FdCA
Marxism and Anarchism
1991

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of opposition to capitalism and the multinationals a strategic basis so that we can assist the struggles of our comrades in the East and in the West, linking them to the struggles of those in the third world and elsewhere — anywhere where people fight for a society that is free from the exploitation of man by other men.

opposition. Even the Social Democratic parties will be forced into policies which are more compatible with the system.

The Role of Anarchist Communists

While it is certainly important for class-struggle militants to understand what is happening, it is even more important to devise a strategy for what Anarchist Communists can do. The analysis we make and the discussion of this analysis with other militants on the left helps us to clarify things further, to get rid of the Bolshevik myth and any Leninist residuals. We need to lay the basis for a wide-ranging theoretical debate in order to establish an organizational project that has as its basis a common analysis of the situation of those many comrades who up to now have been under the influence of the Leninist myth.

We need to continue to carry out our work within the mass organizations and among the workers in our workplaces. We must make efforts to give our action a strategic dimension and range, elaborating concrete, alternative political lines to demonstrate the continuing validity and feasibility of our political alternative.

We need to develop our theoretical analysis, updating our elaborations above all in relation to the management of the future society and the "transitional phase", and organization of the economy and production. One thing we have learnt from history is that there is no possibility of change if we do not provide solutions to people's needs. History teaches us, in fact, that it is when the crisis is at its worst and the solution to the problems is uncertain, that the reaction is able to insert itself and impose itself.

We need to support our comrades in Eastern Europe so that they can re-build the historical memory which has been wiped out after years of falsification and re-writing of history on the part of the Leninist counter-revolution. On our part, we must intensify our work within the class struggle and make efforts to give our action

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ample, the agreement with FerruziMontedison), the resurgence of medium-sized farms and the creation of cooperatives are also being encouraged.

This choice undoubtedly represents a victory for the capitalist mode of production and marks a return to the form of labour organization and the values that the proletariat of the world have always fought. So, apart from the great disappointment felt by those who had thought of the USSR as the home of real socialism, there is now also an objective strengthening of the control of multinationals on a global scale.

It is necessary, however, to examine carefully the possible scenarios that could arise on an international level as a result of this situation.

It seems clear that the main beneficiaries of this policy will be the EEC countries. In particular, the Federal Republic of Germany is destined to see an increase in its GDP by 1995, reaching the levels of France and the UK. The greater part of its investment will no doubt be directed at the GDR's infrastructure and productive apparatus, in an effort to strengthen economic ties between the two countries and create a de facto reunification. Western countries in general will be focused on the Eastern bloc's debt repayments in order to create trustworthy consumers. In the Pacific area and on the world's chess board, the clash between the USA and Japan is destined to become worse and there ban be no doubt but that poor countries will fall further into debt and will also see less investment from OECD countries whose attention will be focused on introducing capital into Central Europe.

The labour movement and the workers of Western Europe may be able to create struggles aimed at bettering their living and working conditions in view of the probable growth in the economy, but at al strategic level, their action will naturally be affected by the mistrust sown by the failure of Leninism. And by no means can it be discounted that international capitalism will not take advantage even more so than before to strangle any form of organized

add the 100 million in Eastern Europe. But for investments and the markets to be secure, the Central European area requires political stability which can only be guaranteed by the re-confirmation of the USSR's hegemony. The first significant evidence of the validity of this statement is the request by the West that the USSR intervene in Romania and the role that the USSR has played there in enabling the fall of Ceaucescu and set about the work of restructuring to bring it back into a politically homogenous area. The USSR thus achieves the first result of seeing its role in Eastern Europe recognized by its long-time rivals and, more importantly, it gains the chance to provide structural support in the future of its dominant role in the area.

But in order for the restructuring which has begun to have a real chance of success, it is necessary to correlate the economies of the USSR and the Eastern European countries to the Western economy and to do this, Gorbachev will be forced to put an end to the anomaly that is (what remains of) post-revolutionary Russia. Thus, he has definitively liquidated the Leninist "third way" and Russia is returning to the Social Democratic family from which, if the truth be told, it had never really strayed to far.

While in politics there is a return to parliamentarianism and the rule of law, the huge oligopolies which developed under the GOSPLAN are importing not only technology but also systems for company and labour organization so that they can make Soviet production costs competitive on the market. Significant accords in this respect have been made (including some during Gorbachev's visit to Italy) and concern all sectors, from heavy industry to infrastructure. Alongside these groups which represent both the present and the future of the USSR's economy, there are attempts to stimulate private initiative in order to develop the service sector, to use technological research on the market through the of goods for large-scale consumption. This dual path is being reproduced in agriculture too, where alongside investment in huge areas also in collaboration with certain multinationals of the sector (see, for ex-

As of the 7th Congress of the FdCA of 1st October 2006, this document ceases to be part of the FdCA's Basic Strategy.

