

Labour Focus on **EASTERN EUROPE**

VOLUME 9/NUMBER 2/JULY—OCTOBER 1987●£3/\$5



EASTERN EUROPE AND THE GERMAN QUESTION

ACHTUNG
Sie verlassen jetzt
West-Berlin

ADAM MICHNIK ON GORBACHEV
INTERVIEW WITH CHARTER 77
JADWIGA STANISZKIS ON "REAL SOCIALISM"

YUGOSLAVIA'S KOSOVO CRISIS
TEN YEARS OF CHARTER 77
THE GATHERING PACE OF "PERESTROIKA"

Labour Focus on EASTERN EUROPE

EAST-WEST

Eastern Europe and the German Question Peter Brandt and Günter Minnerup 4

SOVIET UNION

"Perestroika" Enters Critical Stage Oliver MacDonald 10

New Drive for Quality Reduces Production, Increases Friction Sean Roberts 13

Open Letter to Gorbachev Aleksei Aleksandrovich Myasnikov 15

POLAND

For a Theory of "Real Socialism" Jadwiga Staniszkis 17

The Great Counter-Reformer Adam Michnik 22

YUGOSLAVIA

Letter from Mihailo Markovic, Zagorka Golubovic, Ljubomir Tadic 24

Reply Michele Lee 26

Petition of 200 Belgrade Intellectuals 31

The Kosovo Crisis Branko Horvat 33

"This is Kosovo"

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Interview with Charter 77 39

"Prestavba" Rules – But What Is It? Hans Starek 44

HUNGARY

"Unusual Methods" – Hungarian Ecology Crisis Hubertus Knabe 46

Interview with Editor of Hungarian Underground Ecology Journal 47

GDR

Only Rock'n'Roll? Kevin Ball 48

The "Internationale" at the Brandenburg Gate Wolfgang Templin, Peter Grimm 38

STATEMENT OF AIMS

Labour Focus on Eastern Europe is a completely independent journal whose editorial collective includes various trends of socialist and Marxist opinion. Our purpose is to provide comprehensive analysis of trends and events in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, documentation of opposition movements in those societies, and a forum for the developing dialogue between radical democratic and socialist forces East and West.

We are opposed to the "liberation" of Eastern Europe by Western capitalism and the exploitation of the victims of repression in these societies for the Cold War propaganda of those who prop up racist and fascist dictatorships in other parts of the world. We believe that the division

of Europe can only be overcome by a common movement for socialism and democracy. We support the struggles for working-class, democratic and national rights in the USSR and Eastern Europe and call on the labour movements of the West to extend their internationalist solidarity to them.

Unless otherwise stated, all materials in *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe* may be reproduced, with acknowledgement. Signed articles do not necessarily represent editorial views, nor does publication of a document from Eastern Europe imply our agreement with its contents.

Sponsors

Tariq Ali, Edmund Baluka, Syd Bidwell MP, Mike Davis, Vladimir

Derer, Tamara Deutscher, Paul Foot, Peter Grimm, Eric Heffer MP, Michael Hindley MEP, Roland Jahn, György Krassó, Ernest Mandel, Zhores Medvedev, István Mészáros, John Palmer, Daniel Singer, Wolfgang Templin, Hillel Ticktin, Hilary Wainwright, David Winnick MP

Managing editor

Günter Minnerup

Editorial collective

Barbara Brown, Patrick Camiller, Andrew Csepel, Gus Fagan, Susannah Fry, Victor Haynes, Quintin Hoare, David Holland, Alix Holt, Mark Jackson, Helen Jamieson, Michele Lee, Oliver

MacDonald, Anca Mihailescu, Anna Paczuska (*Reviews*), Sean Roberts, Peter Thompson, Claude Vancour. *West Berlin* Traude Ratsch Paris Cathérine Verla

Editorial Correspondence and Subscriptions

c/o Crystal Management, 46 Theobalds Road, London WC1 8NW

Subscription rates (three issues per annum)

U.K. and Europe: £9 (individuals), £18 (multi-users).

Outside Europe (airmail only): £14 (individuals), £23 (multi-users) –

please pay by International Money Order or cheques drawn in £ sterling on UK banks in order to avoid excessive bank charges.

Typesetting by Wordstream, Bournemouth, Dorset.

Printed by Conifer Press, Fareham, Hants.

FOCAL POINTS

Our magazine may not be on Mikhail Gorbachev's breakfast table, but if it was he could certainly not complain about lack of attention by *Labour Focus*. Two out of the three most recent issues have featured the General Secretary of the CPSU on the front cover, and while he has not quite made it to such prominence this time, his name and his policies crop up frequently enough again to maybe raise some eyebrows among our readers. But we make no apologies for this. On the contrary: it is of vital importance that the discussion of the important changes taking place in the Soviet Union is not left to the bourgeois media circus and its dubious interests in this matter. The outcome of the crisis now unfolding in Moscow will determine the future shape of European and world politics more than any other single factor. The stakes are high: at best, the prospects for socialism could be dramatically improved by a decisive breakthrough towards democratisation in the USSR, at worst the very survival of humanity could be threatened.

The initiatives taken by Gorbachev in the fields of international relations and disarmament, the reform of the Soviet economy, the opening up of the media and cultural life to something resembling public debate, and – most hesitantly as yet – the democratisation of the state and party apparatuses are clearly crucial in all this. The final outcome of the crisis, however, will hardly depend on the General Secretary's intentions and wishes alone, or even primarily. Whatever these may be, they could well be frustrated or outflanked by greater forces: the huge weight of the conservative wing of the Soviet bureaucracy which makes no secret of its hostility to any but the most superficially cosmetic reforms, the uncontrollable dynamism of the battle of ideas once public debate has been substantially freed from the restraints of censorship and fear, or the rise of independent social movements from below giving voice to those who have up to now remained silent – such as the Soviet workers and the nationalities. Last but by no means least the fate of the Gorbachev project will depend on the response from the West and the evolution of the Soviet Union's relations with the outside world.

Most of these angles are reflected in the contents of this issue. Oliver MacDonald draws up a first, and necessarily tentative, balance-sheet of the decisions of the June Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee, suggesting that the divisions within the party between "reformers" and "conservatives" may not be as straightforward as they are usually presented. Sean Roberts looks at the role of the new quality control mechanisms introduced into Soviet industry, which may well provide a focal point for growing working-class unrest. In an Open Letter to Gorbachev, a Soviet sociologist presents a telling indictment of the limitations of "glasnost from above" from his own personal experience, and various East European perspectives on Gorbachev are offered in Adam Michnik's essay, the Open Letter addressed to the General Secretary by the East German Peace and Human Rights Initiative on the occasion of his recent visit to the GDR, and also in the interview with leading activists of the Czechoslovak human rights movement Charter 77 and Hans Starek's assessment of the Gorbachev visit to Prague.

The range of reactions from the East European opposition shows clearly the need for further discussion of what should be the response to the Gorbachev reforms of the democratic and socialist left outside the Soviet Union. While it would be naive to

dismiss as irrelevant the inevitable differences in perspective between those living in the Soviet-dominated countries of Eastern Europe and those of us living in the capitalist West, the basic fact that as Europeans we share this subcontinent not only with each other but also with the USSR should be sufficient to illustrate the desirability of some kind of common approach. In an article which will undoubtedly provoke controversy, Peter Brandt and Günter Minnerup argue that such an approach must be built around a solution to the German Question and a new type of détente between the West European Left and the Soviet Union which does not sacrifice the East European opposition on the altar of *Realpolitik*, but on the contrary makes the release of the iron grip of the "Brezhnev doctrine" an integral part of a new European order based on economic, cultural and security cooperation.

While the division of Germany remains the central pillar of the status quo in Europe, there are other unresolved national problems of concern to socialists. One of these is the question of the Albanians in Yugoslavia, who predominantly live in the province of Kosovo. In *Labour Focus* No.3/Vol.8, Michele Lee criticised the support given by the editors of the journal *Praxis International* to what she called an "obscurantist, nationalist and anti-democratic" petition of 200 Belgrade intellectuals demanding tougher measures in Kosovo. In this issue, the three editors of *Praxis International* reply to the criticism, and Michele Lee responds to the points raised in their reply. In addition, we publish the text of the controversial petition and an important contribution to the Kosovo debate by the leading Yugoslav economist, Branko Horvat.

Elsewhere in this issue, we focus on the emerging ecology movement in Hungary. The steady poisoning and destruction of our natural environment has given rise to protest movements not only in Hungary but in East Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia (where a Green Party has just been founded), too. While not yet on the same scale as the large "green" movements of Western Europe, the bloc-transcending nature of the problem has given another powerful impetus towards the creation of common political agenda in East and West. The purpose of *Labour Focus*, apart from providing information and analysis about the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe for socialists in the West, is to act as a forum for the exchange of views on this agenda. It is in this spirit also that we publish excerpts from a recent article by the influential Polish sociologist and former adviser of *Solidarnosc*, Jadwiga Staniszkis. Her views on the nature of what she refers to as "real socialism" may be unpalatable to many of our readers, but they reflect a significant current of thought within the Polish opposition, and without knowledge of each others' views a real dialogue of the kind urgently necessary will be impossible.



The division of Europe has been largely built around the division of Germany. Not surprisingly, therefore, the German Question is raised wherever the permanency of the European post-war settlement is challenged, as in the strategic discussions of the West European left, the peace movement, and the East European opposition. In a provocative essay to open a debate on this key issue in the pages of *Labour Focus*, Peter Brandt and Günter Minnerup put forward the perspective of a new kind of detente between the West European left and the Soviet Union to promote European security, economic and cultural cooperation, progress on the German Question and greater freedom for Eastern Europe. Critical replies and further contributions are invited from authors in both the East and the West.

PETER BRANDT and GÜNTER MINNERUP

EASTERN EUROPE AND THE GERMAN QUESTION

The ghost of Nikita Krushchev is never far away where the meaning of, and the prospects for, Mikhail Gorbachev's *perestroika* are discussed. In a recent issue of *New Socialist*, the magazine published by the British Labour Party, Ferenc Feher and Agnes Heller again compared the two reform-oriented CPSU General Secretaries and concluded that because of the gigantic bureaucratic immobilism confronting every Soviet reformer, Gorbachev would eventually suffer the same fate as his predecessor. We do not propose to enter into that discussion here, but would rather draw attention to an, in our opinion, fundamental difference between the Krushchev era and the early years of Mikhail Gorbachev's leadership which is to be found not in the domestic situation of the Soviet Union but in the area of foreign policy.

When Stalin died in 1953 the soldiers of the Red Army may have been stationed in Berlin and the power of the USSR extended over Eastern Europe (and, as it appeared then, China), but there could be little doubt over who was calling the tune in the world. The United States encircled the Soviet bloc with military bases from Korea to Norway, had a strategic nuclear weapons monopoly, and – probably Stalin's most serious foreign policy setback – were just setting about consolidating the *Pax americana* in Western Europe. Bonn's and Washington's rejection of all offers of German re-unification and the entry of an economically recovered and militarily rearmed West Germany into NATO finally put the Soviet Union on the defensive in the European arena. It fell to Krushchev to formally acknowledge the already shaped, new post-war order for Europe: through the Soviet guarantee for the "socialist achievements of the GDR", the formation of the Warsaw Pact, the codification of the rules of "peaceful coexistence". Krushchev's personal fascination with the USA is well known, but beyond this throughout the long years of the Brezhnev era Soviet *Westpolitik* remained fixed upon the perspective of a worldwide understanding with Washington on the basis of the strategic nuclear stalemate and world political equality. Europe was never more than a subordinate theatre of Soviet foreign policy; the playing of either the German or any other West European card was never even seriously considered after 1955. At any rate, alternative trains of

thought found no political weight in Moscow. When a rough nuclear parity had been achieved at the beginning of the 1970s and the arms control negotiations with the USA promised significant results, the Kremlin dreamt of a global condominium of the superpowers which would jointly stabilise the world and cooperate ever more closely in the economic, technological and cultural fields.

Insecurity of West European Right

The past months have clearly demonstrated that Gorbachev's orientation is a different one. However one may judge his domestic reform projects, it is impossible to deny today that his leadership has already brought the deepest incision into Soviet foreign policy for decades. If conservative West European commentators and politicians today lament the dangers of a Soviet-US deal on nuclear weapons which would supposedly expose Western Europe to the conventional superiority of the Warsaw Pact, they are not in reality talking about the military but about the political risks of confrontation with a Soviet Union which, for the first time since Stalin, has gone back onto the offensive in the European arena. What these complaints really reveal is the deep insecurity of the bourgeois forces of Western Europe vis-à-vis a world in which the old certainties of the status quo, so familiar for over three decades, are becoming increasingly blurred.

What is the meaning of Gorbachev's new course? For years parts of the peace movement had argued that Reagan's "zero option" amounted to a one-sided removal of medium range missiles unacceptable to the Soviet Union. Now Moscow not only accepts this old American proposal but, at the same time, offers further unilateral concessions in the shape of the removal of short-range missiles, the destruction of its chemical weapons arsenal, and even negotiations about a reduction in the numerical superiority of its conventional military units. A continent free of nuclear missiles, even an Eastern Europe without Soviet occupation troops, suddenly appear among the politically thinkable.

Even if, as bourgeois politicians and journalists often claim

and a section of the East European opposition also suspects, Reagan's hardline course should have contributed to forcing Moscow to the negotiating table, the roots of the new situation certainly lie deeper than in the aggressive self-confidence which US foreign policy appears to have regained when compared with the 1970s. Many strong words could be heard from Washington in recent years about restoring the unity of the "free world" under American leadership and the American strategic superiority over the Soviet Union, as well as about the ruining of the Soviet economy through a new round of the arms race. The truth, however, is that the Western world is today less united than at any time since World War Two, that the hegemony of US industry and the dollar have long been broken and that the US position in the ever more bitter competition with Europe and Japan has become weaker. The American economy is just as threatened with ruin, albeit in different ways, by the growing cost of the arms race as the Soviet economy, and is losing ground to the West Europeans and Japanese even faster as a result of this burden. The kind of strategic superiority over the USSR needed to start a war with impunity or at least to credibly threaten one, appears beyond reach this side of the still distant, if at all practicable, implementation of the SDI. Faced with this situation, a growing faction of the American political establishment is leaning towards a "new isolationism" which in the interest of improving its competitive position is prepared to reduce its military presence in Europe, thus burdening the West Europeans with a larger military budget.

Reorientation of Soviet Westpolitik

Compared with the Krushchev/Eisenhower-Kennedy era, therefore, the position of the USA in the world has become weaker and not stronger, even though the USSR has not yet found a solution to the relatively increasing inefficiency of its system. The bi-polar confrontation is increasingly giving way to a more complex structure within which the West European states are increasingly developing their own interests and articulating these with greater self-confidence. Since, at the very latest, Dobrynin's replacement of Ponomarev as Moscow's chief foreign policy adviser it has been possible to discern a reorientation of Soviet *Westpolitik* which pays more tribute to these new relationships of forces: in the greater attention paid to the medium-size West European powers, the recognition of the EEC as a partner in political dialogue, the positive revaluation of West European, and especially West German, Social Democracy. The acceptance of the "zero-zero solution" in the negotiations with the US over the nuclear missiles deployed in Europe must also be seen against this backdrop.

For Gorbachev, all the unilateral concessions in Europe do not constitute a weakening of the strategic position of the Soviet Union as long as a withdrawal of the American missiles from Europe, and possibly even an at least partial withdrawal of US troops, can be negotiated in return. SS-20, short-range missiles or huge tank armies are not really needed as a counterweight to the USA's intercontinental missiles and even SDI, and the successful conclusion of the negotiations would therefore enable the shifting of significant economic resources to the civilian front. Had this simple calculation been accepted before 1983, of course, the position of the opposition to Cruise and Pershing in the West would have been strengthened to such an extent that their deployment may well have been politically impossible — but late insights are welcome too, even if they are based more on well-defined self-interest than on concern over the fate of the

"progressive forces" in the West. For a military-strategic detente in Europe would not only strengthen the West European opposition against SDI and thereby drive an even deeper wedge into the NATO alliance, but in general change the political climate in favour of a new round of detente politics: only this time, in contrast to the late sixties and early seventies, with a greater specific weight of West European-Soviet relations. For apart from the experience of Washington not being prepared to accept permanently a global strategic parity with the Soviet Union and gambling everything on restoring its former military supremacy, the Soviet leaders since Krushchev and Brezhnev have also had to learn that they cannot expect comprehensive cooperation with the USA in the economic and technological fields either. Since, in particular, Gorbachev's ambitious plans for modernisation cannot, however, do without access to Western trade and Western technology, an increased orientation towards Western Europe seems the obvious road to take.

As yet it is too soon to gauge the precise contours of this reorientation in all their ramifications. The Cruise and Pershing missiles are, in addition to hundreds of thousands of US soldiers, still in Western Europe after all. One should not be surprised, however, at the unrest in the bourgeois camp over the new tunes from Moscow, because despite all the economic competition with the USA the ruling elites of capitalist Europe are ideologically still so conditioned to the Atlantic alliance and so little prepared for the political and, above all, material consequences of their "emancipation" from US tutelage that the farewell from the familiar status quo stirs up considerable foreboding. For the left, however, the emerging new constellations offer a truly historic opportunity — and that not only in Western Europe, but also, as we shall argue here, in the states of the Soviet-dominated East European bloc.

The question is whether this opportunity will be seized. Foreign policy has never been the left's strong point. There has been a long left-wing tradition of viewing the changing of the world as the historical sum total of the social conflicts in the various countries. The level of inter-state relations is usually seen as of secondary importance compared to the proper contents of socialist politics, national questions as a diversion from the social ones. This tendency was immensely strengthened in the post-war epoch by the sheer hopelessness of the confrontation with the supremacy of the two world powers, so that after the adoption on the part of the West German SPD of the policy of Western integration around 1960, apart from the East European opposition, only nationalists and militant anti-communists took issue with the status quo. Outside Germany, the SPD had in any case been isolated on this question, since even the socialist and communist parties of Western Europe saw the division of Germany as the guarantee of European peace. Even within the peace movements of recent years, whose spokespeople so frequently and vehemently lamented the division of Europe and denounced the superpowers for having turned the continent into an object of their nuclear war preparations, the German Question represented too hot an issue for our dangerous times, the raising of which could only add another fuse to the European powder keg. Despite all their verbal radicalism, the strategic concepts emanating from peace movement circles in the final analysis only amounted either to a detente on the basis of the status quo, or a "detente from below" which, by somehow circumventing the holders of state power, thereby evaded the issue of power relations.

For a long period, the fear of German reunification did not fail

to exert its disciplining power in Eastern Europe either. Especially the Poles had, of course, every reason to fear a German "revanchism" given the protracted vehemence of West German claims to the former German Eastern territories. The historical experiences went deep. Liberation from fascism, however, had been the work of the Soviet Union and the Soviet-supported post-1945 regimes of the People's Republics never tired of praising the irreplaceability of the alliance with the Soviet Union as the protector of all Slav peoples against German revanchism. Even the reform-minded "national communist" Gomulka appealed extensively to the fear of the Germans in order to neutralise the pressure of the anti-Russianism already (or once again) so widespread in the Poland of 1956. For those East Europeans unwilling to come to terms with the *Pax sovietica*, this constellation represented a nearly insoluble dilemma. How to emancipate themselves from Soviet hegemony without at the same time reviving the German danger as a consequence of uprooting the central European status quo?

Beyond the Status Quo

Only the experience of the repeated blocking of domestic reform by the Soviet Union, combined with the generational fading away of war memories and the more peaceful rhetoric and more constructive initiatives from Bonn in the era of the *Neue Ostpolitik*, have produced a greater readiness amongst East Europeans to think more radically beyond the status quo – albeit often with overtones of nationalist russophobia which are disconcerting to the Western left. But what are the choices for the East European opposition, as long as any domestic upheaval in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary or the GDR threatens to provoke Soviet intervention? Even those who clearly sympathise with the West have little but anticommunist propaganda to expect from the United States. In the final analysis, there remains only the famous rhetorical question of where the tanks for the suppression of a "Moscow Spring" would come from. No wonder that the Gorbachev phenomenon meets with such intense interest in Warsaw, Prague, Budapest and East Berlin and that the expectations range from the eager anticipation of a Soviet 1968 to the cynical prediction of the "second Krushchev's" failure.

The extent to which Gorbachev actually intends to export his *perestroika* and *glasnost* to Eastern Europe is still rather debatable. The CPSU leadership is still conscious of the spectre of 1956 and it is therefore unlikely that Gorbachev will demand from Honecker, Husak, Jaruzelski and Kadar more than the most inescapable adaptations to the Soviet course. It should be fairly clear however, that the future internal evolution of the Soviet Union will to a large measure depend on the evolution of its relations with the outside world, and that Moscow's readiness to tolerate, or even initiate, liberalising reforms in Eastern Europe is also a function of the overall political climate in Europe at large. In the event of the United States restoring its hegemony over Western Europe and increasing its military pressure on the USSR, neither domestic democratisation and a shift of resources from the military to the civilian sector, nor any significant reform experiments in the East European *cordon sanitaire* can realistically be expected. The same applies to the replacement of the American presence in Western Europe by a strongly anti-communist "third force", armed to the teeth both with nuclear and conventional weapons, around the London-Paris-Bonn triangle or the Paris-Bonn axis. For this reason alone the democratic opposition in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe ought to have a burning interest in the emergence of political alterna-

tives to the old bi-polar bloc confrontation in Europe, and it would be tragic from the point of view of its own interests if the tendencies gambling on a Western "policy of strength" under Washington's leadership were to gain the upper hand in its ranks.

The most favourable constellation for West European socialists as well as for the democratic opposition under "actually existing socialism" would, beyond any doubt, be the cooperation between an "America-free", socialist Western Europe and the Soviet Union as the only historical alternative to the dead ends of the status quo of bloc confrontation between NATO and the Warsaw Pact on the one hand, and a new Cold War between a nuclear West European imperialism and the USSR on the other. But even if the victory of a "home-made", revolutionary-democratic socialism in the West of the continent should continue to be delayed by an extended period, the perspective of an all-European structure of cooperation and of a new European security arrangement offers the opportunity to secure and reequip for the future a European industry many sectors of which are threatened with extinction, to interlock two complementary economic zones to mutual advantage, and to detach as much as possible the intra-European conflict between the systems from the apocalyptic nightmare of a nuclear superpower confrontation in the "European theatre".

