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Three Case Studies in Another Development

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Three Case Studies in Another Development

Development Dialogue has over the last four years, or after the publication of the 1975 Dag Hammarskjöld Report (*What Now*), been devoted to exploring the meaning and implications of Another Development in different sectors and under different social circumstances. Special attention has in previous issues been given to health, education, information and communication, rural development, disarmament and development and science and technology in the Third World and, to a more limited extent, in the industrialized countries. Accounts of national experiences and strategies for the transition to Another Development have not, however, been made available in *Development Dialogue* while a number of such case studies, prepared for the 1975 Dag Hammarskjöld Project, were published by the Foundation in 1977 under the title *Another Development: Approaches and Strategies*, edited by Marc Nerfin. A more comprehensive attempt to formulate and elaborate such strategies has during the last two years been undertaken by the International Foundation for Development Alternatives (IFDA) in Nyon, Switzerland, under its 'Third System Project', which also focusses on the need for Third World collective self-reliance and new contractual arrangements between the Third World and the industrialized countries. Significant work in the two last-mentioned fields are also carried out by the Third World Forum and the Latin American Institute for Transnational Studies (ILET) in Mexico.

This issue of *Development Dialogue* differs from previous 'sectoral' ones in that it provides three broadly conceived, rather long and detailed case studies of Another Development. While reflecting different experiences from widely different parts of the world—India, Sweden and Peru—all three studies have in common that they are written by people who have a direct personal involvement in the subject they are dealing with or who have tried to influence, shape or participate in the developments they describe and analyze.

'Bhoomi Sena', which means land army, is the name of a movement for liberation from oppression and the establishment of people's power in a sub-district north of Bombay in the State of Maharashtra in India. The struggle is based on the demand that existing legislation concerning, for instance, bonded labour and minimum wages be respected; the study discusses and illuminates both the achievements and the failures in the struggle by using a method of participatory research in which the activists and cadres of Bhoomi Sena have joined the authors as partners in the research. The material, which was first presented to the Dag Hammarskjöld Seminar 'From the Village to the Globar Order', constitutes a valuable contribution to the discussion of Another Development and develops a method of research that may also be used to good advantage in other parts of the world.

'Can Sweden Be Shrunk?' by Nordal Åkerman will make readers of this

journal recall Göran Bäckstrand's and Lars Ingelstam's 'How much is enough—another Sweden', published in the 1975 Dag Hammarskjöld Report. Åkerman's study, which has been sponsored by the International Foundation for Development Alternatives, is, however, more profound and comprehensive and the proposals advanced for another Sweden constructed in such a way that their implementation should be within the realm of the politically possible. It may therefore be a striking symptom of the crisis in which Sweden finds itself that almost none of the major issues brought up in his study—issues certainly crucial to Sweden's future—have been seriously discussed in the campaign leading up to the national elections in September this year, which are often said to be decisive for Sweden in the 'eighties.

'Towards a New Information Order: Rural Participation in the Peruvian Press' by Hélan Jaworski brings us right into the editorial offices of an old and prestigious Peruvian newspaper, which during the revolutionary government of General Velasco had been turned over to the rural organizations in a unique attempt to democratize the flow of information and ensure the participation of the rural population in the development of the country. Jaworski's study is a significant contribution to the ongoing debate on the New International Information Order since it deals concretely and in depth both with day-to-day management and editorial problems and with the larger issues of the relationship between the press, the government and the popular organizations.

Bhoomi Sena
A Struggle for People's Power

By G.V.S. de Silva, Niranjan Mehta, Md. Anisur Rahman and Ponna Wignaraja

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This study is a continuation of our collective work on rural development and social transformation, published in DEVELOPMENT DIALOGUE *(1977:2) in the form of two studies under the common title of 'Towards a Theory of Rural Development'. In the first study a broad analysis of the development experiences in four Asian countries was undertaken, from which a direction for a theory of rural development was indicated. In the second study we investigated the contradictions and some interventions at the village level in a number of Asian countries, to develop an approach to generating positive developmental processes in the village. In the present study we have taken a close look at Bhoomi Sena, a movement of adivasis (tribals) in Junglepatti in Maharashtra, India, for liberation from oppression and the establishment of people's power. Insights from the Bhoomi Sena struggle have been combined with further reflections on the issues arising from our earlier works to move towards a deeper understanding of social change, and to understand Bhoomi Sena within this perspective.*

In this study, the activists and cadres of Bhoomi Sena have joined us as partners in research. This partnership has given an intersection of perceptions and knowledge generated from two different life streams, interacting with each other to create knowledge jointly. Our premise is that such an intersection is a richer source and method of knowledge generation about reality, which is a synthesis of sensory perceptions (conscious and unconscious) of men and women, and in which there is an interpenetration of perceptions that are near and far both geographically and temporally. The reality of the immediate life of the adivasis in Junglepatti cannot be fully grasped without understanding the reality of wider social history, not only of India but of the world; conversely, the wider reality of the world and the sweep of its history cannot be fully grasped without a comprehension of the reality of the atoms that fill up this wider space. In turn, these respective dimensions of reality cannot be understood without the respective perceptions embodied in them.

The methodology of conventional social science research is unable to obtain the perceptions of those people whose life and struggle are being researched. To get these requires the method of dialogical research, in which the external researcher internalizes himself to stimulate uninhibited responses, reminiscences and reflections in the former, and thoughts from both the conscious and the unconscious are brought out. In this process, the accumulated experience from their life and struggle, and their considerations of options and rationales for action, are also revealed.

Participatory research goes a stage beyond dialogical research and is enriched by the conscious intellectual input of the people whose life is being researched. Our premise is that formal education and training are neither

necessary nor sufficient for intellectual maturity. Life is a great educator by itself, and through conscious struggle with nature and class oppression the poorest and the formally 'illiterate' can mature in intellectual capacity as well as anybody else. We have observed this capacity in the adivasis and the Bhoomi Sena cadres and have given illustrations of it in the study. While through our participatory research we may have contributed to their understanding of their struggle and perhaps to some useful conceptualization of the issues and appreciation of some wider dimensions of their struggle, we ourselves have been immeasurably enriched by intellectual interaction with them, and we believe our study is richer in quality than we alone, by the method of conventional social science research, could have attained.

With this study our work is completed. The trilogy starts with a macro perspective, probes the micro, and then moves again through this concrete analysis to an enriched understanding of the macro.

*G.V.S. de Silva, Niranjan Mehta, Md. Anisur Rahman, Ponna Wignaraja**

1 Introduction: Two Faces of 'Development'

Barely two hours' drive from the ultra-modern metropolis of Bombay (capital of the State of Maharashtra) and hugging the futuristic atomic power plant of Tarapur in Thana district is a strip of forest land ('Junglepatti') where time has stood still. This forest—or rather what is left of it after 100 years of ruthless plunder by outsiders—is the home of adivasis, a generic term loosely used to describe the aborigines of India. In the multi-racial, caste-fractured Indian society, the adivasis (7 per cent of the population or almost 50 million scattered throughout India) represent an unassimilated mass, clinging to tribal organization and tradi-

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The views are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the organizations with which they are currently associated.

tions, who have over thousands of years resisted the physical and cultural onslaught and domination of the caste Hindu society, largely by retreating to forested, mountainous and often inaccessible areas. Though often autonomous and proud communities preserving the tribal heritage, they are the most deprived stratum of Indian society.

With the rapid growth of Bombay city and a series of satellite towns in the region, the isolation of the Thana adivasi area has, however, virtually ended. The entire belt is criss-crossed with major highways and all-weather roads, river transport and a railway line. The penetration of the transport network has a purpose: exploitation of the rich natural resources of the region, mainly forest produce and natural fodder grass. Tens of millions of rupees worth of produce is exported out of the area and the ornate mansions in the local towns bear testimony to the profitability of the enterprise.

But away from the market towns and just off the highways there is a sudden discontinuity in time. Scattered haphazardly amidst paddy fields, hills and forest enclaves are dozens of isolated small villages, clusters of small huts with mud walls, thatched roofs and almost bare interiors. Highways give way to field and forest paths and at best to cart tracks. While the atomic power plant at Tarapur supplies a sizeable part of Bombay's electric supply, hardly any of the adivasi villages have electricity or a convenient source of drinking water. Emaciated, half-naked children and prematurely aged men and women complete the picture of desolation—the other face of 'development'.

Exploding conventional wisdom, a perceptive English civil servant, Mr Symington, who was charged 40 years ago with the task of making an investigation of the condition of adivasis in Bombay state, came to the remarkable conclusion that 'the problem of the aboriginal and hill tribes lies not in their *isolation* from but in their *contacts* with the main body of the community.'[1]

Four decades ago the area, little served by a communications network, was an island of feudalism—bordering on slavery—in the midst of a coastal region developing the capitalist mode of production. Now, after 40 years, the contact has greatly multiplied, the isolation and overt feudalism have ended and production and exports have increased. The towns in the area are the outposts of the outside world and essentially extensions of Bombay city, inhabited by non-adivasis and dominated by non-Maharashtrian exploiter classes. But, in spite of this 'development', 30 years after independence the life of the adivasi remains essentially untouched. Perpetual starvation, seasonal migration in search of work to survive, illiteracy, disease and bondages of both old and new kinds continue to plague the adivasi life—and continue to feed the pity, solicitude and charitable concern of the 'developers' who cherish the role of benevolent guardians of the 'primitive, promiscuous and irresponsible' adivasis.

However now, finally, the adivasis are responding not with submissiveness, fatalism and gratitude for 'charity', but with a militancy and self-confidence growing out of an awakening consciousness. The expression of this fight against indignities, injustice and exploitation is a spontaneous, indigenous movement named *Bhoomi Sena* (Land Army), which is forging the adivasis and the other poor in the region into a united, powerful force determined to confront the exploiters and the oppressors in a sustained struggle. People's power is beginning to emerge in Junglepatti.

This paper is an attempt to understand the significance of Bhoomi Sena, the meaning of

people's power, and the process of social change.

In Chapter 2, we present a flash of the land and people of Junglepatti, as of today. A sweep of the pre-Bhoomi Sena social history of the area is given in Chapter 3. The evolution of Bhoomi Sena and the critical landmarks in the movement are recorded in Chapter 4. In Chapter 5, some illuminating perceptions and reflections of the activists and cadres of the movement are presented in a report of a dialogue we had with them in August 1977.* In Chapter 6, we discuss the method of Bhoomi Sena as it is unfolding. The final chapter contains our reflections on the significance of Bhoomi Sena within a perspective of social change.

2 The Land and the People of Junglepatti

Geography and population

Thana is one of the districts of the State of Maharashtra situated just north of metropolitan Bombay. Its southern and western (coastal) parts are urbanized, while the northern and interior areas, hilly in terrain and covered with forest, form a distinct rural zone which is the home of the adivasis. Out of Thana's total population of 2.5 million, adivasis constitute 650,000.

The district is divided into a number of sub-districts or taluqs. The Bhoomi Sena movement is at the moment centred in the Palghar taluq which has a population of about 250,000, of whom 85,000 are adivasis. The Palghar taluq has two distinct zones: the developed and urbanized coastal belt ('Bunderpatti'), with a low concentration of adivasis, and the hilly, forested area ('Junglepatti'), where adivasis constitute over 65 per cent of a total population of 90,000 spread out in about 100 villages.

Out of a land area of 140,000 acres (circa 200 square miles), forests account for 80,000 acres and 38,000 acres are under agriculture, mainly unirrigated. The monsoon pattern of rainfall with a four-month (June–September) rainy season followed by an eight-month dry period permits only one crop, unless irrigation facilities are created.

While adivasis constitute 65 per cent of the population, they only own about 7,000 acres of land—less than 20 per cent of the total. In most villages landless labourers far outnumber land-owning adivasis, and even the latter are mainly small and marginal farmers seldom owning more than five acres of land.

The Adivasis

Adivasi life is a constant search for work just to survive from day to day. Depending on the

* The dialogue is also illustrative of our method of investigation.

season, they work in the paddy fields (June–September), cut fodder grass (October–November) and work as forest labourers, road construction workers, etc. in and out of the region (December–May). They describe their migration in search of work outside the area graphically—but pathetically—as 'going out to survive'. This life cycle applies to most adivasis, as even the small amounts of land that some possess hardly produce enough rice to see them through the year—particularly after they have paid back the moneylenders the inevitable consumption loan, seed loan, etc. at usurious rates of interest.

The traditional wage for a day's work is one kilo of paddy or one rupee, which even with the entire family working is barely sufficient to meet the minimum calorie requirements. The much more strenuous work in the forest may earn from two to three rupees a day, but is available only sporadically and to a limited number; again the life cycle recurs—a day's wage must provide two or three days' food. For a meagre five rupees, an adivasi cuts grass (in two to three days) which is worth 25 to 30 rupees wholesale, sells at over 60 rupees in Bombay, and when converted to milk is a multiple of that value.

The day on which an adivasi does not work he does not have food, and were it not for the tribal custom of mutual sharing and solidarity, he would starve. The absence of starvation deaths, which would be inevitable in communities with more individualistic customs, can be attributed to the collectivist communal traditions which have survived among the adivasis in spite of contact with other values.

By borrowing a few hundred rupees as a 'marriage loan', a young adivasi and his bride become bonded labourers, working for the landowner-cum-moneylender for meagre food rations only. They may work for 20 years before the loan is 'repaid', and quite often the next generation continues in unbroken bondage. While such bonded labour has been illegal for years, it took a major struggle by Bhoomi Sena in 1975 to finally end the system in the Junglepatti area. There is also a law on minimum wages (ranging from three to five rupees per day), which the state does little to implement, and a major struggle has been waged on this issue—with varying success—by Bhoomi Sena for the last two years.

The four to six months of work outside the region are, literally, for survival; there are hardly any savings from this work to enable the people to break out of the vicious cycle of consumption loans, bondage, starvation wages and more borrowing. Moreover, the migratory life cycle prevents the children from going to school regularly, keeping them illiterate and unskilled and condemning the coming generation to the same fate as their parents. In fact, even otherwise, few adivasi children go to school for fear of physical molestation by the older non-adivasi children. The primary schools in the adivasi villages function mainly on paper. Nevertheless, a small number of adivasis have obtained education, some up to high-school graduation, through either Christian mission schools or government-sponsored hostels, a part of the tokenism undertaken by the 'Adivasi Service Association'.

Through all these grim realities the adivasis have retained their cultural identity and their traditions. While they accept the extreme poverty, they refuse to equate it to an inferior social status; their distinctiveness prevents them from becoming the dehumanized lowest rung of the oppressive caste Hindu social pyramid. One symbol of this psychological independence is the equality of adivasi women, who participate fully in labour and enjoy high social status, in sharp contrast to their caste

Junglepatti, just north of Bombay, has a land area of 140,000 acres; forests account for 80,000 acres while 38,000 acres are under agriculture, mainly unirrigated. Adivasis constitute over 65 per cent of a total population of 90,000 spread out in about 100 villages.

Hindu counterparts. Community tradition, mutual sharing, absence of a strong sense of private individual property, egalitarianism and solidarity are the other inter-related features which characterize the adivasi society.

While the adivasis lived in relative isolation, their distinctive social traditions were an asset which ensured the continuity of the community. Unfortunately, in contact with social groups with more aggressive individualistic values, these features have become a weakness. Adivasis have been perpetual losers in economic competition with both the feudal and the more capitalistically inclined non-adivasi classes.

The non-adivasis

The non-adivasis of the region may be

classified as two broad groups. The first is the Maharashtrian caste of *kunbis*, which is a cultivator caste. A few decades ago, under feudal dispensation, members of this caste were either small, independent peasant proprietors or tenants of the feudal lords. When land passed to the tiller through land reforms 20 years ago, the kunbis became owner-cultivators. Over the years, through better farming, savings, accumulation, acquisition of more land and exploitation of adivasis, they have become a relatively prosperous and dominant class, particularly at the village level. They own a large share of the land and have entered the moneylending field and through that the bonded labour system. At the village level they are the major exploiters and oppressors of the adivasis.

The other group, mainly non-Maharashtrians, are the traders-cum-moneylenders

(*sawkars**) who over a period of 30 to 40 years have also become landowners, through a process of usurious lending and cheating of the illiterate adivasis. They generally live in the towns and operate at the village level through their agents. As tenancy is now prohibited they cultivate their lands by employing adivasi labour. Unlike most kunbis they do not engage in manual labour themselves; also unlike many kunbis they are indifferent farmers, more resistant to new ideas and intensive cultivation. Their children are acquiring college education and many of them are migrating to Bombay and other places, leaving a part of the family to manage the lands and local business. On the whole, the production system is inefficient and natural resources are underutilized. The sawkars are content with one crop of rice during the rainy season; some even prefer to let natural grass grow in the fields instead of rice, which demands more labour, investment and attention. The entire area presents a picture of indifferent agriculture.

Both these groups dominate the local political and economic institutions, with the kunbis more influential at the village level and the sawkars at the taluq and district level. Local bureaucracies and the police are seen to be in league with them and until recently, when additional physical force was required to contain the adivasis, they employed 'Bhaiyas', a well-built and feared group originally from northern India. For the adivasis, these arrangements constitute the government—as the actual state machinery is too remote and unapproachable. Economic bondage and physical violation are used in supportive combination to maintain the absolute rule of the dominating classes.

The situation described above is the result of exploitation and spasmodic revolt, followed by newer forms of oppression. This story is narrated in the next chapter.

* The label 'sawkar' is used rather loosely by the adivasis to include all the rich exploiter classes ranging from the former feudal lords to traders-cum-moneylenders and rich peasant kunbis. Indeed, there is an interpenetration of characteristics and lifestyles among the various producer and non-producer exploiter groups. The label is sometimes used in a narrower sense to refer to trader-moneylenders as distinct from kunbi peasantry.

3 A Century of Brutality

From ownership to servitude: the kingdom of the sawkars (1875–1945)

Land is lost

The main physical characteristics of the entire Thana adivasi belt are forest-covered hills and partially cultivated valleys. The human settlements of the area, the productive activities and culture of the inhabitants, and the interest of the outside world in the region have been conditioned by these natural resources.

The adivasis inhabiting this region 100 years ago have been variously described as 'primitive', 'uncivilized' and 'wanderers', subsisting by the collection and sale of forest produce or by raising a scanty crop by crude methods of cultivation. Indeed, there is little evidence to substantiate the romantic notion that 'they lived in the midst of these beautiful natural surroundings, a contented people, growing plenty of food, and eating their fill.'[2]

While neither the notion of uncivilized wanderer nor that of a noble savage might quite fit the state of the adivasis a century ago, one fact is undisputed: they were *free men*, 'owning' the means of production. They had little contact with the outside world and the outsiders had little interest in them or the area they inhabited. But once the urban centres in the south developed and the produce of the area—grains, timber and grass—acquired commercial value, in the brief space of two to three decades the ownership of the entire area passed into the hands of the outsiders—mainly non-Maharashtrians. Before long the adivasis had also lost their sovereignty over the last means of production—their own labour—and were reduced to virtual *slavery*, a 'degraded, timid and exploited' people.[3]

A British civil servant, Mr Orr, recorded in the year 1895:

> ... The necessity of some policy or other in this direction arises from the notorious fact that by various means, the least iniquitous of which is cajolery, Brahmans, Parsis, Prabhus and Marwadis are getting hold of all the land in Dahanu, and rack-renting the resident cultivators ...
>
> The Mahalkari of Umbergaon, who is thoroughly acquainted with the land and the people, assures me that not 10 per cent of the Warlis and Kolis [i.e. adivasis], whom he knew as holding large estates two decades back, can claim a single acre as their own today...
>
> We are sometimes told that in the triumphant march of education these backward tribes will some day learn to protect themselves against the people who are now robbing them of their lands. But long before 'education in its triumphant march' has got anywhere within the reach of the Warlis, every inch of their land will have passed to their masters, and they will have no land on which to illustrate the advantages of education. Besides, it is their very poverty, resulting from enormous share of the produce of the soil that they must have given to their masters, that bars the advantages of education: they must be constantly in search of their daily bread so that they cannot spare time for education.[4]

Quoting the above observations in his own report in 1939, Mr Symington remarked:

> Mr Orr's prognostication regarding the 'march of education' has been only too unhappily fulfilled; but nothing as yet has been done to stay the process of land passing out of the ownership of the old inhabitants or to save them from oppression as tenants.[5]

By 1938, hardly 5 per cent of the cultivated land remained in the hands of the adivasis.[6]

Not surprisingly, most of the lands had been snatched away illegally by fraud and cheating. Speaking in the State Assembly in 1939, Mr Morarji Desai, then Home and Revenue Minister, said:

> ... Some years back all the land was held by the people. But in bad times, during the famine or scarcity times, the lands passed from their hands into the hands of the sawkars for trifling amounts. There are instances in which land has been parted—some acres of land—for five pounds of grain and in some cases at the rate of five rupees per acre, or a rupee per acre or eight annas [half a rupee] per acre.[7]

Servitude begins

Separated from the lands on which they produced their own food, the adivasis were completely at the mercy of the new masters, the landlords generally labelled as sawkars—who were often also moneylenders, traders, forest contractors and grass traders.

The main leverage of exploitation was the imposition of extraordinarily stringent terms of tenancy for the adivasis, for gaining access to the use of what was their own land not long before. Their passive acceptance of these terms reflects their desperation and helplessness. The main features were:

1. An oral agreement, for one season, with the adivasi living in constant fear of eviction if he displeased or disobeyed the sawkar.
2. Surrender of about 50 per cent of the produce to the landlord as rent. In addition, the seed loan and the charge for renting bullocks had to be paid, leaving the tenant hardly enough food for six months. The consequent consumption loan (khauti) to survive the rest of the year started a vicious cycle of indebtedness, which combined with usury and cheating was impossible to break.
3. In addition to rent in kind, payment for the privilege of using the land by rendering *veth* or forced labour to the landlord for as many days in a year as was required of him. The normal compensation for a day's work was barely enough rice for one person for one meal. This labour was utilized by the landlord to (a) cultivate his own land, the entire produce of which he retained, (b) do work in the forest if the landlord was also a forest contractor, (c) cut the grass if the landlord was a grass trader, and (d) do any domestic work for the sawkar as required. This forced labour invariably conflicted with the seasonal work the adivasis needed to do in their own rented fields, thus reducing their food production, and diminishing the possibility of their earning some supplementary income by independent wage labour.

Symington described veth as 'this terrible system, which entails conditions of life hardly distinguishable from slavery on the bulk of the aboriginal population...'[8] The entire inhuman and illegal system was enforced by the sawkars through a private army of savage watchmen who indiscriminately beat, whipped and at times even murdered the adivasis. The police connived at it, the minor officials of the area were a party to it and even the courts took a 'strangely perverted view'[9] of the proceedings.

In fact, the adivasis were the private property of the sawkars. Symington mildly records: 'Landlords will not scruple to use their power in fulfilment of other purposes; for instance the use of their tenants' womenfolk for the gratification of their lust.'[10]

Legalized slavery

The marginal degree of freedom that remained with the adivasi after paying his dues as a tenant, both in kind and in forced labour, was extinguished through 'legal' bondage produced by moneylending. Symington records the following instances from personal investigation:

1. An old man borrowed Rs. 100 from his landlord for his son's marriage three years ago. Interest, one anna [one-sixteenth of a rupee] per rupee per month, i.e. 75 per cent (this is a very common rate in the district). He has repaid Rs. 100 and does not know the balance due. Presumably it is Rs. 225.
2. A Dhodia boy this year borrowed Rs. 140 from his landlord for his marriage. Interest, one anna per rupee per month. The loan is to be worked off by carting work every fair season. On these terms he will still be carting for his landlord at the time of his death and will then owe about Rs. 1,500!
3. Two young Dhodias each borrowed Rs. 100, on condition that they would work as carters for four months every year for five years. This works out at about 40 per cent per annum and is comparatively reasonable.
4. A father borrowed Rs. 26 at the time of his son's marriage on condition that the son would work for four years receiving clothes and two annas a week. The father has to feed his son during this period! If the son falls sick, the period of his sickness is to be excluded in calculating the four year period.[11]

The middle strata

In addition to the exploited adivasis and the feudal sawkars, there was a middle level of non-adivasi agriculturists who had migrated into the region over centuries and particularly during the last 100 years. These intermediate caste producers (kunbis, vanjaras, etc.) were present in varying proportions in different taluqs of Thana district, ranging from less than 5 per cent in the more thickly forested areas to over 25 per cent in the Palghar Junglepatti area (mainly kunbis), and even more in some other areas. While they came into the area as labourers—originally seasonal—many had gradually become tenants and even middle-sized, self-sufficient owner-cultivators. In general, they were more aggressive than the adivasis, saved more and acquired small parcels of land. They were the larger tenants and were supervisors on the sawkars' cultivated land.

These producing middle castes, the northern Indian watchmen (Bhaiyas) of the sawkars, the non-producing educated middle classes and the poor relations of the sawkars played an important role a decade later, after the feudal system had collapsed.

Life of the feudal lords

This was the general picture in 1945. On the one side were the perpetually starving, half-naked, totally debased adivasis cringing in fear; on the other were the sawkars, opulent, arrogant, oppressive feudal lords, many of them millionaires, uninhibitedly displaying their wealth.

Parulekar, who played an important role in the area in the 1940s, graphically describes the life-style of the landlords around the year 1945:

> The landlords generally had two places of residence. To the west of the Western Railway are small towns... where the landlord population predominates. They own spacious mansions in these places. To the east of the railway lie their fields. Near these stand the landlords' farm houses where they come and stay in season to supervise farm work... These are the fortresses from where they could easily keep a firm hold over the Warlis...

A neat drive ran from the gate to the house which stood about a furlong away. It was a spacious two-storeyed house surrounded by a well-kept garden... The dining room was upstairs, beautifully furnished with dining table and side-board of Western design, in and on which were displayed bowls of fruit, bottles of liquor, and a collection of delicate china. This particular landlord was a barrister who had been called to the bar in England. But it had not changed his feudalistic attitudes...

In villages near the railway stations stand palatial houses belonging to Hindu and Muslim landlords and moneylenders. Their life-style was also feudal with horse carriages, horses, granaries and large families... The Warli slaves moved and worked around them like marionettes. These landlords showed no signs of progress, not even in the outward niceties of modern life as did the Parsi and Irani landlords. They lived in a narrow, self-centred world...[12]

Transformation of the outside world and its echoes in the sawkar kingdom

By the late 'thirties and early 'forties the feudal sawkars, 'westernized' or traditional, were rapidly becoming an anachronism in western India. The British Raj was in its last decade. The tide of nationalism had thrown up in its wake a new countervailing power against the British, organized by Gandhi through the Congress Party, and by and large led by the non-feudal, newly educated middle classes in western India. In the economic arena, too, the feudals were losing ground: new classes of industrialists and traders had amassed enormous fortunes, particularly during the Second World War period.

The feudal sawkars remained oblivious to all these changes in the outside world. Absorbed in the petty pleasures of their narrow world, they felt secure in the belief that British India would last for ever, and so would their kingdom. Not that there had not been sufficient signals. Christian missions, schools, etc. had been active among adivasis and poor non-adivasis of the area for decades and education was bringing about a slow change among the non-adivasi middle castes (e.g. kunbis) and a small section of the adivasis. Then there were the Gandhian interventions, part of the nationalist ferment, and again in western India a powerful force for social reform and renaissance. Dozens of dedicated socio-political workers had settled down to a lifetime of work in the adivasi areas of western India, including Thana district. They started schools, hospitals, cooperatives and general movements of social reform among the adivasis, often organized through 'ashrams', the modern secular equivalent of the ancient Indian tradition of the camp-cum-school built around wise and holy men who had renounced the material world in search of 'knowledge and truth'. The ashrams' scale of operations, though still small in the 'thirties, was increasing—and they were the communication vehicles through which the newly emerging urban middle classes were becoming aware of the condition of the adivasis.

The social reform movement of the area was loosely organized into an organization named 'Adivasi Seva Mandal' (Adivasi Service Association), composed of social workers in and out of the region and linked to the Congress Party. While the organization provided some relief and backing to the timid adivasis, the sawkars ignored it as a minor nuisance, oblivious of its linkages to the nationalist movement.

In 1940, Mr B. G. Kher, a leader of the Adivasi Seva Mandal, wrote:

The fact that such a big mass of humanity should be rotting in a condition of life more debasing than that of slaves within 50 miles of Bombay and that our

citizens should be in complacent ignorance about their hardships and tortures is certainly disgraceful.[13]

Hardly five years later, the same Mr Kher became the first Chief Minister of Bombay as the head of the Congress Party, and in 1947 British rule in India ended.

The revolt of the adivasis (1945–47)

An unanticipated spasm

With the historic, economic and political changes in the outside world, some reforms over time in the sawkars' kingdom were inevitable. Instead, unexpectedly, and much to the dismay of the erstwhile proponents of change—the Congress Party, now the Formal Power—the system suddenly collapsed, thanks to a spasmodic outburst of the hitherto timid, lifeless and patronized adivasi himself. In less than two years the newly awakened, militant, defiant adivasi overthrew his masters in a totally unanticipated display of fury, energy and spontaneous mobilization.

This was not the scenario that the new power in Bombay had in mind. They had sympathy for the lot of the adivasi and had intended to bestow on him gradually many benefits to make up for the injustice of the past. Above all, in their characteristic patronizing but calculative manner of thinking, they wanted the adivasi to know who his benefactors were and to repay the debt by his loyalty to them in the populist state which they were about to build.

It was the Communists, still in their militant phase, who upset the Congress Party's plans and catalysed the adivasi revolt. The chief architects of the episode were a young woman named Godavari Parulekar, a party activist, and her husband Shamrao Parulekar. The involvement of the Communist Party made the revolt even more unpalatable to the Congress Government, who were put in the uncomfortable position of supporting in principle the demands of the adivasis but opposing the timing, the agitational method and the communist connection. The Congress Party was determined not to permit the consolidation of communist influence in any pocket of India.

In fact, Godavari Parulekar has repeatedly recorded that the adivasi revolt was largely a spontaneous event with herself and the party playing a limited but vital catalytic role. In the preface of the English translation of her book *The Adivasis' Revolt*, published in 1975, she notes:

> Adivasis... went about the business of existence without feelings. In fact it seemed as if all their emotions had been dead. Even if they were starved, or killed, or their wives kidnapped away from them, they remained dumb through it all.... This was the situation when we arrived in their midst. Yet a spark of discontent and anger that still glowed under the ashes of their existence later burst into explosive life. *We helped to control and guide this fury* [emphasis added]. The human being in the adivasi was awakened. With our support he began to think and behave like a human being. He became aware of his rights and his awareness gave him the courage to stand up and resist heroically. In this book I have attempted to tell the story of his metamorphosis from dumb creature to man.

The method of mobilization and the issues

Godavari began her involvement in a very simple and forthright manner. She and her co-workers went from village to village, lived with the adivasis and shared their food, huts and tales of woe; they told the adivasis that forced labour and bonded labour were illegal and that in unity they could raise their wages; they assured the adivasis that many people

outside cared about them and would support them, particularly other organized peasant and worker groups; and, by successfully defying the sawkars and their dreaded agents in front of the astonished adivasis, they created for them an alternate focus of credible power, presumably based on some magic 'law', on which they could rely—perhaps as blindly as they had obeyed the sawkar power.

Having for the first time explicitly shared their bitterness with each other and with sympathetic middle-class outsiders, and emboldened by their own experience of successful collective experimental defiance of the landlord on marginal but symbolic issues, the entire adivasi community was suddenly awakened. Stories—often exaggerated—of their own actions and the prowess of their outside friends spread spontaneously to a wide area and the red flag and the few simple slogans (half understood) became the symbols of unity and defiance.

The visible culmination of this village by village mobilization was the series of mass meetings organized by the Parulekars in which thousands of adivasis participated, marching through the towns on their way in disciplined parades, striking sudden fear among the sawkars. Each meeting passed resolutions pertaining to issues which were most pressing for the adivasis, and in the subsequent campaigns and struggles the adivasis fought for their rights with determination and discipline.

The first struggle was to put an end to the hated system of forced labour, immediately followed by a campaign to end the system of bonded labour. Adivasis, with complete unity, refused to render veth and a massive procession went from village to village and house to house freeing bonded labourers. The sawkars resisted bitterly—but, now without the support of state power, they could not enforce their will on these patently illegal practices with only their private armies. There were skirmishes, incidents and some settling of blood accounts but, in the space of less than two months, servitude was ended by this eruption of adivasi power.

The focus now shifted to wages for grass cutting and in the critical harvesting season the adivasis went on strike. This was now a different issue, not as clear-cut a case of inhumanity and injustice as forced labour for the outside world, involving a somewhat different trader class and affecting the milk supply to Bombay city. The Government stand was equivocal and, when the sawkars provoked an incident by making it appear that the adivasis were about to engage in organized mass violence, the unbriefed and uncertain police resorted to firing on an adivasi meeting, heightening adivasi consciousness and heroism but finally committing state power against the movement. The Parulekars were expelled from the district for a brief period but the struggle continued. Finally, desperate to have the grass cut before it was useless, the sawkars yielded on the issue of wages. In the meanwhile, many adivasis had been arrested and many more beaten by the police and by the sawkars' agents. This only served to strengthen further the adivasi resolve to fight.

The next issue was refusal to pay rents in excess of agreed amounts and refusal to pay fictitious 'arrears', which never seemed to end. Here, being on the wrong side of the law, the sawkars gave in without a fight in the face of adivasi unity.

Victories and reprisal

By November 1946 the movement had won significant victories and spread throughout the region, through the adivasis' own efforts and spontaneity. The Congress Government was

alarmed by its wider implications and during the next struggle, over wages for forest work, the state clamped down, expelled the Communists again, arrested hundreds of adivasis, and sent a force of 1,000 police into the area.

However, the adivasis continued to resist. Hundreds went underground, disappearing into the forests when the police approached a village, organizing themselves into divisions of 100, 200 or even 500 men, resorting to guerilla tactics, but not surrendering on any of the issues on which they had secured hard-won victories. Even some firing incidents could not dissuade them; the newly emerged adivasi cadres maintained unity and peaceful discipline.

Finally, the army was moved in. But by that time public opinion in the cities had been aroused and the newspapers helped to create a climate of opinion against the use of such excessive force. The army was promptly withdrawn and calm gradually returned to the area.

By this time, the world of the sawkars that the adivasi had shattered could not be pieced back together. Parulekar writes:

> In the sacred fire of the agitation that raged from 1945, the adivasis made offerings of such evils as serfdom, marriage-servants, vethbigar, grass and forest work at four and two annas a day, formidable arrears in rents, and many other forms of exploitation... Those who had marched into the battlefield with unlimited powers and money, and were aided by armed police and goondas, were made to bite the dust before half-naked, half-starved men, whose only weapons were a capacity for self-sacrifice, an invulnerable solidarity and unflinching dedication. Out of this battle arose the class-conscious peasant.[14]

The ebb

However, unfortunately, this was not the final word. The adivasis had won the battle through unprecedented mobilization. Equally, the state had not given up its intention of demobilizing the aroused adivasis—only the method of pacification was to change from forceful confrontation to insidious tranquilization. The extent to which the process was successful can be judged by the situation described in Chapter 2. Thirty years after the historic revolt, the next generation of the adivasis remains illiterate, ignorant, half-starving and oppressed by a new class of sawkars, perhaps less brutal than the feudal lords, but equally exploitative through economic processes and—where necessary—through extra-legal and physically coercive means. The sons and daughters of the adivasis who were declared by Godavari as class-conscious have again been reduced to passive acquiescence.

The reasons for this retrogression are to be sought not only in the strategy and strength of the exploiting classes. They also call for introspection regarding the limitations of the methods used during the struggle: the role of the outsiders versus the creation of internal cadres; the emergence of new dependency relationships; the difference between spasmodic mobilization through topical agitation and painstaking organization for sustained struggle; and, finally, the meaning of consciousness, which is more than heroism plus incantation of half-understood slogans based on undigested lessons in incomprehensible 'ideology'. These issues will be analysed while describing the method of Bhoomi Sena in the following chapters.

Aftermath of the revolt: the rise of the new dominant classes

Measures of demobilization

The pacification efforts by the state took many

forms, both as official actions and through encouragement of voluntary agencies.

First, the state formalized what the adivasis had already won—forced labour and bonded labour were abolished and tenancy conditions were regulated, with rents substantially reduced and permanent tenure guaranteed. In addition, measures were taken to regulate moneylending with a limited relief on past debts. At least on paper, these legal measures constituted a substantial change in agrarian relations.

The higher wages won for grass cutting and forest work were largely sustained and in time the forest workers were organized into cooperatives, eliminating the contractors from the primary operation. Since the illiterate adivasis could not manage these cooperatives, however, they provided a fertile field for the emergence of a new exploiter class consisting of an educated petty bureaucracy and local politicians, the professional 'cooperators'.

In the socio-cultural field the Congress-affiliated Adivasi Seva Mandal became very active, now with full state support. New ashrams and schools, hostels for adivasi students, social welfare doles, etc. brought the Mandal workers in close contact with the adivasis and helped them counter suspected communist influence. The more enterprising among the adivasis could be easily coopted in support of the system by the provision of jobs and other opportunities in state and voluntary institutions.

At any rate, the overall effect of all the measures was to defuse the explosive situation and to create divisions among the adivasis by differential rewards and expectations. The poorest among the adivasis, the katkaris, who specialized in forest work and had by and large not joined the 1945–47 movement, were made a particular concern by the Mandal and became strong supporters of the Congress.

With no fresh issues, sustained struggle or permanent forum for discussion in the form of an organization, the adivasi community was demobilized almost as rapidly as it had been aroused. The ease with which the pacification operation could be carried out is again a pointer to the fundamental inadequacy of the approach to mobilization adopted during the revolt period. With adivasi passivity ensured, the stage was again set for exploitation.

The new exploiters

The state interventions, however, were not meant to revive the feudal system which had collapsed by 1947. On the contrary, the new power structure at state level was happy to join in hastening the destruction of a potential rival class. On the one hand, the feudal sawkars were incapable of managing their affairs without the prop of forced labour, etc; on the other, they feared for their physical safety on entering too far into the adivasi area. Adivasis had demonstrated their wrath by totally demolishing a number of sawkars' residences near their fields in the interior areas. So the sawkars thought it best to withdraw to the safety of their homes and lands in sawkar-dominated towns, close to the railway line.

Thus started the scramble for the land put up for distress sale by the feudal class, sold naturally in small parcels. Broadly, the purchasers were of three kinds:

1. Larger tenants from the non-adivasi producer castes, such as kunbis, who bought cheaply the lands they were renting.
2. The former supervisors (often poor relations of sawkars), watchmen (north Indian Bhaiyas) and other underlings of the sawkars, who thought themselves strong enough to handle the adivasis either on their own or with the help of state power.

3. Non-producing petty traders in the villages and the educated middle class, who saw an opportunity for potentially profitable investment.

Hardly any land passed into adivasi hands (except in areas which had a negligible population of non-adivasis) and they remained tenants of the new owners or landless labourers, though under somewhat altered and more regulated conditions.

Some of the feudal families, their power and assets lost, sank in socio-economic status and merged in time with the middle class. Others, however, concentrated on developing highly intensive orchard cultivation on their remaining lands near the railway line and are today thriving capitalists—a remarkable transition.

The new owners of the sawkar land set about organizing production and consolidating their hold on the area. The state helped them by establishing credit cooperatives, extension agencies, etc. to promote production. But not all the new landowners were equally efficient and productive. While producer castes, such as kunbis, increased their production by direct involvement in it, many others became mini-replicas of the feudal lords, preferring tenancy arrangements or indifferent farming.

By 1952, however, the more numerous and aggressive middle-caste producers (the Marathas) had displaced the educated, higher-caste (Brahmin), older generation of Congress politicians at the state level. Acting in their interest as the rising capitalist class, they agitated for 'land to the tiller', and in 1957 tenancy was completely abolished in Maharashtra.

The effect on the Thana adivasi area was (a) to weaken the non-producing classes vis-à-vis the middle castes and (b) to confer for the first time a substantial amount of land on the adivasis (estimated to be about 40 per cent). Special measures were also enacted to prevent the sale of adivasi land to non-adivasis.

These measures, however, had only a marginal effect on the adivasis. Most of them had neither the financial means nor the necessary implements to cultivate the land which was now theirs, without borrowing both for production and consumption. Through this familiar process they again became first unofficial tenants and in time landless labourers, some descending into bondage again, mainly through marriage loans. Most of the land they lost passed into the hands of middle-caste kunbis, who had not only become good-sized, prosperous farmers but had also become moneylenders, in the process acquiring more land from the adivasis, thereby drifting into softer non-productive activities, 'supervision', etc. Some adivasi land was also acquired by local traders-cum-moneylenders, mostly through unofficial and illegal transactions. Thus, by 1970, the adivasis had hardly any more land in actual possession than they had at the zenith of feudalism 25 years before.

The social situation at the time of Bhoomi Sena's birth (1970)

By 1970, the politico-economic processes of the previous quarter century had produced a complex class spectrum in the Junglepatti area quite unlike the feudal situation in 1945. As has been described, some classes had almost disappeared or had been rendered impotent (feudal lords); some had gathered strength and were struggling for total dominance (kunbis —rich peasants); some had been born in the vacuum created by the decline of the old classes (moneylender-trader sawkars); and the landless and poor peasant adivasis had continued to occupy the bottom position.

In the meanwhile, there had been slow but substantial politico-economic changes in the outside world and the internal contradictions

New technology wrapped in paternalism

of the area were being increasingly influenced by the accelerating impingement of the broader conjuncture. Capitalism was developing in western India, but at a modest pace.

Feudal landlord sawkar. This powerful class had totally disappeared from the Junglepatti area by 1970. However, those who had made a successful transition to orchard-based capitalism close to the railway line exerted an indirect influence by providing wage employment to seasonally migrating adivasis from the area. Paradoxically, these former oppressors had acquired a 'progressive' image among the adivasis by paying higher wages (based on efficient and profitable orchard farming) than the local sawkars and kunbis.

Moneylender-trader sawkar. This was essentially a new class, gelled out of the retainers of the feudal lords, moneylenders, small traders, contractors, salaried petty bourgeois, etc., which arose in the wake of the decline of the feudal sawkars. They were a non-producer mercantile class, who had acquired land as one of their investments. The richer among them had powerful linkages with external mercantile interests. In life-style they tended to emulate as best they could (within more limited means) the former feudal sawkars.

Rich peasants. This class was composed almost entirely of producer middle castes like the kunbis. While they did involve themselves directly in production, the richer among them had completely disengaged from actual labour and tended to engage increasingly in mercantile activities such as trading, moneylending, contracting, etc. This dual characteristic hampered their transformation into true capitalist farmers. Their linkages with the ruling power structure in the state were close but ambivalent, again due to their vacillating nature.

Middle peasants. The middle peasantry was composed of the poorer among the kunbis and the richer among the adivasis. Kunbis in this group, while engaging adivasi labour during the peak season, participated in labour themselves. In general, with the same amount of land, a kunbi tended to do better than an adivasi: his methods were more efficient; he extracted more out of hired labour; he saved more; and, due to more individualistic values, he retained more of the produce than the communal traditions of the adivasis would permit. Nevertheless, even kunbi middle peasantry often had a dependency relationship with the moneylenders.

Poor peasants. This class was almost exclusively adivasi. The produce of the marginal amounts of land lasted for just a few months and all the poor peasants were also labourers, both on the land of others during the season and outside the region during the off-season.

Landless adivasis. Many of the landless had only recently lost the lands they had acquired during the 'land to the tiller' legislation of 1957. There was little social difference between them and the poor peasants. However, those among them who had also lost their freedom and become bonded labourers were distinctly the most oppressed among the adivasis.

Interlinkages and relationships. Regardless of landholding, the differences in living standards among the adivasis were marginal. Even the middle peasant, by the time he had settled his debts with the moneylenders on the one hand and fed the adivasi labourers on the other, had little surplus left either for additional consumption or for investment at the end of the yearly cycle. The only differences were in the degree of freedom (i.e. bonded versus free labour) and the number of months it was necessary to migrate for outside work.

The exploitation of the adivasis by the non-adivasis was mainly through wages and moneylending with illegal tenancy (rent) forming a small but not insignificant part. While the kunbis tended to exploit more through wages, the others extracted more through usury and trade.

The kunbi and the sawkar exploiters had their differences both in personal characteristics and economic interests. However, in the slow-moving capitalist development of the region, Junglepatti was still a pre-capitalist area and all the exploiter classes were in alliance against the exploited adivasis. Capitalist penetration and pull were not yet strong enough to drive a wedge between the potential producer class of rich peasant kunbis and the other exploiters or to compel the kunbis to become efficient capitalist producers and shed their mercantile characteristics.

Changes, however, were imminent. State capitalist institutions in the form of nationalized banks, a forest development corporation, cooperatives and a dairy were the harbingers of the greater penetration of the growing external capitalist economy into the Junglepatti area.

Unlike the feudals in 1945, who were oblivious to the changes in the external world, all the classes—both exploiter and exploited—had a greater awareness of the situation in 1970. They also had their respective politico-economic linkages.

Political alignments at the local and state level
The ironic effect of the communist intervention of 1945 was (a) to convert some feudals into orchard-owning capitalists and (b) to create a new class of moneylenders, traders,

contractors and landowners (sawkars) and a class of rich peasants (kunbis) in the Junglepatti area.

While the sawkars are the dominant class at the taluq and district level, the kunbis are becoming dominant at the village level in the Palghar Junglepatti area. They have also become the class base of the Congress Party. But the adivasis, after the initial brief period of hesitation due to welfare measures, and as their condition deteriorated, drifted progressively to the Left opposition parties, to the Communist Party in the core area where the Parulekars had worked and to the Socialists in the Palghar area.

The Socialists particularly won the loyalty of the Palghar adivasis by taking up the legal battles for the reclamation of adivasi lands illegally acquired by nonadivasis. Being in opposition, they also did not hesitate to mobilize the adivasis for more direct action, civil disobedience, deliberate courting of arrests, etc.

Though the rule of the exploiting classes was total in the Junglepatti area, and the state-level political power operated through them locally, these classes were a minor part of the state-level power structure in which the urban industrial classes, professionals and more efficient sugar-cane farmers from other parts of Maharashtra played a dominant role. The state political power did not interfere with the local dominance of the sawkars and even afforded it some legal and police protection. However, broader compulsion of a populist regime—both at the state and national level—compelled it to pass legislation dealing with tenancy, minimum wages, employment guarantee, etc. which was inimical to the sawkars and provided a legal basis for the demands of the adivasis. In this legitimate struggle of the adivasis, the sawkars could no longer be sure of the wholehearted support of the repressive apparatus of the state.

While the state would support capitalist exploitation based on more efficient farming, it was no longer willing to back up serfdom and extra-economic oppression. This reflected the gradual change in the class character and priorities of the state at the regional level.

This was the economic and political scene in Junglepatti on the eve of Bhoomi Sena's birth in 1970: a new economic situation in which adivasis were nevertheless exploited and starving, mainly landless and living in fear of the new classes; a political situation created by communist, Congress and socialist interventions; and a cultural situation conditioned by Christian missionary and Adivasi Seva Mandal educational efforts of many decades. The main actors in the Bhoomi Sena movement are a product of the interaction of a number of the above interventions and social processes that have affected the adivasis.

4 A Decade of Struggle

From symbolic to real struggle

Negation of symbolism: the vanguard emerges

While internal changes were taking place in the Junglepatti area, the political situation in India as a whole was changing. The political stability which had prevailed since the elec-

tions of 1951 disappeared after the 1967 elections. The Congress Party, which had had the monopoly of power since Independence, lost it in about ten states. These states saw the formation of non-Congress and United Front governments, but the Congress Party continued its efforts to regain its majority in them. This was not difficult, because it was in power at the Centre. The people had defeated the Congress in 1967 with the hope that there would be a major transformation. But this transformation was nowhere to be seen in the ensuing period. So the people began to organize direct actions and struggles.

In this atmosphere, all the Left parties in India started the 'land grab' movement. Both the communist parties, the two socialist parties and many other Left groups and parties joined together in the struggle. It became a nationwide movement. The Palghar taluq also joined the struggle. The Praja Socialist Party led the movement here because it had a strong party organization in this area. On 9th August, 1970, they offered satyagraha* on the land belonging to the Anjuman Trust in Mahim. The Trust owned 2,000 acres of land in this area. About 150 people participated in the satyagraha. They entered the property of the Trust and were all arrested by the police and sentenced to 15 days imprisonment. Among those arrested were many adivasis; their leader was Kaluram.** They were lodged in the district jail in Thana.

In the prison, the political workers held discussions about the future of their movement and their programme. The majority of the agitators felt that their problems were over after they had offered satyagraha. They saw their imprisonment as the end of the struggle.

