

restricted circular

INTERNATIONAL
REVIEW

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occasional internal bulletin

This is the
to circulate
the analysis

Revolutionary Communist League of Britain

As with previous issues ... unacknowledged disagreements with positions expressed, and these articles should not be taken as representing official R.C.L. positions.



INTERNATIONAL REVIEW

----- No. 11 Summer 1991 -----

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This is the eleventh issue of an occasional internal bulletin designed to circulate information on the international communist movement, and the analysis and developments within fraternal organisation.

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Commentary : Changes in Albania

Following the pattern elsewhere in Eastern Europe, the ruling Party of Labour of Albania, at a Party Congress held in early June, changed its name. They will be officially known as the *Socialist Party*. Having adopted political pluralism, the Albanian communists are split on the issue of how far to backpedal from the ideological legacy of PLA founder Enver Hoxha.

The PLA reformers received hostile receptions when calling for an *Albanian glasnost*. The writer Dritero Agolli faced the chant of "Enver, Party!" and "Enver, We'll always be ready" when he condemned what he called the "triple cult of Enver, the Party and the Secret Police".

Even those who paid tribute to Enver Hoxha's "undeniable achievements" were critical of the personality cult that surrounded him. Leading Party member Xhelil Gjoni criticised the past "spirit of command". Ramiz Alia, who had navigated the transition in the post-Hoxha era, was criticised for having shown "sentimental attitudes to some friends and collaborators".

Agolli was less circumspect: "Anybody who expressed a contrary opinion to that of Hoxha was immediately considered a heretic, a spy, a revisionist."

The Congress was held against dramatic events outside the meeting hall. The PLA had gained a majority in multi-party elections held in April but following anti-communist strikes, led in part by the miners from Valias, which lasted four weeks, the PLA Prime minister Fatos Nano was forced to resign and agreement on a coalition government led by Ulli Bufi (former Minister for Food) was reached. A leading opposition figure, the Economics professor Gramoz Pashko of the Democratic Party, was appointed deputy prime minister.

The PLA had won two-thirds of the 250 parliamentary seats, drawing support from the rural areas and the 130,000 strong party apparatus. The opposition parties won in the cities and secured the youth vote. PLA leader Ramiz Alia failed to secure election in the capital, Tirana. Prior to the election, a huge statue of Enver Hoxha in the Capital's Skanderbeg Square was toppled in a popular outburst of dissatisfaction with the ruling PLA. Social discontent has not abated since the elections and Ramiz Alia in his capacity as Albanian President is to negotiate with the Independent Trade Union, which has listed 17 demands, including calls for immediate implementation of wide-ranging economic and social changes.

It is generally acknowledged that Albania is in a bad state with a dilapidated industrial infrastructure, inflation at 40%, falling domestic production and a substantial trade deficit amounting to about \$92million or about 18.8% of exports in 1990. According to Gramoz Pashko by July "Albania will have to import \$80 million (£47m) worth of bread grain, if we are going to feed our people." Albania's foreign debt is running at £238million (plus a £148million foreign loan borrowed prior to the April elections). Debt repayment is due to start in July. With the impetus to economic collapse facing the new Albanian coalition, already some 24,000 Albanians have made their way across the sea to Italy or the border to Greece as Europe's latest refugees.

Attempts to bury Marxism doomed to failure

Those who join the ranks of the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) are revolutionary optimists.

Being a revolutionary optimist has very little to do with having a sunny nature as against being pessimistic.

A great number of pessimistic theories are being peddled around Australia and overseas at the moment.

Professional pessimists at a dime a dozen fill the pages of the capitalist press.

Amateurs pessimists crop up, wringing their hands, hankering after by-gone days or sounding like lost souls who've become disorientated in the confusion of events which have bypassed them.

Whichever the category, the end result is the same. Without hope or a goal, they see nothing good. The future is completely black.

But let us return to revolutionary optimism.

One cannot be a revolutionary optimist without being involved in the struggle against oppression or without an ever-lasting consistent battle to grasp the science of Marxism.

The general theories of Marxism were born in struggle against alien views and are a world outlook. They arose from examination of the practice of past struggle and the particular upheavals of the revolutionary period of the 1840s.

Initially they were views advanced by two people, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels.

That they still have to be 'refuted' in the 1990s says a great deal for their truth and durability.

It is also a great reminder to us, if any were needed that there is nothing much wrong in

being holders of a minority viewpoint.

If the viewpoint is true, if it can stand up to the test of practice, those honest people who cannot accept it today will in due course come to realise its correctness and accept it later on.

The great revolutionary aspect of the theories of Marx and Engels (which incidentally guarantees they cannot be wished away, papered over or violently crushed), is that they are in harmony with the forward march of history. For a short period the sheer volume of opposing views may temporarily appear to push them aside. But life soon asserts itself. It has been said they are omnipotent because they are true. Truth stands supreme.

When we speak of Marx's view we speak of an integrated system of ideas, a standpoint if you like, which, when applied to economic and political life, results in a programme for emancipation from the exploitation of capitalism and for realisation of a new system of socialism.

There were other scientists of genius before Marx and Engels who developed fundamental aspects of philosophy, political economy and socialism.

But to them alone went the task of bringing that which stood the test of practice within all fields, together. Moreover they extended and developed these views, crowning them with revolutionary new discoveries.

If we take political economy for example, before Marx there was acceptance of the view that the value of a commodity was determined by the labour time needed for its production. There was understanding that the profit motive was the intention and aim of capitalist production of commodities.

But classical political economy before Marx found itself mystified by the process by which this profit was gained.

To Marx alone goes the honour of discovering the law of surplus value. To derive surplus value, which is the source of profit, the owner of money must "find in the market, a commodity, whose use-value possesses the peculiar property of being a source of value". (*Capital*, Vol.1)

The commodity so described by Marx was labour power. Labour power, the commodity, is sold by the labourer to the owner of money, for wages.

It is put to work, say for the whole week. In current Australian conditions, on average in about half that time the labourer has produced enough values to pay for the week's wages. But the rest of the week must still be worked out. The values created in that extra labour time constitute surplus-value — the source of the capitalist's profit.

We have spoken of this at some length and will later speak of other views of Marx and Engels in the same way because in the great hurry to bury Marxism, it is not only seldom, it is positively rare, that any of its grave-diggers do us the honour of telling us what actually they are burying. It cannot be otherwise of course. Either they have never fully understood or have completely forgotten what the fundamental principles of Marxism are. For us the essential content of Marxism must be discussed. It cannot be glossed over nor distorted.

The same thing can be said about Lenin's views. This great Marxist, leader of the Russian Revolution of 1917, lived in the era following Marx and Engels.

He not only embraced the main economic and political standpoint of Marx and Engels, he extended and further developed that standpoint with genius.

The years leading up to the 1917 Russian Revolution were years when the commodity capitalism examined by Marx and Engels developed into the monopoly capitalism of imperialism.

It would be in utter conflict with the fundamental concepts of Marxism to fail to examine new growing features of the objective world. Changes in the objective world are inevitably reflected in changes within the minds of the men and women who live and work in this reality. Lenin reacted magnificently to the

task of examining all these changes.

He not only examined the economic and political characteristics of his day. He subjected the view which arose from this new stage to close examination. In the process he took part in the task of fully participating in the struggle to change the old way of life.

He reaffirmed the standpoint from which Marx and Engels had examined past history and early capitalism. His starting point was materialist, that is, he accepted that the real world — nature and society — is primary. Our ideas, knowledge, consciousness, are derived from this world and are a reflection of objective reality in our minds.

Moreover, this materialism realised development was a complex of processes. There was nothing ready-made or static. Everything was many-sided in a process of coming into being or going out of existence. Such a viewpoint is called dialectical. Taken together the standpoint is one of dialectical materialism.

