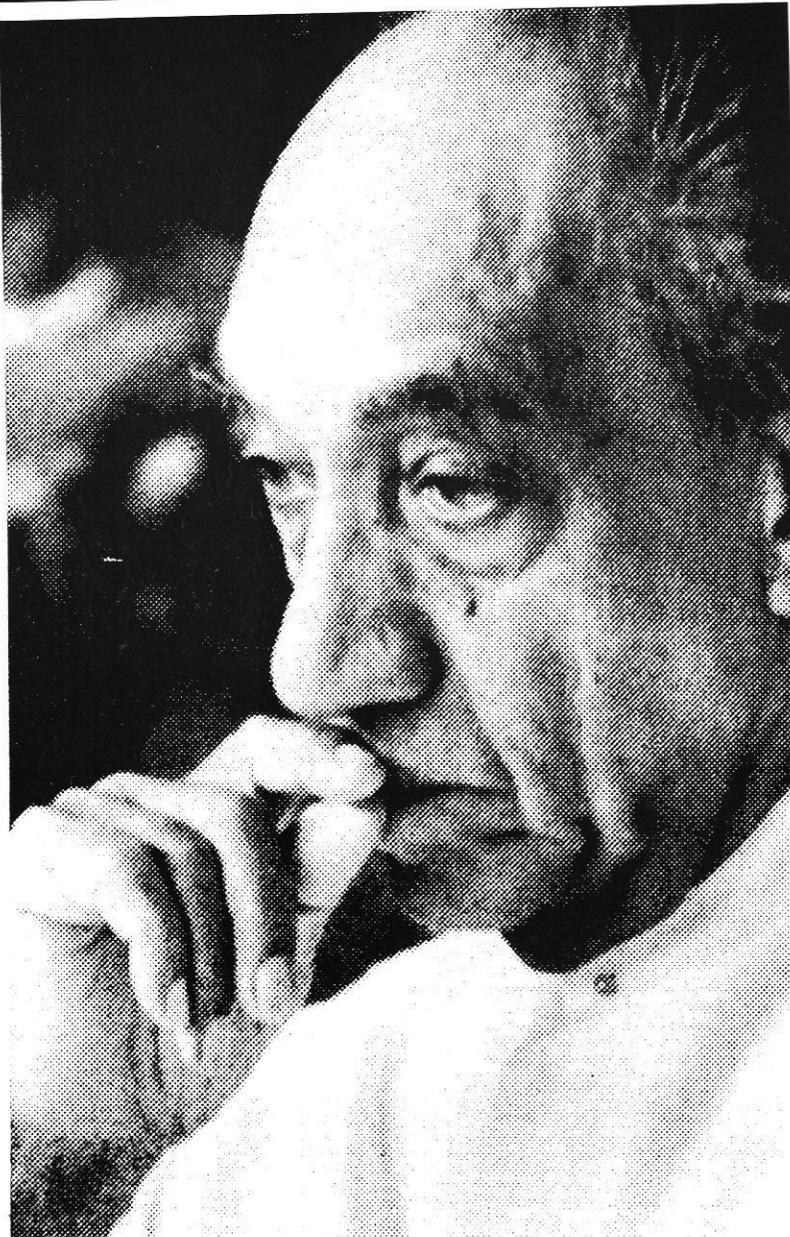
■ **Do the political alignments of the Indian unions present obstacles?**

The Hindu Mazdur Sabha is not really politically aligned. They broadly came from the old Indian Socialist Party left, although there are Congress people in it. I would say that the Hindu Mazdur Sabha corresponds on an Indian-subcontinental level to the CMU in some respects. They have hundreds of thousands of members, essentially in transport. We are even going to collaborate with them on some issues, such as education, where we can develop more contact.

■ **Do they have a general Marxist approach?**

I am sure that there are people in that organization who have Marxist backgrounds, but in India Marxism has also suffered very badly in the period since independence.

President
Junius
Richard
Jayawardene
(DR)



Many of these people are ex-lefts who have lost confidence in the Marxist left.

■ **What is their approach to education, for example?**

It's really workers' education. Of course they belong to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), and their educational programs are to some extent structured on lines similar to those of the ICFTU. But we just recently received some of their workers' education material, and we find it's very good. They have appointed educators for all India, 68 educators, and their basic training is independent democratic trade-union organization with a social policy. They don't support the Congress or the Janata party.

There is a considerable degree of similarity in their approach to that of the CMU, although we have a more openly and directly left approach. They don't have that, probably because of the developments in the left in India, and because they are more mixed. We are a more politically homogeneous leadership in the CMU, and much smaller

of course. They are on an all-India scale.

■ **Is there nothing like the sort of education that the Black unions carry out in South Africa, which is a Marxist education in a broad sense?**

But you see Africa is still relatively new. So Marxism in some respects has an attraction there that it doesn't have in the older Asian countries where Marxism developed very strongly in the immediate pre-war and then post-war situation, and where the Marxist parties have become discredited, as for instance in Sri Lanka. Today, there is a total lack of any knowledge of Marxism. In a broad trade-union meeting today of ordinary workers, perhaps 5 per cent have heard of Karl Marx, heard the name.

So, the new generation is coming in with really no knowledge, even of leftism in the real sense of the term. That is why we are now concentrating on education for this year. We want to bring back a left education which has been lost, because the education that was being given was class collaborationism and pseudo-Marxism. ★

New rise of protests in Armenia

MASS MOBILIZATIONS resumed at the end of May in the Armenian capital of Yerevan and in the Armenian-majority territory of Nagorno-Karabakh. The new upsurge was sparked by statements by the top Kremlin conservative, Egor Ligachev, which touched off a general strike in Nagorno-Karabakh and led to a demonstration of hundreds of thousands of people in Yerevan.