Anarchist Communist Criticism of "Real Socialism"

The Bolshevik model for the construction of communism already showed signs of crisis with Lenin's introduction of the NEP. This was no sudden, unexpected crisis. It had been presaged by certain political and governmental choices in the wake of October 1917, in particular:

1. the liquidation of the governing coalition of all those forces which supported the revolutionary transformation of the country. The consequence of this act was the suppression of the institutional environment which hosted the dialectic and debate between the various political forces representing the various groups and classes that were allied in the revolutionary process. This "simplification" of the political scene was achieved thanks to military strength and well before the structural conditions of the presence of such forces were removed;

2. the consequent liquidation, by force of arms, of the anti-institutional forces and therefore of the "social movements" of which the Anarchists had always been one of the components (the *Makhnovshchina*, Kronshtadt), movements that were capable of creating social models and alternative, revolutionary practices;

3. the liquidation through repeated police action of the organized forces which were capable of coming up with projects and programmes in competition with and further left than

the Bolsheviks' conduct of the revolution — the various revolutionary political groups that operated at the time in Russia (Social Revolutionaries, Anarchists, etc.);

4. the liquidation of the workers' opposition within the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik), the final act that sealed the definitive affirmation of the party centre led by Lenin and the creation of an autocratic management of the revolutionary process;

5. the loss of authority, by decree of the 28th June 1918, of the Factory Committees, organs which were capable of directly exercising workers' control of the productive process, achieved by transferring power to the Soviets, knowing well that the electoral system and the structure of the Soviets gave the party a greater possibility of taking them over.

These choices, which were the result of the Leninist concept of the role of the party during the revolutionary phase, had the (well-known) effect of reducing mass, popular participation in the revolutionary process and made it necessary for management of the economy and production to be aimed at developing accumulation and the management of production by small owners and by a class of bureaucrats who were comparable in every way with those who manage the means of production under a capitalist system.

The transfer of property of the means of production from capitalist groups to the "socialist" State did not result in an automatic overturning of relations between capital and labour. On the contrary, labour remained totally subordinate to the new State institution into which the ownership of the means of production was concentrated after its expropriation from the capitalists. The "socialist state" rapidly became the legal form through which economic development was achieved. The accumulation of profit became the task of the State, which used its capital according to the economic directives of the Communist Party. In the late 1920s in Soviet

rience of the Sudeten Germans. Hungary is more liberal, but even here there are German sections of the population and a Greater Germany would hamper collaboration with the Austrian area and the Danube, which Hungary views as vital (see for example the recent political and commercial agreement between Hungary, Austria, Italy and Yugoslavia). Then there are the Baltic republics who will have to keep in mind the loving attention they were lavished with by Germany during the twenty years which preceded the Second World War.

So, is it not better to stimulate change in Bulgaria before it occurs spontaneously? Or promote change in Romania by forcing the international Masonic clique to abandon Ceaucescu, who is no longer even useful to the West as an opponent of Soviet policy within the communist countries? And it is better for this change to occur before an opposition class can be formed there and before this opposition produces the political class that will decide the changes, as has happened in Poland and Czechoslovakia.

If this is Gorbachev's general policy (and it is), then it matters little if such-and-such a leader of the old regime was a thief (are our own Christian Democrat or Socialist rulers any less so?) or if they had collections of pornographic films or splendid villas. It matters little if General So-and-So is or was friendly with the Russians, or if some party official or factory manger studied in Moscow in such-and-such a period. It would be like saying that anyone who studied at Oxbridge or Ivy League colleges is part of a political plot among Western countries, given that anyone in Eastern Europe who wanted access to the very highest levels of education inevitably went to Moscow. Our attention needs to be focused on the general political project.

Restructuring in the East

The USSR is today offering the countries of the EEC the internal Soviet market — 250 million potential consumers to which we can

paid for this attempt with an irreversible *de facto* integration of the EEC and a reduction of its role as a military and economic power.

For the USSR, the choice has been whether to take an antagonistic position towards the countries of the European Community or to build a partnership with them on the basis of common interests. It is well known that the USSR needs the technological innovation that Europe can easily provide. And it can offer unlimited raw materials, an enormous potential market and a qualified workforce which can quickly adapt to the new technology. In fact, the USSR has the highest number of engineers, mathematicians and scientists of any country in the world. Some sort of union is therefore possible, provided any potential causes of conflict are eliminated and the political unity of the European agglomeration is weakened, leaving a more markedly economic union.

To do this, Gorbachev, having noted the crisis affecting the countries of Eastern Europe, is trying to face the problem with the cooperation of these countries, if only because to do otherwise would mean losing them altogether. The fall of the East German regime was therefore welcomed and if they want to talk about German reunification then so be it — that way West Germany will be less concerned with the political integration of the EEC as it will be focusing on reunification. Apart from ensuring the unity of the German people, reunification has the added bonus of creating an internal market of 80 million consumers and bringing together the productive capacity of the world's fourth and tenth biggest economies. Once an injection of West German capital has bailed out and relaunched the economy of the other Germany, who knows what will happen to the German populations lying outside the borders of the two states? And what interest will Germany still have in European political unity?

Here then are the first positive reactions. Poland is continuing with its attempts to re-introduce the market while still swearing loyalty to the Warsaw Pact. Neither will it be long before Czechoslovakia does likewise, unwilling as it is to repeat the expe-

Russia and in most Communist parties, there was an increasing conviction that the concentration of ownership of the means of production in the State, together with the responsibility for planning it, would considerably reduce the "anarchy of production" which afflicted the Western capitalist regimes, thereby avoiding the short-term risk of economic crises. Instead, in Soviet Russia, typically capitalist production relationships were slowly returning, even though the ownership of the means of production was controlled by the State.