Marx, in immortal words in the preface to his *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, applies these principles of dialectical materialism to human society and its history: "In the social production of their existence, men enter into definite, necessary relations, which are independent of their will, namely, relations of production corresponding to a determinate stage of development of their material forces of production.

"The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation on which there arises a legal and political superstructure and to which there correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life-process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but on the contrary it is their social being that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production or — what is merely a legal expression for the same thing — with the property relations within the framework of which they have hitherto operated. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. At that point an era of social revolution begins. With the change in the economic foundation the whole immense superstructure

is more slowly or more rapidly transformed. In considering such transformations it is always necessary to distinguish between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, artistic or philosophic, in short, ideological, forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out.

“Just as one does not judge an individual by what he thinks about himself, so one cannot judge such an epoch of transformation by its consciousness, but, on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained from the contradictions of material life, from the existing conflict between the social forces of production, and the relations of production ...” (This can be compared with Marx’s brief formulation in a letter to Engels dated July 7, 1866: “*Our theory that the organisation of labour is determined by the means of production*”.)

All the pundits who bury Marxism should enter into serious intellectual discussion based precisely on what Marx says here. Spare us the clichés, the second or third-hand view. Discuss Marx’s own words, please. Refute this magnificent summation if you can!

Marxism not only embraces a general standpoint. If it is valid Marxist theory, it must constantly be viewed against all practice and further developed, consistent with the advent of new facts.

Mention has been made of Lenin’s contribution in this regard. Constituting new theoretical achievement in the light of objective development, it has become known as Leninism. Leninism is Marxism in the era of imperialism. Hence the overall philosophy may be generally referred to as Marxism-Leninism.

Lenin’s views therefore have great import for the practitioners of Marxism today.

In his *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, with extraordinary understanding and foresight he observed the underlying economic and political characteristics of capitalism up to the 1920s so brilliantly that they stand still sharp and clear in the 1990s.

He set out for revolutionaries everywhere the essential content of the apparatus of the state both within capitalism and socialism.

He subjected the growth of opportunism within the working class movement to merciless examination. He illustrated how these ideas arose from this particular stage of imperialism.

These three areas of work in particular were to have exceptional significance.

In the debates within the international communist movement in the late '50s and 60s, these propositions were to be the corner-stones of either adherence to or departure from the revolutionary road.

To understand today’s events — both internationally and nationally — it becomes necessary, however briefly, to look at the substance of those debates. In Australia on both sides many positions were taken and many things said and done which did not assist calm resolution of the fundamental questions.

Generally speaking all debate on fundamental questions should proceed in an atmosphere of calm reason, listening and sifting objective reality from views propounded.

Moreover, practice has resulted in a more all-sided consideration of the issues involved by many of the participants at that time.

However it becomes necessary to restate some of the basic matters dealt with by Lenin in particular, to put the subsequent happenings in proper perspective. The substance cannot be glossed over with vague phrases or the generalities used by those who daily try to bury communism.

Lenin defined imperialist characteristics in the following way. Production is concentrated into a few monopoly capitalist combines which have captured the most important sources of raw materials.

The banks have developed from modest intermediary enterprises to fuse with the big industrialists to become huge finance capitalists upon which all economic and political institutions of this society depend.

In the late 19th and 20th century, this finance capital had extended its grubby fingers and grabbed all the hitherto “undeveloped” areas of the world. Now the only way to achieve access to new sources of raw materials or territory was to re-divide the world, either by direct or underlying force.

Lenin carefully examined each new struggle and area of conflict.

He added to the storehouse of knowledge about the political superstructure which arose from this economic base.

He brilliantly established the fundamental character of each form of capitalist state. Whether it be a monarchy, a bourgeois democratic republic, a fascist dictatorship, in essence

its content was that of a class dictatorship, i.e. it upheld the supremacy of the ruling class; in this case, the capitalist class.

Because of the fundamentally repressive, violent nature of this capitalist state with its armies, police and so on he further concluded that its violence must be met and destroyed by the violence of the class which it was exploiting — the working class in alliance with other oppressed sections of the people.

These propositions formed the background to the debates in the communist movement.

They were propositions which had already been put to the test in Russia in 1917, other countries in the wake of the Second World War and in China in 1949.

Understanding well the imperialist nature of the 1914-18 war for a redivision of the world, Lenin led the Russian people to take advantage of the contradictions between the imperialist powers to unite to throw off a system bringing them nothing but starvation and agony.

Against untold difficulty and problems, first under the leadership of Lenin and following his death Stalin the Soviet Union set out to establish the first socialist country.

Of course there were mistakes. In later years Mao Zedong, the leader of the Communist Party of China, discussed the role of mistakes in developing correct practice.

It is not unusual within a broadly correct programme to make one mistake, two mistakes or many more before the experience is summed up, the errors identified, and the correct path taken. In fact more is probably learnt from mistakes than correct work. They are not to be feared.

Mistakes which occur in the process of taking particular steps when building socialism are almost inevitable. The recognition of mistakes made within socialism and proper adjustments to policy in good time as a consequence is one thing. The rejection of the whole system of socialism is entirely different.

Socialism is a system the like of which (the final elimination of exploitation) with the exception of the period of primitive communism has never before existed.

To examine each step, to adjust activity in the light of practice, brings a whole new dimension of understanding to those matters only dealt with in general outline by Marx, Engels and Lenin.

To expect a completely worked-out set of

laws governing the economic and political features of socialism in advance of the practice of socialism would be to stand Marxist dialectical materialism on its head and thereby court disaster. Marx and Engels discovered the laws governing capitalism from an examination of the workings of capitalism. Marxist political economy does equip us to some extent to anticipate steps needed for the details of socialist development. Mistakes will still be made.

Understanding the role of mistakes, their fearless examination and correction, is one of the hallmarks of a serious communist.

Without this style of work no correct advance can be made.

It was a style which in the 1960s a small group of Australian communists led by E.F. Hill strove to take up. Mistakes in the work of Australian communists covering political tasks and form of organisation were publicly acknowledged. Genuine efforts were made to overcome them. Others failed to do so. Some, as experience accumulated, adopted differing positions.

For the present it needs to be said that on the general world scene if there has been any other systematically worked out programme for overcoming the evils of capitalism than by the winning of a socialist system free of great profits on the one hand and devastating poverty on the other, we have failed to hear of it.

If there is such a thing the would-be detractors of Marxism today should introduce it to us, being prepared by argument and practice to demolish the great theories which they try to dismiss with a mere flick of the wrist.

The propositions put forward against the "out-moded" character of Marxism in the debate of 30 years ago were based upon rejection of the fundamental nature of imperialism, a refusal to accept the concept of the basically violent nature of the ruling capitalist class and its bourgeois dictatorship, the need for a working class dictatorship supported by the working people to build socialism, and bound up with these views an estimate of the position of the parties of social democracy or as in the case of Australia, the Australian Labor Party.

The view argued against Lenin's understanding of imperialism which carried with it the ever-present threat of war to redivide spheres of interest in the world was that of basing

revolutionary tactics and policies on striving for peaceful coexistence between nations, particularly between the imperialist and socialist nations.

From this it followed that socialism and capitalism would live peacefully side-by-side. From this it followed that monopoly capitalism had changed its nature. No longer did the oppressed people need to struggle to overthrow a violent state apparatus. Within all the countries oppressed by imperialism, parliamentary politics would transcend class struggle. All that was needed was a majority of parliamentary representatives, with a hoped-for alliance between social-democrats and communists to legislate for socialism.

Little wonder that after 30 odd years of practice based on such a line of fantasy, some of its most ardent supporters are either presiding over the break-up of the Soviet Union or countries of Eastern Europe or holding public wakes to bury their own phantoms in the capitalist countries. The result has brought horror and dismay to many sincere dedicated communists who believed 30 years ago that the Communist Parties had always been and would always be 100 percent.