"Finlandisation"?

Does this not, as various voices from the East European opposition fear, represent the "creeping Sovietisation" or at least the "Finlandisation" of Western Europe? That depends on how one assesses the relationship of forces and the interests of those involved. By relationships of forces we do not only consider the military forces here, although in this field, too, despite the numerical superiority of Soviet infantry soldiers, tanks and combat planes, all independent military analysts agree that the vision of a Western Europe helplessly incapable of defending itself is an invention of NATO propaganda. At least equally important are the social and political relationships of forces which would render the occupation of Western Europe a suicidal adventure for the USSR. After all, the Soviet Union is primarily interested in economic cooperation with a flourishing capitalist Europe, not in administering a war-ravaged zone with a rebellious population. Least of all does it harbour any real world-revolutionary ambitions. The socialist transformation of Western Europe will, at any event, remain the task of the West European left and would, to say the least, not necessarily be able to count upon the goodwill of a Kremlin leadership that presumably, for its own economic and political reasons, prefers friendly capitalist regimes on its doorstep. On the other hand an economic and thus also cultural symbiosis between different political and social orders which actually deserved the label of "peaceful coexistence" would certainly also create dependencies and obligations: one may call this "Finlandisation" – the important thing is that such a "Europeanisation of Europe" would drastically alter political horizons and points of reference and at long last liberate the politico-ideological debate from the straightjacket imposed on it for four decades by the bi-polar bloc confrontation: a straightjacket which has been such an obstacle to a real, practical solidarity between the progressive, democratic-socialist movements in both camps, and has for instance in the ranks of the Western peace movement given rise to bizarre discussions over whether or not it is in the interest of peace to involve oneself with the affairs of Eastern Europe.

The key to the realisation of such a constellation is to be found, however, in Germany and in the attitudes of the European democratic and socialist forces to the German question. The division of Germany was not the result of an intra-German civil war but rather of the conscious decision of the USA to go for the rearmament of the Western occupied zones as the front-line state and cornerstone of Western Europe, and at the same time of the Soviet reaction to the West's *fait accompli* (accepted by the majority of the population in view of the Stalinist repression in the East) in the form of the forced integration of the Soviet zone into the Eastern bloc. No one should succumb to the illusion that the comfortable accommodation by the West Germans in the prosperity of Western integration or the consolidation of the GDR have solved the German question. From a German perspective it just looks even more insoluble, the status quo even more insurmountable than from elsewhere. Inasmuch as the dam may somewhere be breached and the overcoming of the division of Germany may once again become a possible political option, there can be no doubt that the reunification of the two German states will be coming back onto the agenda again. What must, however, be understood – particularly in view of the still virulent fears, four and a half decades after the second world war, of a renaissance of the old German militarism – is that a restoration of the unity of Germany, in whatever constitutional form, would today no longer mean a restoration of the old German empire.

Platform of operation

This is meant not only in terms of territorial borders. The destruction of the social foundations of the old German empire – the class symbiosis of the old Prussian Junkers, their civil service and officer corps and its predominantly Rhineland-Westphalia based big bourgeoisie – is today an accomplished historical fact. To German grand-bourgeoisie not only continues to exist but has developed into a modern, West European orientated, relatively deeply “americanised” bourgeoisie whose nationalism has, under the pressure of circumstances, wilted into a mere ideological tool. This liberal-conservative bourgeoisie is far too dependent on its West European operational platform to be capable of any renewed *deutschnational* adventurism. This is not to prettify its role in Europe, but simply to assert that it can only play this role today as the lead actor of European reaction and not anymore as a solo part – least of all, in view of the relationship of forces in the atomic age, in frontal confrontation with the Soviet Union. Inasmuch as it has any specific interests in the East – and these are, for reasons of special national, geographical and historical factors, greater than those of, say, French or British capita! and will probably continue to grow – it will pursue them from its position within Western Europe. Even if, against all expectations, the GDR were suddenly to fall into its lap this would not therefore represent the reconstitution of the of the old German empire. On the contrary, the relationship of forces within the national framework, with the addition of the “proletarian” GDR without its own bourgeoisie, would, in the medium term, be shifted to its disadvantage.

There is just as little ground for saying that the West German population is presently in danger of being overcome by a new wave of *deutschnational* nationalist intoxication. For great swathes of the catholic South and West of the FRG it is the case that their enthusiasm for the Prussian empire was never that great, a fact that Adenauer very skilfully used for his project of Western integration. Today the extreme Right mobilises much

more from a basis of xenophobia and racism (as in other West European countries) than on the theme of German reunification. The recent “revisionist” tendencies in the sphere of ideological production (the so called “historian’s dispute”), were on a different plane altogether. The only really relevant national forces with an *objective* interest in German unity, as has been the case since 1945, are the worker’s movement and – in order to include the green/alternative groups estranged from the SPD/KPD tradition – the Left. This assessment is considered utterly absurd by many in West Germany today. For in the FRG these interests will remain only latent for as long as external conditions make their realisation appear impossible and the relevant political parties do not actively challenge the submission to the status quo. In the GDR it is a different story. Here one cannot speak of the latent nature of the German question but rather of a prevention of the open articulation of its actuality by the “organs of state power”.

Identity crisis

The intensity of the Western orientation resulting from the “national question” differentiates the situation in the GDR from that of the other East European states. And yet in many ways the situation of the GDR is only an extreme form of the basic situation confronting all the other East European states: namely, on the one hand, being part of the Soviet sphere of power; on the other hand, however, to look for reasons of cultural, economic and political self-interest beyond that sphere towards the West – and to come up against a system there that indeed offers credit and consumer goods but politically only the choice between an open break with Moscow and remaining within the Soviet bloc. If in Eastern Europe in general the violent intervention of the Red Army represents the last sanction against domestic reform and aspirations to sovereignty, the GDR has 400,000 Soviet troops permanently deployed – doubly secured by the victors’ rights after the Second World War and the treaty on the stationing of troops – and is fully aware of the fact that it is Moscow’s most important strategic outpost outside the frontiers of the USSR. If others such as Hungary and Poland seek to overcome their economic difficulties with Western trade and Western loans, then the GDR too has its intra-German trade (hidden membership of the EEC) and its lucrative agreements with Bonn. On the one hand the GDR enjoys more latitude for Westpolitik of its own and more direct access to Western culture than the rest of Eastern Europe, on the other hand, however, is, if anything, still more tightly bound in the corset of loyalty to Moscow by the same mechanisms as the other members of the Warsaw Pact. Above all, however, in its *national* crisis of identity the GDR stands as a symbol to the *political* crisis of identity of all Eastern European states and societies: the indissoluble and obvious connection between their domestic deficit in democratic legitimacy and their external dependency owed to the division of Europe.

When the Polish Solidarnosc activists were confronted in 1980/81 with the argument that the Soviet Union would never tolerate the endangering of its strategic lifeline to the GDR they were experiencing in the most direct way the central significance of the German question for the emancipation of Eastern Europe. The Czech reformers of 1968 had to have the same experience forced upon them by the military intervention, planned and executed by the GDR and the USSR together, to secure what the latter perceived to be the endangered South-Eastern flank of the strategic axis. By contrast it was precisely the partial nor-

malisation of intra-German relations and the detente between Moscow and Bonn in the 1970s which perceptibly widened the scope for domestic liberalisation and foreign policy initiative for the East European states. All of this underlines that the true kernel of European political reality is the relationship between Germany (East and West) and the Soviet Union and that therefore the alteration of the status quo in Europe is, above all else, dependent on the structuring of this relationship.

But what changes in this relationship are in the interests of the East Europeans? An incorporation of the GDR into the FRG, in other words a German reunification as envisaged, at least rhetorically, by Adenauer, which would effectively only shift the NATO military deployment zone up to Poland's Western border could only be welcomed as progress by those who seriously believe in the "liberation" of Eastern Europe through the military "roll-back" of the Red Army. The consequence of such a solution to the German question would be the immediate increase of East-West tension in Europe up to the threshold of war – scarcely a scenario that promises a greater degree of latitude for the East Europeans. Luckily this is a scarcely probable variant and inasmuch as it is still pursued by certain groups in the West, the Western Left as well as the democratic opposition in the East are well advised to reject it unequivocally.

But a detente within the parameters of the bi-polar status quo, such as that which developed in the 1970s, is also not without its problems for the East Europeans. The, in our opinion heavily overstated, warning of the Hungarian exiles Ferenc Feher and Agnes Heller of a "new Rapallo" between Bonn and Moscow has a kernel of truth within it insofar as certain aspects of the social-liberal Ostpolitik under Helmut Schmidt – known as a convinced Atlanticist – did indeed amount to propping up the existing regimes in the interests of mutual "predictability" against all forms of unrest from below (a tendency which manifested itself especially drastically in Bonn's Polish policy during 1980/81).

As long as European detente remains a subordinate function of relations between Washington and Moscow, the USA remains a military power present on the European continent and West German government policy is not determined by democratic and socialist aspirations (or at least ones independent of Nato), then indeed there is little more that can be expected. It would be quite another matter, however, if a West German government were to make the Soviet Union the offer of an economic and security partnership based upon a treaty of wide-ranging economic, technological and cultural cooperation; the withdrawal of the two German states from their respective military blocs; the prohibition of the stationing of all nuclear and conventional offensive weapons; the removal of all foreign troops (to be confirmed in international law by a peace treaty, outstanding since 1945, with the former war-time enemies) and a confederation-like association between the FRG and the GDR. Whether such a construction would in time produce a unified German state could, and would have to, be left to the internal developments within the two individual states.

Fantastic pipedream?

From the status quo viewpoint that dominates foreign and security policy Left and Right, East and West, such a perspective appears to be a fantastic pipedream. The real fantasy lies, however, in imagining that on the basis of the present international state system it would be possible to come to a lasting detente of tension between the existing power blocs and a real

rapprochement between the two halves of Europe. In reality the political majority which would be able to implement a programme such as the one just outlined (or a similar one's broadly beginning to emerge in the shape of a possible red-green majority "this side of the CDU-FDP", despite the currently rather regressive trends on the parliamentary-electoral level. Only "broadly" as yet because up to now the SPD as well as, in their own way, the Greens are still locked into a foreign and peace policy concept of detente based on the status quo and a red-green coalition, even if one were to be formed, would under present conditions at best take only faltering steps in the direction which we have indicated. But then it is not our task here to lay out party-political blueprints but rather to point out alternatives which are not simply plucked from thin air. Indeed many aspects of today's political realities are already pointing towards the essential feasibility of such alternatives. After all, the world-view of the SPD has since the late 1970s distanced itself so far from its former uncritical Atlanticism that the first tentative steps on the road to a security policy independent of Nato – for example in the shape of the proposed treaty on a chemical-free zone agreed with the leadership of the SED – and Oskar Lafontaine's cautious questioning of the Atlantic alliance have been possible. The fact that all of this will not happen overnight; that there still has to be a thorough process of clarification of foreign policy perspectives within the "alternative majority" in the FRG; and that this project is full of the risks and dangers arising from the likely sharp domestic political confrontation, the probable reaction of the USA and the European Right, as well as from the asynchronism of national political processes in Western Europe should not be concealed. But then "if you don't take risks, you'll come to grief" (Wolf Biermann). As even the German Catholic Church observed years ago, the existing security structures are *in the long term* unacceptable. An effective all-European security system built around a revised position of the two German states as outlined above would, however, require as a precondition measures of confidence-building and disarmament especially on the part of the Soviet Union of such a far-reaching nature that the unavoidable military imbalance could be acceptable even under the most sceptical calculations. In other words, it calls for a principled decision by the Soviet leadership to unconditionally and verifiably relinquish its political and military advantages on the European continent in favour of a fair accommodation between itself and the peoples of Western and Eastern Europe, not least of Germany, and thus also an improvement of its world-political position. The Soviet Union is likely to hold back from such far-reaching offers until a potential partner at least, with parallel interests and ideas, can be found on the other side. It is the role of the West European left to create such a partner.

What we have presented here as a political perspective for Germany in order to stress the centrality of the German question represents objectively the general interests of a democratic and socialist Europe. This conclusion is slowly beginning to assert itself, albeit somewhat unevenly and differently from country to country. To quote Jiri Dienstbier, the Czech oppositionist and former Charta 77 spokesman:

Long after the war, the division of Germany served the internal consolidation of the Stalinist regimes. After the terrible experiences of the war, many anti-communist people accepted an anti-German and pro-Soviet political orientation as the lesser evil. It is still possible today to hear older people say that we might still live to be grateful

because the Germans remember and when it comes down to it there will be nobody but Moscow to protect us. The events of August 1968 dealt a heavy blow to this way of thinking, especially since, unbelievably and perhaps thoughtlessly, the East German army took part in the invasion, so that for the first time since the Second World War a German army entered foreign territory... The unification of Germany is still a spectre which haunts Europe. (Pax Europeana (On the Thinkable and the Unthinkable), Labour Focus on Eastern Europe 1/1985)

Dienstbier comes to the conclusion that "it is necessary to recognise the right of the Germans to reunification inside the present borders of Germany", that is between the Rhine-Mosel and the Oder-Neisse – a position which is also that of Charta 77 as a whole. On the occasion of Willy Brandt's visit to Warsaw in 1986 the following commentary appeared in the widely-read Solidarnosc underground journal *Tygodnik Mazowske* under the title "Germany and the Polish Problem":

We are interested in a change in the state of affairs in Europe: in an easing of tension, in a relaxation of restrictions, in cooperation. Therefore, we ought also to be concerned with the Germans' achieving progress in their internal problems. Everything that leads to the creation of a more peaceful Europe, one not divided into blocs, is to our advantage. It is not possible to support closer links within Europe and at the same time to oppose the prospect of a future unification of Germany... It is a known fact that no progress can be achieved in the German problem without Moscow's agreement. Such an agreement will never be the result of good will or a love of peace, but may be the consequence of wider exigencies. Moscow may decide to carry out a basic re-evaluation of its entire foreign policy if, for example, it can no longer cope with its internal problems, with the steady decline in economic productivity, with the growing apathy of its general public or if it lags behind American scientific, technological, and military progress and at the same time has to contend with the successes of its rivals in the Far East. That moment may not be too far away... Our biggest danger is if nothing changes, including Yalta, the minefields on the Elbe, nuclear missiles on our doorstep, the iron curtain, and prisons for people and their beliefs.'

It would also be too naive to take the dismissive statements of the East European party and state leaderships on the German problem, including the question of reunification, to be the last word on the subject. In the Soviet Union as well as in – for somewhat different reasons – the GDR, the options for a more enterprising German policy are likely to have been under preparation in the think tanks for years, ready to be waved in public when the occasion arises. With regard to Germany many of the politically forward-thinking East Europeans, both within the bureaucratic elite and amongst its opponents outside of it, are ahead of the West Europeans and above all the French. The hostility of the French left towards any project incorporating, or even merely allowing for, the reestablishment of German unity can no longer be primarily explained by the experience of the four Franco-German wars since 1813. The accommodation of the PCF and the PS with the *Force de Frappe* and a modernised Gaullism is a general problem for progressive-socialist politics in Europe; an example of the national egotism of which representatives of our position are often accused, particularly by the French. The democratic Left in Europe will never overcome its

paralysis in this way. This is not a question of morality. The open exposition of national differences of interest and perception must be the starting point of any attempt to overcome them. The fragmentation of the "old world" into separate nation states and the different rhythms of political discourse make the programmatic synchronisation of the Left often more difficult, but it must be pursued as far as possible. Mere solidarity with one another is not enough, nor is the pious wish for a bloc-free Europe (of the politically inconsequential kind that dominates the otherwise worthy Helsinki Memorandum of progressive democrats from East and West). A democratic and socialist Europe on the basis of equality and self-determination for all the peoples of the continent, without the USA but secured by a new type of historic compromise with the European and global power USSR; which would rest on mutual and common interests and thereby not only make the Soviet domination of Eastern Europe obsolete but also create more favourable conditions for a profound democratic-socialist transformation of the Soviet Union itself – the aim of such a Europe demands of all its adherents that they take the German bull by the horns and actively search for progressive roads to a solution of the German Question. Otherwise – although at present this possibility is only hinted at by dubious rumours – the necessary, and in the long term inevitable, new deal between Germany and the Soviet Union, respectively Western Europe and the Soviet Union, could just be struck one day by the *Deutsche Bank* and the Soviet generals on entirely different terms.



Special Trial Offer for New Readers of

THE WORLD TODAY

**Free 2-month subscription with
no obligation to subscribe**

THE WORLD TODAY is a unique magazine of international politics. It covers the broad issues alongside the small ones. It covers the internal politics of countries you don't hear much about, from the inside out. It opens up questions for the scholar and fills in gaps for the general reader. And it takes a balanced point of view.

'THE WORLD TODAY has excellent articles on subjects which are my political corner. The aim of the articles is to present facts systematically, not to express opinions.'

Denis Healey, M.P., shadow foreign secretary

'THE WORLD TODAY is thoroughly researched and clearly written. It provides valuable background information and its choice of subjects is catholic and intelligent.'

Rupert Pennant-Rea, editor of *The Economist*

'THE WORLD TODAY is topical, to the point, a good halfway house between daily and weekly press and academic journals. I read it for useful background and insights.'

Andrew Knight, chief executive of *The Daily Telegraph*

'THE WORLD TODAY taps the best available expertise on international subjects. I recommend it to anyone who wants a greater depth and specialist expertise on a range of topics of current interest.'

John Tusa, *BBC Newsnight*

See for yourself. Read *THE WORLD TODAY* for commentaries, articles, book reviews. Write today for a free 2-month trial subscription, to *THE WORLD TODAY*, Royal Institute of International Affairs, 10 St James's Square, London SW1 4LE, U.K.

THE WORLD TODAY is the political monthly of the Royal Institute of International Affairs.

Written by the experts. Read by the experts.

The June Plenum of the Soviet Central Committee has backed very major reforms of the Soviet economic system of the sort that could hardly have been expected from the documents of the 1986 27th Party Congress. In addition, the Central Committee meeting promoted three people normally thought of as being Gorbachev supporters to the Politburo thus strengthening his position in that crucial body. In short, it may appear that the breakthrough for the reformers against the conservatives, which so obviously failed to materialise in January, has finally arrived.

OLIVER MACDONALD

“PERESTROIKA” ENTERS CRITICAL STAGE

This impression of a political battle in the Soviet Union between a reforming pole and a conservative-authoritarian pole is re-enforced by the form of the debates in the cultural field, where liberals are generally pitted against the reactionary, xenophobic, authoritarian right. And in this sphere also the liberals have been making headway. In the first six months of this year, the cultural thaw and the public discussion in the media of a very wide range of hitherto largely taboo issues has continued. The thaw has reached a point where an administrative edict from the Central Committee apparatus would no longer be enough to stop it. In Moscow an expanding number of new discussion clubs are being formed “from below” on a range of issues from the social sciences to ecology. They must be registered with the local palace of culture on the basis of a statement of aims, constitution and membership list and such registration is assumed not to be automatic. But these clubs’ meetings are attracting packed audiences for the types of passionate debate so characteristic of similar thaws within the Soviet bloc in the past – notably in 1956 in the Soviet Union itself and in Hungary and in Czechoslovakia in the spring of 1968.

At the same time authoritarian and Russian chauvinist elements within the intelligentsia are trying to mount a counter-attack, often using violent language. The board of the Russian Federation’s writers’ union is a centre of such currents as is the literary journal *Oktyabr*. Another such centre is the organisation *Pamyat*, concerned with preserving Russia’s cultural heritage. There have been open attacks by the Right against *glasnost* and a scurrilous video has apparently been circulating from these quarters attacking Mrs Gorbachev.

The publication of the views of the extreme right within the media is not necessarily, however, a sign of their political strength within the party itself. There is a clear effort by reformers themselves to give the authoritarians a hearing in order to establish a public debate. It would be wrong

to assume that such ideological currents are powerfully represented within the party leadership itself.

The intensifying debates between authoritarian conservatism and reformism in the cultural field continues in the context of one very large zone of silence: concrete debate about the role of the CPSU itself within the political system and the relationship between the party and democratic accountability.

This silence was particularly striking at the Sixth Congress of the Soviet Union of Journalists in March. The opening address was delivered by *Pravda* editor Afanasev, who was elected President of the Union at the end of the Congress. Afanasev is identifiable as a prominent liberal in the debates with conservatives in the cultural thaw. Yet the definition he provided of the concrete role and accountability of journalists within the political system marked no difference of principle from the Brezhnev era: the role of journalists was, he said, basically that of helping to implement the policy of the party. The congress was subsequently criticised by some Soviet journalists (notably Viktor Saprukov, deputy executive secretary of *Politicheskoe Samoobrazovanie*) for

failing to be sufficiently constructive and critical. It is noteworthy also that the Congress delegates were drawn far more heavily from the provinces than at previous congresses, a reminder that the thaw in the main centres may have advanced very much further than in the vast expanses of provincial Russia.

The Struggle within the Party Leadership

The silences in the public debates over concrete issues of political reform and of the party’s role are almost certainly not carried over into the discussions and debates within the Party leadership itself. Enough information has entered the public realm to indicate that an intense debate has been in progress within the party leadership over political as well as economic reform. The prominent reformist leader and senior figure in the Central Committee apparatus, Georgi Shakhnazarov, told *Moscow News* in January that “the need to reconstruct the electoral system in the USSR is obvious” and he went on to spell out various alternative mechanisms that have been mentioned. Before the January CC plenum there was undoubtedly a push from circles within the Central Committee for significant measures to make the party leadership more accountable within the organisation. And the repeated stress by Gorbachev himself that economic restructuring requires a concomitant political democratisation makes it evident that an intense debate and indeed political struggle must have been raging within the party leadership over alternative projects for the political system.

Against this background, it is worth considering the possibility that the battle inside the party leadership should not be interpreted with so simple a schema as a polarisation between Conservatives in general and Reformers in general. It is, indeed, very likely that there is a very different line-up on economic reform from the balance of forces on political democratisation. If this is the



Ligachev

case then an accurate interpretation of what happened at the June Central Committee meeting would be very different from the common one suggested at the start of this article.