The reasoning behind this choice can be seen in the mechanistic application of the principle according to which once the ownership of the means of production changes, then there is a consequent change in the social structure. Add to this the fact that State and party were considered equivalent and that the party was considered to be equivalent with the proletariat, and you have shown the communist nature of the society: the proletariat is politically represented by the party and the party controls the State. Hence, it follows that the society in which this is the situation and in which the State is the "owner" of the means of production is therefore a communist society. The clumsy reasoning is obvious, yet Trotsky (who developed it) was never able to go beyond this apparent syllogism and continued to sustain up to the end that the Russian State was indeed a proletarian one, albeit bureaucratically degenerated. As early as 1924, the classes that held control of agricultural production attempted to regain the power which was *de facto* theirs, if only because they materially possessed the means of production.

Stalinism

In this context, the successful emergence of Stalin's line was the response that the party bureaucracy and what was left of the revolutionary forces to the attempt from within the party (but with solid structural bases in the productive and social fabric of the country) to lay the groundwork to restore, also on an institutional level, the

representative power of the classes which had the possession and management of the means of production, with "economic democracy". With the defeat of Bukharin's line, the solutions proposed by Stalin met with unexpected support from the international economic community and from the crisis that was at the time afflicting the mechanisms of accumulation throughout the capitalist world (the 1929 crisis).

On an economic level, Stalinism was an original and adequate response to the problem of the moment. Economic planning, ruthless use of military control over the workforce, the shifting of revolutionary enthusiasm onto the processes of accumulation (the work ethic, the Stakanov syndrome, and so on), a daring foreign policy for the import of civil and military technology, all this made it possible to build the basic structures of the country's heavy industry, the infrastructure, and allowed Russia to move on from a phase of structural economic underdevelopment. But the corollary of this policy was the transformation of the party bureaucracy into a class.

The war, with the rapid acceleration of the productive processes that it brought, the promotion once more of consensus from and the participation of the masses (stimulated through the tactical and strategic conduct of the conflict to the extent of encouraging national reconciliation) gave Stalinist policies an enormous boost. They also ensured that the profound contradictions within the model of development and in the economic and political choices that were made would not be able to nourish the political opposition which was deprived of a mass base, because of the war.

But the war (thanks to the acquisition of other territories and peoples by the Union) did accentuate one very serious problem that the Bolshevik power inherited from Czarist times: nationalities.

Stalin deluded himself into thinking that he could wipe out the basis of this problem with forced migrations and the deportation of entire populations, and tried to effect a "re-mixing" nationalities by destroying territorial homogeneity, seeking to uproot the centuries-long traditions and habits of various populations. This

This instability extended to the Slavic area, with similar problems arising in republics which are part of the USSR and are important both strategically and economically, such as Ukraine, to whom the reborn autonomy of Eastern European states is undeniably attractive. The borders between the states in these regions have always been uncertain. Pan-German claims over the Danube area and the Baltic have caused in the past and still continue to cause worry, as have Polish claims on Lithuania and Ukraine, Hungarian claims on Transylvania and Romania's interest in Moldavia. Equally intense are the various claims and counterclaims in other parts of the region, not least in Yugoslavia, which is in danger of falling apart.

There is, in effect, a real risk that the demands of neighbouring countries are tending towards the restoration of the borders preceding World War II, thereby introducing in the region an instability which would have negative implications throughout the continent to the point that it could once again be the cause of armed conflict (not forgetting that unrest in this area sparked off two world wars!).

The Reasons for a Strategic Choice

Awareness of the crisis affecting it in the Soviet Union today is of a clarity rarely seen among the leadership in Moscow. And they are equally aware of the crisis hitting the United States. Hence the successful policy of disarmament and disengagement which has brought about a definite shift in the role of these global superpowers. There are thus certain areas which are not covered, in which there is a great risk of instability with the possibility that other powers will move in. Both the USSR and the USA are worried about the growing economic power of Japan and Europe. It is commonly felt that 1992 will see the start in Europe of a solid process of integration that the USA has always (but vainly) tried to obstruct through the policies of the United Kingdom, which has

highly professionalized workers and technicians with a high level of education.

Gorbachev's Difficulties

At the time of his rise to power, Gorbachev inherited a situation which had greatly deteriorated.

The morass of the Afghan war was devouring resources, accentuating the reasons for the crisis in the republics along the border whose populations are of Muslim religion and tradition. The winds of Islam, fanned by Khomeini, have blown all the way into the Russia and have been feeding the expectations of ethnic groups undergoing demographic growth and who are eager to have a greater say within the country or at any event to gain autonomy from the ruling classes, made up for the most part of European Russians. This has given rise to the rebirth of centuries-old ethnic rivalries such as the clash between the Georgians and Armenians, each with their own strong traditions and a deep national consciousness.

This situation can be contrasted (though the demands are similar) with the desire for autonomy felt in the Baltic area which has seen notable economic development. In fact, many of the oligopolies we spoke about are based in this area, and the computerization of the productive system here is also notable. This has facilitated communications (think, for example, of the members of the National Fronts who communicate by means of the computers in the companies where they work!), an exchange which has enabled the rigid incommunicability imposed under the planned system, to be overcome and which gives hope to the possibility that these republics, once they become even partially autonomous from Moscow, can join the Scandinavian area of production where they would undoubtedly be able to integrate. National, ethnic, linguistic, historical and religious reasons have seen to the rest.

was supposed to have brought about a sort of equalization which would, by alternatively supporting the various ethnic groups, enable power to be exercised by the central government. The system would make everyone feel so "insecure" as to encourage cohesion and unity in the country over separatism and nationalisms, despite the existence of these sentiments.

