

CLASS STRUGGLE

WORKERS AND OPPRESSED OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!

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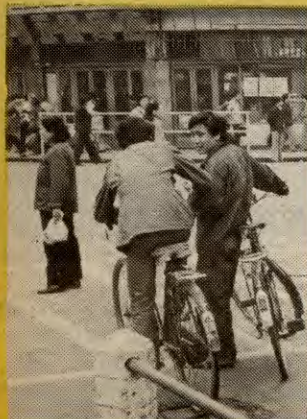
AKP(m-l)'s 4th Congress:

New leadership elected

SIDE 3



Pål Steigan interviewed about his last visit to China



I would assert that in material terms China is undergoing a very sound development. What worries China's friends is whether socialism and the leading role of the working class will survive this process. For det time being we consider it too early to draw any preliminary conclusions.

SIDE 8 AND 9

PHOTO: PETER M. JOHANSEN

The Soviet Union: Advanced Capitalism

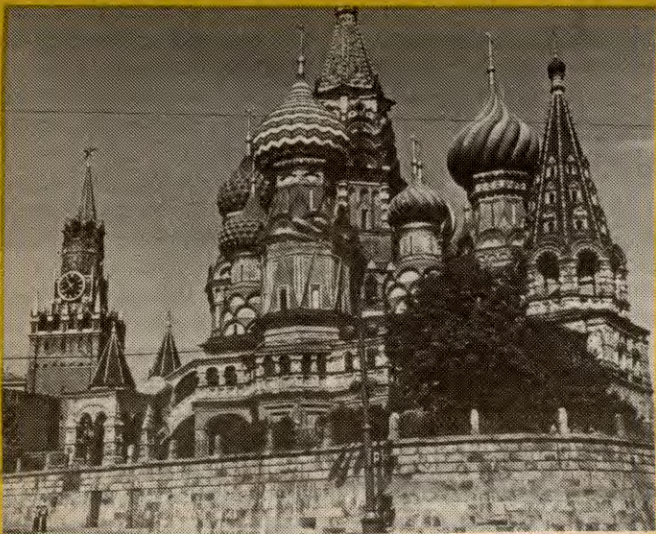


PHOTO: ARNE TRÆLDAL

In recent years people the world over have time and again been shocked by the political adventurism of the Soviet government. Inside the country all opposition is silenced by the dictatorship. This is a fact. It shows the imperialist class content of the Soviet government administration.

SIDE 10 AND 11

AKP(m-l) developed into a mature party

All other political parties in Norway will claim that the WCP(m-l) is insignificant, mostly because it has no parliamentary representative in the national assembly. But that doesn't prevent the huge social-democratic party to name WCP(m-l) as their most important opponent in the trade-union movement.

SIDE 2 AND 3

PHOTO: LEIF GABRIELSEN



The struggle for women's liberation is world-wide. The picture shows a woman in a refugee-camp in the Tigre provinse.

PHOTO: SVEIN TORNAS

The Women's Question

AKP(m-l) sees women's struggle for liberation over the whole world as an important revolutionary potential. Marxist-leninists must lead this struggle and fight for directing it against the bourgeoisie and imperialism and in this way create a united front among the world's suppressed

peoples and nations. At the same time it is necessary to look critically at «the woman question's» place in the tradition of marxism-leninism. We in AKP(m-l) believe we have taken important steps in this direction.

SIDE 6 AND 7

How has the AKP(m-l) of Norway Developed into a Mature Party?

Many people from different countries ask me why it is so that the Workers' Communist Party (m-l) of Norway has not only survived the general crisis of the western communist movement, but has also succeeded in doing a lot of good work. I use to answer that it is due to a happy mixture of objective conditions, skill and luck, says Pål Steigan, the former leader of WCP(m-l), in this article. That is of course a not very scientific summing-up, so my point has to be explained a little further.

In a way the revolutionary movement in Norway is a sort of anachronism. It is one of the stronger of the new parties in the most tranquil and reformist country in Europe. With the general state of splits and demoralization that you find in the ml-movement on our continent, it isn't to be expected that you should find a revolutionary party with a countrywide organization, a daily newspaper, a lot of tradeunion militants and lots of other activities too. But still it is there. All other political parties in Norway will claim that the WCP(m-l) is insignificant, mostly because it has no parliamentary representative in the national assembly. But that doesn't prevent the huge social-democratic party to name WCP(m-l) as their most important opponent in the trade-union movement. The claim of insignificance does neither prevent the biggest bourgeois newspapers from attacking the party every now and then in their editorial columns. Nor does it prevent the party's daily from being one of the most frequently quoted newspapers in the country.

The claim of insignificance also runs counter to the fact that the electoral alliance in which the party plays a leading role polled enough votes in the capital in the latest elections to become represented by two out of 85 delegates. In spite of all wishful thinking from our opponents it must be admitted by any neutral observer that the WCP(m-l) is alive an' kickin'.

How has the party worked it's way to this position?

As I said, partly because of objective factors. Here some people may object, saying that the class struggle in our country is at a low level compared with almost any other country in Europe. That is true.

But the objective factors I am talking about is somewhat different. It has to do with the dominating position of norwegian socialdemocracy. During the fifties the social-democrats achieved a position as a pivot in the political arena in Norway. It rode it

rough over the tradeunion movement, hitting down on anything faintly resembling radicalism, not mentioning communism. At the same time it managed to play the architects role for the state-monopoly capitalism in Norway. The bourgeois parties in Norway are all social democrats whatever they call themselves. This position of strength also became a weakness when the youth movement erupted. That movement had to rebel against the establishment, and therefore against socialdemocracy in all its hues, also against the socialdemocrat «communist» party. The mere lack of any other alternative, the gravitational field of the young marxist-leninist movement was strong enough to attract lots of dissidents. It also succeeded in winning over some sections of the socialdemocrat youth movement, socialdemocracy then being at its nadir among young people.

Another objective factor was the impotence of the old party. The Communist Party of Norway had become so much a copy of the social-democrats in its domestic policies, and very much of an echo of the Kremlins in its foreign policy that it lacked all possibilities of attracting young revolutionaries. It wasn't even militant in trade-union affairs.

For various reasons the basis for trotskyism and similiar tendencies is very scarce if not non-existing in Norway.

There has nor been any militant tradeunionist tendency outside of the parties. Therefore the young ml-movement became the sole representative of important segments of the radical tide of the sixties and early seventies.

When it comes to the luck of the movement, it so happened that it drew winners at some important stages of its development. First the marxist-leninists managed to take over the entire youth organization of the Socialist Party, partly due to extreme clumsiness on the partys side. Second the movement had become properly organized when the youth movement erupted in bigger scale. Third there came a big popular mo-



The picture shows AKP(m-l)'s 3rd anniversary in 1976.

PHOTO: KLASSEKAMPEN

vement following the youth-movement, namely against norwegian membership in the Common Market. This prolonged the waning time from the student movement and gave the marxist-leninist movement good conditions for growth. And so on. It was a matter of being at the right place at the right time.

Of course there couldn't have been a marxist-leninist movement of any significant strength in a country like Norway if there hadn't also been some skilful work. I believe that our party has gained some experiences during our development, that may be of interest to comrades in other countries as well. But I stress that these are our own experiences and I would not insist that they are compatible to conditions elsewhere. Most probably they are not.

1. Theory and practice

From the very outset the ml-movement in Norway was dedicated to practical revolutionary work. The cadres studied theoretical works of marxism, but insisted upon a practical stand. «The proof of the pudding is in the eating», was one of the catchwords of early norwegian marxist-leninists. Therefore the movement did its best to take part, and a leading part at that, in the class-struggle in Norway. At the same time, it tried to not be falling prey to practicism. When the crisis hit the ml-movement, the WCP(m-l) had a cadre comparatively well versed in ml-theory and at the same time a cadre with some experience from class-struggle.

The ml-movement has tried with a varied degree of success to integrate with real movements among the progressive people in Norway. Under the slogan «serve the people» there has been a consistent pledge of the party to promote these movements

and become as one with them, trying to chart routes towards victory for these movements. This has been the case with the strike-movement, with the anti-Common Market movement, with the movement of the samic national minority and many others.

2. Composition

There has been a fairly good quality of the party membership and cadre. From the start there was a strong link with the former generation radical workers' movement and with the national resistance during the second World War. Though most of the membership were young people, high school and college students, they were mostly from working class or radical intellectual background.

The party managed early to recruit some of the most active and radical young workers to the party. Together the students, young workers and a few veterans form a healthy body of dedicated revolutionaries. It wasn't a party of «ivory-tower-revolutionaries», but rather practical folks with a matter of fact way of handling things.

3. Application of principles

There wouldn't have been a ml-movement without the general principles of marxism-leninism, Mao Zedong thought. But nor would there have been any further development whitout concrete application.

The ml-movement has developed a policy of its own, with strategies and tactics alike directed towards the situation in Norway. It was soon clear to us that no other party could solve our problems, so we better had to try to solve them ourselves. On many occasions the concrete analysis of the party has become a guideline for a much

broader movement. This has been the case with the strike movement, the leftwing of the anti-common market movement, the movement against Soviet expansionism in the northern areas.