GERRY FOLEY

THE TEMPERATURE started to rise rapidly again in Armenia in connection with the trial of 80 people accused of participating in the February 28 anti-Armenian pogrom in the Azerbaidzhani city of Sumgait. On May 18, a demonstration took place in the Azerbaidzhani capital of Baku calling for leniency for the Sumgait defendants.

According to an eye-witness who talked to Agence France Presse, "Hands off Karabakh!" and "Azerbaidzhan for the Azeris!" were among the main slogans. The witness also claimed that police opened the way for the demonstrators to march to the offices of the Azerbaidzhan republic. Following the demonstration, film of it was shown on Azerbaidzhani TV, although Armenian TV has never shown pictures of the Armenian demonstrations.

The Azerbaidzhan Minister of Foreign Affairs reported on the demonstration, which it said included 100,000 people and claimed to be in response to the burning of an Azerbaidzhani home in the Armenian district of Ararat.

On May 19, there was a demonstration in Yerevan demanding severe penalties in the Sumgait trial. On May 20, a delegation of Armenian notables went to Moscow to demand an "objective" trial for the Sumgait defendants.

Les Nouvelles de Moscou, the international showcase of *glasnost*, acknowledged that the least that could be said about the Azerbaidzhan authorities' performance during the Sumgait riots was the police had been "inactive."

On the weekend of May 21-22, the secretaries of both the Azerbaidzhani and Armenian CPs, Kiyamran Bagirov and Karen Demirchian, were retired "for health reasons."

Moscow sent two top-ranking envoys to the two republics. Its choice of representatives suggested that the conflict in the Caucasus might have become involved in the struggle between the reform and con-

servative wings in the all-Union CP. The representative sent to Azerbaidzhan was Yegor Ligachev, the leading figure of the conservatives. The Politburo delegate sent to Armenia was Aleksandr Yakovlev, a leading reform figure.

It was the brutal rejection of the Armenian national demands by Ligachev that set the powderkeg alight. Minutes of the Azerbaidzhan CC plenum held at the end of the third week in May reached the Armenian protestors. According to the transcript, Genrikh Borossian, the new secretary of the Nagorno-Karabakh CP, asked the Kremlin's number two:

"In these circumstances, how do you see the national future of Nagorno-Karabakh." Ligachev's answer was "The question is settled. Forget all that." Borossian then asked; "Am I authorized to report your position to the people and press in Nagorno-Karabakh?"

"Your task is to calm people down"

The conservative leader expressed outrage at that, supported by the other participants in the meeting. He answered. "Your only task is to calm them down as best you can." (Quoted by Basile Karlinsky in *Libération* May 30.) The leak of Ligachev's remarks touched off the general strike in Stepanakert on May 23.

Apparently, the mood of protest among the Armenians had been deepening since the rejection of the demands of the protest movement in February and March. The poet Silva Kapoutikyan, a moderate Armenian spokesperson, tried to submit a letter to *Pravda* on April 5 in response to an article in the March 25 issue rejecting the Armenian national claims. *Pravda* refused to publish it.

In the last week of May, copies of Kapoutikyan's open letter reached Paris. It was quoted by Basile Karlinsky in *Libéra-*

tion of May 23. She accused the Azerbaidzhani authorities of deliberately staging the Sumgait pogrom, but did not put the blame on them alone.

Kapoutikyan, who had called on hundreds of thousands of people gathered in Yerevan's Opera Square on February 27 to give the Soviet authorities time to "seek a just solution for Nagorno-Karabakh," expressed her disillusion in the most dramatic terms. She compared the Armenian protests to the demonstration organized by priests in 1905 to loyally petition the Czar:

"The people of Karabakh first, and then of Armenia, set out marching toward the Winter Palace, that is Lenin Square in Stepanakert and Opera Square in Yerevan, thinking that the central power would understand us and extend its hand. We marched with slogans of confidence in the land of socialism, in the Russian people, in *perestroika*, carrying pictures of the general secretary of the CPSU, MS Gorbachev. But they opened fire on us."

Illegal flag displayed by marchers

On May 28, the anniversary of the proclamation of the independent Armenian republic in 1918, the first mass demonstration since March took place in Yerevan. Reportedly, 50,000 people came out, led by representatives of the Union for National Self-Determination. In the demonstration, according to Basile Karlinsky, there were in fact no portraits of Gorbachev.

Also for the first time, the flag of the independent republic, illegal in the USSR, was displayed by the marchers "at first timidly and then massively." The demonstration also called for the release of the Union's leader, Parouir Airikian, who was arrested on March 24.

The police reportedly did not interfere with the demonstration, except to prevent the use of a central sound system. The first secretary of the city CP committee, Levon Saharian, tried to speak to the crowd, but was able to only after Union for National Self-Determination leader Movses Gorgissian called on the demonstrators to respect democracy.

The authorities seemed to be restraining themselves. Some arrests of demonstrators in Nagorno-Karabakh were reported, but two Union for National Self-Determination leaders, Gorgissian and Meralh Abraelian, were reportedly released after being fined only 50 roubles.

At the demonstration of hundreds of thousands in Yerevan on May 30, I. Muradian, leader of the dissolved Karabakh Committees, reportedly called for giving the Soviet authorities another 100 days to come up with a solution. At the same time, he is said to have threatened an Armenian general strike if a satisfactory solution is not found. ★