It was there not a new policy, but an indication of the continuity of the old Czarist regime which conceded the right of settlement to various ethnic groups during the frequent migrations in order to contain demands for autonomy by the various peoples who were subjects of the empire. This vassalage established between the central power and new arrivals was now carefully planned. This was the only difference with the past, as the various communities throughout the country (both then and now) do not communicate with each other, do not join together to become one. Instead, they accentuate their attachment to their own languages, religions, cultures and traditions. This lay at the root of the separatist movements that are today causing difficulty within the USSR. During the second world war, the various contenders tried to exploit the presence of populations, distinct from each other and often in conflict, all along the confines of Great Russia, from the Baltic to the Urals. Backed by the Allies, Stalin once again opted for the destruction of entire ethnic groups by means of forced emigrations, the dispersion of populations in the immense territories of the east and even extermination. The policy of ethnic mixing was not applied in the Baltic republics as these were not acquired by the USSR until later. Having acquired them, however, and this being immediately followed by a war which decimated the local populations, it was possible to engage in a "Russification" of the area by promoting emigration by Russians and people from other republics. For this reason, the problem today of respect for nationality in these countries is, at least in some ways, different than in the rest of the USSR.

But the great failure of Stalinist policy (and one which actually caused its downfall as a method, style and political theory of government) was principally its inability to link the management of those European countries where the Red Army had imposed socialism to the management of the USSR in an organic way. The centralist, bureaucratic vision of the role of the party, the subordination of the various national parties to the hegemony of the Soviet communist party, destroyed the strength, the credibility, the mass base of communist parties with a solid, vast presence in the various countries. This led to the revolts of 1956, a clear signal of dissatisfaction with the "Russian" management of the revolutionary process, due to the bureaucratic nature of the forms of government and the political, economic and social policies which typified it. These insurrections were characterized by the marked political hegemony of left communism, often of council communist inspiration. This should also be seen in the workers' revolts of 1968–70, part of the long wave of leftist revolts in 1956. They contain the embryo of the rejection of the running of society along Marxist communist lines. This rejection also on the part of wide sectors of the workers and peasants arose from the failures and from the repression which followed any uprising of a progressive, revolutionary nature. In fact, popular revolts ended with increasingly more "right-wing" solutions to the problems raised. The leading class of these states has as its prime objective the preservation of the strategic balance and is therefore willing to make alliances with whoever can guarantee it and is ready to make concessions on a structural level. Here, more so than in the USSR, there are therefore the structural conditions to choose the path suggested long ago by Bukharin, with the result that, due to the changes in the political and economic management of society, there is a rebirth (even in the economic and productive structure of these countries) of the domination by classes whose power is based on the management of the means

In any event, the situation on a structural level lent itself perfectly to this operation. If one examines the data on the performance of the economies in the countries in the area, the crisis in the planned economy is perfectly evident, as is the growth in the cost of the apparatus necessary to sustain consensus in ratio to the available resources. There has been no change of a structural nature in the countries of Eastern Europe, though it might be appropriate to deal separately with the productive structure in the GDR and perhaps also in Hungary. The failure of COMECON and the inability to achieve an integration of the productive systems in the associated countries was caused by the hegemony and greed of the USSR in assigning sectors of development and of the division of labour, and by the very structure of COMECON, which did not allow for the sort of effective economic and monetary integration that would have ensured equal status with the USSR. It was therefore inevitable that there would be recourse to foreign debt and to each single country entering the international market. This introduced into the area the dictatorship of the World Bank and was responsible for the inflation which was necessary to pay off foreign debt. This led to the structural causes of the frightening economic crisis which has hit Eastern Europe. Back in 1980, the Soviet economy had begun to react to the crisis through increased concentration, creating a series of "groups" of businesses, effect oligopolies which, by reason of their size and their structural characteristics, had an interest in changing the economic system and in the introduction of the market.

However, the objective causes to which we have referred are not sufficient to explain the speed of the changes, whose reasons should also be sought in the strategic project that lies behind the policies of Gorbachev and the political class to which he belongs, made up of the new managers, the most important directors of the State oligopolies, many of whom come from the ranks of the army. This class is supported by a middle class made up of intellectuals,

The Polish Crisis and the Domino Theory

In 1978 a new element arrived onto the international scene which was already feeling the strain of a profound phase of restructuring of the productive relationships and of division of the markets on a worldwide scale.

The election of a Polish pope suddenly shifted the balance of power. This man, inspired by the same political vision as Gregory VII and supported by Catholic finance through often murky dealings (an example being the IOR-Calvi affair), has acted boldly on all fronts and his policies aspire at a restoration of the temporal power of the Catholic Church. He has thus supported the right-wing elements fighting against the regime in his own country, not only in an attempt to change the situation in Poland but also as a way of sparking off instability throughout Central Europe. To do this, it was necessary to create a system of alliances which could bring about war within the Russian empire. And to do this, he has gradually transformed ecumenical dialogue into a political alliance of an anti-Russian nature. And in order to achieve this goal, he has even established an entente cordiale with every other force on the sole condition that they be anti-communist (see for example the exchange of messages with Khomeini, characterized by the common struggle of Islam and Christianity against atheist Marxism).