Kaluram and his adivasi colleagues, however, felt that most of these discussions were meaningless. Unable to subscribe to the viewpoint of the others, they began to hold separate discussions among themselves. They realized that their problems were not solved, even though they had landed in jail. Thousands of acres of land belonging to the adivasi cultivators had been usurped by the sawkars; they had not yet touched that land, so their struggle had not even begun. The agitation offered on the lands belonging to the Anjuman Trust was a mere illusion. The real aim should be to recover their own lands usurped by the sawkars. Until this was achieved, the struggle had to go on.

Kaluram discussed these thoughts with the other (non-adivasi) workers of the party, but they were unmoved. By and large they held the view that the struggle was over and nothing more was possible. The idea of entering land held by the sawkars was anathema to them.

Kaluram and his colleagues realized that the adivasis would have to fight their own battles, that others were not likely to help them. They also felt that the adivasis must have their own organization in order to launch the struggle to get back their lands.

First mobilization: the birth of Bhoomi Sena

After his release from prison, Kaluram put these thoughts to the people by organizing small meetings of the adivasis of the area, village by village. A young adivasi of Vadhan† closed his tailoring business in order to go around with Kaluram to propagate the ideas.

* Peaceful disobedience to an unjust law, a legacy of the Gandhian method used against the British during the freedom struggle.

** See Annexure I on page 40 for a brief background of Kaluram.

† The names of the villages mentioned in this and the following chapters have been changed.

Others joined them, and they collected detailed information about the usurpation of lands by the sawkars. People readily joined them in collecting this information.

The investigations, not surprisingly, revealed that there were innumerable cases where the sawkars were actually occupying the land which the revenue records showed as belonging to the adivasis, although in some cases the sawkars had managed to transfer the title of the adivasis' land to themselves. The whole process of investigation created a general awareness of the situation and the adivasis, by sharing their common problems in the village and between villages, forged new bonds. In this changed atmosphere, a group of young people led by Kaluram founded their own organization, and named it Bhoomi Sena (Land Army), to fight the injustices perpetrated on the adivasis. Eight hundred 'soldiers' joined Bhoomi Sena. There were no formalities, no elections, no office-bearers. In the beginning, the older adivasis as well as the sawkars opposed the Bhoomi Sena programme of recovering illegally occupied lands. Even Kaluram's brother was opposed to this struggle. Therefore, many strategy sessions had to be held secretly in the hills and the forests. In these meetings, it was decided to launch the struggle in the villages around Vadhan. It was agreed that, as an initial tactic, the crop on lands usurped by the sawkars in these ten villages would be appropriated by Bhoomi Sena.

Confrontation and spontaneity

The first action in the struggle was to take the crop from the land of a rich sawkar, a trader. About 600 people came with sickles in their hands. Kaluram reiterated the aims and objectives of the struggle. As soon as his speech was over, the people raised the slogan of 'Jai Bhoomi Sena' (Victory to Bhoomi Sena) and entered the fields wielding their sickles. The sawkars were taken by surprise; there was no resistance. They did not dare to be present on the scene and the crop was taken away by Bhoomi Sena. This incident was only the beginning. Encouraged by their success, Bhoomi Sena seized the crop in other fields as well. But, gradually, the sawkars began to retaliate. In Bada-Vadkona village the sawkars called the police when the adivasis entered their fields. The police threatened the adivasis with arrest. They in turn told the police that they were implementing the law and taking the crop from lands which really belonged to them, and that the police were acting in an illegal fashion in league with the sawkars. The police were taken aback by the fearless attitude of the adivasis, and were unable to do much beyond taking Kaluram to the police station.

By this time, crops in the fields belonging to 70 to 80 people in ten villages had been appropriated. Emboldened by this, adivasis began on their own to take over crops from the lands which had been usurped by the sawkars. These spontaneous actions were supported by the workers of Bhoomi Sena. The Socialist MLA from the area raised this issue in the Maharashtra Assembly. As a result, the Sub-Divisional Officer came to the town of Manor to hold discussions with Bhoomi Sena. He promised to resolve all cases where ownership of land was in dispute. Bhoomi Sena felt that this was a move to defuse the atmosphere which had been built up in the struggle. They told the SDO that they had no faith in the efficacy of government intervention; besides, the adivasis would not be able to go to the sub-divisional headquarters for arbitration, so the SDO would have to come to Manor to resolve the issue. To the surprise of Bhoomi Sena, the SDO agreed. He brought his court to

Manor and 800 pending cases were decided in three days! In 799 cases the verdict was in favour of the adivasi cultivators, who won back a few thousand acres of land from the sawkars.

The real issue—the usurpation of adivasi lands—which had been intractable or avoided in previous court fights and symbolic actions, had been tackled successfully by the people's own united action, and the system had bent to this assertion of adivasi collective power.

Wherever the crop had been cut by Bhoomi Sena, it was threshed collectively and stored for the next season in the grain banks which were formed in many villages. In the village of Bada-Vadkona, one such grain bank was attacked by the sawkars and their hirelings. The villagers and the Bhoomi Sena workers put up a tough fight, in the course of which the adivasis received injuries. Despite being the victims of the attack, the adivasis involved in the confrontation were arrested by the police and beaten, to compel them to confess to crimes they had not committed. Within 24 hours a morcha (demonstration) was organized by Bhoomi Sena to protest against this. The Socialist MLA also participated in it. As a result, the police were forced to withdraw the case and the police officer involved was transferred.

This successful confrontation led to a spontaneous spread of the struggle in the neighbouring Vada and Jawhar taluqs. The people of these sub-districts invited Kaluram to come to them. They decided to harvest the crop in the fields of a sawkar who had illegally occupied eight acres of adivasi land and had managed to get it transferred to his name in the government records. As the people began to harvest the crop, the sawkar came to the field with a gun in his hand and threatened to shoot them if they did not leave the field immediately. As the land was 'officially' in the sawkar's name, the police intervened. They arrested everyone, including Kaluram, for 'forced entry into private property' and sentenced them to 12 days imprisonment.

The setback

Bhoomi Sena now faced a new problem, relating to the grain banks. The paddy which they stored in these banks was in some places eaten up by those in charge of them. When the monsoon came, there was a shortage of seed for sowing. Some adivasis did manage to sow their fields, but others could not for lack of seeds and the sawkars' refusal to help them out. They began to blame Kaluram and Bhoomi Sena for entrusting the surplus paddy to the wrong persons. And as some of these were Kaluram's friends, they became suspicious of him too.

This difficult situation reveals the shortcomings of the methods used by Bhoomi Sena to mobilize the adivasis. The people were not aware that winning back the lands from their illegal occupants would not solve all their problems. They were also unaware of the methods by which they could face these problems. As a result of Bhoomi Sena's neglect of the need to raise people's awareness in the course of the struggle, its programme of forming grain banks ended in a fiasco. Furthermore, the people did not participate in the process of forming these grain banks.

A major weakness of the movement was that it failed to knit the people who took part in the struggle into a cohesive whole. The 800 people who participated in the Bhoomi Sena activities and those who won back their own lands had different views of the struggle: Bhoomi Sena workers saw the *confrontation* with the sawkars as the primary objective, whereas to the adivasis who won back their

lands it was a matter of *personal gain*, as evidenced by the fact that many adivasis cut the crop only in their own fields and did not participate in collective crop-cutting.

The nature of the movement remained sporadic; participation of the oppressed remained momentary and even symbolic. For these reasons, the struggle regressed. The next season came and a few of the adivasis gave their land to the sawkars to cultivate; others borrowed agricultural inputs such as seeds, cattle and ploughs from sawkars at exorbitant rates of interest. Slowly, people forgot the struggle which they had launched in the previous year. Occasionally there would be incidents of cutting crops in the fields of sawkars, but they were without any real enthusiasm.

When the movement had reached this confused, depressed state, it succumbed to a set of ready-made schemes proffered by old and well-meaning friends. The Socialists and social workers responded to Kaluram's request for help with a package of new technology and finance wrapped in paternalism.

From Bhoomi Sena to Shetkari Mandal

Technocratic thrust

In early 1972, some leaders of Sarvodya (a movement in the Ghandian tradition) arranged a meeting between Kaluram and a well-known social worker* from Bombay. The latter was a lawyer by training and had made a successful business of dairying and farming. He was one of the trustees of a voluntary organization for adivasi upliftment which emphasized production as a key to overall social development. In May 1972, the trustees of the organization motored down to Vadhan to survey the village and the surrounding areas. SW felt that this area was ideally suited for their work.

The Trust discussed its development plans in the area with a nationalized bank, which had agreed to cooperate with them. As an experiment, the bank sanctioned loans for 20 families in Vadhan for the agricultural season of 1972–73. The 20 families participated very enthusiastically in this new development programme, the main objective of which was an increase in production through the use of modern methods of agriculture. There was a drought in the Vadhan area in 1972–73 and as part of the drought relief work two wells were dug here. The 20 families were active partners with SW in the experiment, but the feeling of participation was shattered when their opinion was not sought or respected at the time of disposing of the crop.

The perception of the 20 families who participated in this experiment may best be described in their own words:

> When the Trust first started its work, 20 of us were working together in the field. SW would stand on the bund and exhort us to put enough fertilizer into the fields if he felt that we were putting too little. We had never used fertilizers before and were therefore very apprehensive about its use. But later, the crop was so good that it seemed as if it would hold our weight if we jumped into the field! We were sure we would be able to pay back the bank loan. But when the paddy was threshed SW insisted that we contribute our rice to the government levy, in spite of the fact that the Government paid a much lower price than the prevalent market rate. We felt let down, but had no option except obeying SW. The district collector came with great fanfare and praised SW for 'making the small farmers conscious of their social responsibility and persuading them to contribute their rice to the government levy, despite the fact that they were exempt from this levy'. We were not able to pay back the entire bank loan and our faith in the experiment went down.

* Hereafter called SW.

One of the other participants said:

> In the first year all of us worked together in everyone's field by rotation. We used to discuss every day before we started working. If seedlings were ready for sowing in anyone's field, we used to work together in his field. Whenever we had meetings with SW, we used to have another separate meeting among ourselves. In these separate sessions, we tried to understand and assimilate what was discussed earlier. There was enthusiasm in these 20 families. We thought that we were creating our own common future. But when it came to disposing of the fruits of our efforts, our views were ignored. Subsequently we lost faith in this programme.

The imposition of an external value alienated the participants in this experiment. Yet, in spite of this feeling of alienation, a great deal of activity was generated in the area and the achievements appeared to be quite impressive. The 20 families managed to produce 1,200–1,500 kg. of paddy per acre that year, whereas the previous yields had been around 500–600 kg. per acre. The two wells came in very handy, as 1972–73 was a period of drought. The village also saw electricity and power tillers for the first time. On the whole, everyone got the impression that the programme was successful and it received wide publicity. The deficit in recovery of bank loan was made up by contributions from urban friends.

Financial and commercial thrust

To expand this programme it was given a formal and legal shape. A Shetkari Mandal (Farmers' Association) was registered as a society with a Board of Management consisting of adivasi cultivators. Kaluram was made its president and SW was appointed the honorary adviser. SW and Kaluram jointly operated the bank account of the organization and SW undertook all the responsibilities of maintaining proper accounts. Letter heads and vouchers were printed in the name of the Shetkari Mandal and its work began with great pomp.

In 1973–74, the Shetkari Mandal extended the scope of its activities to include 120 families, and five more wells were dug. Most of the schemes implemented by the Mandal were on the initiative of SW. One of these schemes was as follows: Every member of the Shetkari Mandal would deposit with it the money he got from the bank, and whenever he needed money he would take it from the Mandal. Usually, he would spend less than the amount loaned to him by the bank. The remaining amount would be advanced by the Mandal to other cultivators who were not borrowers of the bank. The latter were to return the money advanced to them by the Mandal after they had sold their crop, and the bank would then be repaid the total loan it had advanced.

In fact, the Shetkari Mandal began to perform the function of a mini bank, mediating between the nationalized banks and the small cultivators. In the beginning Kaluram and his friends expressed some reservations about these arbitrary operations of the Shetkari Mandal, but they were told by SW that even those who were not eligible for bank loans because they were too poor to offer acceptable security should benefit from the scheme. After this plausible explanation, Kaluram and his colleagues participated in the mini bank operations of the Shetkari Mandal. However, many members whose bank credit was used for the benefit of the non-members were not informed about this, and in any case would not have understood the complexities involved. Those members who did understand it were not convinced of the merits of the scheme, but kept quiet. Many members and non-members could

not or did not return the money they had borrowed from the Mandal and the bulk of the bank loan could not be repaid. The members were then forced to carry a debt burden of 150,000 rupees, a large part of which they themselves had never used.

The Shetkari Mandal then decided to enter the grass trade, because the big traders in the area were exploiting the adivasis by buying their grass at very low rates. The first year, when only 20 families participated in the scheme, it made a small profit. But, the next year, its scope was suddenly expanded to cover 30 villages. All the families in these villages were persuaded, or sometimes compelled,* to give their grass to the Mandal. The Mandal held on to the grass in anticipation of getting higher prices later. But the big grass traders who used to buy grass direct from the small adivasi cultivators refused to deal with the Mandal. The grass was therefore transported and stored for a long time in Bombay, where it decomposed. Thus the Mandal made a heavy loss and the adivasis could not be paid for their grass, even though the Mandal had taken a bank loan to purchase it. This loan had been diverted to other schemes of the Mandal, such as the digging of wells and building of godowns. The situation in relation to bank loans got further complicated as there was damage to the paddy crop due to an attack of army worm, and only 50 per cent of the bank loans were repaid.

While all this was going on, Kaluram and the other adivasi members of the Mandal were helpless spectators. The transactions were beyond their comprehension. They were uneasy, but were too overawed to protest. Many of the original Bhoomi Sena workers withdrew in disgust, but did not raise their voices in opposition. Kaluram went along with the programmes for some time, though as a passive partner.

In the third year (1974–75), the scope of activities was further widened: 600 people were included in the schemes and more wells were dug, bringing the total number to 19. Out of these, however, only eight yielded water. There was no consultation with any expert about the well digging programme. It was done completely under SW's supervision. The expenditure on each well increased progressively and reached 27,000 rupees for one well. In one case, the amount spent on digging a well on an adivasi woman's land was more than the price of her land. In another instance, 10,000 rupees were borrowed from the bank on account of a poor cultivator for digging a well in his field. After some digging, no water was found and the money borrowed against his name was used for digging a well in his neighbour's field. Later, the piece of land on which a little digging had been done went to the neighbour on a re-demarcation of boundaries. Thus the poor cultivator had no well, had lost some land, and ended up with a debt of 10,000 rupees to the bank in the bargain!

The recovery of bank loans continued to be very low. At this stage, with the financial and other problems mounting, criticism of SW's approach surfaced. A split occurred among the outside workers, while Kaluram and the adivasis were totally disillusioned.

Failure of the élitist intervention

While the burden of bank debts mounted and the cooperation of the adivasis withered away, SW's faith in his approach remained intact. The failures were attributed to natural causes, to market fluctuations and, above all, to the

* Cartloads of grass being taken to market were forcibly diverted to the purchasing centres of the Mandal by its volunteers.

ignorance of the people and their resistance to new ideas. Giving up the larger programme, SW decided to concentrate on a small group of farmers together making up about 30 acres. This time the participants were to abandon totally all discretion and follow the directions of SW to the letter. In return, all their financial needs were to be met. The élitist approach was taken to its logical conclusion with the participants reduced to puppets. But this experiment also became a complicated financial mess, created mutual suspicion and distrust, and failed.

In the meanwhile, the bank became anxious about the safety of its money and issued notices to those who were defaulters in its own books. But, because of the mini bank operations, there was no correspondence between the bank's books and the actual borrowings. There was panic, consternation and accusations of misappropriation against all concerned. Finally, an audit and an inquiry into the Mandal's accounts revealed that while the bank funds had been mismanaged and diverted for unauthorized and uneconomic projects, there was no misappropriation of money. Actual repayment, however, was a different issue.

Kaluram realized his mistakes and admitted in public his share of the responsibility. A public meeting was organized in which people from 30 villages participated. An overwhelming majority voted for ending the programme and in June 1976 SW left the area.

In the four-year period, Bhoomi Sena had all but disappeared and had been replaced by the economic organization of Shetkari Mandal. The original cadres, who had dropped out at various stages, still retained informal contact and had continually urged Kaluram to make a break with SW and return to the path of struggle which had given birth to Bhoomi Sena. While there were disagreements among them, they had kept faith in each other and from early 1975 had started getting together again to resist the economism of SW. The seeds of Bhoomi Sena's re-emergence had thus been sown long before the formal demise of the ill-conceived élitist intervention.

As for the intervention itself, its characteristics, strengths and weaknesses were not dissimilar to many such paternalistic attempts elsewhere in the country. Its basic weakness was its view of people as mere pawns in the 'development' process.

Back to the struggle: the emergence of people's power

Second mobilization

Thus, over a year before the final winding up of the economic programme, the original Bhoomi Sena activists—including Kaluram—had started taking concrete steps to revive the movement. Instead of merely withdrawing from Mandal activities, they asserted themselves by rekindling Bhoomi Sena as a parallel alternative organization and method. Some urban activists who had split from SW due to disagreements on approach now enthusiastically joined the revived Bhoomi Sena.

In early 1975, a small hut was built in Manor and an 'office' started functioning. At first, the nature of the movement remained traditional: each incident of injustice and exploitation was viewed in isolation and action against the oppression was fragmented. The work consisted mainly of cutting crops on adivasi lands usurped by the sawkars, legal actions regarding cases of adivasi lands illegally in the possession of the sawkars, and fighting against atrocities. No new approach had yet crystallized.

Spontaneous actions, however, were taking place in the villages, which were gradually to reshape the movement.

The struggle in Pithagaon was a small beginning. A landlord of this village had managed to transfer illegally into his own name the lands of eight poor adivasis. The cultivators had run away from the village as they were afraid of him. He was himself an adivasi, who had become a local leader during the revolt of 1945–47. Bhoomi Sena confronted him both in the court and outside and succeeded in recovering half the land which had been usurped.

A second incident concerned the beating up of an adivasi cultivator by a government official in the village of Purves. Bhoomi Sena organized a morcha against him. It was an unusual demonstration: each adivasi carried with him a sheet of paper containing his hand impression along with an impression of his sandals; these were delivered to the official and signified the hundreds of 'slaps' received by him. As a result of the mass pressure, the official panicked, went to Purves and apologized to the aggrieved adivasi. Subsequently, the official was transferred.

Many such incidents occurred during this period. Bhoomi Sena kept on struggling along the familiar path.

The struggle in the village of Jankop was the critical turning point in the Bhoomi Sena movement. Jankop is a village near Palghar. It is a fiefdom of one sawkar family, which owns most of the land there. Forced labour and physical beatings were a regular feature of adivasi life; in fact, there was hardly a person in the village who had not been beaten by the sawkar or his hirelings. Fear had driven many families away from the village. 'Sawkar can even beat up the police; he is a super-government' was the general view.

However, there was in this village a defiant old lady who had been fighting the sawkar single-handed over the usurpation of her land. Though the court had decided the case in her favour, she had been unable to take physical possession of the land. As far back as 1966, Kaluram had visited Jankop and the old lady had told him of her problem. But at that time Kaluram did not feel that any action was possible. In November 1975, she again approached Kaluram. He went to Jankop and with a little effort was able to convene a meeting of some of the youths of the village and other neighbours of the lady. He called on the people to unite and help her. He indicated that if they were prepared to fight against injustice, Bhoomi Sena would back them up. But the people did not respond to his appeal. A few days later Kaluram visited Jankop again. This time more young people came to the meeting, but fear prevailed. Sensing this, the old lady said in frustration: 'Kaluram, why are you wasting your time with these people? If the sawkar comes to beat me, my own sons will run away to the hills. I am an old woman, still fighting and being beaten up; but no one is prepared to be on my side. Maybe they should be wearing my bangles!' After these words, the mood of the gathering changed and the young men started to say that if others were ready, they would be prepared to join. The ice was broken; suddenly, everyone was ready to act—and it was decided to cut the courageous old lady's crop the following day.

Next morning, the youths came and started cutting the crop. When the sawkar came to know of it, he sent half a dozen Bhaiyas to the field. They started beating one of the supporters of the lady. The youths rushed to protect their friend and, in the skirmish that followed, the Bhaiyas got a beating. Surprised and humiliated, they ran away and went to the sawkar in Palghar. The insolence of the

adivasis could not be tolerated by the sawkars as a class and from miles around Bhaiyas and other mercenaries were summoned. Trucks and jeeps transported over 200 lathi-armed* Bhaiyas to Jankop.

In the meanwhile the Jankop youths, anticipating trouble, sent word to Bhoomi Sena's office in Manor. Simultaneously they made preparations for the expected battle.

When the Bhaiyas arrived in Jankop they sent a first batch of 50 to 60 armed men to beat up the adivasis. The youth fought fiercely with stones and sling-shots. Unaccustomed to such resistance, the Bhaiyas panicked and ran away, leaving behind their lathis and other weapons. Seeing the unruly retreat, the other Bhaiyas also ran away, burning grass stacks along the way. They were unwilling to risk their lives for the few rupees which they were paid.

Back in Palghar, the sawkars registered a police complaint against the adivasis for assault and arson. Bhoomi Sena, in the meanwhile, succeeded in registering a counter complaint in Palghar—despite the sawkars' efforts to prevent them physically from approaching the police station. In Jankop, Bhoomi Sena cadres made certain that the police investigation report was not distorted in the sawkars' favour. The police involvement had no net effect: none of the sawkars or Bhaiyas was arrested of course, while Bhoomi Sena's presence prevented the arrest of the adivasis.

After the incident, the adivasis of Jankop were harassed by the sawkars when they came to Palghar for work, marketing, etc. But the adivasis had overcome their fear as a result of their successful battle and they fought back: they declared the bonded labourers of the Jankop sawkar free, they stopped domestic work in the sawkar's residence in Palghar, and they boycotted work in his fields at Jankop. Thus, the sawkar was forced to import labour from other villages, paying two or three times the usual wage. And, at the same time, Bhoomi Sena succeeded in winning for the old lady the legal possession of her land.

Instead of remaining a sporadic incident, the Jankop action generated a protracted struggle. The people themselves decided the strategy, and at each stage Bhoomi Sena was kept informed and its assistance was obtained whenever necessary. This was Bhoomi Sena's first major opportunity to learn from a developing struggle—and from the people. The knowledge that the sawkars could be taught a lesson raised people's self-confidence. This was the first realization of the strength of people's power in confrontation with sawkar power. They also learnt that the fight against the sawkars would be a long struggle. This new awareness of the people at the village level had the effect of raising the consciousness of the whole movement.

At about the same time as the Jankop action, a different kind of struggle began in Purves village. Two hundred acres of land belonging to a Parsee sawkar were taken over by the Government under the land ceiling act for redistribution—but the land was divided amongst the relatives of the local political leaders after first registering them as landless. A few adivasis under the control of these sawkars were also given some acres in the redistribution, but the tenants who had actually been cultivators of this land for generations did not get an inch. The young men of Purves approached Bhoomi Sena and together they met the local official, who refused to do anything to rectify the matter. Having learnt the power of unity in previous action, the youth

* A lathi is a bamboo staff or cudgel, a weapon and symbol of hired bullies.

warned him that he would not be allowed to enter the village to enforce this redistribution of land. At the same time, the Bhoomi Sena cadres began to organize resistance to this unjust act. The *Maharashtra Times*, a Marathi daily from Bombay, published a letter which was signed by six local cadres protesting against the betrayal of the cultivators. The sawkar and the local political leaders threatened these six with legal action for defamation. But a few days later, responding to the mounting pressure, the district collector came to Purves and discussed the issue with the adivasis and Bhoomi Sena cadres. The adivasis demanded that the land which had been distributed to the relatives of the local political leaders should be given to the actual adivasi cultivators. The collector conceded the demand and the previous allocation was cancelled.

In the course of this struggle, the oppressed adivasis saw that their confrontation was not with an individual sawkar but with the whole class. The sawkars' attempt to divide the adivasis failed, as even those who had been given some land refused to side with them against their brothers. Bhoomi Sena led this struggle successfully because it adhered to a continuous process of learning from the spontaneous actions of the people.

While a new Bhoomi Sena was gradually being moulded through such spontaneous people's struggles, there was a major political change in the country. In June 1975, a national emergency was declared by the Government of India, giving unprecedented powers to the State. It was accompanied by the formulation of many programmes with populist overtones. At the same time, a large number of political activists of various shades were arrested and it was feared that Bhoomi Sena's activities against the sawkars and the local official machinery might land Kaluram and his colleagues in jail too. But these fears were unfounded and they were not disturbed. On the contrary, the Government's 20-point programme appeared to have a number of planks that concerned the oppressed, which could help Bhoomi Sena to mobilize the people around these issues.

The confluence of the developing internal struggles and the new situation created by the external changes set the stage for a new phase in Bhoomi Sena's development. While struggles at the village level intensified, the vanguard launched a more systematic programme of (a) learning from the struggles, (b) wider sharing of experience, and (c) large-scale investigation of the socio-economic situation, particularly those elements of it with a bearing on the implementation of the 20-point programme.

The shibirs

By the beginning of 1976, successful struggles like Jankop and Purves had given new life to Bhoomi Sena. Also, Kaluram and other friends had almost come out of the shadow of SW and the Shetkari Mandal. The time was ripe for fresh initiatives on a wider scale. There was a new mood in the area and Bhoomi Sena quickly responded to it.

It had become obvious that the problems of the different villages had much in common and were the products of the social reality. Bhoomi Sena and the people also recognized that isolated villages could not fight alone, even if the people showed a great deal of courage. The problem of one village had to be perceived as the problem of all. A prerequisite for this unity was a greater degree of shared awareness.

The response to this need was the creation of a new interaction process, the *shibir*, or camp for collective reflection. The objective of

the shibir was to systematize the process of learning from experience. It was the converse of the usual method of delivering knowledge to the people by lecturing to them.

The preparation for the shibir took almost two months. The cadres toured the villages and listened to the people—their problems and their perception of the problems. The cadres began to systematize their own experience, formulated issues for the shibir and prepared notes on each issue to organize their own thoughts.

In February 1976, the first shibir was organized in Bada-Vadkona. About 25 youths from ten villages participated in the three-day camp. The shibir started with a session devoted to the history of people's struggles in the area and the emergence of Bhoomi Sena out of these struggles. Then the group heard about the struggles going on in Jankop and Purves from the youth of these villages and tried to give a meaning to them. Along with this, they examined the problems of the landless labourers and small farmers by individually narrating and collectively discussing their own experiences. Through this process they arrived at an understanding of the root causes of these problems.

In addition, the 20-point programme was analysed in great detail. The group came to the conclusion that not more than two or three of the 20 points had a bearing on their problems, although the entire programme was supposed to be aimed at the deprived in society.

Immediately after the first shibir, a second one was held at Virla in March 1976. Fifty people participated. But this time there had not been sufficient prior investigation or planning of topics for discussion. In the shibir itself, the Bhoomi Sena cadres, feeling that they now understood the issues based on the experience of the first shibir, shifted the emphasis from listening to narrating and from searching and understanding to explaining. Because of this, while the people listened quietly, the level of interest was low and neither the participants nor the cadres felt satisfied with the process. This shibir also failed to stimulate as much action as the first. But a lesson was learnt by Bhoomi Sena, and the errors were corrected in the subsequent shibirs. In fact, the methodology has continued to evolve.*

The shibirs had the effect of raising the understanding of the participants to a higher level. They recognized the protracted nature of the struggle and therefore the need for unity on a sustained basis. The first two shibirs, however, did not discuss or prescribe any specific form of organization, leaving it to the people's own initiative and ingenuity.

On returning to their villages, the participants in a shibir would hold intensive discussions with others on the issues examined at the shibir. By reflecting on these issues, the people came to realize that the village is not a unit—it contains two worlds, that of the sawkars and that of the poor—and that unity among the poor is imperative.

In some villages, there was the further realization that to sustain the struggle a Manor-based organization alone is not enough; the poor also need an organization in their own village. With this awareness, a few villages responded by creating a forum for the poor—the *Tarun Mandal* (Youth League). Bhoomi Sena was again kept informed, but the initiative was at the village level and the evolution of the Tarun Mandal was an autonomous process without central direction.

* As an illustration of the evolving methodology, an account of part of a shibir held in April 1977 is given in Annexure II on page 41.

As the news spread, Tarun Mandals began to spring up in many villages—although a number closed down as quickly as they were started. An issue which became popular was the fight against the consumption of daru (alcohol), in which women also took an active interest. But the campaign could not be sustained on the purely emotional and moral plane and it collapsed, taking the Tarun Mandal with it in many places. But, in some villages, the Tarun Mandals analysed the economic forces behind the use of alcohol, and saw the sawkars' vested interest in maintaining it to perpetuate exploitation.

The Tarun Mandals

While the anti-daru campaign itself was not sustained, wherever it served to stimulate a deeper analysis of the social situation, the Tarun Mandals took root.

The village of Bagzari provides a good example of the evolution of a Tarun Mandal. A few of the youth from the village participated in the February and March 1976 shibirs. After discussions in the village, a Tarun Mandal was formed in April 1976. The first issue taken up was the fight against daru, which failed after some initial success. The Tarun Mandal analysed the causes in great depth. In the process, their Friday meetings became an institution and other issues were also discussed.

The first major issues taken up were the existence of the bonded labour system in the village and the payment of minimum wages. A survey showed that there were ten bonded labourers. The Tarun Mandal wrote to the local official about it, but there was no action. They decided, therefore, to act on their own. The Tarun Mandal informed the village sarpanch (head man), on behalf of the bonded labourers, that they were now free under the law and that this fact should be declared publicly; they also demanded that the minimum wages law should be enforced. Seeing no alternative, the sarpanch agreed to declare the bonded labourers free, but refused to act on the demand regarding minimum wages. After a brief strike by the adivasis, the sarpanch took the initiative to convene a meeting of the sawkars. There was some argument, but the issue of bonded labourers was completely settled. On minimum wages, however, while a majority of the sawkars agreed because it was the peak season, a few held out. The adivasis boycotted these recalcitrant sawkars.

The next issues that arose in the Bagzari Tarun Mandal were the creation of a common fund and the problem of finances required for marriage, now that the sawkars would not give the adivasis loans which were linked to the bonded labour system.

Having received substantially higher wages during the major part of the season, the adivasis had for the first time some savings and could think of contributing to a collective contingency fund. It was decided that each person would contribute one rupee and one kilogram of paddy per month. Many paid in cash or kind for the whole year at one time. In the first month, 350 rupees and 1,200 kg. of paddy were collected. The Tarun Mandal also decided on the manner of utilization of the fund, and a committee of five was constituted to manage it.

The next issue to be taken up was marriage expenses. The group realized that it would not be possible to spend money on the same scale as before and a new system of marriage would have to be thought of. They analysed the expenditure pattern of three or four marriages and discovered, to their surprise, that a large part of the expenditure was not on themselves but on the sawkars. It was a strange system:

borrow money from the sawkar, spend it on buying materials from his shop, feed him with that food—and then, as soon as the marriage is over, start working for him as bonded labourers, often for life! When the Tarun Mandal put these facts before the people, one old man exclaimed: 'How can this be called our marriage; this is sawkar's wedding!' It was unanimously decided to eliminate all items which concerned the sawkar and to reduce the expenditure on the rest of the ceremony.

However, as the bride and groom could come from different villages, it was realized that there would have to be Tarun Mandals in other villages which also thought along these lines. The Bagzari Tarun Mandal consulted Bhoomi Sena, which took the initiative in arranging a match between a girl from Bagzari and a Tarun Mandal member from the village of Nawada. Both the Tarun Mandals helped out in kind and with money. All the poor in the two villages participated in the ceremony with great enthusiasm. The couple—who would not become bonded labourers now—took the oath of never becoming slaves again, of unity with the poor, and of equality between husband and wife with full respect for each other. A new chapter was thus opened in the marriage ceremony and relationship.

More marriages of this type followed. While the new has not yet replaced the old on a large scale, the Tarun Mandals have made an important contribution towards changing exploitative social traditions.

In the meanwhile, in Bagzari, the victory in the minimum wages struggle was having repercussions. The sawkars refused to give seed loans and khauti (consumption loan) to the small farmers. This threatened to create a split between the landless and the small farmers. The Tarun Mandal could arrange for the seed loan out of its fund, but khauti was beyond its means. This was a crisis. Finally, Bhoomi Sena helped in arranging a loan from a Christian mission. The morale and the unity of the Tarun Mandal was maintained. The loan was returned at the end of the season. The next year, the Tarun Mandal collected more paddy for the collective fund and planned to become self-reliant in two years.*

An interesting development at this time was the leading role taken by women in a number of villages. The women of Nawada provide an example. A bonded labourer was freed by the Tarun Mandal. This provoked the sawkar to fire at him. Later, fearing legal consequences, the sawkar apologized and tried to hush up the affair by paying 500 rupees to some of the older adivasi men. But the women, who were members of the Tarun Mandal, came to know of it. They protested and made the old men pay back the money, and eventually the sawkar was arrested.

Tarun Mandals evolved differently in different villages and a diversity of experience accumulated. Bhoomi Sena learnt from these real life struggles and these experiences began to be shared through the shibirs.

The movement spreads—and deepens

Struggles for freeing bonded labour and obtaining minimum wages continued at the village level. In many villages, Tarun Mandals were giving an organizational form to the unity of the adivasis. Shibirs were deepening and spreading the awareness of the adivasis. The core area of Bhoomi Sena's activity was being consolidated. Bhoomi Sena could now widen its horizons.

The process of expansion was systematic and based on detailed investigation. Though Bhoomi Sena was known in the entire

* See pages 50–51.

Junglepatti area of 100 villages and more, it had so far concentrated its attention on about 30 villages. In June 1976, the vanguard launched an intensive survey of these 30 villages, and also of an additional 40 villages, which was carried out over a period of three months.

The main items of information collected were (a) identification of bonded labourers,* (b) actual wages paid to agricultural workers, and (c) the situation of the small cultivators. Bhoomi Sena cadres went to each village, explained the objectives of the survey, and mobilized the people to collect authentic information.

The survey revealed the existence of 375 bonded labourers. This information was supplied to the local officials for immediate action. From each village, a number of cases of violation of the minimum wages law were also collected and a total of 1,100 applications were filed with the Government to demonstrate the widespread nature of the abuse. However, no action was taken by the officials concerned. So, armed with the facts, Bhoomi Sena mobilized the people to implement the law themselves. All the bonded labourers declared themselves free and the struggle for minimum wages began. Forty more villages thus became actively involved in the movement.

A new opportunity for expansion came with the unexpectedly called national elections of February 1977. Bhoomi Sena felt that the election campaign should be utilized by the people, rather than the people being utilized by the parties during the elections. It agreed to support those candidates who had participated in people's struggles and campaigned in the entire Junglepatti area of over 100 villages, in the process entering about 40 for the first time.

The cadres covered every village, met the people in small groups, and discussed the people's problems and their relation to the political situation. They emphasized that problems could only be solved by the people's own actions. Elections were not very important; unity was important. The 'new' areas came to know of Bhoomi Sena's activities and of the struggles which were taking place in the 'old' areas of the movement, and Bhoomi Sena came to understand the problems of the 'new' areas. The cadres spoke to the youth and suggested that, like the youth elsewhere, they might also start action to tackle their problems.

To supplement the village-level campaigning, a large election meeting was organized in Bhasvan. Thousands of adivasis, including many women, came on foot from a 15-mile radius. The meeting demonstrated to the oppressed the strength in their numbers and their unity. The election campaign thus became a part of the struggle of the adivasis.

In Junglepatti, the vote was a demonstration of confidence in Bhoomi Sena. People participated in large numbers and gave overwhelming support to the Bhoomi Sena backed candidates, who won the elections.

Immediately after the elections, Bhoomi Sena started work in the 'new' areas. A shibir was organized in Variwadi in April 1977.** It was agreed that action should be initiated to find employment during the lean period over the next two months. In eight days, the participants made a survey of the number of people requiring work and of possible works that could be started under the Employment

* In spite of all official claims to the contrary, the system still continued to operate in the area.

** See Annexure II, page 41.

Guarantee Scheme* that would give maximum benefit to the poor. With this information, a delegation of 30 people from different villages met the local officials and requested them to start the works. The officials, however, took no action and Bhoomi Sena organized a morcha to back up its demand. A small delegation went into the office to talk again to the officials, who this time agreed to start work in 25 locations immediately.**

The struggle for minimum wages also spread to the 'new' areas. Here, Bhoomi Sena came into conflict with Shiv Sena (a regional rightist party), which was backed by the local sawkars. They tried to intimidate Bhoomi Sena workers and supporters and one evening attempted to attack Kaluram while he was in an adivasi hut in the area. A number of people were injured, but Kaluram was protected by the adivasis. Bhoomi Sena took the issue to the people and discussed with them the real cause of the attack on Kaluram. A few days later a huge morcha was organized and a mass protest meeting held in Afala was attended by over 6,000 people. It was completely peaceful and orderly. Shiv Sena's attempt to organize a counter morcha was a failure and their meeting was attended by only 300 to 400 people.

The struggle in the 'new' areas soon led to the formation of Tarun Mandals in many of the villages. These are providing new lessons: they are widening the base of unity of the oppressed and are creating people's organs to deal with justice, education, economic activities, etc.

In Gativali a Tarun Mandal had been formed in 1976, but it collapsed because the fight it took up against daru failed. Gativali is a village where the small farmers outnumber the landless. It also has a sizeable population of katkaris† and poor kunbis. During the election campaign, Bhoomi Sena cadres visited each one of the padas (hamlets); they took the opportunity to discuss with the different sections of the poor the developments in Bhoomi Sena during the last year and related them to the problems of the poor in Gativali. This time all the communities, including the katkaris and the poor kunbis, felt that the struggle was not just that of a section of adivasis but of all the oppressed, and Tarun Mandals were formed in the different padas. A collective fund was started in the kunbi pada, which was also utilized to help the needy among the katkaris and other adivasis. The katkaris have started a fund in their pada too. And they have organized a boycott of an educated, despotic, katkari schoolteacher whom they consider an agent of the sawkars.

The Tarun Mandal of Chamoli added yet another dimension to the movement. Traditionally, the panchayat (village council), which was dominated by the sawkars, used to hear and settle village disputes. But the system of justice when it related to the poor was peculiar: the sarpanch used to go to the home of each party to the dispute and beat him up; in

* The State of Maharashtra operates a scheme (soon to become a law) under which, if 25 persons in a village file a request, the Government is obliged to find work for them within 15 days within a three-mile radius of the village. The operation of the scheme is not uniformly satisfactory, but Maharashtra is a pioneer in this respect.

** When the delegation came out of the office, Kaluram addressed the gathering—but he neglected to tell the people what exactly had transpired. This was pointed out to him by the people and he admitted his mistake.

† Katkaris are the poorest stratum among the adivasis. They mainly specialize in forest work and are not fully integrated with other adivasis. They did not join the revolt of 1945–47. The Adivasi Seva Mandal concentrated its welfare work among them and they have generally tended to support the Congress. Until 1977, their involvement in the Bhoomi Sena movement was marginal.

addition, they were fined! The Tarun Mandal decided to boycott the panchayat and set up their own court to settle their mutual disputes. When the panchayat leaders came to know of this, they objected on the ground that the Government had not entrusted this task to the Tarun Mandal. The reply came back that neither had the Government appointed the sarpanch as a judge nor approved his method of 'justice'.

The new method of justice of the people's court has eliminated the sawkars' favourite punitive actions—beatings and fines. A person found 'guilty' of an offence now has to contribute his labour either to a very poor family or for a collective purpose.

In Bhasvan, the Tarun Mandal established a school for the young adivasi children with the help of the 'Socialist Women's Organization'. The idea is not merely to provide conventional education for the adivasi children, who are otherwise prevented by the non-adivasis from attending school, but the new school is also an attempt to base education on experience. The emphasis is on cooperative work and integration of the school with the community. Thus, both the content and the method of education being designed are different.

The Bhasvan Tarun Mandal has also pioneered in another direction—production. Normally, during the lean season, people go out of the village to find work. However, in the 1977–78 lean season, 80 families planted vegetables on the bank of the river. While the plots were individual, the adivasis helped each other in various operations. The income from this activity was sufficient to obviate the need to migrate from the village. This not only lent a continuity to the adivasis' existence, which in turn helped the continuous functioning of the Tarun Mandal, but it also strengthened their bargaining position for minimum wages.

Observing the Bhasvan experiment, adivasis in other villages along the river have also made a small beginning in this direction. Moreover, the united strength of the poor expressed through the Tarun Mandal has destroyed another exploitative practice: that of the village common property being used exclusively by the rich.

Thus the Tarun Mandals are becoming the people's organs for struggle and innovation. Bhoomi Sena constantly encourages the Tarun Mandals to take initiatives and considers them schools for its own learning; they are also the centres of investigation on which Bhoomi Sena relies for understanding social reality at the village level.

State and panchayat elections and the aftermath.

In February 1978, elections were held to the Maharashtra State Assembly. Palghar and neighbouring taluqs were reserved constituencies for the adivasis. There was pressure from outside on Kaluram to contest the election but Bhoomi Sena, holding the view that people's action is more important than elections and assemblies, decided that Kaluram's time was too valuable to be wasted on assembly sessions. However, it suggested another adivasi candidate, a sympathizer of the movement, and worked actively for his election. The candidate won by a large margin and Bhoomi Sena's popularity with the people was again demonstrated. In contrast with the 1977 national election, however, the 1978 election did not spread the movement to any new areas; nor did it deepen the struggle in the old areas—during the intervening 12-month period people had already moved much further through actual struggles.

Elections to the panchayats immediately followed the assembly elections. Although

they had no illusions regarding the utility of these forums to them, the people decided to contest the elections in order to assert their power and deny these centres of formal power to the sawkars. Candidates supported by the Tarun Mandals won in every panchayat, including those which were supposed to have been the strongholds of sawkars and such parties as Shiv Sena.

However, there were also negative aspects of participation in these elections. In Bagzari, a founding leader of the Tarun Mandal who was also a cadre of Bhoomi Sena colluded with the sawkars with a view to getting himself elected a member of the panchayat and then, with the sawkars' assistance, becoming the sarpanch of the village. The Tarun Mandal learnt of this plot, put up its own candidates against the sawkars', and informed Bhoomi Sena. Kaluram came to Bagzari the night before the election and confronted the cadre with the facts. The cadre admitted his mistake, apologized to the Tarun Mandal, and requested to be elected. Kaluram suggested that he could be forgiven and elected, but the people remained unconvinced and he was defeated* along with the candidate of the sawkars. Many adivasis who had not been active participants in the recent struggles were also elected to the panchayat on the wave of Bhoomi Sena's popularity—but their loyalties are not unambiguous.

The state assembly election was considered neither a gain nor a loss from the point of view of the movement. The panchayat elections, however, presented a more complex balance sheet: the gains were real, but diffuse and mainly psychological; the losses, as in the case of the defection of the cadre in Bagzari, were concrete and immediate. These considerations produced in the Bhoomi Sena cadres a feeling of lull and frustration. But this was not the first time that such a fluctuation in the mood of the cadres had been experienced. In the words of a cadre, the causes of the frustration may be expressed thus:

> The same issues have to be fought for again and again. It seems we are not moving forward. Even after a battle for minimum wages has been won, the situation reverts to the old status quo. If minimum wages are achieved by the landless labourers, the problem of khauti crops up. Tarun Mandals start, but then collapse again. In the elections at times the sawkars defeat us, not by votes, but by corrupting one of our own.

However, Bhoomi Sena has with experience evolved a method of combating such frustrations which often overcome *individual* cadres. The method is that of intensive *collective* reflections, analysis and fresh action—a periodic shibir for the vanguard group itself. Individual subjective perception is replaced by collective objective assessment of reality.

The objective analysis reveals the forces which are pulling the situation backwards; it also helps to discover the forces pushing towards change. To understand the forces which would help the oppressed to break out of stagnation and to contribute to the release of these forces is seen as the way to overcome the periodic frustrations.

The self-clarification shibirs have been invaluable and have become an integral part of Bhoomi Sena's operations. But, in overcoming feelings of frustration, they are increasingly becoming secondary to the more powerful impulses provided by the spontaneous actions of the masses on an ever rising plane and at an accelerated pace.

* He has now decided to work as an ordinary member of the Tarun Mandal, a position which has been accepted by the Mandal without rancour.

Waves of spontaneity

An old issue for the adivasis is their traditional right to cultivate small plots of land in the forest. The sawkars have always managed to deprive them of this right through the intervention of the state,* as access to this means of production would make the adivasis somewhat independent of them. In June 1978, Bhoomi Sena organized a morcha on the issue in which over 5,000 people participated. But, when assembled, the people went further. They suggested a second morcha to demand the free exercise of another accepted traditional right of the adivasis namely, the right to collect and sell a headload of firewood from the forest. They complained that forest officials were harassing them, particularly the women, 'confiscating the firewood and selling it themselves.

Bhoomi Sena readily accepted the suggestion, and the struggle as well as the preparations for the morcha started simultaneously. Women refused to surrender their bundles. They said they would only do so if paid compensation—namely, a day's wage. The morcha—largely a women's morcha—was also very well attended, and the problem was solved.

In July 1978, at the beginning of the paddy season, the time for the minimum wages struggle again approached. Bhoomi Sena cadres were not sure what turn it would take this time. But the lead was given by the Tarun Mandals of Bhasvan, Chamoli and Tahala and the struggle rapidly spread to the entire Junglepatti area. There was a total strike. An official of the labour department came to tour the area and Bhoomi Sena helped him investigate. Seeing the situation, he took the correct legal stand and told the sawkars that if they did not pay the minimum wages, he would be forced to prosecute them. With no backing from the state, the sawkars surrendered and minimum wages became universal. In some places the adivasis fought for and won wages even above the minimum.

In Variwadi, the sawkars backed out of the agreement after a few days and also refused to settle the arrears. The workers again went on strike. In addition, they took another effective action. Traditionally, the sawkars who own the more fertile lowlands grow the paddy seedlings on the higher lands belonging to the adivasis to avoid the risk of possible floods at the seedling stage. The adivasis now refused the sawkars access to the seedlings, took back the lands which they had leased to them, and started planting the fields collectively. They had decided to treat the entire 50 acres as one unit and the produce will not be divided on the basis of landholding. The exact distribution principle has yet to be worked out. The entire productive activity is viewed as an integral part of the struggle against the sawkars.

Taking fresh initiatives is now no longer a monopoly of the vanguard. At one stage Jankop takes the lead, then Bagzari, and later the standard-bearer is Bhasvan or Variwadi. The pace-setter changes, but the *Sena* marches on.

Annexure I: The making of an adivasi leader**

Kaluram is a product of the socio-economic processes described in Chapter 3. He was born around the year 1943 in a poor adivasi family in the village of Vadhan, not far from the town of Manor in the

* The ostensible explanation for the state policy is the preservation of the forest, which, however, is being ruthlessly cut down to the benefit of the rich private contractors.

** This annexure is adapted from a longer article written by a Bhoomi Sena activist.

Junglepatti area. His father was a tenant cultivating about ten acres of land and Kaluram was helping him. The bright boy came to the attention of the Adivasi Seva Mandal workers in the area, who persuaded Kaluram's father to educate him by putting him in one of the free boarding schools run by the Mandal. This discontinuity began Kaluram's long journey towards understanding the problems of his fellow adivasis, and later doing something about them.

In the hostel, Kaluram observed the semi-starvation of the adivasi boys and the diversion of the allotted boarding funds to private pockets. He helped organize an agitation in the school and the boarding against corruption, which met with partial success. This event launched him on a career of organizing a series of actions against injustices to the hostel boys; it also meant occasional beatings and a regular transfer of the 'trouble-maker' to a succession of hostels in Thana district and Bombay city. He began evolving as a natural leader in the process and commanded respect even in the camp of the 'authorities', many of whom, while disturbed by corruption at lower levels, had no effective means of controlling it except perhaps through the vigilance of the boys themselves. They were therefore ambivalent regarding Kaluram's activities. With this experience, when he came home for the holidays he exhibited the same critical attitude to the traditional culture of acceptance of their lot by the adivasis.

During his contact with the Adivasi Seva Mandal, Kaluram also had an opportunity of listening to the problems of a stream of adivasis who used to come to the Mandal office with their tales of injustice and atrocities. Kaluram began to understand the pattern of oppression in the wider social context.

Kaluram did not finish school. Instead, on his father's insistence, he started looking for a job. At this time the Congress Party was putting pressure on him to join their ranks. He did not join them and continued his search for a job. In this search he came into contact with the Member of the State Assembly (MLA) from Palghar, who belonged to the Socialist Party. The first encounter was mutually satisfying, as Kaluram was impressed with the MLA's simplicity and sincerity, and the relationship grew. Finally, Kaluram was persuaded to work full-time on behalf of the Socialist Party in the Junglepatti area. It was this work which took him to almost every village in the area and exposed him to the real problems of his people. It also made him a familiar figure in the area, with a reputation for honesty and sincerity—accompanied inevitably by some affectionate, lighthearted comments regarding his single-minded zeal in pursuing the cause of the adivasis. Apart from campaigning during elections, the work consisted mainly of collecting instances of injustices to adivasis, fighting court cases on behalf of adivasis whose lands had been illegally acquired by sawkars, and demonstrating against gross abuses of police power. However, the ineffectual actions of both the government and the opposition parties in solving the problems of the adivasis sowed the seeds of doubt in his mind regarding the limits of the traditional political and administrative processes and created an awareness of the gap between the rhetoric and actual action.