With hindsight, the 27th Party Congress looks as if it was still very much dominated by an attempt by the opponents of marketising economic reforms to block such possibilities from being achieved. Great efforts were successful in nailing the leadership down (on paper) to the traditional plan targets and planning mechanisms even while Gorbachev himself was talking, in rather vague terms, about restructuring. At the same time, many analysts in the West confused the process of rejuvenation of the leadership with the consolidation of Gorbachev's own position: it is now perfectly clear that much of the newer, younger intake into the Politburo were very far from being loyal supporters of the new General Secretary. In short, Gorbachev's accession to office in the Spring of 1985 had meant, for the Soviet leadership, nothing more than a repudiation of the Brezhnev mafia and a vague endorsement of a very unspecific commitment to reformist modernisation of the USSR on Gorbachev's part. Indeed, having given Gorbachev office, efforts were made within the leadership to keep him on a tight rein.

At the June 1986 plenum, just a few months after the party Congress, Gorbachev indicated that he was very far from happy with the Gosplan regime and its so-recently endorsed five and fifteen year plans. But so vague were the positive proposals of Gorbachev himself for economic restructuring at that plenum, that the bulk of party officials can be forgiven for afterwards being unable to comprehend what it was all about. Other than minor adjustments of priorities and a few cost cutting exercises, restructuring seemed to mean some vague psychic renewal under the rubric of the "human factor", plus a denunciation of the suppression of innovators. True, the party leadership did endorse individual enterprise – an important ideological break with the Stalinist tradition – but this was and is likely to make only a marginal material impact on economic and social conditions. The leadership had also set up a new state quality control agency empowered to reject goods from factories as being of inferior standard. But this mechanism has not constituted a break in principle with the planning and management structures of the past. More significant was Gorbachev's clear endorsement of Lenin's New Economic Policy as the historical legitimising precedent for his strategy, indicated that much wider economic reform was envisaged. But no concrete programme had emerged and the 27th Congress had failed even to elect Gorbachev's own favoured economic adviser, Aganbegyan, to the Central Committee.

Then, in the autumn of last year during

his tour of Krasnodar, Gorbachev made a major tactical shift from giving primacy to economic restructuring to giving primacy to democratisation. Political reform was, he indicated, both vital in itself and indispensable for successful economic revitalisation. This then set the scene for the struggle up to the three-times postponed January Central Committee meeting. And the result of that meeting seems to have been a serious rebuff for Gorbachev. He gained no major victory over the balance of forces on the Politburo, though some strengthening of his position in the secretariat, and the dramatic changes in cadre policy – not least the retirement of officials at all levels over a certain age – did not materialise.

Following that Plenum, Gorbachev hinted publically that if the aims he was fighting for could not be carried through he would resign. At this time also the public polemics between the liberal and conservative-authoritarian wings of the intelligentsia intensified.

Yet if Gorbachev was isolated in January within the top leadership, how is it possible that a very far-reaching economic reform package, in outline roughly parallel to the Hungarian model of the 1970s and even with the same name, should have triumphed at this latest Central Committee?

The answer seems to be that the line-up within the top leadership over political reform and democratisation is a different one from the line-up on marketising economic reforms. More precisely, the number 2 in the party leadership, Ligachev, fought the General Secretary on political reform in January, but supported him on Hungarian-style economic reform in June. In other words, if this analysis is correct, Gorbachev is the minority leader of a hung politburo in which Ligachev holds the balance of power. And the likelihood is that the June Plenum has not fundamentally changed this situation. Two of the three additions to the Politburo are not specifically identified with political reform – only the third, Yakovlev, falls clearly into that category. And even if all three do support qualitative political changes, Gorbachev still seems to lack a secure majority for his leadership within the Politburo.

Ligachev is generally presented in the Western media as a "hard-liner", yet there is no reason to assume this as far as *perestroika* goes in the economy. On his visit to Hungary in the spring of this year he presented himself as an outspoken enthusiast for the Hungarian economic system and made it clear, for the first time on the part of any Soviet leader, that Moscow planned to follow the Hungarian example in key aspects of its own economic reform.

But where Ligachev has shown himself to be far from reform-minded is in the field of ideology and the political system. The suspicion must therefore be strong that in ally-

ing with Gorbachev to push marketisation through the central committee against the resistance of the Gosplan-central ministry lobby (including Prime Minister Ryzhkov?), Ligachev has required a quid pro quo from Gorbachev on the political front.

This last point is a matter of pure conjecture but the rationale for speculating in this way derives from the crucial strategic dilemma facing any ruling Communist Party embarking on the transition from a traditional Stalinist socio-economic mechanism to "market socialism".

The Alternative Politics of Marketising Economic Reforms

The so-called "marketising" economic reform has both a domestic and an international aspect. Internationally it involves a decisive and necessary rejection of Stalinist autarchy – the socio-economic conception whose ideological expression is the doctrine of Socialism in a single, isolated country. The Soviet leadership has recognised that autarchy is a formula not for the smooth, contradiction-free advance to national communism, but for stagnation and mounting internal contradictions in social and cultural as well as economic life. For this reason the Soviet leadership's economic reform entails a new relationship with the capitalist world economy: the tentative changes in the foreign trade mechanisms, the attempt to enter GATT, the new overtures to the Common Market, the talk by Aganbegyan of even eventually making the rouble convertible, the readiness to contemplate joint ventures within the USSR with capitalist companies (albeit with pretty tight restrictions at the present time) – all these are aspects of the international dimensions of the economic reform. And their effect in the political sphere is both to make the Soviet Union, in the long-term more dependent upon political events in the capitalist world, and more open to ideological influences from the capitalist world.

There must have been considerable doubts within the Soviet leadership as to whether Gorbachev's efforts to break into the world capitalist market and force a new Soviet role within the international economic division of labour could even get off the ground at all, given the Cold War, the COCOM controls, the blocking of Soviet peace initiatives in both the arms control field and in Afghanistan and Kampuchea and other parts of the Third World. But in recent months the atmosphere has begun to change and the prospect of a new economic detente following a possible regional military detente in Europe thanks to an INF deal makes this aspect of the economic reform more credible.

But the political choice involved here lies in the obvious fact that there are two, more

or less diametrically opposed ways of handling the domestic politics of an economic opening to the West: one route might be called the Ceausescu approach: a domestic tightening up combined with an ultra-conciliatory diplomacy; the other might unkindly be called the Gierek approach – a great degree of internal liberalisation combined with a wide exposure of the population to Western cultural influences. Neither of these parallels apply very closely to the Soviet case but the broad choice remains indicative of a dilemma for Soviet policy-makers. Even more to the point would be the impact of such a Soviet opening to the West combined with a domestic liberalisation on the states of Eastern Europe. This is a particularly pressing concern at a time when the GDR, Czechoslovakia and Hungary are all entering a leadership transition phase and are all suffering economic problems and political tensions within the Communist Parties (Poland, despite its continuing severe economic difficulties and the narrow base of the Communist Party is less of a Soviet worry because Jaruzelski's leadership within the regime is secure and the opposition is deeply divided and lacking political perspectives).

As the signs of nervousness within the Soviet leadership over Gorbachev's visit to Prague in the Spring indicate, this concern about the consequences in Eastern Europe of Soviet liberalisation plus an economic opening to the West is very great.

Of even greater concern must be problems of managing the domestic political consequences of marketisation. Or to put matters more bluntly: what political strategy should the leadership adopt for handling large sections of the working class that are likely to be hostile to the short-term effects of marketisation?

The social effects of marketisation on the industrial working class used to a Brezhnev-type system are dramatic and profound. There is first of all potentially disastrous effects on workers in bankrupt plants. Secondly, there is a potentially sharp rise in basic prices, hitting the poorest groups of workers. Thirdly, there will be a very marked wage differentiation. Fourthly, the wide area of common interests between workers and their managers under the old planning regime is destroyed and managements acquire incentives to shed labour, cut costs, rationalise and speed-up work. And finally, that extremely powerful and well entrenched section of the working class which might be called the Soviet labour aristocracy and which flourished under Brezhnev can find its entire network of extremely valuable political and institutional ties disrupted to its great disadvantage.

Of course, in embarking upon the marketising economic reform the Soviet leadership will do all it can to ensure that the tempo and tactics of the reform produce at

least as many short-term gainers as losers. But the problems are not simply material. Above all, the experience of other such reform-attempts in countries where the working class is strongly entrenched (notably in Czechoslovakia and in Poland, but not in Hungary where in 1968 the working class had still not recovered from the terrible defeat of 1956) shows that workers consider such reforms to be illegitimate, anti-working class, even anti-socialist.

It is against this background that the differentiation within the CPSU, including its leadership, should be viewed. Wholesale opposition to the market reform will be coming not only from the government bureaucrats and not only from the "organicist authoritarians" of the Right – the Solzhenitsyn-types inside the CPSU. It will also be coming from what might be called the "egalitarian Stalinist organicists of the left",



with a constituency among sections of the industrial working class. This was a clearly visible trend in both Czechoslovakia in 1968 and in Poland in the same year and such a trend is likely to be at least as strong (if not far stronger) in the Soviet Union. Indeed, it is very possible that some of the attacks on the official privileges of the Soviet *nomenklatura* come from this quarter. Recently *Sovietskaya Rossiya* carried an attack on those in the leadership who talk a lot about "social justice" yet send their children to schools for the privileged in Moscow, schools where only 6 per cent of the pupils come from working class families. The sense of this attack can be grasped when we realise that the slogan of "social justice" is precisely championed by the Gorbachev wing of the leadership.

The June Plenum signifies that this heterogeneous anti-market coalition has been defeated within the leadership. But the mar-

ketisers then face, and almost certainly divide over how to neutralise in practice, mass working class opposition to the actual implementation of the reform. One wing, almost certainly represented by Ligachev, will want to defeat this opposition by avoiding any significant political loosening of the reins whatever: impose iron Stalinist discipline and control and ensure that talk of democratisation remains no more than talk. But the real corollary of that stance is that, if resistance from below becomes too great, the economic reform itself will have to be sacrificed: no Soviet leadership is likely to risk armed confrontation with mobilised workers if such mobilisations extend beyond isolated localities.

The alternative strategy for the Soviet leadership is to prepare for the implementation of economic reform and head-off working class resistance by carrying through major ideological and political changes. In the ideological field this would mean decisively destroying the idea of the "egalitarian organicist Stalinists" that the Stalinist-Brezhnevite model of state and social system equals advanced socialism: demonstrating that it is a theoretical perversion, however much it may have sunk roots amongst sections of the working class that feel they have gained from it over the years. Politically, the reformers would have to thoroughly overhaul the Soviet welfare system and its principles, transferring the welfare benefits from the hands of the labour aristocrats-cum-bureaucrats at the point of production into qualitatively strengthened local soviets handling housing, income maintenance and other welfare and social services according to genuine principles of social justice. But to achieve this the political authority and independence of the local soviets would have to be qualitatively strengthened: this means not only major electoral reform, but restructuring of the party and genuine institutional guarantees of independence for the local media. Against this background, and most important of all, genuine institutional channels for autonomous working class protest and political mobilisation would have to be established. The trade unions would have to be dragged out of the hands of the local nexus of bureaucratic-cum-labour aristocratic barons, the right to strike would have to be seen to be guaranteed and activists would have to feel secure from the political police and from management victimisation.

These are not, of course, the only elements in any ultimate programme of political reform. One of the most fundamental political issues in a Soviet market reform will be not only its social-class disintegrating effects, but the centrifugal tendencies unleashed in a multi-national state: marketisation in Yugoslavia since the 1960s has demonstrated this. The ultimate solution to this problem can be found only in dual bastions of genuine political institutions of

popular sovereignty at an All-Union level and in the visible strength and unity of the institutions of the working class across the nationalities: neither of these solutions appears on the Soviet horizon at the moment and as a result the present struggle to preserve the Stalinist structures of the Communist party will be greatly strengthened by the fears of a slide into national antagonisms.

The fact remains that a current for genuinely progressive political reforms to some degree on the lines outlined above does seem to exist inside influential sectors of the CPSU, up to the level of the Central Committee. There are currents wanting to create genuinely open political structures in the field of local politics, radically transforming the electoral system. There are also efforts to strengthen the trade unions' autonomy and even to legitimise strikes. A recent article in *Moscow News* supporting a strike

in Moscow and attacking the weakness of the trade union officials in the strike was a case in point. And the entire style of Gorbachev himself seems geared to stimulating political processes rather than administrative coercion.

Yet such a radical political reform is in effect a gamble on the surviving political health and vigour of the mass membership of the CPSU itself. Only a revival of the energy and commitment of a substantial part of the party's base – we should not forget that one out of every two Soviet graduates is a CPSU member and about one in 9 of industrial workers – gives a prospect of successful economic reform leading to genuine political renewal.

It is no exaggeration to say that the entire nature of world political life into the 21st century hinges upon whether or not there is a genuine renewal of the socialist project in the USSR. Issues such as the outcome of the

recent general election in Britain are parochial trivia compared with the issues at stake in the political process that is now unfolding in the Soviet Union.

If the real content of the latest Central Committee meeting was a deal binding Gorbachev to economic reform without democratisation, the process of change will be far longer and more tortuous than it might have been. But if Gorbachev and his circle are aiming to wage a serious political struggle for democratisation up to the scheduled special Party Conference of June next year, the consequences for all of us could be enormous. Paradoxically, the fact that the power brokers of the Politburo have still denied the general secretary a secure majority may signify that they, at least, believe he is more serious about mobilising the party masses for democratisation and genuine socialist democracy than most socialists here (including this author) could dare imagine.

Gorbachev's strategy for the restructuring (*perestroika*) of the Soviet economy and society is reaching a crossroads with the crucial second Central Committee Plenum of 1987 just days away at the time of writing. The strategy involves a whole complex of measures which will be examined in a future issue of *Labour Focus*. Here Sean Roberts' article concentrates on just one aspect of *perestroika* – the new measures on quality control.

SEAN ROBERTS

NEW DRIVE FOR QUALITY REDUCES PRODUCTION, INCREASES FRICTION

The last thirty years of debate about economic reform have centred around developing an economic mechanism which will consistently improve the quality of industrial output. While Stalinist centralism was adequate for mobilising labour reserves and developing heavy industry at the expense of workers' and peasants' personal consumption, it was found wanting when it came to satisfying society's needs through technological innovation and increasing productivity – the difference between "extensive" and "intensive" growth.

The latest attempt at a radical improvement in quality is the introduction of a state-wide quality control body independent of the individual enterprise, the so-called State Acceptance of Production (*Gospriemka*).

New Drive for Quality

The *Gospriemka* is responsible to the State Committee for Standards (*Gosstandart*) and an experimental version had been operative since 1985 in 19 enterprises. It has now been gradually introduced into 1500 major enterprises and associations, coming into full effect from January 1st, 1987. Overall, these enterprises, controlled by 28 Ministries, are

responsible for half of total Soviet output, while the machine-building sector, a priority in the 12th Five-Year Plan, has 43% of its enterprises and 60% of its output covered by the new system. Industries producing consumer goods such as TVs and refrigerators have also been targeted.

Quality control before 1987

Prior to the *Gospriemka* each enterprise had only its own quality control department (OTK – Department of Technical Control). However, with plan-fulfilment being seen in terms of volume of production, the OTK was often viewed as an obstacle and put under heavy pressure to certify inferior goods as top quality. Defective goods which reached the consumer were dealt with in some instances by a "flying squad" of repairers (*Ekonomicheskaya Gazeta* No.16, 1987, p.9), or if returned to the factory, the customer often had to wait months for repair or replacement. Low-quality production was often in the interests of the enterprise manager for it enabled him "to remain easily within the limits of planned cost and even to

lower it while not resorting to such drastic measures as technical re-equipping, perfecting the organisation of production and labour and tightening up control." (*Ekonom.Gaz.* No.12, 1987, p.13)

The prime goal of the *Gospriemka* – heightening the overall level of output quality with the intention of steadily moving towards "world standards" – is hardly a new one. Since 1965 moves have been made towards greater standardisation and the 1979 Reform designated quality certification for all industrial goods other than those specifically exempted. But, nor is the method adopted a new one either. It is in the time-honoured Soviet tradition of exhortation and mobilisation. Consequently, the Party is playing a key role at local and regional level. The *Gospriemka* teams are drawn predominantly from experienced workers in the enterprises themselves and, in all instances, both the team leader and deputy are Party members. Nevertheless, the intrusion of a centrally controlled external body has revealed only too plainly the shortcomings of Soviet industry, but, at the same time, generated considerable friction both with management and workforce.

Friction

It is clear that a number of enterprise managers and Ministers did not want the *Gospriemka* at any price. "...individual leaders in the system of the Ministry of Light Engineering, instead of preparing enterprises for the new forms of control, persistently demanded its cancellation, postponement or some sort of reduction in the size of the Acceptance." (*Ekon.Gaz.* No.48, 1986, p.1). Others provided pathetic excuses as to why the *Gospriemka* could not come in – "sanitary norms are not being observed in the enterprise"! Too much prying, it seems, is liable to reveal unknown reserves of labour, report-padding and all the other artificial means of plan-fulfilment.

Gorbachev has emphasised many times that *perestroika* is not just a question of changing the mode of operation of the economy, of increasing productivity, but also of changing the thinking and habits of the individual. In practice, a great weight is already being placed on individual workers for the shortcomings of the economic mechanism.

This has led to numerous instances of problems between the *Gospriemka* team and workers involved in the production of sub-standard goods. In some instances fines have been introduced equivalent to the value of the component in question. In some factories production has been so poor that bonuses have been reduced and wages have fallen a massive 60 roubles a month (one quarter to one third of average wages). In one enterprise skilled workers were each given three coupons. Each time there was a breach in the technical quality of the product or an infringement of the technical documentation leading to waste, one coupon was removed. If all three coupons were removed then that worker would no longer be able to participate in that grade of work and would suffer loss of earnings accordingly.

The *Gospriemka* appears, in most instances, to have been ruthless in the way it has checked output for defects. In some instances the whole of the production for a particular plan period has been rejected or only a small percentage accepted. At the giant KamAZ truck plant in Brezhnev this led to a stoppage of work at the end of last year which was reported in *Izvestia*. This particular instance of *glasnost* is of interest because the Soviet press is normally silent on labour disputes (see my article in *Labour Focus* Vol.9 No.1).

However, criticism of past Soviet industrial practices is now very common in the press. The Party Secretary of the engine factory at the KamAZ plant, while discreetly avoiding the above-mentioned dispute, is highly critical of the past emphasis on quantitative rather than qualitative indicators. Work must now be accounted for in

front of the whole brigade and "the negligent pay for their waste with the rouble. Compensation for loss through waste at the expense of the wages of the wastemakers has risen by almost three times." (*Partiinaya Zhizn'*, No.3, 1987 p.19).

"Storming"

A practice endemic in Soviet industry which has been responsible for much poor production is "storming". This virtual way of life of fulfilling plan requirements in the last few days of a given plan period is caused primarily by poor supply which extends back along each link of the chain of production. Speaking at the Central Committee in November 1986, which discussed the introduction of the *Gospriemka*, Lev Zaikov declared: "Storming ('shturmovshchina') remains a great evil and opponent of high quality production, a dislocation in the work of the collectives. What sort of quality are we talking about if a half or even more of the volume of production is manufactured in the last week of the month?" (*Ekon.Gaz.* 48/86 p.4)

The search for better quality is, therefore, being accompanied by an emphasis on discipline and work rhythm. Again discipline has been a frequent refrain since Andropov but here prominence is given to a regularity of the work pattern not so much of the individual as of the enterprise. Consequently, "storming" is a prime target.

However, it appears that "storming" is reluctant to leave the Soviet economic stage, not just because of "objective" supply factors, but because it is useful in overwhelming the *Gospriemka* with production: "Possibly they [the workers of the particular enterprise] consider that under such conditions the *Gospriemka* workers will slacken their attention and demands." (*Ekon.Gaz.* No.9, 1987, p.10)

However, a single enterprise cannot be wholly responsible for the quality of its production as other factors beyond its control are involved. Primary amongst these is the quality of the products coming from an enterprise's immediate supplier. Even a shortage of supply of a comparatively minor component like enamel can bring a tractor production line to a halt. Indeed, many enterprises will accept inferior goods from a supplier in order to maintain good relations. At present, the *Gospriemka* in concentrating on major concerns has little influence over the output of suppliers although, in some instances, it is trying to extend itself into component manufacturing plants.

Technical documentation and obsolescence

A major cause of production being refused by the *Gospriemka* is the failure to meet criteria laid down in technical specifications. Much of this results from the specifications

being out of date, often by as much as fifteen years. If the Soviet economy is to approach world standards in its production then specifications will also have to be revised and this could take several years.

Poor quality goods are also being turned out on equipment that in some cases was installed at the end of the last war. The present Five-Year Plan is attempting to remedy this situation through refurbishment of existing plants rather than the building of new ones, although this is liable to bring its own problems relating to the relative locations of industry and raw materials.

Even by Soviet estimates the *Gospriemka* is having a patchy impact. In some enterprises – probably those most self-sufficient or with the best suppliers – the quality of production appears to have genuinely improved with high percentages of output being approved at the first time of asking. However another side is revealed by V. Purgin:

"The work of the *Gospriemka* in January and February has shown that *perestroika* has touched upon only the uppermost layers of disorder accumulated over the years. As before, there is weak executive discipline, a great deal of paper-creation and little concrete action." (*Ekon. Gaz.* No.10, 1987, p.11)

One factory producing television sets and *Gosstandart* have both been publicly criticised in *Ekonomicheskaya Gazeta* for coming to an agreement to accept sub-standard production. So an apparent increase in the quality of production is, in reality, no such thing. It is unlikely that such a deal is a one-off.