The party has been concerned with classanalysis and its program is developed from a classanalysis of Norway. The same with its military policy and its work with the woman-question.

4. Importance of anti-EEC struggle

In the early seventies the ruling class and most political parties in Norway wanted the country to join the Common Market. But there developed a massmovement against membership among the workers, peasants and fishermen. This movement had a considerable impact on all political activity in the country for more than two years. Mass-demonstrations, rallies, protestcampaigns and so forth. The ruling echelon of the tradeunions were in favour of membership, but rank and file members voted against.

The ml-movement was actively campaigning against membership from the very outset, taking no notice of the fact that official chinese spokesmen were positive in their attitude.

Though in its infancy the ml-movement initiated a united front against the EEC, whose membership totalled 25 000 i 1972. By this vigorous activity the ml-movement won new activists and a firm foothold in norwegian society. This campaign also focused the party's interest on the concrete economic and social conditions of Norway. We also learned that all parties must define a strategy on their own, not relying on any other party to do it.

5. Daily newspaper

A mainstay in the partybuild-

ing of the norwegian marxist-leninist has all the way been our newspaper. Founded in 1969 as a monthly «Klassekampen» (The Class Struggle) has been an important lever for organizing the party and creating revolutionary and progressive public opinion. When the party was formed in 1973 the newspaper allready had developed into a weekly and 4 years later it finally became a daily.

The newspaper has allways focussed on the interests of the working class and the working people and on solidarity with oppressed peoples as well. It has demasked a lot of under-cover-activity committed by the ruling circles of Norway, it has become a lojal organ of all people fighting for justice. At any time workers on strike or women activists or foreign workers have found their interests best represented by «Klassekampen».

I am totally convinced that if it hadn't been for the daily our party would have been much more seriously harmed by the international crisis of the ml-movement by the turn of the seventies. It has also been an important lever for tuning the party into the day-to-day problems of the norwegian society. You simply cannot develop a communist daily on abstract issues.

6. «Proletarianization»

Having gained the hegemony on the universities in the early seventies the ml-movement decided to encourage a vast part of its university and highschool students to quit their studies and become workers. Hundreds did, in two waves, and added to a rather small number of members in the factories. In spite of some shortcomings, some anti-intellectualism and some ultra-leftism in the beginning this draw was a strategic consolidation of the ml-movements in the working class. Most of

The Fourth Congress of AKP(m-l): A new Leadership Elected

The fourth congress of AKP(m-l) was held in December 1985. On the congress agenda was adoption of a new General Program of the Party, some smaller revisions of the party's constitution and finally, election of the Party's Central Committee General Program.

Adoption of the new General Program was preceded by almost two years of party discussions. Two topics were particularly focused in the discussion: socialism and the liberation of women.

Sum up experiences

To this day, socialist revolutions have been successfully carried through only in countries very unlike Norway in economic structure and political tradition. It is necessary to sum up both positive and negative experiences in the history of socialism. Further, it is necessary to decide which principles and experiences are generally applicable to all socialist revolutions and socialist societies, and which have to be modified and tailored to the specific conditions in different countries.

Armed revolution

The chapter on socialism in the new General Program states that historical experience teaches the necessity of armed revolution against the bourgeoisie. Regardless of the will of the people, the bourgeoisie will not resign power and privileges unless they are forced to do so.

The program also states that the state form of socialism has to be the dictatorship of the proletariat, based on the class alliance between the leading working class and the rest of the working people.

One main point in the party discussions has been the importance of democracy for the people in socialist society.

Democracy

Democracy is necessary to



This is the new leadership of AKP(m-l). From the left Arne Lauritzen, Kjersti Ericsson and Jorun Gulbrandsen.

PHOTO: BERNT EIDE

mobilize the working class and the rest of the working people as the rulers of the state, and to pave the way for the abolishment of the division of labour. Democracy of the working class and the people, not administrative measures from the state, also must be the main method in the suppression of the bourgeoisie.

The role for the communist party in socialist society is another important point. The role of the party must be that of the vanguard of the working class in the struggle to develop

socialism into communism. The communist party must remain a critical element in society, with strong roots among the working class and the working people. The party must fight against signs of degeneration and the formation of a new privileged class in socialist society.

Women

The new General Program closely links the liberation of women with the development of communist society. The struggle of women for liberation is one of the main

forces in the struggle for communism. Socialism will not automatically solve the women's question and do away with all kinds of discrimination and oppression of women. But socialism will create a new foundation for the struggle, making it possible to build the economic and political conditions for the full liberation of women. To carry this through, a strong, independent, organized Women's movement will be necessary.

50% of the membership of the newly elected Central Committee of the party are

women, and 50% belongs to the working class. Pål Steigan, who has been leading the party for 9 of the twelve years of its existence, resigned his leadership, but remains a member of the central committee. Steigan was warmly thanked by the congress for his hard and inspiring work during these 9 years. The new leader of the party is Kjersti Ericsson. Political deputy leader is Jorun Gulbrandsen, and organizational deputy leader is Arne Lauritzen.

the people who followed the call to become workers have managed to take roots and become experienced and respected leaders among their fellow tradeunion members.

Without this move, the party would not have been able to profit lastingly from the youth-movement. There are also reasons to believe that the party was more resistant to the ideological crisis when that became the vogue.

7. Tradeunion work

At the end of WW2 the socialdemocrats launched a «joint program» in which the trade unions gave up their independence and pledged to enhance profits in exchange for welfare and job security. During the fifties all revolutionaries and communists were stamped out of trade-union posts and the unions became tools of classcollaboration.

This situation prevailed until the end of the sixties. Then some baselevel unions broke these fetters and waged strikemovements in spite of top-level veto. The young

ml-movement took directly part in these movements and became the most reliable force in supporting these wildcat-strikes. We developed a whole series of measures and means to forward the success of this movement. Since support for the strikes was prohibited by the trade-union center, funds had to be collected outside the tradeunion-network. The party launched a lot of new principles for union work. Against socialdemocrat top-level control we promoted baselevel activism. Against splittism according to trade we launched broad union solidarity and unity workers-students. Against corruption we launched a style of membership-control and hardworking shopstuarnts. It can all be summed up in the «class-struggle line» versus the «classcollaboration line». (Class collaboration meaning collaboration between workers and capitalists.)

In the beginning of the seventies there was a debate between two different approaches to the trade-unions. Some people calling themselves

revolutionaries didn't want to work inside the trade-unions, but to set up brand new ones instead, untinted by socialdemocrat influence. We denounced that line. If we hadn't I really doubt if we would have had a marxist-leninist party today.

8. United Front

It has been a principle for our party to carry out united front work. We have worked for united fronts between workers and small peasants and fishermen, between workers and students, between working people of different nationalities. It mostly has been «unity from below», but in some cases even «unity from above».

9. The national question

Our party has never yielded to trotskyite «national nihilism». We have fought vigorously against any attempt to undermine the national sovereignty of Norway, and at the same time we have fully respected and supported the right of self-determination for the same national minority in Norway. We have a program for national military resistance in case of any military attack on Norway.

10. Against social-imperialism

The WCP(m-l) has always fought against Soviet social-imperialism and been in the forefront for supporting the peoples in Afghanistan, Poland, Eritrea and others being oppressed by socialimperialism.

We hold that this is a prin-

ciple for all revolutionary parties, a demarcation line between true and sham marxism.

11. Womens movement

The new womens' movement started in 1970. In most countries this movement is named the feminist movement, but in Norway the name of «Kvinnefront» (Womens' Front) has become synonymous with the womens' movement. The marxist-leninist were the main initiators of the front and have been actively promoting this movement for fifteen years. One result of this is that bourgeois feminism has had a narrow foothold in Norway. The movement has always been an activist force promoting the interests of the great majority of the women. At the initiative of Kvinnefronten the 8th of March has become a day of protests and rallies almost on a par with mayday.

The party has taken many important initiatives in the struggle for full emansipation of women, and even in the last few years there has been an upsurge on this front, in which party comrades have played a great role. From our point of view a neglect of this important field would have been wrong in principle and lead to setbacks in practice.

12. Culture

The party has played a significant role in many fields of culture during the seventies, especially literature and arts and also theater. A generation of young writers and artists have been strongly in-

fluenced by the party. There is a general consensus that some of their works have been among the most important ones on a national scale in a whole decade.

In general the revolutionary cultural workers have been trying to create art that would serve the people, but they have done so in many different ways using many different techniques and approaches. Our cultural workers have added a lot to the partys influence and also played an important role for the self-respect of the working people.

13. International work

Our party has carried out a lot of international work and solidarity work. Party members have been working as medical workers for liberation movement, the party has carried out innumerable campaigns in solidarity with the peoples of the third world and with the working people in other countries in general. This work has played a great role for the orientation of the party and the radical section of the working class movement. And it has also had measureable impact on the society as a whole.

It has been and is our philosophy and our pledge that we always will carry out solidarity work. As a party we have also gained a lot from this work. We have had the undivided pleasure of taking part in the valuable experiences of other partys and revolutionary organizations. I believe that this experience has been an important reason for

our ability to take countermeasures against the liquidationist trend that hit the ml-movement a couple of years back.

Although we support comrades in other countries as far as our small means allow, we will never be subject to the directives of any other party.