The symbolic satyagraha of 1970 provided only the last piece of evidence that crystallized the thinking of non-conformist Kaluram and his friends on the necessity of an alternate approach in solving their own problems.

Annexure II: The shibir of April 1977*

The shibir was to include representatives of 30 villages. Eight Bhoomi Sena cadres spent 15 to 20 days going to each of these villages, discussed village problems with the people, informed them about the work of Bhoomi Sena, etc. In this manner the word was spread.

Most of these meetings were mass meetings where 200 to 300 adivasis attended. Entry was no problem—because the cadres were all adivasis themselves. Familiarity with the area, and the existence of relatives, made the job much easier.

* Quoted from the paper *Lok Chetna Jagaran (Raising Mass Consciousness)* prepared by Harsh Sethi.

Through all this discussion, it was decided that each village would send two or three representatives to the meeting depending on its size. About 40 people were expected.

Twenty-four villages out of 30 participated—from distances of over 15 miles—and 48 to 50 adivasis came.

The first day—a cadre gave a brief history of the organization, its successes and failures, how they grew from 1970 to 1977, etc.

In the second session—each 'delegate' from every village spoke. The story was the story both of the individual as well as the village. They told the stories of their exploitation. Everyone spoke.

On the basis of the 'emerging appreciation' of reality, spontaneous clustering took place, based on 'problem perception'. Some key problems emerged, which would be the basic discussion issues. Though from village to village problems were different, the reality now contained an appreciation of 24 villages—a much larger universe had emerged.

The problems agreed on were:

1. Why are we poor?
2. Relations between a sawkar and the Government.
3. Relations between small farmers and landless labourers. How are they one?
4. What are the Tarun Mandals and how can they tackle the problem?
5. What has the 'Sarkar' (government) done? Employment Guarantee Scheme, minimum wages, bonded labour, etc.

Through mutual discussions, the class-analysis of the area took place. The categories presented were:

1. Those who live only on their labour power—labourers.
2. Those who have some land, but also sell their labour power—poor peasant.
3. Those who have land, and neither sell nor buy labour power—middle peasant.
4. Those who have land, and do no personal work on the land, and have moneylending and trading activities—sawkar.

It was also decided that the sawkar was the oppressor, while the first three were the oppressed.

Babu had borrowed seven maunds* of paddy as consumption loan. His total production from his two-acre plot of land was 44 maunds. Out of this he paid 28 maunds as principal plus interest to the sawkar (at the rate of 400 per cent interest) within six months. He was left with 16 maunds only, to sustain himself and his family till the next season, when he would have to go again to the sawkar for a consumption loan.

Kalu was a bonded labourer. He had borrowed 650 rupees six years back. In return, against a minimum wage of three rupees per day, he was paid a daily wage of only one rupee (i.e. 4,380 rupees over six years as principal plus interest). The quantum, the method, the form of exploitation, who the exploiter was and the process of gradual weakening were all 'discovered'.

Through these individual stories, it was realized that for both the poor peasant and the landless labourer the enemy was the same, and the suffering was common. It was also analysed that the sawkar became strong only by exploiting 'our' weakness. Further, it was discovered that while the labourer is exploited only once (through the wage link), the poor peasant is exploited thrice (through wage, interest and trading). This experience recounting led the entire group to calculate how much they had paid to the moneylending class over the years, and with this the collective perception of a common enemy gained strength.

An example of their analysis/perception:

> How are the landless labourer and small farmer one? 'Though both the small farmer and the landlord have land, their connection is one of exploiter–exploited. It is a "weakening link". Both the small farmers and landless labourers work and get exploited for wage—and this *mutual exploited status* brings them together.'

It was also revealed to the adivasis, through their own stories and words, that the 'differential speed and direction' in which the Government reacts in an adivasi–sawkar struggle proves that it is sawkar's government.

* 1 maund = 40 kg.

Slowly, through such stories of the police terror, the tehsildars,* the firings by sawkars, etc., a picture of their reality emerged.

In the last session, where action had to be decided, the cadres initiated the process—but never dominated it. The attempt was to give the maximum assertion to the adivasis. (In the entire three-day meeting, most of the speaking was done by the adivasis. The organizational cadres merely initiated the discussion—and sometimes attempted to give it direction. The outsiders kept completely quiet.)

The major problem which emerged was that of work in the month of May—thus the Employment Guarantee Scheme. It was decided not only that work was required, but it was also defined that the work:

1. Should be for as long a period as possible.
2. Should not help the sawkar.

(There was no appreciation yet of a positive quality—i.e. work that will help the adivasis.)

Work areas would be decided upon by discussion in each of the 30 villages—keeping in mind the criteria laid down.

A joint meeting was then convened and a delegation met the tehsildar—and got their application processed.

About 20 Tarun Mandals sprang up in the area, whose role would be to see that the 'work' got done. This entire area participated in the minimum wages struggle—and the politicization is such that a meeting of 800 people can be called within four hours.

Examples can be multiplied to show the growth in political awareness over the last two years. There is a very clear understanding of 'who is our enemy, and who is our friend', and the variations in this in different situations, viz. they understood that contradictions develop during a minimum wages struggle between the small farmers and the landless labourers. The method followed is also clear—how we build up to the whole from fragmented bits. In fact, through a participatory and dialogic approach a relationship was built up:

1. Between the *individual* and the *structure*.
2. Between the *individual* and all *oppressed*.
3. Between all *oppressed* and the *structure*.

5 Bhoomi Sena Speaks

Time is no longer standing still in Junglepatti. The deepening struggle of the adivasis is shaping a new reality, and in the process is creating a more conscious adivasi. While the vanguard is spearheading the movement, the movement is moulding the vanguard. In a dialogue with the vanguard in August 1977, we explored their perceptions, their understanding and their vision. This probe into their consciousness provided valuable insights for our understanding of Bhoomi Sena. The dialogue is recorded below.

* A tehsildar is a local official.

A dialogue with Bhoomi Sena

We had a dialogue with the Bhoomi Sena cadres from 20th–24th August, 1977. Among us were those who speak English, Hindi and Marathi, English and Hindi, and English only. Among the Bhoomi Sena activists and cadres, who were 11 in number including its leader—eight adivasis and three non-adivasis—at least seven were present at any one time. Among them were those who speak Marathi, Hindi and English, Marathi and Hindi, and Marathi only. The dialogue was carried on in all three languages, with translation into English and/or

Marathi, whenever necessary, by one or other of the participants. The presence of others with knowledge of both the languages in question was a check to any possible misinterpretation.

The dialogue is presented in the sequence in which it unfolded. 'We' means any one of us. BS means any one of the Bhoomi Sena activists and cadres including its leader, except for an experienced educator, an external activist, who is referred to as Y.

A characteristic of Bhoomi Sena's participation in the dialogue was that, as a rule, the indigenous cadres (whose formal education was less than that of the non-adivasi cadres) spoke the most and often summed up the consensus. Kaluram spoke considerably less than the others, relaxed and content to see the cadres articulate the Bhoomi Sena point of view.

First session: some general observations

The dialogue was kicked off by one of us, who presented some observations on the Bhoomi Sena movement based on the visit to the area in April 1977, when he attended a review session of the Bhoomi Sena cadres, and another in August 1977 to a number of villages in the area during which he talked with individual peasants and attended Tarun Mandal meetings in three villages. His observations were:

1. Bhoomi Sena is an indigenous movement of the adivasis of Palghar, in which however some outsiders have also been involved from time to time.
2. There has been a qualitative difference in the involvement of outsiders in a second phase of the movement from that in a first phase: in the first phase outsiders came with external solutions to their problems; in the second phase outsiders are contributing only to conscientization and raising the reflective capability of the Bhoomi Sena cadres and the adivasis and are not prescribing any solution to their problems. The disastrous consequences of the first phase of outside intervention played a crucial part in the emergence of a new consciousness of the adivasis and a correspondingly new role of outsiders in the movement.
3. The Bhoomi Sena organization has not been formed as a result of prior abstract deliberation. It has been formed at the height of a spontaneous mobilization of the adivasis in concrete struggle. A formal central leadership was not the first factor in the movement.
4. Likewise, the local organizations (Tarun Mandals) are also not being formed by abstract deliberation or by central decision. These are being formed either in spontaneous local struggles of the adivasis against exploitation at the local level, or through stimulation in the camps which are held from time to time to review and disseminate experience of the continuing struggle and the role of local organizations in the struggle.
5. A review may be worth-while of the comparative experience of the performance of local organizations that are born out of struggle and those that are born out of stimulation in the camps. It is possible that these two methods generate different types of leadership in terms of mobilizational and deliberative ability, and the quality and performance of a local organization may vary accordingly. Question may also be raised whether leadership can be trained, or acquired through struggle.
6. The local organizations have full autonomy in deliberating on local problems and in taking action. The centre comes when a local organization brings its problem to its atten-

tion for assistance or guidance. In this respect, the movement appears committed to the development of local initiative and capability and is opposed to the principle of 'centralism'.

7. The demands of the Bhoomi Sena movement are all for realization of their legal rights. In this, there is implicit acceptance of state power to bestow these rights. The movement seeks to implement state law regarding minimum wage; it does not assert the right to determine what the wage should be. It demands the implementation of the Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS), and has not apparently questioned the state's ability to implement this scheme, or considered the fundamental question of dependency in an employer-employee relationship.
8. One is curious to know if the struggle of the adivasis is conceived primarily as an economic struggle, or whether a deeper perception of man underlies the struggle. What, in other words, is their conception of development? Do they want more than basic material needs, i.e. power for creative self-expression?
9. A consciousness of self-reliance has emerged in the movement from past relationship and experience with outsiders. There seems to be a realization that soft options dilute the hard struggle ahead.

After these observations the session adjourned, with the understanding that the Bhoomi Sena cadres would in subsequent sessions discuss any of the above issues, or other issues, as they felt like, spontaneously.

Second session: role of outsiders

The Bhoomi Sena cadres started by discussing the role of outsiders in their movement.

BS: We need outside help for analysis and understanding of our situation and experience, but not for telling us what we should do.

BS: Initially, we had genuinely thought that outsiders had our good at heart, and knew better. We did not ourselves think much and did not have ideas of our own.

We: Then will you say that the experience of the first outsiders' help, and its quick failure, was very good?

BS (several together)**:** Yes.

We: In what sense do you think now that outside help is useful?

BS: We have good experience ourselves. We insiders are outsiders to the Tarun Mandals, and they ask us to tell them what to do. But we have to tell them that it is they who must decide.

BS: An outsider who comes with readymade solutions and advice is worse than useless. He must first understand from us what our questions are, and help us articulate the questions better, and then help us find solutions. Outsiders also have to change. He alone is a friend who helps us to think about our problems on our own.

The relation between outsiders and Bhoomi Sena should be similar to that between Bhoomi Sena and Tarun Mandal. The principle should be minimum intervention. The Bhoomi Sena cadres do not offer any solutions to Tarun Mandal: when Tarun Mandal faces some genuine problem, Bhoomi Sena tells them only how problems of this type have been solved in other villages. Then Tarun Mandal decides.

Y: After failure of outsiders' method a camp was held in 1975 to discuss the experience. The majority of those present were outsiders,

Bhoomi Sena's Manor office built in 1975

but the purpose was to get the perception of the local workers. Two years later, today, the camps are dominated much more by insiders.

We: How did this happen?

BS: In the first camp, we had not come out of dependence. We had no political understanding. We wanted to link the political issues with our problems and needed the help of outsiders in this respect. When we learnt the linking, we can now do this analysis on our own. We now go to the Tarun Mandals and tell them the method by which we learnt, and ask them to learn the method of learning how to link economic problems with politics.

When we go to Tarun Mandal, they talk to us freely and we encourage them to assert. We formulate issues for the struggle on the basis of *their* assertion. When, however, they meet complete outsiders they still tend to listen more and assert less.

Self-reliance

We: Is this fierce self-reliance a matter of having no other concrete option, or a value also? A conscious ethical choice between alternatives that exist, or compulsion?

BS: Self-reliance is an ideal for us, but it is also linked with our practical situation; without this our struggle will not develop.

We: Refusing to repay bank loans could also be regarded as a kind of self-reliance. Have you considered this option? After all, it is your money that the sawkar [moneylender] puts in the bank.

BS: It is better to rely on our own accumulation. If a loan is taken at all, it should be returned, or else corruption may come in the mind.

We: What is your attitude to 'snatching' bank money?

BS: If we get money through concrete struggle, then everyone becomes more responsible about its use. If money is just snatched away, then such money is misused—individuals snatch it also for themselves.

BS: To snatch it and avoid misuse you have to be strongly organized.

BS: Such soft options will divert us away from the hardship of the struggle, which will be long and arduous.

We: Your opponents also understand this, and offer soft options. Do you succeed in convincing people that this should be rejected?

BS: When *individuals* ask for something, we ask them to demand *collectively*. Then we know the demand cannot be met and so the people will remain struggle-minded. This is the way to combat the tendency of individuals to fall into the trap of soft options.

We: The more such movement succeeds, the greater is the possibility that Government will come with massive investment in some area of Palghar.

We: If Government accepts demands gradually, then what happens to the struggle? This also becomes a soft option.

We: The method of 'outsider' may be tried again, this time more efficiently. For example, an adivasi Development Plan genuinely to be implemented in Palghar.

BS: Local vested interests will not permit this.

We: The movement must all the time keep growing at a critical minimum rate in order not to slip back.

We: This means the demand of the movement must always be sufficiently greater than what can be met.

Y: Not only the struggle, but rearranging the society for self-government will also develop a new culture and experience which they will not be ready to give up. This gives them a new identity which develops its own momentum.

We: In other words, the struggle should not merely be *negative*—it must have a *positive* content as well.

BS: Take a concrete example. Out of 206 acres of excess land of Bagzari (village) to be distributed, only four acres were earmarked for the landless peasants in Bagzari. The rest was not cultivable land. Twenty-eight persons applied. How to distribute four acres among 28 persons? The officials wanted to draw lottery. But Tarun Mandal decided that irrespective of lottery the land would be cultivated jointly by all the 28 peasants who would be paid wages, and the surplus would go to the Tarun Mandal. That is, for all practical purposes, the Tarun Mandal would own the four acres. This is how they are countering efforts to corrupt individuals.

Attempt is also being made to corrupt individuals by tempting them with the hope that they may get an extra acre of land each if they join the lottery. But Tarun Mandal said: 'No, if there is more excess land let us take stock of that and bring that too under joint cultivation. There should be no individual deals.'

Third session: organization

We: Would you describe the structure of your organization? What are the inter-relationships and the rules of business?

BS: We have a president, but he participates in decision-making as an equal. Any villager can come and participate as equal in our decision-making. We thus have an open decision-making process. Bhoomi Sena itself goes

to villages to consult villagers on major issues. Sometimes it convenes meetings of villagers.

There are no representatives as such in Bhoomi Sena from the villages. Its members are all full-time workers.

Tarun Mandals and the struggle

BS: You raised the question of formation of Tarun Mandals. In one village Tarun Mandal was formed without struggle, after a camp. In the village itself there was no immediate issue that agitated the peasants. Sawkar was not living in the village, and was not visible. The number of landless labourers was small. So Tarun Mandal collapsed. There must be struggle to keep the organization alive. The village, however, is solidly behind Bhoomi Sena, and there is 100 per cent mobilization when Bhoomi Sena initiates mobilization on particular issues. But organization did not last.

We: Is struggle against men absolutely necessary? There can be struggle for economic and social progress without necessarily struggling against other men. Can this not sustain organization?

BS: Some social issues they have, and they have got together and solved them. The caste system is there—four or five castes. In this respect much progress has taken place. Last two years, local workers kept on working to break caste barrier and promote organization on class basis. Inter-dining, taking water, tea, participating in social activities together—these are now taking place. But no intermarriage yet. Yet with all this, Tarun Mandal organization is not being formed everywhere.

Y: One reason may be that in this village [Gativali] the paras [clusters] are scattered.

BS: The peasants fear that organization will alienate sawkar too much and they will not get khauti. They are still too dependent.

We: But why then in other villages Tarun Mandal is being formed?

BS: Bagzari, where organization is most advanced, has a long history of struggle. Even this year they had trouble. The poor peasants did not have enough working capital. Sawkars agreed to pay landless labourers three rupees a day, but against $10^1/_2$ hours of work a day. So Tarun Mandal sent the landless labourers to other places where they can get more—both wage and food. But the situation remains desperate, as many poor peasants were not provided for. Tarun Mandal went to a charitable mission for loan. A letter has been sent by one of cadres to us about the desperate situation: in three or four days, some arrangement must be made for khauti, otherwise the organization may collapse.

The sawkars struck here by refusing khauti after the question of distribution of excess land was solved by the Tarun Mandal, who took ownership of land and arranged for joint cultivation by the landless labourers.

The mission finally came to its assistance, and the situation was saved. But it was really touch and go in this, the most advanced, village.

The letter to Bhoomi Sena expresses the deep agony and dilemma—the organization has created such desperate situation, and if it cannot be tackled the organization cannot survive.

Small farmers must join the landless labourers to strengthen organization, but small farmers are afraid to antagonize sawkars because they are so very dependent on khauti. They all have sympathy for Bhoomi Sena, but they also have fear.

BS: In Variwadi village, sawkars threatened to stop all loans, but Tarun Mandal was prepared for this and was able to make alternative provisions. But in Bagzari, sawkar promised loans during the election, and Tarun Mandal was fooled. Later, neighbouring sawkars persuaded this sawkar to back out. Tarun Mandal was not prepared with any alternative, so this crisis.

Realization has come now that movement cannot survive unless the small farmers' problem of khauti can be tackled by the organization. So grain contribution after harvest is being mobilized. From this, loans will be given at 25 per cent rate of interest, thus gradually building up a growing fund.

We: What if the borrower does not repay and goes back to sawkar next time?

BS: If he is in real distress he will repay, and Tarun Mandal will consider giving him fresh loan. If he defaults deliberately, he will not fare better with sawkar whose interest rate is 250 per cent and on top of this he has to be given daru. Besides, there is also informal social sanction. Generally, no one feels recovery is a problem.

We: Will not the sawkars strike in one go as a last resort, by denying all kinds of help? There are so many types of dependency—bullock, seed, khauti, etc. They will keep their land fallow.

Y: Against this, mutual aid is the answer. Small peasants have their own bullocks and ploughs which can rotate.

We: This will perhaps be the next phase of struggle, and for this mutual aid should start developing.

BS: In Gativali village mutual aid is being attempted.

We: Suppose next year sawkars decide to keep all land fallow. Then how will the landless labourers survive?

BS: Our labourers will walk 25 to 30 miles and get work at four rupees a day. But sawkar cannot take his land out of the village. We already have this collective consciousness and solidarity.

Also, out of 25 sawkars, five or six only can survive one season without cultivating their land. Others have no such staying power. Furthermore, sawkars can suffer less than we can. We can go hungry—the sawkar cannot. Small sawkars, middle peasants and small peasants have the bulk of land; the bigger sawkars do not command so much land as to put landless labourers into great difficulty by stopping work.

BS: The bigger sawkar will have to go for second crop to maintain his standard of living after giving minimum wage. This will increase employment possibilities all the more.

We: What are the various possibilities of the sawkars retaliating?

BS: Sawkar lives in the village, and knows the weakness of each individual and group, and will try to exploit these.

BS: They will use daru, caste and bribe selectively to create division.

BS: Where the productivity of land is high, sawkar will prefer to pay higher wages—even then he will have considerable surplus left.

Public institutions

We: How about the police?

BS: Police beating has stopped. Police are now afraid of the organization. Sawkars are also getting afraid.

Bribery in adivasi hospital has also stopped. The bank's attitude has also changed—they have now posted a branch manager and a field assistant approved by Bhoomi Sena, whose cooperation they now want.

Fourth session: class analysis

BS: The problem of uniting landless labourers and small peasants is receiving serious attention by us. We have four agricultural classes: (a) totally landless; (b) very small farmer—part self-employed, part outside employment; (c) self-sufficient middle farmer, employing outside labour only occasionally, (d) rich farmer. In all, about 34 per cent are landless labourers, 35 to 40 per cent small farmers, and 10 to 15 per cent middle. Then there are the shopkeeper-traders who are of non-adivasi and non-Maharashtra origin, trading in paddy, grass, etc.

Among the landless labourers, 90 per cent are adivasis. The kunbis, a non-adivasi caste, form about 5 to 8 per cent of the total population, but 50 per cent of the middle farmers.

The kunbis and sawkars employ regular wage-labour. But those among the adivasis who have more land share their income more like extended family with hired labour. Thus they are not rich, and there is no dynamics for them to move up.

We: Doesn't the demand for minimum wage go against the middle farmer who needs to hire casual labour?

BS: Middle farmer is normally neutral with respect to this demand. During natural calamities, when he has to work outside his land, he will benefit. During off-season also he works, and so the demand for the Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS) helps him. Actually, he can take greater advantage of it than landless labourers, as under EGS wage is paid once every week only, and he has the greater staying power.

The adivasi middle farmer does not engage in moneylending, but the non-adivasi middle farmer does. The non-adivasi middle farmer will thus lose from EGS because demand for khauti will decline.

We: The demand for minimum wage and employment both affect the same classes in the same direction, so that class separation on this basis is in order and it appears the two movements can be launched simultaneously.

BS: This is true. The pressure of the organization on the EGS is yielding concrete results. When it fails to do so, then also the struggle advances by exposing the Government's hollow promise. And if employment results, then the demand is increased. Minimum wage and employment are not ends, but instruments of struggle, and at the same time to increase incomes in order to give staying power for the struggle.

We: Are you pressing for daily payment of wage under EGS?

BS: Demand for daily payment of wage in kind has been added to the demand for implementation of EGS in order to benefit the landless labourer.

Struggle in Bagzari

At this point, the leader of the Tarun Mandal in Bagzari—who is also a cadre of Bhoomi Sena—arrives from Bagzari, and reports on the struggle in his village and the latest situation.

BS: Khauti is not a demand of the landless labourers—they will not get it in any case. To the small farmer, sawkar often gives khauti for four instead of the five months of the cultiva-

tion season, at a rate of interest of 200 per cent plus, so that the last month before harvest he has to come again, and this time the rate of interest is made even higher. For the landless labourer, there is the visoli system, i.e. advance given just at the beginning of the crop season for 15 days, in return for which the labourer has to work on the master's land and get food only during work—just like bonded labour.

Bagzari village has 25 landless labourers, 25 small farmers, eight to ten middle farmers and eight rich farmers. The small farmers joined the landless labourers in the struggle for minimum wage, and sawkars in retaliation stopped giving khauti to the small farmers. Tarun Mandal and Bhoomi Sena discussed the problem but found no solution. They went to a Father of the adivasi Shetkari Mandal [Farmers' Association] Mission. Father said from his book that seven years back Bagzari villagers had borrowed half a bag of rice from the mission and never repaid, so that they could not be given further loan. The farmers went back to a Bhoomi Sena cadre who asked them to go to Father again. They did, but Father would not help.

For eight to ten days the farmers were without food. They ate roots in the forest. The landless labourers went back to work on sawkars' land, even though they did not get minimum wage. Finally, a Bhoomi cadre persuaded the Father to give some advance: one bag of rice initially, then after a week one bag of wheat. Having got the loan, the small farmers now planted paddy. Even through this hard struggle the small farmers are better off, because they got loan at much lower rate of interest (25 per cent) than what sawkar would charge. The small farmers came then to Tarun Mandal meeting, and it was decided that they would return loan to Father after harvest, and next year Tarun Mandal would give them advance for khauti.

By this time, some landless labourers who had gone outside the village in search of work returned, and Tarun Mandal led negotiation on their behalf with village headmen for work on sawkars' land. Negotiation failed as sawkars demanded more than eight hours work if three rupees wage was to be given. The labourers went out again and got employment for 25 days. The sawkars were now without workers. One of them brought two labourers from outside; the others were in trouble. After 25 days the labourers of the village returned, and sawkars offered them work on their terms.

We: Through such hard struggle, has the spirit of Bhoomi Sena been strengthened or weakened in Bagzari?

BS: The spirit is stronger today. The small farmers have resolved to contribute their whole surplus harvest to Tarun Mandal fund and themselves work outside for subsistence.

Women

We: What is the role of women in the movement?

BS: They are participating in the movement, in mobilizations organized by the Bhoomi Sena and in local mobilizations. But there is no separate organization of women. This needs a catalyst.

Fifth session: conceptualization

This was a session only of the English speaking participants in the dialogue, for some quick conceptual reflections. The points made were:

1. Future society grows out of the present and therefore its seeds must be sown in the present. In Bhoomi Sena some positive values are emerging, and even if the move-

ment is crushed these values may continue to live. From this point of view, Bhoomi Sena shows one way of generating these values.

2. Self-reliance has emerged as a value from Experience in the struggle. Having emerged, it has taken on an autonomous character, and is giving the movement more sustaining power. This, in turn, influences the course of development of the struggle.
3. Bhoomi Sena also demonstrates the role of spontaneity in developing self-awareness.
4. Dialectical development of spontaneity and order is observable in the Bhoomi Sena movement. First spontaneous mobilization, then synthesis into an order (organization). Then split again: some spontaneity and some order, spontaneity being encouraged in struggles for new issues. Thus a higher stage is reached. A subsequent synthesis of spontaneous actions will take the movement to an even higher stage, and there will be a split again as new contradictions emerge and spontaneous initiatives to resolve them are allowed.

   At this stage Kaluram joins the session, and the above points are presented to him. He says in response that Bhoomi Sena is consciously committed to the development of spontaneous initiatives to seek solutions to new contradictions and to draw lessons therefrom and develop organization on that basis. He cites the example of new contradiction as the refusal of sawkars to give khauti. To this problem no solution was known, so spontaneity was encouraged, for synthesis later.
5. Is this dialectical role of spontaneity in developing a movement contrary to the concept of 'democratic centralism', which assumes that solution is available to the centre or can be found by deliberations without some spontaneous experience?
6. Circumstances may, however, be such that there is no time for spontaneous experiences.

Sixth session

The conceptualization of the previous session was presented to the full body of participants.

BS: This raises the question of how Tarun Mandal may be expanded. There may not be time for spontaneous growth in every new village, but at least people must feel that it is not being imposed.

BS: In Purves village, land distribution was the issue, but people did not feel the need for Tarun Mandal. We told them that in other villages Tarun Mandals had been formed and had tackled the issue. The Purves people tackled the issue by mobilization but did not form Tarun Mandal.

Bhoomi Sena's mistakes

BS: We have ourselves made mistakes. In one village, there are more small farmers than landless labourers. This makes organization for minimum wage difficult, since if small farmers join the landless labourers for minimum wage, they will not get khauti. Even then, we tried to organize the people around the demand for minimum wage, but it was unsuccessful. The mistake was Bhoomi Sena's; the people were rational all right. Our mistake was in the *method* of carrying issue of one village to another, without inquiring what the issue in each village is.

We: When you say the small farmers fear the sawkars, what kind of fear is this?

BS: The fear is not physical, but the absence of alternatives to sustain life.

Primacy of man
We: Why was bonded labour selected as a first issue?

BS: It was a question of human dignity. The reason was not economic only.

We: Why is minimum wage rather than khauti being given priority now? Is there something similar in the reason for this also?

BS: Yes. Landless labour is very much like bonded labour, being dependent for day-to-day living.

Kaluram (summing up)**:** We saw and heard of people's sufferings, and thought we therefore knew what they were. Then we go to them and talk about the movement. People listen; only a few talk, others do not. We thought the few that talked represented everybody. That was a mistake. Others did not talk, not because they thought they were being represented, but because they thought we were their well-wishers, so how could they contradict us? But what we talked or did, did not always excite them. So organization did not gather intensity.

Different wages for women
BS: In one village demand was made by Tarun Mandal for a wage of five rupees for men and four rupees for women, when actually women possibly work harder. What could Bhoomi Sena do in such a case? Bhoomi Sena will not tell people what they should do, but want to understand why people do this. Why this difference? Were women present in the meeting? By asking such questions, Bhoomi Sena tries to generate a self-reflective and self-corrective process.

Tarun Mandal and Bhoomi Sena
We: What if Tarun Mandal feels Bhoomi Sena is making a mistake?

BS (consensus after talking between themselves)**:** Bhoomi Sena can make mistakes, and should correct them. There should be a mechanism by which Tarun Mandal can raise such questions. Bhoomi Sena has not yet done it, but should do it.

We: Consider the following different models: (a) Tarun Mandal a branch of Bhoomi Sena; (b) Bhoomi Sena a federation of Tarun Mandals; (c) the two are organizationally independent of each other. Which one do you prefer?

BS: Bhoomi Sena should be a federation, but at the moment Tarun Mandal looks like branch of Bhoomi Sena.

Kaluram: It should be a federation, but we have not thought of this as yet.

BS: The two should remain independent. Then, if external attack come on Bhoomi Sena, Tarun Mandal can continue struggle independently.

We: Shall we say at present the relation is based on commitment and trust? This is working all right. Only a mechanism for Tarun Mandal and Bhoomi Sena to meet may be added. Other formal relations should be allowed to evolve as need is felt.

BS (consensus)**:** Some mechanism should be created for Tarun Mandal and Bhoomi Sena to meet from time to time. But as an objective, Bhoomi Sena should be a federation.

Constraints to growth
We: What is the most serious constraint to the growth of the movement? Lack of cadre or finance?

Kaluram: Bhoomi Sena has come to a stage when people are accepting it as the instrument for their liberation. They all join mobilizations. There is the question of selecting and training

cadres for Tarun Mandal. People want to join, but local leaders have to be carefully selected. The financial constraint is now becoming a major one. As Bhoomi Sena spreads, communication, contact, etc. become increasingly more expensive.

BS: Personal ups and downs of full-time cadres—our periodic frustrations—this is also a constraint. Eight [number of workers] is not always eight, and it has to grow as organization grows.

Y: Movement has to grow to survive, but as it grows the democratic qualities will be more difficult to retain in their purity. Also, the larger the movement, the greater will be the chance of repression from above, and to face this some centralism may be necessary.

BS: Movement should not expand faster than the rate at which quality can be maintained. If quality is lost, then it will not be the fault of those who will repress from above: we ourselves by developing too fast shall be responsible for destroying quality, and once quality is lost the fundamental is lost.

BS: Taking care about recruitment of full-time cadres—this itself will restrict the pace of growth. One new recruit was admonished in a cadre meeting and he resented, saying that he should have been admonished by the leader privately. He had to leave.

We: Leaders emerge out of struggle. The nature of leadership depends on the nature of struggle and the issues. Subsequent struggles and issues may be different.

BS: This relation is recognized. A person does not qualify to be a cadre just because he has led one struggle successfully. He must be able to do sustained organizational work.

Bhoomi Sena and other organizations

BS: In the neighbouring taluq, a political party has been working for many years. But their method is wrong, and people are disillusioned. What should Bhoomi Sena do there? Bhoomi Sena should not come into unproductive conflict with the party. In the broader context, they are our friends. So Bhoomi Sena will work in that area, try to solve problems in one locality. This may have some effect on cadres of that party. If they change, all the better, for theirs is a large organization and if this organization improves in method of work people of a larger area will be benefited. It is not necessary to plant Bhoomi Sena flag in all areas, nor can Bhoomi Sena handle a much bigger area. What is important is that our method is applied elsewhere also. In some areas where that party is working, their cadres actually acknowledge that the Bhoomi Sena method is better. They have become friends of Bhoomi Sena. But they cannot really change: most of them are too old to change. And their leaders tell Bhoomi Sena cadres: 'You are doing good work, but without party you cannot survive; so you should join our party.'

Social and economic areas

We: How about moving to other areas like education, health, etc. which are parts of the totality of life?

BS: Yes, Tarun Mandal should, when they are not busy with specific issues for struggle, try activities in other areas if people want them. But Bhoomi Sena has to be engaged with political issues. The Farmers' Association can occupy themselves with the others, with organizational link with Bhoomi Sena.

BS: At present, Bhoomi Sena does political work, Shetkari Mandal economic work, but

Tarun Mandal is loaded with both economic and political work. At the village level also there should be division of work, otherwise one or the other function will suffer. For example, at the Tarun Mandal level, when they are engaged with mobilization for a procession or some other activity, the task of negotiation for bank loan suffers.

BS: Women may be given special tasks like health.

BS: However, for selecting cadres for non-political activities, political consciousness and technical ability both should be verified.

BS: Work on education is not possible because half of the year the poor leave the village. They do not perceive education as an issue yet. The beating up of adivasi children by non-adivasi children in the schools is an issue, and they resent it. But they have not yet thought of taking any positive action on this issue—they just do not send their children to school.

Farewell

We: We have learnt much from talking to you these four days. We are afraid we have not given much. We shall remember your hospitality, and hope you shall regard us as your friends.

BS: It has been useful for us to discuss our problems with you. This has helped us clarify our own minds and has generated new issues about which we had not thought before. As regards your desire that we regard you as our friends, [with a smile] we shall give due consideration to this request.

We (laughingly)**:** In other words, you only acknowledge receipt of our application for friendship?

BS (laughingly)**:** Yes, that is the case!

6 The Method of Bhoomi Sena

The foregoing chapters have presented the background and evolution of the Bhoomi Sena movement, and some attempts to capture the perceptions and understanding of the Bhoomi Sena activists and cadres about their struggle. It is apparent that, through its experience, Bhoomi Sena has developed a distinctive method of *mobilization*, raising of mass *consciousness* and *organization*, in which these three elements are dialectically linked with each other, and which is in sharp contrast to the methods of previous interventions in the area. An understanding of this method and its evolution is attempted in the following pages.

Mobilization

As opposed to a spontaneous eruption of mass action, mobilization is a conscious act by a leadership to mobilize the masses for action.

Mobilization of the adivasis has been and is seen to be a central task of Bhoomi Sena as the vanguard group* of the movement.

The vanguard group (the centre) initiated the process of mobilization with the consciousness that militant mass action was necessary—a consciousness derived from earlier involvements in fighting individual cases of oppression and experience with the satyagraha movement. There was no grand design, no theory of the movement.

There was, however, the appreciation that the decision to act must be a decision of the people, with a knowledge of the facts and after collective deliberation based on these facts. The people must act to resolve their own problems.

With this consciousness Bhoomi Sena was born. The vanguard group undertook a systematic investigation of the usurpation of adivasi land by the sawkars. From the beginning, the people were involved in the investigations. The facts were then placed before the people in small groups and large, and discussions were initiated. Through a series of deliberations, the people decided to act and seized harvests and land.

From the people's point of view they got mobilized, not for mere agitation but for action; not through mere arousal but through informed deliberation. The deliberation was, however, for immediate action only—without any conception of the task beyond this. There was not enough consciousness yet. And there was no organization to give continuity to the movement.

* The term Bhoomi Sena is used either to denote the movement or the vanguard group. When the context does not make this clear, the vanguard group is specifically referred to.

These gaps were critical, and resulted in the following:

1. The people who got land were not necessarily those who had initiated the movement for seizure of land, with the consciousness developed through investigation and discussion. Having no organic identity with the movement, many of them even turned against Bhoomi Sena after getting their land and not knowing what to do with it.
2. In some villages, *ad hoc* collective grain funds were created. But these were mismanaged, some even misappropriated, and the scheme collapsed.
3. The vacuum caused by lack of consciousness and organization was finally filled by benevolent external paternalism—SW's technology backed by bank money offered an easy and attractive alternative to going back to the sawkars.

It was only after the failure of SW's intervention became clear *to the people*, and its lesson was learnt by Bhoomi Sena, that a fresh initiative could again be taken. The vanguard group realized, however, that for this the people had to be conscientized. Mobilization would continue but a systematic process of conscientization had to be initiated, so that mobilization could be raised to a higher level with a clearer *internal* sense of direction.

Conscientization

As defined by Paulo Freire, conscientization is a process 'in which men, not as recipients, but as knowing subjects, achieve a deepening awareness both of the sociological reality

which shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality'.*

As opposed to spontaneous (unconscious) action of the mass mobilized by a conscious vanguard, conscientization is a process that generates consciousness in the masses themselves.

Spontaneous action

The first significant step in conscientization was the incident in Jankop in 1975 in which the people experienced their power in confrontation with the feared Bhaiyas, who were to the adivasis the real power in Palghar, coercive and answerable to none. Their capacity to transform reality dawned on the adivasis.

This awareness came, however, through spontaneous action, and remained to be *conscientized* through systematic reflection.

Collective reflection

Systematic attempts at conscientization started with the shibirs of 1976. The technique of the shibirs developed through experience. In the first shibir, people recounted experiences individually and reflected upon their meaning collectively. The process heightened the awareness of the participants and was satisfying to all, and the adivasis were stimulated to action.

Feeling, perhaps, that the issues were now clear and had only to be placed before the people, the process was reversed in the second shibir. The consensus reached in the first shibir was *presented* to the participants in the second. The people heard, perhaps even agreed, but did not reflect, and were not stimulated to action as much as after the first shibir. In the post-shibir analysis, the vanguard group learnt that the method was wrong. The recounting of the experience of each new participant in the process, followed by a creative collective reflection, in which consensus reached in other deliberations could only be one useful input, was a necessary sequence for real conscientization. The process had to be re-creative each time, maturing to a stage when it could creatively absorb the output of other shibirs and other experiences.

Thus the technique of the shibir matured, and generated a process of conscientization illustrated in the account of the 1977 shibir given in Annexure II on page 41.**

The lesson learnt by Bhoomi Sena on the process of learning is pertinent for those who wish to learn from Bhoomi Sena or, for that matter, from any other 'Tachai'.

From perception to conception

In the development of knowledge, a dialectical movement between perception and conception is observed in Bhoomi Sena. The basis of knowledge (conscientization) for the adivasis is their experience from daily life and from their initiatives in improving this life, i.e. their political and economic struggle. The initial perception of this experience, which is the subjective reality for the individual adivasis, is spontaneous. Subjective reality is transformed into objective reality through its universalization. An essential first step in this transition is

* *Cultural Action for Freedom*, Penguin, 1972. Conscientization includes awareness of the 'physical reality' and the capacity of man to transform this reality. It is not clear if the Freirian concept of sociological reality includes the man-nature relationship, which interacts with the man-man relationship.

** While the shibirs have been the most systematic method used for conscientization, Bhoomi Sena has also utilized whatever opportunities presented themselves to increase mass awareness, e.g. participation in the 1977 parliamentary elections.

the assertion of individual perceptions in a collective forum (e.g. shibirs and weekly meetings of Tarun Mandals). The second step is integration of the perceptions into a conception. The basis is now laid for a more sensitive perception of subsequent social experiences, to be integrated at a higher level of conceptualization in further collective deliberations. In this way, through the method of praxis—from experience to synthesis, knowledge and action to transform reality, and thereafter to a higher level of experience and a higher order synthesis and knowledge for further action—the consciousness of the adivasis is developing.

Through this conscientization process, the conceptualization of the adivasis about their struggle is unfolding. This in turn is shaping and reshaping the very method of the struggle.

Assertion

One major theme in the emerging conceptualization is *assertion*. The people must assert themselves. The struggle is to create conditions in which the people can assert collectively.

This struggle is viewed as fundamentally political—a struggle to establish *people's power*. But what you fight *for*, you fight *with*. If you do not assert your power, you do not get the power to assert. This concept of unity of ends and means is crucial for understanding the Bhoomi Sena method.

A major element in the concept of assertion is *self-reliance*, a consciousness that has emerged out of the struggle and was not manifest in the beginning. Having emerged as a necessity to carry out the struggle for people's power, it is now a value. Self-reliance, now, is being *asserted*, and is a material force which is influencing the course of the struggle.

To Bhoomi Sena, self-reliance in simplest terms means:

1. '*We* shall take decisions.'
2. 'We shall take outside help *only to raise our own capabilities*.'

Thus self-reliance for Bhoomi Sena is not an autarky, either physical or intellectual. Specifically, the crucial role of middle-class activists in the process of conscientization at this stage of Bhoomi Sena's development is recognized.

In Bhoomi Sena's assertion that 'we shall decide' lies also the consciousness that 'we must therefore raise our analytical ability'. For this reason, outsiders are not welcome to come 'with readymade solutions and advice' nor merely to systematize their experiences, but to 'help us think about our problems on our own'.

In their assertion of self-reliance, the adivasis are yet to show significant concern for the development of productive forces in the economic space they are gaining through their political struggle. Discussions indicate that the traumatic experience with the initial economism phase has made the adivasis averse to taking serious economic initiatives again, at least for the time being. It appears that this experience has made the adivasis withdraw from productive initiatives, rather than spurring them to assert their power to develop the productive forces in their own self-reliant manner.*

Spontaneity

Along with assertion, another major theme in the emerging conceptualization of the Bhoomi Sena movement is the liberation of spontaneity—the prime source of creativity—in people's action, and its qualitative development through struggle and conscientization. In accordance with the concept of unity of ends

and means, the liberation of spontaneity is not attainable only as an end product of the struggle, but requires its continuous release in the process of struggle itself. People's initiatives cannot be liberated unless they are activated to assert themselves and know their own tendencies and directions, confronting the barriers to their fuller expression against which the struggle will then be directed. In the course of the struggle which will thus unfold, people's initiatives will become richer in quality and potentials, and will develop strength to assert and to resist further encroachment on their liberty.

In the qualitative development of spontaneity, to be discussed in depth later (pages 61–62) conscientization provides a key link. Through this process of collective reflection, not only are experiences of individual (at the group or village level) spontaneous initiatives synthesized conceptually; lessons from such experiences are also *collectively* absorbed, to enrich subsequent individual initiatives over a wider area. In this way, successful initiatives in one village tend to be re-created in others, while lessons from unsuccessful initiatives are learnt by all.

Conscientization of the vanguard group

The vanguard group has its own conscientization process, which seems to have been institutionalized in their periodic review sessions. In these sessions, which go on for two to three days, the group engages in synthesizing the experience of the movement, lessons to be learnt from spontaneous action at the village level, self-criticism and reflection. In this manner the vanguard group advances its own consciousness.

Organization

As opposed to spontaneous action of mobilized and conscious people, organization—the creation of organs—provides a continuing mechanism for action through collective decision and for reviewing them.

The centre

In Bhoomi Sena, *the vanguard group does not organize the people*. It believes that the people should organize themselves. But it is also convinced that mobilization by itself does not achieve much sustained gain, unless it is followed by organization. 'From mobilization to organization' is therefore a slogan emphasized in every shibir. But the organization will be formed by the people's own will and initiative, and *in the village*, where the people are. If people have indeed been conscientized, they will form their own organization. The vanguard group's task in the development of organization does not go beyond mobilization and initiating conscientization processes.

While the centre does not organize the people, its own method of functioning provides an

* This observation was presented to the Bhoomi Sena cadres in a final dialogue in August 1978. We were told that Bhoomi Sena has indeed been preoccupied with the political struggle and has not seriously reflected upon the question of development of the productive forces. While the necessity to increase economic power to sustain the political struggle is recognized, the question could be premature, the cadres said, until the urge to increase production is generated in the consciousness of the adivasis themselves and some spontaneous initiatives in this direction are taken. The collective cultivation of paddy in Variwadi in the 1978 season may be the first small step towards integrating production with political struggle. At the moment they perhaps see the production relations as too exploitative to offer incentive for greater productive effort on their part—they have remained dependent on the sawkars for consumption and input loans even if they have regained their land, and through this dependence considerable appropriation of surplus product by the sawkars has still been taking place.

image for the people's organizations. It has no constitution and no office-bearers. The office in the town of Manor is itself a hut, no different from most adivasi houses. This open office is a home for the adivasis. They do not hesitate to enter it. On the office day every Saturday there is a steady stream of adivasis who come to *their* organization, Bhoomi Sena, with their problems, both individual and collective. These are usually grievances against the sawkars and the state administration. This is one method by which the vanguard group is kept in constant and direct touch with the problems that agitate the minds of the people. On Saturday evenings, the vanguard group has its weekly meeting. These meetings, like many others, are not exclusive: other adivasis who happen to be there also join the deliberations. Through the open office and the open meeting the centre keeps an organic link with the people with no exclusivity that might separate it from them.

The centre is an organ. Therefore, it is an organization—but with a difference.

Tarun Mandals

Tarun Mandals are the organs which the adivasis are creating in the villages. These are their assemblies, established to consolidate a collective solidarity that has already been experienced in spontaneous action. The role of the Tarun Mandal is to provide a systematic forum for deliberation about collective tasks, to organize such tasks, and to review experience.

The Tarun Mandals hold meetings once every week. Their activities include negotiating with and confronting the sawkars in the village as the need arises on issues of bondage, minimum wages, and other conditions of work; managing collective savings funds and advancing khauti to the more distressed among the adivasis; undertaking activities like mutual aid in production and joint farming; obtaining and managing bank loans for cultivation purposes; and, more recently, setting up people's courts and people's schools.

In the Bhoomi Sena movement, mobilization and conscientization generally precede voluntary decision to form an organization at the village level. Hence there is a lag in the birth of Tarun Mandals. The movement has mobilized many more villages than have organized into Tarun Mandals.

Once born, a Tarun Mandal grows with a life of its own—like an organic cell of a body that is the Bhoomi Sena movement. It is interlinked with other Tarun Mandals through participation in the movement and in shibirs, and through direct exchanges. It learns from its own experience, from other Tarun Mandals, and from the centre. But it is not a local branch of Bhoomi Sena; it is fully autonomous and free to move on its own.

The relation between the centre and the Tarun Mandal is in fact informal. It has evolved naturally through participation in the struggle together, and no necessity for any formal constitution or accountability has as yet been felt. The cadres of Bhoomi Sena are not formal representatives of the Tarun Mandals and most of them, having been in the movement before the formation of Tarun Mandals, do not come from any of them.

Although informal, the relationship is significant and gives vitality to the movement. As we have described, the vanguard group maintains direct and intimate contact with the people. The Tarun Mandal is the other leg in this interfacing. The centre and the Tarun Mandals are closely linked through a continuous two-way flow of information. Issues are formulated out of this free communication between the people and Bhoomi Sena, both di-

rect and through the Tarun Mandals. As in the cases of Jankop, Purves and Bhasvan, actions evolved and tried at the village level have later become conscious strategies of the movement.

The dialectical development of spontaneity: a synthesis of the Bhoomi Sena method

As already mentioned, the liberation and development of spontaneity is a major theme in the Bhoomi Sena movement. Spontaneity has different levels. Spontaneity, like all concepts in dialectical logic, has no absolute meaning, and may be defined only in relation to its opposite with which it constitutes a unity. This unity grows and at some point changes in quality. Spontaneity then acquires a new definition, in relation to a new opposite, together constituting unity of a higher order. This process continues.

The Bhoomi Sena method—from mobilization through conscientization to organization—reveals an inner logic that integrates the three essential elements in it in such a development of spontaneity in human action.

Initially, spontaneity is primordial, unconscious itself and unmobilized by any conscious force. Spontaneity at this stage is the opposite of *mobilization*. But it can still *assert*, through eruption. This is unmobilized assertion.

When a conscious force (e.g. a party or vanguard group) mobilizes unconscious masses, spontaneity changes quality. The masses are now mobilized for issues conceived by an external conscious force. But, once mobilized, they may still act spontaneously, in manner and directions beyond the designs of the force that mobilizes them. Such spontaneous action may not be conscious. Spontaneity is now the opposite not of mobilization, which it has absorbed, but of *conscientization*. Spontaneity again asserts, unconscious, but raised to a higher level by its interaction with a conscious mobilizing force.

The process of conscientization makes the masses conscious. Mobilized and conscious masses may now have an agreed design evolved through consensus; but they may still act beyond the design with no mechanism for changing the consensus. Such mobilized and conscientized spontaneity—spontaneity of a still higher level—is the opposite of organization.

When conscientization leads to organization, the masses will act consciously and in an organized manner in accordance with their collective decisions. But they may still go beyond an (external) central design. Spontaneity—mobilized, conscious and organized—is now at a higher level of development with *centralism* as its opposite. This is the stage of *self-management*. If such spontaneity ever absorbs its opposite, i.e. centralism, then both are transcended.*

The sequences in the dialectical development of spontaneity (and its opposite) are then as follows:

Spontaneity	*Unites with, and opposes*
1. Primordial (eruption)	Mobilization
2. Mobilized, unconscious	Conscientization
3. Mobilized, conscious	Organization
4. Mobilized, conscious and organized (self-management)	Centralization

* Self-management (the highest stage of spontaneity) and its opposite, centralism, together constitute a unity that may be called *democratic centralism*. In some usage of the term democratic centralism, the emphasis is on centralism which is democratic. This may be contrasted with centralist democracy, with the emphasis on democracy which is centralized. Which of the two prevails depends on which aspect of the contradiction is the dominant one. If ever both democracy and centralism are transcended, then man is non-alienated.