How do things stand with the economy as a whole? According to an interview with First Deputy President of Gosplan, Anatolii Reut, "for the first quarter of the year no improvement in the qualitative structure of output occurred. The proportion of production of the highest category of quality in the overall volume of commodity production constituted 14.2% as against 14.5% for the same period in 1986." (*Ekon.Gaz.* No.23, 1987). Not much cheer there for Gorbachev or the Soviet worker. The *Gospriemka* represents a very obvious stick in a "carrot" and "stick" policy. The problem is that the carrot, in the shape of more better quality consumer goods, is still waving about in the distance. As V. Ulyanov (no relation) observed:

"The *Gospriemka* will give and is already giving tangible results. But without the resolution of a whole complex of problems on the road to the raising of the quality of consumer goods...rapid change cannot be expected." (*Ekon.Gaz.* No.14, 1987, p.16) The question is – has Gorbachev the time and, more importantly, the political will to carry through the solutions?

We have received a copy of an open letter from Aleksei Myasnikov to Mikhail Gorbachev. Myasnikov was sentenced in 1980 to three years deprivation of freedom under Article 190 of the Soviet Constitution for writing a "slandorous" article attacking the Soviet state. He was forced to divorce his wife to stop her from being harassed. Since his release in 1983 he has been prevented from taking up residence in his native Moscow or from gaining work in his own field of sociology, and been subject to continual petty harassment. The letter – which has had to be abbreviated – is a powerful indictment of the forces ranged against the progress of restructuring in the USSR and throws some light on the limitations of Gorbachev's "democratisation" so far.

ALEKSEI ALEKSANDROVICH MYASNIKOV

OPEN LETTER TO GORBACHEV

3rd April 1987

Esteemed Mikhail Sergeevich!

Turning to you is one of the true supporters of the transformations begun in our country. Many of us have been waiting for this health-giving process, have been convinced of its irreversibility and have strived for change. We have paid for the right to participate in the restructuring (*perestroika*) with sacrifices and crippled lives. But, they are not giving it to us...the same figures and organs who did not give us work before, who pursued us, imprisoned us and told us we "cannot think like that". We are speaking, first and foremost, about the so-called law enforcement organs...

As regards *glasnost*, I am under no illusion that this letter will be published here, although I have sent it to one of the central newspapers. Nor will it get to you although I have sent it to the Central Committee of the CPSU in your name. Employees on the post know better than the authors to whom letters should be addressed. Therefore, they usually send the letters on to those about whom the author is complaining... To a complaint to the Moscow Court who had illegally confiscated my manuscripts as "material evidence", replied the same Moscow Court with the original suggestion that I refer to a higher body. Where higher – the Party Central Committee! All the others had been gone through in sequence. Should I turn to God now then? And I am not even baptised. Therefore, as my last hope, I am turning to you in exactly the same way as a believer in God: without any confidence in being heard or receiving an answer. Evidently, for some reason or other, a person must do this all the same. Dum spiro, spero – while I breathe, I hope.

The only means of getting a letter to you is to publish. But this is impossible here. If letters and articles on the themes on which I have touched had been published, the despotism would certainly have been reduced and there would be no need to seek your attention. The dark forces of our native bureaucracy are fighting *glasnost* harder than they do you. More than anything in society, they fight society itself. More than anything

in life, they fight life itself. Now they hypocritically say yes to *glasnost* only so as to never allow it. Therefore, for the time being there is no genuine *glasnost* here. And the professional heralds, the editors, believe in it least of all. Only the holes in the web of censorship in which our press exists have become a little wider, it has become fresher, easier to breathe – this is the sum of our *glasnost* today. The web itself has remained and on each editor is a heap of bosses, on whom he is completely dependent, and who keep watch as before. A little is permitted today, but where is the guarantee that tomorrow the editor will not vanish from his post? The guarantee is with the bosses who tend to be all sorts and their mood also. To such an unreliable guarantee editors prefer the more tried and tested method – caution. They never publish pointed material, without having received the "O.K." from the bosses. Today's *glasnost* is still administrative *glasnost*; *glasnost* from above, that which is permitted, nothing more. A genuine, social, popular *glasnost*, *glasnost* from below, has neither existed nor exists at present.

On the eve of the 27th Congress of the Party and of restructuring (*perestroika*) and acceleration (*uskorenie*), *Izvestia* published a criminal article entitled 'The Shoemaker Affair' which they termed 'Reporting with passion'. Someone called Chilingarov had organised the production of fashionable, deficit footwear six or seven times above the plan target on the basis of an impoverished village workshop. He had not taken a penny from the state but, of course, neither had he damaged himself or his craftsmen. They gave him 8 years... Why is it those who, not in words, but in deeds are achieving *perestroika* and *uskorenie* who usually end up in the dock?

I wrote about this to *Izvestia*. To the honour of the editorial staff, they did not take offence but, on the contrary, proposed to prepare an article on an analogous economic affair and gave me an assignment to Tula. There, there were large-scale goings on connected with illegal production and bribe-taking by people in responsible positions including the police. They accepted the article and prepared it for publication.

But then the question arose: why had I not had anything published for six years? I told them why. The editor put his head in his hands. The article was removed. I proposed using another name, declining the authorship and the fee if only the article was printed. "Noone would take on the responsibility", was the answer. Fear had destroyed their interest in the matter.

However, it was rapidly published in *Sovetskaya Rossiya*. True, it had been well ironed out and they threw out everything that touched upon the marauding of the police, the inadequacies in the investigation and the mindless brutality of the sentences and that the accused were called swindlers by the employers. But the sense of the material remained: it is such "swindlers" that are needed in the national economy and not in jail and from whom there is something to be learned by official economics. The article was discussed at a "Round Table" and the discussion material was also published. It appeared that the ice had been broken: I could work and be published. I was even sent a form for work on the staff of the paper. But, at question 14 I stumbled: had I been subject to legal action? There was no sense in filling it in any further. I was still working on three pieces of material, two of which had already been selected. Would they publish them? They promised to publish and suggested I write. But from that time my articles have never appeared in the pages of the paper.

So it was all to no purpose. One of the articles prepared for publication deals with corruption by the authorities in Kalinin all but directed at putting behind bars a worker who had complained to the public prosecutor about a hooligan director. They managed to defend the worker but those who had spoken in his defence were exposed to fresh persecution and denunciation. The article will not be published, tyranny will triumph and people will be powerless in the face of it. Twice the article was placed in an issue and it was removed, the last time by the Chief Editor of *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, V. Chikin, with no explanation. Where is the justice and the *glasnost*?

The second article on a conflict between workers and managers flared up as a result of systematic breaches of labour legislation, arbitrariness in setting norms for the payment of labour which are now passed off as a reform in the organisation of wages. Both the factory management and *Goskomtrud* (State Committee for Labour) are criticised. The Deputy President of USSR *Goskomtrud*, B. N. Gavrilov, opposed publication – the usual reaction to criticism. The editors said the article would be published. But the chosen article was held up somewhere at the top. Who had stopped it? *Goskomtrud*? My convictions? What is the difference: some control on *glasnost* is always found...

How does this relate to the Constitution, to the present course towards legality and democratisation, to the recent Plenum on restructuring and cadres? They are calling us to work and not giving us work. They are amnestying political prisoners, but former political prisoners are deprived of their rights as before. They are freeing them from the camps but to what? To be put at the mercy of the obscurantists. How is it possible to live and work under such conditions? How is it possible to fight for the health and restructuring of society? I cannot conceive...

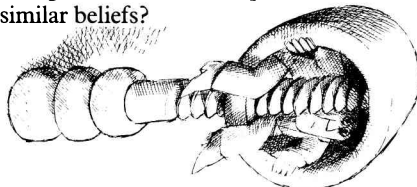
“Learn democracy”, “We need democracy like we need air” – Mikhail Sergeevich, you pronounced these prophetic words and instituted the beginning of historic changes. You have won over a great number of supporters both here and throughout the world. The opponents of restructuring are in a paltry minority but it is the all-powerful bureaucracy, occupying the key positions in the state who is controlling the process of transformation in practice and who do not desire fundamental change. Their power is in the system of total control which has been formed over society, they hold on to this system with a death-like grip. Their slogan is: restructuring while changing nothing. And while they are in power they are capable of rendering any reforms unrecognisable and of turning progress into its opposite. Therefore, the transformation process is now acquiring the misshapen contours of a sort of democracy from above, a police democracy. Restructuring for them is a rattle: we are humoured for a bit and then we stop. And in reality everything does stop if the citizens do not receive real rights and if there is no genuine democracy from below. And everything would happen much more quickly and effectively if the bureaucracy did not fetter the activity of your supporters. Already they cannot put a stop to the changes but they will not spare their efforts to hinder and pervert them. It is easy to be convinced of this if only through the scuttling of the *Gospriemka* (State Acceptance of Production) or the welcome given to the deliberately intricate Draft Law on State Enterprises.

The question is posed thus: either bureaucracy or democracy. While it remains unresolved there will be no authentic restructuring. At present there is not restructuring but a struggle for restructuring. The new course will triumph only in the event that the system of bureaucratic control over production and society is successfully reorganised, if society triumphs over the bureaucrat. What is required for this is firstly, a normal legal system, and *glasnost*. The judicial system must lay the legislative foundation of the new society, liberating it from the stifling fetters of departmental pseudo-legal regulation through which bureaucratic tyranny is concealed. *Glasnost* as the basis of independent means of mass communication guarantees a free dialogue and feedback between society and the state. We will have law and we will have someone to stand up for it.

It is necessary to define in some way the relationship of the state to so-called dissidents. From the official point of view these are criminals: slanderers, renegades and traitors. In actual fact, fundamentally, these are people asserting their constitutionally guaranteed right to free thought, word and movement. I, for example, did not even suspect that I was dissident until they imprisoned me under Article 190!

Probably it is convenient for someone to exaggerate the bogey of the danger to the state so as to heroically rummage in personal archives, exterminate people in the camps and prisons, increase the number of state prisoners and, at the same time, the staffs of the punitive establishments...

And no one wants to hear about it and it is impossible to knock until one is heard. And do not, for heaven's sake, publish anything in the West. But what else is there to do? How does one overcome one's own muteness and the deafness of irresponsible people so as to somehow influence the government in the interests of society? In the pitch-black silence the West is the only help. So who is to blame: those who turn for help to western means of information or those who forced them to it – those who were obliged to help and did not? Who is right: those who thought or those who did not care to think? Who is the patriot: those who stood up for change or those who imprisoned others for similar beliefs?



What is there to say – criticism is not always very pleasant. But isn't it a Party slogan: Criticism and self-criticism? Slander? But why is slander defined in the investigative offices of the punitive organs, by what right do they violate the truth while laying claim to the role of repositories of

truth in the last instance? Cannot society and the people themselves distinguish the wheat from the chaff? Problems have arisen and will arise. There has been and there must be criticism. It is not necessary to imprison but to discuss. Then there would not have been and there will not be any sort of mythical dissidence. There would have been simply democracy and a normal, healthy society. There is no problem of dissidence but there is a problem of total despotism. The problem of dissidence is false through and through and artificially created. It is a tragic error through which our state has lost many honest, talented, needed people and many more have been isolated or removed from active participation in society. An amnesty of political prisoners is a recognition and a correction of this error.

But that alone is too little. It is necessary to return these people to a normal life. Return what has been seized from them: rights, homes, jobs. People are returning from exile and the camps but many are unable to live anywhere – there is the residence permit problem, they are not taken on for work and newspaper editors and institutions shy away from them. They are freed from imprisonment but in society, as before, they are not free. And they will not have real rights and freedoms while they are branded with their convictions. *Rehabilitation* is needed. This is absolutely necessary if democratisation is not just foreign-trade publicity but a real process.

We have not slandered or undermined. On the contrary we have been slandered by those who have undermined and not allowed society to develop. Who is slowing up restructuring today? It is precisely those people who give us no peace. “You were and still are criminals”, they declare...One can understand them: they do not want restructuring, they fight the free word and exposure. But who are we from the point of view of those who are for restructuring? We would like to know your opinion, Mikhail Sergeevich. But, in the meanwhile, we are superfluous people.

Society is weary with longing for a judicious leadership. The country needs honest, thinking people. If democracy is as necessary as air then so are democrats. Who will fight for it, bring it to life – the police, KGB, *Goskomtrud*? I hope to live to such a time when these organs will not hinder but will defend democracy, will not break but will observe the law and not punish the innocent but will stand guard over human rights. This is only possible if they cease viewing their enemy in every manifestation of free thinking be it civil or economic. If personal, official and departmental interests are not contrary to social ones, then we must have only one aim – the well-being of society and we must work for that together.

There is an unfortunate tendency among Western leftists to ignore those voices in the East European opposition with which they disagree. Unfortunate, because this renders an informed East-West dialogue the more difficult. In a series of articles, *Labour Focus* will be documenting the various strands of political thought which have emerged from the Polish Solidarity experience, beginning here with the influential views of Jadwiga Staniszkis. The material was edited, translated, and is introduced by David Holland.

JADWIGA STANISZKIS: A POLISH VIEW OF "REAL SOCIALISM"

A Critical Note On the Work of Jadwiga Staniszkis

Polish sociologist Jadwiga Staniszkis is a well known figure in the West and occupies a prestigious position in Polish opposition circles. She was one of the team of advisers to the Gdansk strikers in 1980, until she walked out in protest at the collusion she claimed to detect between the advisers and the government negotiating team over the terms of the agreement.¹

She subsequently wrote of the experience in Gdansk: "I cannot forget those faces, pallid in the darkening light, mingled in the darkness around the buildings where the discussions were taking place. If I feel some obligation of solidarity, it is an obligation to do something for those silent faces."²

Passionately radical in her opposition to the prevailing system in Poland and sometimes described as a Marxist, Staniszkis is probably best known in the West for her book of essays *Poland's Self-Limiting Revolution*, Princeton 1983. Three articles also appeared in *Soviet Studies* in 1978, 1979, and 1981.

The earlier work is written in a very difficult style, and owes something to Marcuse and his followers in its analysis of the reproduction of Polish "artificial reality." The later pieces are clearer and full of well-informed detail. The angry polemic against Polish communism and all its works that underlies her writing reflects a pervasive mood in the Polish intelligentsia.

Staniszkis has always shown herself adept at translating ideas from Western social science to analyse Polish conditions. Whilst invariably striking, this technique can also create more confusion than it resolves.

For example, she adopted the controversial ideas of the English educationist Basil Bernstein on class-specific "extended" and "restricted" language codes. These were then applied to the rather different issues of the pseudo-Marxist jargon of Polish officialese (extended code) and the language of Polish workers (restricted code). This mixed up linguistic competence with issues of social snobbery, self-confidence and the development of political consciousness. These are very interesting and important issues, but they are not ones with which Bernstein is very much help.

Similarly, she adapted Victor Turner's ideas on the social functions of ritual in traditional societies, in order to interpret the successive crises that have gripped Poland since the war, as instances of a "ritual drama," stage-managed by the authorities for their own ends. It is true, as she says in her own defence, that her own formative period coincided with the cynically manipulated crisis of 1968. However, although skilful crisis management was certainly employed in the events of 1956, they did represent a real crisis in the East European system. The anthropology of ritual is really very little help in elucidating these events.

The following recent article by Staniszkis presents a sort of strange mirror image of a Western new-left analysis, ruthlessly criticising the recuperative capacity of the system and the failure of rebellions within it to challenge its essential nature. Only instead of turning to Marxism, Staniszkis turns to the Western ideological critics of the system in which she lives – von Hayek and Friedman.

Staniszkis now appears to be an adherent of the "property rights" school, which has some influence in Polish intellectual circles- to the extent that it is quite possible to meet people seriously arguing the desirability of vesting formal property rights in the bureaucracy, since supposedly only a class of property owners can re-introduce economic rationality.

A complete pessimism as to the possibility of ever developing a viable, let alone an attractive, model of socialism, runs strongly through this article. In apparent contradiction is the other primary emphasis, the immense stability of the system and the incorporation of the aspirations of the working class within it. The workers' demands are egalitarian and redistributive and therefore bolster the logic of a socialist state system. For those, like myself, who have not despaired of the possibility of an attractive, free and open model of socialism ever being developed, this is not itself a problem. But for Staniszkis it means that: "the greater part of individuals in 'real socialism' hold convictions which facilitate their exploitation and repression."³

Much of what Staniszkis has to say on this subject will be read in a contrary spirit to that which she intended. Readers will perhaps also not share her exaggerated belief in the rationality and efficiency of modern capitalism. With tens of millions of unemployed such claims can only be regarded with scepticism. She does however point to very real problems on the absence of a coherent basis for opposition in Soviet type societies – a programmatic basis that could animate a stable coalition of interests. In this sense, what she has to say about the inevitable "moral" rejection of what she calls a "post-totalitarian" society, and the political limitations of such a rejection, is certainly worth considering.

To this theme are added ideas influenced by Ferenc and Heller on the fundamental irrationality of East European socialism and a full-blown adoption of Yanov's ideas on the continuity of Byzantine and Tsarist traditions of autocracy with modern Soviet socialism. This last is a strongly evocative Polish theme.

It is to be regretted that it is possible only to print extracts from this very long article here. Hopefully however, its flavour and preoccupations will help provide readers with an appreciation of the direction some influential East European critical thought is taking.

Editor's Footnotes

- 1) But see Kowalik's version in his introduction to *The Birth of Solidarity*.
- 2) P.214 in the August 1981 *Soviet Studies* article.
- 3) P.23 in the second part of the article in *Est Documentazione* No.1 1986.

For A Theory of "Real Socialism"

My point of departure will be an analysis of incomplete and non exclusive property rights, with the aim of describing and explaining three characteristic phenomena of real socialism. The first is the location of the state apparatus in the base (to employ Marxist terminology) rather than in the superstructure. This relocation does not derive solely from a political choice, but primarily from the necessity to find a substitute for the economic and motivational mechanisms, weakened by the nationalisation of the means of production. Secondly I will refer to the inertness of a social structure, to which the category of "economic interests" appears to be irrelevant, and in which a vision of a dichotomous, bi-polar system does not imply political radicalism. In such a structure, as the case of Solidarnosc demonstrates, even rebellion prompts a revitalisation (via their egalitarian claims and fundamentalist orientation) of two constitutive elements of the system: on the one hand administrative redistribution, and on the other a model of aprioristic reasoning. The third phenomenon that I will consider is the peculiar rationality of real socialism, which is quite different from western rationality, and is instrumental and based upon induction.

Here I am interested in developing a theory of real socialism, and I hope that my article will be read as an argument in favour of the thesis that the nationalisation (or socialisation) of property rights represents the end of property in the economic sense of the word.¹ but does not exclude the usefulness of the category of property rights in analysing the system of real socialism². Even in this system the character of property rights determines the way in which people behave in a world of scarcity and determines, through a self generated matrix of incentives, how and to what extent social needs are converted into interests (understood as relatively stable and in fact as a guide to subjective rational action).

Incomplete Property Rights.

According to the property rights school³, property must be understood as an ensemble of recognised rights of social action in relation to the use of scarce resources. It is not resources themselves that are possessed, but an ensemble of rights to use them. The incompleteness of the right of property in real socialism means a systematic absence of some types of action (uses), so that it is as if the right of property itself lacks some dimensions. One aspect of this incompleteness is exemplified in the absence of a capital market, which logically derives from the nationalisation (or socialisation) of the means of production⁴. Another can be seen in the absence of hereditary and capitalisable property rights. This means that some interests are absent (for example an interest in the multiplication of the capital stock), as are some costs. Naturally, it is not my intention to deny the existence of an area of effective social costs but rather the absence of concrete social groups or individuals, who bear these costs as costs of living in the first person. In turn this induces a systematic undervaluation of these costs in the decision-making process, and, if these costs are not considered, they do not operate as

constraints in the taking of concrete decisions.⁵

Investment policy in real socialism serves as a good example of the above. As has been pointed out, incomplete property rights imply a lack of interest in capital stock that does not yield immediate benefits to a the holder of a job. A similar attitude increases the risks of de-capitalisation, and in this situation the state must force the enterprise to invest (by means of obligatory quotas or the so-called "soft-financing."⁶ Both these methods have an element in common: they reduce the cost of the investment, from the point of view of the factory manager, to zero. With the first method, the funds used for investment cannot be employed in any other manner. This means that when investment projects are evaluated and compared, no standard of efficiency is taken into account. The only criterion is that the money must be spent, or otherwise, from the point of view of the enterprise it will be lost. In the second case, the investment is considered as a form of consumption rather than as a cost, for the following reason: a diminution takes place in the pressures on current operations (some resources may be re-allocated from investment to production) and the status of managers is boosted, together with their negotiating strength in relation to their own staff and to the local authorities. Even the Yugoslav self-management system does not escape from a paradoxical situation in which the lack of an economic interest in investment is conducive to irresponsible over-investment (a characteristic of real socialism). Here too it is caused by pressure based upon consumer interests, rather than the productive interests of creators of capital and potential investors. "Soft financing" is inadequate to regenerate a material interest in the stock of capital and from this there follows a comprehensive decapitalisation of society.⁸ This process, which transforms over-investment into de-capitalisation is owing essentially to the character of property rights in socialism.

Mechanisms normally brought into play by the presence of full property rights in real socialism are activated by administrative intervention by the state. This is the complementary logic of incomplete property, absence of certain interests and of economic activity. Centralised administrative redistribution plays the role of an adjustment mechanism and acts as a substitute for the capital market, whilst the combination of control and politico-moral appeals attempts without success to substitute for non-existent economic interests in saving and developing the means of production. The inefficiency of this procedure arises from the fact that in a situation in which the means of production cannot be sold or consumed by producers in an alternative manner, their use is not considered by anyone as a real cost, at least from the decision-making point of view. Moreover, this administrative substitution for economic mechanisms and the absence of some dimensions of property rights is not neutral either in terms of productivity or in terms of distributive logic. Violence as an economic instrument (the so-called "functional terror," in the form of forced labour or of militarisation of the factory) is often easier and more accessible for the state apparatus than undertaking organisational or technological innovations. The failures in productivity and in allocation that produce the tendency towards violence as an economic instrument, have their roots in the particular objective function of the state apparatus in real socialism: the maximisation of use value under its control – independent of its economic costs.⁹ The exclusive control of these use values (consumer goods as much as means of production) are first and foremost a material base for the expropriation and monopolisation of control over all forms of social organisation. Secondly, these use values make up a stock that can be redistributed according to a logic of power: to buy the support of internal and external interest groups and thereby maintain power. In such a situation, the rationality of control (via elements of moral economy)¹⁰ replace economic rationality. This means that real socialism is a system in which the material interests of dominant groups (or classes) do not count for much. What counts is rather the the will to control of the apparatus of the party-state, independent of the varying make-up of its personnel. The will to maintain power is ahistoric and has no content

outside itself. This is the will that tends to preserve the social forms controlling economic development, which cause decline in the living standards of all, including the members of the power apparatus themselves. The objective function of the apparatus nevertheless does not consist in simple direct exploitation (in the sense of appropriation of surplus value). On the contrary: the logic of power at

times leads to the assignment for social consumption of more than economic rationality permits. Nevertheless this logic is inextricably linked to indirect exploitation, from the moment that the negation of the system of property rights and social organisation, by the objective function of control, induce an under-utilisation of social resources.'