14. Unified leadership and democratic centralism

The central leadership of the party has never been split. The leading comrades have taken part in a collective leadership and there are only rare cases of fractionalism. Though the leadership has developed all the time, there has never been any major desertion from the leading bodies of the party.

The WCP(m-l) practices democratic centralism and our experience is that this organizational principle is indispensable in a revolutionary party.

One major cause of the partys relative success is that we managed from the very outset to unite all significant marxist-leninist forces in one organization. This has added to the gravitational field of the party, that is made it more attractive to more people.

This concludes my brief summary of some of the most important experiences of our party. There most certainly are shortcomings in such a brief account. Please blame them on me, not on the party.

Pål Steigan



The Social-Democrats are Pursuing Non-Socialist Policies

Arne Lauritzen, the former head of the Workers' Communist Party (marxist-leninist) policy advisory committee, now deputy head, writes here about the tactical situation prior to the autumn elections in Norway. He maintains that the Norwegian social democratic party is the main tactical enemy of the Workers' Communist Party (AKP m-l) in the election and that the non-socialist policies it pursues are identical to the policies of the Norwegian Conservative Party (Høyre). The Conservative party holds office in Norway today.

— The main question in the coming period will be our relationship to the Norwegian Labour Party, the Norwegian social democrats. Up until 1 May we will be pressured time and again to participate in the «broad front of the Left» against the conservative forces and the Willoch government (the conservative government in power at present). May Day will be coloured by the coming parliamentary (Storting) election campaign and the demand made of us will be «Join with us against the blues, vote Labour».

— Our point of view is summarized in the concept A = B (social democrat equals non-socialist) but if this to be more than pure rhetoric, we must be capable both of showing that A really is the same as B in addition to being aware that nuances are to be found. We are faced therefore by a tactically difficult situation, both as far as 1 May is concerned but also in relation to the entire period up to the Storting elections. It looks as though the entire political scene will be coloured by a choice between the two largest parties, the Labour Party and the Conservative Party, and that many people will be taken in by Labour's tactical argument: «We have to unite now; oust the Willoch government».

The prerequisite for the Labour Party

There are one important conditions which have to be fulfilled if the Labour Party is to succeed with these tac-

tics: They have to have gathered around them so many activists that they can carry out an effective election campaign; in other words the party structure has to be strengthened to such an extent that enthusiasm spreads both within and outside the rank and file of the party. The struggle over 1 May and between the Labour procession or the class-struggle procession will be an important indication of how to be able to present policies which can be recognised as a real alternative to those of the Willoch government.

Let us look more closely at this prerequisite:

First, the question of whether the Labour Party currently has enough momentum to give the party increased support amongst the voters. My assertion is that Labour has more problems than it can deal with. Had I been asked nine months ago I would have answered that Labour were sure to win the election. Today I am not so sure. The six points which follow serve to reinforce my doubt:

Six points

1. The Gallup poll. If the Labour Party are to bring about a political situation in the election campaign from which they will fully benefit, then they ought to have the moral advantage of being well placed in the opinion polls. Everyone is talking about the effect of wear and tear on the Willoch government and a similar effect on the Labour opposition. But Labour cannot boast an inc-

crease in support in the opinion polls. They are making little headway and have not done so for a long time.

2. The activity of members: Spot checks around the country in the last few months give in the main the same result. The Labour Party has problems mobilising its own members. Sure enough quite an effort is being made to activate parts of the trade union movement into campaigning for the party. The first phase went ahead last autumn when a number of courses were held; a sort of ideological rearmament, of which we were the specific target.

But the real pay-off is yet to come and it is reported that the Labour Party lacks cadre members and new recruits are few.

The old faithfuls are making all the effort. In a number of places it is reported that AUF, the social democrats' youth organization, is growing, but that the situation seen as a whole leaves something to be desired.

3. The Labour Party is plagued by dissension in important concrete issues. The leaders of the iron and metal workers have for nearly two years desperately tried to mobilise the union, and especially the shipyard workers, for the election campaign. The Days of Action in 1983 were a fiasco. In Stavanger the Iron and Metal Workers' Union has 4,000 members. Of these, only four manned street-stands on the Day of Action. In 1984 the picture was even more clear-cut. Skytøen (the chairman of the important



Gro Harlem Brundtland, the leader of the social-democratic party of Norway.

PHOTO: LEIF GABRIELSEN

Iron and Metal Workers' Union) and his associates arranged action-days against the fiscal budget and linked this with election campaigning for Labour. A number of clubs and unions in the shipyard industry protested and the effect was negligible. Shipyard workers do not have much confidence in the Labour Party being able to straighten out the situation and very many disagree with Skytøen's attack on the «Yes, we'll work» action when his response to the struggle to save shipyard jobs is election campaigning for Labour.

Another example of a serious split can be seen in the

budget difficulties in Oslo. Deep contradictions have been revealed within the DNA, from the time when the struggle against the budget began with the compromise agreement proposed by the Labour members of the Municipal Employees' Union, via 'Let Oslo Live' (a grass-root demonstration against the decimation of manufacturing industry in the capital), and the demonstration on 10 December by 10,000 trade union members — to Stoltenberg's (the leader of the Labour Party group in the city council in Oslo) boundless loyalty to the Conservative Party over the treatment of the

budget in the city council.

4. The political and organisational changes which the Labour Party has attempted to initiate have proved of little worth. I have mentioned the Days of Action which were organised by the Iron and Metal Workers' Union. The attempts at mobilising the trade unions haven't been painless either. Gro Harlem Brundtland can still manage to rouse standing applause at federation meetings, for example of the Commercial and Office Employees' Union, and the national conference is used solely for the Labour's election campaign. But I think that Labour itself

CLASS STRUGGLE

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Its purpose is to inform readers:

- of superpower aggression against Norway
- of class struggle in Norway
- of struggle against modern revisionism in Norway
- of the activities and policy of the Norwegian Marxist-Leninist movement, comprising the AKP(m-l) and its two youth organisations, the Red Youth (Rød Ungdom) and the Communist Student League of Norway (NKS) — Norges Kommunistiske Studentforbund.

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No 11 1979

Comments on the open «Letter of the CC of the PLA and the Government of Albania to the CC of the CPC and the Government of China». Part I to IV.



The policy of the social democratic party becomes more and more similar to the policy of the open bourgeois party of Norway. Here symbolized by the leader of the bourgeois party, Kåre Willoch and the leader of the social democrats, Gro Harlem Brundtland. PHOTO: BERNT EIDE

is counting its chickens before they're hatched. One thing is to enjoy oneself in an assembly of largely faithfuls; quite another to win support at grassroot level in the trade unions. Referring once again to the Commercial and Clerical Employees' Union, Labour received NOK 750,000 at their national conference but the delegates at the conference who aggressively defended misuse of the party will probably not be so cocksure when they return to their local environments. A concrete example is the threat of withdrawal from the Commercial and Clerical Employees' Union and the Union of Civil Aviation Employees (1200 members).

5. The fiscal budget. For reasons which I will explain later, the DNA cannot present an alternative budget which clearly shows the difference between the Labour Party and the Willoch government, and with that the mobilisation effect it would have. On the contrary, in the past four months Labour has actively said that the pressure of expectations must be dampened down. This happened most recently at the important annual meeting of the Troms County Labour Party in January where Einar Førde pointedly warned against such expectations. The Labour Party is on the verge of being caught in its own net, and the consequence is that people have trouble in distinguishing between the Labour Party and the Conservative Party.

6. Membership trend. The Labour Party set itself an ambitious target in 1982. They aimed at achieving 200,000 members by 1985. We are now in 1985 and the information we have received clearly indicates that they will not achieve more than 170-180,000. It is interesting to note that 20,000 new members were enlisted in 1982 but that the enlistment campaign was less successful in '83 and '84.

These six points show, I believe, that the Labour Party is struggling against the current, a current which is perhaps proving a little too strong. The other prerequisite for success for the Party's «united front tactic», is that they manage to present policies which can be seen to be real alternatives. The biggest problem facing Labour in this respect is the innate class contradiction in its ranks.

The two faces of the Norwegian Labour Party

One face is turned toward the bourgeoisie and is actively engaged in developing capitalist strategies in order to get capitalism through its crisis and make necessary adjustments while keeping profits intact.

The other of its two faces is turned toward the working class and promises «defence of the welfare state» and «full employment». At the same time as the Labour Party had 59% of the votes of the working class in 1981, an increasing part of the same 59% were hit by policies inimical to the working classes, formulated by the self-same Labour Party. This situation is the Labour Party's Achilles' heel; it pervades the Party. If we make proper use of this class antagonism it will give us great chance to manoeuvre. A striking example of this is the exposure, by the Oslo division of the Red Electoral Alliance, of Stoltenberg and the Labour Party in connection with the increase of nursery school fees in Oslo.

We maintain that $A = B$. Let us look at one or two important issues and see how things really are.

The struggle for jobs

What is the Labour Party doing to protect jobs in, for example, the shipyard industry?