While the Roman Catholics within Solidarity carried on the battle in Poland and Lithuania, the Lutheran Church has taken on the task of being a point of reference for the opposition in the German Democratic Republic, Estonia and Latvia, and among that vast minority of Germans spread throughout the plains of the Danube. The area of Eastern Europe and the USSR has been subjected to a concentric attack.

Thus, when events came to a crisis in Poland, we witnessed the effects of the so-called domino theory advanced by Kissinger in the Vietnam War, whereby if one country falls, all the others in the area would inevitably follow.

of production and on the bureaucratically-exercised control of the processes of accumulation. In this way, the structural and superstructural bases for the re-introduction of private ownership of the means of production and the market were recreated.

The Rebirth Of Capitalism

Today, in certain countries such as Hungary and Poland, this process is more advanced and so we can see the introduction of reforms in structure and institutions of political democracy of a Western type. In others, like the German Democratic Republic, the call of national unity seems to be forcing the pace of change. In Czechoslovakia, Romania and Bulgaria, the political situation is moving according to the particular conditions of each country. We will look at the characteristics and consequences of all this further on. What we would like to point out here is that in the USSR, the communist party is playing the most difficult card.

In fact, there is an attempt to constitute the control of power by the single party (so-called communist) with the restoration, albeit gradual and partial, of the market, introducing guarantees similar to those in the liberal state. In other words, there is a search for an original way to find a new (neo-communist) solution that quietly draws on the experience accumulated by the social democratic parties and is gradually introduced into their programmes, in the conviction that the Soviet State can only benefit from a policy of debate/competition with other States. Today, the USSR is a full member in its own right of the international community and a wholly legitimate one. As a military power, as a State that can offer an immense, receptive market attractive above all to those European countries which are in a phase of strong, steady productive growth, the USSR is looking for something in return on the level of security and economic development, and seeks solidarity from Western (above all, European) countries in order to contain the separatist tendencies of its peoples, as only a central Russian

power can guarantee the conditions of stability which provide the market with security and balance.

There is much to be said on the new phase of European and world history that is opened up thanks to this choice. It is sufficient to think of the "Balkanization" of the whole of Eastern Europe right up to the borders of the Russian republic and of certain situations in Asia in order to understand that we are embarking on a phase of great instability. And we can be sure that in this situation the processes in progress will not be without their difficulties or without consequences for peace.

The Failure of Marxism

It is necessary to point out that at the end of this long road, there is nothing communist left in the USSR and in Eastern Europe and that the much-vaunted superiority (as a political theory) of Marxism over Anarchism is now seen to be without any basis. We now see the inconsistency of those who based this superiority on Marxism's ability to provide positive, concrete solutions to the "transitional phase", providing as an example the realization of socialism in Eastern Europe. In the wake of what has happened, we can happily say that nothing is as it was before, even though the problems of the exploitation of man by man and the need to build a communist society remain, in fact the urgently concern the whole world. The increasing gap between the north and south of the world, between rich countries and poor, the ecological and environmental emergency, the explosion of nationalism and religious and ethnic conflict are all indication of a deep crisis which requires the urgent adoption of global solutions. The Marxist hypothesis, which is also undergoing an identity crisis in China and in other parts of the world, no longer offers sure solutions.

We must re-launch the debate leaving behind us the ruins of a historic defeat, strong in the knowledge that, although capital continues to grow stronger, although exploitation is on the rise,

early popular support, which is only partly explainable by the anti-Nazi struggle and liberation at the hands of the Red Army, or to understand why this popular support gradually diminished, and not through an entirely painless process at that.

We would do well to remind those who have forgotten about the disturbances in Berlin in 1953 which were inspired by left communism, the Hungarian and Polish revolutions in 1956 which, alongside the minority pro-Western elements, were largely the result of the workers' councils, and a similar movement in Poland against in 1970. These experiences ended in bloody repression, a limit certainly not desired by those who had promoted them. However, the ways in which the repression was carried out provided greater space for right-wing forces, to the point that there spread throughout the masses a mistrust in the notion that there could be an evolution from Moscow's brand of "communism". The so-called Communist governments were increasingly seen as occupation regimes and existed under the shadow of their big brother, whenever they did not turn into personal dictatorships, as in Romania. In fact, it was this very character of regime that prevented the internal dialectics necessary for any sort of change from within, resulting in the stagnation of the party and its members. Where conditions did, instead, permit it, as in Czechoslovakia in 1968, the rigidity of the system built by Stalin imposed the armed repression of a vital communist party which had mass support, resulting in the party's credibility being irreparably damaged. It wasn't long before the leaderships of the Eastern European countries (like that in the USSR, and in some cases even more so) found themselves beset with difficulties relating to the question of their succession, understandable given the extreme difficulty in selecting new members of the leading class.

Yalta and the Balance of Powers

At the end of the Second World War, the division of Europe into spheres of influence satisfied the appetites of the warring powers while at the same time putting an end to a situation of perennial instability in Central Europe. Geographical isolation, linguistic differences even to the point of the impossibility of communication, religious differences, different traditions, elements which in other parts of the continent had been the basis for the construction of national identities and the definition of borders were absent in Central Europe on produced only vague borders. Hence the indeterminate nature of frontiers which allowed Hitler to dream of a Greater Germany and to find no shortage of allies among the fragile monarchies and little tyrants who ruled in the countries of the Balkans and along the Danube. Yalta replaced German control with the hegemony of Russia, accepted by the Americans and strongly desired by the British (and later by the French) as an anti-German device. Borders became strong and well-defined, cemented by the ideology of Stalinist Communism and supported in some cases by popular enthusiasm. The reasons for this consensus, which was certainly limited to some areas only but was nonetheless vast and deeply felt in its earliest phase, are to be found in the existence in these countries of strong, well-established left-wing parties and labour unions whose upper echelons were used by Stalin during the years of the Cominform dictatorship, at least as far as the Marxists were concerned (it is significant to note the massacre of members and leaders of the Polish communist party). Stalin had already seen to the elimination of the leaders of the other political organizations as the Red Army advanced (a clear example being the liquidation of the Bulgarian Anarchist Communist movement, an event which has been ignored in every historical reconstruction).