Non-Exclusive Property Rights

A second characteristic of property rights in socialism is their non-exclusivity. The non-exclusivity of property in a nationalised economy is linked above all to the collectivistic character of property rights. If I can elucidate: firstly, no individual is able to appropriate the surplus. This is the exclusive right of the state apparatus as a corporate body. Secondly, certain particular aspects of property rights are distributed within the apparatus, with a minimal degree of formalisation of the distinctions between economic and political roles, powers and responsibilities. This recalls the "service society" of Tsarist Russia,¹¹ in which property rights were differentiated, but the state, as in real socialism, was a part of the base and supplied administrative instruments to replace the non-existent economic mechanisms, which would have been supplied by a free market in labour, by conditions of capital formation and circulation of the factors of production, which were politically restricted....

The text continues to argue the absence of conditions for a formal Weberian logic in conditions of real socialism – making economic rationality itself impossible...

"Inert Structure"

One of the more interesting implications of property rights of the incomplete and non-exclusive type is represented by the "inert" character of the social structure. I employ the adjective inert, but this does not imply immobility. On the contrary as we will see. such a structure is full of tensions and conflicts, but the peculiar form of these and the way in which demands are articulated end up by assisting the reproduction of the system. This thesis leads to the conclusion that the stability, or perhaps more accurately the oscil-

lating equilibrium, of the socialist system is not only a function of coercion exercised by a particular dominant group, but is also a product of the society itself. There is something extraordinarily ironic in this assertion when it is applied to the disobedient Polish society. The following assertion is difficult for the frustrated societies of Eastern Europe to accept, but they do reject communism on the normative terrain, whilst consolidating the self-same system on the level of social interaction. Even in rebellions, the rejection of the system often evokes some of its most characteristic traits – redistribution and a dogmatic and aprioristic mode of reasoning.

The inert character of the social structure is made up of three elements. First and foremost there is a systematic difference between the social models of articulation and self-identification, on the one hand, and the structure of economic action that can be analytically reconstructed on the other. As the Polish case of 1980-81 shows, this difference widens in periods when articulation is relatively free. It determines the dynamic of conflictual situations as much as the permanence of political coalitions.

A second characteristic of inert structure is the peculiar inter-connection of actors, who, seen in a normative perspective, occupy opposite poles. Such interconnections assume the form of two elements which together call forth kindred traits in the profound logic of the system: a moral economy based upon redistribution; an aprioristic reasoning that denies the "principle of social reality"¹²; an essential rather than a procedural justice, and the peculiar ontological perspective of a highly etatised society.

A third characteristic of inert structure is the specific type of conflicts that reproduce rather than transform the system: an example is the quasi-ritualistic regulation of the system by crises¹³, by conflicts which consolidate its segmented character and isolate potential allies, or of the type of fissiparous conflict which rapidly splits the society on a normative basis and expends great quantities of energy, but ends only by reproducing the system.

The text continues with a discussion of the incapacity of real socialism to express economic interests, owing to the character of property rights and the mediation of the state through a "command rationality." This situation is compared to pre-capitalist formations. Revolts against the power apparatus, after a brief convulsion of redistribution, therefore, tend to reinforce the status quo. Revolts oppose only a mythical symbolic alternative to reality. Norman Jacobs' work on the moral economy and ideological tendencies in China, is cited approvingly. Material interests can only express themselves very partially in normal conditions, since the Party possesses the exclusive right to accord or withhold recognition to organised interests. Even in the relatively free conditions of Poland in 1980-81, this divorce between the articulation of interests and self-identification on the one hand and the structure of material interests on the other, still held true. The unwillingness of the state to allow some actors to participate in the "renewal" process and Soli-

darity's unwillingness to ally itself with the "horizontal movement" in the Party, both derived from misconceptions of the real distribution of conflicts of material interests.

A number of factors are discussed which obscure the articulation of economic conflicts, deriving from the "moral economy." These include: the peculiar form of exploitation in real socialism, based on distribution rather than the appropriation of surplus value from production; the absence of economic mechanisms to organise social actors; the inter-twining of economic and political roles; and the dominance of arguments about distribution dependent on ethical and ideological criteria, rather than in terms of economic costs. All these factors make it very difficult to construct a durable oppositional coalition, with an effective programme.

This difficulty is further discussed in the light of the weakness of the moral oppositional coalition established by Solidarnosc on the basis of concepts such as dignity and solidarity. Although functional in a period of polarisation and revolt, the stresses of real politics trans-

formed it into a sort of negative pseudo-radicalism: an ideology of form rather than content.

Oppositional Similarities

The second characteristic of the "inert structure" of society in real socialism, is the peculiar intertwining that is created between the two opposed poles, that result when they are perceived by workers in moral terms, but which reproduce the self-same logic, even when one is in conflict with the other. Three elements of this inter-relationship are discussed.

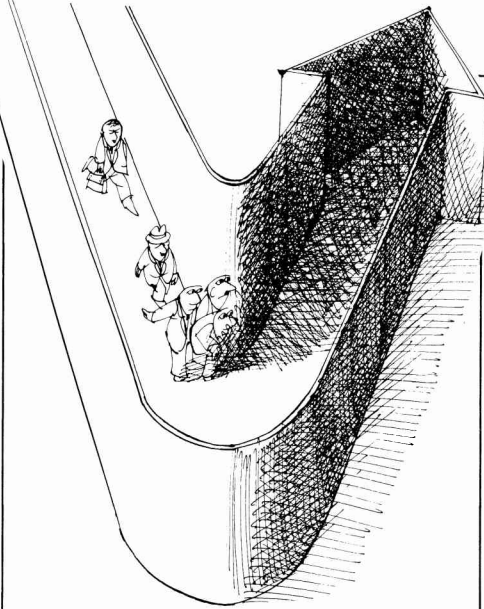
1) The fact that both sides adopt a mode of reasoning which is aprioristic and deductive, insensible to empirical evidence. I have already analysed this phenomenon when I described the Polish rebellion of 1980-81, in which counter-posed to the doctrinal formula of the leading role of the Party was a

millenarian vision of society that equally obscured objective differences. This vision was constructed on the basis of a bi-polar opposition, with moral labels as principal evaluative criteria in a valuation addressed strictly to context rather than content.

2) The fact that the redistributive logic of the system was reinforced from the base via egalitarian demands. The reasoning in the two opposed poles thus showed itself as having the self-same redistributive system as point of reference. The axis of the conflict concerned the right to take decisions and to execute redistributive choices: the right of the apparatus as "vanguard" was opposed to that of the workers, deriving from "productive work." And it is worthwhile stressing that both the "poles" derived their arguments from the same Marxist rhetoric. A surreal obfuscation can thus be observed in the conflict between the objective functions of the leading group and the expectations of society. The "rationality of control" (stabilisation) of the former met with the demands of a moral economy, articulated from below, seeking – for diverse reasons – an equal distribution of the weight of the crisis. More specifically, the leading group and society met in the situation described at certain precise points:

- an analogous pressure for production of use values independent of costs;
- a common rejection (in deeds not words) of change in the economic system¹⁴, owing to the high costs for example of a transformation in the direction of a market economy and exclusive property rights. The costs of a transformation of the system are effectively high, and they rise in tandem with the deepening of the crisis. In such a situation, an increase in the rate of indirect exploitation at this stage in the history of the system, would lead to a strengthening of pressure for change – but, the associated increase in the costs of such a change would in reality weaken the pressure for change.
- the fact that neither pole of the social structure has interests of its own in capital reserves, owing to the character of property rights. In turn this induces both of them to use such reserves as amortisation of short term tensions, with the result that the economy as a whole is comprehensively decapitalised.

This paradoxical situation in which the emergence of a moral economy reduces the contradictions between the objective functions of the power apparatus and the expectations of society, regardless of the decline in production and signs of a neo-Malthusian crisis, is one of the secrets responsible for the inert character of the social structure. But on the other hand, the reduced portion of the gross national product destined for consumption is distributed in a more equitable manner than market mechanisms and exclusive property rights would permit. This double mechanism has a formidable



impact on the side of stabilisation.

It is appropriate here to recall Max Weber's notes on Tsarist Russia.¹⁵ Weber argued that the peculiar character of the Russian economy – which from my point of view resembles that of real socialism, by virtue of the mislocation of the state in the "base" (structure) and the powerful impact of its objective functions on economic decisions – rendered illusory any expectation of structural change prompted by economic causes. Weber did not develop this point further, but it can be argued that, as subsequent Russian history shows, that in such a structure, change is not caused by material interests, but by forces extraneous to the economy. Concretely, we are discussing change from above from political motives (the Stolypin reform), or owing to the collapse of the state or the economy (war), intertwined with a corrosion of traditional normative identification models, resulting from a tendency towards social relations of a capitalist type (individualistic-competitive). It was indeed this last change which strengthened a relatively marginal group of political outsiders – the Bolsheviks – with their communist utopianism and efficient paramilitary organisation.

3) The third characteristic of the intertwining between the two nominally opposed poles is the striking similarity between the "political imagination" of the working class and of the Party apparatus. This is visible on a number of levels:

- a strong statist orientation on the part of both, with little tolerance for the ambiguity, the risk and the responsibility of the self regulation of the market and of free competition¹⁶.
- much stronger support expressed in favour of state property (incomplete and non-exclusive property rights) than that expressed by other control groups eg. managers and students¹⁷. This orientation has accentuated with the deepening of the crisis and is accompanied by a weaker interest in self-management than the other groups.¹⁸

- the same substantial, rather than procedural conception of justice¹⁹.

- a low tolerance for the ambiguity caused by social pluralism and by conflicts in their own group: the plebiscitary orientation of the workers towards mass democracy coincides with the authoritarian and bureaucratic orientation of the apparatus²⁰.

- a stronger egalitarian and redistributive preference than in the other control groups.²¹

The biggest differences between the two groups (working class and party apparatus) are, according to Polish research conducted in 1980-81:

- opposed institutional loyalties (Party vs. Solidarity) with strong status competition and contrasting symbolic identifications;
- different attitudes to the power of the state.²²

An additional factor which reinforces the above mentioned intertwining of opposed poles can be empirically noted in a peculiar form of schizoid division in the consciousness of the working class. On the one hand the declared values of socialist ideology, such as material justice and egalitarianism are accepted. On the other, the guiding principle of the system, the leading role of the Party, is strongly rejected²³. But at the same time the same operation of the Party at the level of interaction – the single secretary in a single factory – is evaluated much less negatively. This is owing to a phenomenon of "secondary reinforcement": when for example the apparatus succeeds in resolving a scarcity of prime materials through party channels.

I have defined this phenomenon as an adaptation superstructure, to refer to the growing identification with the system on the level of interaction, even when its abstract rules are rejected at a normative and symbolic level.

This "surreal" form of intertwining between opposed poles, characteristic of the inert structure and present even in a rebellious society, forces us to alter our stereotypical image of the relationship between society and leading groups. I agree here with the position of Michel Foucault²⁴, when he proposes a displacement of the philosophic perspective in favour of a concept of power, capable of assuming not only an objective form, perceived as external pressure, but also a subjective one, perceived by various subjects as their "authentic" true position. I have sought to describe the processes by which, in moments of rebellion, certain convictions are formed and consolidated, with the aim of better understanding why the majority of individuals in "real socialism" embrace convictions which facilitate their exploitation and repression. The passivity of the working class in Poland after the 13th December 1981 was not a direct consequence of the level of repression, but rather an effect of

much more complex processes.

In the light of the preceding analysis, the mechanisms of "normalisation" in Poland seem distinct from those in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, as these are described in semi-clandestine literature. We are not dealing simply with a generalised fear of repression (M. Simecka), or of the risk of loss of status, with a desire for a "normal" life (as opposed to an elevated one, immersed in history and abstraction: J. Patocka). Normalisation in Poland is not even based on the Hungarian ontological perspective, according to which liberty and material well-being are perceived as alternatives, with the first considered joyous and tragic at the same time (Wajda). In the Polish case there are three mechanisms responsible for normalisation:

a) The inert structure, described above, with its intertwining opposed poles and the reinforcement at the level of interaction in the same system, which is refuted on the conceptual terrain.

b) The discrediting of free articulation as such. On the one hand, a series of moral categories, proudly defended by the workers, have failed as a cognitive and expressive instrument and have impeded political success on account of their excessive rigidity and polarisation. On the other hand, alternative forms of integration and self-identification have proved difficult to put into practice, indeed useless, (for example based on economic interests) on account of the character of property rights discussed above, and also because of the tendency of the system towards a moral economy and its post-totalitarian character, which required a moral catharsis before political action was possible.

c) The peculiar dynamic of political fundamentalism, with its tendency to self-paralysis. The empirical evidence shows that those who share this orientation tend to lose the right to express themselves via moral categories (which are the only ones that they have to apply to higher order, large scale issues) if they do not succeed in living up to the high moral standards established at the outset. For example, during an unofficial miners' meeting, the view was expressed that "we cannot use the symbol of "Solidarity" any more, because we did nothing when people were killed in the "Wujek" mine..."

The text goes on to argue that the segmented character of society under real socialism also stems from the prevailing character of property rights. Local mini-markets and even local currencies replace the universal rules of the market. Access is decided administratively. Social needs are met by administrative action, giving preference to strategic groups. All such segments are isolated from one another, and hierarchically ordered by the political priorities of the state. A complex network of groups therefore places demands through their various "corporations" on

the state. This "matrix structure" weakens rather than strengthens its articulation in periods of free expression, when moral stances come to the fore. The mosaic of the inert society is self-stabilising in present conditions.

The author then turns to an extensive argument that Soviet society displays important features of continuity with Russian society under the Tsars. This is in terms of a model of mobilising resources under state control, of doctrinaire thinking and of anti-individualism. Ideological elements, such as the dogmatic and aprioristic character of dialectical materialism are discussed at length.

(Translated from "Est Documentazione" IRES CGIL Toscana. Issue nos. 0 and 1, 1986)

Notes

1) Von Mises, *Human Action (A Treatise on Economics)*, Yale Univ. Press 1965. Hayek, *Studies*, London 1978. M. Weber, *Economy and Society*, vol.1 New York 1968.

2) For example, L. Althusser and E. Balibar stress the uselessness of the category of property right for an analysis of socialism and propose that it be replaced with a general category of "relations of production," which, according to them, in real socialism are of a political nature. In consequence the functioning of the state must be the principal object of analysis (*Reading Capital*, Paris 1969). It is interesting that the Althusserian analytical model had many adherents in the Soviet Union and other East European countries. Reform proposals have emerged in this way which do not threaten the non-exclusive and incomplete character of property rights. cf. C. Jozefiak, *Uwagi w sprawie zwiazkow miedzy systemem politycznym a efektywnoscia gospodarki*, Warsaw. Mimeo. W. Kuczynski, *Uwagi o ekonomicznej pozycji panstwa*, Colloquia Comuna, Univ. of Warsaw 1983. The articles and books of W. Brus and also J.A. Konrod, *Zakony politicheskoi ekonomii sotsializma*, Moscow 1976; Kuzminov, *Oczerki politicheskoi ekonomii sotsializma*, Moscow 1971.

3) A. Alchian, H. Demsetz, *The Property Rights Paradigm*, *The Journal of Economic History* no.1 1973.

4) My position is that the so-called "socialisation" of the means of production – even when we know how to define it precisely – does not imply a qualitative difference in the non-exclusivity and incompleteness of property rights.

5) cf. S. Cheung, *The structure of a contract and non-exclusive resources*, in E. Furubotn and S. Pejovich (eds.) *The Economics of Property Rights*, Camb. Mass. 1974.

6) J. Kornai, *Economics of shortage*, Amsterdam 1980.

7) cf. E. Furubotn, S. Pejovich, *Property Rights and the Behaviour of the Firm in a Socialist State*, op. cit.

8) Here the Polish data are indicative: in 1983 the investment plan was exceeded by 200 billion zloty (almost 40%) and at the same time 53.2% of machinery and plant in industry needed replacement, owing to age. (H. Lesz, *Cena dekapitalizacji*, *Zycie Gospodarcze*, Warsaw 1984).

9) This formula is that of F. Feher, A. Heller and G. Markus, *Dictatorship Over Needs*, vol.2, OUP 1983.

10) A term used by E.P. Thompson which describes pre-capitalist relations, and is used in his book on the working class in England.

11) The concept of the "service society" was the basic category of the work by P.M. Miljukov, *Oczerki po istorii russoj kultury*, St. Petersburg 1908.

12) Miljukov, op.cit. cf. also R. Pipes, *Russia Under the Old Regime*.

13) eg. the impost per capita (relative to the non-productive sector) reinforced the redistributive and control functions of the obczyna: the state consumer credits for the aristocracy not only made these strata more dependent, but even facilitated the reconstitution of capital for a further redistribution (in certain periods almost two thirds of the peasantry were property of the state owing to the indebtedness of the land-owners).

14) In the research cited by Beskid and Sufin, 70% of those interviewed supported the idea of economic reform. But at the same time 60% were favourable to price control and 50% to salaries being determined on social rather than economic grounds.

15) M. Weber, *Gesammelte Politische Schriften (2nd edition)*, Tubingen 1958.

16) From Rychard's study it is notable that to the question: "Who should fix and articulate the hierarchy of social needs?", 74% answered "the institutions" (44% the government, 20% the unions, 10.6% both). Only 9.9% suggested a self-regulatory mechanism based on competition and the free market. J. Janicka's research too (Polish Academy of Sciences 1977) shows that 72% of those interviewed were favourable to the administrative limitation of salaries, "even if no-one profited by it." Finally, the research of W. Suraszka (Wroclaw 1981) shows that 80% of the workers supported the idea of "forced labour" for "parasites."

17) A comparison between samples of printed materials edited by students and workers has been made by G. Lindenberg (Univ. of Warsaw, 1983) and by K. Kosela (Univ. of Warsaw 1983).

18) Beskin and Sufin have revealed that 72.9% of those interviewed, offered the choice of the two statements: "People would like to be governed justly" and "People would like to participate in power," chose the second.

19) cf. My observations on *Solidarity in Poland, the Self Limiting Revolution*, Princeton 1983.

20) cf. W. Saruszka: *Solidarity members listed the principal characteristics of the movement in the following manner: discipline 80%, tolerance towards differing attitudes and ideas 35%, independence of the union press 51%, independence of regional organisations 5.2%. At the same time 62% were against direct democracy and in favour of charismatic leadership.*

21) cf. W. Saruszka: 64% of the sample called for protection by the state, even though "this was not enough to guarantee equal opportunities." 52% were for administrative limitation on salaries "even of people most socially useful."

22) cf. Saruszka. Workers opposed the idea of a strong state power, whilst the Party supported it.

23) In 1980 only 61.3% of Party members in Poland were favourable to the leading role of the Party: the following year the percentage fell to 54.5%. cf. *Polacy 1980 and 1981*, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw).

24) M. Foucault, *Power, Knowledge*, Harvester 1980.

Who is Gorbachev? A reformer or a play-actor? A politician who is aware of the fact that large-scale reform represents an essential prerequisite for securing the future of the Soviet state? Or a skilful demagogue who recognises that the pretence of reform is necessary in order to shield the Soviet Union from unfavourable trends in world politics?

ADAM MICHNIK

THE GREAT COUNTER-REFORMER

Today these questions are being debated the world over. Nowhere more so than in Poland.

Although mistrust of Soviet declarations is one of the more permanent elements of Polish thinking, certain specific characteristics of the present reaction to the changes in the Soviet Union cannot be overlooked.

Let us begin with the power elite. Despite their declarations of sympathy for Gorbachev, Soviet *perestroika* seems to have caused the Jaruzelski team acute embarrassment. The same people who, just a few years ago, were having to accept admonishments from Moscow to follow a harder line are today attempting to reduce the flow of information from the Soviet Union to a minimum.

Reports about breaches of the law, about the functioning of the Soviet legal system, about concrete plans for reform are being shortened or even removed from the Polish Party press by the censors. Against this the level of public interest for Soviet newspapers has risen – something that until now had been unimaginable in Poland. The Moscow weekly journal *Ogonyok* is, for the first time ever, being sold out.

For this reason the Jaruzelski people, when they protest their support for Gorbachev, emphasise that they do not wish to “mechanically copy Soviet examples”. An extraordinary declaration of sovereignty. And look at this: Poland, so we are told, already has the realisation of *perestroika* behind it.

Hiding behind these declarations is an obvious degree of fear. Their authors are sensing the emerging dynamic of a new wave of change which could pitch them into political oblivion.

The situation of the Jaruzelski team is far from gratifying. They have brought calm to the country and that is their only political success. It is not, however, the much promised normalisation. They have not succeeded in dealing with the economic crisis,

and the only reforms that the Polish people have experienced are the repeated price reforms and their concomitant impoverishment of the people.

The Polish economy is suffocating in the straight-jacket of communist doctrine. The ever deepening crisis is also leading to conflicts within the governing *nomenklatura*. What wonder is it then that Jaruzelski and his team fear that an opposition could be created within the party apparatus whose natural programme would be a Polish *perestroika*?

For Jaruzelski that is a terrible vision. Support from Moscow and the obedience of the apparatus of repression have served as the legitimisation of his power. Both of these are now gradually becoming questionable.