Let us return to the national conference of the Iron and Metal Workers' Union in 1982. Gro Harlem Brund-

tland (leader of the social democratic party) promised full support to the iron workers and was given resounding applause. One of the demands was, and is, that permanent installations should be built at Norwegian yards. The day after these promises were made at the national conference of Iron and Metal Workers, Gro Harlem Brundtland and the rest of the Labour Party voted down a proposal from the SV (Socialist Left Party) for the establishment of a state-run order distribution office. If this had been adopted it would have been the first step towards fulfilment of the iron and metal workers' demands. The most important task facing the members of the Labour Party working in the Iron and Metal Workers Union looks, for many Iron and Metal Workers Union members, like being the stifling of any attempt to raise opposition against cut-backs as, for example, «Yes, to work».

Take for example the recent case of Horten Shipyard. Have they proclaimed full support? No, and during Syse's (Conservative Minister of Industry) manoeuvres last autumn they supported this quite uncritically. In Aftenposten on 20 January it is stated plainly that the Ministry of Industry would like to sell Horten Shipyard. Has Labour raised a storm of protest? No. The Party is just as interested as the Conservatives in reconverting the shipyard industry. In other words cutting it back to a size which is commensurate with both capacity and profits. At the same time the Labour Party, & Co., propose the export of capital on a large scale. A key word for both Conservatives and Labour is reconversion. We maintain that reconversion of industry will mean reconversion to unemployment. The LKAB (a major iron ore plant) in Narvik is a prime example. The union has agreed twice to cut-backs and has been promised alternative

jobs. They have been cheated twice. DNA states in its draft working programme (New Growth for Norway) that «The Labour Party believes substantial restructuring is necessary in industry. The Labour Party will maintain the main pattern of population settlement and safeguard stable local communities. Restructuring must therefore in the first instance be between occupations, companies and branches of industry, and should not result in large-scale local unemployment and pressure to move.»

Ask people in Horten, Førde etc. what they think about this, when Labour simultaneously presents an alternative fiscal budget which, in relation to that of Willoch, only appropriates 37 millions more to the shipyard industries. And the DNA states as much in its working programme:

«Less emphasis should be placed on those forms of assistance which give poor utilisation of capital and labour.» This quotation means in fact that when the bourgeoisie have problems with profits i.e. «poor utilisation of capital and labour», support schemes are cut back, resulting in unemployment.

Example number two: Housing policy

Many in the Labour Party now acknowledge that it was this Party that started the decimation of the State Housing Bank. DNA members, such as Torbjørn Berntsen, openly requested help to pressure the Labour leadership at the housing conference of the Oslo Trade Union Federation in June last year. There is an intense antagonism between Labour members in the Norwegian Building Industry Workers' Union and the leadership of the Labour Party about the level and financing of housing construction. 10,000 fewer new dwellings means 20,000 more unemployed building workers. The Building Workers' Union and

the Federation of Trade Unions (LO) demand 40,000 new dwellings per year — in the fiscal budget the Labour Party propose 31,000-35,000. This is a compromise and as far as financing is concerned, the Willoch government has, through various tactical additions in the autumn of '84, presented a housing construction programme which doesn't differ much from that of the Labour Party.

Another example is the interest on loans in the State Housing Bank. The Building Workers' Union and the Federation of Trade Unions demand that interest be reduced to 8%. In their alternative fiscal budget for 1985 the Labour Party demand an interest rate of 10,5 per cent. A half percent increase (or reduction) of the interest on State Housing Bank loans would mean increased/decreased living expenses of NOK 200 per month.

We maintain that the Labour Party has paved the way for the policies which the Willoch government have pursued in the past few years.

The trend in interest rates on loans from the State Housing Bank is a good example of Labour policies being inimical to the working classes. In 1980/81 the DNA raised the interest on loans from 7½ to 10½%. In other words, several thousand kroner in increased living expenses for most people. The Conservative Party and the Willoch government have followed this up by raising the interest level first from 10½ to 11% and then from 11% to 12%.

$A = B$

We are entering a period in which the large numbers of students who left school in the 60s are now joining the housing queue. Willoch's policies in recent years have made it almost impossible for many to buy a house. But it was the Labour Party who started the decimation of the State Housing Bank — and the price of restoring the

Housing Bank to its pre-1980 level is estimated at NOK 5-7 billions. This sum is the reason why Labour's housing policy is almost identical to that of the Conservatives. In sphere after sphere we see the same pattern. The now so infamous «Long Term Programme» of 1981 drew up the Labour Party's main policies. And in budget after budget these policies are concretized:

- Cutbacks in the health and social welfare sectors,
- neutralisation of the demand for a six-hour working day,
- no opposition to the Conservative Party's campaign to decimate the sickpay system. Not a word about this in Labour's draft working programme for '85-'89,
- the working hour regulations are being undermined; the normal working day is under attack.

In issue after issue we can demonstrate the similarity between Labour and Conservative policies. The struggle for 1 May could become tactically complicated. A precondition for our being able to reap the best possible result is that we manage to demonstrate the similarity between A and B (between Labour and Conservative policies). Peoples' memories are often short and it will be an important task to remind them of everything that the Labour Party prefers to forget. The Long Term Programme and the increase in interest rates on State Housing Bank loans are in this context almost classic examples, but we must also show how Labour conducts itself in the various political issues.

I choose to finish where I began. The main issue for the 1 May is our relationship to the Labour Party. Progress or decline of the May Day movement depends on how skilled we are in exposing the Labour Party and getting people to choose between class collaboration or class struggle.

The Women's Question — a Key Question for the Working Class

In this article, Siri Jensen — leader of AKP(m-l)'s Women's Committee — takes up the party's policy concerning «the women question». It is the communist party's duty, she says, to place itself in the vanguard of the struggle for women's liberation, and to avoid division of class according to sex. It is also important to fight repression of women within the communist party itself, she says, and points out the importance of criticizing the marxist-leninist tradition on this point.

In Norway today, women constitute a half of all employees and approximately half of the employed working class. Large groups of the working class's closest allies in the petit-bourgeoisie are women; nurses, teachers, social workers.

Employment amongst women has increased notably in the last 10 years. At the same time, this has meant that women have been drawn to a larger extent into class struggle, and «the woman question» has forced itself upon the political order of the day.

Women, however, are concentrated in relatively few professions. A third of all working women are to be found within education, health and the social sector, a fourth within trade, hotel and restaurant, an eighth in industry. 20% have office work, 13% nursing, 11% work in shops and 9% are cleaners.

Lower wages

Women earn less than men. Wages are lower and the fact that half of the employed women work part time, makes the difference greater.

More than two thirds of women are employed — the remaining third stay at home.

These figures show that women have a special position in working life.

We believe that it is important to understand women's dual position in our society: Women are in working life, constitute half of the employ-

ed working class, and are to be found in most professions.

At the same time, women have a special position which basically rises from the tasks society imposes upon women within the family, and the division of labour between sexes — which society decides. This duality is expressed in many forms. On the one hand, women are less economically dependent on men — marriage is not the only possibility. Women, with or without children, can manage, more or less, on their own income or with the help of social security. Women can divorce.

On the other hand, single women and single providers are the poorest members of society, with many economic problems. Economies is still an important factor in limiting the right to divorce: Women's low wages and working hours make many women dependent on their husbands.

In one way it is accepted that women have jobs, including traditionally male jobs, and women look upon themselves increasingly as employees with the right to work alongside men.

Private work

At the same time, women are dependent upon adapting their jobs to the needs of their families — husband's working hours, possibilities of child care etc. Society does not increase kindergarten fa-

cilities or care for old people according to necessity — for example, 90–95% of care for the elderly is private, that is to say the women's responsibility. It is, furthermore, still a fact that women are squeezed out of jobs to the advantage of men, when it comes to cut downs and reductions. Real unemployment is highest amongst women.

Women take an active, though much smaller, part in political life and mass organizations: Women organize themselves and demand greater influence. Women have fought to gain the right to self-determined abortion.

At the same time women's freedom is limited by the demands of the family and because they are still to a great extent regarded as men's property. Maltreatment of women within the family, rape, pornography and prostitution contribute to holding women down. Increased employment and increased consciousness as to one's own rights lead to a stronger will to struggle and women demand that working class organizations take up; to a greater extent, their situation and demands.

AKP(m-l) considers this to be a key question for the working class as a whole.

Today the trade unions do not give priority to cases of importance to working class women — wages for those who earn the least, shorter normal working day, possi-



The women are double working, both taking care of their families and contributing to the income of the family by wage labour.

bilities to combine full job with family, rights for part-time workers etc.

At the same time employers know exactly how to make use of women's situation to press wages down, increase wage differences and undermine the normal working day.

This is possible, not because women show less solidarity, but because they are crushed between the demands of work and family. The eight hour day is too long, in as much as women have a second job at home. Many women must ask for special contracts for shorter working hours, usually on the employer's terms with lower wages and fewer rights.

The only possible answer to this is a joint struggle for a 6 hour day with full wage compensation.

As long as the unions couldn't care less, employers can offer women lower wages because they are «provided for». In today's situation, women can become a lever to press down wages. Therefore, we believe that the struggle for women's rights is today necessary to strengthen working class unity and to meet the bourgeois offensive. It is of course, a condition for mobilising the female half of the working class, which has the worst circumstances and most to win through fighting. This struggle must be a cen-

tral task for a revolutionary marxist-leninist party.