The history of the role of COMINFORM in Eastern Europe and the persecution of leftist opposition in those countries needs to be completely re-written if we are to understand the reasons for the

although the refinement of the techniques of domination is ever greater, at least a theory on which we have been divided is now seen to be a failure, thus opening the way to revolutionary unity, the unity that characterized the International in its earliest days.

Today, finally, behind the walls of the Kremlin, the heirs of the London Secretariat of the First International have taken their last breath. Once again, the masses become the leading actor in the revolutionary process. But in order that they can have the instruments for political action, communist anarchism must get back to carrying out its political action, anarchist communist organizations must make their contribution by constantly updating their theory, by setting out a strategy which is managed by international connections and brought into the workplace and among the masses by means of a tactical articulation which allows for the maximum participation and constant verification.

We invite those revolutionary comrades who have been or still are members of Marxist organizations to debate with us and work with us, starting with the work among the masses and with a first verification of the results achieved.

The Strategic Proposals of Anarchist Communism

Even at the time of the preparations for the revolutionary uprisings in Russia, Anarchists had their own original proposals which at times held sway within the revolutionary movement. The development in 1905 of the soviets as a means for the self-management of the struggles, as organs of revolutionary democracy in substitution of the institution and forms of bourgeois democracy and the nobility, was the direct result of their political theory. The soviet, in fact, gathers the active forces which are really involved in the revolutionary project in progress and allows for the participation of all, irrespective of their political beliefs, their labour union or

religion, on the basis of total equality. This original instrument of proletarian democracy and mass participation does not deny the role of parties and political organizations, but achieves the political objective of mass participation by presenting itself as the only real and functional (original) instrument of participation. The full approval by the masses of the soviet as an instrument of political participation in the revolutionary process is evidenced by the fact that even the Bolsheviks were forced by the movement to adopt as their own the slogan "All power to the Soviets!". Even in the early phase of the revolutionary process of 1917 (the insurrectional phase), Anarchism had laid the groundwork for leaving bourgeois representative democracy behind and had created the basic nucleus for building a new type of system for participation, also on an institutional level, by finding a positive solution to the problem of power and of the State in the phase of transition to communism.

Anarchism not only supported but promoted the liquidation of the last State structures and the bourgeois democracy (the revolutionary vanguards that physically closed down the Duma were Anarchists and the Bolsheviks ratified the operation). But it must not be forgotten that in the soviets, not only the Bolsheviks and Anarchists were represented, there were also the Mensheviks, the Social Revolutionaries and, even more important, those without party, proving the extent of the soviets' comprehensive capacity for representation.

The liquidation of the left-wing and right-wing opposition by the Bolsheviks, hegemonized by the Leninist area, went hand in hand with the subjugation of the soviets and their total domination by the Bolsheviks. The rise to power of the party and the emergence of the bureaucratic class in the USSR necessarily meant denying the pluralist nature and the enormous mass popular participation in the revolutionary process.

Instead, by affirming "All power to the soviets, not to the party", as the sailors of Kronshtadt did in 1921, it would have been possible

no doubt that our struggle is all the more difficult now thanks to the mud thrown at the idea of communism itself, to the mistrust sown among the people, for the consciousness which now pervades the masses who are driven to think of the "Communism" that existed but is now defeated and the Anarchist Communism that we promote as one and the same thing. It may require a generation before what has happened can be objectively analysed, before the causes of what has happened and the need to continue the struggle for communism can be understood.

But the events of these past months also offer another important lesson: nothing remains the same and things can change in a short space of time if they are supported by a desire for structural change and if there is mass support. It is during phases of crisis in accumulation that a transformation of social and productive relationships can be sparked off and today we are going through a particularly intense crisis. It is a crisis which effects not only the Soviet empire, certainly a spectacular crisis, but also an equally profound, though still partially obscured, crisis of the American empire. A battle is in progress, with no holds barred, where Japan and Western Europe are bent on conquering increasing proportions of the market and the centre of gravity of the planet's history is revolving once more around Europe after many years.

In this situation it is the task of the most conscious elements (the vanguard) to work towards developing the consciousness of increasing sectors of the workers of their strategic objectives, by adapting their political strategy according to the changing situation, by stimulating an updating of their theory together with the evolution of the economic structure and technological innovation which, above all in the field of communications, has overturned the old rules. And one essential tool to achieve this is analysis. The notes which follow are therefore aimed at contributing to this.

and the attempt by the workforce to build a communist society. It was not (and Anarchist Communists were well aware of the fact) a linear process or one without obstacles. But the proposed strategy was the only one by which communism could have been achieved in liberty, beginning by building an alternative to capitalism which would not be reduced into the more of Stalinism or Social Democracy.