It is essential that each Communist Party within its own national boundaries, determines its own road to socialism. This is one important principle emerging strengthened from the debates of those years.

The roads to socialism will be infinitely varied. But just as the natural laws governing the rotation of the earth can be positively proclaimed as objective truth, so can the general principles, the underlying laws of social change only be understood if based upon the science of Marxism. It is these laws which must be applied to the national features of each of the world's countries. The basic laws stand unaltered. Their form will be expressed in great variety.

Confidence in this science allows us to conclude that if incorrect paths are temporarily taken even though disaster may occur, sooner or later, new forces will enter the stage, look at the experiences of recent years, sum up the practice and adjust policy accordingly. It must be so. The people who continue to suffer from exploitation and oppression will demand it. Where there is suffering, there will be struggle and rebellion.

No amount of endless debate from afar

will turn those overseas who rejected the path of Marxism to change course.

But the people of each country based on the practice of their daily lives will eventually do so. If need be they will advance new leaders from their ranks who will correctly analyse the real nature of capitalism, so-called Western democracy and freedom and finally sort out their real friends and enemies. In the process they will distinguish genuine Marxism from pseudo-Marxism. The time and the circumstances are decisions for each nation free from outside interference.

It is necessary to return to an important field of Lenin's work.

Because he lived and worked in the era of imperialism, a great deal of Lenin's theoretical work is concerned with the labour movement of that time and the development of opportunism within the working class movement. In many important works — *What is to be Done?*, *"Left-wing" Communism*, etc. — he set out clearly the need for a strict line of demarcation between reformist social democratic theories and communist theory, the former being limited within capitalism, the latter calling for a complete change of system. At the same time he called for the utmost unity in struggle of the people who suffer under the capitalist system, irrespective of whether they follow reformism or communism.

Lenin analysed the position of the Australian Labor Party in 1913. He designated the ALP as a liberal-bourgeois party concerning itself with the development of a central capitalist state, not as a socialist party striving for socialism.

Many years ago the Communist Party in Australia under the leadership of L. Sharkey had described the Labor Party as a "two class" party.

This incorrect description went unchallenged for some years, until E.F. Hill corrected his previous support of that position to substantiate the view that the ALP is a parliamentary party administering capitalism.

The fact that it has electoral support from many workers in no way alters its basic role.

Central to the proposal for "peaceful coexistence" and "peaceful transition to socialism" was the theme of reconciliation between the Labor Party and the communists in Australia. According to the view accepted by a majority of communists in the debates inter-



E.F. (Ted) Hill addressing a Melbourne public meeting in 1986.

nationally, a common platform and parliamentary representation of these two parties would legislate for socialism.

An incorrect evaluation of the Labor Party was bound up with this proposition.

The Australian labour movement has been greatly influenced by British trade unionism. Britain's early imperialist development enabled certain sections of British workers to be bribed to support that country's position. This opportunism which saw the interests of the exploiting class and the workers as being identical was carried over into Australia.

Examining the practice and make-up of the ALP, E.F. Hill and the group of communists who established the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) in 1964 concluded that the Labor Party as an institution had set out to build and administer capitalism in Australia. The absolute limit to which its policy could aspire would be that of winning some reforms within this capitalism. Irrespective of the desires and hopes of the bulk of the Labor Party's membership, basically it stood for capitalism.

To seek political reconciliation with this party would be to seek to reconcile the ideas of reformism with revolutionary change. In the final analysis it would mean confining all struggle within the surrounds of parliament and

the existing system. It would completely subordinate communism to reformism.

Ultimately it would spell betrayal of those oppressed and exploited, who yearned for a change of system.

Unity in struggle to change the system with members of the Labor Party who genuinely seek to serve the mass of the people is another matter altogether.

E.F.Hill's correct estimation of the character of the Labor Party together with the repudiation of the decisions abandoning Marxism on the international scene were significant for the direction of class struggle in Australia.

From the summing-up of experience of Labor governments in office in Australia, the C.P.A.(M-L) has been able over the intervening years to develop tactics to further the understanding of Labor's role in this country.

Central to real progress, to victories against foreign domination for national independence, for real advancement in living standards, is an understanding of the direction of the correct path for people's struggle.

Reliance on the Labor Party and parliament over the years, time and time again, has resulted in betrayal of the people and often disastrous defeats.

The correct tactic for future victory demands the people rely upon their own activity outside parliament. At the same time to help more and more understand the real position of the Labor Party as an institution administering capitalism, it is necessary that Labor should remain in office. Otherwise it moves to Opposition benches, rebuilds credibility which it loses whilst in office, and the movement for real change is postponed accordingly. Experience indicates this is the correct path for exposing parliament as an institution of the capitalist dictatorship in spite of its democratic appearance.

As the years have passed, some of those who tried to impose the ideas of peaceful transition to socialism upon the communist movement more and more vigorously opposed class struggle. In the last seven years of Labor Party government in Australia, some have become the most ardent advocates of "consensus" and "restructuring" within the working class movement. As more and more inroads into living standards have taken place under these slogans, the base of the advocates has narrowed and narrowed.

Preaching false ideas about Marxism, they then decry the fact that there is no support for these false ideas, claiming it is Marxism which is refuted. Now many years later summing up the practice of the intervening years, many are re-examining the situation and setting out to study Marxism anew.

Marxism has never been refuted or rejected. Those who deserted Marxism becoming apologists for capitalism, seeking to dampen down class struggle, are the ones whose only possible fate is rejection.

Unable to accept the reality of the predatory nature of imperialism they are unable to see and join the great movement against the largely foreign-based monopolies and for national independence developing under their very noses. They talk of the Australian people being without hope. It is they who are without hope or faith in the future.

The experience of the C.P.A. (M-L) is entirely different. Certainly mistakes have been made. Reference has already been made to some. There are others. When they occur, if we honestly sum up experience, strive, without fear, to adjust policies, the Australian people benefit

and the C.P.A. (M-L) becomes a bit more mature. There is a very long way to go. The Australian movement of struggle basically for independence and socialism has taken some important first steps. It is an honour to be part of the process. But they are only the first steps.

No one person or group has a monopoly of Marxism. The most that can be hoped for is to strive continuously for a better grasp of this revolutionary science. In the final analysis the Australian people will decide what is or is not correct leadership in all their struggles.

We can say though that each passing day adds to confidence and optimism.

The turmoil and instability throughout the world and within Australia bear powerful witness that it takes more than the subjective desire for peaceful coexistence to hold back the reality of imperialism. The fundamental laws of capitalism, the laws of surplus value, the law of maximum profit, the anarchy of production, remain firmly in place. They are behind all the chaos both here and overseas.

Many write to the C.P.A. (M-L), send splendid financial assistance and the most experienced join the Party's ranks. The achievements may still be small. They only occur if we continue without fear or favour to serve the Australian people and strive to master the ideas of Marxism.

These latter are readily available in books in bookshops listed on the back cover. We would suggest all who can obtain them do so.

There can be no solutions to the many international or national problems without the fullest participation of the majority of the people.

Once this fact is ignored, once any ideas of elitism or any divorcing themselves from the people creep into a political party's style of work, that party and the revolutionary movement suffer serious consequences.

Whether the immediate task is that of challenging capitalism or striving to build socialism, reliance on the wisdom and invincibility of the majority of the people is the magic ingredient for victory. They will determine the steps and the pace for change.

Marxist theory and practice is inexorably bound up with this truth. There can be no departure from it.

On the Third World side, against the forces of war by us

(Speech at the central meeting of the 1st of May 1991)

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Last year, it was necessary to carry away the false illusion into the so called democratic revolution in Eastern Europe.

One speaks of the historical winning of liberalism versus marxism. But, in this triumph of imperialism reveals its rottenness and unrepairable bankruptcy. In Eastern Europe, the Velvet Counter-revolution indicates already unemployment, misery, chauvinism, racism and fascism: as a result it provokes the collapse of the production and the domination of the foreign economical interests and it leads to chaos, destabilization and civil war. Indeed, this is the beautiful triumph of capitalism and social-democracy.