The stages are, of course, not mutually exclusive but can interpenetrate and mutually reinforce each other. This can be seen in Bhoomi Sena where, for example, organization (of Tarun Mandals) has taken place with different degrees of conscientization, and the latter has continued after the organs have been created, providing an institutionalized forum for conscientization to continue. However, in extreme cases, where Tarun Mandals have been created after mobilization only without any conscientization, a forward momentum to the process has not come easily, and such Tarun Mandals have been seen even to collapse. This indicates that, while a lower and higher stage can coexist and may give a greater forward momentum to the process of development of spontaneity than a strictly one-stage-at-a-time sequence, the premature imposition of a higher stage can be counterproductive.

The effort of Bhoomi Sena is to develop spontaneity into a mobilized, conscious and organized people's power. In the process, Bhoomi Sena is creating its own opposite—countervailing power against Bhoomi Sena itself is being developed as a consciousness and culture and institutionalized in the Tarun Mandals, perhaps eventually to become a federation of Tarun Mandals (see page 53). If this process can indeed continue and mature, Bhoomi Sena may see its own image in the very countervailing power it creates against itself, in which it may thus find its highest fulfilment.

While this trend is visible, opposite tendencies also exist, such as degeneration of cadres (see page 39), negative tendencies inherent in the very expansion of the movement, and the pull of an ideologically adverse environment. In view of these tendencies, the course of Bhoomi Sena's struggle for people's power—notwithstanding the innovative character of its method—remains uncertain. This course will also be determined by the dialectics of the objective conditions in Bhoomi Sena and in the broader reality that encompasses it, to which we now turn.

7 Bhoomi Sena within a Perspective of Social Change

Bhoomi Sena emerging as a countervailing power

The adivasi revolt of 1945–47 destroyed the feudal kingdom of the sawkars. What arose on its ruins was not adivasi power, but the power of a new non-producing sawkar class (traders, moneylenders, contractors, landowners) and a producing rich peasant class (the kunbis). The adivasis were beaten into submission or tranquillized, and remained illiterate, ignorant, half-starved and oppressed by the new dominant power.

Now, three decades later, Bhoomi Sena—using a method and style of mobilization, conscientization and organization (described in the previous chapter), which is in marked contrast to the method of spasmodic arousal and mobilization through topical agitation by

external agents which led to the 1945–47 eruption—has rekindled the flame of adivasi consciousness and kept it burning brightly for a decade. Adivasi power is now becoming a reality in the Junglepatti area.

This emerging power of the adivasis is a countervailing power and not the dominant power.

What is the nature of this countervailing power?

Countervailing power is of two types, each of which is characterized by the nature of its relationship to the dominant power:

1. *Non-antagonistic countervailing power.* The relationship here is a contradictory but not antagonistic one. Such countervailing power can develop simultaneously with the growth of the dominant power. It may seek to reduce exploitation, but within the existing production relations; to check and control the abuse of dominant power; and, at most, to take over and manage more efficiently, and perhaps even more equitably, some of the institutions of the dominant power.
2. *Antagonistic countervailing power.* The relationship is an antagonistic one, and the growth of such a countervailing power necessarily implies a decline of the dominant power. It consciously strives to transform itself into the dominant power.

Is the emerging adivasi power in the Junglepatti area an antagonistic or a non-antagonistic countervailing power? This would depend on the nature of its relationship to the dominant power. The latter, however, is not homogeneous, since there are two exploiter classes with significant contradictions between them. One is the new sawkar class, which is primarily a moneylending, trading and contracting class, and only secondarily and indifferently engaged in production. So far, the sawkars, who constitute a mercantile capitalist class, have maintained their dominance at the taluq and district level. Local bureaucracies and the police are in league with them, and for the adivasis they constitute the government—as the actual state machinery is too remote and unapproachable.

On the other hand, at the village level in the Palghar Junglepatti area, kunbi power is more in evidence. The kunbis are a class of rich (and middle) peasants primarily engaged in agricultural production. They are an emerging agricultural bourgeoisie slowly taking to modern capitalist agriculture. However, due to the constraints on the development of capitalism, they are also being diverted into non-producing activities such as moneylending. With greater state assistance, however, they may attempt a more complete transition to capitalism, and become the dominant power not only in the village but also at higher administrative levels.

Thus the nature of adivasi countervailing power has to be examined in relation to both sawkar power and kunbi power. In relation to sawkar power, it is quite evident that adivasi power is an antagonistic countervailing power. The adivasis are consciously and unequivocally striving to destroy sawkar power, and the growth of their own power over the last seven years has undoubtedly led to a corresponding reduction in that of the sawkars. In relation to kunbi power, however, the adivasi consciousness appears to be somewhat ambivalent. The adivasis often lump the kunbis and the sawkars in the same class category, and tend to identify the destruction of sawkar power with the elimination of kunbi power. There is some objective basis for this identification in so far as the richer kunbis, like the sawkars, are moneylenders and imitate the life-style of the sawkars, and in their struggle for khauti the

adivasis do not differentiate between the sawkars and the moneylending kunbis.

The material basis of kunbi power, however, is different from that of sawkar power: it is the emerging capitalist relations of production in agriculture. All the activities hitherto undertaken by Bhoomi Sena—the struggle for land, khauti, minimum wages and employment, abolition of bonded labour, etc.—are not in any way incompatible with, but are rather within the framework of, capitalist relations of production. In fact, some of these activities may even help to speed up the movement towards capitalism in the area, by compelling the more enterprising kunbis to modernize agricultural production so as to be able to pay the higher wages demanded. Whether the objective conditions, both internal and external, are conducive to the development of agricultural capitalism in the area is another matter (discussed subsequently). If they are, the present activities of Bhoomi Sena could well promote rather than hinder that process.

In this perspective, while adivasi power is unambiguously an antagonistic countervailing power in relation to the declining sawkar power, it has at present the characteristic of a non-antagonistic countervailing power in relation to the growing kunbi power.

Breaking the pre-capitalist mould

Under what conditions could adivasi countervailing power become antagonistic in relation to kunbi power, and eventually transform itself into the dominant power of the area? This question raises many issues which take us outside the Bhoomi Sena range of experience. It requires an understanding of Bhoomi Sena within a perspective of social change.

In the Bhoomi Sena area of activities, we are dealing with a pre-capitalist society. By this, we mean a society in which not only are the productive forces predominantly pre-capitalist, but accumulation has also not become a self-reproducing and self-expanding process. Pre-capitalist societies, as a result of their own evolution and through their contact with more advanced societies, may contain some typically capitalist or socialist features in their superstructure, and may even have developed the wage-labour form of exploitation and forms of social ownership in certain areas of the economy, yet they remain essentially pre-capitalist in the sense in which we are using the term.

Historical experience shows that it is possible for two inter-related social classes to emerge from within a pre-capitalist society, which are capable of further developing the productive forces under new and higher relations of production. These classes are the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The vanguard of each of these classes has shown a capacity to initiate and organize a social movement impregnated with the new class consciousness, mobilize allies under its hegemony and carry out a sustained struggle to transform itself from a countervailing to the dominant power. These social revolutions are characterized as either bourgeois or proletarian, according to which of the two classes provided the leadership and the consciousness, and the ensuing new society as capitalist or socialist respectively.

According to this understanding of historical experience, socialism is not a form of society that lies 'beyond' capitalism, but is, for pre-capitalist societies, a historical alternative to capitalism. Capitalism and socialism are contemporaneous social systems which oppose each other, but also interpenetrate each other.

In both, the drive to accumulate provides the impulse for the development of the productive forces.

Pre-capitalist societies have existed and continue to exist in a variety of forms. Some of these societies have made the transition either to capitalism or to socialism, others may do so, but still others appear to be far from this transition in their present state. Since, in pre-capitalist social formations, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat are numerically small, the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie play a vital role in the transformation of these societies, whether through the bourgeois or the proletarian revolutions. However, where the petty bourgeoisie attempts the transformation on its own, independent of and in opposition to both the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, no real transformation takes place, and pre-capitalism continues to exist either in the form of simple commodity production or some form of 'state capitalism'.

There is no unique path of transition either from pre-capitalism to capitalism or from pre-capitalism to socialism. Neither is there any determinism about the direction in which a pre-capitalist society would move, or even whether it would move at all. The 'determinism' exists, if at all, in the objective necessity that if a pre-capitalist society does move to a higher level of social development, it can under present conditions only move to a stage which will develop the productive forces through a process of self-reproducing and self-expanding accumulation.

Pathways of transition: unity of ends and means

Capitalist and socialist societies exist in a variety of forms. The particular transitional path from pre-capitalism will largely condition the character of the resulting capitalist or socialist society, in the same sense that ends and means constitute a dialectical unity. Within the capitalist and socialist groupings, the differentiation of forms will depend partly on differences at the level of the base (forces and relations of production) and partly on superstructural variations, particularly in the precise character of state power, the extent and nature of countervailing power, the level of social consciousness, the degree of self-management and the vitality of community organizations. Unless the richness and variety of the differences possible within any given mode of production are recognized, the considerable scope for conscious intervention in the process of social change will not be fully grasped, and a more or less deterministic attitude to it may prevail. In this regard, actual and possible variants of capitalism and socialism arising out of differences in the relationship between centre and periphery, and more specifically the urban-rural contradictions, are of particular significance to us.

The contemporary history of imperialism shows that continued accumulation and realization of surplus value at the centre cannot permanently be based on pure exploitation and coercion at the periphery. That this is true even in the case of an individual country is borne out by the recent experience of South Korea. Imperialism was mainly instrumental in lifting South Korea out of pre-capitalism into capitalism. This particular path of transition determined tha initial export-oriented phase of South Korean capitalism, and the mainly exploitative and coercive relationship between the centre and periphery in the country. The remarkable growth rates achieved by the South Korean economy, together with the increasing trend towards protectionism in the United States and Europe, threatened to disrupt the cycle of expanded

accumulation and realization of surplus value. The South Korean bourgeoisie is responding to this situation by turning inwards and attempting to deepen its internal market in the rural areas. The method used, so far, has not been the classical one of developing agrarian capitalism based on wage-labour, partly because of an awareness of the social and political consequences if the urban sector proved incapable of absorbing the rural poor who would have been uprooted in such a process. In fact, in 1970, the Government initiated the Saemaul Undong or New Community Movement[15] as an attempt to stem the migration from rural to urban areas. It is also possible that the bourgeoisie was deterred from the course of agrarian capitalism by an awareness of their incapacity to provide the immense infrastructural investment that would be needed to make the countryside ripe for it. Whatever the reason may be, the main thrust in the rural areas comes from the Saemaul Undong, which has become a nationwide rural development movement based on 'the spirit of diligence, self-help and cooperation'. As a result of the activities generated by this movement, rural surplus labour is being transformed into capital and a physical and social infrastructure is being developed at a fraction of the cost that would have had to be incurred if the bourgeoisie had to bear this burden themselves. Moreover, the internal market which the South Korean bourgeoisie so badly need is being simultaneously created as a result of the rising living standards in the rural areas. It is significant that the interpenetration of capitalism and socialism as contemporary and parallel social systems permits some elements of the ideology, organizational forms and rhetoric of socialism to be used to serve the needs of the bourgeoisie.

However, this process generates its own contradictions. How long can the relative egalitarianism generated by a ceiling on land-ownership, without which a movement such as the Saemaul Undong cannot be sustained, last in the face of a growing income differentiation which is bound to result from a development process based on individual ownership? What is the strength of the countervailing power against the pressure of an embryonic rural bourgeoisie to do away with the ceiling on land-ownership and begin in earnest the development of capitalist agriculture, now that much of the initial infrastructure needed for it is substantially in place? This emerging contradiction in the rural areas will have to be resolved one way or another: either by opening the flood gates to capitalism in the countryside or by the Saemaul Undong developing the rural productive forces on the basis of collectivist relations of production. Which of these two tendencies will become dominant depends not only on the social consciousness of the Saemaul Undong movement, but also on the attitude of the urban bourgeoisie. This attitude, in turn, will largely depend on their judgement as to who can most rapidly develop the internal market for them, and on their willingness or otherwise to face the social and political consequences of a disruption of rural egalitarianism and the intensification of class struggle to which the growth of agrarian capitalism will lead.

Options for the Indian bourgeoisie

The question of developing the rural productive forces and deepening the internal market for capitalism has become a central one for the Indian bourgeoisie too. Unlike the South Koreans, they have not yet been able to establish and sustain an expanding cycle of accumulation and realization of surplus value.

In this sense India is still not a capitalist country, but one moving towards it with a greater sense of direction and speed than most other Third World countries today. However, it still remains a country with oases of capitalism in a pre-capitalist desert. The piling up of enormous foreign exchange reserves, the huge grain surpluses, and the significant under-utilization of existing industrial productive capacity and technological and scientific manpower are all manifestations of the relatively narrow internal market. In view of the size of the country, the current international economic situation, the vast foreign exchange reserves and the limited capacity to absorb imports, it is doubtful whether the drive for foreign markets alone could substantially ease the realization problem of the Indian bourgeoisie. Hence, the development of the rural productive forces, and with it the internal market, appears to be the essential precondition for freeing India from the trap of pre-capitalist stagnation.

Which class can perform this task? In this regard, the Indian bourgeoisie have some options open to them.

The first is to rely on the petty bourgeoisie. However, the weak and paternalistic efforts of urban petty bourgeois élites to live and 'integrate' with the rural poor, and lift them up through education, organization and the provision of technical expertise, have proved ineffectual. On the other hand, South Korea has demonstrated that the rural petty bourgeoisie, which is a producing class of middle peasants, can be organized and motivated through a suitable rhetoric to perform this tasks, at least in the initial stages. But an Indian 'Saemaul Undong' is a little difficult to visualize, if only because of the absence of egalitarianism in the Indian countryside due to the wide disparity in land-ownership and the sharp class and caste differentiation which exists there; under such conditions of increasing polarization, the rural petty bourgeoisie is a disintegrating class.

A second option is to rely on the emerging rural bourgeoisie to develop an agrarian capitalism. This raises problems somewhat similar to those confronting the South Korean bourgeoisie. The rural bourgeoisie is still a relatively weak class, and it is very doubtful whether they on their own can perform the massive task of the capitalist transformation of rural India. Even if they were to do so, it would need a tremendous transfer of resources from the urban to the rural areas merely to build the physical and social infrastructure necessary for capitalist growth. Will the urban bourgeoisie be willing to permit such a substantial flow of surplus to the rural areas, continuing over a number of years? What is the capacity of the urban industrial sector to absorb the millions of rural poor who would be uprooted in the process of the development of agrarian capitalism? What about the social and political consequences of increasing the polarization and intensifying the class contradictions in the rural areas? There is a further question of whether the bourgeoisie could transcend the barrier of a diffused 'countervailing consciousness' arising out of a populist rhetoric, which India shares with many other state capitalist countries and which militates against openly adopting a path of increased polarization. These are questions that the Indian bourgeoisie may well ponder before they decide to take the second option.

A third option is to depend on a tacit alliance between the two emerging rural classes capable of developing the productive forces, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, to provide the material preconditions for the development of rural capitalism. This may appear paradoxical, but the experience of Kerala and recent trends

in West Bengal indicate that it is a real option available to the Indian bourgeoisie. An efficient, 'communist' management of capitalism, utilizing the full power of socialist invocation to mobilize the proletariat and peasantry to develop the productive forces under *capitalist* relations of production, with a minimum of cost to the bourgeoisie, is an interesting social experiment with great significance for the understanding of social change.

There may, possibly, be a fourth option. A class-conscious, rural proletariat may begin in certain areas to develop the productive forces under *collectivist* relations of production. Depending on the strength of the countervailing power of such an organized rural proletariat, and on the relationship of class forces within and outside the area, the bourgeoisie may not only be unable to contain such a movement, but may even come to accept it as the only realistic way of developing the productive forces and the internal market for them in such areas. In such an eventuality, the Indian bourgeoisie would be making a historic choice between the development of a rural capitalism, which would bleed it economically but strengthen it politically, and the development of a rural collectivism, which would be painless economically, but agonizing politically.

Whither Bhoomi Sena?

It is within this perspective of social change that we attempt to obtain a glimpse of the future possibilities of Bhoomi Sena. Junglepatti and its surroundings is a pre-capitalist area dominated by a mercantile bourgeois class (sawkars), which to all intents and purposes constitutes the 'power' there. Their principal mode of exploitation is through interest and commercial profit, and only secondarily through the surplus extracted from wage-labour. While a middle peasant class engaged in petty commodity production is widespread throughout the area, its disintegration has already commenced, and the tendency towards agrarian capitalism is already manifest. The two classes which have emerged as a result of this tendency are the rich peasant class (kunbis), whose principal mode of exploitation is through the surplus extracted from wage-labour and only secondarily through interest, and the proletariat consisting of the landless and land-poor peasant labourers.

The future of this area will depend not only on the internal class relationships and struggles, but also on the relationship of this peripheral area to the capitalist centre. As mentioned earlier, a deepening of the internal market through the development of the rural productive forces has now become a matter of prime concern to the Indian bourgeoisie. It is this concern that will largely influence the relationship between the centre and the periphery.

The principal question, therefore, is: which class can develop the productive forces in the Junglepatti area, and under what conditions? The sawkar class is totally incapable of doing this; on the contrary, the development of productive forces requires the elimination of the political, economic and cultural dominance of this pre-capitalist exploiting class of non-producers. In Junglepatti there are only two classes capable of playing this role: the rich peasant class consisting mainly of kunbis and the proletariat consisting mainly of adivasis. The kunbis, at present, are a weak and vacillating class with one foot in capitalism and the other in pre-capitalism. The utilization of their surplus is divided between capitalist accumulation, conspicuous consumption and pre-capitalist forms of investment. They are only very slowly and painfully modernizing and intensifying agricultural production. Although

they are a class for others, they are still not fully conscious of being a class for themselves. They will need a tremendous push from outside if they are to emerge as a full-fledged rural capitalist class. The Indian bourgeoisie will have to divert considerable resources to this area to make capitalists out of the kunbis. The building of the physical and social infrastructure necessary for capitalism in this 'primitive' tribal area will tax the bourgeoisie heavily. It is not a path that they will take lightly.

The other producer class capable of developing the productive forces in this area is the proletariat. This class is organizing itself through the Bhoomi Sena movement, and emerging as a countervailing power in the Junglepatti area. It is taking the lead in the struggle to destroy pre-capitalism and has achieved a significant measure of success. As a result, it is creating the political and economic space necessary for the development of the productive forces under new and higher relations of production. But this space today is largely an unfilled vacuum, even though the kunbis have crept into a little bit of it and sown the seeds of capitalist relations of production. Bhoomi Sena, so far, has done very little with regard to the utilization of this space for the development of productive forces, and the productive activities which have been initiated by the Tarun Mandals so far are mainly within the framework of capitalist production relations. At present, though the Bhoomi Sena method and style of work is fundamentally different to that of the Left parties and their trade union movements, in terms of the content of its activities Bhoomi Sena still remains essentially within the traditional mould. But its unique method and style could provide it with an opportunity to break out of this mould and chart an equally unique path for itself. This path is not merely one of mobilizing and raising the consciousness of people through political and economic struggles. It is one of fully utilizing the space created through these struggles to develop the productive forces, not under capitalist but under new *collectivist* relations of production, thereby sowing the seeds of a new social order and emerging as a countervailing power antagonistic to kunbi power, with the full consciousness of becoming the dominant power in the area.

The objective conditions for such a transition from pre-capitalism do not appear to be unfavourable. Firstly, although Bhoomi Sena has not yet taken this path, the sharpening of the contradictions arising out of the slow growth of capitalism and the rapid development of Bhoomi Sena power and class consciousness among the adivasis may make this path appear the most obvious and natural one to take. If that were to happen, the infrastructure that has already been laid in terms of mobilization and organization could facilitate and speed up the movement towards collectivist relations of production.

Secondly, 'state capitalism' in India—through land reform, state marketing networks, processing facilities, nationalized financial institutions, etc.—has provided some economic space for the development of rural productive forces. That this space still remains largely unutilized in the area is a further commentary on the weakness of the kunbi class, which has been unable to fill it by developing the productive forces under capitalist relations of production. However, at present, this space is neutral with respect to the specific character of the relations of production, and there seems to be no barrier at all to Bhoomi Sena utilizing this space to develop productive forces under collectivist relations

of production. An illustration of this is the state milk-collecting centre in the area, which today is inoperative because there is no milk to collect. On the other hand, the adivasi labourers are cutting grass for contractors who sell it to dairies outside the area. It would be very difficult to eliminate the contractor, because the private grass-marketing chain is a very tight one. However, the adivasis could bypass this entire private marketing network, and engage in collective milk production which could be fed into the Bombay market through the state milk-collecting centre.

As in the case of the Indian bourgeoisie, the options before Bhoomi Sena are more than one. What actually will happen remains unpredictable, not only because the preferred option of the bourgeoisie is unknown but also because the method of Bhoomi Sena, if the past is any guide, is to advance through learning derived from spontaneous ground-level initiatives rather than on the basis of a centrally conceived grand design.

Notes

1. Symington, D., *Report on the Aboriginal and Hill Tribes*, Government of Bombay, Bombay, 1939, p.1.
2. Parulekar, Godavari, *The Adivasis' Revolt*, National Book Agency, Calcutta, 1975, p.1.
3. Symington, D., *Report on the Aboriginal and Hill Tribes*, Government of Bombay, Bombay, 1939, p.1.
4. Ibid., p.47.
5. Ibid., p.48.
6. Ibid., p.29.
7. Quoted in Parulekar, Godavari, op.cit., pp.1–2.
8. Symington, D., op.cit., p.34.
9. Ibid., p.50.
10. Ibid., p.36.
11. Ibid., p.49.
12. Parulekar, Godavari, op.cit., pp.37–40.
13. Ibid., p.3.
14. Ibid., pp.139–40.
15. See 'Towards a Theory of Rural Development', *Development Dialogue*, 1977:2, pp.133–37.

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Can Sweden Be Shrunk?

By Nordal Åkerman

In this study, which comprehensively analyzes and summarizes the main social, economic and political developments in Sweden after the Second World War and discusses the prospects for Another Development in Sweden in the 'eighties and beyond, Nordal Åkerman raises some of the fundamental questions facing a small, 'progressive', industrialized country of the North. Taking as his point of departure the feeling experienced by many of his countrymen that Sweden is today a country in crisis, Åkerman asks whether Sweden can be 'shrunk', whether it can scrap its economic big power dream, and whether it has got the courage to admit that certain formulae that worked until recently cannot be used any more?

'Sweden was for a long time', Åkerman writes, 'a kind of model country where the mixed economy had a steady success as nowhere else. Its stance on international questions was unusual for a country of its size and gave hope to the Third World and to liberation movements. Suddenly Sweden has become distinctly smaller. While still progressive on many international issues, it has on a number of decisive matters readjusted to the conventional role played by the little country. The membership of the Inter-American Development Bank will do as an example. It has become smaller in another way, too. The kind of development of the industrialized state, with the frantic groping for growth, literally at any cost, which Social Democrats especially have chosen for the country, is no longer what reformist socialists are striving at. Rather, Sweden is nowadays something of a warning example. Less developed countries can, by studying its recent experiences, hope to avoid at least some of its pitfalls.'

However, what Åkerman is discussing in the article is not how Sweden is involuntarily getting smaller, but rather how Sweden can redefine its development objectives and find a new role for itself. 'If Sweden aims at recapturing its role as a model country, it will have to face a series of agonizing reappraisals. Only by voluntarily *getting smaller can Sweden become great again.'*

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post-war era. In the early 'seventies, he edited fifteen books in a series called 'The New Society', dealing with problems of integrity, democracy, bureaucracy and other social and political issues. Prior to that, he edited and published for three years a Swedish monthly magazine, Konkret. *Among his other publications are interview books—the latest one an interview with Olof Palme—and three books on the United States. He has also worked extensively for the Swedish radio and television. This study was undertaken with the support of the International Foundation for Development Alternatives at Nyon, Switzerland, and forms part of its 'Third System' Project.*

1 Background

Sweden is today a country in crisis. The basis for this claim is tangible enough, but it is also a question of psychology and the will to head in another direction. To the consternation of Swedes and the undisguised glee of many others, Sweden's long era in the sun seems to be over. The most important flagships among industries producing for export (iron ore, special steels, pulp, etc.) are no longer yielding the safe income on which the highest standard of living in the world (when counted as the even spread of goods, services, amenities and disposable income) could be based.

Unemployment is above 2 per cent, which is still one of the lowest in Western Europe, but high by Swedish standards. Without heavy contributions made by government agencies this figure would be three times as high. Some 300,000 people, out of a working force of four million, are retired on sick pensions or as early retirees. And in the northern parts of the country especially, people are bluntly told to go where the work is—in spite of a growing awareness of what this spells to both the yielding regions and the receiving ones.

Investments in the private sector have decreased by 30 per cent over the last three years and are higher in Swedish-owned enterprises abroad than in Sweden. To muddle through to hopefully better times, the two bourgeois governments that have been in power since the 1976 election have been forced to an unprecedented series of nationalizations of main industries. Shipbuilders, steelmakers and textile producers have all moved into the (still rather small) family of State-owned industries. Though the pace is quicker and the moneys bigger, this policy is a natural continuation of the responsibility taken by earlier Social Democratic governments. Nevertheless, it shows an increasing dependence on the State, irrespective of ideology.

By now, it is more than obvious that there are no sure answers to the problems that stagflation presents. Swedes had become secure in their belief that expansion of the public sector could make the wheels spin again in times of recession. Without knowing it, they were Keynesians to the core. Today they sense that the future will contain ever-recurring crises

and that the Keynesian formula is not as applicable any more. This is in marked contrast to politicians, who refuse to acknowledge the new situation and stubbornly avoid the main task of a leadership, i.e. to lead. With really very little hope, the political parties cling to old formulas in the belief that these, somehow, will put the country back on the track of unproblematic growth. Most hints about alternative production are treated as silly romanticism.

Yet, it has been clear for almost a decade that the priorities of the general public have changed considerably compared with earlier periods. A secure job still leads the list, even more so during a recession like the present one. The fact that nowadays growth and a more up-beat economy do not necessarily mean more jobs could make this point so strong as to exclude others, when it should stress the need for a new orientation. However, after this first priority, non-material needs have become more important than a further raising of the standard of living. Emphasis is now placed on such matters as less dangerous working environments, more varied housing areas, more rewarding leisure activities, culture, and so forth.

This general impression is borne out by opinion surveys made during the last five years. In 1974, 81 per cent were already of the opinion that the standard of living and energy consumption should not be raised further. Three years later, only 1 per cent of the public held that the standard was too low, while 60 per cent thought it to be too high. Specifically asked about their own standard, a mere 8 per cent maintained that it should be higher—70 per cent were content with it as it was. Viewed from the aspect of the present crisis, these figures indicate that Swedes in general would be interested, perhaps even eager, to accept a change in the kind of development pursued by their country, if only politicians would take the initiative.

Why is this so?

First, it is natural to extrapolate and thus to assume that crises are here to stay and that we had better behave accordingly.

Second, most people are aware of the costs of growth in its present form. They watch the rising rates for crime, drunkenness and drug addiction. Perhaps they do not know that the cases of reported vandalism are up from 5,000 a year in 1950 to 62,000 today and that Sweden has a much higher crime rate counted per capita than other Scandinavian countries, but they are sure to see the effects and to feel generally uncomfortable when walking city streets at night. They may not be aware that 40 per cent of all known law offenders are between 11 and 20 years old, but they realize that to some extent a whole generation is wasted. They notice how the pace of production in industry is stepped up, with the result that an increasing number of people are thrown out of the system, unable to sustain the pace. More and more, the society appears as complex, bureaucratic, meddling and downright unfathomable. The standard assurances that a renewed high growth rate will take care of everything no longer sound credible. As a conventionally raised standard can only be paid for by an even more one-sided concentration on efficiency and profitability, a larger number of people will need the care that was insufficient beforehand. Where then is the gain?

Third, the standard we have already created presents a constantly increasing bill. In its turn, this causes a fast-growing indebtedness (at present, close to 180,000 million Sw.kr.), which does not mean so much in itself as most of the money is borrowed within the country,

but the interest rates have already become a serious burden on the budget. It is, however, exceedingly difficult to point out social reforms which should not have been carried through. Who can dispute the needs of the old, the very young, the sick, the handicapped, the parents? True, we have also borrowed to be able to raise private consumption, but the problem is not caused by voluntary actions alone. Demographic trends show an increasing number of very old people who need a type of care that costs more all the time. No sensible answer has yet been found to the question of where the money should be taken from to meet rising welfare costs.

Fourth, morale and the very fabric of society seem on the verge of collapse. People who would not have thought about it only a few years ago enter into all kinds of tax frauds. Repair work, when carried out by independent service people, is normally paid for without a receipt and thus at a lower rate. A new gentry within State and commune bureaucracies allots itself exorbitant pensions after only a few years' work. At the same time, the ordinary employee, living with his family in an apartment, having few deductions—if any—from his taxes, is caught by high inflation and rising rents. Often he is paying higher taxes, relatively or even absolutely, than the self-employed and others who can afford to make capital investments and build a fortune.

Fifth, politicians have evaded sensitive issues and traded in half-lies so often that they lack credibility. Examples are rows over the number of nuclear reactors that Sweden will have, the role and tasks of Swedish intelligence, the weapons trade with countries that clearly do not fit in with adopted principles for this kind of trade, and so on.

Sixth, energy worries have spurred an interest in saving as such. To most, there is something obviously wrong with the assertion made by politicians that we will have to spend our way into good times again. The gut feelings of the public do not harmonize with the sophisticated liberal model for the economy. Also, there is a puritan streak in the Swedish character which has not been tapped. Quite possibly, a political party could capture the opinion if it helped this tendency to come out in a sensible and realistic way. On the other hand, should feelings like this become suppressed in the future, too, they could foster reactionary sentiments.

When asked if they thought that energy consumption should be lowered even if this meant that their standard of living had to go down, 70 per cent of a representative segment of the Swedish audience answered in the affirmative. According to a survey made by the American sociologist Yankelovich, in Sweden it is those with lesser rather than higher incomes who are the more willing to accept a limit to increases in the standard of living. In the USA and West Germany, also covered by the Yankelovich study, it is the other way round.

Seventh, the energy crisis of 1973, or what appeared as such, caused a slow realization on the part of the public that Sweden is an extremely vulnerable society. With a dependence on oil for heating and electricity as high as 70 per cent, this is hardly surprising. In addition, the technological level attained means that even a trivial mishap can cause standstills, if not chaos. The highly computerized routines, such as wages and welfare cheques, are a matter in point. The country is also vulnerable socially and psychologically: with less contact between people we are more dependent on the uninterrupted stream of goods, services and impulses. It would probably take only a short suspension in the supply of electricity to bring Sweden to its knees.

During the post-war period, central policies have been carried out as if they had nothing to do with each other. For example, a strong defence has been very important to the four major parties. Sweden thus has the fifth strongest defence in the world, when appropriations are counted per capita, and one of the very strongest air forces in absolute numbers. Yet, nuclear reactors have been built on open land instead of in rock caves, thereby becoming extremely vulnerable to airborne attacks. A very high number of railway lines have been discarded, thus making troop transports harder and the civilian population in many areas totally dependent on private cars. Food production has been organized in a way that makes cities dependent on instant supply from areas hundreds of miles away.

Eighth, idealism has its points, too. First in the world to reach the goal of 1 per cent of GNP used for international development, Sweden has until lately had a reasonably consistent policy concerning the Third World, and this policy is firmly backed by the population. Even during the present economic crisis the opinion in favour of unabridged aid has stood up well. With the possible exception of people under 30 years of age, who all their lives have been conditioned to high consumption and thus take a little longer to make the shift, most Swedes now and then feel nauseated by the meaningless spending. They often get mad at what they regard as rip-offs and a consumption pattern which they feel, justfiably, is forced upon them. More and more are disturbed by the glaring contradictions between certain phenomena that underpin the present kind of development within their own country and the progressive stance taken by the Government in questions relating to development in the Third World. There is a self-evident truth in the words pronounced by Gunnar Myrdal:

> The notion that the developing countries can be industrialized without far-going changes in the consumption patterns of the rich nations is a humbug.

In fact, it seems probable that the Swedish opinion would strongly agree with the following passage from the Cocoyoc declaration:

> The world is today not only faced with the anomaly of underdevelopment. We may also talk about overconsumptive types of development that violate the inner limits of man and the outer limits of nature. Seen in this perspective, we are all in need of a redefinition of our goals, of new development strategies, of new life styles, including more modest patterns of consumption among the rich. Even though the first priority goes to securing the minima we shall be looking for those development strategies that also may help the affluent countries, in their enlightened self-interest, in finding more human patterns of life, less exploitative of nature, of others, of oneself.

Now, if the Swedish audience agrees with this, why is it not manifested in political actions? It could be said that it has been: the outcome of the 1976 election was, so the opinion surveys tell us, decided on the margin by the question of nuclear energy. The reaction against this kind of energy had less to do with anxieties over radiation effects and reactor accidents than with the kind of society that nuclear energy symbolizes and fosters.

Otherwise, the answer to this crucial question of why people do not take action is, of course, that people in general are not equivalent to the electorate, that what we ask for as individuals is not the same as what we opt for as voters. This notion goes back to a distinction between private and public morals made in Gunnar Myrdal's *An American Dilemma*. It

also has some connection with Fred Hirsch's image of the positional economy, where some of the ambitions of the individual presuppose that they are fulfilled for only a few.

The idea that people in their public behaviour transcend their selfish interests or, rather, seek a less materialistic and less immediate satisfaction of private aspirations, puts the main responsibility on the politicians. It is up to them to take the initiative whereby people get their chance to work politically in a direction that corresponds better with their true feelings. If the politicians fail in this respect, the relationship between them and their voters will be wrought with tensions, and this is indeed what pollsters have found in Sweden today.

It could of course be argued that what has been said here is a typical Swedish reaction to a problem: 'Let the politicians take the lead! Don't start anything on your own.' Today, some initiatives have been taken by individuals and by groups, as will be shown below. But to make the whole of a society shift in another direction, which is what is being discussed here, must in a nation like Sweden be pursued at the political level.

The general debate in the mass media often makes the assumption that society could be changed radically if only there was a political will to do so. No doubt, these often diffuse sentiments are to a certain extent based upon a wishful longing for a simpler society and could, if worst came to worst, lead to a strong movement of discontent of the kind that Denmark is still experiencing. Quite a few people tend to see the ecologically sound, well-balanced and more humane society as one which would demand less from its inhabitants, when the meaning of it should be just the opposite. It will certainly take a concerted effort to start the process which will show people that it is possible to redirect development and that they themselves have some importance in this work. Considering how many times the trust has been betrayed, this is no mean task.

Can Sweden be shrunk? Can it scrap its economic big power dreams and head for a model that is closer to the ambitions of virtually every Swede? Has it got the strength to admit that certain formulae that worked so well until recently cannot be used any more?

Sweden was for a long time a kind of model country, where the mixed economy had a steady success as nowhere else. Its stance on international questions was unusual for a country of its size and gave hope to the Third World and to liberation movements. Suddenly, Sweden has become distinctly smaller. While still progressive on many international issues, it has on a number of decisive matters readjusted to the conventional role played by the little country. The membership of the Interamerican Development Bank will do as an example.

It has become smaller in another way, too. The kind of development of the industrialized state—with the frantic groping for growth, literally at any cost—which Social Democrats especially have chosen for the country is no longer what reformist socialists in other countries are striving at. Rather, Sweden is nowadays something of a warning example. Less developed countries can, by studying its recent experiences, hope to avoid at least some of its pitfalls.

However, what I want to discuss here is not this process of involuntarily getting smaller. My aim is another kind of atmosphere in which the goal is not to make the same thing as everyone else, but something better. It is the goal of trying out a new model again. If Sweden aims to recapture its role as a model country, it will have to face a series of agoniz-

ing reappraisals. Only by *voluntarily* getting smaller can Sweden become great again. If, as I believe, the general public is ready for a change, what is the outlook for a different posture among the various élites?

A note on this study

Reversing Sartre's well-known dictum, it could be said that in the political context essence may precede existence. Some models of the future clearly already have an attraction in theory and are sometimes able to sway the opinion. But to make the small-scale, decentralized and participatory society probable, one has to start somewhere. Possibly major changes in a few areas, such as care and health services, would be enough to get the ball rolling.

Below, a few central areas have been treated in some detail to show the advantages and the obstacles that existing conditions present to the reformist. Also, to test the willingness and preparedness for change among the élite, some 30 centrally placed decision-makers and experts within politics and industry have been interviewed. It can be stated right away that the result of this round of rather informal talks was shattering, revealing a pessimism and even a refusal to contemplate alternative paths of development that is almost incredible. Ten years ago I published an interview book with the same kind of people (and in a few cases actually the same people) and thus have some material for comparisons.

From the outset, the plan was to carry out a Delphi study, which in this case would have meant that those interviewed would be confronted with an aggregate of their views and a simple model for change in a number of areas. This latter part has instead been substituted within a group of experts and high-level politicians in the city of Örebro, which from many aspects reflects the problems of all Sweden. Here, the proposals made in this paper were tested on the theoretical level in order to get a measure of the possibilities offered by the kind of approach suggested.

Generally speaking, the time for this enquiry is not altogether right. Rather little down-to-earth thinking has been devoted to what kind of future we should choose. The debate has only recently started and, though there are several good studies on specific issues by individuals, it is hard to find an equivalent of the precise, hardnosed planning for an alternative production like the often-mentioned but rarely studied Lucas plan (though AGAP, a plan for the Gothenburg shipbuilders, is something of an exception).

Now, the space between the merely trivial and suggestions which most politicians reject out of hand is, indeed, very small. When Bäckstrand and Ingelstam presented five proposals on how to decrease private consumption in certain fields (*How much is enough?*), these were met with vehement reactions on the editorial pages throughout the country. The ideas submitted contained proposals that private ownership of cars should be replaced by car-pools and that meat should be rationed. This was felt to be way out of line with normal Swedish politics. Perhaps the reaction would have been somewhat less strong had the commentators read the whole study rather than a short abstract. Nevertheless, it goes to prove that individuals cannot successfully propose such radical changes in a country where politicians normally are affected only by suggestions coming from organizations and the like.

On the other hand, a detailed discussion of various items in the programmes of the political parties has very little to yield on the ques-

tion of how to shape an alternative to policies of today. Therefore, it is necessary to try to find some middle ground where a few central themes can be discussed, which are modest enough to have a chance of getting accepted, but which still constitute a definite change.

2 Some Obstacles to Change

Economic obstacles

Even a short look at current tendencies in the Swedish economy shows that the development is not very conducive to a major change in the present model. First of all, the process of concentration within industry is proceeding at a steady pace. When the ten-year period between 1963 and 1973 is studied, it is clear that those companies in which the 19 largest owner-groups kept dominant interests increased their number of employees by one-third and went from 14 to 21 per cent in their share of the total number of industrially employed.

Production for export is strongly concentrated, too. The nine largest export companies share one-third of the export and the 22 largest half of it. This means that the number of milch cows is fairly limited. A prerequisite for change would be to increase the number, spread the export over a wider range of articles, and strengthen the sales organization. To achieve this, small and semi-large industries would have to get a considerably larger share of subsidies and active interest from the State. A weak spot like marketing would have to be remedied by an organization which, with the help of government agencies abroad, could give this type of industry the advantages now enjoyed by big companies. But, it should be noted, the effect of a broader thrust is somewhat ambiguous. Vulnerability to technological change and to slack periods for certain products would probably be diminished, while dependence on export—for the State and for the individual company—would possibly be even greater.

This is really the heart of the matter. For it seems likely that not only are obvious things like transportation and consumption patterns affected by the way we deal with the rest of the world but also indirectly—in architecture and the style of interior decorating, for example—trends are eventually decided by the volume of trade, with whom we trade and with what. If it is neither possible nor likely that dependence on exports could be altered or diminished, then the chances of change become much smaller. Besides the necessity of adjusting to development in the world market and the countries with which we trade the most (which has considerable trickle-down effects in the whole economy and elsewhere), there is the question of whether one would be *allowed* to change. The trading agreement which Sweden has with the EEC has already meant that Swedish companies are put under control from abroad and sometimes threatened with reprisals if they do not fall into line. Many observers claim that integration with this market (which has half of Swedish exports and imports) has gone so far as soon to make full membership a mere formality.

Another aspect of this is whether we really are aiming at a greater degree of independence. While there are some protectionist

sentiments in the general opinion, no doubt mainly caused by low-price imports from newly industrialized countries (NICs), most experts and decision-makers in my series of interviews showed very little interest in attempts to shrink or redirect Swedish trade. Possibly this reflects a steadfast conviction that Sweden could not withdraw by degrees even if it wanted to, but some also voiced the fear that cultural contacts and impulses would diminish together with the trade. To others this held a clear attraction as Swedish culture is often viewed as heavily dominated by imported ideas and styles.

There is, of course, a very concrete background to the position that Swedish trade will continue to be of vital importance to the economy of the country. Over the last ten years, the share of GNP taken up by exports has risen from 22 to 33 per cent, while the commodity exports' share of industrial output grew from 27 to 40 per cent. This trend is supported by imports: during the period 1965–75, imports of industrial goods increased faster than production within industry.

When one looks back over the period from the end of World War II up to now, Sweden's dependence in all economic fields is striking. Large and small companies had to comply with the embargo policy instituted by the US against Communist countries in the late 'forties and the early 'fifties. Swedish trade came to be firmly set in the pattern decided by the US and its allies in Europe. Lately, by entering IDB and IEA, we have once again shown where our priorities lie. Only once has there been a general discussion on the direction of our trade and commerce. In the 'sixties, there ensued a huge debate on whether Sweden should join the Common Market as an associate member or not. The opposition to membership, led by the Social Democratic government, stressed the risks to independence and relations with the Third World that membership would entail. But when the line of free trade agreement was established as formal policy, the public was never told what effects an agreement of this kind would have. Today it seems as if the supporters of closer bonds with the EEC have cause to be very pleased with the way things are, even though they strive to make the bonds closer still.

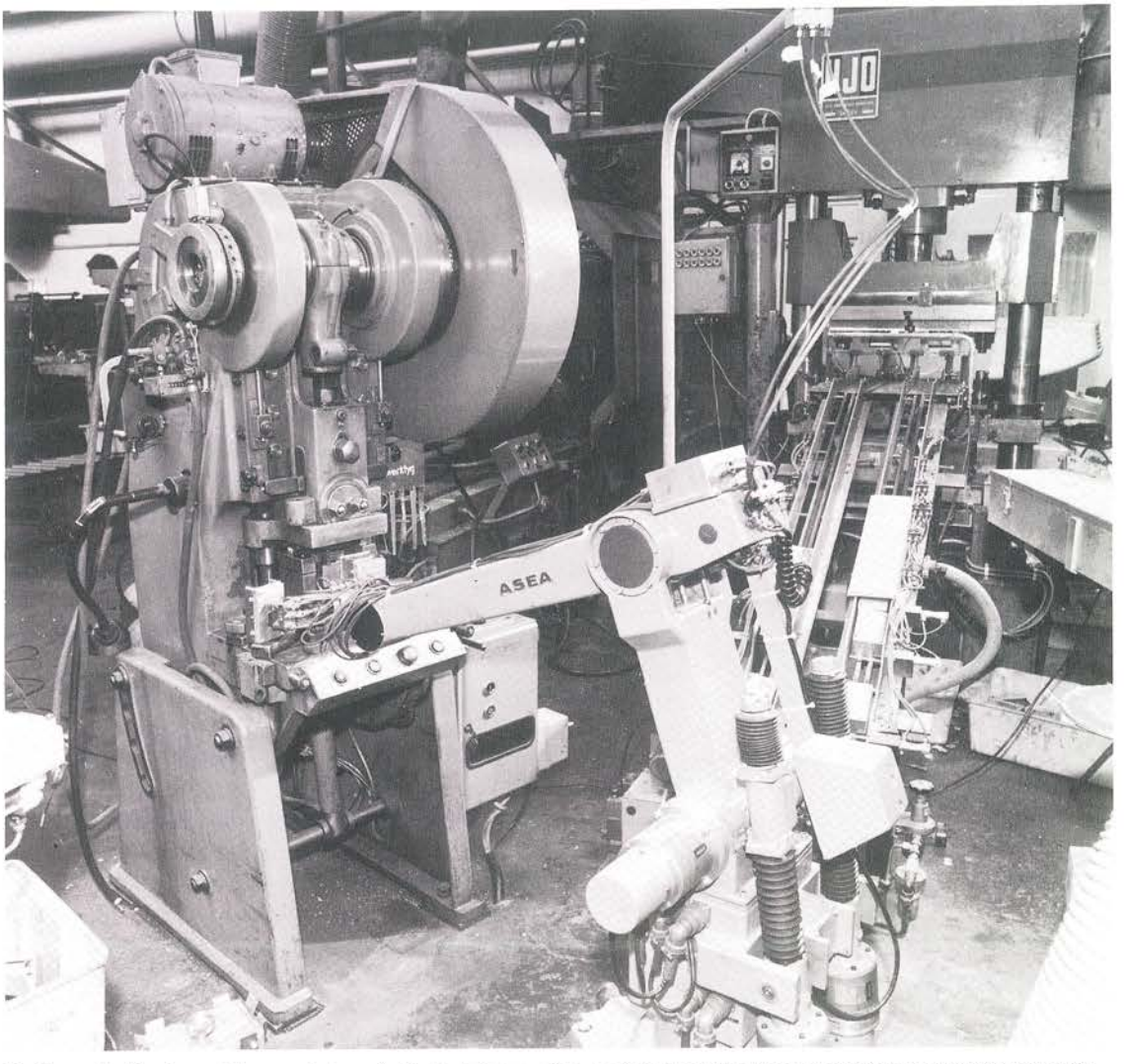
As the trends mentioned here are increasing in strength, it has to be concluded that Sweden's trade will not support the case for a new model, but rather work against such efforts. This means that every change will have to stand on its own merits and cannot be bolstered by an overall plan. It will also encounter concrete, albeit shortsighted, arguments concerning profitability and competitive efficiency. The risk is that even if a change in a given field would work, its value would be played down with references to the special circumstances that could be said to have ruled the experiment.

Technological obstacles

Among the many factors that affect every prognosis and programme for the future, technological innovation is probably the least possible to avoid or steer, and at the same time is the most decisive. Even with a determined policy to harmonize development in this field with the goals one aims at, it could turn out to be impossible to shield society from new techniques, gadgets and processes.

For the time-span we are dealing with here—the next 10 to 20 years—some technological changes with wide social repercussions stand out as particularly likely. These include the following:

Technological changes	**Social effects**
Workplace	
Further robotization, also in offices	Rising unemployment, collapse of present system of taxation
Cheaper and further developed semiconductors	Greater safety in many operations, but also an even stronger alienation between man and materia
Communications	
Two-way television	Regular referendums. Otherwise dependent on how it is handled: activating or enslaving
Holographic television	Decentralization of work, more frequent consultation
Different kinds of view data	Democratization of knowledge, to counter the many tendencies in the other direction
Faxmail	Easier to work at home, less congested cities, possible breakdown of regular post service
Portable telephones	Pollution by noise, higher pace, elimination of remnants of tranquility still to be found
Fibre optics	When used in everyday machines this technique will make repair impractical, if not impossible
Portable and personal scramblers	To off-set increasing attacks on integrity
Biology	
Artificial life	Tremendous, but unpredictable
Cloning of humans	Tremendous, but unpredictable
Prolonged lives for some	Stronger élites, sharper clashes between generations, serious threat to the whole system of social security
Character transforming pills	Basically unpredictable, but possibly the appearance of some kind of fascism
Space technology	
Beginning of settlements in space	Little, except drain on public resources
Housing	
Architectural computers	Individualized homes through instant drawings of plans based on consumers' simple outlays. Possible democratization of the planning process
Armaments	
Realistic threat of particle beam weapon	Total collapse of the balance of terror, risk of preventive first strike



Further robotization of the workplace is likely to have wide social repercussions during the next 10 to 20 years

These are, of course, only a few examples of what might appear in the near future, causing serious disruptions in politics and social life. If they cannot be stopped, altered or modified, at least innovations of this kind can be prepared for. But in Sweden today there is very little preparedness in this field. Technology assessment is a new word and rarely used. Every major innovation will therefore come as an unpleasant surprise, to be dealt with in a haphazard manner.

In my series of interviews, the experts and decision-makers were asked which technological breakthroughs they thought to be the most likely ones when looking 10 to 20 years into the future. The result was that most had little to suggest. Among those who had, these were the items mentioned in descending order from the often-mentioned to the occasional reference:

- Further development of semiconductors.
- Further robotization of the workplace.
- Sharper social stratification due to developments in the computer field.
- Simpler basic health care with the possible use of herbs and acupuncture.
- Energy storing that permits more economic use of renewable resources.
- Cities in space.