But even within opposition circles there are no Gorbachev enthusiasts. The image of the changes in the Soviet Union is blurred. The commentators are disorientated. Only the “Uncompromising” among the oppositionists are consistent – they categorically reject any possibility of positive change in Russia. They, drawing on historical arguments, contend that a totalitarian system is unable to construct self-correcting mechanisms and thereby create the conditions for internal reform. The only option left, they maintain, is to struggle on to the final destruction of the Soviet empire.

In their diagnosis the “Uncompromising” are, paradoxically, in agreement with their bitter enemies. Jaruzelski too is waiting impatiently for the end of Gorbachev’s reformist elan, after all. He has already experienced so many *perestroikas* that he now only believes in one sort; the one which he himself created on the 13th December 1981 with the introduction of martial law.

The Polish “neo-liberals” have a friendly attitude towards the Soviet Party leader. This grouping, which has become increasingly significant over the

past few years, sees in the policies of Gorbachev a return to the patterns of NEP, Lenin’s “New Economic Policy”.

Basing themselves on the view that at present no political reform is possible in Poland the “Neo liberals” have reduced their programme to economic demands. We accept – so say the Polish supporters of Milton Friedman – the leading role of the Party according to Leninist principles, but you people in the Party should allow us to conduct economics in a liberal manner. You should permit private property and the capitalist market.

The “neo-liberals” seem to think that the Jaruzelski team, under the burden of the crisis and out of fear of both the underground activities of Solidarnosc and the changes in the Soviet Union, would accept this model. But can a communist *nomenklatura* voluntarily sacrifice its power of decision over the economy of the country?

The evaluation of Gorbachev is cautious rather than optimistic. Lech Walesa said to me: In the 25 years I have been an electrician I have constantly had to tighten or loosen some screw or another. Of all the screws I have tightened I have only ever broken one. Of the ones I have attempted to loosen it must have been hundreds, and Gorbachev is loosening and loosening...

Jacek Kuron sees it differently. According to him, Gorbachev, with his attempts at reform, is coming into conflict with his own bureaucracy. As a result he will have to try to appeal to public opinion and to those social forces which are most likely to support reform. This conflict, however, will inevitably bring forward some elements of pluralism and lead to self-determination both within Russian society and for the other nations of the Soviet empire.

But still I ponder: Is Mikhail Gorbachev really a reformer?

Polish humanism has the philosopher Leszek Kolakowski to thank for an interpretation of the term "counter-reformation" which not only encompasses a rejection of reformist criticism but also its assimilation in order that traditional structures may adapt to changed circumstances. A counter-reformation is therefore not a restoration of the pre-reformist order, but rather an attempt to transform the institutions from within. It is a self-critical show of strength with the aim of incorporating those values created against the will of and outside the social institutions in order to stop them becoming antagonistic and subversive.

So if we accept that Solidarnosc was a great reformist movement within the boundaries of the communist world, then Gorbachev must therefore, earn the title of the "Great Counter-Reformer". This is the meaning of his "reform from above". This is the counter-reformation which is to rescue the communist system.

Solidarnosc, in successfully organising the workers against the communist state, withdrew from communism its fundamental means of legitimation. It was proved that the precondition for positive change was the transcendence of a doctrine, the rejection of the rigorous principle of the leading role of the Communist Party and thus the reestablishment of a democratic society.

Gorbachev, wiser as a result of the Polish experience, is undertaking the task of saving communism from being exposed in such a fashion and has, for this purpose, sketched out a bundle of ideas and solutions. The ideas, taken from oppositional writings on the programme of the CPSU, thereby lose their unambiguous anti-totalitarian thrust. Gorbachev's skill is demonstrated by his partial immobilisation of the dissidents whose spokespeople find themselves obliged to continuously stress that the changes in the Soviet Union are a propagandistic farce.

It is, however, not a farce. Mikhail Gorbachev's policy is the result of the generational conflict within the Soviet *nomenklatura*; it is the result of technological backwardness and several years of the Afghanistan war; it is, finally, the result of the fear of military confrontation and the uncompromising stance of President Reagan.

Gorbachev is not a play-actor — he is a counter-reformer.

But this counter-reformation — and here I am at one with Walesa and Kuron — can have profound consequences for Russia. The logic of the conflicts around *perestroika* and the power struggle within the political leadership of the Soviet Union are pushing the Party leader in the direction of consistent changes. The experiences of Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, even China (resignation of the General Secretary of the CP) and Yugoslavia, however, must be working as a brake upon him.

One can say that changes are as unavoidable as they are risky. Without them the Soviet Union is threatened with internal rot, but their realisation, on the other hand, could open a Pandora's box. All the demons of Soviet communism could take revenge for the years of silence. It is therefore not possible to predict the condition of the Soviet Union in the coming period. What is possible, however, is an attempt to formulate the criteria for an evaluation of these changes.

There is only *one* criterion for a reliable diagnosis of the political aims and that is the respecting of human rights.

The release of a few hundred prisoners, the surprising, if only partial, rehabilitation of Professor Andrei Sakharov — these are essential signals that something is indeed changing for the better in Russia.

The police are slowly being replaced with politics and repression with political dialogue. The extension of freedom in culture, *glasnost* in the area of information — these are the first steps on the road to an articulation of public opinion.

There exists, however, an obvious limit to these changes and that is the approval of Mikhail Gorbachev's policies. A real test of *perestroika* will come at the point where criticism is made of those policies. Only then will it be shown whether we are witnesses to a process of the reestablishment of a democratic society in the Soviet Union, or whether it is a matter of a Potemkin's village with democratic facades but totalitarian foundations.

But what can come out of Soviet *perestroika* for Poland? In Poland, in contrast for example to Czechoslovakia, nobody will go onto the streets with the slogan "We Want Gorbachev". The Polish situation is different for here we have a powerful, independent catholic church, for ten years there has been an independent public opinion and independent institutions of public life. A turn towards the better in Poland depends on a dialogue between the state and these institutions. Admittedly the changes going on in the Soviet Union could have an effect on this dialogue.

The Western public was understandably impressed when uncensored interviews with Margaret Thatcher or Zbigniew Brzezinski appeared in the Soviet media. The Poles, however, see the proverbial swallow which announces the beginning of spring in the publication in the Soviet Union of an interview with the Polish Primate Cardinal Jozef Glomp.

For the first time a Polish church leader was given the opportunity to express himself in a Soviet newspaper. For the first time the fact was publicly acknowledged that there is a powerful institution in Poland which is independent from the state apparatus and

which commands general public respect. It was shown for the first time that for communist Russia there is an alternative partner in dialogue in Poland to the communist *nomenklatura*.

Gorbachev's and Jaruzelski's declaration of the 21st April can also be seen as significant. It said that in historical research of Polish-Russian relations there must be no "blind spots" even where "dramatic episodes" are concerned. There is hardly anyone in Poland who does not understand these words as an announcement that the truth about the mass murder of Polish officers in Katyn will finally be exposed.

These are important events which confront Polish political thought with new questions.

For it cannot be excluded that the counter-reformation in Moscow will open new perspectives for the Poles. The hopes for such a change in Polish-Russian relations and the expectation that the conflict will turn into a dialogue are in no way absurd.

In the context of these considerations the widespread Russophobia amongst Poles is not very helpful. The anti-Russian resentments of the Poles are understandable, although not always for the Russians themselves. But they should yield to the attempt to come to a better understanding of both Russian history and the Russia present.

When Soviet leaders consider variations of a new order in Eastern Europe, one suspects that Jaruzelski is presenting Solidarnosc to them as a movement of people for whom "the only good Russian is a dead Russian". That is one of the lies that must continually be exposed by Solidarnosc.

So let us attempt to summarise. The counter-reformation in Moscow can open the way to new thinking on the philosophy of political compromise. It can teach us to use compromise to regulate international conflicts or social conflicts within the countries of actually existing communism. It is worth relying on this form of compromise today, even if one must not forget that the totalitarian foundation of Soviet institutions has remained untouched.

Many sceptical questions are still open. Is the gradual and peaceful evolution of the Soviet Union towards democratic patterns also a real opportunity for the world? Is actually existing communism flexible enough to accept the functioning of an independent public opinion? Will the process of change not be halted by the obstructive pressure of the conservative power apparatus? And what of the natural claims of the suppressed peoples for more freedom — the Ukrainians, Georgians, Lithuanians, Estonians, Kazakhs and many others. Will the Soviet reformers not shrink back from these claims?

Our hope wrestles with dependency. But how can one live without hope?

EDITORS OF "PRAXIS INTERNATIONAL" DEFEND THEIR POSITION ON KOSOVO

To the Editorial Collective of Labour Focus on Eastern Europe

Dear friends,

In Volume 8 Number 3 of November 1986 (pp.40-41) you have published an article by Michalee Lee under the title *The End of an Era*. The article seems to have three purposes: (1) to condemn former editors of *praxis* (Zaga Golueovic, Mihailo Markovic and Ljubomir Tadic) for betrayal of their former socialist views and alignment with nationalism, (2) to inform about the real nature of the problem of the Yugoslav province Kosovo, and (3) to explain the present day crisis in Yugoslavia, concerning which former progressive intellectuals have allegedly remained silent.

The publication of the article violates some basic principles of your editorial policy, published on page two of your journal. We are aware, of course, that, as you say in your *Statement of aims*, signed articles need not necessarily represent the view of the editorial collective. However, the author of the article, Michele Lee, is a member of the editorial collective. More importantly, the article is preceded by a comment which adds insult to injury and is not signed, — therefore, can hardly be anything else but the *editorial* comment. That is why we address this letter to you and not just to the author, convinced that, as a consequence of your commitment to democratic socialism, you will publish it without delay, and allow the possibility of a dialogue, which is the only possible means to resolve an obvious conflict of opinions.

Let, first, explain in what sense the publication of Michele Lee's article violates the principles of your editorial policy. In your *Statement of aims* you insist on the labour movement's responsibility to "take a stand against the suppression of democratic rights in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe". And you say that the mass media largely ignore campaigns run by socialists concerning victims of repression in Eastern Europe. Now, the petition on Kosovo signed by two hundred leading Belgrade intellectuals, including the best known independent democratic socialists, raises essentially the issues of the suppression of human rights of the minority groups in the autonomous region Kosovo, it defends victims of repression.

There is not a shred of doubt that the repression in question really exists. On this factual issue there is no controversy: Yugoslav federal authorities, even Albanian authorities from Kosovo do not at all disagree with the signatories of the petition that the Serbian, Montenegrin and Turkish families are increasingly forced either to leave the region or to get assimilated, and that the force in question is: threat of violence, appropriation of land, destruction of harvests, attacks on people and domestic animals, rapes and murders. Everything else is controversial: the causes, the consequences, the speed of the transformation of a multinational region into an ethnically-pure one — in a socialist and allegedly internationalist society. That people suffer in a direct, brutal, tragic, unexplainable way is an irrefutable fact. All Yugoslav mass media report about it regularly. That governments are responsible that tolerate crude violations of elementary human rights for a prolonged period of time is rather obvious. That socialists must raise their voice of protest against such injustice and in defence of the victims — no matter which nationality they belong to — should also hardly be controversial. And yet the journal identifies the protest against repression of national minorities — as nationalism. It effectively defends the regime against "the accusations" of its radical critics. Since when is this your policy concerning the bureaucratic regimes in Eastern Europe?

Another principle of your editorial policy is to provide *reliable comprehensive information* about events in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union rather than to "debate on the nature of those states or recommend a strategy for socialists in Eastern Europe". Do you really believe that Michele Lee's article offers a reliable and comprehensive coverage of either the Yugoslav crisis or the tragic developments in Kosovo? As we shall show this coverage is not only "scanty" but also "selective and slanted" — characteristics that you ascribe to the bourgeois press. As the title and the main thrust of the article clearly indicate, the main point of the text was to discredit and write off another group

of former leftist friends. Another betrayal, another rupture, another break with "fellow travellers" who "get confused in the inevitable turning points of history". Why should you continue with this most pathological, most insane feature of the traditional behaviour on the left?

Did we exaggerate? Have another look at the text. Before you say anything (and you say next to nothing) about the contents of the alleged petition, the signing of which constitutes "the end of an era" (of the progressive era in our lives) — you stamp your judgment on it: This is a petition of an "obscurantist, nationalist and anti-democratic character". This style of passing such devastating judgments before and without any arguments and without any "reliable and comprehensive" information about the subject and its context — sounds quite familiar. You must know at least theoretically where the source of this style and method is. And we know it from experience since that is how we have invariably been treated dur-

SOCIAL POLICY & SOCIALISM

Organised jointly by
Institute of Sociology,
Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the
International Social Policy
Research Unit, Leeds Polytechnic

Further details for persons wishing to present papers and/or attend the conference can be obtained from

Bob Deacon
Head of Department of Social Studies
Leeds Polytechnic, Calverley Street,
Leeds LS1 3HE, UK.

Conference funded by E.S.R.C., BUAS-NASEES,
British Council, British Academy

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

APRIL
11-14
1988

ing the last quarter of a century by most dogmatic Soviet and Eastern European ideologues, by the worst Stalinists in our own country and by ardent admirers of Enver Hoxha and Kim Il Sung in the West. What on earth brings you into this company, how could you resort to this kind of treatment of your *Praxis* friends? You could have easily found out that, far from "searching for alternative ideological shores" as Michele Lee has gently put it, we stay what we have always been. We continue to publish a truly internationalist journal committed to democratic socialism. (*Praxis International* is now in its sixth year). All three of us are members of the *Committee for defense of freedom of public expression* in Belgrade and raise our voice against all forms of repression in our country, in defense of victims that belong to various social groups and to various nationalities: Serbs, Montenegrins, Albanians, Turks, Bosnians, Muslims, Croats. We are far from silent about the Yugoslav crisis and the possibilities of overcoming it, we are in fact more engaged on concrete issues of Yugoslav society now than in 1968.

Are we nationalists because we also write on national issues (which are very acute in Yugoslavia now), or because we, being Serbs, also defend Serbian victims of repression? Is it nationalism if we defend the same principle of national and human self-determination both in the case of Albanians and non-Albanians in Kosovo? Albanians constitute 8% of the Yugoslav population but they have the right to their own autonomous government and to free development of their language and their national culture. However, there are 20% of non-Albanians in the population of Kosovo (Serbs, Montenegrins, Turks, Gypsies) and this minority within the minority must also have all civil and human rights protected – which is *not* the case. We are willing to support a further step – from autonomy to full national self-determination, including secession. But then again, instead of aspiring to an ethnically pure Kosovo, Albanian leaders in the region would have to grant the right of self-determination, including secession to the non-Albanian minority. One of the essential characteristics of nationalism, whether Serbian or Croatian or Slovenian or Albanian, is that it refuses to recognise *equal rights* for all nations and national minorities. And that has never been our position – as anyone who claims to know the Yugoslav situation and to inform the world about it would have to know.

Showing in full detail how inadequate, superficial, selective and utterly biased is Michele Lee's account of either the problem of Kosovo or of the Yugoslav crisis would make a long story. It should suffice for the moment to indicate at least some areas of issues that are entirely missing from Lee's account and without which nothing could be understood about either Kosovo or Yugosla-

via.

First, there is a century-old history of national conflict in Kosovo, a series of acts of aggression and counter-aggression, of acts of violence and bloody revenge – a story of true horror. It is only human to feel sympathy "under the veil of ignorance" for the smaller Albanian people. But the little David had the upper hand most of the time because it was amply supported by overwhelming allies: the Islamic Ottoman empire during five centuries until 1912, Austria-Hungary that occupied the entire territory during the First World War; fascist Italy and Germany which did the same during the Second World War; the Soviet Union and China after 1948; eventually a dominating anti-Serbian coalition in Yugoslavia itself during the last twenty years.

What happened during the Second World War is especially relevant here. In contrast to the vast majority of Albanian people in Albania who fought bravely against the Italian occupation army, the Albanian people in Kosovo received the Italian army and later the German army as liberators in 1941 and 1943. This indicates how oppressed they felt in pre-war Yugoslavia. This also explains why there were less than one hundred Albanian partisans and Party members in Kosovo until 1944 and why dozens of thousands of Albanians from Kosovo joined the Italian and German armies (SS division Skender-beg was formed entirely of Albanians). Furthermore this explains why the dominating political organisation in Kosovo during the war was the pro-fascist *Bali Komb'tar*, and why this organisation was able to organise a mass uprising against the new people's government during the winter 1945-46. Whatever happened later, the fact is that Kosovo was the only Yugoslav region where the socialist system was *imposed* from outside, by the victorious Yugoslav partisan army, and has *not* emerged as the result of a mass liberation movement by Albanian people in Kosovo themselves. The fact is that *Bali Komb'tar* – which was completely destroyed in Albania, survived in Kosovo and still plays there a formidable role, supported financially and politically by its powerful organisation in the West. This must be taken into account not only when one tries to understand the political problems in Kosovo after 1945, but also when one tries to figure out where a sovereign Kosovo state might end up. This could be a first and unique case of a region of a socialist state seceding and restoring bourgeois society governed by a pro-fascist right-wing regime. It is by no means an accident that in June 1986 the conservative American senator Robert Dole submitted to the US Senate a resolution demanding from the Yugoslav government that it grant Kosovo the status of a republic.

Another factor that must never be ignored is the policy of *Comintern* towards Yugosla-

via between the two world wars. That was the policy of disintegration of the country (officially characterised as "the prison of nations"), a policy of support for every separatist national movement. After a long period of vacillation this policy has, to a surprisingly large extent, been brought to life owing to the Yugoslav Constitution of 1974. Yugoslavia is now a loosely connected association of eight states, eight parties and eight economic systems. This madness of restoring feudal political and economic relations cannot be fully understood without taking into account this syndrome of *Comintern's* anti-Yugoslavism which has been transmitted from one to the other generation of Yugoslav party leaders. Without an awareness of this syndrome one would fail to understand the strength of the Albanian bureaucracy in Kosovo which is, in fact, openly or tacitly supported by the majority of eight bureaucratic elites against the Serbian bureaucracy.

Only against this historic context one may also understand the economic causes of the tragic disaster called Kosovo. This is indeed the least developed region, with the highest unemployment, with still existing forms of abject poverty. Worst of all the gap between the developed regions and Kosovo is growing. This is the inevitable consequence of the restoration of the market economy in Yugoslavia after 1965. The leadership of the country cannot eschew responsibility for such a development. However, one must bear in mind that Serbia does not belong to the developed parts of Yugoslavia: according to all economic indicators it is now below the average Yugoslav level and lags behind, together with Kosovo. And when one hears the *altera pars* – the representatives of the three developed federal units (Slovenia, Croatia and Vojvodina) – one begins to understand better the complexities of the Kosovo economy. These three and Serbia have so far given enormous amounts of aid to Kosovo. Since 1945 Kosovo has received more than \$10 billion from the Federal Fund for the aid to developing regions. The Kosovo have autonomously decided the use of this aid. It could be shown in detail how those enormous means (like elsewhere in Yugoslavia) have been misinvested, and how Kosovo has wasted an opportunity of faster and more rational development. In spite of that the social product of Kosovo has increased 6.5. times since 1945. Furthermore, the Albanian bureaucracy in Kosovo has always supported a disastrous demographic policy. In most developing countries efforts have been made to decrease the population growth rate: China is probably the best example. In Kosovo the pursuit of a project of an ethnically pure Kosovo has resulted in a flat refusal of any policy of family planning. Albanians in Kosovo have the highest population growth rate in Europe. That is why indicator *per*

capita give a far worse picture than indicators in absolute terms. This looks like a suicidal economic policy. But as national policy it does lead to its ultimate end. In 1940 there were 55% Albanians in Kosovo, in 1985 it is already 80%. It is hardly possible to do anything about such a demographic policy which greatly contributes to unemployment and poverty in Kosovo. But something can be done and must be done about the forceful assimilation and expulsion of the non-Albanian population from Kosovo. To qualify as nationalists those who raise their voices against this form of repression means either that one has a very peculiar idea of nationalism, or that one simply continues to follow the Comintern policy of the disintegration of Yugoslavia, involving full support for separatist national movements, no matter how chauvinistic and reactionary they may be.

This letter can hardly be an occasion for a detailed critique of Michele Lee's account of the Yugoslav crisis. She could learn a lot about that subject from the excellent work of another of your editors – Catherine Verla from Paris. To call the present policy of the Yugoslav leadership a policy of "realism", to say that it is increasingly inclined to seek "purely" economic solutions, to single out "recent decisions of the Serbian Government" as the example of "irrational passions" – is rather the example of unserious, irresponsible and systematically biased writing. The present Yugoslav policies resulting in an inflation of over 100%, in the worst unemployment in the country's history, in the fall of the real standard of living to the level of the Sixties – is anything but realistic. If its "solutions" are, as a rule, hardly more than purely pragmatic compromises between eight political wills of eight oligarchies at loggerheads with each other – then they can be qualified as "purely economic" only in a very peculiar sense of the word. Singling out the Serbian government

– one of the weakest after great purges in 1966 and 1971 – as the main villain that has just decided to ride the tiger of "irrational passions" – is hardly more than the indication of the author's bias and the expression of her aversion. Any sound political and economic analysis will be able to establish that, under the given external and internal conditions, the single most important causal factor of the present deep crisis of Yugoslav society was the 1965 complete reversal of the policy of socialist democratisation, a restoration of the market economy, increasing reliance on Western capital loans and a growing division of political power among eight national or regional oligarchies. This was the policy that expressed particular, shortrange interests of the two developed republics Slovenia and Croatia. Every student of recent Yugoslav history knows who were the unchallenged leaders during this period and that there were no Serbs among them. The question, therefore, arises: what is the source of Michele Lee's "informations"? They can hardly be found in any serious existing political, sociological and economic analysis of Yugoslav society. To a large extent they coincide with rumours that circulate in some bureaucratic and truly nationalistic circles in Yugoslavia. Even more surprisingly, the basic attitude toward the petition of Belgrade intellectuals concerning the repression in Kosovo fully coincides with the attitude of the Yugoslav regime itself.

We regret that this letter is so long, but we hope that you will understand our desire to not only reply to unfounded accusations but also to offer your readers some additional informations so that they would be able to form their own judgment.

Belgrade, 26 February 1987

Zagorka Golubovic, Mihailo Markovic, Ljubomir Tadic

"THIS IS KOSOVO..."