By joining the imperialistic camp the Soviet Union have endorsed the imperialistic aggression on the 17th of January, the first battle of the new hundred years war. The Hungarian, Czech-slovakian and Bulgarian, by participating on the side of the allied forces against Iraq. In the third world this new aggression of the new world order of Bush and Mitterrand is recolonisation, supported by the most barbaric state-terrorism on the basis of hunger and epidemics. A beautiful performance of triumphal liberalism.

As every historical event, this war in the Gulf has surfaced essential truths, stayed hidden until now.

First truth. All imperialist countries are ready to use the most sophisticated technology against the third world in inhuman and barbaric state-terrorism methods, as they did against Iraq.

More than 110.000 sorties, 200.000 ton of TNT was dropped in six weeks.

Since the first day of the allied bombardment electric powerplants of Baghdad were destroyed. Without electric power the watersupply was stopped; as a consequence of this epidemics spread, hundred of children died of diarrhoea. According to Ramsay Clark, who visited Iraq, "the bombardments of allied forces are barbaric, brutal and racist. Their aim was the destruction of the civilian and economic life of Iraq." Civil nuclear reactors have been bombarded with the danger of a new Tchernobyl. Cruise missiles, petroleum bombs has been experimented on human lives.

This criminal war get full support of the socialist parties. On the day of the aggression, Willockx declared: "Our effort must be on small scale, defensive and humanitarian. We hope this military action will be short and successful." This means for him of 200.000 ton of TNT. For the socialist party this is a short and swift method to achieve victory.

On the 22th of February Iraq accepted without preconditions to withdraw from Kuwait. But thousand of Iraqi soldiers, with the white flag in their hands while surrendering, were shoot down, a convoy of 10.000 Iraqi soldiers, while leaving Kuwait, were bombarded.

After the victory of the aggressors, the embargo against Iraq still is continuing. Famine is threatening. "People will die in thousands", according to an American doctor who has visited Iraq.

Second truth. This criminal war get support in the USA of both political parties, the Republicans and the Democrats, and in Europe of all traditional parties, the social-democrats, liberals, nationalists, conservatives and christian-democrats. This western democracy is a pluralistic one as long as support and defence of the imperialistic interests are respected.

Third truth. The conditions of surrender, imposed on Iraq, indicates that we go back into the old colonial slavery in the third world.

Iraq must destroy all his chemical weapons and missiles, while the colonial powers develop and produce new weapons for massive destructions.

The West refuses that Iraq develop any nuclear weapon. The colonial powers possess thousands of nuclear weapons and their ally Israel has also nuclear weapons. The Israeli state has publicly threaten to use this weapon against Iraq.

As a result of this criminal war that destroyed completely Iraq, the allies demand war reparation to pay damages inflicted on Kuwait. Therefor they will take over an important part of the oil income of Iraq.

Fourth truth. The Gulf war teach us that "human rights and democracy", in the mouth of the imperialists, are a bitter joke to mask state terrorism, slaughter, assassinations and colonial domination.

Bush condemned Saddam Hussein at the time he hold the hostages. "The Iraqis, said Bush, have committed barbaric acts. I don't believe Adolf Hitler ever participated in this sort of brutality." While we all known the hostages were in hotels, relatively in comfortable conditions. When Bush was bombarding Baghdad and Bassoarah, killing thousands of civilians, he spook of a clean and chirurgical war for law and democracy. We are back to the time of Leopold II appealing "the struggle against barbarians".

Fifth truth. The "right of intervention" is nowadays the motto of imperialism to deny the sovereignty of the third world countries and to destroy international law and to replace it by arbitrary colonialism.

Israel and the allies, using some Kurds as their agents, try to overthrow the nationalist regime of Saddam Hussein. The Israeli government requests the USA to give military assistance to the Kurdish rebellion, because "the genocide of the Kurds is no longer an internal affair", according to the sionists. All these murderers - Bush, Mitterrand, Major - claim their right of intervention in the name of humanity. The so called free media accepted for six weeks censorship and military disinformation: now suddenly they are in Kurdistan reporting day and night about human misery. Their reports become lies. They refused to bring out the horror of bombardments killing 60.000 Iraqi citizens and 150.000 soldiers; in the same way they refused to report of the forced deportation of one million Yemenis workers out of Saudi-Arabia. They didn't report of the situation of 1.100.000 refugees arriving in Jordan. Now they want us to believe that the Kurdish people are in danger of extermination; but in fact the Kurds are used in a criminal way by CIA and the Mossad in an pro-American uprising.

Sixth truth. The Gulf war didn't brought any independence or sovereignty of Kuwait, in reality it became the 51th American state.

With the destruction of Iraq the position of the Palestinian struggle become weaker. Today, the imperialists don't even mention any more the UN-resolution 181 that stipulates the

partition of Palestine. Bush will impose to the Palestinians an American made solution that lead to the creation of a mini-state without any effective defense capacity.

Seventh truth. The Western world is ready, by mobilising his technology and capital to establish his empire of terror and exploitation: Imperialism becomes inhuman and diabolic and his existence is incompatible with the survival of billions of people in the third world.

In the Middle-East a second war has yet started : a war that opposes the USA en the new European superpower. Weaker then Germany and Japan in the economic field, the USA sought deliberately the War in the Gulf. Their goal consisted in snatching the enormous markets of the Middle East, thanks to their military supremacy. The USA reckons to monopolize the market of hundreds of billions of dollars : contracts of at least 40 billions for armement are already under negotiation; contracts for rebuilding are estimated at 100 billion dollars and the Americans will rob away the agricultural market of the Europeans. To hold the USA for the only barbarian and to regret the inability of Europe, is no longer conform to reality. France, Great-Brittain and Germany participated fully in the war. They discovered an occassion to present Europe as a future polical and military power.

United Europe under the leadership of Germany will become a formidable warmachinery against the third world and East-Europe countries.

The great victory of the western barbarism in the Gulf and the lot of noise caused by the duty of intervention, are announcing new wars to come.

Nowadays, French and German generals do speak in public of the possibility of a military European intervention in a conflict between Turkey and Bulgaria or between Rumania and Hungary, or even in a civil war in Yugoslavia or Czechoslovakia as in the Baltic States and Armenia.

Belgium and France send troops to Ruwanda : this may be considered of a first rapid European deployment force. An advisor of the French marine declares : "The crises in many parts of Africa may be considered as a potential threat of the security."(31) Those countries who do persist in the socialist road, mainly the Democratic Socialist Peoples Republic of Korea and Cuba, do find themselves also in the focus. The Democratic Republic of Korea builds socialism in total independence and faces one of the most vicious fascist regimes of the planet, South-Korea, a country comforted by the presence of 50.000 American soldiers and 1000 nuclear ogives. On the 12th of April, the Council of the Chiefs of the American general-staff indicates in a report, that the Korean peninsula forms the region with the highest risk of a limited groundwar after the Gulf." It adds that it could send, if necessary, 200.000 American soldiers. On the same 12th of April, the Minister of Defence of South-Korea enounced the possibility for the South to launch a surprise attack to annihilate the nuclear installations of North-Korea. (32) We have to put forward that the whole nationalistic population, in the North as well as in the South, wants the reunification of the nation in full independence and by peaceful means; this implicates the leaving of the American occupation forces. The Korean people, in the North as well as in the South, needs a large international support and in all European countries, soon will be organized solidarity marches in support of the reunification of Korea.

In Cuba the Americans try to destabilize a socialist regime that has the total support of the masses. The political counter-revolution is lead by a so called "Democratic Platform", where in a social-democrat party plays the first violin.