Grounds for repression of women under capitalism

The grounds for repression of women under capitalism are women's position in the family and a society based on division of labour according to sex.

In addition to class repression, which affects women in the oppressed classes, women are repressed as a sex in two ways:

- the bourgeoisie represses women
- men represses women.

The bourgeois repression of women

The family is a part of society's basic organization and of capitalist relations of production. It carries forth bourgeois property through inheritance. The family and not society has the main responsibility for providing for those without income. In this way the bourgeoisie is spared enormous expenses.

Historically speaking, men have been the family providers. Women stand in a stronger economic position today, because they represent half of all employees. Yet women are still economically dependent on men. Many hundreds of thousands of women do not have income giving

jobs. The labour market is divided according to sex and women are concentrated in routine type jobs with low status and low pay. Half the number of working women have part time jobs. These conditions arise again because the family will always choose the «easiest» way to secure a necessary income. This means that the man has full time work and is the main provider, because his work has a higher value than the woman's. Capitalism will never give everyone full time work.

Capitalism secures women as a huge reserve army of labour power. The consequences of this family system affect all women, whether or not they live within a family, whether they are heterosexual or homosexual. All women meet the market divided according to sex, and low wages.

Throughout the entire history of class society, the ruling class has oppressed women particularly, and given men privileges. This colours all institutions and relationships, careers, politics, school, the media, church, the unions etc.

The ruling ideology elevates men and represses women

Pornography and prostitution present women as objects



Women are dependent upon adapting their jobs to the needs of their families.

PHOTO: LEIF GABRIELSEN



The struggle for women's liberation has long traditions in Norway. The sign to the left says «We want the night back», and the one to the right: «Fight against all oppression of women».

PHOTO: KIRSTEN KARLSEN AND SAMFOTO

to be used by men. Pornography has developed into a powerful capitalist industry which scoops in enormous profits on sadism and contempt of women.

Under capitalism, the most important form of repression of women, is the bourgeoisie's repression of women. The bourgeoisie has the most powerful interest in defending the institution of the family and division of the labour market according to sexes, which repress women.

Men's repression of women

Men in all classes and areas of society repress women by force of their own privileges.

They are an active power against women's liberation.

In the family men repress women and have privileges at women's expense. This can be seen for example in the economic, social and sexual repression of women and children. Men allow their careers and interests go before their families. They greatly influence women's lives with their choices. Men have the right to decide what is important for the trade unions, political parties and all social life.

Men's repression of women in the working class and amongst working people, is one of the most important hindrances for increased unity and strength in the working class — both in the day to day struggle and in the struggle for revolution. Women must gain power in workers' organizations and these organizations must support women's struggle. Women must rebel against men's privileges and repression. Men of the working class must support women's struggle and fight repression of women, or they damage the whole working class and its allies. To fight against the repression of women amongst the people is a necessary prerequisite for the liberation of the whole workers' movement.

The women's movement

The increase in women's paid work activity is an important reason for the broad women's movement which takes up

their struggle in all areas. Women have strengthened their political power. Because repression of women touches all women no matter class, there is the basis for a broad alliance amongst women.

Women in the working class have a special historic rôle in this movement. Together with the other women of the working people (small farmers, women intellectuals etc.), they are all repressed as both class and sex. As well as this they must fight the repression of men from their own class. They must lead the women's struggle and be at the same time an especially important leading force in class struggle against the bourgeoisie. They must do away with capitalism both to free themselves as workers, and as women.

A women's organization is therefore also a necessary ground for women's liberation and thereby for revolution and socialism. Also here, women of the working class must play a leading role.

The women's movement cannot win if it is limited and steered by illusions that women can liberate themselves without changing the whole of society. More and more women understand this, through struggle.

In the same way, women in Norway cannot gain liberation isolated from the women of the rest of the world. Today imperialism is the most important hindrance to the bettering of women's situation. Women and women's movements must take their part in the fight to crush imperialism on a world wide scale. The women's movement must tie close bonds over the whole world to learn and to develop a common struggle.

Kvinnefronten («the women's front») in Norway

AKP(m-l) looks upon the building of a nation wide women's organisation as a strategic task. An organization for women in all types of jobs and life situations, of all ages, who can stake out a political line for the different areas of women's struggle, lead mass

struggle and fight for women's premisses in class struggle.

We have in Norway today the beginnings of such an organisation. «Kvinnefronten» (the women's front) has existed in Norway for 13 years. It has an anti-capitalist platform, and has always fought for ordinary women's interests, for work, kindergartens, self-determined abortion, against pornography and for international solidarity. «Kvinnefronten» has carried on the fight against all attempts to isolate women's struggle from the struggle against imperialism and the two superpowers, the USA and the Soviet Union. Today «Kvinnefronten» is fighting especially for the six hour working day with full wage compensation, against women losing their jobs, against pornography and violence to women, and for active international solidarity work — including support of the freedom fighters in Afghanistan.

The front has groups in many places in Norway and shows influence outside of its own ranks. «Kvinnefronten» has led the 8th of March Movement in Norway. In recent years the 8th of March has been celebrated with demonstrations and meetings in 30—80 different places.

AKP(m-l) has many active members of «Kvinnefronten».

The struggle for socialism and communism

In the debate on AKP(m-l)'s newly adopted programme, the women question was a central factor. The struggle to make an end to the repression of women has for the first time been discussed as an absolutely necessary part of the struggle for socialism and communism.

The debate has also pointed out that a central task for the socialist economy must be to create the possibilities for full women's liberation.

This means a stop to division according to sex in all areas of society. Today's institution of the family, which suppresses women, must be abolished. The family must

be replaced by new basic groups which the people choose for themselves. These must have the following:

- equal relationship between men and women
- society (and not each separate little group of people) must have the responsibility to provide for and take care of its members.
- All members (also children, the aged, and those unable to work) are economically independent and self-sufficient. Such a group would not be therefore the economic basis of society, but a freely chosen social community.

To reach such a development, struggle is necessary throughout the whole period of socialism, during which women will be the motive force and will be opposed by men.

To reach their goal of full women's liberation, socialism must, from the word go, work to transfer tasks from the family to society, and to break down division of labour according to sex.

This demands the development of the forces of production, total rearranging of society and a change in way of thinking. This is absolutely necessary to liberate women as a force in production and in the ruling of society. Women must have economic self-reliance. Wages must increase and become equal to men's wages. Women must be secured entrance to jobs which earlier have been male dominated, especially in political and economic areas. Society must take over increasingly, responsibility for provision and care, create free kindergartens for all children, medical care centres for all who need them, build care facilities for the elderly, and give direct economic subsidies to all children.

If the economy is to develop in this way, women must have power. The women's movement and the working class must fight for the goal of women's liberation in all aspects of planning and production. An economic plan without such goal would freeze old repression of women and make the progression towards communism impossible.

The struggle for women's liberation and the progression of socialism

Socialism gives the possibility to create the material grounds for getting rid of the repression of women. But historical experience shows that socialism does not automatically lead to women's liberation. Formal equality for women is relatively easy to carry through. But this is easily paralleled with women's real repression. As long as the family exists, it will be the grounds for man's privileged position with women as man's servant, and idea of women as second grade members of society. There will also be deeply rooted reactionary habits and ways of thinking which will take a long time to get rid of.

The ideological fight must go hand in hand with the struggle to change the material basis for the suppression of women. It will also be extremely important to develop an independent and strong women's movement under socialism.

The struggle for women's liberation has a lot to say for the socialist democracy and the strength of the proletarian dictatorship. If women do not have the same real rights as men to take part in political work, then half of the working class and the people have only formal democratic rights. In this case women's energy cannot be mobilized for the building of socialism and class struggle against the bourgeoisie.

To get rid of the repression of women, is to abolish the family, division of labour according to sex, private property and the market. Women's struggle under socialism is therefore bound to the fight for communism. It is of course a duty for the communist party to lead the struggle for women's liberation.

The fight against the repression of women in AKP(m-l) itself

AKP(m-l) is a part of Norwegian society and is influenced by it. Therefore, women

are repressed in AKP(m-l) just as they are in all other parties and organizations. It is impossible to put a full stop to this without changing society. But it is absolutely necessary to take up the fight, and this is what women in AKP(m-l) have done.

Repression within the party can be seen, for example, in the fact that it is women who do most of the «invisible» organizational work — while men stake out the political line. Furthermore women wear themselves out on most house and family work.

Women's political and organizational experience is hardly noticed and women's condition in the working class and as part of the working people, is seldom treated as «important politics». This situation is aggravated by the fact that few women have taken leadership. The result being that women in and related to the working class, are not mobilized in the fight against the bourgeoisie.

The party emphasizes therefore active and particular work on the women problem, firstly taking up repression of women in society, but also giving importance to the struggle against repression within the party. The decision to include at least 50% women members of the central committee, has been adopted by voting. Experience so far show that there are enough qualified women, if one looks for them.

The party tries also to take up women's position as a part of its political line in several areas — for example the unions.

AKP(m-l) sees women's struggle for liberation over the whole world as an important revolutionary potential. Marxist-leninists must lead this struggle and fight for directing it against the bourgeoisie and imperialism and in this way create a united front against the world's suppressed peoples and nations. At the same time it is necessary to look critically at «the woman question's» place in the tradition of marxism-leninism.