The general air of futility and lack of will also pervades the assessment of what changes

technology might bring. According to those interviewed not much can be done, other than adjusting to the new situation as well as is possible. Obviously, they also entertain a vain hope that nothing very important will happen that could push or break their world. Not one of the 30 individuals showed any sign of recognizing that we are on the threshold of a series of breakthroughs in various fields which will drastically affect society as we know it.

Generally speaking, so little has happened to man's ability to cope with serious questions of principles and morals that we hardly know how to manage present technology, much less the astounding things we are likely to encounter in the near future, given the pace of innovations in areas such as biotechnology and communications.

Political obstacles

There are two political movements whose attitudes, for all practical purposes, decide the future of Sweden: the Centre Party and the Social Democratic Party. Together, they should be able to overcome even extreme difficulties in shaping a new climate. Opposed to each other, as they have been for many years, and with a tendency to define their positions negatively as the antithesis of each other, they create a non-productive stalemate.

The Centre Party has hitherto been the ecologist party of Sweden. Perfunctorily it has voiced the now standard critique of the industrial society, its inhuman scale and values. But the party has been unable to weld these opinions into a concrete programme for political action. Beyond a strong commitment to the development of usage of renewable sources of energy, and this as a consequence of its opposition to nuclear energy, it has not offered its voters any real alternatives, but rather a cluster of sentiments.

Traditionally an agrarian party, with a deep distrust of the huge corporations that dominated the sector in which farmers operated, its anti-capitalism has been blurred in recent decades. This is partly so because the agrarian sector has been permitted to reflect the constant centralization of the industrial world. Rationalization by size has meant that the number of farmers is steadily declining and that those remaining tend to identify with the entrepreneurial class rather than with the workers. Within the farmers' cooperative movement centralization has been extremely fast and thorough, totally belying the ideals of decentralization and small production units that are held by the Centre Party.

By its very vagueness, the Centre Party has succeeded in attracting those people who would otherwise have constituted the base for a party or movement of discontent. In the longer perspective, this lack of alternatives is, of course, a threat to the position of the party: when it cannot deliver any solutions to a clear expression of need, the discontent will, after some time, seek other outlets.

To the Social Democrats, these questions present even more of a dilemma. While the leadership during the party's term in opposition has stubbornly kept to the old formula of 'more of the same', there is a growing faction that reflects the opinion of the general public which is fed up with the standard type of political analysis. This division is only natural given the obvious dysfunctions of the industrial state and the problems that these create for the socialist ideology. What is surprising is that it has come to the fore at such a late date.

In fact, it will take a determined fight and a huge effort to change the official line of the party. A policy which has been followed with

great consistency for several decades and which up to recently was considered a success is not easily abandoned. What was the essence of this policy?

Probably, security was the key. Social Democracy held power for 44 years. In retrospect this was an enormous span of time, but the life expectancy of each government was never more than four—or later three—years, and only for a few years did the party have a majority of its own in Parliament. Short-term measures in order to alleviate human suffering always seemed more important than a coherent strategy. And the 'thirties and 'forties presented a destitution which called for immediate action rather than a long-term haul aimed at doing away with the old society. Thus, the institutions of the bourgeois society were not erased, but partly given new tasks.

If the need for social reform was limitless, the scope for new levies was great, too, even though it did not appear so at the time. World War II facilitated far-reaching interventionism by the State, and industry got used to expecting a helping, and occasionally mildly regulating, hand. Times got better. With boom periods like the one during the Korean War, there always seemed to be enough resources for new threads in the safety-nets which would ensure that no one would face permanent difficulties because of one or two mishaps. To an ever-increasing degree, the State provided security for its citizens. It provided industry with the same thing, though industrialists together with the bourgeois parties put up a strong fight over every reform which in the long run would greatly help industry to modernize. Because of this opposition, Social Democratic leaders got the impression that they were on the right track, steadily pushing for the socialist society.

The 'sixties, or most of them, constituted the peak of success. Exports were good. Generous tax laws enabled industry to compete on the world market with advanced techniques. The scope of environmental pollution had not yet been discovered. Enough was left of rather idyllic milieus to give the pleasant impression of a perfect blend of old and new. Though many class distinctions remained, and social disadvantages still tended to cluster for a number of low paid people, many differences were smoothed out, such as those between city and countryside. Real wage increases were seen as almost a human right. In virtually every field of endeavour, reforms were implemented which liberated people and allowed them to take an interest in things other than day-to-day problems. A skilful handling of monetary and economic policies kept Sweden out of several recessions and softened the impact of others.

There is no denying that the edifice thus built was, and still is, an enormously impressive one. Now and then a singular reform in another country which seems to be more generous than the Swedish counterpart is held up to show that there is really nothing special about Swedish social reforms. For example, French family policies are sometimes mentioned as proof that other nations, with less rhetoric and no socialist ambitions, have achieved the same or more. Rarely is it acknowledged that singular reforms have very little to say about the general policy. In the case of France, family policies are caused by the wish of authorities to stimulate a higher birth rate. What should count is the mix, the atmosphere created, the total trend. It should not be possible to pick out a few redeeming features of an otherwise repressive social system. It is important to make this point, as a number of standard socialist conceptions are reappraised below.

Now and then it is asked: How did the Swedish model come about? The answer is a complex one, containing both historical and contemporary reasons. The former include uninterrupted peace for 165 years; plenitude of resources; a peasantry that was never enslaved; communal self-direction; transportation an early matter for the State; free elementary education; a number of inventions and an indebtedness in foreign countries that did not exceed the growth of the country; unions that pressed for bearable conditions which at the same time eased modernization and thus expansion.

Coming to present-day explanations, some are more striking than others: the famous peace on the labour market, the constant fight to meet 'the discontent of rising expectations', the liberation of women, the successful ambition to narrow the gap between highest and lowest incomes (from 30 per cent around the average in 1959 to 13 per cent in 1978), the elimination of class distinctions, the homogeneity of the population, and so on. For a long time Sweden was, and to a large extent still is, one of the most decent countries in the world.

But the price for the erection of the edifice was high. People had to move from their traditional surroundings to get a job. They were helped to do this, no doubt, and their standard of living rose. But the psychological loss can hardly be overestimated. Houses were built at a tremendous pace (one million apartments in ten years), with a very high interior standard, while social amenities came much later and the outer environment was neglected altogether. Social problems in these concrete ghettos were many from the outset and have recently increased again.

Rationalization by size, and a wage policy implemented by the unions that asked for the same rises in all companies, regardless of profitability, meant that many had the experience of being unemployed at some time. Structural changes in most industries had the same effect. Social Democratic governments married themselves to big industry, often taking the risk that capital refused to take but none of the profits and little of the influence. One reason for this was that, within the huge corporations, it was the well-financed R&D-departments which promised innovations which would keep up the rate of growth. To leading Social Democrats, faith in the future came to mean faith in technology and research.

Many problems were swept under the rug. An abridged calculation took no account of phenomena some links further down the chain: growth was never connected with social failures such as drug addiction and rising crime rate, collective transportation was made to look unprofitable because the costs of private transportation (deaths, hospitalization, loss of working time) were hidden, people rather than factories were moved because someone else was paying the bill.

The price was also an ideological one. Social Democrats expanded on the theme of 'the great society' which in reality was the idealistic superstructure of welfarism but had nothing to do with socialism and indeed worked against it. The concept also meant that society was changed *for* the people rather than *with* the people. This, in turn, had two consequences. Knowing that society would always pick up the tab or help out, both individuals and companies got used to being taken care of, with little effort by themselves. They became a clientele. Also, when security is the password of the day, only the sky is the limit. No one gets enough security, and when the country is hit by international recessions the gap between resources and demands widens dangerously.

Making security and not solidarity with self-realization the goal was somehow to ensure that all new problems would be interpreted and reacted on in private rather than political terms.

Politically, this was a self-defeating course in many ways. Little by little, traditional Social Democratic strongholds were dismantled. When people moved from close-knit communities in the north to culturally and politically deprived suburbs around the big cities in the south, they did not become bourgeois but apathetic. Voting figures turned out to be much lower in these places than in others, and the same was of course true of the areas where immigrants live.

Perhaps even more serious was the fact that, when a reform was launched, Social Democratic governments invariably tried to placate the opposition in Parliament by motivating the proposal with typically bourgeois arguments. In this context, profitability sounded better than solidarity. This way they hoped to take some leaves from the books of the opposition—only to discover, in the middle of the 'seventies, that their own book had already been filled with them. When security no longer was the political monopoly of Social Democracy and recurrent crises made promises about continued full employment lack credibility, it only needed a symbol of protest to change the political map. In 1976, opposition to nuclear energy provided that symbol and the Social Democratic government fell.

The changes that had affected society at large also played a dominant role at the political level. Rationalization by size was the method used to beef up efficiency in the trade union movement, in the party organizations, in local government—the 'communes'. With regard to the latter, this meant that some 225,000 committee positions (nearly half of which were held by Social Democrats) were abolished. The result of these trends can be studied in an opinion survey made in the election year of 1973 and then repeated in 1976. Between these years, the share of the public that saw Social Democrats as top-dogs grew from 36 per cent to 41 per cent.

Though much of Social Democratic reform work over the years helped to free people, to give the poor enough strength to voice complaints, the leadership of the party was deceived by the whole development into defending phenomena that should have been natural goals for Social Democratic attacks. Thus it appeared to side with the establishment.

Another side to the same coin is attitudes found within unions. The staffs and organizers are often conservative forces with little creative fantasy, all the time pressing for 'more of the same'. Bureaucracies in unions, in industry, in communes, in state agencies, all operate in the same vein. At the same time, the interests of the individual are more and more ignored. With each new social reform the self-perpetuating forces are strengthened and so is the resistance to change. The press plays its role in this charade by strictly adhering to the truths of the day, scorning new ideas, refusing contributions that run counter to policies of editorial and cultural staffs. The band-wagon effect in the media, though often constituted by virulent attacks on the Government or the Social Democratic Party or something else, seems to increase year by year. Corporate interests are wielded in an increasingly mechanical way, and people are seldom listened to in their capacities as 'public men' but only as 'experts' in limited fields. Suddenly, Sweden is on the verge of becoming a quiet society, for all the well-orchestrated noise in the media.

To all this, the leadership of the Social

Democratic Party has had very little to say. Looking for resources for new reforms it suggests an increase in the tax burden—in spite of figures showing that this would mean a higher rate of so-called new poverty. In all probability the result would be that even breadwinners with good earnings (say US $10,000 to $12,000) would have problems in making ends meet and have to rely on welfare cheques, which in turn could start a state of dependency. To remedy the bad effects of technology, it banks on new technical inventions. To counter the criticism of the present kind of development, it says: We can never turn back! But as every driver knows, when you have entered a cul-de-sac you have only two choices: to knock down the house or wall at the end of the road or to back up. But for the Social Democratic leadership to admit that something has been *systematically* wrong with its policies for the last 10 to 15 years would obviously mean a painful loss of face. Probably, only the threat of a split or serious revolt within the party could force the issue.

To sum up, all of this leads to the question: Is Sweden closer to socialism than any other country? At the outset one would assume that the kind of process that has taken place in this country would have made the Swedish population mature enough to be the first ever to achieve libertarian socialism. Indeed, official Social Democratic ideology presupposes that the reform work sooner or later will have reached a level where the final step into socialism is rather small. But the question has already been raised as to whether this concept entails a situation where every reform misfires because its aim clashes with inherent tendencies in the existing society. It seems probable that somewhere along the road there will be a breaking-point—the fact that bourgeois politicians find it everywhere is not a proof that it does not exist anywhere.

More often than not, it is a formula that is to trigger the change. At the moment it is the proposal for wage earners' funds (which in the long run would make workers, or rather unions, own the companies) that is supposed to carry society a long way towards a democratic economy. But a reform that is not underpinned, or rather filled out, by the active work of those who are affected by it, becomes a monster. By choosing to present people with security as a gift from the State, Social Democracy has boxed itself into a corner where the old rhetoric simply will not do to open up new avenues. It has to be concluded that for the moment the credibility of Social Democracy is spent. An election victory in 1979 would not counter this claim as high unemployment and other ills, for which the incumbents are always blamed, could take the party over the hump. Should the party content itself with such shallow victories it is sure to lose the much greater fight over the course for the future. The coming period will make heavy demands on foresight and the will to find another direction, one that makes people a part of the realization of their own hopes. This is the great challenge to Social Democracy, as well as to others. It must live up to it if the party is to stay on as a dominant force in the society.

3 Problem Areas and Goals

In this section some problem areas of vital importance will be discussed. Other areas could have been chosen, but these will do to outline some principles that must be evaluated if change is to start at all and somewhere. The purpose is to find relevant guidelines which together will indicate what kind of mix and what kind of basis a new development should head for.

Economy, energy, agriculture

The recovery of the Swedish economy has been based in the budget plan for 1979/80 on the assumption that there will be a series of good years with a continuously high growth. At the same time, there is very little hope that even a high growth rate will produce nearly enough jobs.

For social reasons, governments have been forced to support industries with obviously meagre futures. While overall investments (including the public sector) have been steady during the 'seventies, they have increasingly been made in declining branches. This is what the Boston Consulting Group reports and it is meant as a criticism. But this policy would have been entirely reasonable if only there had existed a conscious will to look for alternative production within these industries and a gradual shifting of emphasis towards another kind of production profile for the whole country. The recommendations of the Boston Group will not do. If Sweden were to follow these and try to establish itself as a dominant producer in the same vein as today, albeit in other fields such as chemistry and special instruments, the same crisis would be repeated in a few years time. Instead, niches on a lower scale have to be found and risks spread on a more even basis.

Even so, jobs will be scarce in the future. No task is more important than to offset the effects of this. There is no way that democracy can withstand permanent high unemployment, especially among young people who easily feel rejected by society and behave accordingly. Robotization and similar technological phenomena will give a rising number the experience of being out work. Let it be stated unequivocally that there is no aspect of this which can be viewed as positive. A stable job or the knowledge that a job can be acquired is as important for making man free and keeping him free as is stability in residence and the knowledge that he is allowed to root himself in the place of his liking.

Thus, one of the tasks for the future is to distribute an ever-shrinking body of productive jobs. It should be said, though, that this has very little to do with natural resources and energy. Given that the reports of the Club of Rome and others were too alarmist, it is still not wise to apply the economist's favourite method of viewing every problem as one of price elasticity. In some cases, the price asked for will be too high to pay, in direct costs and in social dysfunctions. There is obviously a limit to some resources that an elevated price cannot transcend. After all, we are talking about physical materia, not conjuring tricks. Yet, it is unlikely that lack of energy or natural resources would have any negative effect on employment, at least in the long run. On the contrary, substitution and a new organization of society, where human qualities are stressed, should produce more jobs and new types of jobs.

Right now, Sweden has an energy problem that is more pressing than for most Western European countries, due to an excessively high oil dependence. In the long run, however, it seems probable that difficulties will not arise because of lack of energy, but because of an abundance that will force society into an even higher degree of growth and consumerism than today. Society would be best suited if plans were based on the assumption that we will be short of energy—then many problems that a surplus would give rise to could be modified or countered altogether.

At present, conflicting visions of the future society are focusing on energy questions. The leadership of the Social Democratic Party has, true to its traditional paradigm of development, been all-out in favour of atomic energy and has not even been prepared to rule out a very large programme for nuclear power (i.e. 20 or 30 reactors). The sudden and tactical decision in April 1979—made under the influence which the Harrisburg accident had on public opinion—to accept a referendum on the question does not constitute a change of its model or its view of the merits of this kind of energy. Yet it seems clear that Sweden will be able to rely solely on renewable energy sources—if not for another quarter of a century. In the meantime, the reactors built will have to be used to lessen somewhat the burden of the oil import. Sooner or later there will be a decision on what energy future we should aim for. At that time the two opposing visions of Sweden are going to clash and a split may occur between what roughly can be called industrial socialists and ecosocialists. In this context, it will suffice to say that a Sweden based on renewable energy would possibly entail a somewhat lower standard of living, in terms of today's measures, but also more jobs.

However we judge development on this score in the long run, we have to presuppose a shrinking market of remunerative jobs for the next decade. Various proposals have been put forward to meet this situation. One has been presented by the economist Gunnar Adler-Karlsson. Adler-Karlsson's basic idea is that work should be divided into different sectors—one of necessity, one of excess, one of freedom and one of power. It is said that the full employment goal is both unrealistic and wrong—in the latter case with regard to the Third World.

It is difficult to see what problems Adler-Karlsson's scheme really solves. If people were allowed to work in all sectors, presumably using resources in all of them, where would Sweden lower its real growth and the Third World gain accordingly (if it is as simple a connection as that, which is doubtful)? The scheme could be seen merely as a description of the present economic organization. It is perfectly possible to divide the present working day into hours of necessity (the profit of which will pay for food, housing, child care, and so on), hours of excess (cars) and hours of freedom (travel, artistic work, love affairs).

The normal answer from traditional Social Democrats and trade unionists is, of course, that the goal of full employment must be upheld. One who voices this opinion, but in many respects has come up with original proposals, is the well-known OECD expert and professor of social research Gösta Rehn. For many years now he has advocated a system of great flexibility that would roll work, education and leisure into one unit and by an allotment of points would give the individual a number of drawing rights which he could use at his own discretion. In periods of low employment he could be talked into taking a year or two at an education centre. It would be up to him if he wanted to use a number of

points all at once to make possible a sabbatical. Clearly, this system would have absurd consequences if it was not modified by certain ground rules. Workaholics should not be permitted never to take a vacation, the hippie should not be allowed to use all his points at one go: an obligatory vacation every year (from the normal work, that is) and a maximum limit would be necessary.

The attraction of this system is that it offers flexibility to both the individual and society. It is also fair and gives the individual more responsibility. Or in Rehn's own words:

> It implies the application—on a broader scale than hitherto—of a *self-determination principle in social policy*: the offer of economic incentives, designed to stimulate those who are willing and able to undertake adjustments in the labour market voluntarily (under partial utilization of their own assets in the general social insurance fund) instead of laying most of the burden of adjustment on the weaker groups, making 'social cases' of those who are most vulnerable to unemployment and least adaptable for new jobs, subject of individualised tutelage, controls, and direction. It implies a recognition that a good deal of what we all pay into the social insurance system is in reality a transfer of income between different parts of our own lives and that these funds should therefore to a great extent be regarded as the individual's own property, the use of which could be substantially liberated from bureaucratic supervision; instead its use should be influenced by incentives which the individual can accept or reject according to his own preferences.

In line with this proposal—which can be viewed as an expanded variety of a minimum income or negative tax—is Rehn's suggestion that society should use benefits and individual subsidies (now given to the unemployed) directly at the workplace. Society already offers to pay the employer to take on another man or woman and Rehn is able to show that society should profit from going further in this direction. The suggestion is not far from how these matters are handled in the Soviet Union, where there is virtually no open unemployment but a large hidden one within the factories.

Rehn's system of drawing rights is best suited to the normal labour market, but it seems perfectly possible to apply it to another situation, in which working hours are reduced from eight to six hours a day in order to share existing remunerative jobs. This would, of course, demand of society that it kept pace with change. For example, as a number of industries that now have only one shift would probably take up two, society would have to provide sufficient child care.

There is nothing God-given about the eight-hour working day. A reduction of two hours would have a series of beneficial effects, not least for the children. It is a natural reform of solidarity to share the given possibilities rather than opt for full employment at the eight-hour level, which will be extremely hard to get back to. Quite possibly, production results will be higher, both in quantity and in quality, when the working day is as short as six hours.

At the general level, the goal is not a lower growth or a non-growth state, but another kind of growth. This could mean a whole series of changes: less waste, fewer choices between identical products, less artificial stimulation, more durable goods, more emphasis on local, small-scale production, several working roles for each individual, slower pace in working life, smaller and fewer units (in housing, for example), rebuilding of the cities, and so forth. A difficult question to answer here is that concerning development in the rich countries and in the Third World. Should the rich countries reduce—or at least not increase—growth, as

Adler-Karlsson suggests? Or should they for a time continue to produce goods and techniques at the same pace and then give these free to the Third World, as Norwegian ecologist Erik Damman wants? Damman's line is more demanding than that normally taken by ecologists and the risk is that it would hinder a change in the industrialized world. It seems more probable that a society which successfully combines small and large scales, low and high energy consumption, and local and central production would be ready or even eager to increase development cooperation.

It is an interesting phenomenon that a number of ideas and concepts are being discussed all over the world at the same time, irrespective of the development level of the individual country. Concepts like basic needs, self-reliance and intermediate technology have become as important in industrialized countries looking for a more humane way of organizing society as in countries where the main problem is to feed the population properly. In Sweden, this debate has given rise to a limited number of proposals which in a systematic way try to create a basis for another kind of living and producing. Unfortunately, most of them seem to have the countryside, villages or small towns as their main focus. As is natural today, they often aim at finding some space for the informal or secondary economy, but then take this nucleus of social organization to set the standard for the whole of society.

This is hardly realistic, but two other aspects are more important. One is that the proposals seem to strive at a thoroughly planned society. For socialists turning ecologists this may be an understandable approach. But there could easily be an authoritarian trap here, swallowing all the ambitions of pluralism and re-creating the old village with its excessive social control. A Swedish peace researcher, Mats Friberg, is one of the few hitherto to voice his opposition to the idea of streamlining society as an answer to all demands for a society which is considered just and reasonable:

> It is only natural that through its size a State apparatus is an 'organism' that is able to 'think' in one dimension only. From this follows that we must seriously question all political ideologies that put their hopes in a totally planned society. Our country, out of simple cybernetical reasons, cannot be planned and guided centrally in a way which pays regards to our deeper human qualities.

Indeed, the ideal local community so much sought after is somehow beyond ideologies. It seems to presuppose a massive support for a system that cannot accept political differences, one that is conspicuously close to the prevalent American ideology of 'common sense'. Is it not probable that communalism would have to mean the conscious or unconscious suppression of political passions? Would it not represent a step backwards, towards less consciousness, while satisfying the immediate needs of the individual and the group he belongs to?

Another aspect of the system for an informal economy is how it would fit in with existing structures. Given that one of the main problems of change is that the public instinctively shies away from the new and untested, it is unrealistic and even harmful to advocate a change as total as one that starts from scratch. On the other hand, too modest a reform would not do either, as it would be ground to pieces by the existing system of regulations. Taking these different aspects into account, I suggest that one should try to create at the local level an all-cooperative organization that could in time make it possible to pull some of the basic

needs, and the satisfaction of these, out of the market. By using the cooperation as a basis, expanding its aims and structures, one should be able to change the situation gradually.

The period in which the cooperative movement was really viable is not longer back than, say, 20 years. Most people of 40 years of age and upwards have memories of the neighbourhood store and of a meaningful activity in the cooperative association in the areas where they lived. Today, separate cooperative enterprises take care of such needs of the individual as food, clothes, basic tools, funeral services, housing, heating, petrol, travel and insurance. It would be only natural to expand into social services as well: child care, communal production of some food and textiles, car-pools, and possibly basic health care. As will be discussed below, the cooperative idea is probably better suited to solving the problem of how to achieve real democracy in industrial life than are the wage earners' funds.

The main advantages of basing change on the cooperative movement are that it is not new; it is fundamentally democratic, though at present democratic functions within the movement are somewhat dormant; it has a long tradition of economic operations; it uses modern techniques without being engulfed by them; and it is politically neutral, at least officially. Seen from another angle, the movement is in sore need of revitalization. The commercial aspects have become dominant in the various movements and these have in turn fostered a strong bureaucracy. Membership influence is weakened by too many rungs between the district association (the lowest one within the consumer cooperative movement) and the management at the top. Suboptimization is no less important a catchword in the cooperative movement than in private industry.

In the long run, there should be an all-cooperative movement for all the nation. The first step would probably have to be a cooperative bank, which should strengthen the movement considerably. These are interesting prospects, but they have very little to do with the aim proposed in this paper, i.e. to shrink the size of the units in society and to make people active and in command of the development. The point in suggesting an all-cooperative association at the local level is not least that it should be easier to carry through and that it clearly relies on the interest shown by members. At this level, amalgamation should not be slowed down because of the different structures of the different movements, as would be the case at the national level. When problems are of a size that makes it possible to do something about them, and when people feel that they have a direct influence on their organization, it should be much simpler to counter the strong tendency of the consumer movement to adjust to the market. As will be argued later, this all-cooperative association should be able to channel much of the voluntary work that members would like to invest to make their neighbourhoods more pleasant. Given high inflation, a tax burden that makes clients of all people and a rising apathy, it is of vital importance to create a niche *outside* the market where basic needs can be satisfied. This could help to ease the inveterate reflex that calls for new layers of security. It could also boost morale and make tax fraud less attractive.

The most obvious effect of a local all-cooperative association concerns participation. In Sweden today, an average consumer spends something like 20 to 25 per cent of his total income on groceries and non-durable goods. Of this, perhaps less than half is used in the local co-op, amounting to 5,000 to 6,000 Sw.

kr. This is clearly too small a sum to give a lasting incentive for membership activities. Suppose this consumer lives in a cooperative house, buys her petrol at the cooperative service station, books a charter trip with the cooperative travel agency, and so on. At each place she pays sums that taken one by one are too small to be interesting. But put them together and she would suddenly realize that most of her money is spent within the cooperative movements. Her wish to exercise influence must then surely become much greater. It would merely be an act of self-interest.

There is now a strong trend among opinion-makers to ask for planning that would break down some of the large structures, split up State agencies which have become unwieldy and remote from ordinary people, and hand back to people some of the responsibility for basic needs. The cooperative movement should take the initiative to expand its functions at the local level, so as to make a change in the direction indicated all the more natural. At the political level, many small steps can be taken to facilitate this process and help both decision-makers and people in general to alter their attitudes to and their judgements of what is realistic and what is not.

Some actions seem more important than others. All local communities and, at another level, all regional boards should be compelled by law to create supply plans for their immediate needs of water, heating, foodstuffs, transportation, basic textiles, machines and waste disposal. Such plans exist today only in part and without any real provisions for contingencies. Indeed, besides preparing plans for normal times, every community should have to plan for different situations of need. A 'zero-budgeting' of this kind would quite possibly shake up the local decision-making structures and lay the foundation for an alternative production and social organization. It would give communities a chance to reduce their serious vulnerability. When the new plans are brought out into open discussion it is more than likely that this will give rise to a much higher participation in local affairs.

Also, the main responsibility for full employment should rest with the communes. As mentioned in the earlier discussion, I am now not talking about remunerative jobs but simply about something for everyone to do, although something that should be useful to society. The communes should make lists of all those small things that would help to make life in the local communities more active, rewarding and pleasant. This could be done through local referendums where people would be asked to make a choice of some 20–30 items and have the possibility of adding five to ten of their own suggestions. The list thus composed would be a guide to important tasks that could be carried out by the unemployed who are receiving benefits. These should be transformed into normal salaries, though perhaps only for a limited period of time, if it was felt that there should be a stimulus to try to get back into the 'normal' labour market again. This reform is an attractive one, as there are a number of things that could be done if only there was money for them. It is only reasonable to demand of the benefit recipients that they share in carrying out these tasks, given the level of these benefits (90 per cent of the salary in the first year). It would also be of utmost importance to help counter the feelings of rejection and uselessness that the unemployed often entertain and that sometimes start them on the road to alcohol problems. For example, participation in cleaning up oil-polluted beaches should, so we assume, be felt as a relief compared to being confined to the home all day long.

In all the aspects discussed in this article, no artificial barrier is erected between centralism and decentralism. This is a matter of course as decentralization cannot be achieved without some central power-base that is strong enough to neutralize rivalling interests and is able to support an economically weak commune against mighty corporations. Centralism in certain areas will ease decentralism in others, as for example when the State uses tax incentives to stimulate local associations to assume responsibility for some of the basic services. The State should actively support every effort to find alternative products in industries with meagre outlooks and should implement a programme of conversion for those which are connected with defence production for export. It could counter the vast production of gadgets by a differentiated value added tax—successfully tried in other countries but so far stubbornly refused in Sweden. Local production and local sources of renewable energy should be carefully screened at the regional level, but there must at all times be a consciousness that puts self-reliance before profitability and number of jobs before overall economic efficiency.

Though Swedes are a city-dwelling people, and will remain so for the foreseeable future, new jobs and new life styles could be had if present trends in agriculture were reversed. At the moment, there are 120,000 agricultural units, but the number of employed within the farming sector is declining at the rate of 3.5 per cent per annum. The implementation of the law against absentee ownership has been too lax and the law itself is too liberal. Today, almost half of the farms are operated by tenants. Prices on farms have risen enormously in the last decade—in fact so much that it is literally impossible for a young couple to acquire a farm of their own. If they happen to inherit one, they will have to renew loans at a level that makes them servants for the rest of their lives. Because of the way that taxes are shaped, a vast overmechanization is promoted.

Here, only rather drastic measures will do. One is to separate subsidies from the ongoing rationalization and allow for a more labour-intensive kind of operation. This could also help to eliminate the present overuse of chemicals that unchecked might cause an ecological catastrophe in the near future. However, to affect the prices of farms one would have to attack the whole concept of ownership. Here it has been suggested that the State should use a small portion (perhaps as little as 25,000 million Sw.kr.) of the vast pension funds (at present some 120,000 million Sw.kr.) to buy all usable land in the country and then to lease it in lots at prices that change with the interest rate or possibly the rate of inflation plus a little more. The value rise would then belong to society. Larger farm units could be split up to make room for 20,000 to 30,000 families. Here too it would mean a great deal if cooperative undertakings could be made possible, thereby re-erecting the farming village. The social benefits of a change of this magnitude can hardly be overestimated. The risks of the scheme are virtually none. Rather, the question is whether society can afford to abstain from socializing land profits in a way that would ease, not to say provoke, a series of possibilities for a radical change of life styles without erasing what has been achieved so far. This would surely be in line with what people hope for: as Peter Hall showed in *Europe 2000*, Scandinavia is the only area in Europe where young people are confident that the small farm will return. If land lots are leased with the right of inheritance, the non-speculating individual does not stand to lose a thing. On the other hand, there is no point in describing this plan as a cure-all.

When land speculation is made impossible, house prices will go up fast. This is less of a problem in the countryside than in cities, but even in urban areas that kind of development could be stopped by law or with taxes. Without State ownership of the land very little can be achieved. With it, the way is cleared for instituting a policy of development of quite another kind.

City planning: between Ecumenopolis and Kampuchea

The city, Aristotle said, should make people happy and secure. That goal has not become less topical, even though we are rapidly building ourselves into exactly the opposite.

The city is worth keeping, its concept is synonymous with that of culture. In its ideal form it gives closeness, density, a common sphere with others, and a series of wanted and unwanted encounters. It is hardly possible to envisage a real society without cities, and they are just as important to socialism.

That is why one has to reject the outlook of the Pol Pot regime of Kampuchea. To its leaders, it was said, the city itself was a perversion—not only in the shape it had acquired, not only in the way it had been moulded by the interests of other countries, but as an idea, as a life style. That was an untenable notion which would have had to be abandoned, even if the regime had stayed.

Yet, more and more people throughout the world have given up on the city. They do not think it can be made livable again. In a short time, they have seen it adjusted to fit the demand for accessibility posed by the car industry and other economic interests. In the facades they can study the ruling ideology. The new brutalism is scoring all the way. The walls of our outer living rooms are made stone-hard, ice-cold, without cracks where human fingers can get a hold. In some places the result is beautiful and cold, in others ugly and cold. The cooperative movement has successfully killed every major square in the country with its supermarkets turned into concrete pillboxes. Others have followed suit. Whole sections in the cities are given a form as if they were supposed to function in a period of overt fascism.

What kind of city would people really like to have? Most would say: a milieu that is fathomable, distinct enough to make a relation possible, giving easy contacts but permitting seclusion, encouraging a life that is intensive and opens possibilities for developing many aspects of one's personality. Few whole cities, if any, function like that; certain city sectors, possibly, enclaves in cities big enough for a small unit to have a life of its own. Generally speaking, the city as we know it is a machine crushing its inhabitants.

What does this mean for society, and for the way in which individuals look at society and each other? What costs are attributed to the calculation of growth when people are forced to live in the anonymous, culturally impoverished environment created by motorism and the ideology of high energy consumption? How many lives will be wasted by the fronts of Stockholm's downtown area?

A superficial view? Hardly. You read the same newspaper all your adult life and you are affected by it. Indiscernibly, it sets or helps to set the outer limits of your view of what people have in common. Nevertheless, its importance is negligible compared with the house you live in, the street you walk on, the architecture that sets the tone of your milieu.

The reasons for the inhuman environment in the cities have long been identified with abridged calculations and one-sided profita-

bility. But there are other factors as well. One of them is overplanning. Our time does not provide the kind of petty capitalism built by shop-owners and craftsmen which could create the irrational and surprising street. We may prefer old-time Moscow to thoroughly planned Leningrad, but the former could not arise in the same way today.

For a long time, many believed that the alternative to the present way of shaping cities was better planning. But planning came to mean an uneven match between high finance, local authorities and the lonely city-planner genius. Sweden has had its fill of that brilliant architect who, with imperiatorial gestures, points at the city map and declares that no one should be allowed to tamper with *his* bold plan or spoil that marvellous straight line. With the support of a weak economy in many communes (which seemingly makes renovation more expensive than removal and construction of new houses with higher rents), he sends bulldozers through the layers of history. One man's vision is permitted to knock out what generations have achieved over the centuries. The result is like La Defence in Paris: interesting enough on the map, but a windy wasteland in reality.

So there is a point in warning about visionaries, not least because they will always be supported by 'development', which they never try to shape according to human scales. There is Dinos Doxiadis, who dreamt of Ecumenopolis, the single city comprising all urban land in the world, with individual cells for 50,000 people and traffic and factories relegated to below ground. There is Le Corbusier, who envisaged a building stretched out for hundreds of miles along the east coast of South America with a highway atop. There are the students of Georgia Tech in Atlanta, who created a model of the future city in the shape of an A, with offices and flats in the side lines, an express railway at the top, and a supermarket on a rail in the bar that moves up and down the city all day long.

It is about time to get down to earth again, to use the knowledge that already exists on how the total environment—and even the single house—is affecting the individual and then to plan accordingly. While further theoretical knowledge would be good, there is hardly any time left before the final decay of the huge cities. Something has to be done *now* if the social cost is to be met at all and social life rescued.

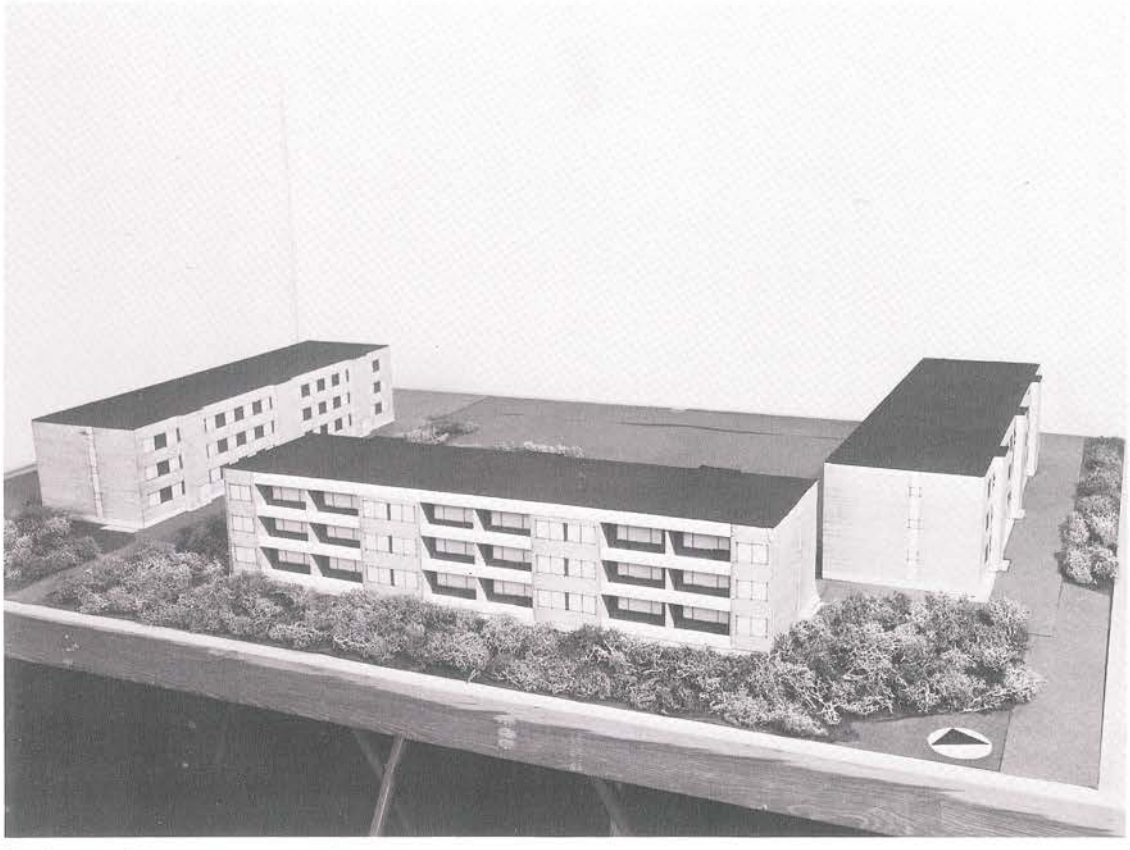
Let us see what kinds of qualities we ask of the modern city if it is to become a human landscape again. There should be:

- closeness — not accessibility
- intimacy — not functionalism
- beauty, sensualism — not perfection or finish
- varied utility — not specialization
- comprehensive, individual service — not efficiency or cheapness
- softness — not strength
- freedom — not for cars

Also, the city should be:

- understandable — not elegant
- surprising — not standardized or symmetric
- green — not sectorized nature
- humane — not monumental
- multicentric — not altogether centric or altogether linear

This should not be taken as a proposal for rebuilding the medieval village. Historical epochs cannot be reinstituted at will. But some

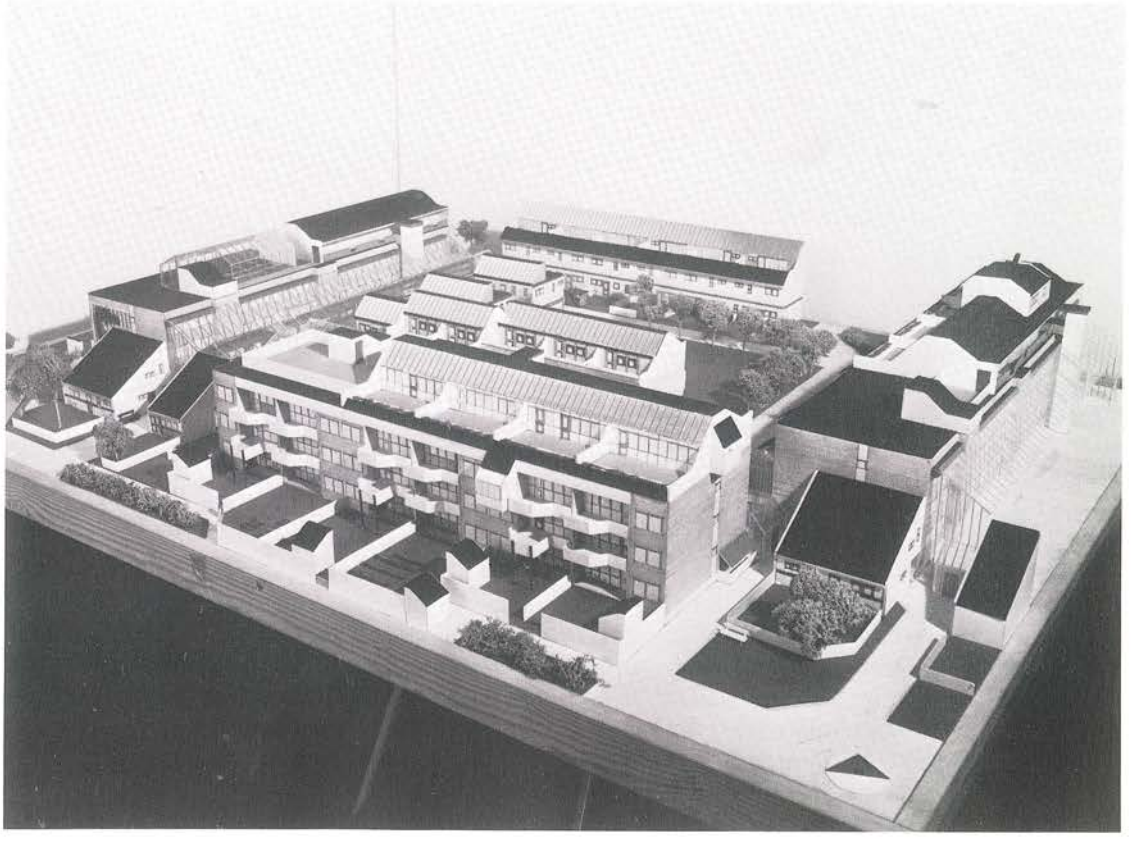


By the year 2000, most people will live in houses that are already built today. The dominant type of modern housing in Sweden is shown above

of the qualities which we connect with that environment could successfully be integrated in modern city planning. To the list above could be added demands for low energy consumption and a less vulnerable life style. Happily, all these demands seem to coincide. With a wider calculation than normal, it should be obvious that we cannot afford to build on the inhuman scale any longer.

Looking at many new towns or new city parts in Sweden (and even more so in Denmark), it is evident that the crises of energy and economy have put on the agenda other priorities than the traditional ones. The best new places are closely knit, with roofed-in malls and no thoroughfare traffic, and with concrete, glass, steel and softer materials used in a way that is both surprising and sensual. Other qualities could be added in the future. Good insulation would permit the placing of small industries right in residential areas. It is natural to make it possible for people to tend their own vegetables. Waste could be separated at source. There should be continuous bicycle paths and special corridors for heavy traffic. Houses should rarely be permitted to be higher than three storeys and must be prepared for the use of renewable energy sources. Every sector of the new town should provide its inhabitants with open and free repair shops and with combined libraries and cafés. Institutions like schools and health-care centres could move in on the ground floors of apartment houses which should be used for other purposes during the hours when not in use for their normal functions.

All this is good. It should be done. And probably it will be done if there is constant pressure on local politicians. Yet this is not what really matters. Some 80 per cent of the Swedes are living in cities. However nice new towns may be, only a fraction of the population will inhabit them. By the year 2000, most people will live in houses that are already built today. This makes rebuilding rather than building the great task of the 'eighties and the



Rebuilding rather than building will be the great task of the 'eighties and the 'nineties. Architect Peter Broberg has provided a workable model of how to transform the houses on the opposite page into attractive living quarters

'nineties. Only this way can the 'one million programme' (of apartments) get its belated status as providing good dwelling places rather than silos for human storage. All the qualities asked of the new town should be asked of the rebuilt city sector as well. It will also be a question of actively changing scales of existing houses, 'coarsing' the fronts, filling out empty spaces, reallocating services, 'zero-budgeting' present non-residential houses for a new usage policy, redirecting traffic, and so on.

Can it be done? Better yet, it is being done. In the city of Landskrona, in the southernmost part of Sweden, architect Peter Broberg and a 25-odd man crew at his think tank for ecological building have put together a workable model called 'the angular village'. Given the stereotyped three 'loaves' of houses built at right-angles to each other (the dominant type of housing in Sweden), Broberg has totally changed the character by making the area denser, expanding the balconies to be truly useful, adding condominiums on top of the houses, putting elevators on the fronts to make them operational for the handicapped, etc. The apartment space added is 40 per cent. Suddenly a dead-dull block has become attractive, lively and changeable. It has become part of a living city.

To recapture the city one would have to start a crash programme of the sort Broberg has indicated. This would go a long way towards meeting human needs. But there are other problems that have to be tackled. One is rents. If the scheme of massive land buying proposed in the previous section was carried out, much of the problem would vanish, but certainly not all of it. Speculation would try to find other outlets and so affect housing. There would still be a need to make people more responsible for the places they live in, thereby reducing rents and stopping vandalism. Selling the apartments now rented has been suggested as a method to achieve this. The proposal has been criticized for strengthening segregation, already a major problem in most cities. But it

seems as if those voicing this criticism tend to underestimate the factual segregation caused by decisive factors like vandalism. Nevertheless, transforming all rented apartments into condominiums would require a housing bank to help people with little buying power. This bank could be financed initially by the selling of bonds with a guaranteed interest slightly above inflation rate. The demand for this kind of bond has been much higher than the supply. The measure would also help to dry up the considerable streams of money visible in the market, which pose an inflationary threat.

Segregation could be viewed in a less one-sided way than is normal in Sweden. Positively phrased, it is a distinction of a certain area which gives its inhabitants a sense of belonging, an important quality today. Possibly the poorest areas would gain by making their situations clearer. In several countries, but especially in the US, trends are now going simultaneously in two opposite directions. While some questions are solved by a few states in cooperation (like the regulation of a river or protection of natural wilderness), big cities are increasingly split up into a number of neighbourhoods. In Atlanta, Georgia, the units have been given a remarkable and probably irreversible influence on the planning process through a scheme of public discussion between the neighbourhoods and the mayor's office of budget and planning. This process could well be copied and if, at first, middle-class areas are more active than working-class areas, as in Atlanta, this need not be the case in the long run.

As noted earlier, all cities, towns and communes should be required to plan and publish their schemes for supply of energy, water, food, etc. and also alternatives to these schemes. Concerning food, the absurd transportation up and down the country of necessary and not so necessary items should be shrunk to a minimum. Every city but the very largest should be able to supply itself from the immediate farmland area surrounding it. Possibly, different parts of farmland could be made responsible for the feeding of a sector of a city, as in China.

Finally, it is self-evident that the rebuilding of the cities should to some extent be carried out by their own inhabitants. Each neighbourhood association should be allotted money and materials and very few restrictions should be made on their ideas and schemes. The city should be recaptured not *for* anyone, but *with* many.

Participation

Besides the question of energy, no issue has been trickier to handle than that of participation and the democratization of economic life. At the moment so many conflicting demands are made, the confrontation between the formal view of democracy and other views so sharp, that it is hardly possible to indicate a workable direction. At the same time democratization is pushed forwards without any real notion of what effects it will have.

Thus, at the local government level, publicly employed ask to take part in the decision-making process concerning not only their own work or the whole administration but the political issues as well. This clearly infringes on representative democracy. (The same kind of problem, though here a real dilemma, can be found in the cooperative movement, where there is a clash between employees and the management which justly claims to represent also the interest of the members.) At the national level, under the present minority government, Parliament has been reassigned an important role. Normally its standing is

much lower, while the government produces agreements in collusion with various groups of interests. The corporate state is more than a theoretical threat and is constantly strengthened by demands, such as from feminists for quotas and affirmative action.

As has been noted before, decentralization and democratization are not automatically the same thing. The concept of formal democracy is important to uphold so as to balance the power of various interests and to give a voice to those, be it individuals, local governments or associations, who fare less well among the strong. A recent academic study has shown that, for example, only the very active and young have a chance of making their influence felt in groups who wage extra-parliamentary campaigns. Indeed, an authoritarian streak is felt in many movements claiming to further a more direct democracy.

But representative democracy can be structured in many ways and it is not impossible, though hard, to bring more of the power back to the people. Here, no single formula will do. What is needed is a consciousness in all aspects of politics to withstand the impulse to still more centralization, efficiency and profitability. In general, it is a question of whether the political parties are prepared to use the strength and imagination of their members. So far they have treated them the way employers normally treat workers—with distrust and a total disregard of what could be achieved by listening. In fact, it is worse than that. Several parties have organized vast study groups to deal with certain well-defined problems. The groups have been given long questionnaires to be filled out and sent to the party central office. On the issue of energy policies, the Centre Party and the Social Democrats had some 70,000 people devote a number of evenings to discussions. However, the snag is that they had to answer highly leading questions and that the results were crudely misused. In the case of the Social Democrats, the leadership managed to portray an obviously hesitant membership opinion (with 21 per cent clearly against nuclear energy, 16 per cent clearly in favour and 63 per cent undecided) as resounding support for the official party line, which of course was very positive towards this kind of energy.

When asked if they supported the Social Democratic Party line in the crucial decision on atomic energy made in Parliament in 1975, most said they did—in spite of the fact that at the time of the decision only 9 per cent of the general population were in favour of it and the subsequent debate made people even more dubious. This utter loyalty towards the leadership, never reciprocated, is a tower of strength—as long as it lasts. The chances are that it may suddenly collapse. What happens to the member of the study group who knows his opinions to be on the side of a majority and sees them covered up or even interpreted as a message of exactly the opposite kind?