Crisis and Restructuring in the Russian Empire

For several months now, the crisis in the USSR's satellites in Europe have been occupying all the papers, in a stream of anti-communist propaganda of an intensity never before seen. What is taking place could be used to discredit any type of communism and presents the long sought-after opportunity to eliminate any opposition to capitalism. However, not much is being said about those (and there have always been those) who say that there has never been much communism about those regimes that are now collapsing.

But beyond the repercussions of this propaganda (important as they are), on an ideological level the crisis of these regimes introduces a situation of instability into Europe which merits careful attention by the very people, like us, who care about the class struggle and the problems of peace.

In analysing the new situation, we Anarchist Communists can hold our heads high, having unceasingly and from the very start criticized the "real socialism" of those countries, starting with the Leninist solution to the problem of the transition to socialism. Today, our criticism finds its confirmation in history, criticism which was paid for with the blood of so many Anarchist Communist comrades during the Russian Revolution, the Spanish Civil War, in Bulgaria, Germany, Italy and every country where Anarchists were active in the class struggle. But it is poor consolation, as there can be

to preserve the genuinely communist and revolutionary nature of the class struggle in the USSR.

Later events demonstrated that when there is no more dialectics with forces outside the party and when the social opposition is required to carry out its role exclusively within a single party, then popular mass participation and the participation of revolutionaries disappear and even the leftist forces within the party succumb. In fact, they gain sustenance only from the revolutionary movement which, deprived of its instruments (the soviets and the political debate between the various forces), inevitably disappeared.

The events of the first four years of the Russian Revolution taught the revolutionary movement that there is no communism without democracy and that democracy is not expressed through the bourgeois forms of parliamentarianism and the electoral delegate, but through the direct participation of everyone in all the political decisions and all the decisions of government. The main characteristic of such a system is not the absence of the delegate (even the members of the soviets were delegated and elected), but constant grassroots control of the delegates by those who delegated them. Delegates must always be subject to their mandate being recalled by those who delegated them.

The presence of the soviet with elected, recallable delegates was part of the general strategy and political proposals for the management of the transition to communism set out by the Anarchists with regard to the running of the economy. Only a society based on soviets of producers (by which it is intended the factory workers, peasants, intellectuals, etc.) could permit a new form of management at a political and institutional level of the economy by means of the self-management of production and services. Rejecting the positivist cause and effect relationship between structure and superstructure as expounded by the Leninists, the Anarchists instead considered the two to interact with each other. It follows that the element of political management (superstructural) interacted with the structural element of the management of the economy. In

other words, one was a condition for the other, to the point that the soviets and the self-management of the means of production and services were two sides of the same problem: the communist management of society.

Stalinism and the Government of the Economy — Reflections on Anarchism

The victory of Stalinism in the USSR greatly affected Anarchism's theoretical and strategic development. The profound strategic re-examination that involved Anarchist organizations throughout the world resulted in:

1. the strengthening of the right-wing positions which had always been present in Anarchism, matched by the Social Democratic deviation within the Marxist movement. The individualists of various tendencies found arguments to create and strengthen organizations which revolved around certain publications which had been established in order to influence public opinion. They abandoned communism and the Bakuninist tradition, only to return to the liberal-inspired proto-anarchism of mainly Anglo-Saxon origin. These elements took inspiration from a re-examination of the neo-positivist ideas of Kropotkin and came up with the messianic idea of the inevitability of Anarchism. As it was impossible to achieve an Anarchist society then, they chose to introduce it "religiously" into the private sphere of their daily lives, to serve as an example. Thus, from being a political ideology, Anarchism became first and foremost an existential choice and met with some success among certain cultural and intellectual movements, fulfilling the messianic need that is always present, above all in the social layers which are removed from the productive process.

(economic self-management) and through a new system of political participation. The basic points of this new institutional framework were:

1. the creation of elected soviets in the workplaces and neighbourhoods;

2. the ever-present possibility of recalling the mandate of delegates by those who delegated them;

3. the establishment of organisms of delegated democracy for higher levels of representation up to the point of structures meeting the needs for the management of ethnic, linguistic and cultural matters;

4. the "cement" for this "society of autonomies" was the common vision of the liberation of man from capitalist exploitation and need, and of internationalism understood as the overcoming of the enmity between nations fomented by capitalism. The federalist structure was in order to avoid the ever-present possibility of the domination of one ethnic group, people or nationality by another. This collective participation in social life would be held together by political pluralism and therefore the continuation of political and party associations and of organizational pluralism in the field of labour, conditional on acceptance of the institutional structure that society had given itself, thanks to the revolutionary break with the domination of capital. In this delicate phase, where society as a whole is moving towards communism and towards the "new humanity", the Anarchist Communist organization would have the delicate task of guaranteeing the development of the revolutionary process, safeguarding and strengthening the institutions created by the proletarian revolution, keeping alive the dialectic tension between the domination of capital (always lying in wait to rise up once more)

Anarchist Communist Ideas Survives

If the Spanish Civil War seemed to have sounded the death knell for Anarchist Communism, the Second World War appeared to bury it for good. Revolution and Communism were not seen to arrive by means of the struggles of the partisans (whose ranks thronged with Anarchists from all countries) but at bayonet point, imposed by the Red Army. Instead, the communist regimes set up in the areas under Soviet influence were in reality degenerate forms of State Socialism which in many cases swamped the positive experiences that the proletariat in some countries had developed. Indeed, Stalinism was responsible for eliminating some of the most able and autonomous leaders and militants, and was accomplice to the wiping out of many class-struggle movements in areas which were outside its direct control. The installation of socialism in many European countries was therefore part of the expansion of Russian imperialism which did not hesitate to make use of a policy of annexation in the Baltic, Balkan and Asiatic areas. The "Union of Soviet Socialist Republics" had inherited the imperialist policy of Catherine II and Peter the Great to the cost of the peoples, the ethnic groups and the nationalities of Europe and Asia.