We may also expect a higher level intervention of the American army in Peru. Between 85 and 90 the prices have been multiplied bib 1.200.000. The production collapsed by 25

percent. 88 percent of the active population are jobless or suffer of under-employment. The guerilla, started in 1980 by the Communist Gauds of Peru, nowadays spread over nearly the whole country and the Americans are scared by the spectre of the victory of Sendero Luminoso. A large scale intervention of the USA becomes more and more probably.

And, there are a few other countries where the revolutionary struggle threatens the bases of the imperialist domination, such like the Philippines, Eritrea and Ethiopia.

When Bush called for a new crusade against the Third World, the environmentalists were the sole parliamentarian fraction to express some anti-imperialist positions. But as they are so easily impressed by the pressure of bourgeois-propaganda, they proved to be totally unable to oppose consequently the imperialist barbarism. Their main thesis was that the imperialistic democracy was correct in destroying the Iraqi dictatorship, but that it should be done through a very strict embargo. "The force of our democracy", Ecolo told in september, "is to be able to oppose totalitarian regimes using non-violent strategies, like an embargo. Our weakness would be to adopt the same violent methods as our enemies."

In the heat of the American aggression, Agalev titles: "They just know the language of military madness. Bush, Mitterand and also Saddam Hussein and Yasser Arafat". (40) At the moment the technology of destruction is crushing Iraq in such a barbarian way, the environmentalists continued repeating Bush is still more democratic than Saddam. In the middle of allied butchery, Agalev judges opportune opposing "the rather democratic system of the United States and the complete absence of democracy in Iraq". It "condemns Saddam Hussein as a brutal and bloodthirsty dictator without any respect of democracy and human rights." (41) But not one blessing word for the respected president Bush, the big protector of animals rights.

Today, the environmentalists support the creation of colonial enclaves and justify the limited sovereignty of countries of the third world.

They sustain Eyskens when he plaids for military intervention as a duty in the name of human rights (43). Today some speak about "the duty of interference for human rights" in the same way as, a hundred years ago, others spoke about the "duty of civilizing barbarian peoples".

Last year struggles teach our Party 4 lessons.

First, we have to make a special effort to diffuse two important Party-texts: our analysis of the trade-union movement called "The Future is ours" and our analysis of the Soviet Union called "The Velvet Counter-Revolution".

The entire bourgeoisie is fixing our minds on the idea of the "failure of communism", smacking with Timisoara's and Tomahawks. She imposes the idea of her eternal triumph and of the foolishness of socialist hope, merely by hiding the truth, spreading lies, terrorizing the revolutionaries and intimating the progressives. But for who's making a materialist analysis of the world events, for who's staying on the side of the working class and the oppressed masses, it is clear that only marxism-leninism can shape the socialist future of humanity, that marxism-leninism is the unique and invincible tool for the oppressed humanity. In the most recent years, our Party stressed particularly on the quality of analytical work, study and information. Its our advantage to the nauseating demagogy invading all the parties of imperialism.

Since two years our Party is intensively attacked by all bourgeois-parties. We consider this as a big honour. And we can say that through the struggle we acquired a very strong ideological and political unity, clearly contrasting with the intrigues, the fractionally struggles and disunity that overwhelms the live of all bourgeois-parties.

This unity was forged around four documents.

The book on the "Société Générale" which permits us to reach a better understanding of our immediate enemy, the belgian big-bourgeoisie.

The documents pertaining to the Gulf war which draw the orientation for our solidarity with the Third World.

The book on the belgian trade-union movement that learns us how to unite the working class for the struggle.

And finally, the book "The Velvet Counter-Revolution" that summarizes the discussions on the Fourth Congress of our Party of Labour of Belgium, hold in november 1990. 210 delegates met during six days. The profound discussions led to a nearly unanimous position on our analysis of the degeneration in the Soviet Union.

The Party today is very well armed to make significant progresses.

Next, we need to perform deep political work, in the first place in our own ranks, by fighting still existing political inertness and opportunism, but mainly by more actively seeking debates with all the progressives.

Indeed, being well-armed for the struggle doesn't automatically mean that everybody is waging it effectively. Facing the inexhaustible reserves of demagogy and dupery owned by the bourgeoisie, we only can advance through intense political work.

If only few members disagree with the official Party-positions we may not say that everybody has already fully grasped the analyses neither that everybody is using them to remould its own erroneous ideas. We still have to eradicate political laziness and laissez-aller among some comrades. We will wage this struggle without failure, because the situation is favourable to clean up opportunism in the Party and to realize effective revolutionary changes.

After the Beijing events of june 1989, Vandenbroucke (the chairman of the socialist party) declared that the PTB-leaders had to be ashamed and to hide themselves 100 meters under the ground. This same Vandenbroucke has now his deign place of little butcher, siding the big butcher Bush. The Bushes and Vandenbrouckes are very arrogant, but their arrogance is based on lies, despotism and terror. There is no reason for us to be impressed by them. In this tremendously changing world the honest militants and cadres of the trade-union movement, the socialist and environmentalist parties are raising a lot of questions and worrying for the future. We should not keeping on, self-satisfied, trumpeting that we are right. We are very well armed with arguments, proves and facts, analyses and studies to engage in serious discussions, point by point, with all those who really wish to commit themselves to the struggle against a to unjust world.

Since one year, subscriptions to our weekly, Solidaire, increased by 12%. Militant sale progressed by 13%. We have sold 4.000 brochures on the Gulf War. Proves are there that important progresses are quiet possible, but we are far from exploiting all the possibilities. After having put a lot of time and forces in analysis-work the last two years, we now have to resolutely shift towards intense mass-work. We set as objective an increment of 25% of our militant activities for the next year.

In the third place, we have to double our energy invested in concrete, simple activities within reach of the masses. We have to fight the sectarian attitude that refuses to acknowledge the by times very low political level and the political brutishness organized by the bourgeoisie.

In this field too we have made promising experiences pointing out the paths to be followed. I'll only mention two of them.

In Third World Solidarity work, we have been developing concrete activities enabling us to reach a broad audience. The myth of western supremacy clashes, when people meet with Third World people in flesh and blood, with man, women, children who suffer and who

struggle. Doctors of our Party have done excellent work in Palestine, El Salvador, Burkina Faso and other countries and the groups supporting them here also performed very well in raising funds and spreading out information. Young Belgians went to Palestine and back home they propagated the Palestinian cause. Six Palestinian students, girls and boys, visited Belgium, went to families, spoke about their live in tens of schools, youth-houses, cultural associations. We are organizing exposures in an increasing number of countries of Latin America, Africa and Asia through which people can apprehend the social realities and meet activists in the political and trade-union sectors.

In trade-union work, the militants of our Party were able to acknowledge the aspirations of all the workers to democratically elect shop-stewards who will defend them courageously. They were able to link up with a hundred shop-stewards launching the Call of the 138 for democratic elections in militant trade-unions. Over the five thousand men and women from the working class signed the Call for direct elections of shop-stewards and for making it possible for every trade-unionist to candidate in the social elections. We ask you to continue that work of collecting signatures. There are several examples of trade-union activists who were able to make it, through successful mobilization of the workers.

Fourth lesson: our Party passed very well through the recent trials. We now have to strengthen the Party-spirit, the proudness to belong to a vanguard Party and we need to be very active in welcoming in our ranks all those who are aspiring for socialism.

Facing the devastating storms that are ravaging the world, facing the confusion that overwhelms so many progressive militants, we are in a position to state that only the militants of the PTB stood firmly, to defend the cause of socialism, to defend the anti-imperialist combat of the Third World, to inflexibly fight capitalist exploitation.

Thinking over what is happening now in the East and in the Soviet Union, watching the ravages in the Gulf, many people these days come to us saying: after all, we have to avow that the PTB was correct. There is certainly a greater openness for the Party.