It cannot be stated too strongly that the degree of functioning democracy which a country has is decided by many factors that have very little to do with formal democracy. We have already broached some of these earlier: the scale of everything from houses to associations to industrial combines; the very rapidness of technological development and how this is planned for; permanent structural change which means lifelong insecurity for workers (and their families) in certain branches; the faster and faster pace of daily life. It takes strong and conscious work to offset the effects of these and many more.

By all counts, Swedish democracy should *not* function. Given the factors mentioned and the growing gap between various élites and the

people, one might expect that the rituals of formal democracy would have shrunk to just that. Yet, democracy *does* function. The mere threat of disposing of the élites (by election) —i.e. the élites that can be disposed of—seems to be enough to safeguard a minimum of control and check. It may be that the controlling functions are to some extent passed on to other agents, such as the media. Now, this being said, the fact that democracy functions in spite of the strains is no guarantee that it will do so in the future. The educational situation is an illustrious example, in fact more than that—a decisive factor. While the ambition has been to prepare young people for adult life, to strengthen vocational talents at the expense of theoretical knowledge and to reduce competitive tendencies, the result has been rising illiteracy, too early specialization and a tumultuous situation in the classroom. The aim was to help children from workers' homes—but the result was that all are now disadvantaged in school, while youngsters from well-educated homes receive their basic training from their parents. In comparative studies of European children, a substantial minority of the Swedish young stand out as lonesome, unwanted, taking their norms from their own age groups rather than from grown-ups, and as having a negative attitude towards work and duties.

This means a widening gap between those ruling and those ruled; between those who perhaps do not know so much but know how to find knowledge and how to operate society, and those who just cannot muster the will. While schools are permitted to drift into chaos with no demands made, higher education has been turned around into some kind of conveyor belt work, with literally no freedom to pick up random knowledge and experiences. After that, the student is turned out into a society where opinion-making is firmly in the hands of commercial interests.

What we are witnessing is really the triumph of liberalism. Young people are never permitted to sense the limits of their freedom—because there are none. They will never experience the liberating feeling of knocking down a mental wall provided by grown-ups—because it is not there. In a world of chaos and violence there are fewer and fewer steady points to use as a base. The lack of demands made on young people combines with the lack of jobs and the constant, deafening noise of commercialism to give them a feeling of being unwanted, ignored and worthless. In a society without norms and with ideologically bewildered grown-ups, society itself fades away.

The main characteristic of Swedish liberalism is an inclination to attack formal rules while obscuring economic interests. Thus it sometimes helps to dismantle a structure that was a support for the weak and opens the field for unhampered exploitation by various business interests. For all practical purposes, liberal intellectuals operate as a front for economic imperialism within the country. It is thanks to them that the view of the relations between élites and others has become so crude and superficial. There is no doubt that every modern society has a plethora of élites. Like the liberals, one can deny it, thus stripping oneself of any possibility of having a say on their doings. But they will still be there. In fact, what separates democracy and fascism is not whether élites are there or if they play an important role. The difference is whether or not there is a theoretical possibility of sacking them. In a democracy this is possible, and it works. Belief in any kind of development means an acceptance of the existence of élites. The real question is how to influence and interact with them.

In Sweden, lately, these two aspects of the role of the élites have been mixed up. The result is that much of the discussion on the way to achieve economic democracy is totally stale. In practice, the reforms to this end (State representatives on bank boards, industrial committees in factories, the law about the right of partaking in decision-making) have either meant very little or created a situation where time is taken up by endless discussions at the expense of productive work. People who fail to make any special marks in their own work regard union activities as a second chance of making a career. More and more work units close themselves to the outside, refusing new ideas and new people, and expand only by cooptation. Control is viewed as a value in itself rather than as a necessary way of checking the direction. The will to accept responsibility is often automatically identified as the will to hold power and people with initiative are bullied, however useful their ideas might be to the group.

If experiences within creative jobs (such as media) have anything to tell, the economic democratization of Sweden is in sore straits right now. Though few care to admit it the proposal for wage earners' funds could harm rather than benefit real democracy. The scheme is to build up funds, partly from a percentage of every employee's earnings, partly from a percentage of the annual profits, that would eventually constitute the dominating block of shares. At the heart of the debate is the question of whether this would give workers control of their own workplaces or merely would mean so much more power for the unions. In the latter case, could the unions cope with the problem of being at the same time employer and representative of the employees? Is it reasonable that those who happen to work in an industry that is essential to the Swedish economy and society should wield all the power over this industry or should the State somehow be brought into the picture?

What is clear is that present conditions do not give real insight or control to the employees. Quite a few schemes have proved to be grander in theory than in practice. Already ten years ago one could make the forecast (as this writer did) that the proposal for self-steering groups would mean that the more farsighted among the owners would be only too happy to surrender power over the shopfloor to the workers, or rather the stewards, while retaining control of investments, research and market exploitation. Several studies have now shown that this is precisely what has happened and that only the participation of workers' representatives, not on the boards but at the management level and in the groups that decide day-to-day operations, will give real influence.

To counter an excessive local influence, the scheme for wage earners' funds makes provisions for branch funds that could help with investments in particularly difficult areas. This would also give the Trade Union Central a certain number of seats on the boards of the funds. Some debaters who would like to see society gain some influence in the process have asked for a tripartite solution where society, trade unions and present owners would form the board in every company of major size (>500 workers). This is regarded as a way of avoiding too narrow an outlook and a stalemate between present owners and workers' representatives.

However, in both cases one has to ask: Will half-democracy do? Will increased power for the union men give enough of an incentive to workers to assume more responsibility? I think not. Experiences seem clear enough:

only when given real power will people feel that they have good reason to interest themselves in the management of the places where they work. The way to follow then is the syndicalist or the cooperative course which gives workers' collectives full responsibility for the factory they operate. According to this alternative, every unit goes its own way while cooperating through various organizations for buying and commerce and perhaps giving the same bank some supervisory role, as in the successful Mondragon cooperative in Spain. Laws would regulate the use of profits, i.e. how much would be paid out as extra salary and how much set aside for investments and as reserves. Consumer interests and those of the local society could be guaranteed through seats on the board.

This alternative seems rather attractive compared with the intricate scheme of wage earners' funds. Nevertheless, it could only be introduced by that kind of approach. The difference is that it does not stop at a formal acquisition of the majority of shares; it does not accept that most of the workers act as 'sleeping partners'; and it does not display a fundamental distrust of what a workers' collective can achieve on its own. The best thing about it is that work itself would be the basis of influence. If this principle was strictly enforced throughout working life in Sweden, much of the present squabbling would stop. On the other hand, it demands more of the individual worker and more of the trade unions. A significant problem—felt all through the debate on wage earners' funds—is that the unions and especially the central organization (LO) have only in the last decade shown some interest in training workers in taking responsibility. Earlier, the thought of a possible dual role for the unions made every attempt in this direction look like back-door syndicalism. This goes a long way towards explaining why Swedish workers, while striving for a broader role, simply do not feel ready for the takeover that is now envisaged.

Probably, the cooperative solution looks even more dangerous as this means going it alone. But then some 40 Swedish firms are already cooperatives and doing rather well, in spite of the fact that they were taken over when the former owners threatened to close down. Possibly a scheme where the workers gain control only nominally, while the unions carry the real responsibility, would be the worst solution. As the debate goes right now, we seem to be heading for exactly this situation, where workers have the formal responsibility but none of the real power and thus no incentive for committing themselves any more than today.

A proposal for the cooperative solution is almost automatically met by a reference to the Yugoslavian experience. There, it is claimed, corporations behave like capitalist units, fiercely competing with each other with no consideration for the common good. Sometimes, just the opposite is said—that they are under the strong control of banks and the State and therefore have very little scope for initiatives of their own. Still another criticism made is that successful companies use profits for higher wages instead of expanding and bringing in new people. Obviously, there is some truth in this. But as the Yugoslavian experiment is not a truly cooperative one, the model cannot be discarded in this way. Rather, one should look for ideas in places where conditions are closer to Swedish reality, i.e. in capitalist countries with strong cooperative movements. Also, the fear of individual initiatives (and here we are talking about 'individuals' constituting workers' collectives) is vastly exaggerated. It is generally voiced by

people who otherwise show little inclination towards socialism but unfortunately mimic some attitudes of dogmatic communism. Fear of individualism, forgetting that the collective way is only a means to achieve a better society, not a goal in itself, could lead us into social bureaucratism without socialism. Again, the question is whether reform should be made *for* or *with* the people. But to reject the cooperative solution with this kind of argument would also be wrong on factual grounds: as hinted at earlier, a number of measures could be taken to ensure that society, and consumers and branches, have their say in the policies of a single corporation or factory.

In any kind of scheme, information and control of research will be an important factor. At the industrial level, after some kind of workers' control has been established, this will create less of a problem than in society as a whole. With an increasing pace in technological breakthroughs, concerning things that sometimes are hard to grasp even for people of neighbouring disciplines, it becomes more and more necessary to bridge the gap between people in general and scientific and technical élites. It will take a great effort to stimulate the appearance of more scientific journalists; of hearings where parliamentary or non-parliamentary commissions—with the help of a law or perhaps only the moral imperative—force scientists to reveal the true meaning of their work; and various techniques for disseminating crucial facts, such as people's computers that could have outlets at public libraries where trained personnel would help in operating them.

Even if it is hardly realistic to create a technological 'gate-keeper', there should be a commission with the task of trying to foresee developments in this field and make recommendations to prepare for or combat the effects of new techniques, sometimes possibly to block them altogether. There should also be an active effort to initiate counter-research at both the central and the local level.

Swedes are not negative to technology or research. Surveys have shown that they place great confidence in the ability of technicians to provide the economy with inventions to give Sweden the lead in certain fields. At the same time, they show strong opposition to nuclear energy and hybrid-DNA research. This mature attitude could be of enormous value if people were practically stimulated to use their own brains and to help develop techniques at the lower and intermediate levels. This, in turn, calls for a kind of cultural liberation. With the help of an assortment of measures, both positive and negative, all the obstacles which keep people from a more active and intensive life must be removed. A reactivation of people's movements, this particular Nordic phenomenon that has meant so much for democracy in Scandinavia, would have high priority. It takes some guts, no doubt, to introduce measures which could superficially be described as so many steps backwards—like reduced TV time with perhaps one evening every week totally free and strong censorship of violence in films—but the alternative, accepting 'development' as it is, would be too appalling to contemplate. But once more: the main road to a vitalized democracy is through shrinking the scale, making society less forbidding, more of a common responsibility and more of a common pleasure.

4 Model: A Cooperative Sweden

As mentioned before, there are a number of proposals of varying scope for dealing with what is seen by most people as an unsatisfying way of living. Quite a few focus on the local community (such as several thorough suggestions made by researchers at the Centre for Cross-Scientific Studies in Gothenburg: on the low energy society, a plan for building a new low energy community, etc). Some, on the other hand, are general in character but not part of a total plan, like Bäckstrand and Ingelstams *How much is enough?*, the wage earners' funds and Rehn's system of drawing rights. These are good building blocks, but more so the latter than the former, as there is an inherent distrust in Sweden of everything that is radically new or deals with intangibles like quality of life or self-realization. What should be found is a way to argue which makes positive use of the experiences and insights gained during the long struggle for social liberation, and a system or plan that is natural to this experience and fairly easy to implement.

A ladder of development, from the causes of the negative situation of the present, over a simple extrapolation of visible tendencies, into an evaluation of what is possible and realistic, could look like this.

A ladder of development.

−4 Certain biological features, like the domination of neocortex over older brain layers, condition Man to a one-sided development.
−3 The development of technology proceeds at an immensely faster pace than the development of Man's moral and emotional capacity.
−2 An era of reductionism prevails with large-scale, capitalist accumulation.
−1 Man is threatened on all levels, while overstimulation keeps him from being active and thus causes understimulation in other aspects.
0 If Man perishes—morally, emotionally, imaginatively—the world does.
1 To regain control over the consumption pattern and our time (Sachs), certain basic goods and services and possibilities for self-activity must be pulled out of the market.
2 A new concept of security has to be shaped.
3 People will not be ready to abstain from anything if they cannot clearly see what they will get instead (this is what welfare has done to us).
4 At present, we cannot cope with holistic solutions, they may not even be desirable.
5 Still, singular changes are broken or distorted by the present system of regulations and by conditions in the market.
6 Therefore, we have to strive for comprehensive solutions in singular areas.
7 The aim is to create self-reliant units with a consciousness of the whole and a natural role in the hierarchy presented by this. In every unit, tendencies to integration and tendencies to self-reliance and isolation should be able to manifest themselves without fatal conflicts.

Let us assume it is 1990.

Sweden is changing, but it has not really made up its mind which way to go. To the bewilderment and even disgust of traditional trading partners, the country has somehow altered its life style, its kind of development and its goals. Yet, all this without any overt declarations or earth-shaking decisions. While retaining its position as a free trade country, upholding imports from the Third World, Sweden has in a small but significant way altered and reduced its interchange with other countries. Not by law, but by inclination,

Swedes are consciously striving to support their own industries, even at a time when the industrial and economic organization is rather unclear.

The cause of the present situation is what happened in the Social Democratic Party towards the middle of the 'eighties. Rather than trying to suppress what appeared as a majority or at least a substantial minority that firmly believed in ecosocialism, and thereby risking a rift that could split the party in half, the leadership preferred to roll with the tide. The result was an ambiguous policy that seemed to tolerate planning and practical experimenting with alternative production and living, while putting all real emphasis on large scale development that for so long had been the guiding rule of the party. But in spite of the fact that the party has succeeded in staying in power, alone or at times together with the Liberals, the power and influence of the government is obviously circumscribed. Local authorities have achieved an independence in relation to Stockholm which in some cases is remarkable. But most baffling to old-fashioned Social Democrats are the many tendencies that seem to deny the value of certain hard-fought-over principles: unpaid work is no longer scoffed at as 'upper-class charity'; school curricula are not seen as holy any more and many types of experiments in the field are allowed; a high tax burden is not only viewed as a 'collective income' but also as an indication that something is seriously wrong with the system, etc. All this hurt, of course, and still does. Perhaps the most painful change to many Social Democrats—but at the same time the most hopeful to others—was the decision (made possible by an alliance of Liberals, Centre Party members, Communists and a few Social Democratic rebels) to establish a committee of MPs, experts and respected laymen to review the existing system of regulations and purge from it all items that hindered attempts to create an alternative Sweden. A number of politicians felt like having wasted their lives on ingenious sets of rules which were now thrown out of the window.

Though so much is still at the crossroads, change is visible in almost every walk of life. By buying all land, the State has made it possible for young people to establish themselves as farmers, either as families or as cooperatives. The work has become less of a gamble through the contracts at indexed prices that cooperatives and associations make with 'their' sectors of the near-by city. More men and women till the land than most can remember. This enables them to open up new land, with the aim of making the country independent of agricultural imports. Also, very few chemicals are used nowadays and fuel for homes and machines, mainly methane, is made on the farms. Many families which started out on their own have finally decided to join a cooperative or start a new one, as they found that life became too strenuous and lonesome in the old way. Now they get the same chances of vacation, leisure time and education at self-appointed dates as everyone else. It is even easier to live in a farming cooperative than in a city cooperative, as the former is more apt to calculate with considerable flexibility in the work force and thus is able to accept 'working guests'.

City dwellers are less estranged from country life than before, as most of them have their own little patch of soil (on rooftops, in transformed parking lots, or just outside the immediate housing area) with extremely intensive production of vegetables. The block repair and welding shops have given them some experience in mending and constructing simple machines. Some have taken part in the

The Swedish cooperative movement, which may expand into many new areas of the nation's life and develop into an all-cooperative movement, has a long tradition of economic operations. The first cooperative association, Lagunda och Hagunda häraders varu-anskaffnings aktie-bolag, was established at Örsundsbro outside Uppsala in 1850. Its purpose was to make bulk purchases in order to provide farmers and crofters with essential goods at cheap prices. A museum, commemorating the first cooperative store, was recently inaugurated at Örsundsbro.

rebuilding of their city sector. Partly by banning cars from downtown areas, partly by changing the structure of the city with denser housing and more complex planning, life here has become much more varied, challenging and simply fun. It is also easier than before, in spite of the restricted list of commodities offered by supermarkets (and only the old and the handicapped are allowed to order through view data systems). Most services can be found in the neighbourhood: basic health care, repair shops, day and night child care centres, lower grade and training centres, adult education courses, cinemas and small restaurants. In fact, most of these amenities would look rather simple to someone coming from the 'seventies with the values of that time. As things are used longer, and then often recycled, one can see the wear. Elegance and polish are almost forgotten words. In that superficial understanding of the term, the standard of living has become much lower. But everyone is properly fed and clothed and lives well, too. And life is not a bore any more.

What started this process was of course the debate on whether all cooperative movements (for housing, insurance and consumption) should be merged. It seems likely that this will happen in the end. Until then we will have to make do with the common cooperative credit cards. But, in the last few years, we have seen interesting results from an idea that was originally brought to Sweden from Quebec. It is a loans and savings institution that instead of interest on savings provides its members with inexpensive goods and services. This is done through other cooperative companies and members can, for example, buy vacations and insurances far below market prices and get interest-free loans. The aim is to sidestep inflation and give people a real interest on what they save. This fits perfectly with the declared intentions of the local all-cooperative associations, which organize an increasing number of

activities. The most original feature is perhaps that members can pitch in a few hours of work for the common good to accumulate points with which they can buy basic goods cheaper than in ordinary stores. This way they will also get help when they cannot cope on their own, e.g. a bachelor who wants to put up new wallpaper and wants it done in a day or two. The work he has to do to get the points he needs is of the same kind. But it could also consist of things that would make the whole city sector more pleasant. This has given rise to a certain clash of opinions. Some think that everyone should be forced to join the association, as everyone benefits from it. Others compare the situation with what happened when unions were still reasonably young—when those who fought for the unions improved conditions for everyone, including those who did not care to join. According to this faction, membership will eventually increase by itself, as it becomes evident how much is gained in lower prices by joining.

It has become quite common for whole families to work together in the associations, as this is seen as a kind of desirable social control and thus duly rewarded with a higher number of points. This would probably have been impossible without the reduction of hours on normal jobs which is now six hours and looks like going down to five. No doubt quite a few would have preferred to have stayed in the 'seventies or even 'sixties. It remains to be seen if the new life style is so strong that its most ardent supporters can relinquish their messianism and permit people to live outside the system. It is also a question of whether this will demand so many provisions that the liberty of the few will threaten the liberty of the many who have shown that they want to go this new way.

In spite of the obvious momentum that city rebuilding has achieved, there is still a long haul to be made before the worst features of the concrete architecture of the 'one million programme' have been removed or—in the case of rather small houses of not more than four or five storeys—renovated. You can still hear gasps of incredulity over the sheer waste of money when scenes like the dynamiting of the Pruitt-Igloe Project, St Louis, in 1953 are repeated. Not everyone is able to see that the demolition of almost brand-new high-rises, that could have remained for 70 or 80 years, is absolutely necessary. Every decision of this kind has to be fought over as if it were being made for the first time. And often it is, as these decisions are made by neighbourhoods with only financial help from their cities.

So we are in a period of transition. Few neighbourhoods or city sectors have found a definite character, and perhaps they never will. Relations between government and administration on the one hand and regions and cities on the other are still undecided, not least because, surprisingly, regions have turned out to be much less important than communities, towns and neighbourhoods. Also, the industrial and economic organization is still uncertain. What seems to be the goal of most is a state where every corporation with more than 500 employees is owned by society, if possible managed by worker-elected boards, where every business with five or less employees can be privately or cooperatively managed, and where the rest are run by producer cooperatives with seats reserved on the boards for representatives of the local community and the consumers' organizations.

Perhaps the most impressive part of this picture is that it does not presuppose total allegiance. Though the goals mentioned are far from reached, and will not be for at least another five years, it is safe to forecast that the

details of the system will vary from region to region, from area to area. This means a rejection of the old conviction that law should change people's minds instead of the other way round—another favourite Social Democratic conception that had to go. Now most people will press to get their companies into this system, which has raised productivity by 20 to 30 per cent (and thus confirmed reports from companies that went cooperative in the 'seventies).

It could be expected that the big change would eliminate or at least blur ideological conflicts. This has hardly been the case, but one has to admit that conflicts now are of another kind. Less total in scope and more expressions of individual or group demands than general principles, they focus on concrete issues. The row over health care is a good example. In the latter part of the 'seventies health-care costs sky-rocketed and no one had any real idea of how to curb them. One suggestion was a somewhat half-baked proposal by the Liberals to establish a kind of 'house-physician' system. It aimed at giving people access to the same physician for many minor ailments, even psychiatric ones. Every health centre should serve at first 3,000 people, and eventually 2,000. However, there was a shortage of general practitioners in the existing system and the proposal did not take into account factors that would keep the operators of the centre away, such as courses, repeated education spells, illnesses and so forth. But what mattered most was that even if the plan could have made the overall costs rise less rapidly, it could not make the curve turn downwards.

The debate that ensued polarized opinion. One faction saw health care as such a vital service that almost everything else should yield to the demands for instant care with the latest in treatment technology. As a consequence, they deemed it unavoidable that treatment should be paid for by the patients. This approach also included openings for private practices. The other faction asked radically for a communalization of health-care funds, based on population numbers, with a strong commitment to basic health-care centres in factories and the living areas. According to this view, most of the high-technology gadgets should be allowed to rust. But as we now witness the results of our life style in the 'sixties and the 'seventies—with ever-rising figures for cancer and other environmental diseases—more and more people believe that treatment with ultra-modern techniques is a right that only the callous can dispute.

Understandably, we have not seen the end of the discussion. But the small scale faction has at least established that basic health care is indeed a matter for neighbourhoods, who are allotted a per capita share of some two-thirds of the total costs. On the other hand, they have had to accept the reintroduction of more than nominal fees to stop misuse. The hope is, of course, that the new life style will have results in the health sector, too. Our new-found insight, tentative as it is, into the interdependence of somatic status and psychological well-being has provoked notions of an altogether new kind of medical treatment that is hardly realistic. Perhaps this whole field would have been easier to handle had the leadership of the cooperative movements not been so hesitant to step into the fray. Clearly, these organizations have a role to play in this context, too.

What is life like in cooperative Sweden? Perhaps a visitor would not see drastic changes. He would note, of course, that cities have become greener, softer, more personal. The wind-mills, sun-collectors and, in the re-

mote countryside areas, the vast fields of biomass farming would hardly be news to him. But he is sure to note that the pace is slower and that people are leading lives that are quite different from earlier times. Walking the streets where bicycles and small electrical transport vehicles mill around, he will see people of all ages every hour of the day. The system of drawing rights has made it hard to know what people's main occupations are. As unemployment is virtually non-existent, crime rates, drunkenness and other social disorders have declined markedly.

But what surely would strike the visitor most would be the curious blend of old and new. Swedes are immensely interested in technical innovations and, in spite of protests from ecologists, we have with an almost Japanese fervour put semiconductors into everything in sight. Still, the rat race is slower, goods are acquired to use more than to admire or show off with, and people make few capital investments and borrow a lot. Now that the unions have given up their resistance to unpaid work, functionalism in aspects other than architecture is also on the decline and social networks that have been long forgotten are gingerly re-established. This has among other things permitted child-care centres to be very small—which is important for the development of the children—and to move into living blocks.

It is hardly a dream world, but it is safer, secure in a new way, more challenging, and it offers a chance to live rather than merely exist.

5 Örebro: Strategies to Get There

Is there any possibility at all that the scheme presented above could be implemented? The only way to get an answer is to pick out a certain area and study the tendencies there.

Örebro is a middle-sized city some two hours' drive south-west of Stockholm. It has a population of 118,000, two-thirds of whom are of working age. The province, with the same name, is one of 24 major ones, and when figures for the nation are broken down Örebro looks quite representative of the country.

The city was for a long time the centre of textile and shoemaking industries. In fact, every third adult in the city of Örebro used to earn his or her living in shoemaking. Due to imports, this industry has almost disappeared. During the ten-year period 1965–75 the commodity producing sector lost more than 5,000 jobs. But an increase in service jobs made up for this—indeed offered twice as many.

The change that came over Sweden in the early and middle 'seventies was more sweeping in Örebro than elsewhere, as the city had more to lose. By the same token the change is now considered finished, while the rest of the country still has some violent strucural transformations to expect. So Örebro fast became a service-oriented city. Some State agencies moved there (e.g. the Central Statistical Bureau) which has helped. Investments will be made on a fairly large scale in the railway works that is serving the country, and in other

companies. Yet, the official estimate is that only 70 to 80 per cent of the industrial capacity the city and the region is being utilized.

Counted per employee some 20 per cent of production is exported, a much lower dependence on exports than the nation as a whole. Seen the other way round one finds in Örebro an illustrious example of how little has been done to check foreign companies. Not far from the city is the small community called Zinc Pits, which for a hundred years or so has been totally run by the Belgian company Vieille Montagne. Huge quantities of zinc are exported every year, but so far the company has not paid a dime in taxes. The mining operation has entailed an abnormal number of deaths from cancer, caused by the radon gas. At the same time, the whole area has been polluted with waste of different kinds. Young miners do not care at all about the risks, but the older ones worry a great deal. The union chapters and the leaders of the Social Democratic district and city associations support the company wholeheartedly, fearing that the slightest criticism would make the company leave the country and thereby add to unemployment.

When it comes to housing, Örebro has a reputation for progressive thinking. Two areas, some ten years old, have seen experiments with housing committees and an all-out effort to provide the first dwellers with all kinds of services, which normally come late in newly built areas in Sweden. Unfortunately, the committees were never accepted by the tenants' union and thus folded. Today there is no self-activity to be seen in these areas. They are also examples of the much too uniform, right-angled approach to building that has dominated in Sweden up to now.

Politically, Örebro city had a period of some 40 years of Social Democratic rule. This was broken in 1973, only to be resumed in 1976. Generally speaking, more Social Democratic leaders in this city are interested in discussions like the one presented here than one would find in other places. Membership activity, on the other hand, is low, partly because many feel that much of the internal deliberation with questionnaires and the whole bit has been a sham. As shown by a recent study, election slates in Örebro are dominated by full-time staff within the local government services—at least as far as Liberals and Social Democrats are concerned. This is clearly a memento for the future.

To test the willingness to consider change and to discuss what Örebro has to offer regarding strategies to start this change, a small group of present and former leading decision-makers in the city administration (all Social Democrats) was convened. Presented with a seven-page version of this paper, the group agreed on the whole with the analysis made. In their daily work of managing Örebro, the participants have ample possibility to study the fundamentally new difficulties that Sweden now faces. They all agreed that the main problem was to make leading Social Democrats realize that measures that have worked fine in the past cannot be relied upon any longer. That no one hesitated to side with the rather gloomy picture drawn in this report is in itself remarkable. The discussion on the various issues can be summarized as follows.

1. Among most of the group there was a marked scepticism regarding the proposal for an all-cooperative organization at the local level to take care of the secondary economy. The criticism mainly concerned the non-ideological, common-sense basis of the idea. It was emphasized that Swedish tradition is to couch most issues in political terms and that this is a necessary instrument or guiding

principle to counter strong economic and bureaucratic interests. The participants obviously had some difficulty in visualizing how the organization would work. Moreover, the risk that young, active and healthy persons would dominate the organization, thus excluding others, was felt to be a realistic development.

The Social Democrats in Örebro have their own scheme for decentralization. Taking their cue from a formal decision made at the latest party conference in the autumn of 1978, they have created community councils which, to start with, have an advisory function. These are created from above, with a representation for the different parties to match that in the city council. In January 1980, some of the councils will be given the right to decide on certain issues. Money earmarked for one field can be used at the discretion of a council as long as it is kept within this field. The goal is to shape 13 self-reliant areas which more or less conform with school and social areas. It is fully expected that this will lead to different developments in the different city sectors. Thus schools, for example, will be permitted to vary considerably in their structures and ways of operating. This is actually a less drastic change than normally assumed, for schools already look very different when studied closely.

For those familiar with the Bologna system of decentralization there are some interesting parallels. Two aspects are important in this context. One is that the decentralization through neighbourhoods in Bologna is underpinned by a strong centralist power, all the time pressing for a fair distribution of services. This is in harmony with the ambitions of decision-makers in Örebro, who have put three members of staff in city hall at the disposal of the councils. The other is that the Bolognese aim at making the community councils a matter for popular election in the city sectors. Today the president of each council is nominated by the mayor but elected with a two-thirds majority in public elections. This is not what politicians in Örebro plan, as they wish to keep the bond with city politics and avoid possible intra-party bickering.

The Bologna example is interesting in this context because people there have succeeded in a way that is hardly open to the people of Örebro—and perhaps as a result of starting far behind Sweden in terms of social security and the like. The Bolognese have made mass transit free during rush hours, paid for by the employers with 0.8 per cent of the wage sum. They have made it more expensive to tear down old houses than to renovate them—and have stopped all demolitions in the Old City. They have put a ceiling on population growth at 600,000 inhabitants. They actively support producers' cooperatives.

The Örebro plan for self-reliant areas is certainly a step in the right direction, and not too small a step at that. It could easily be expanded through the adoption of certain features of the neighbourhood system used in Atlanta, Georgia, where people have a decisive influence over planning and with the help of programme budgeting can follow 'their' issues all the way through the political and bureaucratic processes. But the Örebro plan is clearly not a way to activate people in general—only measures of the kind suggested in this report will do. In fact, there seem to be few obstacles to marrying the Örebro plan to the system for all-cooperative local organizations.

2. Revealingly, this group of decision-makers in Örebro had only the vaguest ideas about the supply. plans of the city. Besides plans for normal use, there are also plans for

emergencies. It is, however, a plain fact that the latter are fundamentally unrealistic. The group felt that the suggestion that alternative plans should be made and publicly discussed would be an interesting way of opening a dialogue on what can be done and what cannot.

Could the city be supplied with food from the immediate countryside area? The main problem here, ironically, is a cooperative—namely that of the farmers—which by its extreme centralization has made it very difficult to envisage an alternative to the present situation.

3. There is no question that there is an almost unlimited number of tasks to be done to make society a nicer place to live in. By this token, there is no need for a six-hour day in order to share out existing jobs. But here one must make a distinction between jobs that are remunerative in the present sense and jobs that are useful but not remunerative and possibly even the opposite. What should be sought is a way of making needs and resources meet. For some, the six-hour day has a decommercialized leisure time as a necessary prerequisite. Just as important is the possibility of changing jobs several times during a lifetime. This view is fully in line with the proposal for a real income insurance with individual drawing rights. In Örebro, trade unions have shown a positive attitude towards voluntary work and have helped to create public works for young people.

4. Örebro has been much less hit by housing cycles than the rest of the country. In the city, there were never more than 100 to 150 empty flats while other cities were fighting the effects of overbuilding. When it comes to vandalism, middle-class areas in Örebro have been hurt as much as other areas. There are certain plans to add more services to existing living areas, but no rebuilding plan like the one proposed here exists. It has not been possible, for example, to get craftsmen's shops located in the housing areas—instead an 'entrepreneurial village' is under construction, which is something else altogether. While a small area in downtown Örebro is car-free, there are no plans to expand it. On the other hand, studies have been made for linking traffic in a circle around the downtown area with plenty of parking lots and possibly a free bus service between these and the centre of the city. Also, some experiments for differentiating work hours are planned, so that the peak traffic time will be spread and thus less intense.

Active work is being carried out to infuse some democratic structures into the living areas. The aim is, of course, to give people something to decide about: the environment surrounding the houses, maintenance, uses and so forth. Further, Örebro will continue its extensive practice of leasing rather than selling lots for private homes. In the future, it will be important to guarantee to home-owners that only fluctuations in the interest rate will influence what they have to pay, while rent hikes will occur when houses are sold. This is in line with proposals in this paper, but it should be noted that there is a very real risk of promoting segregation if rent hikes get too high.

5. Basic health care in Örebro is in bad shape. There is no real balance between resources spent on the regional hospital and the district centres. Said to be an attempt at introducing the house-physician system proposed for the nation, the Örebro centres have only some 20 physicians—and most of them are working in one of the centres. Unfortunately, there seems to be no ambition to rectify this situation on the part of the decision-makers, who are politicians in the regional or secondary communes.

6. From their experiences, it was clear to many in the group that the existing order for giving employees some influence over their workplaces just does not function. The law on the right to influence decisions has led to never-ending discussions, marathon committee meetings, bureaucratic inefficiency, and no real responsibility. The only good that can be said of it is that it gives an early warning of failing companies. What is needed instead is working conditions that permit a natural democracy.
7. One special experience of current political work in Örebro is said to be the difficulty of piecemeal reforms. When the planning organization was up for review and change, it proved to be impractical to start with an analysis of the needs. Job roles, underpinned by unions and other organizations, made change virtually impossible. Rather, it was much easier to create an image of how things should work. That way, the whole structure of command could be broken down and there could be a fresh start. The conclusion drawn from this was that all structures have to change at the same time—an interesting comment on what has been said in this paper on the problems of presenting people with total solutions.
8. According to one participant (a leading trade unionist), one of the two main arguments in favour of the scheme for wage earners' funds is wholly erroneous. Rather than suffering from a lack of funds, many companies today do not know how to use their excessive capital. The risk is that there will be such an abundance of capital that this in itself will force society to develop in a direction that most people would loathe. Obviously, there is a parallel to this view in the comments made earlier about the effects of an abundance of energy.
9. Another participant offered the observation that very little can be done concerning social security and related matters without a renewed incomes policy. According to this highly placed decision-maker, there should be active government intervention in the labour market to create, in negotiations with the unions and the employers, a totally new incomes picture with a much smaller spread between incomes. This would only be an open acceptance of the undeniable fact that, with an increasing total tax burden, our system of redistribution causes losses that are too big to be reasonable.

This is an interesting but perhaps not fully realistic idea. It could, however, be modified by a decision to create maximum as well as minimum income levels. The higher level should be set low enough to generate sufficient funds for the rebuilding of the cities, an all-out programme to help young people find jobs and meaningful leisure-time activities, a broad and consistent fight against drug addiction, a decision to narrow the student-teacher ratio in schools, etc. As has been said before: it may be expensive, but the alternative of doing nothing seems to be even more expensive.

Did the Örebro meeting yield any definite suggestions on strategies to start the work for an alternative development? Not quite. Day-to-day politics and reform work itself constitute a certain inertia. While there was a clear awareness of the illnesses besetting Sweden and the Swedish model, there was also an understandable hesitation to plunge into a radically new development (as the proposal for the all-cooperative local associations was felt to be). Nevertheless, a few important signs, such as the plan for community councils and the interest in things like public ownership of land and zero-planning, show that some new thinking is emerging. The pace envisaged may

be maddeningly slow, but if this group of decision-makers is to any extent representative of feelings in Sweden today, we may conclude that there is a good basis for change.

As the saying goes: you can take your horse to the water, but you cannot make him drink. Some may think that Swedes are less interested in non-materialistic goals than people in other countries, less prepared to make the effort required for change. We cannot rule out that there is a kernel of truth in this. But on the other hand we must ask: Have people had the chance? Has the way society is organized been conducive to assuming more responsibility? The fight for equality and security was a liberating one. Now the aim must be to liberate people once more by shaping a new concept of security and by making society less formal, less 'strong' or 'great', and more inviting. I sincerely believe that the way to this end is through a conscious struggle to shrink the scale of a good many units in society. Man must again be the measure of everything man-made. This theme could be expanded at book-length. We have only broached here a few areas of central importance and submitted a few proposals (own and others'), big enough to promise a real change, but not too big to deny them some prospects of acceptance. Of these, I would like to stress those which concern the rebuilding of the cities, zero-planning, the buying of all land, the splitting up of cities into neighbourhoods, and the creation of an all-cooperative organization on the local level. These are great tasks, no doubt, but their effects should be attractive enough to make the difficulties of implementation seem reasonable. The decisive factor is the will to let people be a part of changes affecting themselves and to trust that they have something to offer.

Think shrink—it can be done!

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Towards a New Information Order: Rural Participation in the Peruvian Press

By Hélan Jaworski C.

One of the ten points introducing the objectives of the 1975 Dag Hammarskjöld Report, What Now: Another Development, *was devoted to information. It stated that 'citizens have a right to inform and be informed about the facts of development, its inherent conflicts and the changes it will bring about, locally and internationally' and went on to emphasize that 'under present conditions, information and education are only too often monopolized by the power structure, which manipulates public opinion to its own ends and tends to perpetuate preconceived ideas, ignorance and alienation.'*

It was also to be expected that the role of information in the new international order would be given increasing attention as a result of the new demands from the Third World; this issue was, in fact, the subject of a seminar organized by the Latin American Institute for Transnational Studies (ILET) in cooperation with the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation in Mexico City in 1976 and published in Development Dialogue later that year. The issues raised were further pursued at a seminar on 'International Communications and Third World Participation', organized by ILET in 1977. However, in these fora, as well as in others at which these questions have been discussed, there has been a need for concrete examples of experiences in the field of 'another information', illustrating both the achievements and the failures. One of the most interesting of the relatively few experiments made in this sphere is the one carried out by the revolutionary government of Peru, when the national daily newspapers were expropriated and assigned to different sectors of the population. Thus, Peru's leading newspaper, El Comercio, *was handed over to the rural organizations in July 1974.*

From late September 1975 to the middle of March 1976, Hélan Jaworski was a key figure in this development as the person responsible to the governing Board appointed by the National Agrarian Confederation for the management of El Comercio. *'Handing over the most ''respectable'' newspaper in Peru to the rural organizations could have seemed a cruel hoax . . . but it was undoubtedly also an indisputable gesture of social justice. It was to give back to the most backward sector in the country—none the less in the majority—only something of all that colonial and republican domination had*

denied them', writes Hélan Jaworski in this account of an extraordinary experiment in the democratization of communications.

Hélan Jaworski, who had participated in the Peruvian revolutionary process both as a Deputy Vice-Minister of SINAMOS, the national system of support for social mobilization, and as an adviser to the Minister for Foreign Trade and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, is in a unique position to describe and analyze the complicated processes which Peru went through in its endeavours to transform a hierarchical society into a society characterized by the ideas of development and participation, by the right to inform and be informed.

In concluding his eyewitness acount, Hélan Jaworski writes, inter alia: 'The power to inform and make opinion is essentially political and intimately linked with the power structure. In order to change its nature and practice in traditional societies, an effective structural transformation is required. Seen in the perspective of an alternative development model, the power to inform loses its character as a right for privileged groups or individuals and acquires a participatory dimension, expressed in the rights to participate actively in information and to be informed fully and truthfully of events as they occur. To obtain for the people the social right of information means disappropriating it from the power groups that traditionally have exercized it.'

In a crowded library, covered entirely from floor to ceiling with the bound volumes of 136 years of daily editions, the editorial committee of the main daily newspaper of Lima—and hence of Peru—is in session. Twelve people, in uncomfortable chairs reminiscent of the colonial era, are discussing a long agenda matching the size and responsibilities of the undertaking that they are called upon to direct. The scene is in no way original. It is the actors who introduce the different element, the revolutionary character. Some represent the more than three million organized rural workers who labour in the arid coastal zone, in the harsh *sierra* or the rolling forests of Peru. Others are delegates of their work colleagues on the newspaper itself. The third group consists of those nominated by the Revolutionary Military Government.

The growing complexity of world communications media and their centralization, at the expense of the periphery, have led to the search in many different places for alternatives to eliminate the monopoly, the abuses and the other negative results of the concentration of the power over information. After the de-

nunciation of the vertical control of communications exercised by the international news agencies in the interests of domination by the North, and the manner in which the transnational mechanisms of publicity assist in the destruction of national identity and culture, the right of people to inform and be informed—when the news happens, objectively and without bias—is being positively emphasized.

A strong effort is being made, parallel to that in other sectors, to propound a new international information order that will not be built on the liberal capitalist pattern, the basis of the present structure. Nor will it rest on state bureaucracies, which tend to be oppressive and restrictive towards an authentic and democratic freedom of information. The basic criterion and guarantee of success will have to be direct participation by the people, exercising the rights referred to above: not just passive participation, getting access to the information that is required, but fundamentally active participation in the generation, elaboration and dissemination of news and comment. This article provides some of the details and background of an experiment that was tried out in one locality, the description of which may stimulate the creative imagination that our Third World countries must unleash in order to shatter the mimetic models of 'Western civilization'.

1 Background

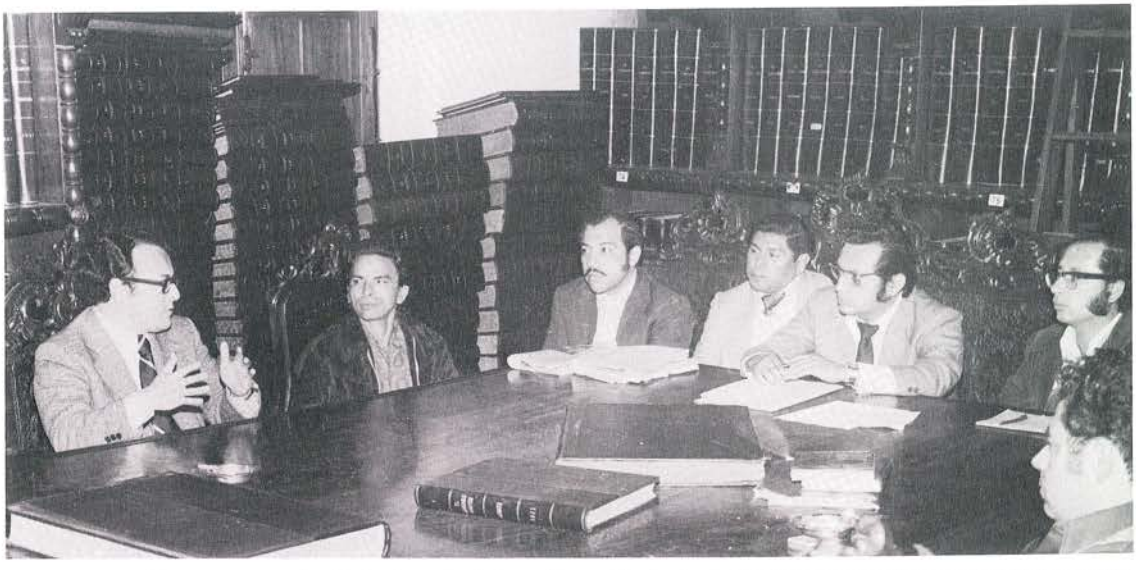
The Peruvian experience of the last ten years, in particular the period from 1968 to 1975 during which General Juan Velasco Alvarado was President, has been poorly reported internationally. Distortion has been paramount. Most of the news agencies have kept silent about it or minimized its accomplishments and transformations. Meanwhile, they have emphasized the internal conflicts, the contradictions, attempts at repression, and economic and labour troubles. Conversely, press organs in the non-aligned countries and in the socialist world, and the small agencies, have looked with interest on the day-to-day achievements of the Peruvian process. Up to 1975, they followed, on the whole, the lead, set by their governments, of cautious support for an experiment that many find hard to understand. It was difficult to reconcile military leadership with the idea of structural change that would favour the largest social groups, i.e. to believe in a revolution for the people. It proved simpler, after the overthrow of Velasco and since it departed in effect from revolutionary theory and practice, to liken the Peruvian experience to that of the other Latin American military governments, giving it the benefit of an indulgent doubt for its good initial intentions and recognizing that its record on human rights was above average. For this reason, it would seem that enquiry into the 1968–75 period and its important occurrences is of concern only to academics and students. Nevertheless, the now rare observers of the Latin American scene in the rest of the world must have seen something different when in December 1977, on the death of Velasco, an enormous mass of more than half a million people, mostly from

the poorer quarters, erupted on to the streets of Lima. And when the crowd, breaking the funeral protocol set by the armed forces, took possession of the coffin and bore it in orderly fashion to the cemetery three-and-a-half kilometres away, it was certainly not homage to a dictator, to the symbol of a period of oppression and domination. On the contrary, it was an act of recognition of his identification with the people, of his genuineness and of the hope that his government had awakened in the impoverished masses.

Thus it is appropriate that a few initial paragraphs should be devoted to the context which made the experiment of a socialized and participatory press possible in Peru.

In the complex mosaic of pluses and minuses of the Peruvian Revolution, some pieces stand out and are perhaps the best known. Others, by contrast, are more hidden and seem more diffuse. They are not thereby less important. Among the first, we can rapidly list such positive achievements as: agricultural reform; educational reform; the reform of business; the nationalization of foreign trade, of the exploitation of natural resources and of a substantial part of the banking sector; the policy of control over foreign capital; and the various aspects of a forceful foreign policy that clashed at different times with the North American hegemony (whether over the expropriation of branches of important transnational corporations, such as Exxon, Cerro, Gulf, Marcona and Grace, over the defence of maritime sovereignty, or the withdrawal of advisory military missions), and that soon established diplomatic and commercial relations with the socialist world, initiated an active participation in the advance posts of Third World policy, reinforced the movement of Andean integration and committed itself to the thesis of non-alignment. A negative assessment can be made of the crisis that could not be resolved in the Peruvian university system regrettable acts of repression, above all the attacks on workers' rights; the failure to hold back the arms race; the excessive optimism and the lack of forethought in dealing with the economic situation; and the fact that certain areas of the economy were not dealt with in the framework of these reforms, which prevented the redistributive policy initiated by the transformations from reaching huge sectors of the population.

At any event, and in spite of the mistakes, the substantive image of an overall design remains clearly outlined, that of a programme for a really liberating transformation, to set into motion a different development style which is not imitative but original in its aims and ends. It is endogenous, seeking to be self-reliant, and fundamentally based on structural transformations. Within this framework of reference, two aspects that are less familiar (or perhaps more distorted) in the Peruvian process take key positions in the mosaic: policies of popular participation and for the mass communications media. Not by chance are both found at the crux of one of the most strongly contested motifs associated with the Velasco regime: the transfer of power. Indeed, the organization of the people and of information are two essential elements in the exercise of power. And is it conceivable—given the recent experience of the *de facto* régimes—that a military government would take as its objective and put into practice the dispersal of the share of power that it has accumulated, to hand it over to the organs of the people? This is what the most conservative sectors of the country were afraid of and they had evidence that the political will existed. The Left was divided. The most extreme sector bet on the capacity for survival of the traditional



'In a crowded library, covered entirely from floor to ceiling with the bound volumes of 136 years of daily editions, the editorial committee of the main daily newspaper of Lima is in session'

structures and refused to take part in a programme that robbed it of its colours; it preferred to take a more radical stance and to denounce the reform. The remainder of the Left took an active role in the wide range of tasks necessary to make the transfer of power effective.

Participation by the people

Not until the second year of government by the armed forces does participation emerge as an imperative necessity in the process. The idea is still imprecise in form, but clear in intention: not passive participation, not integration, not more of the same. And not the hypocrisy of supposedly sharing in collective benefits in a society structured in favour of domination. On the contrary, to participate, albeit with limitations and contradictions, in power. It was premature to think of participation in the government, but it was possible to begin creating new structures of representation and to begin practising the progressive exercise of power. The guiding team of the process, with Velasco, was aware of the difficulties and obstacles that the experiment would meet: opposition by interest groups that also said they wanted the people to be organized, but thought of it as under their special influence and control; opposition by those sectors of economic power that saw themselves affected by the organization and progressive accession to power of rural and industrial workers, miners, fishermen, producers and consumers, artisans and contributors to popular culture, young people, women, urban immigrants and so on; opposition or distrust within the armed forces themselves, being essentially hierarchical and inclined to vertical control and authoritarianism; and a rebuff by many in the civil service, resolved not to assist an experiment in political change that would react negatively upon them and cut into some of their own power. In spite of the validity of this analysis, the decision was upheld: to implant the revolution meant promoting participation and using the channels that each reform was beginning to create. There was no time to lose.

In a broader historical perspective, it can be seen that the so-called First Phase of the Peruvian Revolution (1968–75) was plainly searching for the participation of the various social structures. Accordingly, each new reform made its own structural alliance. The rural organization, which was the direct result of the *agrarian reform*, integrated the former indigenous communities of the Andes—modernizing them as businesses with cooperative forms of production and services, farming companies of social interest, reorganized indigenous amazonian communities and associations of landless peasants, looking upon them all as

base organizations. The *reform of enterprise* recognized work as an entrée to property, to its management and to its benefits, enabling first the transformation of many industrial, mining and fishing enterprises in co-management forms through the *'comunidad laboral'* (work community). Later on, when little time remained to Velasco, the creation of a *social property* sector led to the emergence of a self-management sector, which was thought of as a hegemonic and priority area. The *reform of education* also opened channels for participation —not always successfully—strengthening the role of parents' associations, the communal educational councils and centres *(núcleos y consejos educativos comunales)*, workers' basic education and, in coordination with the reform of enterprise, the teaching units *(unidades de instrucción)*. The *reform of the press* created its own organizational form in the civil ownership associations of the daily newspapers, as we shall see later.