We in AKP(m-l) believe we have taken important steps in this direction.



In September-October 1984 a delegation from the central committee of the Workers' Communist Party (marxist-leninist) headed by Pål Steigan, was in China. Six comrades spent three weeks visiting Beijing, Shanghai, Shandong province and the economic zone in Shenxhen. This was Pål Steigan's fifth visit to China. On previous occasions he has met Mao Zedong, Chou Enlai og Hua Guofeng. This time he, and the entire delegation, met Hu Yaobang. The delegation also participated in the celebration in Beijing of 1. Oktober - the 35th anniversary of the establishment of the People's Republic.

Greater prosperity

Class Struggle has asked Pål Steigan what he found most conspicuous in today's China.

— The greater prosperity, without a doubt. The shops carry more merchandise, people are better dressed and

there is a lot of new housing. Many of the political slogans have been replaced by advertisements for Sony and International. A question which remained unanswered was whether China would develop in a commercial direction in the time ahead, with political issues taking second place to

purely economic factors.

A question we consider important is the role played by the working class in Chinese society, given the new economic reforms. What of trade union rights? What power does the working class have? On the question of how the delegation approached the

The Lesson

Independend

tour, Pål Steigan said that very critical questions were put to the Chinese comrades throughout.

Open hosts

— Compared with previous visits our hosts were relatively open. They gave close attention to our questions and provided us with a wealth of material to take home.

The Workers' Communist Party (marxist-leninist) has not adopted a viewpoint on the economic reforms in China. We believe unreservedly that major changes in the economy were necessary in order to modernize China. But we will not take a stand on the concrete measures now being carried through. We see clear dangers associated with the economic reforms which we discussed openly with our Chinese hosts. Will the gap between poor and rich in China become so wide as to amount to a cleavage between the classes? Does the manufacturing industry being developed through joint ventures with overseas companies contain the beginnings of an urban bourgeoisie? Is there a

risk that a new landowner class will emerge in the rural areas — as witnessed in many other Third World countries. Pål Steigan cites issues which the delegation worked on.

Gains undermined?

— There is a danger here that the gains won through socialism will be undermined, he emphasizes. And the dangers are quite obvious, in my view. It remains to be seen how the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese people will meet this situation. Our sincere wish is that China will succeed in building up a modern socialist country with an advanced technology and culture. But we realize there are many obstacles to be overcome. For det time being we consider it too early to draw any preliminary conclusions.

At international level we noted China's support to liberation movements, e.g. in Kampuchea, and its general support to the Third World. China gives large and valuable support to those struggling against imperialism and hegemonic desires. There can be no doubt about that. But at the same time there appears to be doubt regarding China's views on the situation in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. It is no secret

to Learn From China:

ence!

that there are differences of opinion between our two parties in this respect, differences which we discussed frankly with our hosts.

Develop relations

Pål Steigan relates that the visit was concluded with a mutual desire to develop relations between the Chinese Communist Party and the WCP(m-l) of Norway in a number of fields, for example through further tours by special delegations.

— I should stress that the visit was carried through based on the principle of parity between the WCP and the CCP, he says.

— What was the greatest surprise of the visit to China?

— We chose the same route as in 1981. The biggest surprise was probably the

marked economic progress made in the most backward rural areas. We feared that progress had only been made in the advanced rural areas. Otherwise, the capital Beijing had changed a great deal, with large new housing projects in evidence. Obviously there are immense ecological problems. Waste gas from industry is a major problem. At the same time, energy utilization is low. The Chinese face great challenges here.

The visit to one of the economic zones was a novel experience for this delegation. And I must admit that the strategy presented to us for the next 70 years, with the aim of creating a developed modern China, was more comprehensive and ambitious than I realized. It was slightly surprising to discover how well informed they were of the new technological revolution. I would assert that in material terms China is undergoing a very sound development. What worries China's friends is whether socialism and the leading role of the working class will survive this process. China has always occupied a central role in the young revolutionary movement, and many are the parties — including the

WCP(m-l) — which have sworn by «Chinese solutions» to political problems they have faced.

Independent

— The most important lesson to be learned is that the Chinese always did what they themselves considered right. Ignoring the Komintern's directives, Mao applied marxism's general principles to the actual conditions in China. That is why there was a revolution in China. And that is why we cannot emulate China today. Mao once said to some foreign guests who praised China uninhibitedly: «Go home and forget everything you've seen!»

Pål Steigan emphasizes how important it is to cool one's ardour once in a while.

— A significant weakness of the young revolutionary movement in the Western world was that we too failed to listen to what Mao said, he says in conclusion.

Right: What will the future bring him? PHOTO: LEIF GABRIELSEN

Beneath: China is prospering. New houses are built and the shops can offer a great variety of commodities.

PHOTO: PETER M. JOHANSEN



The Soviet Union: Advanced Capitalism

On 8 February 1948 the Yugoslav party leader, Djilas, returned from a meeting with Stalin in Moscow and reported to the Yugoslav party leadership: «We must expect to have to manage on our own and not count on any assistance. The Soviet government will subordinate us to their own policies and force us down to the same level as the occupied countries of Eastern Europe». This

was the first time a Communist leader questioned the nature of the Soviet state. The Soviet Union's international prestige was at its peak at this time. Djilas' statements would never have been believed by communists around the world if they had been made known outside the borders of Yugoslavia.

Peder Martin Lysestøl

Today the evidence is that there is much to be said for the Yugoslav criticism.

Through the forcible industrialization campaign in the thirties the bureaucracy and technical intelligentsia had moved further and further away from the working class and the people. The War had given rise to a system of *privileges for the highest echelons*. Russian chauvinism had become steadily more apparent. After the War profits were given a more central position in the economy, at the same time as the Soviet government took complete control of the economic and political development in the East European peoples' democracies. This type of negative aspect of the socialist Soviet Union was becoming ever clearer. The counter-revolution which was carried through after Stalin's death had been «in preparation» for a long period. For the international communist movement this first became clear after the 20th party congress in 1956. It was from this point that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) began its criticism of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) — criticism which indeed led to a complete breach after 1960.

Split in the view of the Soviet Union

Throughout the world communist parties and revolutionary groups became split in their view of the development in the Soviet Union. When, in the 1960s, those of us who subsequently formed the Workers' Communist Party (marxist-leninist) were in the youth movement, we had connections with the Soviet Party's youth movement. From 1967 onwards we had in reality adopted a standpoint on the conflict between the Soviet Union and China. It

was clear to us that the Soviet Union was no longer a socialist society. Subsequently the struggle against the false communism and against social imperialism played an important role in our work. After the Soviet entry into Czechoslovakia in 1968, the occupation of Afghanistan in 1979 and the events in Poland in 1981, more and more progressives have taken a view against parts of, or the entity of, Soviet policy. But, at the same time the Soviet Union has acquired new friends. As a superpower with large economic, political and military resources the Soviet Union has played the part of «progressive» vis-à-vis liberation movements and nations which have struggled against U.S. imperialism. Moreover, the large Soviet market acts as a magnet for capitalist groups and opportunists the world over. For them it is therefore important to tone down the criticism of the Soviet Union. These factors, and the fact that Soviet society is as closed as it is, have meant that there is still much confusion as to the nature of the social system in the Soviet Union. The fine phrases about socialism, the leading role of the party, the planned economy etc., blur the picture and serve to disguise the true facts — capitalism in an advanced form: Social Imperialism. In this article I will present some of the material which shows the Soviet Union to be capitalist. In the first instance I will examine the economic system.

Planned economic growth or crisis?

It may be useful to take a look at what the system has achieved, before going on to criticism of a more theoretical nature. Practical experience is, as we know, the most important source of knowledge. Pompous statements on «victory for socialism» are no

help when statistics show steadily decreasing growth and crises in the economy!

Historically it is precisely statistics which have been the Soviet Union's best «friend». While the capitalist countries in the West were undergoing the world crisis in the thirties, the Soviet community was being methodically developed. Although today Western economists doubt Stalin's growth figures somewhat, it is at all events clear that economic growth in the first two five-year periods stood at 5 to 12 per cent. Labour productivity was on the increase and the country was in the process of turning into an industrial great power. Despite the large-scale devastations of war the economy was shortly once again able to show good results. Up to the early 1960s GNP expanded by 5.5 to 6 per cent annually. (In the period 1946—62 growth in Norway was 4.7 per cent). Reference was still made to the Soviet Union's «brilliant» results. However, the growth figures soon became less impressive, and for the period 1976—80 economic growth was down to 2.8 per cent annually. (By way of comparison, annual GNP growth for Norway was 4.2 per cent in the same period.)