A shop-steward of an important factory wrote recently in *Solidaire*: "Before, I worked alone. I was angry with what was happening in our steel sector but meanwhile I also found myself so powerless in changing things. My individualism prevailed. It's the PTB who convinced me of the necessity to be politically organized in order to be efficient. It's the PTB who learned me that there are two antagonistic classes and that nobody can sit on both sides. My joining the Party was a very well considered choice". Many workers who for years had to fight alone, like this comrade, facing so many treasons, got lost in individualism, discouragement and sadness. It's a duty for every Party-member to convince those comrades to join us as it is a right for every militant and conscious worker to adhere to the Party. Passivity in recruitment-work does not only harm the Party, but harms as well the so many vanguard-workers exhausting their forces vainly and becoming demoralized in the absence of a marxist-leninist party. Our estimate is that we should be able to increase the Party-forces by 20 to 25 % next year.

I could finish with this words of Fidel Castro: "The revolutionary ideas are far from being vanquished. They go through difficult times, but they will come back invigorated. And the more injustice, exploitation, famine, chaos there is in this world, the sooner they will come back. And we who are the standard-bearers of those ideas, we have to carry them very high for history gave us that task." (44)

But I prefer to close with a lesser known person, a simple Jordanian teacher who had to flee away from Koweit after the American aggression started. On January 18, Ibrahim declared at the Jordanian border: "I shall nourish my son with the hate for the Americans as if it was milk. Then years from now, when everybody in Bagdad will be dead, he will fight on his turn. I'll learn him to hate America, to hate Germany, to hate France, to hate Great-Britain. And if necessary, its over 100 year that we shall win". (45)

Denmark : Robbing for the revolution ?

At the beginning of May, a Copenhagen court convicted seven former activists of the K.A.G. of offenses including robbery and possessions of arms. The seven received prison sentences of as long as ten years following an eight-month trial. In the absence of other sources of information we reproduce unedited a transcript of a report by Isabella Stasi on the Channel 4 series "Europe Express". It was first broadcast in September 1990 entitled "*Robbing for the Revolution ?*".

Isabella Stasi: While most of their hippy friends just talked about revolution in the Sixties, seven members of an extreme Maoist group went onto to rob banks to pay for terrorism - at least that is the charge.

This week in Copenhagen they are calling it the trial of the century : seven Danes accused of armed robbery, attempted kidnapping and the murder of a policeman. On the surface they were the pillars of society : middle class men with respectable jobs like Nils (Jorgensen ?), a 36 year old social worker and Carlson (Nielsen?), a 37 year old council official. Like most educated Danes they were once dedicated but harmless left-wingers. Now it is alleged the group killed and robbed to support international terrorism.

The revelations have come as a shock to the man who was once their friend and political mentor, Gottfred Appel. (As he says) " I wanted them to oppose US troops in Vietnam and repression in Africa. I didn't expect them to rob, or play soldiers."

Isabella Stasi: We tend to think of Copenhagen as one of Europe's most progressive and liberal cities, and the Danes as the broad-minded of Europeans. It's an image mirrored in a small corner of the city, a self-proclaimed hippy state known as *Christiana*.

Nine hundred adults, eighty children and three hundred dogs and thirty-seven horses live here, rent and tax free, but the police and government turn a blind eye. There would be an outcry if this symbol of Danish free-thinking came under threat.

In the sixties, its residents were the vanguard of the Danish Left; hundreds of small political groups were formed: feminists, peace activists, anarchists. Gottfred Appel, a prominent university lecturer at the time set up his own communist group in a house near-by.

Gottfred Appel: " It was a great place in its day."

Isabella Stasi: Do you think this is where it all began ?

Gottfred Appel: " I wouldn't say that, but the group's politics were founded here."

Isabella Stasi: Those beliefs were based on Maoism, Mao Zedong was one of the heroes of the sixties and an inspiration for left-wing activists worldwide. Appel visited China at the height of the Cultural Revolution. He returned determined to bring the revolution to Denmark.

Gottfred Appel: " I was in Tiananmen Square with a million others. Red Guards marched by, waving Little Red Books. It was a fantastic sight. I could see Chou En-lai, Lin Piao and Chairman Mao. I didn't recognise its political significance."

Isabella Stasi: " It was from here [the commune] that Appel and his group promoted left-wing causes. They organised demonstrations against the US presence in Vietnam and picketed cinema's screening American war movies. At a World Bank meeting in Copenhagen, thousands took to the street in protest at the exploitation of the Third World.

In the Seventies, Appel's group took up the Palestinian cause. A crucial turning point came when Appel was summoned to Iraq. In Baghdad, he met members of the PFLP - a radical terrorist splinter group of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation."

Gottfred Appel: "At the meeting they asked us a direct question: Do you want to join us in covert operations ?"

Isabella Stasi: Appel's comrades forced him to make a choice: talk about revolution, or make one ? When he rejected violence, the others formed a break-away group. A bitter and resentful Appel was left-out in the cold. The group now called the K.A.G. set up new headquarters and changed tactics.

Gert Rasmussen, ex-KAG activist recalls: " We were an illegal group, ready to do anything."

Everything ?

Gert Rasmussen: "Yes. Everything."

Even Kidnapping and armed robbery ?

Gert Rasmussen: " Yes. Anything you could possibly imagine. Our leaders gave the orders according to the what the situation demanded."

Isabella Stasi: Over the next ten years they allegedly carried out a series of armed robberies including the biggest in Danish history - One million pounds stolen from a Copenhagen post office. A policeman was shot dead during the getaway. The murder made criminal history in Denmark and shocked the nation.

The harmless left-wing activists had grown up into sophisticated criminals. Now it is plain that their profits was sent to the Middle East to pay for terrorism.

Gert Rasmussen: "They went too far. It was pure terror. Their motives weren't political at all."

Isabella Stasi: The Danish police were out of their depth, they were used to dealing with petty crime not armed robbery. It was not until last year [1989] they got the evidence they needed to bring the group to trial. In a small flat in suburban Copenhagen they found plans for the robberies and enough weaponry to equip a small army: anti-tank rocket launches and landmines. Surely more than would be needed to rob a bank ?

Kurt Olsen, Police Inspector : " It was a great find. We really don't know what they were used for. Maybe we'll never know."

Isabella Stasi: The trial began on Monday and its revelations are astounding a country where the crime rate are among the lowest in Europe. Two of the defendants have now pleaded guilty to carrying out one of the robberies but the others are refusing to talk.

What is being billed as the most complex case in Danish legal history could drag on for up to two years. The prisoners are being held in Copenhagen's high security (Vestvet?) prison. To most Danes they are common prisoners but to some they are deluded idealists. Do you have a message for your former comrades ?

Gottfred Appel: " I'd tell them : you should have known better, and let politics play a bigger role. If you'd thought more about your actions, then maybe you wouldn't be in prison today. But I'm sorry you're there, even if you did behave like animals."



FROM
THE
PRESS

Peruvian Maoists start to penetrate deep into capital

INDEPENDENT 25 MAY

From Simon Strong
in Lima

THE FUNERAL of the first foreign nun killed in Peru by the Maoist guerrillas known as Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) is to take place today, as fears mount that the rebels are stepping up attempts to force religious organisations to drop their social work activities.

Sister Irene McCormack, an Australian, was shot in the head along with four others after a "people's trial" in the highland village of Huasahuasi in Junin department. In the same week, another guerrilla column in Junin assassinated a provincial director of the Catholic Church's national charity, and a Canadian evangelical pastor, Norman Tattersall, was gunned down in front of the Lima headquarters of the US-based aid organisation, World Vision, of which he was interim director.

The killings fell during the week of the 11th anniversary of Shining Path's "people's war", which has brought nearly half the country under a state of emergency and caused at least 22,000 deaths. While continuing to advance in rural areas, the rebels are also penetrating deep into the industrial and shantytown districts of Lima.