The objectives foreseen by the social model of participation went much further. However, the internal contradictions of the process, and the concessions made to certain sectors in order to allow progress in others, hindered the overall development. Thus, for example, in not having carried out structural transformations in areas such as finance, trade, health, urban development and housing, it was impossible to stimulate an authentic organization in them, not imposed from above. A second problem has to be seen in the plan of implementation. Here perhaps is the historic expression of one of the crucial errors of the Peruvian process. Instead of making participation a general government policy—fearing that to expand it would be to dilute it and to take away its thrust, although it would have also meant involving the whole public apparatus—preference was given to the concentration of responsibility on one executive body. Hence in 1971 the National System of Support for Social Mobilization (SINAMOS) was set up, with a status equivalent to that of a ministry, in one of the less well-known but more controversial experiments of the revolution. Its period of force as an effective body, answering to an integral project of participation (fully participatory social democracy), was very brief. It started work in April 1972 and already by July 1974 could be seen to be infiltrated by manipulative tendencies; its more thrusting programmes were dismantled and the rest of the administration looked on it as an expiatory goat for the growing malaise that the beginning of the economic crisis generated. In spite of this, it was uselessly and mistakenly kept in being even after August 1975—the date of Velasco's departure—up to the last quarter of 1978, creating confusion between what could have been an instrument of effective mobilization from the base and an administrative role which in the last three years only falsified the practice of participation and gave arguments to those who were opposed to the original idea.

Mass communications

For several years the Velasco Government maintained the regulations for the mass communications media without substantial modification. Television and radio, under a commercial system of dependent capitalism, were in the hands of economic groups linked to foreign business enterprises and news services. In a country that reads little and with a high illiteracy rate, the national dailies, which are aimed exclusively at the middle classes, were mostly the property of small circles, of families in some instances. As in the case of other groups affected by the reforms (land-

owners, industrialists, owners of mining concessions, bankers, exporters, merchants, family heads of exclusive private colleges, and élite intellectuals), the proprietors of the mass media took care not to attack the military government, nor the President or ministers in person. They systematically suggested that the Government—which was nationalist—had been 'infiltrated' and that those responsible for the supposed damage to the country were civilian advisers, radicals of every tendency.

Since the takeover of power in October 1968, it was plain to the Government that the press and communications media in general would have a decisive role to play in the future of the process. But it was also too early and the advance of the revolution had to be carried out in safety. The first warning was in the form of a press statute. The Inter-American Press Society (SIP), whose members are exclusively newspaper proprietors, set up an outcry and denounced the statute as totalitarian, anti-democratic and restrictive of the freedom of information. And certainly, one article left the regulation of certain situations to the government, converting it into both judge and plaintiff. But what really upset the proprietors was the fact that the statute imposed obligations on them which had never before been respected: it stipulated the right of individuals or institutions injured by a publication to demand a printed correction in the same place and with the same extent and type size as the original, and establish summary judicial proceedings in the case of non-compliance; it set norms for the nationality and other requirements of publishers; it required daily and other, non-daily, publications to make known annually how their capital was made up and the names of their shareholders; it made it obligatory to print on the first or another important page the press notices and official bulletins sent out by the ministries, in the first edition after their emission; it defined the extent of the space to be used for advertising as not to exceed a fixed percentage, the remainder having to be devoted to news; and, finally, it defined clearly the press offences, laid down penalties, and detailed the relevant procedure.

As for their relationship to participation, something has to be said about the so-called 'official press notices'. When the first reforms were started and the Government set into operation effective actions—and obtained concrete results—the daily press was systematically silent about or minimized these events. Each newspaper, representing a particular sectoral interest and backing its own political standpoint, supported and exploited the words and acts of the Government that were in its own interest. When inconsistencies or divisions were detected in the Government of the Armed Forces, the press hastened to exploit them and naturally to highlight what would favour a return to the old order. In 1972, the situation changed when it was decided to expropriate *Expreso*, the daily, and to hand it over to its workers in the shape of a pre-cooperative, with an editorial board nominated by the Government. A similar case occurred with another daily, *La Crónica*, which came into the public sector as a result of the bankruptcy of a family banking empire. In the rest of the dailies, the only way that the Government could inform the country about the steps it was taking and about the first people's organizations that were arising was through the official press notices.

In 1974, after five-and-a-half years in power, the Peruvian process began to become more complex. With the downfall of the Torres Government in Bolivia and the Allende government in Chile, Andean solidarity began to break up; globally, the Third World movement

was making greater progress than ever before, with the approval of the Charter of Rights and Duties of States and the adoption of the Declaration and Action Programme for the Establishment of a New International Economic Order. But at the same time there was an increase in the prices of the principal products imported into the country, among them petroleum, whereas the prices of raw materials for export (copper, cotton, sugar, lead and iron) plummeted and the incipient economic crisis was hastened by the disappearance of the anchovy. Internally, the change in the correlation of forces regarding neighbouring countries and the steady approach of the centenary of the War of the Pacific put pressure on the military leadership to demand a greater investment in armaments. Relying too much on price tendencies of past years and on the expectation of major oil reserves, the Velasco Government took on an increasing burden of debt in major investment works which the country had been awaiting for decades (irrigation, mineral exploitation, an oil pipeline from the *selva* to the coast, hydroelectricity, highways, an increase in farming and grazing land, etc.). Moreover, perhaps with little economic awareness of the complex monetary and financial situation that was developing world-wide, but with a strong social and popular awareness of the basic human needs, Velasco declined to devalue the sol, obviously overvalued against the dollar, knowing that with the reform process unfinished, the biggest price would be paid by the people.

Among all the problems, one in particular stood out as very serious. The revolution had opened many fronts (too few for some, too many for others), but had no one to defend it. In the simplest theoretical outline its support was the coupling: people—armed forces. But the armed forces as an institution could not enter into the political arena, they had a strictly hierarchical organization; and, more serious, the attacks against the reforms (which affected the middle classes, from which officialdom was recruited) also began to make an impression at the level of ministers, who disagreed with and contradicted each other. In their turn the organizations of the people, which were a product of the revolution, protested, opposed or supported, but were ignored by the mass media, by television, radio and the main daily newspapers (main not for readership reasons, but for having been traditionally the opinion-makers). If the majority had no way of expressing themselves, the minority by contrast made themselves heard in an opposition that reached excessive proportions because of its control of the media. It was obvious that nothing was lost by inverting the terms.

In this contest, and after a political skirmish (between the President and the navy leaders) that would have important repercussions in the future, it was decided in July 1974, a few days before the national holiday, to expropriate the national daily newspapers and to assign them by sector to the organized population.

It is not my intention to chronicle the overall story of the expropriation of the press in Peru in the five years that have elapsed. The object that led me to write this article, on the warm invitation of Sven Hamrell, was to give an account of an experience that I was able to live through, an experience of real participation, of collaboration with newspaper workers and *campesinos*, during the time when I was responsible for the management of the Lima daily, *El Comercio*, from 21st September, 1975 to 15th March, 1976.

2 Journalism by Participation

From private families to people's organizations

Many Peruvian governments have had clashes and quarrels with the press during the history of the Republic, i.e. over the last 150 years. Some dailies were temporarily closed down, at other times editions have been censored or withdrawn after having been published, and directors and journalists ended up in jail or went into exile. Nevertheless, generally speaking the system has been respected. In agreement with its policy, each government made *de facto* alliances with the power groups that each newspaper represented (latifundia owners, bankers, exporters, fishermen, etc.). In this way the regime obtained a sympathetic press organ and the newspaper increased its influence and normally its government advertising, too. In the most difficult cases, some dictatorships that did not enjoy the support necessary for a pact bought a daily or created a new one. But the private ownership of the means of communication had never been in question, nor had there ever been any mention that the press should fulfil a social function. Three large-format dailies and five tabloids shared the market of Lima and the provincial capitals. Four of them could be called 'serious', while the remainder, of bigger circulation and directed at the popular urban level, were typically sensationalist varieties of the 'yellow press'. News was a fief reserved to those economic power groups which could pay for radio or television time or buy space in the press. Political groups, popular organizations, individuals and institutions that needed to pass on information or to reply, defend themselves or make corrections had to beg space or make difficult collections in order to publish paid notices which were regularly relegated to subsidiary pages in the newspapers.

Against this historical background the decision of the Velasco Government undoubtedly represented a revolutionary measure. It also created some problems from the start. It was decided that of the eight dailies with a national circulation, i.e. with a run of more than 20,000 copies, six should be handed over to the organized population, by sector of activity. The distribution was as follows: *El Comercio* to the rural organizations; *La Prensa* to the work communities; *Correo* to the professional associations; *Ojo* to the cultural organizations; *Expreso* to the educational bodies; and *Ultima Hora* to the service organizations (an ambiguous, generic term that comprised banking, first-and second-degree cooperatives and social property enterprises). The Government kept *El Peruano* as its gazette or official daily, limited strictly to legal and administrative information, and converted *La Crónica* into a government newspaper, entirely subsidized and without advertising.

As we have seen, three of the dailies did not need to be expropriated: *El Peruano,* which was governmental; *La Crónica,* which had transferred its capital to the public sector after bankruptcy; and *Expreso,* which had been handed over to its workers in 1972, although the expropriation had not been completed. In the case of the other five newspapers, the occupation of their offices was a spectacular affair. The night before the publication of the law, government accountants and legal staff, with police backing, took charge of all the journals' documents, while special govern-

ment envoys gathered together the workers of the dailies (journalists, designers, clerks, etc.) in order to explain to them the sudden change in the situation. When the legal document on which the expropriation was based had been read out, it was revealed that the press workers together with the people's representatives would participate in the new structure that the newspaper enterprises were to have. This participation had at its basis the existing work communities which had been set up in all the work centres from 1971 onwards, when the reform of enterprises was begun. Thanks to this regulation, which established the principle of co-management, the workers' right to participate in the ownership, management and benefits of enterprises was recognized.

The first problem that arose was that the popular organizations were still very weak, in some cases non-existent. In spite of the validity and creative audacity of the theoretical approach, the proposal to allocate the dailies in this way was hardly realistic. With the exception of the rural sector, which after five years of agrarian reform had just organized itself on the basis of the National Agrarian Confederation, and the work communities which also had a real organizational structure, the other sectors were a myth. There were isolated organizations, but there was no national representation.

This initial flaw seriously affected the experiment. The popular organizations were not ready to accept their responsibility and they had to complete a long and complicated legal transaction. Nonetheless, the Government, having taken a decision, could not hesitate. It set a term of one year for conditions to be adapted to the transfer. For this period the dailies would be in the charge of management committees nominated by the executive branch. The directors elected were drawn from politicians, intellectuals and journalists. Naturally, the political opposition to the Government and the expropriated magnates in particular accused the new directors of complicity in the suppression of press freedom. At the same time, commentators and journalists who had been linked with the old press structure withdrew, foreseeing that there would be no place for them in the new socialized set-up.

From a socialized press to state control and back to the past

The press decision, promoted by Velasco himself, had two major contradictions: with respect to the process of participation and mobilization of the people, it came too soon—perhaps because the process had been much delayed—when the organizations were still feeble and without greater experience; with respect to the revolution as a whole, it came late, when the political crisis had developed with the appearance of divisions in the Government of the Armed Forces, and the economic crises had started to erode the social basis of the process.

In spite of this, and perhaps because of a political framework unlike that of other countries in that the armed forces are institutionally involved, in Peru decisions are not drastically revoked. They evolve, lose their force, fall into disuse, are modified, and sometimes finally end up pointing in quite a different direction from their original one. In this general context, it may be noted in the case of the press that the decision taken in July 1974 led to action which through inertia hung fire for 20 months after the replacement of General Velasco by General Morales Bermúdez. Four stages may be clearly distinguished in the progress of the experiment:

1. From July 1974 to July 1975. The dailies are administered by committees, nominated by the executive branch of the government, and are directed towards the population sector assigned to them during a phase intended to allow for the adjustment of the representative bodies.
2. From July 1975 to 15th March, 1976. Not having completed the organization of the people's sectors, the Government decides to postpone for one year the transfer of the dailies. It rules that as soon as the civil associations which are to be the proprietors of the dailies obtain legal recognition, the management committees shall be augmented by seven representatives from the respective people's sector and three representatives of the workers elected by the work community, and that the Government will nominate for a one-year term the editor and general manager of each newspaper. It was this lapse of eight months that enabled an assessment to be made of the real scope and possibilities of the participation process.
3. From March 1976 to July 1978. The criticism by a number of dailies of its economic and employment policies leads the Government of Morales Bermúdez to dismiss six of the editors of the dailies, replacing them by professional journalists, with one exception, who obey government instructions unconditionally. The nine editors are empowered to discharge workers whom they consider to be subversive and more than 100 journalists are sacked. The people's organizations, which were supposed to take their share of the ownership of the newspaper enterprises, are set aside, although in some cases they have already constituted their civil associations. The management committees are not reconvened and the directors assume all the authority. The sectoral orientation of each daily is maintained, but the Central Office of Information acquires greater influence: it supplies news to the dailies, suggests newspaper policy, organizes campaigns that are reproduced almost identically in different dailies, and in addition provides editorial columns. At this stage the press is dominated by the State and all participation disappears.
4. In July 1978, within a general climate of stagnation and regression for the revolution, the Government enacts a new decree law that opens the road to a return to the past. It is laid down that the capital of the newspaper enterprises may be acquired: up to 25 per cent by the former proprietors who were expropriated; another 25 per cent by the workers on the dailies; and the remaining 50 per cent to be sold on the stock exchange, in such a way that no one person should acquire more than 5 per cent. This last stipulation is a dead letter. Nowhere in the law are the people's organizations mentioned, nor the civil associations. They have simply been dropped. Without giving up its control over the news via the Central Office of Information, the Government has set up through the same law a new transitional ownership and administration structure, handing over these faculties to a new management committee, this time made up of technicians presided over by a representative of the Development Finance Corporation.

The future presents very contradictory possibilities. Neither the former proprietors, who are seeking restitution and compensation for their financial loss, nor the workers are satisfied. Nor is there much interest on the part of investors in investing in an area that has been left marked by the experience of participation. The people are again on the sidelines where the news is concerned, but they retain a memory of a period when they had legal and priority access to the mass media.

3 *El Comercio,* The Daily of the Rural Organizations

Something must be said briefly about the newspaper *El Comercio* as such, so that the reader may better understand the extent and impact of the revolutionary measure that affected it.

Lima, the capital of Peru, is a city of some 4 1/2 million people, i.e. totalling just over 25 per cent of the national population. All the government offices and nearly three-quarters of industry, trade and finance are located in Lima. Its annual growth rate, owing to the increasing migration and the absence of other poles of attraction (the second city in the country has barely 350,000 inhabitants) is over 5 per cent and currently more than one-third of the urban population, who are mostly of rural origin, live in unauthorized new suburbs. However, Lima, which was the seat of the viceroyalty of Peru, lived very comfortably right up to the 1950s from its Spanish and colonial inheritance. This is reflected in the closely integrated institutions of the power structure, i.e. those which the dominant class controls completely.

El Comercio, which was founded in 1839, was from the turn of the last century the journal associated with the capital and, consequently, with the nation, just as *The Times* has always been synonymous with London, *Le Figaro* with Paris, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* with their respective cities and, in the Latin American world, *El Tiempo* with Bogotá, *El Mercurio* with Chile and *La Prensa* with Buenos Aires. Its influence grew during the early years of the century and its masthead in gothic letters was a sign of its growing status, equivalent to the imposing offices erected during the 1920s. In the building, with its ample vestibule, ornamented dome and sumptuous marble staircase, the family owners of the daily displayed not only a consciousness of effective power over the country, but also the will to make this domination permanent.

It is one thing to give public opinion guidance but quite another to orchestrate it through a careful pre-selection of news. This is what occurred for many years with *El Comercio*. What seemed convenient or useful to the proprietors was reported and commented on and what was against their interests was hidden or ignored. The most extreme case and the best known sprang from the assassination in 1935 of the newspaper's editor and his wife by a member of the APRA party. For almost 40 years the newspaper decided to ignore the existence of this political group, of its members and also of people allegedly close to it. There was a black list of persons whose names were not to be printed. It was as though they had perished, dying a 'civil death'.

This unlimited power in the hands of a family that exercised it directly over the newspaper (more than a dozen posts were filled by relatives, from the editing and management to the control of pages and sections) was based on the considerable revenues of the enterprise. As in the case of other internationally well-known journals, *El Comercio* obtained its principal revenues from the sale of space for notices and advertising and not from the sale of copies. For this reason, the proprietors had no great interest in increasing the circulation. They were satisfied with a fixed market among the urban upper and middle classes, consumers in the system of 'classified advertisements'. A complementary attraction for the rising bourgeoisie and the status-seekers was

In the *El Comercio* building, with its 'ornamented dome and sumptuous marble staircase, the family owners of the daily displayed not only a consciousness of effective power over the country, but also the will to make this domination permanent'.

the news about the private life of 'nice' people. The whole life cycle stood to be recorded in *El Comercio:* births, baptisms, parties, journeys, marriages, illnesses and deaths. The petty bourgeoisie and lower middle class, estranged—as are many others in the Third World—from this life-style, bought *El Comercio* in order to learn about the details of the lives of this privileged sector and felt that through this vicarious and marginalized experience they were being allowed to participate, from outside, in a world that was their model and frame of reference.

In this context, handing over the most 'respectable' newspaper in Peru to the rural organizations could have seemed a cruel hoax. This was how the right-wing opposition to Velasco's regime understood it. But it was undoubtedly also an indisputable gesture of social justice. It was to give back to the most backward sector of the country—none the less in the majority—only something of all that colonial and republican domination had denied them. Already in 1971 in the full flood of the agrarian reform, and in the face of the aggressive opposition of the former latifundia owners, the Government had decreed the dissolution of the National Agrarian Society and conveyed its offices (a modern building of ten storeys in which the Peruvian branch of the Bank of America had its headquarters) and appurtenances to the rural organizations. Then, in March 1974, on the constitution of the National Agrarian Confederation and the arrival in Lima of the rural representatives of the 23 provinces of the country, the Congress building was opened for the first time since it had been closed in October 1968 and the rural delegates—many of them illiterate—occupied the benches of the Chamber of Deputies as authentic representatives of the people and of a new participatory democracy from the grass roots. The discussions during this session, conducted in Spanish, Quechua and Aymara, also drew attention to something often forgotten by the communications media—that

El Comercio

Fundado en 1839

Gran médico es el tiempo por lo viejo y por lo experimentado.
Gracián

HOLAN JAWORSKI CARDENAS
Director

NUMERO 74-566

DIARIO DE LAS ORGANIZACIONES CAMPESINAS

LIMA, MARTES 25 DE NOVIEMBRE DE 1975

DIRECCION, REDACCION Y TALLERES
JR. A. MIRO QUESADA 300 — TELF. 287620
EDICION DE 16 PAGINAS DOS SECCIONES

S. 5.00

Peru is a trilingual country in which Spanish continues to be the language of the dominators.

As we have seen, the rural representation on *El Comercio* did not arrive immediately. In the first year, although the paper was now subtitled 'Daily of the Rural Organizations' and began publishing a special section aimed at the problems of participation in the rural environment, there was no direct presence by the people. The editor and the government-appointed committee members met the management of the National Agrarian Confederation several times. During the year the mechanisms of delegation and representation at ground level were organized. First, at the national level, the 30 members of the governing board that constituted the civil ownership association of the newspaper were elected. Then the members of the board voted among themselves for the seven representatives who would come to Lima on a permanent basis as members of the managing council. The two who received most votes were appointed chairman and vice-chairman of the council respectively.

At the end of July 1975, at the beginning of the second year of the socialized press, the rural managers were formally incorporated into the daily. The Government had confirmed the existing editor for a period of one year. The phase of shared management had begun. In addition, the workers through their work community, the *comunidad laboral,* had elected their representatives. Velasco gradually fulfilled the programme, although for some the process was delayed.

Barely one month later, on 29th August, the political perspective suddenly changed. In a tense atmosphere, but without violence, General Velasco was deposed and his place taken by General Morales Bermúdez. The general reaction among the various circles which supported the revolution was to regret this step while finding it understandable. At the same time assurances were received from the new government that the process of change would continue. As a result there was no great anxiety among the people as a whole, nor were there protests from their organizations. However, on *El Comercio,* the editor (Dr Héctor Cornejo Chávez), who had been appointed by Velasco, resigned his post on the same day and the last edition to appear under his responsibility was that of 30th August, 1975, which included an editorial note explaining his departure.

A campesino editor for *El Comercio*

In the first days of the new government, there were changes in cabinet ministers and there were other urgent problems to attend to. The appointment of a new editor for *El Comercio* was not a matter of high priority. But for the daily itself, it was. And the mechanism of participation had already begun to function. The managing council, made up entirely of rural representatives and workers, met and decided that during the period up to the appointment of a new editor his responsibilities would be undertaken by Alex Noriega, a peasant leader from the Amazon region (San Martín province) who was chairman of the council, and that the council itself would take the decisions normally taken by the general management (whose chief had also resigned).

For three whole weeks, up to 21st September, the oldest Lima newspaper, known as the 'dean' of the Peruvian press, and identified for many decades by the name of a family belonging to the national oligarchy, was under the control of a *campesino*. The news

went round the world. There were innumerable interviews for this simple but sharp-witted man of clear political perception, who sought in a natural way to overcome difficulties and avoid conflicts in a large enterprise (with more than 600 workers) in which the problems of political alignment, labour tensions and external pressures were added to those of the responsibility for producing a daily newspaper.

On 25th September, at 5 o'clock in the afternoon, I assumed the responsibility for editing *El Comercio*. Representatives of the workers and rural delegates came to join me and wish me well. We knew each other from before. I came as a government representative as well, having had previous experience in the areas of foreign trade and social mobilization. I had edited journals and written a number of articles, although I was not a professional journalist. Nevertheless, I knew very concretely what the immediate tasks were: (1) to prepare the real transfer of the paper to its new owners, the rural labourers and the newspaper workers, who had an acquired right; (2) to create a new type of journalism, honest and authentic, in which the subject of the news would be the people itself and not a few individuals; and (3) to help in the explanation of the revolutionary process to all those I understood to be involved: the armed forces, the government, the people's organizations and those who had public responsibilities or offices to fulfil. I also knew that I would only have about a year in office. Then the new governing board of the civil association would democratically elect a new editor. This was what the law provided for. Also, I had realized that time was somehow short, that there was a mood of change and that it was best to hurry. The new general manager (Eduardo Mazzini) and I met almost immediately, together with the managing council, in order to weigh up the situation and to consider the first requests. Thus began the experiment of shared control and management in the only Peruvian newspaper that had behind it the backing and the expectations of an organized sector of the population—the millions of rural workers represented in the National Agrarian Confederation and on the board of the civil ownership association.

What follows is not a chronicle of the nearly six months that I was in charge. The emphasis is directed at the reality of participation, how it began, its successes, the main problems, mistakes and difficulties, how the period ended and the conclusions that can be drawn which are valid not only at the national level but also and above all in the search in different countries and contexts for viable formulas for constructing a new international information order.

4 A Newspaper Enterprise with Full Participation

The question that is usually asked first is whether there really was participation by the various groups which shared in the running of the paper, or whether it was a sham, just a facade behind which a controlling group lay hidden. The answer is clear-cut. Participation was effective, not symbolic or a matter of form. The reasons for this vary according to

the different sectors considered:

1. The fact that Alex Noriega was editor for a period of 21 days and the importance that the other communications media gave to it rapidly legitimated *campesino* participation in practice. Although there were difficulties, as we shall see, the newspaper workers accepted and 'negotiated' internally with the rural members of the council who were there full-time. It allocated three offices to them, one for the chairman and the others for the remaining delegates to work in and in particular to receive the numerous rural delegations that arrived daily from the most remote corners of the country. In addition, the powerful National Agrarian Confederation (axed by the Government in May 1978) maintained a watching brief—since it thought that the paper ought to have been handed over to it—through which it monitored the actions of the civil association. The confederation periodically made suggestions, coordinated actions and complained if it believed that an important matter had not been adequately dealt with. The rural representatives forwarded opinions and requests; they were constantly signalling the grass roots pressure on them and the views of provincial organizations about such varied aspects as circulation, timely distribution, local news and the political line.

2. In the case of the newspaper workers, participation proved to be an almost natural corollary, the reward or better perhaps the achievement of a long struggle. For many years the proprietors had prevented the organization of a union in the firm. While buying the goodwill of some, the bosses had promoted an association of journalists and prevented the collection of the necessary signatures for a union to be set up. The situation reached a climax in 1972 when the workers went on strike for about one month, occupying the newspaper offices and publishing a limited edition, which they called 'revolutionary', reproducing a speech of President Velasco. Months later, taking advantage of the fact that the business had to bring the workers together in order to organize the work community, the union leaders were able to obtain the signatures for the union to be recognized. For these reasons, and because there were no opposing political factions, it was possible for worker participation to be sufficiently united and forward-looking. Although there was rivalry and jealousy between the work community and the union, both were very active at this time. The former emphasized the finances and the expenses of the enterprise. The union was more concerned with individual cases and the defence of acquired rights during collective negotiation. However, in crises they acted together.

3. The third sector was made up of government representatives, i.e. the editor and manager. *El Comercio* employs more than 600 workers, many of them working shifts in the different sections. Its daily edition is divided into two separate parts running into a total of 32 to 50 pages, rising to a total of 64 to 70 pages on Sundays and reaching 80 pages for advertising campaigns. It published a review, or Sunday supplement, and—during this period—a weekly called *El Campesino*. Before the expropriation, over a dozen members of the proprietor's family held the positions of responsibility and the remaining supervisory posts were filled by professional personnel with many years of experience. During the first year, after the expropriation, the new editors and the management committee constituted a team of seven in different areas of responsibility. The workers felt that the payment of this external personnel with their high salaries was affecting the financial viability of

the enterprise. From September 1975 to March 1976, besides the editor and the manager, only two persons came in at management level: an assistant editor and an editorial-page editor (Héctor Béjar and Mario Razetto respectively). There were various reaons for this: (a) our responsibility was temporary, later on it would be the new owners who would make the decisions; (b) we were not able to engage new permanent staff without confirming that the work could not be carried out by existing personnel; (c) both the editor (myself) and assistant editor came from SINAMOS, where we had developed the theory and practice of participation, believing that the workers' case was legitimate; (d) the presence of the rural delegation that had come to live in Lima and was receiving salaries and allowances from the paper was already a heavy economic burden; (e) finally, what was really important to us was to ensure that the political line of the journal was in agreement with the revolutionary process and its ideology—and not necessarily the government's. For this it was sufficient for one person to be in charge of the editorial page, for the assistant editor to oversee the political page, and for the latter together with the chief editor, Roberto Almandós (a former journalist on the paper), the editor and on some occasions the chairman of the management committee to supervise the day-to-day edition.

The experience of participation

To a certain extent the experience of participation was a new one for all of us. The workers were better informed, through their many years of practice, but their knowledge was often too specialized or limited. From the beginning there was agreement on the operating basis: a daily is a product that appears and is sold each day. You cannot hold it back. It can, anyway, be corrected as you go along. The editor carried the political and legal responsibility. The editor was, therefore, in charge of the journalism, while being open to suggestions, criticisms and comment by others. In return, the central task was to consolidate the general management of the enterprise. For this the key organ of participation was the management council, which met weekly and, on special occasions, two or three times a week. There were 12 members: seven *campesinos,* one of them the council chairman; three workers, one a journalist (the chief editor), one a worker from the print-shop (a linotype operator) and one an administrative employee (head of personnel); the editor; and the manager. The latter by law had a voice but not a vote.

The priority tasks for the undertaking were quite complex. (a) To conclude the procedure for the legal recognition and inscription of the civil association that represented the rural organizations, which were the new proprietors of *El Comercio,* in order to transfer the ownership, rights and facilities of the enterprise to them. Until this transaction was concluded, the expropriated legal person was a private company whose powers were exercised by the editor and the manager. (b) To meet the requirement of the rural organizations which needed to feel in a tangible way that the daily belonged to them, represented their interests and provided them with an effective service. This was always a delicate matter. Although the requirement was certainly reasonable, the daily had since its start been aimed at the urban area. The financial situation was satisfactory, but the risk of a sudden change of readership, which would have meant losing its advertisers, could not be taken. The newspaper staff stressed this aspect throughout, and it was one of the points of friction with the

rural representatives. (c) To make an analysis, with the minimum delay, of the situation of the enterprise as a whole, in order to plan its future development. It was known that much of the printing machinery was obsolete and uneconomic and needed to be renewed. The weekly for the rural areas was being published and distributed gratis through the agrarian federations (regions) and leagues (provinces). It was urgent to have an up-to-date budget. For a number of months, the rural representatives and the newspaper staff separately obtained detailed explanations about economic progress, the justification for new investments; procedures for acquiring supplies and spares; a calculation of advertising charges; the method for working out salary scales; etc. (d) Journalistically the paper had a heavy, old-fashioned feel and the printers themselves had a conservative attitude and were sceptical about changes. From the point of view of appearance, *El Comercio* was at a disadvantage compared with more lively and up-to-date newspapers, better handled graphically. But it also had a non-committal style. For many years the editorial writers had been used to dealing with subjects without any follow-up; national political and local news was secondary and often late; international news—undoubtedly the most abundant, not only in Peru, but compared with the leading Latin American dailies—was a mass of cables without much selection; the new rural page was also a simple collection of local news, sometimes very trivial—almost a bulletin of the agrarian organizations. Some lacunae were equally serious, above all the absence of systematic news and comment on economic and labour matters. More generally, it was obvious that there was a lack of involvement in the process of change the country was undergoing, i.e. participation in the revolution.

Our common effort was organized around these four points, although naturally at that moment we did not see them so clearly differentiated. The pressure was severe. *The staff,* under the pressure of the internal conflict between the union and the work community, held frequent meetings by area of activity (editing, photography, print-shop, stores, distribution, etc.) in order to solve complaints and conflicts and to bring to the weekly council meeting the proposals they had discussed with the members. All this activity was additional to the professional burden, but the shift system and union experience helped them to run things. *The rural representation* undoubtedly fulfilled a political role: the requests of the agrarian communities and the other grass roots rural organizations were not only to publish news. They frequently included condemnations, calls for investigations into abuses by officials or magistrates, petitions for us to intercede with the political authorities, sometimes even for financial support. This activity was still growing when they decided to travel to the interior of the country (preferably to their place of origin) with journalists and photographers from the paper, with results which were ambivalent: direct reports from the land on the one hand, but also the development of a certain political 'clientism' on the other. Finally, *the management team,* which was responsible both for journalism and the administration, had to coordinate the whole, in 16-hour working days.

It is worth noting here that the time horizons of the three interlocking sectors differed and that there was a divergency of interests, in spite of the relative harmony in which work went on. There were initial obstacles to overcome: lack of previous experience and mistrust (amounting to aggressiveness in some

cases) which could gradually be overcome; the relative advantage enjoyed by the staff, who had a better prior training than the *campesino* representatives; and a political view of the country and of the process of change that was restricted in both cases by sectoral priorities. The time factor enters here. As the months passed it was obvious that a slowing-down in the rhythm of change was occurring. In some sectors it was even going into reverse. The editorial team looked on this with apprehension, knowing that it could be replaced at any moment, and tried to quicken the pace. The rural representatives felt more secure, for the Front for the Defence of the Revolution, which had been set up not long before, was close to the Government and presided over by another *campesino;* for them the middle term was more important and, for the present, their aim was to meet the needs of the grass roots, in order to keep their political support. As for the newspaper workers, they had a longer time horizon: they felt that their position was more stable than the *campesinos'* and, opposed only to the return of the newspaper to its former proprietors, they were inclined to wait.

In sum, internal participation was real and effective. The rural representatives began to feel that the paper was truly theirs. Moreover, many external signs of power had disappeared. The offices of the former directors had been distributed among the rural delegation, the editors and the publishing team and the furniture and decorations, the symbols of the 'old regime', were kept protected, with the idea of one day setting up a museum about *El Comercio* prior to this democratic stage in its development. For the old staff of the daily, a visible proof of equality and change was that the members of the managing council, the editor and the manager would eat almost daily in the canteen, previously used only by the workers. To make other, permanent changes more time would have been needed.

Outward participation

Outside the confines of the newspaper, the political situation was evolving. Conflicts of loyalties were gradually beginning to appear. These were not oriented towards the base, nor against the popular organizations—although there had been some friction—but in relation to the ideology of the process. For seven years for peasant and labour leaders, as for us in the publishing team, the identification of revolution and Government had been an undisputed truth, even if we might have disagreed over certain measures and attitudes. Now a slow but inexorable deviation was perceptible: the aim of the revolution was to intensify the changes and not to hold back, but the Government wanted to 'consolidate', which meant to hold back and to leave some areas untouched. Confronted with particular events, as the daily became more political in its editorials, news columns, cartoons, etc., it was necessary to choose. The choice meant defending the revolution and criticizing the Government. In this choice, approved and shared by all those with responsibility, there was also the seed for the rapid termination of the experiment. At the same time, it is proof for those who assert that in Peru the socialized dailies had no autonomy. They do not have it now, which is different.

Velasco had been very conscious of the political power of the press. Referring on one occasion to the period in which *Expreso* was the only daily defending the Government and opposing the rest of the national press, he said that it had been like a guard-dog for the oligarchy. But socialization had not been carried out in order to 'silence the opposition',

as the opposition claimed. The President received constant complaints from ministers and heads of public bodies about the criticisms they had received during the first year of socialization. None the less he kept on going forward. He knew what he wanted. A real transfer of power, as proposed by his Government, in order to implement a 'social democracy of full participation', called for the transformation of the communications media structures and for the people to be given the right to be well informed and to take part in the news-making process, through their organizations.

5 Balance Sheet of the Experiment

Positive aspects and successes achieved

For each of the three tasks that were assigned priority, important gains may be recorded. The first, the consolidation of rural participation, was confirmed when the ratification of the civil association—before any other daily—was achieved. The very next day, the reference to its being a joint stock company was removed from the newspaper's mast-head and replaced by the phrase, 'El Comercio Civil Association'. This rubric, attached to that of 'Daily of the Campesino Organizations', lasted until July 1978. A second achievement of great importance was registered in the decision-making. All the approvals of an administrative type—acquisitions, sales, advertising contracts, rate for public notices, salary and wage settings, calculations of daily allowances, overtime and bonuses, appointments and sanctions of the personnel, etc.—were adopted by the managing council and on various occasions put to the vote. It must be recalled that the rural representatives were in a clear majority and that the general manager had no vote. At different times the management had prior meetings with the rural representatives, the work community or the union in order to explain technical details and at other times the council members asked for a decision to be deferred while the membership was consulted.

The third success can be claimed for the relative achievement on the rural front. The leaders of the National Agrarian Confederation, the members of the civil association and various regional and local representatives had recognized that the daily could not be left as it was before: as an expensive news vehicle appreciated and supported by the urban middle class, which made profits but depended on very sensitive commercial advertising. At the same time, certain rural tendencies, some radical groups on the left of the change process and also some authorities within the Ministry of Agriculture called for drastic alterations and for *El Comercio* to be a daily 'of and for' the *campesino*. This tension recurred cyclically throughout the period and the solutions it led to can be counted as successes: the appointment by the rural delegates of two advisers, who assisted during negotiations and transactions on behalf of organizations with problems; the decision that the editor responsible

for the rural page should coordinate directly with the *campesino* delegation in order to guarantee due attention to urgent and priority matters; and the decision that the newspaper should, on the whole, give more importance to rural matters. Journalistically, this expressed itself as follows: (a) a tendency for at least one item (a news item or an illustration) from the *campesino* world to appear daily on the front page; (b) by the same token, one notice (out of a possible six) on the editorial page had to deal with *campesino,* agrarian or rural matters generally; (c) emphasis on happenings of importance to the *campesino* world in the local, international and provincial news sections and in the Sunday supplement; (d) a remodelling of the rural page in order to give it more flexibility and better content, avoiding its former unvarnished bulletin character; (e) a decision to make a conscious search for news and stories from the interior of the country, for which a special section was created called 'National Report', which embodied the news obtained by the mixed teams of journalists and photographers that travelled in the company of *campesino* members of the council or of the National Agrarian Confederation; (f) a reinforcement of the team responsible for publishing the weekly, *El Campesino,* redesigning it and incorporating a digest of national and international news that would enable the country-dweller progressively to relate better to a wider perspective of problems; (g) an improvement of the distribution network in the provinces so that the daily and *El Campesino* could easily reach the agrarian federations and leagues; (h) finally, payment with daily allowances for missions by the *campesino* members of the council, in agreement with the scale approved for the journalists, so that they could travel to the rural zones.

A fourth area in which some positive gains may be recorded is strictly journalistic, both in its impact on news policy and in the guidance and stimulation of public opinion. It is also preferable here, for the sake of brevity, to list the chief events:

1. Special meetings of the publishing team, sometimes including one of the *campesino* delegates, with all the editors of the newspaper's different sections—local, international, provincial, institutional and financial news and information, sport, culture and entertainments, the two weeklies and the graphic reporters—in order in each case to evaluate the section, hear out the problems and complaints, make comparisons with other dailies and elicit suggestions for action as a team.
2. Testing the professionalism of the journalists, judged from a political angle. This is clearly illustrated in three areas: the discussion about the 'assignment framework' or news priorities fixed daily for the journalists; the incorporation of a considerable number of editorial collaborators from outside—economists, historians, specialists in foreign affairs, artists and intellectuals of national prestige in general, at the side of the staff journalists; and the appointment of a team of foreign journalists to create a news and comment section on international material.
3. Observance of the 'opinion column'. The press statute promulgated by Velasco created a new institution in Peruvian journalism: the right of the newspaper workers to dispose of space on the editorial page in which they could express their free opinions, without the management being able to censor them or refuse to publish them. Not all the workers felt themselves called upon to write: on some dailies the use of this space was minimal. On *El Comercio* the union drew up a rota list of opportunities and it was much used. On different occasions, accounts of internal problems and criticisms,

some hostile to the management, were published in this column, which did not appear again after March 1976.

4. Restructuring of international news. The paper always gave a great deal of coverage to cable news, but without orientation or organization and depending, even for headlines, on news agency suggestions. Up to September 1975, *El Comercio* took wires from four agencies: UPI, AFP, ANSA and EFE. The Government had cancelled Reuter and LATIN (the Latin American agency close to SIP and representing the newspaper proprietors) some time back. Three changes were made: (a) to generate a political awareness among the 'gate-keepers', i.e. those responsible for selecting the content of the international pages, in order to reduce the news—often anecdotic—about the Centre countries and give greater emphasis to news about the Third World; (b) to demonstrate that agreement with the policy of the Peruvian process of change was necessary and to do away with aggressive references in headlines to 'reds', 'subversives' and 'illegals' or similar epithets usually applied to liberation movements in Africa or south-east Asia; (c) with the agreement of the managing council new contracts were taken out with AP, IPS-Tanjug and Prensa Latina (Cuba) in order to correct the news imbalance, and material from the Novosti and Sinjua agencies began to be used. On 12th March, 1976, an agreement was signed with the Mexican daily, *Excelsior,* for an exchange of news material between the two dailies of similarly progressive positions. The contract was immediately rescinded by *Excelsior,* after our removal as editors.

5. In the same international arena a political concern was becoming increasingly apparent. The people's organizations and in general the Peruvian people, who were living through an accelerated—although not always visible—process of change, knew nothing about the struggle of other peoples for their liberation, about the sometimes successful results of joint actions and of organized solidarity, about the advantages of integration processes like the Andean Pact and the importance of producer associations like OPEC or CIPEC. On the contrary, they normally obtained from the agencies a distorted and fragmented view, often critical and negative. Two measures were undertaken to remedy this situation: the editorial team was reinforced in such a way that there was daily at least a note about international economic affairs and politics which commented on and put in their context facts like those alluded to above, some of particular significance for Peru (e.g. the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Sugar-Exporting Countries, the Integrated Programme and Common Fund for Raw Materials, the evolution of SELA, the facts about OPEC, etc.), and even more important, the creation of a new page, preceding the cable news, called 'International Report'. This section (a full page, without advertising) was published six days a week with 'digested' news, oriented exclusively to Third World problems. This meant not just background information on national situations, problems of colonialism, racism and other forms of domination, above all in Africa and Asia, little known or totally hidden from the average Peruvian reader. It also meant explanations of the impact of the actions of the North (understanding by this the industrialized countries and the institutions that they control) on our countries. As a natural follow-up, the role of self-reliance and of collective solidarity, and the significance of the liberation struggles and of joint action against the transnationals, were also discussed. The idea for this section came from

TANZANIA: La entrega del comercio minorista a las cooperativas

Para Nyerere era esencial no permitir que personas con propósitos capitalistas se aprovecharan de los nuevos mercados creados

Por Nelva MOREIRA

El Primer Ministro de Tanzania, Rashid, Kawawa, acaba de hacer un anuncio sumamente importante para el proceso revolucionario que está viviendo su país: la nacionalización de los comercios privados de las aldeas tanzanianas. En su lugar serán creadas cooperativas de comercialización.

La medida afecta a un sinnúmero de empresarios que, aun cuando pequeños, ya se estaban convirtiendo en grandes en muchas partes del país, pero la palabra "nacionalización" tiene en este caso una connotación particular. Muchos de los pequeños y medianos comercios de Tanzania, tal como en Kenya, Uganda, y otros países del Índico, estaban o están en manos de la minoría hindú, que no se limita al comercio. En Dar-es-Salaam y otras capitales, gran parte de las residencias de material noble eran propiedad de hindúes. Cuando vino la independencia y se instaló el régimen de Nyerere, una de sus primeras medidas fue una reforma urbana que convirtió en propiedad pública las residencias privadas que pertenecían a empresas y familias adineradas que las alquilaban por altos precios. Los hindúes figuraban ampliamente entre esos propietarios.

Según su tradición humanista el presidente Nyerere ha tratado este problema de forma diferente que Idi Amin, quien, para buscar una popularidad fácil y una evasión a sus propios problemas internos, confiscó las propiedades de los hindúes y los expulsó sumariamente de Uganda.

Sin embargo, es así inevitable que muchos de esos hindúes, propietarios de comercios en las aldeas, sean ahora alcanzados por la ley nacionalizadora, tanto más cuanto pocos de ellos se preocuparon de adquirir la nacionalidad tanzaniana y siguen, ya en la cuarta o quinta generación en Tanganyka y Zanzíbar, usando pasaporte inglés.

El año pasado visitamos gran parte del interior de Tanzania, para conocer las experiencias de las aldeas autogestionarias, mundialmente conocidas como "ujamaas" que en suahili significa "familia", y que ahora, ya se entiende, políticamente, como "familia socialista".

Tanzania es un país en más de un 90% campesino. Y todo el esfuerzo del régimen actual dirigido por un partido de larga tradición progresista en África, el TANU (Tanganyca African National Union) es para crear una sociedad de modelo socialista, basada en el campo, y en la que la abrumadora mayoría de la nación no sea dominada por las pequeñas élites urbanas.

LAS ALDEAS AUTOGESTIONARIAS

La fórmula encontrada por Nyerere fue la aldea "ujamaa", que es la base física de la política de nucleamiento campesino. El considera con toda razón, que sería imposible cualquier progreso con núcleos rurales. Se llama "Umoja Bwawani Ujamaa", "Umoja" significa "todos juntos". En ella viven 650 familias, con tres mil habitantes. Todavía hay lotes explotados individualmente. Mas cada familia es obligada a dar tres días de trabajo semanal a la granja colectiva que hay en la aldea.

La zona es muy seca, pero, pese a eso, la producción ha aumentado y las personas se muestran satisfechas con la nueva vida. Pero el éxito mayor de esa "ujamaa" fue la cooperativa de comercialización, que ya en el primer año dio una ganancia igual a la mitad del capital invertido.

Las nuevas inversiones son decididas por la asamblea de la aldea. Días antes de nuestra visita, se había resuelto comprar un molino. El presidente de la cooperativa, que es un campesino de poco más de treinta años, Culhbert Nyando, que llegó allí desde una región a más de mil kilómetros de distancia, nos dijo que no se permite ningún tipo de comercio privado en "Umoja Bwawani", y, cuando apareció alguna persona que se estaba "elevando", pues la apartaban de la aldea.

EL CAMBIO DE LA SOCIEDAD

Es evidente que este no es el panorama de todas las "ujamaas" tanzanianas. En otras escuchamos quejas de que algunos negociadores estaban ganando dinero explotando a los demás y se estaba formando una nueva clase de intermediarios que, no sólo hacían imposible el desarrollo de la cooperativa, sino que comprometían la confianza en el proceso de cambios.

Planteamos ese problema al Presidente Nyerere, en una entrevista que nos concedió en su residencia privada en Dar-es-Salaam.

Nos dijo que conocía esa situación. Le preguntamos si no consideraba que el proceso tanzaniano alcanzaba un período de para[illegible]. El Presidente nos [illegible] política de cambio en las áreas campesinas si las familias vivieran aisladas o en pequeños grupos a los cuales no podría llegar el gobierno con ningún programa educativo, sanitario o de asistencia social. Y menos aún un trabajo de concientización política.

No diría que el Presidente Nyerere ya está victorioso en su lucha [illegible] para implantar una nueva sociedad en Tanzania. Puede, sin embargo, sentirse satisfecho por un éxito evidente: los campesinos tanzanianos comprendieron y aceptaron con entusiasmo su apelo para que se reuniesen en aldeas cuya economía debería ser autogestionaria, y, por consiguiente, no capitalista.

Tanzania, un país de poco más de 900 mil kilómetros cuadrados, tiene quince millones de habitantes. De ellos, seis millones ya están mudados en "ujamaas", algunas de ellas prósperas y otras enfrentando todavía graves problemas.

Visitamos algunas aldeas y una de ellas nos pareció típica. Es una de las quinientas ujamaas instaladas alrededor de la nueva capital, Dodoma, zona en la cual el 90% de la población ya vive en esos [illegible] que recuperar las riquezas del país —casi todo en manos de extranjeros— fue fácil. Nacionalizamos todo lo que podía ser nacionalizado en tres días y podría haber sido hecho en sólo 24 horas. Transformar la sociedad no era, sin embargo, algo que se pudiese hacer en un día o una semana.

Es un proceso en marcha que arranca, principalmente, de la educación de los campesinos para conocer sus derechos.

Analizando nuestra inquietud sobre los riesgos de un neo-capitalismo en el medio campesino y sobre todo en las nuevas aldeas autogestionarias, él nos comentó lo siguiente:

"Hay cosas que vamos a cortar por la raíz en las "ujamaas" villages. Usted acentúa en su pregunta que cuando se agrupan algunos millares de personas, se está formando un mercado. Es, evidentemente, una oportunidad para que alguna gente con propósitos capitalistas se aproveche. Pero eso nosotros no lo vamos a permitir.

Ningún negocio de tipo capitalista podrá ser realizado en las ujamaas villages. Por mayor que sea la dificultad, estableceremos en cada "ujamaa" una unidad comercial de tipo cooperativo, que asegure que ese mercado creado sea utilizado y revierta en beneficio de la propia comunidad".

La decisión de la semana pasada del gobierno tanzaniano de transferir a las cooperativas los comercios de las aldeas comprueba que el presidente Nyerere estaba no solamente atento al problema sino que tenía una fórmula para su solución, aunque él no debía ignorar que iría a encontrar mucha resistencia.

Al lado de otras medidas progresistas, ésta confirma el propósito del "Mwalimu" (maestro) Nyerere de hacer avanzar la revolución tanzaniana rompiendo en favor de las mayorías nacionales, cierto inmovilismo que la estaba deteniendo.

URUGUAY:

Denuncia internacional por derechos humanos

Dos hechos importantes marcaron en esta semana la situación uruguaya: la detención de 26 oficiales en actividad y la campaña de esclarecimiento mundial que inició en todos los continentes la Amnesty International, exigiendo el respeto por los derechos humanos en ese país que hasta un pasado reciente era un modelo de sociedad políticamente bien organizada.

Los datos revelados por Amnesty International son dramáticos. El número de presos supera a los seis mil, es decir, un detenido por cada 450 ciudadanos, estimando que uno de cada cincuenta uruguayos pertenece a las fuerzas militares y policiales.

"A pesar de que la víctima del persecutorio parece tener como objetivo principal a los comunistas —añade Amnesty International— también socialistas, demócratas-cristianos y miembros de los partidos tradicionales Blanco y Colorado se encuentran entre las víctimas. Los derechos sindicales han sido totalmente anulados, y, con siniestro cinismo, algunas sedes de sindicatos han sido confiscadas y transformadas en centros policiales y de interrogatorio. Pero, el aspecto más repugnante del aparato represivo en el Uruguay es el empleo sistemático y difundido de la tortura, convertida en práctica normal cuando se trata de casos políticos".

Señálese que Amnesty International es una organización que ganó prestigio con su imparcialidad y por el cuidado con que investiga sus denuncias. En el caso concreto de Uruguay hace muchos meses que sus delegados analizan denuncias y recopilan pruebas y ahora piden a todas las organizaciones mundiales que denuncian a este "Chile silencioso", al mismo tiempo que están exigiendo que el gobierno de Uruguay "permita que una entidad independiente internacional investigue las denuncias de torturas".