"In 1962, at the annual meeting of the trade union conference of Pristina, at which new cadres were being appointed, an Albanian worker stood up and asked for an Albanian to be elected to take minutes in the Albanian language. Two officials of the Internal Security Services (ISS) were present: one of them got up and said that the man asking for minutes to be recorded in Albanian was an enemy. The man responded by saying that he was a party member; that what he asked for was quite legitimate; and that, if this meant he was an enemy, then he was indeed on the other side. While the meeting carried on, the two officials dragged him outside, called for a 'Black Maria' and took him to the police station, where they beat him unconscious. A member of the Provincial Committee [of the LCY], who worked in the ISS, told them that they should not behave like this. Though this was all he did, he saved the man's life – for otherwise they would have eventually killed him.

I shall mention examples from other spheres of life. A course at the Pristina faculty [of sociology] included a topic called 'Contradictions in the Transitional Period'. The lecturer in charge of the course was called to police headquarters and told he was not allowed to teach this. When he pointed out that this topic was being taught at equivalent faculties in Belgrade, Zagreb and Ljubljana, he was told he ought to know that this was Kosovo."

Veli Deva, one of the principal leaders of the Yugoslav League of Communists in Kosovo, speaking to Tito on the occasion of an official visit by a Provincial Committee delegation on 23rd February 1967. The transcript of the meeting was published in Politika (Belgrade) on 12th May 1987.

MICHELE LEE REPLIES

Before taking up the arguments presented by Golubovic, Markovic and Tadic in their response to my article *The End of an Era*, it is worth recalling that *Labour Focus* has never shied away from criticising the nationality policies of the East European states. It has published texts on Bulgaria, Romania and Albania that have condemned the ruling parties' nationalism – be it, as in the case of Bulgaria, directed against a specific ethnic group (the Turks) or, as in the Albanian case, providing a key underpinning of the official ideology. So it should come as no surprise to our readers to see Yugoslavia's attitude towards its Albanian minority critically scrutinised following

the events of 1981 – the more so since that country has a far better record on the national issue than any of its neighbours.

Let us set aside all the insinuations about my supposed Stalinoid sectarianism¹, and concern ourselves with the substance of the arguments put forward by the three authors. They argue, in effect, that a state of complete lawlessness exists in the Yugoslav province of Kosovo, aided and abetted by the Provincial authorities with varying degrees of complicity on the part of the Federal state itself and the seven other Republican (or Provincial) governments. They speak of the "threat of violence, destruction of harvests, attacks on people

and domestic animals, rapes and murders"². The petition which they signed speaks of "genocide" suffered by the Slavs in the Province; of national treason, expressed in the conscious surrender of parts of Yugoslavia to Albania.

These are all very serious charges. Yet what evidence do the three authors produce for them? None at all. They convey an impression of continuous anarchy in Kosovo, such as would require the introduction of direct administration by the Federal authorities: suspension of the Province's political autonomy in favour of yet another dose of emergency rule. But is this the true picture? Let us examine briefly the three most serious charges they make, concerning

murder, rape and the land issue.

Murder and Rape

How many actual murders of Slavs have been committed in Kosovo over the past five years? The Yugoslav press has reported exactly one: the outcome of a dispute among neighbours over land, of the kind that is unfortunately still quite common in Yugoslavia. The judicial investigation showed no indication that the crime had been committed out of nationalistic hatred. The perpetrator was speedily executed, to the great consternation of all those Yugoslavs who have been actively campaigning against capital punishment.

How about rapes? Official statistics show that the incidence of rape is, if anything, smaller in the Province than, for example, in neighbouring "Serbia proper" (i.e. Serbia excluding the autonomous provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina) or in Slovenia (the most advanced republic in economic and cultural terms). Furthermore, the figures do not show any particular national bias: the overwhelming majority of both perpetrators and victims are Albanian.

In spite of this, the Serbian republican government has recently adopted amendments to its criminal code (which has force also in Kosovo) that make the ethnic origin of the accused in rape cases (indeed, in other forms of common crime as well) a matter of legal relevance. That this change was anyway quite redundant in view of actual court practice is shown by the case of a young Albanian who, only a few months before the new law was introduced, had received a *ten-year* prison sentence for molesting — not raping! — a Serb woman. So it seems clear enough that the change in the law was made not so much to meet a real problem as to appease nationalist agitation and, perhaps, to silence the voices calling for the reimposition of a state of emergency in Kosovo.

Yet we are told by the three authors that to criticise this legal innovation is to show bias: "Singling out the Serbian government ... is hardly more than an indication of the author's bias and the expression of her aversion". Here we see one of many attempts to dress up all criticism in national colours³. Why should Lee in particular be biased against the Serbian government, or have any particular aversion against it? After all, condemnation of the legal amendments was widespread in Yugoslavia itself. It came not just from the prominent jurist Ljubo Bavcon, but from many other quarters within the legal profession. Thus we read in the press that a Belgrade lawyer, Toma Fila, protested last April to the Constitutional Court of Yugoslavia on the grounds that the new laws were unconstitutional. Similar criticism has been voiced in such important journals as the Belgrade weekly *NIN*. Furthermore, other republican governments have declined to follow Serbia's lead (which,

of course, does not absolve them of responsibility in the matter, given the constitutional issues raised). One can only hope that the Constitutional Court will come to the aid of the Serbian government, by annulling this obvious blunder.

In reality, if one takes into account the fact that, whereas Albanians form only 8% of the country's population, they provide (according to Amnesty International) some 75% of all "prisoners of conscience", it is quite obvious that the Yugoslav authorities, from the Provincial administration up, have been showing extremely little leniency in dealing with any real or imagined Albanian nationalist threat. If anything, the zeal with which people are sent to prison for "political offences" in Kosovo, often without any proof whatsoever, suggests a lawlessness of quite a different kind from that alluded to by the three authors. Their arguments beg the real question, which they nowhere openly confront: what kind of "radical" policy could the Yugoslav state adopt that would meet the demands of the petitioners (including themselves)? Would they be satisfied by a further sharp rise in the already quite unacceptable number of young Albanians in prison (unacceptable from the point of view of the victims, but also from that of Yugoslavia's own long-term interests)? Or are they seeking more fundamental changes, such as the elimination of Kosovo's status as an autonomous province? Even as a temporary measure, this would lead only to disaster.

Land and Emigration

It is worth paying some attention to the question of changes in land ownership in Kosovo, since these are often cited as the main axis of Albanian nationalist pressure on the Slav (mainly Serb) minority population there, not to speak of "proving" the deliberate alienation of national territory. An official survey of land sales in the Province was recently conducted by the Kosovo internal security organs, under the supervision of the Serbian government, and its results were published in April 1987. It shows no evidence for any nationalist design in the buying or selling of land in Kosovo. Judging by comments in the Yugoslav press, the survey's results had been expected. Yet the three authors signed a petition which refers to "national treason" and the "surrender" of land to Albania (not just to Yugoslav Albanians!). Such attitudes prevent any true understanding of what is happening in the Province. Their only contribution is to further inflame national tensions.

Increased migration of Serbs out of Kosovo in recent years is an undeniable fact. But if one is to gauge its significance and understand its real causes, it must be viewed first of all in an all-Yugoslav context. Yugoslav statistics show the existence of a general tendency for internal migration to be

directed towards national centres: Serbs from Bosnia tend to move to Serbia, Bosnian Croats to Croatia, Macedonian Albanians to Kosovo and so on. This tendency is overlaid with economic pressures arising from uneven regional development: for example, the whole South Morava region (the poor southern area of "Serbia proper" adjacent to Kosovo) is becoming depopulated, as the young and able leave their villages in search of jobs in the industrial centres further north. In all, some 4.5 million Yugoslav peasants have left the land over the past fifteen years, flooding the cities in pursuit of employment. Kosovo, a largely agricultural area and the poorest as well, has predictably suffered most in this respect. The Province, moreover, is one of the most densely populated areas of Yugoslavia, with highly subdivided land the price of which is probably the highest in the entire country: the already quoted survey of land sales gives this as one of the main reasons for the sale of land. It is worth pointing out in this connection that the Yugoslav public, well acquainted with the figures for Slav emigration from Kosovo, has been given no idea of the scale of Albanian emigration in the same period.

To be sure, these purely material causes of Serb migration from Kosovo are not the whole story. There is little doubt that, since 1966, the rapid (because belated) Albanisation of the Kosovo administration, the new ascendancy of the Albanian language and the accompanying cultural-national shift in the Province's schools, media etc. — rendered more dramatic by the fast growth of the Albanian population — have been very hard for the formerly privileged Slav minority to come to terms with. Yugoslav, and Albanian, policy-makers have clearly failed to anticipate the substantial problems necessarily associated with such a change. Positive discrimination favouring the formerly disadvantaged Albanians has been experienced by other national groups as real injustice, so that a growth of insecurity among them has paralleled the growth of a new Albanian national self-confidence. In some quarters, moreover, the fear grew that this advance of the Albanians was dangerous for Yugoslavia — which did not help matters.

The souring of inter-community relations following the repression in and after 1981, together with the violence of the economic crisis in recent years (which has produced, for example, an unemployment rate in Kosovo of around 50% in 1987), have made the process of change far more strained. In the absence of any positive strategy by party or state, the resulting frustration only too easily spills over into petty violence across ethnic boundaries. Even recent attempts by the Kosovo and Serbian authorities to encourage the return, or indeed new settlement, of Slavs in the Province by promising jobs and accommodation — goods in acutely short supply throughout Yugoslavia and pre-emi-

nently so in Kosovo – have inevitably generated new tensions.

History and the Position of Serbia

Let us now turn to some other arguments put forward by the three authors. We are told we cannot understand what is happening in Kosovo today without surveying the last hundred years of Serb-Albanian relations in the Balkan context (the petition they signed actually takes the story back three hundred years). The authors begin by speaking of “a series of aggressions and counter-aggressions” – a fair assessment. But then we are quickly introduced to the idea that “the little David (the Albanians) had the upper hand most of the time”, because over the past century he has been supported by such powerful allies as the Ottoman Empire, Austria-Hungary, Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union and China – and, most recently, also by the “dominating anti-Serbian coalition in Yugoslavia over the past twenty years”.

As any reader of Balkan history will recognise, this is a highly tendentious account. To take just one example: in the last decades of its rule, the Ottoman state allowed its Serb, Bulgar and Greek subjects education in their own language; but it always denied this right to the supposedly privileged Albanians – a policy continued after 1918 by bourgeois Yugoslavia, leading to an estimated 90% illiteracy among the country's Albanian minority at the start of World War II. However, one part of the three authors' argument “from history” is more relevant to the real issues under discussion: the “anti-Serbian coalition” supposedly in power in Yugoslavia over the past twenty years. A quick calculation shows that the date of its installation would have been the removal from office of Alexander Rankovic, in 1966. But why should one accept – even from such eminent Marxists as Golubovic, Markovic and Tadic – the idea that the fall of Rankovic was a blow against Serbia? After all, however one chooses to define the post-1966 leadership, it soon showed itself able to purge the local party and state apparatuses in Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia, Macedonia and most recently Kosovo with equal vigour.

The authors find themselves on firmer ground when they ascribe the worsening situation in the Province to the long-term effects of the economic reform launched in the mid-sixties. This promising line of argument, however, is once again compromised by their national *parti pris*. We are told that the market reforms were introduced without Serbian consent, so that their ill-effects can be placed at the door of the “short-range interests of the two developed republics of Slovenia and Croatia”; indeed, “every student of recent Yugoslav history knows who were the unchallenged leaders during this period and that there were no Serbs among them”. But this is simply untrue. On the

contrary, there is absolutely no doubt whatsoever that the market mechanisms introduced in the 1960s very much involved the Serbian leadership. Were not the younger generation of party leaders purged in Croatia and Serbia in the early 1970s alike accused, *inter alia*, of giving free reign to “technocracy”? To view the debate on the economy – or the constitution – solely through national spectacles only served to cloud the essential issues related to regional underdevelopment.

In a recent memorandum produced within the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences, which was leaked to the press without its authors' consent, it is argued that after the fall of Rankovic power passed to the Slovene Kardelj and the Croat Tito, who – because of their ethnic origins – inflected Yugoslav politics to serve the interests primarily of the republics of Slovenia and Croatia. It would appear from the above that this view is shared by Golubovic and her co-authors, Academicians Markovic and Tadic. Moreover, the 1974 Constitution is presented by them as “a policy of support for every separatist national movement”. But though many justified criticisms can indeed be levelled at that document, surely socialists should in fact support that part of it which endorses very substantial national rights for Yugoslavia's minorities – and especially the Albanian one. There is no justification at all for presenting this as an encouragement to separatism. On the contrary, national equality has been one of the main pillars of Yugoslavia's cohesion.

“Enemies”

Another claim of Markovic and his colleagues is that violations of Kosovo Slavs' human rights are intimately linked to the presence in the Province today of *Balli Kombetar*, the wartime bourgeois and collaborationist Albanian nationalist front. Apparently, this organisation “has survived in Kosovo and still plays a formidable role, supported financially and politically by its powerful organisation in the West”. What is the source for this bizarre notion? The Yugoslav press over the past years has reported the discovery of dozens of secret organisations in Kosovo (reports which, of course, may or may not have a basis in reality). The security services have uncovered nest after nest of “Marxists-Leninists”, “irredentists” and generic nationalists. Yet, for all their tireless vigilance, they have not detected any such active presence of *Balli Kombetar*. We are, however, informed categorically by the three authors that it exists.

Because of it, moreover, a “sovereign Kosovo state” would produce a pro-fascist regime: “this could be a first and unique case that a region of a socialist state secedes and restores bourgeois society governed by a pro-fascist right-wing regime”. Who are they trying to scare? It is astonishing to hear

it so blandly asserted that a population overwhelmingly raised in socialist Yugoslavia (and Albanians are the youngest of all Yugoslav nationalities) would – at the nod of King Zog II or Senator Robert Dole – embrace fascism⁴. In the eyes of those with such febrile imaginations, all the two million ethnic Albanians living within Yugoslavia's borders must automatically be suspect. No doubt this extraordinary assessment of the country's Albanian population is made easier by an “appropriate” view of the People's Republic of Albania: in the petition which the three authors signed, Albania is placed on the same footing as Nazi Germany!

In the three authors' presentation of the situation, enemies without are joined by enemies within, and also by enemies from the past: by the Comintern tradition, with its supposed responsibility for the 1974 Constitution⁵. “Comintern's anti-Yugoslavism has been transmitted from one to another generation of Yugoslav party leaders... Without an awareness of this syndrome, we would fail to understand the strength of the Albanian bureaucracy in Kosovo, which is openly and tacitly supported by the majority of the eight bureaucratic elites against the Serbian bureaucracy”. Without going into the whole history of early Comintern policy towards Yugoslavia, it is enough to point out two facts. First, Tito's appointment as leader of the Yugoslav Communist Party coincided almost exactly with the Comintern's endorsement in 1935 of the Popular Front policy, which entailed defending the European status quo – including the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia. Secondly, in all the discussions between Stalin and the Western Allies from 1941 on, the integrity of Yugoslavia was never questioned. And in 1948 Yugoslavia split with the Soviet Union on the issue of Yugoslav independence.

So why on earth should the Yugoslav League of Communists today be charged with “anti-Yugoslavism”? How many of its cadres can really have been moulded immutably in a *pre-1935* Comintern tradition? There is no need for any such far-fetched theory. For what is “anti-Yugoslav” about the bureaucracy's support for its wing in Kosovo? Or does the problem for the three authors really lie in the fact that in Kosovo we are dealing with an *Albanian* bureaucracy? Are the Kosovo Albanians somehow less Yugoslav than Serbs or Croats? Surely, such a view would lead one to reject altogether the Yugoslav federation as presently constituted and conceived, in a favour of a reduced, more ethnically pure South Slav state? After all, given that some 80% of the Kosovo population is Albanian, is it surprising that the administration there should be staffed largely by Albanians, as it has been since 1966? Why should this not be seen as only right and indeed desirable, as much by South Slavs as by non-South Slavs?

Population Control

Finally, let us take up the question of the population policy supposedly being pursued by the Albanian authorities in Kosovo, as part of a grand design to make Kosovo an all-Albanian land. "In Kosovo the pursuit of a project of an ethnically pure Kosovo has resulted in a flat refusal of any policy of family planning", write Golubovic, Markovic and Tadic. Given the high Albanian birth rate and the province's poverty, "this looks like a suicidal economic policy. But as national policy it does lead to its ultimate end". Now it is true that Albanians have a higher birth rate than any other nation in Europe (excluding Turkey). It is equally true that the population of Soviet Central Asia is growing more rapidly than that of European Russia, and that this has produced considerable anguish among Russian chauvinists. But as in Central Asia, so too in Yugoslavia, the high birth rate need not be part of any sinister nationalist plot. The Albanian birth rate today matches those obtaining among South Slavs before World War II. We are dealing here with the completion (the birth rate is actually falling) of a demographic cycle undergone by all European nations in their more or less recent past – the Albanian case has just happened, for socio-economic reasons, to be the last in Europe.

The Yugoslav state, for its part, has never pursued a population policy of any kind, other than making abortion available on demand. It does not have any particular need to do so: its area is that of Great Britain, while its population is less than half Britain's. Given this context, the birth rate is essentially a question of industrialisation and modernisation. As a Kosovo demographer has put it succinctly: the fertility of Albanian women is in the last instance a function of their lack of social emancipation. Now Golubovic, Markovic and Tadic do not argue that the overall Yugoslav birthrate is too high, like that of China, but that the birthrate of the Albanian minority is too high. They say that the Kosovo economy in and of itself cannot sustain the existing rate of population growth in the province, so the Kosovo authorities would be well advised to introduce a policy of limiting births. But the truth is that no multinational state could countenance a policy of ethnically selective restriction of births without being rightly charged with racism.

The Principles at Stake

In conclusion, let us move from particular arguments to a more general assessment of the response to my article from Golubovic, Markovic and Tadic. It is conducted at two different levels. On the surface, their argument is the following: we were moved to sign this petition – the petition criticised in

"The End of an Era" and reproduced in this issue of *Labour Focus* – because the situation of Serbs and Montenegrins in Kosovo is so bad that to protest against it is a socialist and democratic imperative. However, the fact that they signed not a *petition*, but *this particular petition*, together with the concerns expressed in their response to my article, make it clear that beneath the surface they see other, essentially national, issues as being at stake in the "Kosovo question".

This is why the three authors' solution is sought in terms of strengthening one (Serbian) bureaucracy against another (Albanian) bureaucracy. Their text is quite devoid of any idea that Serb and Albanian peasants, workers, intellectuals, women, students, etc. – all those who have shared, in a truly democratic manner, the effects of the province's parlous economic situation – might *jointly* deal with the provincial, republican and federal powers, on the basis of a programme that asserted certain basic rights of all Yugoslav citizens. The trouble is that, at the precise moment when a socialist and internationalist outlook was most necessary to combat rising national prejudice, the editors of *Praxis International* simply joined the fray.

In their response, Golubovic, Markovic and Tadic speak of their equal commitment to Albanian and Serb national rights, and to such rights for all other nations. I do not wish to dispute the sincerity of their feelings. But it is their practice which has been so disquietening. When in 1981 a state of emergency was declared in Kosovo – for the first time in postwar Yugoslavia – in order to quell popular demonstrations, did they protest against such undemocratic action by the state? Did they condemn the shooting of twelve demonstrators (even by official figures) or the subsequent draconian measures taken against hundreds if not thousands of Yugoslav citizens of Albanian origin, in a whole string of political trials that have scarred Yugoslavia's internal life over the past six years?

When an anti-Albanian rampage took place in Belgrade last year – it was immediately and correctly condemned by the authorities, but the sentences handed out were a fraction of what they would have been in Kosovo – did the three authors speak out against such an outrage? When factories were built in Kosovo which, in a break with the whole tradition of socialist Yugoslavia, excluded workers because they were Albanian, and when families were forced out of villages because these were seen as exclusive Serb property, did they sign a petition against such infringements of the national and democratic rights of these Yugoslavs? When legislation was brought in which, contrary to the Yugoslav constitution, made ethnic origin a relevant factor in common crimes, did they protest against

this departure from all democratic norms? The purging from Kosovo school textbooks of some of the best Albanian novelists and poets, simply because they were born or are living in the People's Republic of Albania, was likewise passed over by them in silence.

Golubovic, Markovic and Tadic, formerly professors at the University of Belgrade, over a decade ago now were themselves the victims of a political purge, the original motive for which was their support for students during and after 1968. Their removal from the University was rightly felt as a loss by all progressive Yugoslavs, in the same way that the closing down of the journal *Praxis* impoverished the Marxist and socialist thought of the country as a whole. At the time there was an international campaign on their behalf. Yet when professors at the University of Pristina in Kosovo were dismissed after the 1981 events for refusing to condemn their students, or for their stated (or more often merely alleged) beliefs; when students were excluded from the university and secondary-school pupils denied entry to higher education, on the grounds that some member of their extended family was deemed by the state to be politically suspect: when these things happened the former Belgrade professors and *Praxis* editors remained silent. Their only public act in relation to Kosovo has been to put their names to a petition whose content and preoccupations have nothing to do with the democratic socialist principles that have been the hallmark of the *Praxis* tradition.

Democratic Initiatives and Nationalism

Kosovo raises issues that go well beyond individual human rights. The argument that the three authors present – that their signing of the petition was governed by the same set of concerns as their participation in the work of the *Belgrade Committee for Defence of Freedom of Thought and Expression* – is contradicted by the text of the petition itself. My dispute with them is not about whether or not they should have signed *any petition*, on behalf of the rights of any particular group of Yugoslavs. Nor is it about whether non-Albanians in Kosovo do or do not suffer acts of discrimination. Clearly all acts of discrimination, at whatever level, must be condemned and petitions are entirely legitimate forms of public protest. The problem lies in the nature of the particular petition they chose to sign, in the present Yugoslav political context.