The churches are often perceived as the state's front line. High up the desert valley of San Juan de Lurigancho, where an eighth of Lima's seven million people live, two shots rang out in the night as Father Robert Gloisten raised the chalice towards the roof of the reed-built chapel. The congregation kept its eyes fixed on the chalice. In a zone dominated by the insurgents, the shots were probably somebody being "liquidated".

Later, as the priest drove to-

wards the main road, his headlights picked up the flash of knives and guns as 15 youths blocked it with rocks. "Senderistas," he cursed, spun the car and drove off-road to the tarmac highway 100 metres further on.

The priest, a US Catholic, said: "Sendero's penetration is no longer just a matter of burning hammers-and-sickles on Lima's hillside. It is infiltrating the church and popular organisations and is openly active by day."

As in other parts of Peru, police in San Juan de Lurigancho have retreated in the face of Shining Path's advance. Only three police stations are still manned, close to the valley mouth, and police rarely stray off the main road. At night that, too, is abandoned. Across the country, at least 400 stations are deserted.

Although Mr Gloisten himself has not received direct threats, religious workers say they are not uncommon. Two other priests, a nun and four Mormons have been killed. Shining Path, whose leader is a former philosophy lecturer, Abimael Guzman, views religious organisations as a threat to its political power and all development aid as counter-revolutionary.

The latest deaths have sent shock waves through religious and secular development groups, which have withdrawn foreign workers from the countryside and halted many projects. The Lima-based Anglican bishop, Alan Winstanley, was yesterday reviewing the future of three social and pastoral projects in the Pamplona district of the capital. He said: "We

may have to withdraw the foreigners until we see which way things go. The pastors say there is a lot of unrest at the moment."

Shining Path's grip on the Lima hinterland is severely damaging industry and business. El Pueblo, a luxury hotel on the fringe of the city, where Margaret Thatcher's former adviser, Sir Alan Walters, said a year ago at a conference that Shining Path seemed to him nothing more than a "slippery slope", is a typical victim of the rebels' expansion. It is fighting for survival after the resignation of its former manager, who fled after death threats.

The hotel's union, which regularly disrupts services, issued a statement loaded with Maoist rhetoric about the "rotten structures" of society and its "putrid bureaucratic capitalism". It accused the owners of sucking the workers' blood. The new manager, Jimmy Schuller, of Swiss origin and the main shareholder, said: "The workers have to take care of me. Nobody else will. They know that if this place closes they won't find a job anywhere else."

Fresh graffiti outside Lima factories, which are protected by gun turrets and electric fences, laud "Chairman Gonzalo", alias Abimael Guzman. Shining Path forces businesses to pay up to £20,000 with threats of sabotage and assassination. Police, who were close to capturing "Gonzalo" earlier this year, admit they have once again lost his scent.

Asked whether Shining Path could one day topple the state, a former minister of the interior, Agustin Mantilla, said: "If things go on as they are now, if we do not realise the danger we are facing, I believe [the answer is] yes."

Sendero's Law in Peru's Shantytowns

By CAROL GRAHAM

LIMA—On my most recent visit to Huascar, a Lima shantytown where I have conducted research for several years, there was a cadaver lying in the middle of the main "street." The dead body in and of itself was not so notable. After all, Huascar is a town with dirt streets, and without running water, sewer systems, electricity or garbage-collection services. Dead dogs on the streets are as common as the dozens of live dogs, chickens and poorly clad children. What was remarkable was the nonchalant reaction of most of the settlers when questioned about the cadaver. "Oh, Sendero killed him," was the common response. "He was just a corrupt customs official."

One would have thought they were referring to the local police arresting a teen-ager for petty vandalism, rather than the brutal Shining Path guerrilla movement performing an act of "justice" by executing a fellow townsman and leaving his body in the center of town. In the cycle of violence, economic deterioration and political chaos that characterizes today's Peru, perhaps the most frightening development is the extent to which corruption and violence have eroded state credibility and the rule of law.

In Huascar—one of many similar towns in which more than half of Lima's population of seven million live—violence and Sendero have become just another aspect of the difficult day-to-day survival process. The lack of basic sanitation, electricity and water services in Lima shantytowns means that diseases such as typhoid and tuberculosis are widespread. Huascar, for example, has one of the highest rates of diarrhea in the world. Accounts of babies dying of malnutrition because their mothers cannot afford the car fare to get to the clinic are not uncommon. It takes little imagination to understand why the cholera epidemic that broke out in Peru in February spread so quickly.

Yet perhaps the most important basic services that are missing are justice and protection from crime. Where state officials are present, they are known for their corruption and inefficiency rather than anything else. They often attempt to extort bribes from poor migrants, who are both naive and desperately in need of state services such as land titles. "The only good thing about Sendero is that they kill the corrupt state officials," one Huascar woman told me. She had a history of frustrating experiences with the state, including one in which she sold all her belongings in order to buy title to her land—only to discover

later that the title she had been sold was fraudulent.

Huascar has no police protection. The police abandoned their nearby post a year ago because they felt too vulnerable to Sendero. One woman recounted how only a few hundred yards away from her house, she could see the Senderistas dynamiting electricity pylons—which they do to black out Lima. She also recounted how after voting in the June elections she ran home hiding her hands so that Sendero would not know that she had voted; voters' index fingers are blotted with indelible ink to prevent double-voting, and Sendero had threatened to "chop the index fingers off" all those who voted.

In urban areas the group is careful to kill only community members whom the towns-

The Americas

people hold in disrepute, such as the corrupt customs official. Sendero also precludes any independent organization against the movement. The group allows the traditional neighborhood organizations, mothers' clubs and communal kitchens to conduct business as usual, but there is always a Sendero member present at all these meetings.

Up to this point, Sendero has allowed nongovernmental and health-care organizations to continue to operate, as long as they do not "meddle." On the days that Sendero is staging its famous *paros armados*, or armed strikes, these groups are advised by the townspeople to stay home, advice that they wisely follow. Huascar increasingly is being controlled by Sendero and, in the absence of any state attention or protection, the people have little choice but to tolerate the guerrillas.

For the poor in such communities as Huascar, justice means the opportunity to work to improve their condition, as well as protection from crime and terrorism. Poverty is nothing new in Peru, although it has reached an unprecedented scale and severity: Per-capita incomes are now at levels comparable with 30 years ago. Yet most striking about today's poverty is the virtual absence of opportunity. Only 9% of Lima's economically active population is "adequately employed": defined as earning the equivalent of the 1967 minimum wage or \$68 a month (the 1990 minimum wage is one-third of that—\$19.75).

Education is no longer an out. Most of Peru's universities are hopelessly underfunded and understaffed—and infiltrated by Shining Path as well. A university degree is at best a ticket to drive a taxi—usually a 1965 Volkswagen bug that is missing half its hinges. Even the middle class can no longer afford to send its children to college. For the poor, a high-school education has become a luxury.

In today's Peru, the chances of working one's way up within the system and according to the law are few and far between. One observer, Francisco Thoumi, has noted that the social and physical environment in which people operate eventually effects societal values: "What occurs, simply, is that in a society where there is a great amount of dishonesty and

corruption, it becomes increasingly costly to behave honestly."

Yet it is difficult to make the needs of the poor a political priority when powerful special interests have a stake in the existing system. During the previous APRA government of Alan Garcia, for example, the number of people employed by the state sector grew by 70% while the economy collapsed and private-sector unemployment skyrocketed. New President Alberto Fujimori's education minister, Gloria Helfer of the United Left Party, had a plan to reduce the education ministry's staff, which had grown from 193,000 to 252,000 employees during the Garcia years.

APRA naturally opposed Ms. Helfer's cutting efforts because most of the additional posts had been filled by its members. But President Fujimori was relying on APRA's support to pass several key packages of legislation, including approval of his hand-picked Central Bank president. Thus, despite his commitment to reducing the government bureaucracy, President Fujimori supported APRA on this issue, over the objections of his own education minister. Ms. Helfer resigned shortly afterward.

