

International VIEWPOINT

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stated it "agrees completely."¹⁸ This is hardly reassuring for those in Vietnam who cannot forget that the Chinese road led to the massacre in Tiananmen Square.

The two CPs who were yesterday enemies at war are going to meet to officially mark the reconciliation. For a period the Vietnamese regime can benefit from this change of alliance. Economic relations are developing rapidly with the giant neighbour. China's weight is such that it cannot simply be ignored either on the regional or international levels — we should not forget that China has nuclear weapons and a right to veto as a permanent member of the UN Security Council. Forming a bloc with Beijing can thus reduce Hanoi's isolation. But there will be a price to pay, which is already apparent on the ideological level. And Beijing has never been inclined to treat the Vietnamese as equals.

Following the logic of turning inwards, the VCP leadership seems intent on stifling debate in the post-Congress period just as it did with the preparatory debate, now using the formal authority of decisions taken.

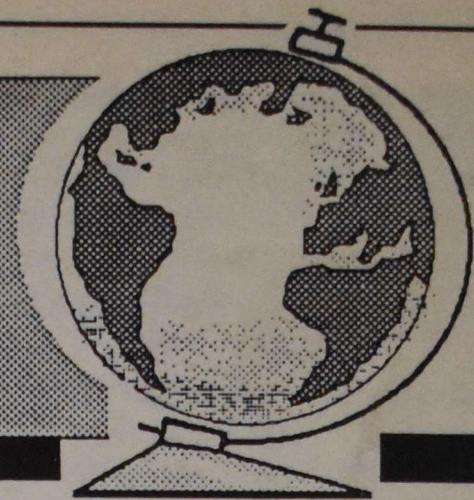
Đào Duy Tùng, the no. 4 in the PB, declared in his closing report that: "The congress has debated and analyzed that the absolute majority of our people have supported the party renovation line, recognized our party as the sole political organization to lead the society, rejected political pluralism, multi-partyism and opposition parties and maintained that our forces of dictatorship are firm and strong."¹⁹

Praising unanimity

The Voice of Vietnam also struck the same note, praising the unanimity of the congress and declaring that the debate was closed: "The high unanimity of all the congress delegates over the approved documents has confirmed the unshakable strength of a party that has been tested through countless objective events of history. At a time when the international situation is full of changes, the socio-economic crisis in the country has not ended, and the enemy both outside and inside is still day and night attacking us in an attempt to destroy the party leadership, the high unanimity of the congress has a particularly great significance... Although it is impossible not to have some differing views, the main stream of the congress was determined and agreed on by the absolute majority of the delegates.... It can be said henceforth, we no longer have to debate and weigh which direction we should follow, but we should seek all ways to the best and most favourable implementation of the documents..."

There is obviously little likelihood that Vietnamese society can agree to conform to the image of itself handed down by the VCP leadership. ★

AROUND THE WORLD



MOROCCO

Abraham Serfaty released

ONE of Africa's longest serving political prisoners, the Moroccan Abraham Serfaty, was released and expelled to France on September 13, 1991. Serfaty, a "Jewish Arab militant" (in his own words) and a founder member of the clandestine Marxist group *Ilal Amam*, had been imprisoned by the regime of Hassan II since 1974 (see IV 199, February 4, 1991).

His release follows an international solidarity campaign in which his French wife Christine played a prominent role, and undoubtedly reflects pressure from a French Socialist government which has become increasingly embarrassed by the appalling human rights record of its North African ally. The release also comes on the eve of the arrival of a team of United Nations observers in the western Sahara to oversee the referendum on self-determination for this area.

As recently as July of this year, Hassan II had said that Serfaty could not be released until he recognized Moroccan sovereignty over western Sahara, and shortly before his release Serfaty had announced his intention of launching a hunger strike until his right to see his wife, ended in July, was restored.

The pretext finally given for his release and expulsion was the discovery that he was in fact of Brazilian and not Moroccan nationality, an allegation he emphatically denies. Now 65, Serfaty has affirmed that he maintains all his former political opinions, including his commitment to self-determination for western Sahara. He has also drawn attention to the several hundred other political prisoners who continue to languish in the royal dictator's jails, in particular the "living dead" of the prison at Tazmamart, where inmates are kept in perpetual darkness in conditions Serfaty described as being "as horrible as Auschwitz". ★

SOUTH AFRICA

The coup and the SACP

A WEEK after the failed coup in Moscow, the South African Communist Party (SACP) issued a statement declaring that information on these events was still too imprecise to be commented on. Thus, the

SACP leadership was adopting a wait-and-see policy.

However, the Natal branch broke discipline. There the CP openly backed the coup, explaining that it was needed because Gorbachev threatened to destroy the Soviet Union, and do harm to the international socialist movement.

Finally, the SACP adopted a statement denouncing the coup as unconstitutional. Meanwhile, the party journal *Umsebenzi* has criticized Gorbachev for being more interested in preserving his presidency than in saving the socialist project. The SACP has also condemned the outlawing of the CPSU as an anti-democratic measure as well as the dissolution of the party proclaimed by Gorbachev. ★

JAPAN

Trotsky Institute

THE Trotsky Institute of Japan was founded in Tokyo on May 19, 1991. The aim of the Institute is to collect, preserve, study and disseminate documents and articles of Trotsky.

The Institute was set up in the wake of the International Trotsky Symposium held in Tokyo last year (see *International Viewpoint*, No. 197 December 24, 1990). It is sponsored by Sovietologists, historians, independent left activists and Japanese Trotskyists.

The Institute's director is Yoshinobu Shiokawa, a former leader of the radical *Zengakuren* students' movement in the late 1950s and a former leader of the Japanese Revolutionary Communist League.

The Library has already gained a collection of books about Trotsky, known as the Oya-Shiro (Kyoji-Nishi) collection, after the late Kyoji-Nishi, one of the founders of Japanese Trotskyism, whose family donated the collection to the Institute.

The Institute will publish a quarterly magazine, the first issue of which is to appear in the autumn. Interest in Trotskyism is growing within the rank-and-file and intellectuals circles of the Japanese Communist Party, and the Institute can play an important role at this time.

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