EN EL FRENTE INTERNO

Uruguay era un país liberal y esa represión encontró a sus partidos y organizaciones populares desprevenidos para enfrentarla. Sin embargo, en los últimos meses, se ha verificado un recrudecimiento de la resistencia al gobierno de Juan María Bordaberry no solamente en el campo político sino también en los medios populares.

La segunda noticia de destaque sobre aquel país esta semana se refiere a los militares. En estos últimos años varios jefes militares de grados superiores —que de una manera u otra se habían opuesto al régimen— fueron detenidos, como los generales Líber Seregni y Víctor Licandro, y los coroneles Zufriategui y Montañez, o pasados a retiro y marginados, muchos otros. Ahora mismo, los primeros están bajo arresto. El hecho nuevo fue la detención, en los últimos días, de 26 oficiales en actividad en el ejército. Por primera vez esto ocurre desde que el 27 de junio de 1973 el Presidente clausuró el Parlamento, declaró en receso a todos los partidos políticos y clausuró a las centrales sindicales (CNT) y estudiantil (FEUU).

"Ahora la detención de militares en actividad, mandos superiores y medios y comandantes y capitanes es juzgada, por fuentes políticas dignas de crédito, como un indicador de la existencia de contradicciones reales en los cuadros de las Fuerzas Armadas uruguayas en relación al papel que ellas cumplen en la actual coyuntura política", señala un despacho de IPS.

"En efecto, siempre de acuerdo a esas fuentes, se señala que puede caracterizarse a los oficiales presos como de tendencia democrática, opuesta al continuismo del régimen cívico-militar", agrega la información, que concluye: "Señalan las mismas fuentes que el fracaso de la política económica, la agudización de los conflictos sociales, acallados por una metódica represión, el aislamiento internacional a que ha conducido dicha política, las múltiples denuncias por la violación de los derechos humanos en el Uruguay, comienzan ahora a repercutir en lo mismo interno de las Fuerzas Armadas, lo que agrega un factor más a la inestabilidad del régimen uruguayo".

Por primera vez los No Alineados serán dirigidos por una mujer

Madame Bandaranaike dirigirá reunión cumbre de Colombo

Han comenzado ya en el Comité Preparatorio para la próxima conferencia cumbre de los Países No Alineados, a realizarse el mes de octubre en Sri Lanka (ex-Ceylán), las actividades que deberán concluir en la redacción del plan de acción de la cita internacional. La estrategia y acción común de los países no alineados en su mutua cooperación política, económica, social, cultural e informativa, están en el centro de la atención en los preparativos. Se trabaja sobre las decisiones más importantes de la Conferencia de Cancilleres, realizada en Lima en agosto pasado, aunque voceros autorizados han señalado que hay cierto retraso en la concreción de algunas decisiones. En el próximo mes de marzo, también en Lima, se reunirán los países interesados en la preparación del programa de cooperación científica y tecnológica entre los no alineados.

A la cumbre de Colombo deberán ser presentados los informes sobre las reales posibilidades de cooperación entre los Bancos Centrales de los países no alineados, sobre la actividad del grupo de 24 países en desarrollo en la reforma monetaria internacional, sobre el programa de ayuda a los países menos desarrollados, sobre un nueva reunión a celebrarse en La Habana, de países coordinadores para la cooperación entre los países no alineados y sobre los preparativos para la fundación del fondo para estimular la producción de alimentos en estos países.

En las Naciones Unidas los países no alineados trabajan también en el análisis del informe sobre el proyecto de estatuto para el Centro de Informaciones sobre empresas transnacionales, que funcionará en Cuba. Este punto fue incluido en la agenda en la reunión de Jefes de Estado de los países no alineados realizada en 1973 en Argel.

UNA MUJER EN LA PRESIDENCIA

Siguiendo la tradición del movimiento, la presidencia de la cita estará a cargo del primer mandatario del país sede, Sri Lanka, en este caso, hecho que llevará a una mujer por primera vez a la dirección de los no alineados.

Efectivamente, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, ocupa el puesto de Primer Ministro desde 1970, cuando se proclamó la República. Ella es una dirigente con ideas progresistas que imprimió su gestión al frente del gobierno de un carácter nacionalista. El pasado 14 de octubre la Asamblea Nacional votó por unanimidad la nacionalización de todas las plantaciones poseídas por el capital extranjero, que ascienden a unas 400, con más de cuatrocientos mil acres. El té —principal producto de exportación de Sri Lanka, el caucho, el coco y demás, están ahora bajo control del Estado.

Esta medida tiene decisiva importancia en la economía nacional, entre otras cosas porque ahora se podrá analizar si realmente conviene a las necesidades sociales y económicas continuar con la elevada producción de té, o si mejor será (como piden las reivindicaciones de algunos sectores) "arrancar el té y plantar alimentos", que son casi totalmente importados del exterior.

El hecho que la próxima Conferencia de Países no Alineados sea presidida por una mujer y que se realice nuevamente en un país asiático, la primera vez desde Bandung, en 1955, le pone un marco de referencia que se suma al atractivo e interés internacional que el evento naturalmente despierta.

UNA VISION RETROSPECTIVA

Señálese, además, que fue también en Colombo que el 28 de agosto de 1954 se reunieron los Jefes de Estado de la India, Nehru, de Pakistán, Mohamed Alí, de Birmania, U Nu, de Ceylán, Sir John Kotelawala, y de Indonesia, Sastroamidjojo, con el propósito de llamar a una conferencia afro-asiática.

Esas naciones habían declarado su independencia muy poco tiempo atrás, (1946 Filipinas, 1949, Indonesia) y en la mayor parte del África el colonialismo estaba aún fuerte, si bien ya se insinuaba una poderosa lucha de liberación que ganaba a más pueblos del continente. Es de esa reunión que surgen los planteamientos que se concretan en la conferencia de Bandung, que se realiza dos años más tarde.

El primer llamado sólo preveía la presencia de Estados que ya hubiesen alcanzado la independencia, y, por eso mismo, fue modificado poco después. La guerra independentista estaba ya en una etapa que justificaba la inclusión de movimientos que en poco tiempo llegarían a ser gobierno en sus países liberados. En Indonesia se reunieron precursoramente 29 naciones afro-asiáticas, con un punto de coincidencia: el anti-colonialismo y el antiimperialismo.

Posiblemente haya sido Nasser el líder que ya entonces impactó más por sus ideas avanzadas sobre la necesidad de alcanzar la unidad de lo que llamó la "Nación árabe", y por sus nítidos argumentos a favor del nacionalismo como doctrina para comenzar un proceso de cambios basado en el anticolonialismo y antiimperialismo.

Mirando retrospectivamente aquella cita, se puede ver cómo ya estaban en génesis planteos que se fueron reforzando en el seno de los países alineados y que hoy constituyen una de sus principales banderas de lucha, como la revaloración de precios justos para las materias primas y la renuncia a formar parte de pactos militares que en el fondo no son sino una de las formas que adopta la política de poder.

La próxima cita de Colombo será sin duda, un eslabón importante en la historia del movimiento, que ya agrupa a más de ochenta naciones.

Teletipo

Ferrocarril interafricano

* Se estudian en la ciudad de Takoradi a 200 Km. de Accra las posibilidades de construir una red ferrocarrilera africana. La iniciativa partió del Comité de la Unión Ferrocarrilera Africana, del que son miembros expertos de Ghana, Nigeria, Swazilandia, Costa de Marfil, Togo, Argelia y Zaire. El representante del país sede, Ghana, destacó la necesidad de construir esta red de ferrocarril para el fortalecimiento de los vínculos entre los Estados africanos y para el necesario incremento del intercambio comercial.

La terrible herencia colonial que no ha sido totalmente superada, obliga aún hoy a un estado de África Occidental que desean exportar sus mercaderías a los países de África Oriental a enviarlas a través de Europa. La Unión Ferrocarrilera Africana, que tiene por sede la capital zaireña, Kinshasa, ya cuenta con 24 miembros.

Latinoamericanas

* Las exportaciones de Colombia de este año superaron en más de seis millones de dólares a las del año anterior, con un total de mil doscientos noventa y cinco millones.
* El Presidente de Finlandia, Sr. Uhro Kekkonen, regresó a su país después de unas vacaciones de carácter tan privado que ni siquiera visitó al Presidente Geisel. El Sr. Kekkonen pescó en varios ríos brasileños, y marcó un éxito especial al pescar, en el Negro un "pirarucú" de 1.80 m., con un peso de setenta kilogramos, el ejemplar más importante que el activo presidente pescó en toda su larga trayectoria por varias partes del mundo.
* El sector privado chileno reafirmó su confianza en el Pacto Andino.
* Súbito aumento de la cotización del dólar en relación al Guaraní, en Paraguay.

Arabes

* El Presidente de Egipto, Anuar El Sadat, visita Arabia Saudita. El primer mandatario egipcio busca fortalecer su alianza con el rey Khaled frente a la ofensiva de Siria, que estaría en la conveniencia de crear una confederación con Jordania, a la que Damasco espera que se junte, posteriormente, el nuevo Estado independiente de Palestina, a ser instalado en lo que es hoy la Cisjordania, ocupada por Israel.

Los palestinos todavía no se muestran muy entusiasmados con esa federación y acaban de advertir a sus amigos sirios que el rey Hussein no se caracteriza por el cumplimiento de los acuerdos asumidos.
* Mientras tanto del otro lado del Mediterráneo, comenzó a funcionar un comité mixto argelino-libio, que estudia la ampliación de las relaciones entre los dos países, hoy enfrentados a la posición de Marruecos y de Mauritania en el problema de los saharauis.
* Por fin, un episodio que está llamando la atención hace varios días a la prensa de El Cairo: la policía consiguió, después de una dramática búsqueda, detener a un mono fumando. Ese travieso miembro de la "mafia" se especializó en desvalijar a las personas desprevenidas. "Después de cada delito criminal, informó el diario "Al Gomhuriya", se fumaba un cigarrillo. En la cárcel se opuso a revelar su técnica a la policía, y le mostró también dónde guardaba su malhabido botín.

Kissingerianas

* Un comentarista de Bogotá (AFP): "La breve gira de Henry Kissinger al sur del río Grande con nuevas promesas de Washington es insuficiente para colmar el actual descontento latinoamericano hacia su poderoso vecino".

Costa Rica (IPS): "Cuando ha declinado la estrella del Secretario de Estado norteamericano Henry Kissinger lo dice el hecho que sin poner los pies en Centro América, haya tenido el pésimo tropiezo al fracasar las gestiones para producir una reunión con los seis Jefes de Estado del istmo. La reunión resultó imposible".

Estados Unidos (IPS): "La gira de Kissinger por cinco países latinoamericanos es considerada en medios oficiales norteamericanos como la prueba cabal de que la verdadera política de Washington hacia el resto de los países americanos es la política de las multitudes".

Jornal do Brasil: "Kissinger elogia papel del Perú pero admite desacuerdos".

Héctor Béjar, the assistant editor of the paper, and to put it into practice three foreign journalists were engaged (Neiva Moreira, Beatriz Bissio and Pablo Piacentini) who each day provided the written and graphic material, for the most part elaborated by themselves, using material not currently in the news, mostly from IPS, ANSA or Prensa Latina. The proof of its success was that many people collected the International Report and that it was used in some schools as teaching material.

Various sections of the daily had relied on 'canned' material for many years. The editorial page reprinted columns by Art Buchwald and Jack Anderson. More serious culturally was the frequent use of material from EFE or DPA (Germany) and, as in many other newspapers in the Third World, the dependence was plain for the feature section as a whole, including the women's pages, apart from a few 'specialist' pages on agriculture, housing and bull-fighting, and the Sunday edition. In order to counteract the cultural penetration in the comic strips and in the filler material required for the other sections, including entertainments, it was necessary to stimulate local literary and artistic productivity. Newspapers find it more convenient and less demanding to reprint syndicated features, from cartoons to cookery recipes. A start had been made in the fight against this inertia. The short time at our disposal prevented us from making substantial changes, but an appreciable effort was made in the search for creativity and national identity, increasing our own production and reducing imitation.

Problems, mistakes and difficulties

The foregoing description may seem excessive or exaggerated. The reader must nevertheless recall the magnitude of the political change that had taken place in Peru since 1968. Some of us wanted the revolution to be irreversible; we stressed this and tried to convince ourselves of it. But we knew of the capacity of the internal and external opposition to erode and attack. We were conscious, too, of the enormous resistance that the structures of society—social and cultural, above all—would present to the changes. We are all conservatives when our own security is at stake. And individual security—in money, work, status, the opinion of others—is one of the values most internalized through the capitalist social structure. Peru wanted to break with it between 1968 and 1975. For some, very timidly. For others, in looking for a vague third way. For others, finally, in laying the foundations of a viable, pristine experiment which was frustrated by a combination of indecisiveness, hostility, mistakes and current misfortunes.

Meanwhile, it should not be thought that the experience of participation on *El Comercio* was lacking in problems and difficulties. On the contrary, there were many obstacles, as many as there were mistakes. It is not easy to criticize oneself. Even less when you alone are representing a group of those responsible. In the above pages the context of many of the problems has been illustrated. At all events, I shall try to point out the main stumbling-blocks that our common effort experienced in its short duration:

1. In the actual territory of participation, the relations between the various actors were not always easy. It was, in the first place, a question of attitudes. It was an encounter between different classes: *campesinos* from different regions of the country, from the central and southern Andes and from the *selva;* intellectuals; professionals, journalists and non-journalists; administrative or white-collar

employees and workers right across the spectrum, with considerable specialization or none. What pulled it together was a common experience of trade-union, *campesino* or political militancy. But this did not automatically eliminate the lack of trust, misgivings and in some circumstances contempt or a discriminatory attitude. The clashes that occurred at different moments between the union and the management, the work community and the rural delegates and the latter and the management undoubtedly reflected this emotional underpinning which was nevertheless, I think, successfully overcome. In the second instance, there were problems ostensibly of behaviour. We have already seen that perspectives of the future were different and that there was internal rivalry between the union and the work community for greater legitimacy in the eyes of the workers. In the same field—as in other self-management experiments in Peru—group egotisms arose: the workers in feeling themselves to be the owners and participants in the benefits of the enterprise developed typically capitalist reasonings. On the one hand, they thought that the fewer there were to participate the more profit there would be for each; this was illustrated by the refusal to let the vacant places be filled or to allow contract staff the same income as permanent staff. On the other hand, they judged very severely and not too impartially those expenses not incurred by the workers; this occasioned frequent clashes with the rural delegates, who drew daily expenses for journeys and an allowance for meals while in the office.

Another problem of behaviour appeared in the opportunity for decision-making. The management had executive experience and a sense of urgency which could bring them into conflict with the other two groups if the latter felt that they were being pressured into a decision. There were moments when there was a genuine breakdown of communication, both on the political side when the management through its relation with the Government had access to privileged information, and on the business side when élitist training made it obvious that the degree of practical knowledge and of technology that was not shared was marginalizing the *campesino* sector, above all, or making the expression of its thought difficult. In the same area, one group of the journalists claimed to be apolitical, and tried to conceal their lack of commitment by 'professional' behaviour. These two difficulties were always the most tricky, inasmuch as they involved interpersonal relations. But they were resolved and never produced open conflict.

In the case of the *campesino* delegation, there was some evidence of the extent to which accession to a position of power, with a high degree of public exposure, influenced behaviour: there was a tendency to cultivate political clients, predominantly in the delegate's own constituency, which frequently led to the importance or gravity of certain events being misrepresented. At the same time, the effect of control from outside, by the National Agrarian Confederation and via the pressures exerted by the regional and provincial leagues and federations, often took the form of a tendency to make nothing but accusations, followed by corrections and counter-accusations, which on occasions disrupted relations with the staff journalists (who disliked being amended and legally obliged to correct themselves). A certain amount of initial political ingenuity enabled this behaviour to be assimilated.

2. To give political shape and content to a business, by nature commercial, is not an easy task. And this was the focal point on which the attacks against *El Comercio* concentrated, not

by the opposition groups, but by the grass roots in some quarters and especially by other socialized dailies. The problem may be summed up very simply: dependence on commercial advertising. A payroll of more than 600 workers enjoying the social benefits, bonuses and privileges won from the former owners through the union leadership, with the consent of the Government (and which the workers then did not want to see cut back), added to the seniority in service of the staff, in an undertaking integrated vertically from editors to distributors, meant that the costs were undoubtedly the highest of any Peruvian daily. But at the same time the revenues were also higher than those of any other newspaper, in spite of the scale of charges also being higher. Bourgeois traditions played a very important role here. A few decades ago it was common to hear someone refer collectively to the newspapers in the capital as *'comercios'*; and a member of the newspaper-owning family would proudly claim that 'no one is born or dies in Lima without it being reported in *El Comercio*'. Besides an extensive section of classified advertisements, and the special notices (deaths, public notices, property, finance, auctions, the professions, employment vacancies, etc.), the entertainments columns and directly commercial advertising met the cost of the edition and left some surplus. To this could be added the proceeds of sales. During this period, too—and in particular to satisfy the increased demand from the provinces and the *campesino* sector—there was pressure to increase the circulation, which was not possible because of the limited quota of paper.

But the central point continued to be the advertising. We were very conscious of the privileged position of *El Comercio,* compared with other journals that were on the verge of bankruptcy. The Government had arranged for official notices and advertising from state enterprises to be distributed equally. What the other dailies aspired to was that the private advertising should also be shared out. This went much further than the reforms put forward by the Government. And yet the commercial advertising stayed mainly with *El Comercio,* with the residue going to other dailies, only because of inertia and because of a *de facto* monopoly: there were no new dailies. But if the opposition had published another morning newspaper, a sizeable mass of publicity would surely have been diverted.

Therefore, fully aware of not being able to change a situation in which we were the beneficiaries, we tried not to compete unfairly; we aligned our advertising tariffs with those of other newspapers and rigorously applied the regulation on advertising that had been approved by the Velasco Government, setting standards and criteria and fixing limits to advertising activities.

3. Relations with the people's organizations were put by the Peruvian Revolution at the very centre of the idea of participation. If a new way was to be found that would be really important for development, participation would have to be extensive, wide-ranging in its scope and not limited to individuals. Hence, all the reforms tended to rely on associated schemes, whether territorial or functional. As we have seen, in the structure envisaged for the socialized press, two types of associate entity converged: those which represented workers (union or work community) with access to ownership (through the second) and those which represented organized sectors of society, in the case of *El Comercio* the *campesinos*. The second type was less clear and created some misunderstandings and lack of comprehension. The natural structure of

representation of the agrarian sector sprang from the base itself, from the agrarian cooperatives, communities and associations, expressing itself at a first level in the leagues, by valley or by province; at a second level in the federations, by department or region; and, finally, at the third level, in the National Agrarian Confederation (CNA).

When the daily was being assigned to the rural sector, the most sensible thing would have been for the CNA to have elected the representatives. But the spread of participation, when the transfer of power is being sought as it was by the Velasco regime, may also generate new excessive concentrations. This was the fear of the Government, to give too much power to the CNA. So it set up a parallel structure, the civil association, also with a decentralized and democratic representation. The dualism certainly created problems: very critical opinions by the CNA organizations about the delegates to the newspaper's managing council and a certain reluctance to give support and participate in common tasks; mutual accusations of duplication of effort and a progressive disengagement. The reasons for this cannot be arbitrarily attributed to any sector: the CNA called for a more aggressive policy of agrarian reform and for a more radical policy in general for the process of change. This was part of its obvious external role. The civil association, in its turn, frequently found itself squeezed between these pressures—which it also frequently shared—and the 'modus vivendi' that underwrote the relative harmony within which the collective work of the newspaper went on. This tension was not resolved and is to be seen in the final problem for analysis. Effectively, as was the case for the other dailies, never in the history of the country had the popular organizations had the access to the communications media that they achieved in this period. The bulletins and messages from the CNA and the agrarian federations were front-page news, in the spaces reserved for decades for employers and business bodies. In this light, the importance of the *campesino* group, as a national political element, was obvious from the coverage.

4. The schism in the process, with the progressive rupture and separation between the Government and the revolution, undoubtedly created the most serious problems, which came to a head with the brusque interruption of the experiment.

(a) As for the revolution itself, the central idea which had guided the process since 1968, enriching and nourishing it, altered by stages into an element of dispute and a seed of disunity. After the replacement of Velasco and as the new political line of the Government became clearer, there ceased to be 'somebody' who could speak in the name of the revolution. In the absence of a party and with a political organization that had remained stunned after the final months of Velasco and a Front for the Defence of the Revolution that was entering a phase of decline, various groups within a broad compromise belt tried to obtain a degree of hegemony. The popular organizations, among other sectors, remained trapped in the steady drift of opinion. The daily newspapers also reflected the gradual disappearance of unity, engaging in heated debates among themselves about unavoidable inconsistencies in tactics and strategy. In the absence of an arbiter, all conflicts, clashes or inconsistencies were interpreted ideologically. *El Comercio* was not immune from these distortions, which affected the whole process and seriously warped the image of the experience of participation, favouring the most regressive elements, that congratulated themselves on

this proof of failure. However, the direct effect on the daily was slight. Internally, there was no major conflict and the workers, *campesinos* and management were able to work on excellent terms up to the end.

(b) The increasingly difficult relationship between the paper and the Government ran parallel with the disengagement of the latter from the practice of revolutionary aims and with the appearance of a technocratic bureaucracy in the information sector, which developed an uncontrolled appetite for centralization and monopoly. The first problem arose at the end of October 1975, when the Government replaced two high army officials who were discharging political functions of great responsibility: one was head of the Advisory Committee (Comité de Asesoramiento) to the Presidency and the other head of the Central Office of Information. Both had been among the initiators of the process of change and close to President Velasco. A number of newspapers (not all) expressed their concern and surprise at this event. The case of *El Comercio* was particularly noticeable. A large number of messages from the *campesino* organizations called for the reinstatement of the generals who had been retired. Other sectors also protested and the paper put out three editorials in one week asking for an explanation from the Government. The reply was harsh: the directors were simply forbidden, by the new head of the Central Office of Information, to continue with the matter or to publish news about the two officials. The same evening a censor was appointed, who visited the editorial offices and print-shops of the newspapers in order to check that the instruction had been obeyed. The only course of action left open to the editor in the face of this violation of the autonomy and freedom of the press was to resign. An urgent meeting was held by the rural representatives and the officers of the union and the work community to discuss what had happened and our decision (editor, assistant editor and manager) to withdraw. Following the intervention of a number of ministers and an interview by the editors with President Morales, the situation was resolved by a guarantee that the like would not happen again. This incident contributed directly to legitimate the role of the management and to smooth out conflicting relations on the paper.

In the following months contact between the daily and the Government, which ran chiefly through the Central Office of Information, revealed the second problem. The office was supposed to 'orient' the news. Instead of the newspapers being able to obtain their information directly from state boards, ministries or enterprises, the office gradually began to assume the role of an intermediary. But it did not limit itself to passing on information. In order to justify its bureaucracy, it rewrote, cut, shaped and even gave titles to the news for the newspapers to reproduce. The dangers of monotony, of copying, of the 'official truth' and the party line which the opposition on the Right had always warned of, now became a real and imminent threat. Towards the end of the period the struggle with the office was constant. We published the more innocuous material, used direct sources, editorialized or commented in our political columns contrary to the sense suggested. The presumption of the head of the office to be (as he was afterwards in practice) the editor of each and every one of the daily newspapers was rejected. Not for a moment during the struggle was this accepted. The managing council was aware of the worsening situation and gave unhesitating support.

The first months of 1976 saw a sharpening of the economic crisis which the Government

sought to deal with not in a revolutionary manner but by allowing the people to bear the heaviest charges. Three criticisms were developed in the daily: of the economic and financial policy; of the labour and employment policy; and of the beginnings of repressive attitudes. The power to inform and to create opinion, the power of the press, was at the service of the revolutionary idea and not of the Government. However, the Government was now thinking not of the transfer of power (although it went on affirming it for two more years) but of ending the autonomy of the socialized press.

On Monday, 15th March, 1976, at five in the afternoon, the Lima correspondent of an international news agency telephoned me to say that a message had come through the Office of Information teletype (installed in newspapers, radio stations and news agencies) to say that six newspaper editors had been sacked. Not only had the customary thanks been dispensed with, but also a few days later the President himself referred to those who 'had fomented foreign ideologies, encouraging confrontation between Peruvians and ...'.

I have always believed that this day represented a definitive break in Peru and that many subsequent happenings may find their explanation in it.

6 Conclusions

From this eyewitness account, which is perhaps over-detailed at times about matters that each participant would evaluate in a distinct way, I wish to draw a few conclusions. They do not refer to *El Comercio* but are intended as a general critique, valid for the situation in many countries of the Third World. They derive, of course, from the experience described.

1. The power to inform and make opinion is essentially political and intimately linked with the power structure. In order to change its nature and practice in traditional societies, an effective structural transformation is required. Seen in the perspective of an alternative development model, the power to inform loses its character as a right for privileged groups or individuals and acquires a participatory dimension expressed in the rights to participate actively in information and to be informed fully and truthfully of events as they occur. To obtain for the people the social right of information means disappropriating it from the power groups that traditionally have exercized it.

2. Freedom of expression and of information in the abstract mean very little if they are not linked to the freedom of access to the media. Mass communications technology is expensive in all its forms. Normally, it is the economic power groups that own the media and control access to it. In the case described from the Peruvian press, *El Comercio* was able to function and make profits because it had been expropriated as a going concern and then transferred. But in a capitalist society, if this initial financial support does not exist nor a mechanism that enables the takeover of existing stock or goodwill, who is going to finance a newspaper enterprise for the people? It is not

enough to say that anyone who wants to do so may start a newspaper. For this, in Peru, the press monopoly was necessary, a monopoly which was then transferred from the power groups to the State and the popular organizations.

3. The participation of the people in the press is possible and desirable. In the first place, certainly, there should be participation by the workers themselves. This should be, as it started to be in Peru, in the ownership, management and benefits of the enterprise. And not through shareholders, which allows constant manipulation of the capital by the majority holders. There must be effective participation from the bottom in all the decisions which concern the public interest. Yet this in itself is not sufficient. There must be participation by the people and not the falsified participation which the commercial press claims to provide through its numbers of readers (or circulation), by running competitions and opinion polls or by publishing a few—not always authentic—readers' letters. There has to be real participation, not as a response, but active and self-motivating. The only shape it can take to avoid becoming a state monopoly is through a broad scheme of association by democratic organization, perhaps different from the Peruvian experiment. In accordance with each requirement a broad spectrum of organized public sectors—territorial groupings, union bodies, political parties, ethnic groups, etc.—could have guaranteed access without intermediaries in the exercise of information power.

4. When participation ceases to be an idea and the political will exists, the forms it may take are very varied. Participation thereafter implies other things. It does not mean admission to an existing structure, but co-responsibility in its formulation. It means equality of status, the suppression of all discrimination or at least the conditions and will to suppress it, if as in the case described a class situation presents itself.

5. There is no set pattern for participation. The Peruvian *campesinos* did not write for the paper or become journalists. But they were the protagonists and direct generators of the news, supplying the facts, opinions and suggestions for the professionals to work on. Yet they also carried out other functions: they made decisions in their capacity as trustees and owners of the undertaking; supplied themselves with and studied the information necessary for the best decisions; served as a contact with their base in the rural areas, travelling and receiving delegations; carried out political and administrative negotiations; and arbitrated in disputes. All this provided a concrete and effective way of participating.

6. Structural reform in the area of information cannot be taken in isolation. It has to fit into a receptive social setting. As has been shown, in Peru there was effective representative support for the earlier reforms: on the land, in business, in education and advertising. Many were needed. Perhaps the process of change tapered off for this reason. The aim of the reform of information is to bring political decision-making—always the object of a few—into daily life and to make it the daily concern of all of us.

7. Reform of information suggests something more than transforming the conditions of ownership and management. Thinking about Another Information and active participation by the people also means a change of mentality by the professionals. The long debate about professionalism and news-making concludes, as in the case of any other technology, with the question about who fixes the political guidelines for the use of the media and the content of the message. The political involve-

ment of the professional helps in the transition to Another Development. The alternative is to accede to the role of a simple intermediary, accepting the initiative and interference of others and also agreeing to substitution. The values of objectivity, credibility and specialization do not conflict with participation in information, they actually favour active involvement.

8. In order to inform and communicate, both those who transmit and those who receive need to be educated. This education embraces all the media. In our experiment on *El Comercio,* this is what we tried to do with the editorials, the *campesino* page, the national report and, especially, with the international report, which was intended to reveal to the masses the existence of the Third World and their membership of it.

9. The day-to-day relationship with authority is always delicate. In the Peruvian case it was the Government of the Armed Forces. Many other examples could be cited. But the freedom of information must be guaranteed, in correlation with the political responsibility of those who exercise the right to inform. And if there is real participation, it is not for the State to intervene, either by monopoly or censorship. It may take generations for freedom to become customary. Our time was very short and mental attitudes very slow to absorb the change. When the experiment was cancelled and the popular sectors pushed out, no one or almost no one protested. Perhaps because they now had nowhere to do so.

[*Translated from Spanish*]

ANOTHER DEVELOPMENT
Approaches and Strategies

Published by the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, Uppsala

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Most of the papers in this volume were originally prepared in the context of the 1975 Dag Hammarskjöld Project on Development and International Cooperation. They constituted inputs to its report, *What Now: Another Development*. Enlarged upon here, they throw further light on the substance of Another Development and elaborate on a number of concepts that could only be outlined within the format of a publication meant for rapid distribution. They provide elements for the continuation of the discussion and for action-oriented policy research. The volume has been conceived as a contribution to the on-going process of change-promoting thinking.

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Document

Nuclear Energy—Implications for Society

Declaration of the Groupe de Bellerive

The Colloquium on 'Nuclear Energy—Implications for Society', sponsored in Geneva by the Groupe de Bellerive in February 1979, provided a major opportunity for a dispassionate discussion of the most important issues which nuclear power now presents. According to the Editor of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 'the meeting may become known as the turning point in the recognition of the profound changes a nuclear world poses for society'. We hope to publish the full proceedings later this year.

Those issues have, in our view, in recent years become so polarized and invested with so much emotion on both sides, that they threaten more profound and long-lasting divisions within Western European societies than we have seen for a very long time.

Seeking to stand outside the emotional and political confrontations and taking no collective part in them ourselves, we were concerned that the cases which can be made on all sides of these issues should be put forward with an equal degree of rationality and objectivity. We therefore invited to the Colloquium leading figures from both the proponents and the opponents of nuclear energy. The opponents responded well to our invitation, and several original and important papers were presented on their behalf. While the quality of those presented by the proponents was in no sense inferior, only comparatively few representatives of the nuclear power industry chose to attend. More important than numerical inferiority, it soon became clear that what Lord Flowers, in opening the Colloquium, called 'the orthodox case for nuclear power', still rests on assumptions made several years ago, which more recent research has subjected to severe and reasoned criticism.

That criticism has not so far been answered: the assumptions on which it rests have not been challenged; the arguments by which it proceeds have not been refuted; the conclusions to which it comes have not been controverted. In short, the case for nuclear power risks going by default if it is not brought up to date and reformulated.

For the nuclear industry to rest on its laurels may seem a pragmatically convenient policy for it. In much of Western Europe, governments already have commitments to substantial nuclear power programmes. The United Kingdom has authorised the development of an Oxide Fuel Reprocessing Plant at Windscale, and a public inquiry will soon take place on a proposed Commercial Demonstration Fast Reactor; the Federal Republic of Germany is still proposing to support a major nuclear programme by constructing the largest reprocessing plant in the world at Gorleben, with an annual production of 14,000 kilograms of plutonium; in France, the Super-Phoenix Fast Breeder Reactor of Creys-Malville is under construction, and the reprocessing plant at La Hague is still expanding.

All this may provide some comfort for the nuclear industry, despite the shortage of orders for power reactors from which it currently suffers. But such comfort may be illusory, and the policy of keeping its head down may have dangers of which it is probably unaware. While the governmental momentum in support of major nuclear projects continues, the public is becoming increasingly aware that the criticism of the 'orthodox case' is no longer the prerogative of eccentric environmentalists for whom a reduction of living standards is the decisive aim. On the contrary, the anti-nuclear case is today being put forward by an increasing number of highly competent scientists and economists, and with more sophistication and greater objectivity than the case for nuclear power. If, in that

situation, governments continue to go ahead with major nuclear projects which no longer appear to the public to rest on a convincing case, even the presently uncommited citizen may come to believe what he is constantly being told by those who, for their own reasons, wish to subvert his adherence to a democratic order—namely that his nations are being governed not for his benefit, but by and for a 'military-industrial complex' which seeks only more power and aggrandisement for itself.

Such a pervasive loss of public faith in the institutions of democratic government would be a recipe for potential disaster, for reasons which are too obvious to spell out here. No free society can be governed without both trust and consent. Once trust evaporates, government can only be carried on by increasing coercion, and at the end of that road lies the graveyard of once free societies.

We believe that this risk of disaffection is greater than the nuclear industry, and at least some of the governments that support it, now realize. Following our Colloquium, therefore, we now call on the industry to make its case again, with the objectivity and elaboration which the situation today demands. During the presentations and debates in Geneva in February, the critics challenged the industry with the following specific questions, which seem to us to require reasoned answers:

1. Now that official energy demand forecasts (and more particularly forecasts of future 'energy gaps') have been successively scaled down for several years to a fraction of what they once were, is it still valid to base energy policies on extrapolations of past total demand, rather than on a detailed analysis of the specific demands for different kinds of energy to be expected from different sectors of consumption, in the light of realistic assumptions about fuel prices, consumption patterns, and technical and commercial developments?

2. Given that the use of electricity for domestic and commercial space heating is an extremely inefficient use of primary fuels, is it wise to continue to base any national energy policy on the all-electric house, office or factory?

3. How can nuclear power stations which generate electricity substitute adequately for imported oil, at all events in those Western European countries where the greater part of such oil is used for transportable liquid fuel in road, rail and air vehicles?

4. Is it true that the potential gains from energy conservation, without any reduction in standards of living, are as great as are now claimed for them, given appropriate energy policies?

5. How does the allocation of scarce economic resources to large nuclear power programmes compare, in terms of future public and private utility, with the allocation of the same resources to other patterns of energy supply and distribution?

6. Even assuming a present and future need for some base-load electricity generated from nuclear reactors, what case is there for deciding *now* to build Fast Breeder Reactors, let alone actually starting to build them?

7. Given the exceptional dangers of plutonium, especially in terms of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, as well as of national security and therefore of the survival of civil liberties and democratic societies under the rule of law, what case is there for deciding *now* to build nuclear reprocessing plants which will separate that substance from the highly

radioactive materials with which it is mixed when it leaves the current reactors, and which protect it from illicit use in atomic weapons, either by states or by sub-national groups?

If there is still a valid case today for large nuclear power programmes in Western Europe, then these questions can be answered, and the case of those who have asked them can be weakened or refuted. But if they cannot be adequately answered, then it is high time that the public were told that this is so.

Geneva, 31st May, 1979

Sadruddin Aga Khan, Jacques Freymond, Martin Kaplan, Lew Kowarski, Niall MacDermot, Olivier Reverdin, Denis de Rougemont, Paul Sieghart, William A. Visser't Hooft, Victor F. Weisskopf.

The Gorleben International Review

In the past year, West Germany has made a major contribution to the development of new procedures for reaching decisions about nuclear energy.

There, for several years, the Federal Government wanted to build the world's largest nuclear reprocessing centre, with a planned annual production of 14,000 kg of plutonium. But the proposed site—Gorleben—lies in Lower Saxony, and under West German atomic law the Government of that State is the licensing authority.

Before deciding whether to begin the formal licensing procedure, the State Government commissioned a panel of 20 international experts—from France, Norway, Sweden, the UK and the USA—to study the Gorleben project. Known as the 'Gorleben International Review' (GIR), that panel took 5 months to write a report of 2,200 pages. Its conclusion was the opposite of that reached by the official West German safety authorities: it said that the Gorleben project was *not* 'realizable in principle' from the standpoint of safety technology.

At the end of March 1979, the GIR panel were invited to present and defend their report at a 6-day public hearing in Hannover, and to debate it there with nearly 40 German and foreign scientists and engineers who supported the project. Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker, the distinguished German physicist and philosopher, presided as the independent chairman. The Prime Minister of Lower Saxony, the leader of the Opposition Party, and several hundred others attended throughout the hearings. There was simultaneous translation in 3 languages, and the proceedings were recorded for TV. The transcript covered another 2,000 pages.

On 16th May, the Prime Minister announced that the Government of Lower Saxony had accepted the GIR's advice: the Gorleben project was *not* 'realizable in principle' in its present form, and the licensing proceedings would therefore not even begin. The Federal Government now has to decide what to do next.

This procedure was both new and imaginative. It was very thorough; it was open; it took place in public. Above all, it was the first time that Governmental authorities have commissioned 'countervailing critics' of international standing to develop a reasoned scientific appraisal of a major official project, which had until then been supported by all the official agencies.

In the past, objectors have often complained that the proponents of such projects enjoy a monopoly, not only of financial resources, but also of information and expertise. The GIR procedure went some way towards redressing that imbalance. Other countries have much to learn from it.

Purari: Overpowering Papua New Guinea?

Book Review

By Robin Burns

Purari: Overpowering Papua New Guinea? Edited by Rob Pardy, Mike Parsons, Don Siemon and Ann Wigglesworth for International Development Action and the Purari Action Group. Illustrated by Jeff Stewart. Available from International Development Action, 73 Little George Street, Fitzroy, Vic. 3065, Australia. 1978, $5.00.

With the publication of *Purari,* International Development Action has really come of age. While continuing in the style of work already established in the early 1970s, the scale and depth of this study of the proposed Purari Hydroelectric Scheme and industrial development in Papua New Guinea shows the way in which a joint team of concerned local and expatriate individuals can provide a masterly analysis of a particular 'development' proposal in the local, national and global contexts.

IDA worked together with the Purari Action Group (PAG) over several years to organize materials for this book. There are five parts. In Part I a summary history of the scheme is presented, together with an outline of the formation and activities of the PAG and views from Purari people who were interviewed by the PAG (in the vernacular and translated into English). Part 2 examines the whole scheme, from its inception through the varying stages of study and negotiations and some of the factors underlying discussions and actions taken at the different stages. An examination of environmental and social impacts which the scheme would have is found in Part 3, while Part 4 presents information on and analysis of comparable schemes which have actually been implemented in a range of other countries. In the final part, the scheme is placed in an analytical framework of far-reaching questions concerning the transfer of technology, the political, economic and social consequences of such approaches to development in the Third World, and the possibilities for different ways of bringing about socio-economic development.

The Purari scheme

The Purari River was first considered as a site for a possible aluminium smelter by British Aluminium, half-owner of COMALCO, in 1958. This possibility was revived in 1971 by the Nippon Koei company of Japan, in a letter to the *Australian* Government, and that company carried out a pre-feasibility study of the potential for hydropower in the following year. In 1974, the Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation of Australia (SMEC) reviewed Nippon Koei's study and reports on the proposal, including one by the United Nations Development Programme, were made to the Papua New Guinea Government. In that year, a group of mainly tertiary students in Port Moresby formed the Purari Action Group and began to involve local people in finding out about the proposal which would so drastically affect their lives. Additionally, the PNG Office of Environment and Conservation stressed the need for impact studies of the scheme, the Central Planning Office also began to question some aspects of the proposal and Prime Minister Somare met Prime Minister Tanaka in *Canberra* to discuss further aspects of the proposal.

In January 1975 the Australian, Japanese and Papua New Guinean Governments established joint feasibility teams and a round of intergovernmental committee meetings began, leading to the presentation of a joint SMEC-Nippon Koei feasibility study to the Papua New Guinea Government in December 1977. In those three years, a number of problems began to emerge.

Problems emerge

The first problem concerned the position of the potential Japanese investors, and beginning with pressurizing the PNG Government for substantial tax concessions for the feasibility study consultants, it emerged, through examination of patterns of Japanese investment in other parts of the world, that the Purari Scheme was being conceived as yet another Japanese tax-free zone, the *first* of its kind to be established in the Pacific.

Secondly, a plurality of interests began to emerge. On the Japanese part, the aforementioned desire to obtain a tax-free zone for industrial development, together with use of Purari as a bargaining point for access to Australian minerals, especially during the ALP 'resources diplomacy' foreign policy era, were foremost, and were underlined by changing Japanese interest during fluctuating economic situations in Japan and subsequent to their establishment of an aluminium project in Brazil in 1976 (an excellent analysis of these developments is found in Chapters 4 and 5). Australia's position has been less clear. Although the links between COMALCO, British Aluminium, Conzinc Riotinto of Australia and British Rio Tinto-Zinc Corporation are now well-known, and known to have, in the case of the first two, been actively interested in PNG and the Purari in particular for at least 20 years, and the latter are now well established in PNG in the Bougainville copper operation, Australian Government attitudes are less obvious. Two considerations do emerge: the possibilities for an industrial complex in PNG to lift the aid-burden from Australia (now 50 % of the national budget in PNG, a burden of dependence of which PNG would also be glad to be rid), and the possibility, more relevant to the companies than the government, for electric power to be carried by undersea cable to Weipa, Gove and Darwin.

For its part, the PNG Government has vacillated between interest in capital and industrial development from new sources; concern and even interdepartmental rivalries over control, ownership and impact issues, and concern, as Japanese interest waxes and wanes, over alternative industrial developers and users (no mission has so far met with success, however, even for a proposal for establishing a uranium-enriching plant using Purari power), and the compatibility and nature of the proposed scheme with the 1972 Eight Point Plan for self-reliant development, especially as elaborated in the Constitutional Development Committee's Reports.

Thirdly, the issues which have come increasingly to the fore in PNG are the social and environmental aspects. It became clear that, apart from one study by Goldman of the environmental impact, the PNG Government was to bear the financial burden of any more detailed impact studies, including the abortive attempts to determine the best port site. The activities of the Office of Environment and Conservation and of the PAG began to draw attention to the lack of understanding of the local people of the issues involved, not helped by 'information and consultation' visits by Patrol Officers, seeking to convince village councillors and backed up by commercially made films, and by a futile attempt to take a mixed group from the area on a global fact-finding tour, which ended in a tourist visit to dams and smelting plants in Australia. Clearly, the PNG Government is in a dilemma concerning its own desire to increase its GNP and reduce reliance on imports, without substituting one locus for economic dependence for another, and to adhere to its own principles for the nature of development of the country.

What I am going to say here is my own views. First I must tell you my schooling is limited. I only completed standard two and later became a Pastor. So my point is, what I will be saying is really a primitive man's view. You can laugh at me if you wish

I have ban listening to the government officers and radio with interest about what will happen here. Sometimes I wonder how the whiteman will be able to close our river to make power for Papua New Guinea. Many of us believe that they will not be able to succeed in their attempt to close the river. To us it is a sacred place. The whole Purari, and especially up stream, is so sacred because that is where our ancestors came from. The trees, animals, birds, and even rivers are the product of our ancestors. If the whitemen close the river it will be only a short period of time before our ancestors will spoil their work and open the river once more. How can our Black government ignore our beliefs?

What is more important, is it money or is it our traditional beliefs and values? I have spent the young years of my life in Port Moresby. I have seen it developed from a little mission station into a city. I have seen many Motuans lose their hunting grounds and gardens. Motuans can no longer hunt or dig the soil for gardens. Instead they have turned to the government for work in office buildings. I do not want this to happen here or to our children.

The land was given to us by our ancestors and we have every right over the land. This also applies to the river. I would like my children to know that the river is part of our life. What will happen to us when the clever men close the river?

Letter reprinted from *Purari: Overpowering Papua New Guinea.*

The Purari: people and place

The scheme itself envisages an initial dam at Wabo on the Purari River, with up to six additional dams, together with the development of an industrial complex based on several core heavy industries at a coastal site. Even the single dam would produce more electricity than the entire country could currently use. Therefore, allowing the construction to go ahead would be close to selling land for the development of heavy industry by and for foreign investors, creating 'enclave development' which, apart from the provision of some jobs during the construction phase, would do little for the actual people in the Gulf Province or even the much larger area from the Highlands to the Papuan Gulf drained by the Purari system.

The book shows that the minimal hopes of the people themselves, for better facilities (health, education, roads, jobs) are not only unlikely to be met, but even if they are (e.g. health), it will be to counteract the effects of new diseases introduced along roads, through migrant workers and through ecological changes in the water system; that the local people will be displaced in most significant fields by imported, more qualified workers; that there will be strains on agricultural land, ecological changes affecting present subsistence and food-producing patterns; community life, although only a relatively small number will need to be relocated, will be severely and irreversibly disrupted including traditional and religious ties with the land, and even the safety of the dam itself has not been adequately investigated. The Gulf people, with one of the longest histories of European contact in PNG, yet one of the poorest records for official attention and development assistance, are moving from an interest in *any* proposed development, especially one put to them officially in terms of benefit to themselves, to questioning and hostility:

> Tell the people in the big government meetings that we do not want them to close our river because they want to make money for themselves. Tell them the water is ours and has a name ... (p.11)

> I can appreciate the need for development in the Gulf Province but this development, I believe, should take place in the people first. (p.13)

The development of underdevelopment?

The bulk of *Purari* is a deeply-researched and excellently-documented factual account of the inception of the Purari Scheme and its subsequent vicissitudes, including both favourable and unfavourable reports from industry and government departments. This not only clearly outlines the scheme, but provides a most useful case study, together with the minor ones from comparable projects in other countries, of the processes, problems and factors involved in development planning.

More importantly, however, the book presents both the diversity of opinions and the problems of opposition to the project in Papua New Guinea itself, both on the local opposition, interdepartmental problems and national government to foreign company/government levels, and also an analysis of the many factors involved. It shows that a smaller scheme, which would dam rivers with far less detrimental environmental consequences, could produce enough power to establish smaller-scale, less capital intensive and less socially-disruptive industries in which PNG could be a much more active participant and beneficiary.

More significantly again, it shows how the whole process of technological development and transfer can be either in the service of an

industrial capitalist élite, which in the case of a developing country is predominantly a European or European-educated élite, or an integral and alternative development growing out of the history, traditions and aspirations of a people. The factors affecting the ability of a developing country to choose the latter path are also examined, together with an all-too-brief outline of the actions which a cooperative group, PAG, and its IDA partners, can take in awakening people to the events which are taking place.

In the closing words of the book, 'What is known of the environmental and social changes Purari would bring, reinforces the experience of others in the Third World—the people become the victims of development ...Many fear that it will mean the overpowering of PNG, not just electrically, but politically, economically, socially and environmentally' (p.216). Even a casual reading of this book shows how well-founded such fears are.

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Some publications of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation

Mass Education: Studies in Adult Education and Teaching by Correspondence in Some Developing Countries. Edited by Lars-Olof Edström, Renée Erdos and Roy Prosser. Uppsala, 1970. 379 pp. Price: 68 Sw.kr.

Sovereignty, Aggression and Neutrality. Three lectures by Hans Blix. Uppsala, 1970. 64 pp. Price: 21.25 Sw.kr.

The Image of the Developing Countries: An Inquiry into Swedish Public Opinion. By Stig Lindholm. Uppsala, 1971. 100 pp. Price: 21.25 Sw.kr.

Nutrition: A Priority in African Development. Edited by Bo Vahlquist. Uppsala, 1972. 228 pp. Price: 51 Sw.kr.

Technical Assistance Administration in East Africa. Edited by Yashpal Tandon. Uppsala, 1973. 212 pp. Price: 29.75 Sw.kr.

The Treaty Maker's Handbook. Edited by Hans Blix and Jirina H. Emerson. Uppsala, 1973. 355 pp. Price: 90 Sw.kr.

Appointment with the Third World. Experts and Volunteers in the Field: Their Work, Life and Thoughts. By Stig Lindholm. Uppsala, 1974. 144 pp. Price: 25.50 Sw.kr.

Report from Swaneng Hill: Education and Employment in an African Country. By Patrick van Rensburg. Uppsala, 1974. 235 pp. Price: 20 Sw.kr. (UK and Commonwealth only: Wildwood House Ltd, 29 King Street, London WC2E 8JD. Price: £1.95)

Outer Limits and Human Needs: Resource and Environmental Issues of Development Strategies. Edited by William H. Matthews. Uppsala, 1976. 102 pp. Price: 45 Sw.kr.

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Another Development: Approaches and Strategies. Edited by Marc Nerfin with contributions by Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Rodolfo Stavenhagen, Krishna Ahooja-Patel, Jacques Berthelot, Johan Galtung, Paul Singer and Bolivar Lamounier, Cynthia Hewitt de Alcantara, Rajni Kothari, Sergio Bitar, Ahmed Ben Salah. Uppsala, 1977. 265 pp. Price: air mail 90 Sw.kr., surface mail 80 Sw.kr.

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