Productivity falling

Economic growth in capitalist Norway stood 50 per cent over the growth in the socialist USSR. Statistics were no longer on the Soviet Union's side. Not only was GNP expanding very slowly; labour productivity had been falling since 1970 and per capita consumption showed very slow growth. In the five-year period 1976—80, consumption increased by only 1.6 per cent annually, (compared with about 2 per cent annually in Norway). Agriculture had also long shown signs of weakness. From about 1970 onwards it became steadily clearer that the Soviet Union was

in the throes of a crisis. Whereas the country up to 1970 was a net exporter of grain, the import surplus was now growing ever larger. The Soviet Union, which had always emphasized the importance of being self-supporting in grain, soon had to import grain from its arch-enemy, the USA. During the seventies and eighties the import surplus has been in the range 15—40 million tonnes annually. Concurrently meat imports were increased sharply. Between 1971 and 1980 the country had to quadruple its imports of meat. Or, as the expert on the USSR, M. Goldman, says in his book «USSR in Crisis»: «Sixty-five years after the revolution food rationing had to be introduced in many large cities». Krushchov's plans to make up the ground lost to the USA in just a few decades sound today like a pipe-dream. Despite the fact that the population of the USSR is 20 per cent larger than that of the United States, GNP is still only about 60 per cent of the American figure.

Can the USSR be said to be capitalistic?

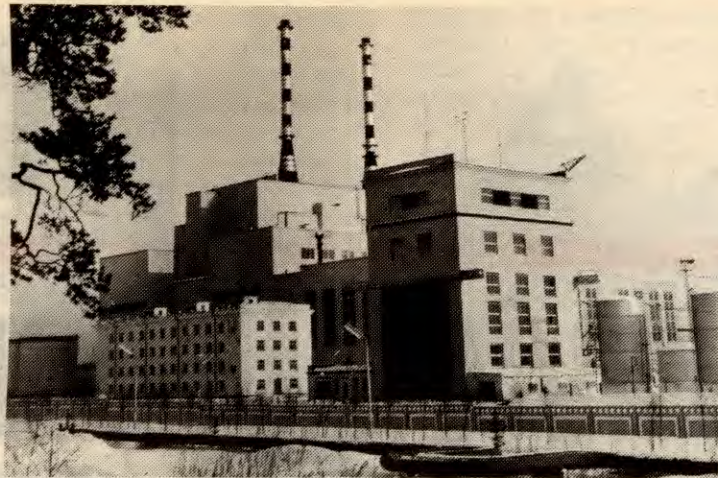
In my view the declining growth figures do not show that capitalism is superior to socialism. However, they are a strong indicator that drastic changes have taken place in the Soviet system. More to the point: can it be asserted that a country with a tightly and extensively controlled economy is capitalistic?

In the main the idea that capitalism characterizes countries with a highly developed manufacturing sector, private monopolies and extensive merchandise trade is most probably correct. But, at the same time, there are clearly wide differences between the social systems of the capitalist countries. They differ in regard to historical background, level of development, and also class condi-

tions. These differences have led to the existence of a capitalist superpower like the USA where the economic role of central government continues to be relatively small. At the same time we have a small capitalist country like Norway in which some 50 per cent of GNP is utilized by the state or is redistributed by way of the government budgets. There are capitalist countries where almost the entire banking system and all main industries are nationalized. (In Norway, for example, all the largest industrial concerns are today state-controlled.) At the same time there are countries where government business operations are on a very small scale. In the article «Economic problems of Socialism», Stalin puts forward two crucial criteria for distinguishing capitalism from socialism:

1. The means of production are not community-





A lot of the industry built up under Stalin is now old and out of function. It is difficult to modernize in a country where so much money is used for the military purposes. PHOTO: NTB



the size of the various owner-groups.

The state controls without a doubt the most important means of production. It is state property which provides the basis for the power of the ruling class in the country. However, there is little doubt that major contradictions also exist within this system. After the reforms of 1965 the individual trades and enterprises have acquired greater independence. The struggle for credits, projects and prices lays the basis for numerous contradictions within the state economy. Given favourable conditions the individual state enterprises can raise profits and thereby the standard of living of the employees, in the first instance those at director level.

The collective sector

The collective sector is mainly to be found in agriculture. The collective farms control

which goes to consumption of luxuries by the rich. However, it is also used for expansion within the large illegal sector. All who have travelled in the USSR have encountered the black market. According to estimates by Western economists, this market accounts for 20—25 per cent of GNP, i.e. a market larger than the entire national product of Norway! All kinds of article are sold — from machinery and equipment which are stolen from state enterprises to imported luxury cars or foreign currency. There is no reason to doubt that the Nomenclature itself takes an active part in the illegal market. Trips to the West provide them with both access to foreign currency and to goods which can be sold on the poorly supplied Russian market at a huge profit.

The Nomenclature — representatives of the people or a ruling class?

Does the dominant state sector not guarantee that the socialistic sector of the economy wins over the private sector, and that all means of

fact. Evidence for this: The economy of the Soviet Union has developed more and more into a war economy. The military-industrial complex and heavy industry tap the country's resources. The consumer goods sector and service sectors are greatly underdeveloped. The people's basic needs are not being met. People still have to queue for basic necessities. The quality of consumer goods is very poor. Today the USSR has to import large quantities of consumer goods from Eastern Europe. Hungarian and Yugoslav economists I have spoken to say that «the Soviet Union takes everything we can deliver. They don't ask about quality». The following explanation for this was given by a Hungarian economist at the Ministry of Finance in Budapest: «The Soviet Union compels us to deliver «peace merchandise» so that they themselves can invest in the war industry». In recent years the Soviet defence appropriations have stood at 12—15 per cent of GNP, a figure that is particularly high given the economic problems facing the country.

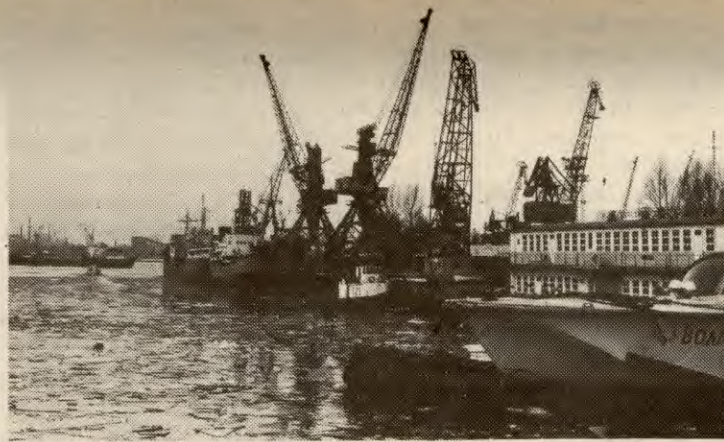
Privileges

Another factor which shows how the leaders of party and state have distanced themselves from the people is the extensive system of privileges. The Nomenclature is a secret list of the privileges accorded to certain posts. This privileged echelon is estimated to number 227,000 persons (Matthews, Privilege in the Soviet Union, London 1978). Other authors have also arrived at figures of this order. In the first place the Nomenclature enjoy salaries three to four times the average. As a rule they have a chauffeur-driven car, luxurious country cottages, special vacation spots, and their own stores carrying imported, high quality consumer goods (they must in no event suffer from the inadequate output of consumer goods). They also have their own health service as well as special advantages as regards education for their children, etc.

Is it possible to assert that this upper class stratum represents the working class and the working people. No. On the contrary this is an echelon which has obtained right of ownership over the means of production. Thus, the most important means of production are today not the «people's property» but the property of an echelon comprising well under 1 per cent of the country's population. With its control of the means of production this ruling class can buy labour which is exploited so as to increase the power and wealth of the ruling class.

Left: Consumer goods are scarce in the Soviet Union. This is from the vegetable-marcet in Kiev which is private. PHOTO: ARNE TRÆLDAL

Beneath: From the harbour in Riga, where Soviet interests are strong. PHOTO: BJØRN WESTLIE



owned, but privately owned.

2. In a system of commodity production, labour is also a commodity.

Additionally, we may include Lenin's criteria for capitalism having developed into imperialism — the concentration of capital in monopolies, merging of bank- and industrial capital and capital export.

Does the Soviet system exemplify the distinguishing marks of capitalism described by Stalin and Lenin?

Who controls the means of production?

Today one type of Soviet critic asserts that the USSR is a super-centralized social system controlled by the Nomenclature. They say that the country has one set of capital resources. This bears little relation to reality. The Soviet Union is the world's largest state in extent. There are so-

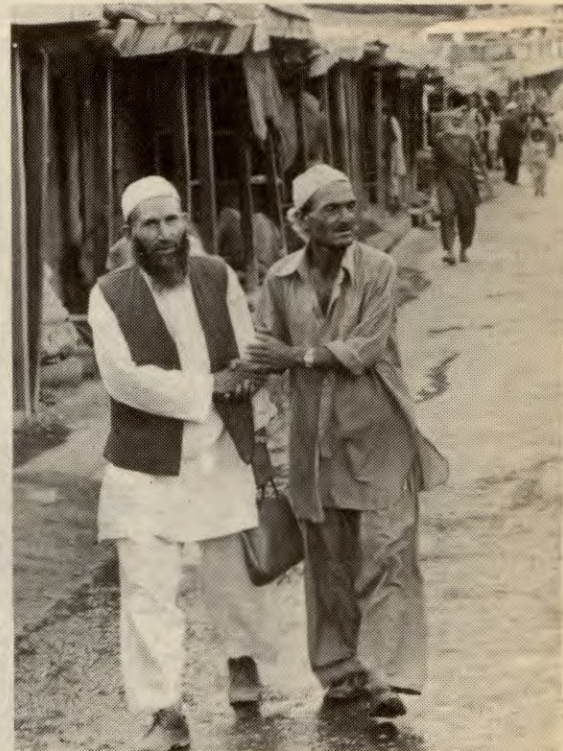
me 90 nationalities, over 100 languages and wide variation in economic development. In this system contradictions between the nationalities are rife, particularly between the national minorities and the Russians. The Ukrainian nationality numbers approximately 50 million and accounts for about 20 per cent of the population. The Uzbeks number about 10 million, and a number of other nationalities are over 5 million strong. There are contradictions between the state and the collective sector and between the state and the private sector. All these contradictions are between groups which control the means of production. Thus, there is clearly no question of a *single centre of power*.