President Fujimori's commitment to a realistic market strategy is a good first step toward salvaging Peru's devastated economy. But unless rapid progress can be made at the same time toward establishing state credibility and providing employment opportunities in such areas as Huascar, the erosion of civil society and the prevalence of Sendero's law will be preclusive to the success of any economic strategy. It might be a classic case where the operation was a success, but the patient died.

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL
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Sally Bowen reports on the army's latest initiative in the 11-year war waged by Shining Path

FINANCIAL TIMES
MAY 31, 1991

RAGGED BANDS of weather-beaten peasants toting makeshift weapons now patrol the dirt roads around the Andean towns of Ayacucho and Huanta, until recently controlled by Peru's principal guerrilla movement, Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path).

The 11-year guerrilla war has so far claimed the lives of over 22,000 Peruvians, many of them defenceless peasants. The fight against this Maoist guerrilla organisation has crippled an already sick economy, with costs estimated at about \$18bn (£10.4bn) almost matching Peru's external debt.

Conventional army attempts to counter the subversives' bloody hit and run tactics in which police, military and any ordinary people who resist their demands are ruthlessly assassinated, are widely agreed to have failed. "Civil defence groups, or rondas, are now the axis of our strategy," said an Ayacucho army captain.

The army reckons it now controls 600 rondas operating in the departments of Ayacucho and Huancavelica, with another 150 or so in the Apurimac Valley further east on the jungle fringe. All able-bodied males between the ages of 15 and 70 have to join.

Arming the rondas is now government policy. Already 6,500 shotguns have been

issued to peasant rondas in the central Andean region around Huancayo, where Sendero has become powerful. More guns will follow, President Fujimori has promised.

"We need decent modern weapons," argued the second-in-command of the Apurimac Valley ronderos, who operates under the nom-de-guerre of Jorge. "Sendero is well armed

Three people died in the first strike called by guerrillas against the government of President Fujimori. It paralysed most public transport and left parts of Lima without electricity on Wednesday, Reuter reports from Lima. A Shining Path guerrilla was killed by police after he put a firebomb in a minibus. One policeman died when guerrillas opened fire on police near the international airport. A guerrilla died in a police operation after the attack.

and they just laugh at the weapons we presently have to confront them with."

For several years, ronderos have made their own guns, hewing rough wooden stocks and fitting barrels made from plumbing pipes. But chronic lack of cash has recently led to some ingenious if alarming improvisations.

Outside Huanta, at the frequent rondero-manned road-blocks where travellers' credentials are carefully checked, canned fizzy drinks lay in a pile on the ground.

But it transpired these innocuous-looking cans were home-made bombs with a five-second fuse, packed with explo-

sive and nails. The local army base manufactures these primitive bombs.

Joint army-rondero operations are perceived by many as the only workable option. "Sendero had become the law around here, and we cannot permit that," said Jorge. "The military on their own cannot identify the subversives - it's essential for us

to act together."

The desperately underfunded and ill-equipped Peruvian army agrees. "The peasants have to learn to defend themselves," said an Ayacucho army spokesman.

So far the strategy seems to be working. The town of Ayacucho, which has been governed under emergency powers for years, is back under civilian control - at least in theory. An "armed strike" called by Sendero to celebrate their 11th anniversary earlier this month passed off peacefully.

The regional prefect and the local police say Sendero cells within the town have been rooted out. The subversives

have taken to the hills and valleys to the east, from where they launch sporadic attacks.

Yet the battle against subversion is far from won. Sendero's anniversary strike call was unanimously observed in Ayacucho.

The Peruvian senate commission on Pacification reports 2,129 confirmed deaths from terrorist violence in the first nine months of the Fujimori administration alone, and suggests the true figure could be much higher.

At present, the central sierra is effectively at war. Local Ayacucho deputy Alberto Valencia, reflects the views of many when he argues, "Nothing short of a military solution will work against terrorists who were recruited at age 12 and are now 23. There's no chance of rehabilitating them."

Charges of human rights abuses by the army continue to cause concern, however. For four successive years Peru has a high number of recorded "disappearances."

Both church and human rights groups fear the consequences of arming the peasantry. "It just increases militarisation," one church leader said. And Cesar Sulca, the regional prefect, asks: "Will ronderos be prepared to lay down arms and live within the constitution once subversion is defeated?"

— THE INDEPENDENT —

Violent 'strike' in Lima

Lima - The Peruvian capital was yesterday paralysed in many of its industrial and poorer residential districts by an "armed strike" decreed by the Maoist Shining Path guerrillas which was accompanied by a string of bombings and left at least one policeman dead, writes **Simon Strong**. Public transport was brought almost to a standstill in most areas, and the roads in some of the worst affected districts, where all banks, shops, formal markets and businesses were closed, were empty of traffic and pedestrians.

On the eve of the "strike", a factory manager and his daughter were shot, several banks were dynamited, buses were burned, a train station was fire-bombed and a bomb exploded in the Ministry of Transport. Lima's electricity supply was halved when the guerrillas blew up 12 pylons. A policeman was killed when a patrol surprised a group of rebels painting slogans near the airport. The guerrillas turned guns on the police, and two other policemen were wounded.

Jungle clash

Lima (AP) - Troops killed 30 Maoist guerrillas in a two-hour gun battle near Tingo Maria, in the coca-producing Upper Huallaga Valley.

June 4th 1991

See also: IR #9 Autumn 1990

MAY 30th 1991

Ex-Reds can join politics but no communism: KL

KUALA LUMPUR — Former members of the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) can form a political party if they wish to do so, the Malaysian police has said.

But the banned communist party itself, as well as other political parties espousing the communist ideology, would remain outlawed, said Deputy Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Mohamed Noor yesterday.

He said the question whether former CPM members could join political parties did not arise because there were former communist elements who were political party members and Members of Parliament.

As for former CPM secretary-general Chin Peng, Tan Sri Rahim said it was up to him whether to return to the country.

But "he must carefully study the wisdom of his intentions" once he comes back, Tan Sri Rahim said.

The deputy police chief said former CPM members wishing to set up a political party would be allowed to do so on condition they adhered to the country's laws and Constitution.

The government would also first have to study the type of party they wanted to set up and its constitution.

The government would also require that the committee members held posts in accordance with the provisions of the Societies Act, he added.

He did not explain what these provisions were.

The deputy police chief made the disclosure after presenting cash tokens to widows and beneficiaries of policemen.

His statement followed the signing of a pact in 1989 between the CPM and the Malaysian and Thai governments when the CPM, which had operated on the Thai-Malaysian border, decided to give up armed struggle.

The CPM decision was not entirely unexpected given the decline of communism worldwide.

This development has been followed by serious rethinking of the communist doctrine within the communist bloc.

Tan Sri Abdul Rahim said: "The setting up of the new party has to be studied thoroughly, including its policies.

"We have explained this to them when signing the pact on Dec 2, 1989, after the CPM decided to lay down arms ... what they can and cannot do

when they return.

"We do not want to open old wounds and the CPM leaders understand the government's stand."

He added that there were some CPM leaders who wanted to return to the country.

But there were also others not keen to do so.

"We have given them a one-year grace period from Dec 2, 1989, to make an application whether to return or otherwise," he said.

Tan Sri Rahim said the authorities would consider each application on an individual basis.

One such case was the request made by former CPM woman leader Shamsiah Pakeh, now in China.

He said this had to be so because some might not be covered by the 1989 pact. — Bernama.

Thai army resumes anti-communist drive

► Thai troops have launched their first operation in recent years in northern Thailand to hunt armed remnants of the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT). One soldier lost a leg to a booby trap as the 300 troops moved through thick forest in remote Nan province near the Lao border. Northern and northeastern Thailand were once the main strongholds of the CPT, which has since been reduced to less than 200 fighters — mostly in southern Thailand — through mass defections in the 1980s.