The operation was carried out under the ideological cover of internationalism whose true meaning was distorted into aiding and guaranteeing the power of the Russian Bolshevik party over the international Communist movement.

But Anarchism had warned of the dangers of pan-Russian ideology and Russian imperialism, using the Slavic question as the level of debate, and had come up with concrete proposals. Bakunin had studied the Slavic question deeply and with a re-working of the concept of federalism, had laid the basis for an original vision of the State tending towards its progressive negation and eventual dissolution. The Anarchist proposal could have actually been achieved through a radical change of ownership of the means of production, which would have passed to direct management by the producers

2. The radicalisation of the communist choice by a large section of international Anarchism leading to an intensification of labour action and to the creation of an anarchist-inspired syndicalist international (the IWA).

Through these means, this area of Anarchism succeeded for a decade in keeping the class struggle alive and in opposing the vast restructuring of production which followed the First World War within the framework of a new international division of labour. Crushed by the 1929 depression and by the rise of Nazism, Fascism, Rooseveltism and Stalinism, they survived within the workers' organizational structures in the various countries which kept the class struggle on a genuinely revolutionary footing during the following decade and, in part, also during the Second World War. The revolutionary component of Anarchism was also responsible for the creation in certain areas such as Latin America and South-East Asia of class-struggle unions and political organizations which paved the way for future anti-imperialist struggles.

But there is no doubt that the most mature revolutionary experience was Spain, thanks also to the particularly favourable conditions created by Anarchism and by the Spanish proletariat over decades of struggle. Reflecting on the failure of the Anarchist strategy in the USSR, but also in Italy and Germany (where the workers' councils in Bavaria and the unrest in Berlin were to finish tragically), Spanish Anarchism developed a more elaborate theory and strategy of Anarchist Communism.

The Experience in Spain

The Iberian Anarchist Federation (FAI) adopted "organizational dualism", by which it left the task of coordinating and leading mass action to the labour union, while it worked on the development of theory, strategy and a programme. The two organizations were

linked by a constant dialectic rapport, carried out through continual verification (theory-practice-theory) involving every militant who was at the same time member of the political organization and of the mass organization. In this way, the theorizations of the political organization were presented to the mass organization, where they underwent a democratic examination by all the members of the movement in struggle and came back, confirmed, to the political organization, enriching not only its political, strategic and programmatic work but also its theoretical baggage. It was therefore a dynamic vision of the theory and the revolutionary project and allowed the organization to struggle in order to create the conditions for realizing communism by sparking off a genuinely revolutionary, pluralist and libertarian process.

Despite the international coalition against it, as seen in the military intervention of the Fascist regimes, despite the disturbing action by the Stalinists which affected the revolutionary unity and despite the guilty indifference and complicity of the bourgeois democracies, the Spanish Revolution was an exemplary revolutionary experience by reason of the many positive results it saw with respect to the economy, to mass popular participation in production and distribution, to the creation of structures for self-management, to the formation of new institutions of producers and citizens which led to a different, more advanced concept of the State, of rights, of social welfare, of cultural enrichment, the quality of life, the rights of individuals and in particular of women, freedom from religious enslavement, while at the same time achieving full liberty of conscience. Simply put, the conditions were created to enable an original and efficient model for the transition towards a communist society.

In response to the Stalinist policy of planning and the militarization of the workforce; in response to autarchy, the depression of wages and consumption and the policy of re-armament sought by the Fascists and which would inevitably have led to war; in response to a greater role for the State in the economy and the draining of resources away from wages, through a massive devaluation in order to re-launch consumption (after an unequal and forced re-distribution of resources), as foreseen by the New Deal and Keynesian policies; in response to all this, Anarchism proposed and achieved in Spain (despite the civil war) an economy with the people at the centre.

The most was made of the country's resources by mobilizing the energies of the people. By eliminating company profit, resources were directed into the development of collectivisation. In agriculture, efforts were concentrated on modernization while collectivisation allowed companies to return to competitive and economically desirable dimensions. Distortions in the system of distribution were eliminated, as were parasitic profits, gains, benefits and ecclesiastic privileges. The whole operation was so efficient that, despite the state of civil war, the farms which had been collectivised ended the year in the black, thereby ensuring employment, produce and food supplies. In the industrial sector, and despite being penalized by the war effort, there was investment and technological innovation, company accounts were in the black and the restructuring of distribution through the elimination of intermediaries had a positive effect on profits and consumption.

In services, despite the repeated damage caused by the war, there were notable successes. Services were extended and made accessible via a policy of lower tariffs leading to greater company profits and also ensuring higher standards of services. There was also great development in health and social services, thanks also to the availability of resources such as those of parasitic elements like the Church, the religious orders and the nobility.

The action of Anarchist Communists in Spain was proof of Anarchism's ability to achieve results. It therefore had to be eliminated. This was the task which both the Fascists and the Stalinists set about with great gusto, ably assisted by the democratic regimes.