I will come back later to the Nomenclature, the most powerful of the power groups in the country. I shall include some data in order to show

about just as much land as the state farms. Collective property is a form of group property which, through trade with the state and trade on the market, has its own economic interests. About 20—25 per cent of the Soviet population today live on collective farms.

In the Soviet Union there is both a legal and an illegal private sector. The legal sector is to be found in agriculture. It is well known that the USSR today is dependent on the private producers for meeting the country's needs for important food products. Some 4 per cent of the Soviet Union's land area is in private hands. Yet this area accounts for 60 per cent of the country's potato production, 40 per cent of fruit and eggs and 25 per cent of meat, milk and vegetables (M. Goldman: USSR in Crisis, New York 1983, page 83). Through private trade much capital is accumulated

production come under the control of the working class and the working people? A prerequisite for this is of course that the state property is controlled by the working class. This was at one time the case in the Soviet Union. Today the facts show that the ruling class which governs the state and the enormous state enterprise is the Nomenclature, a party-appointed stratum of the community which lives on the «backs of the people». Can this be proved? Let us look at some facts: If the state was controlled by the people the plans for the economy would also reflect the people's needs. This in no way tallies with the situation in the Soviet Union. The plans are decided over the heads of the people. It is not the people's needs but the party leadership's strategic plans which Gosplan bases itself on when the country's five-year plans are put into ef-



After the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in 1979 more and more progressives have taken a view against parts of, or the entirety of, Soviet policy.

PHOTO: KJELL GJERSETH, PETER M. JOHANSEN, KLASSEKAMPEN

Is labour a commodity?

But this of course presupposes that labour is a commodity, i.e. that the worker sells his labour for pay which is worth less than the wealth he creates. After the economic reforms of 1965 it became clear that the position of the worker on the labour market was, «Norrosti Press», issued the booklet: «Soviet economic reform and its critics». Page 43 states the following: «... an increase in profits can only be achieved by economizing on materials, labour and financial resources». This was a signal for extensive rationalization. Nicolaus relates that production switches in the industrial chemicals industry meant a 10-15 per cent reduction in employee numbers. Although there is officially no unemployment in the Soviet Union there is no doubt that workers made redundant through rationalization measures have long gone without work. Nicolaus also states that 59 per cent of the workers change jobs once a year! The workers are exploited in that the surplus wealth they create is utilized by the upper echelons of industry and the state for their own class interests. The working class is left with a wage which, compared to that of the Nomenclature, secures them only a very poor standard of living. The so-called «socialist» development has not narrowed the gap between the leader class and the people. To the contrary. In many areas the disparities appear merely to be increasing.

Maximum profit can only be secured through the «empire»

In the course of the last 20

years the Soviet Union has expanded vigorously outside the country's own borders. The division of Europe after World War II marked the start of what was to become the Soviet empire. With the approval of the Western powers, the Red Army was able to secure a development in Eastern Europe that served Soviet interests. Stalin's strategy was now clear: What serves the Soviet Union also serves socialism. Eastern Europe was developed so as to fit into the Soviet economic strategy. The strong concentration of capital around the state monopoly, the military power and the desire for greatest possible profits have made the USSR the most expansive imperialist power of our time. Since the mid-60s the USSR has steadily increased its involvement outside the Comecon area.

Control of Eastern Europe enables the USSR to secure for itself the necessary machines and consumer goods without having to use convertible currency. Through increasing control of countries in the Third World such as Cuba, Vietnam and Ethiopia it can also secure cheap raw materials without using foreign currency. Among other things this makes it possible to reserve Western currency for purchases of necessities such as grain or for know-how such as modern electronics or advanced oil-drilling equipment. It also allows economic resources within the Soviet Union to be earmarked for heavy industry, production of energy, and manufacture of weapons and other war equipment.

The countries of Eastern Europe function today as economic «leaseholders» for the Soviet economy. Attempts to reform the economy of Czechoslovakia, Po-

land, Hungary or East Germany are greatly impeded by «compulsory deliveries» to the Soviet Union.

By way of illustration,

to permit an increase in exports to the West which would bring in foreign currency necessary to repay the heavy dollar debt, are hindered by the Soviet Union's insistence that Hungary continue to deliver the goods needed by the Soviet Union. The large Ikaros bus factory in Budapest is an example in point. Realignment of production with a view to increased exports to the West is impossible so long as the Soviets demand regular deliveries of buses to meet their own transport requirements.

There is little doubt that the USSR keeps a close watch on attempts in Eastern Europe to strengthen links with Western Europe. The East German party leader Honecker's trip to West Germany was stopped precisely because the Soviet government considered that cooperation was in this case being taken too far. The West German government had indeed offered East Germany about 1000 million U.S. dollars in credit.

Trade with Western Europe

At the same time as the Soviet Union keeps a close watch on the countries of Eastern Europe, it fully concentrates its efforts on strengthening its own trade and cooperation with Western Europe.

The economic crisis and the political differences of opinion between the U.S.A. and Western Europe are exploited in order to strengthen the Soviet Union's position. There is little doubt that in a world in which the economic

warfare over markets between the imperialist countries is sharper than at any time since World War II, the sizable Soviet and East-European markets are a tempting proposition.

Through long-term agreements the USSR will become a steadily more important supplier of energy to Western Europe. The high point of energy cooperation so far is the major gas agreement of 1981. This agreement will provide 13 per cent of Western Europe's supply of gas in the 1990s. The enormous pipeline of 5,500 km was built with the aid of Western credits of NOK 10,000. German, French, British and Italian firms are involved.

Norwegian trade with the Soviet Union has up to now been fairly modest. However, it is clearly increasing. Norway's exports to the USSR grew by almost 50 per cent between 1977 and 1983. This is far stronger growth than for Norwegian exports overall. The value of Norway's exports to the USSR is around NOK 1,000 million.

It is also characteristic that after the invasion of Afghanistan, Norway entered into a ten-year cooperation agreement with the Soviet Union. A five-year trade agreement was signed simultaneously; this includes deliveries of paper and other important Norwegian export products.

Kongsberg Våpenfabrikk (a major Norwegian arms manufacturer) has entered into four agreements where, among other things, deliveries of important computer equipment are involved.

It is typical of the Western bourgeoisie's unprincipled attitude to Soviet imperialism that Minister of Trade R. Steen (Soc.Dem.) stressed that the agreements were en-

tered into in a «good atmosphere». This, it may be noted, was immediately after the entry into Afghanistan.

The Norwegian government is to conclude a new trade agreement with the Soviet Union after the general election this year. There is little doubt that it will mean a new step forward for «cooperation», regardless of whether the Conservative or the Labour Party is in office. Some people maintain that trade serves «both parties», and it is clear that so long as trade is carried on at a low level the imperialists in the Kremlin will have no decisive influence on the other party's policy. However, there is little doubt that the Kremlin's goal is to use trade as a means of acquiring influence, and later power.

Yugoslavia

The best case in point is Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia lies in the «grey zone» between East and West. Its location is strategically important given its border far into Western Europe and its long Adriatic coastline. Between 1948 and 1955 virtually all trade between the USSR and Yugoslavia was at a standstill. However, from 1955 onwards, the USSR concentrated on winning over Yugoslavia by «peaceful» means. Yugoslav manufacturing industry had problems gaining entry to the Western market. But trade with the Soviet Union was an easier matter. As early as in 1965 the Soviet Union was Yugoslavia's most important export market. In 1980 the Soviet Union was both Yugoslavia's main export and import market. Some examples: According to Yugoslav trade statistics, 78 per cent of her shoe exports went to the

USSR, 56 per cent of her clothes exports and 50 per cent of non-electrical machinery.

At the same time Yugoslavia received 47 per cent of its oil needs from the USSR, which also supplied other important raw materials. Soviet influence on Yugoslavia's external trade today is on a par with its influence on the other countries of Eastern Europe. This means in the next instance that economic pressure can be turned into political and military pressure. The Soviet Union has long demanded military base facilities on the Adriatic coast. Will the crisis in the Yugoslav economy and Soviet pressure compel them to give way?

Conclusion

In recent years people the world over have time and again been shocked by the political adventurism of the Soviet government. Inside the country all opposition is silenced by the dictatorship. This is a fact. It shows the imperialist class content of the Soviet government administration. However this is not only the result of «erroneous policy» of great-power chauvinism. The policy followed is a consequence of the policy of a powerful nation characterized by monopoly of the state. Analysis of the country's economy shows it to be a society in which a small group, the Nomenclature, controls the most important means of production. They acquire wealth by gross exploitation of the country's working class and of people in countries which fall victim to their imperialist adventurism.