The case of the above-mentioned Committee is a good example of how democratic initiatives can have only a limited impact in a multi-national state if their initiators are seen to make compromises on the national question. As far as one can judge from official and unofficial publications, the Committee drew initially upon two strands

of public resistance: one coming from within the Serbian Writers' Association and the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences in response to the trial of the Serbian poet Gojko Djogo, who in 1982 was sentenced to two years in prison for poems judged to be insulting to the recently deceased President Tito; the other formed out of defence activities related to the trial of the Belgrade Six and that of Vojislav Seselj in Sarajevo. When the Committee was set up as a permanent body – its platform was presented in an open letter to the Federal Assembly and the Yugoslav public in October 1986 – it found it impossible to attract members from outside Serbia. This doubtless says something about the national-regional limitations of the critical intelligentsia in Yugoslavia. Yet it is difficult to avoid the impression that the past passivity of the Committee's founding members in the face of the repression carried out by the Yugoslav authorities in Kosovo, i.e. on the territory of their own republic of Serbia, has contributed also to its present predicament: its confinement to Belgrade. The Committee is now seeking to overcome this predicament to some extent, by enlarging the scope of its activities to include defending individuals from other national groups. This is a positive development. For that very reason, it is all the more disheartening to see the signatures of some of its most prominent members (not just Golubovic, Markovic and Tadic) on a nationalist petition.

The End of an Era

My aim in "The End of an Era" was not to "inform about the real nature of the problems in Kosovo" or to "explain the present-day crisis in Yugoslavia", as Golubovic and her colleagues seem to think. Nobody serious would have attempted all that in such a short text. Nor did the title of my article refer to them personally. It referred in fact to an era in Yugoslav politics. Against the background of a continuing political and economic crisis, certain new developments at the start of 1987 were particularly worrying: 1. The government's move to freeze workers' wages and in some cases even push them below the December 1986 level (in a situation of 100% inflation) opened up the possibility of a frontal clash with workers for the first time since the War. 2. Official endorsement of "ethnically pure" Slav factories and villages in Kosovo, and legal changes making ethnicity a relevant factor in judging common crimes in the Republic of Serbia (including the autonomous provinces), could not fail to fan further the flames of nationalism and counter-nationalism. 3. The petition signed by 200 Belgrade intellectuals – an unprecedented event – signalled the alignment of a key social layer behind what can most charitably be called an anachronistic view of the Kosovo problem. 4. The failure of socialists among them

to provide the necessary corrective facilitated the emergence of a consensus right across the political spectrum which works against any positive (as opposed to police) resolution of the Kosovo problem.

Thus the title "The End of an Era" suggested that the Yugoslav crisis has evolved to a point where it is no longer possible for any of the social forces to behave in the old way. It did not imply that Golubovic, Markovic and Tadic were no longer socialists in the sense in which they have been up to now, any more than it implied that Yugoslavia itself was no longer a socialist country in the sense in which it has been up to now⁶.

A clarification may help here. After the Revolution the Yugoslav party proclaimed the rule of the working class, at a time when this class was only a small minority in society as a whole: this constellation of forces was to be one of the main motors of subsequent bureaucratisation. Furthermore, national equality was endorsed as one of the Revolution's main achievements, in a situation characterised by a very sizeable degree of regional (hence also national) economic and social inequality. Forty years on, the situation has changed considerably. The working class has grown in size and self-awareness, which today poses more sharply than ever the need for a radical democratisation of political life. At the same time, the growth and national emancipation of the Albanian population, in particular, has placed on the agenda the need for their proper integration into the Yugoslav community – hence the need to shift popular identification of the federation with the South Slavs in favour of what Branko Horvat calls a "federation of Balkan peoples". Such integration, indeed, is a necessary condition for overcoming Kosovo's economic and social backwardness – something which is vital for Yugoslavia as a whole.

The Yugoslav crisis has negative aspects which are obvious to all. But it can also contribute something positive: by making many of the country's systemic problems stand out more clearly, it can assist their future resolution. At least potentially, it can encourage a more ambitious and advanced conception of Yugoslav socialism. Which of these two dimensions of the crisis will prevail depends upon Yugoslav socialists themselves.

Thus what above all moved me to write "The End of an Era" was a real concern that, if such well-known socialists as Zaga Golubovic, Mihajlo Markovic and Ljubomir Tadic were to join the nationalist cause, all hope of seeing the emergence of a genuinely democratic alternative to the present quagmire of bureaucratic and nationalist discord would be set back.

This debate has been of great value, its tenor reflecting no doubt the importance of the issues under discussion. *Labour Focus* is

not a sectarian journal: the response of Golubovic, Markovic and Tadic is published here in full. It is to be hoped that the three editors of *Praxis International* will again contribute their views to our pages in the future.

Footnotes

1. Or about my "scanty", "selective and slanted", "inadequate, superficial, selective and utterly biased", "unserious, irresponsible and systematically biased" approach.

2. It is simply not true that there is an all-Yugoslav consensus concerning the state of lawlessness in Kosovo. Moreover, a concerted propaganda campaign in the Yugoslav press is no proof either of the existence of such a consensus or of the truth of the campaign itself. Who should know this better than the three former Belgrade professors, themselves once the target of just such an onslaught?

3. At the same time as I am accused of "bias and aversion towards the Serbian government", my criticism of the petition and those who signed it "fully coincides with the attitude of the Yugoslav regime itself" and my article "effectively defends the regime against the 'accusations' of its radical critics".

4. A concern over the US Right's designs in the Balkans, directed impartially against socialist Yugoslavia and socialist Albania, has already been voiced in these pages. See M. Lee, "Albania's journey into isolation and US plans to end it", *Labour Focus*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Winter 1984).

5. Searching for "enemies" seems to have become a passion in certain Yugoslav circles. See, for example, the approach followed by Milos Misovic in his recent *Who Wanted a Republic: Kosovo 1945-1985*, Belgrade 1987.

6. Regress on the vital issue of national equality is as much more evident, in fact, in the case of these three authors than is for the LCY. As is shown by their reply, moreover, their signatures on the petition cannot unfortunately be regarded as a momentary aberration. This is confirmed by a recent intervention of Mihailo Markovic at a Round Table discussion on demographic policy in Yugoslavia organised last May by the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences. Here is part of the report published in the Belgrade weekly *NIN* of 14.6.1987:

"According to Academician Macura, the high natural birth rate of the Albanian population is creating an exceptionally strong population pressure. Serb, Montenegrin and other populations are disappearing in Kosovo in the demographic sense... Dr. Musa Limani from Pristina said that development was the most effective form of contraception. ...the high birth rate is a consequence not a cause of Kosovo underdevelopment. ...Attributing political intentions to the Albanian population in regard to its birth rate is inappropriate and unreal", said Dr. Aslan Pushka from Pristina. He found an important reason for the high birth rate in Kosovo in the lack of education and employment of Albanian women, which he illustrated with many statistical data. ...*In the spirit of laissez-faire, unrestrained demographic growth is continuing in Kosovo and the bill for it is being submitted to the Federation*, said Academician Mihailo Markovic. *With the Federation's material aid, Kosovo is supposed to draw closer to the Yugoslav income per capita. In a situation where the Kosovo population is doubling every few decades, this is*

like throwing money into a bottomless pit."

One is reminded of an incident a few years ago here in Britain, when a Tory cabinet minister Keith Joseph complained publicly that the poor were a drain on the resources of the state and said they should be encouraged to limit their families. His statement was widely condemned, not just by socialists. In Yugoslavia, at least, the current constitution, framed by the LCY, specifically guarantees couples the right to choose the size of their family.

**Albanian children:
too many?**



PETITION BY 200 LEADING BELGRADE INTELLECTUALS

Belgrade, 21 January 1986
To the Assembly of SFRJ
To the Assembly of SR Serbia

In October 1985, 2,016 Serbs from Kosovo and Metohija sent a petition to the assemblies of SR Serbia and SFRJ, subsequently signed by further thousands of signatories, in which the unbearable condition of the Serb nation in Kosovo was described, and which demanded radical measures that would ensure it all constitutional rights and prevent its forced exodus from its ancient hearths.

All those who have been shaken by the suffering of Serbs and other nationalities in Kosovo and Metohija, all those who are concerned for the destiny of Serbia and Yugoslavia, all those in whom conscience and sense of responsibility are not dead, were amazed and dejected by the authorities' reaction to this petition: by the threatening response of the officials in Kosovo and by the attitude of the highest Serbian and all-Yugoslav authorities.

Those whose first concern should be for the destiny of their nation have shown themselves to be deaf to its desperate cry and its awoken consciousness – they have shown neither sympathy for its sacrifices nor determination to prevent its sufferings, contesting its right to express the feeling of historic desorientation to which the nation has been brought through no fault of its own – its right to seek help and protection from its own state.

The demand for justice and equality expressed in this Petition- Plebiscite has been condemned as an enemy act and qualified as rebellion, instead of being taken by the government as an encouragement to re-examine itself, come to its senses and understand that time is running out for these people stripped of their rights, and that they now are trying to organise themselves and take responsibility for their own destiny. No nation willingly gives up its right to exist and the Serb nation is not and will not be an exception.

In the last twenty years, 200,000 people have been moved out of Kosovo and Metohija, more than 700 settlements have been ethnically "purged", the emigration is continuing with unabated force, Kosovo and Metohija are becoming "ethnically pure", the aggression is crossing the borders of the Province.

The political condemnation of the Petition has therefore moved us, the undersigned, to turn to public opinion with an appeal to support its demands for a radical change of the situation in Kosovo and Metohija. Political reason insists that emergency sessions of the assemblies of SFRJ and SR Serbia should be convened to consider the Petition of Serbs from Kosovo and undertake immediate and effective measures to put an end to this chronicle of one long, destructive genocide on European territory. As is known from historical science, from still unextinguished memory, the expulsion of the Serb people from Kosovo and Metohija has already been going on for three centuries. Only the protectors of the tyrants have changed: the Ottoman Empire, the Habsburg Monarchy, Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany have been replaced by the Albanian state and the ruling institutions of Kosovo. In place of forced Islamisation and Fascism there is Stalinised chauvinism. The only novelty is the fusion of tribal hatred and genocide masked by Marxism.

The methods have remained the same: the old poles now carry new heads. The new Deacon Avakum is called Djordje Martinovic, the new Mother of the Jugoviches – Danica Milincic. Old women and nuns are raped, frail children beaten up, stables built with gravestones, churches and historic holy places desecrated and shamed, economic sabotage tolerated, people forced to sell their property for nothing...

Not only are individuals exposed to this persecution – Serbia, Yugoslavia and peace in the Balkans are endangered as well. If an "ethnically pure Kosovo" is achieved, new national and state confrontations are inevitable, which will turn the Balkan space into a potential crucible of war and endanger the peace of Europe.

Under cover of the struggle against "Great-Serb hegemonism" a rigged political trial of the Serb nation and its history has been going on for decades. The first goal is an ethnically pure Kosovo, to be followed by further conquest of Serbian, Macedonian and Montenegrin territories. There is no national minority in the world which has greater constitutional rights (than the Albanians in Yugoslavia), but its leaders and ideologues are leading it into a national adventure in which it can lose all.

The absence of law; the authorities' sympathy for the crime and the criminals; the categorisation of serious criminal acts as mere

YUGOSLAVIA

misdemeanours; the organisation of violence; the hushing up and passing over in silence of injustice; the unequal status of citizens in employment and education; the "pacification" of public opinion by means of false statements, "ideological explanations" and the covering up of violence; equating the victim's cries for help with deliberate crimes and similar acts – all this, in essence, constitutes abuse of the constitutional right to autonomy. The case of Djordje Martinovic has become that of the whole Serb nation in Kosovo. Even among crimes it would be hard to find a crime like this; but the fact that the entire legal-constitutional order of a country has been harnessed to hide such a crime is surely without precedent.

The enemy is being encouraged; his "arguments" and goals are being legitimised. As if the truth were on the other side; as if we had no firm conviction or clear goal. Giving credence to a lie and casting doubt on the truth also means confusing international public opinion, which seems to show greater understanding for the genocide of the persecutor than for the fate of the persecuted.

In 1981 it was publicly admitted that the real situation in Kosovo had been hidden and falsified; the hope was encouraged that this would cease to be the case. However, for five years now we have witnessed permanent anarchy and the crushing of any hope for a transformation of social and national relations in Kosovo and Metohija. Draconian measures meted out to young people, verbal "differentiation" and ideological babble simply serve to provide the ideological leaders with an alibi for maintenance of their positions.

Everyone in this country who is not indifferent has long ago realised that the genocide in Kosovo cannot be combated without deep social and political changes in the whole country. These changes are unimaginable without changes likewise in the relationship between the Autonomous Provinces and the Republic of Serbia, hence also of Yugoslavia. Genocide cannot be prevented by the politics that had led to it in the first place: the politics of gradual surrender of Kosovo and Metohija – to Albania: the unsigned capitulation which leads to a politics of national treason.

The Serb people, in the course of its own wars of liberation, fought also for the Albanians; with its unselfish aid since 1945 and up to the present day, it has given sufficient proof that it cares for the freedom, progress and dignity of the Albanian people. We stress that we do not wish harm or injustice to the Albanian people, and that we support its democratic rights; when we demand equality for the Serb and other peoples in Kosovo, we see among them the Albanian people also. We disavow and condemn all the injustices that were ever committed from the Serbian side against the Albanian people.

We demand the right to spiritual identity, to defence of the foundations of Serb national culture and to the physical survival of our nation on its land.

We demand decisive measures, and that the concern and will of all Yugoslavia in order to stop the Albanian aggression in Kosovo and Metohija; democratic reforms, in order to establish a firm juridical order and ensure equal rights for all citizens; and end to the internal undermining of Yugoslavia's frontiers; and, by guarantee for civil security and political freedoms, the confidence and winning of support from Europe and the world at large.



For the first time since the 1981 demonstrations in Kosovo, an attempt has been made in Yugoslavia to open a public debate on the whole position inside the Yugoslav federation of the Autonomous Province of Kosovo, with its almost two million Albanians. Branko Horvat, the best known Yugoslav economist and one of the favourites for last year's Nobel Prize for Economics, has written a long essay entitled *The Kosovo Question* which represents a real watershed.

BRANKO HORVAT

THE KOSOVO QUESTION



It is particularly positive that Horvat should have elected to publish this in the journal of the Serbian Writers' Association Knjizevne Novine – and that the latter should have accepted his text for publication. He states: "My motive for writing this work – apart from a desire to explain to myself issues which those professionally more competent have failed to explain – was to encourage an all-Yugoslav dialogue. This journal of Serb intellectuals seemed to me most suitable for this purpose."

Horvat's approach is based on a conviction that the Yugoslav revolution has set its own standards for finding the right answer to the "Kosovo question". Above all, he stresses the need to reaffirm the character of Yugoslavia as a socialist federation of Balkan peoples, as against any attempt to give it a purely Slav nature. What is more, he does not shrink from tackling the most sensitive issues, including the aims of the 1981 demonstrators, the demand for a Kosovo republic and the question of secession.

Though there are many things in Horvat's text with which one could take issue, it represents a real act of courage and responsibility in a situation which (except to some extent in Slovenia) has hitherto been characterised almost exclusively – in the various spheres of Yugoslav intellectual life – by official half-truths, nationalist rhetoric and opportunistic (if often embarrassed) silence. To give at least an idea of the novelty of Horvat's approach, we are publishing the following extracts, representing about one quarter of the entire essay (whose extensive historical dimension, in particular, has unfortunately had to be excluded here for reasons of space). Minor omissions are indicated by triple dots. Words in square brackets are editorial interpolations; footnotes and subheads have been added by Labour Focus.

Michele Lee

This problem [of Kosovo] is evidently our country's most delicate problem. It has at least three distinct aspects: the emigration of Serbs and Montenegrins; Serb nationalism; and the integration of Albanians into the Yugoslav community. The first two are rather obvious. The third requires more serious examination... It is the most complex, but contains the solution to the problem.

But before I undertake a more systematic exposition, I should like to draw attention to two mystifications. First, no counter-revolution took place in Kosovo [in 1981], as is endlessly repeated by political and police functionaries as well as by the media. Revolutions and counter-revolutions are the product of relations between social classes, between capitalism and socialism, private property and self-management. None of

this applied. Moreover, the two leading separatist groups – the Group of Marxists-Leninists and the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of Albanians in Yugoslavia – both swear by communism and Marxism. Such Marxists-Leninists, oriented towards the break-up of Yugoslavia, we also had before the war. But whereas at that time they were distributed throughout the entire country, today they are concentrated in one region. Both cases, however, have in common an ideological dogmatism and fanaticism. In Kosovo, for reasons that we shall examine later, there simply occurred a national revolt. This becomes clear when one studies the social composition of the activists: most of those arrested were schoolchildren, students and teachers. Several hundred school pupils crossed over into Albania, and were returned. All this is typical of a nation in

formation, still in search of its identity.

Secondly, "Kosovo Republic!" is in no way a counter-revolutionary slogan, for which citizens should be liable to arrest. Rather, it is a political demand which in a socialist country – and Yugoslavia is supposed to be such a country – is perfectly legitimate. Whether this demand is justified or not should be decided by political debate rather than police measures.

I must admit I find it hard to understand why, four decades after the Revolution, we in Yugoslavia cannot discuss these questions in a civilised manner. My motive for writing this work – apart from a desire to explain to myself issues which those professionally more competent have failed to explain – was to encourage an all-Yugoslav dialogue. This journal of Serb intellectuals seemed to me most suitable for such a purpose.

I must also admit I do not see myself as particularly qualified for this task: I do not live in Kosovo, do not speak Albanian and am not a historian. My sources are limited and I have no means of establishing for certain if they are accurate or not. On three occasions I have travelled through Kosovo, crossing it from one end to the other, but I do not claim that this gives me the right to think of myself as an expert. A definitive, scientific history of the Albanians on which I could rely has not yet been written – which does not say much for our historians, be they of Albanian or non-Albanian nationality. I would, therefore, be grateful for any factual correction. In particular, I would like to become acquainted with Albanian intellectuals' own views. Friends in Serbia and Croatia who know something about the Kosovo problem assure me that there is no solution. The absence of a solution implies a police solution. And this is the worst one possible. The social situation does not exist from which reasonable people cannot find a way out. Let us then begin the search for a reasonable solution that could untie the Albanian knot.

Everyday prejudice

A great contribution to the fostering of ethnic intolerance is made by ignorance. The average Yugoslav's knowledge of Albanian or Kosovo history is close to zero. At most, he will know there were once some people called Skanderbeg and King Zog, and more recently there was the bloodthirsty chauvinist Enver Hoxha. Teenagers who have read Karl May will have enlarged their knowledge somewhat thanks to his adventure story *Through Shiptar Territory*, in which Shiptars (Albanians) are located in a wild west setting (anyway the main theme in May's novels). Philatelists will know that the Albanian state was established in 1913, and occupied in 1939. This was about the sum total of my own knowledge of Albanian history. I heard of the Prizren League only in the year of its centenary, and that in a rather dubious context. Further details I found out only after the student revolt – which was one of its positive effects. The first serious book about Kosovo we acquired only two years ago: *Autonomija Kosova* [Kosovo Autonomy] by Rajovic. We still do not have a history of the Albanians. It is true we do not have a history of Yugoslavia either – a fact which well characterises the intellectual climate in Yugoslavia and the responsibility (or rather irresponsibility) of its intellectuals. But Yugoslavia's disunity does not make solving the Kosovo problem any easier.

An educated and mature political leadership, or more precisely a climate in which intellectuals behaved more in accordance with the requirements of their profession, would have created the right conditions for

the anniversaries of George Kastrioti Skanderbeg's death (1468) and the Prizren League (1878) to be celebrated as important Yugoslav events in Belgrade – instead of just in Tirana and to some extent, under attack, in Pristina. Special postage stamps should have been printed and the mass media mobilised. The Yugoslav public would have acquired information it lacked and even the Kosovo events [of 1968 and 1981] would have taken a somewhat different course...

Given that Yugoslavia did not commemorate Skanderbeg, representations were made that a school called after him in the Montenegrin village of Ostros ought to be renamed. Luckily good sense prevailed and the suggestion was rejected. But the scar remained. In another republic, Macedonia, things unfortunately went differently¹. NIN (on 21.12.1986) reported: "In Tetovo in the last few days, the Communal Committee of the League of Communists has been devoting most of its efforts to eliminating the effects of a wedding in the village of Strumica, which was attended by three thousand people...for most of the songs to be heard were ones which are *not broadcast* on the radio stations in Skopje, Tetovo and other Macedonian towns, because they are *nationalist*. The wedding guests sang only songs that spoke of the two-headed eagle, places in Albania, *Skender-beg*". (Emphasis added: BH). The Kosovo writer Rexhep Qosja protested in the Slovene [newspaper] *Delo* (on 19/2/1987): "In Macedonia, out of 600 Albanian folk songs which used hitherto to be transmitted by local radio stations or Skopje radio and TV, 570 have now been banned because they allegedly 'encourage the national spirit', though the majority of them are centuries-old wedding and love songs." Husnie Bitiq pointed out with equal anger in *Borba* [the Socialist Alliance newspaper] (on 7- 8/3/1987): "Children's names such as Sqipe, Arben, Liridona, Kushtrim and others have been characterised... as enemy slogans."

Speaking of songs, mention should be made of the scandal over the translation into Albanian of the Macedonian textbook *Learning Music*². The translators, on their own initiative, threw out thirty per cent of the original contents, omitted the anthem 'Hej Slaveni' [Hail to the Slavs] and in some places replaced the word "Yugoslavia" by "fatherland". The district court ordered that the book be pulped, and disciplinary and other measures followed. [The Zagreb newspaper] *Vjesnik's* reporter Djordje Janovic concluded that what was involved was clearly "a conscious attempt to indoctrinate the very young in the spirit of the monstrous ideas of separatism and irredentism." But was that really the case? There was certainly an infringement of copyright. But had the translators asked in advance for the inclusion of Albanian songs, this would obviously

have been refused. So they tried to slip it through – which is a national custom in this Balkan country of ours.

More serious, and at the same time more symptomatic, is the business about the anthem and name of our state. It is obvious that the anthem "Hej Slaveni" offends Albanian (and Turkish, Hungarian etc.) national feelings, because Albanians are not Slavs³. Yet, in spite of this, half the delegates to our Federal Assembly still cannot grasp the fact that those "Slavs" should be replaced as speedily as possible – so the debate drags on endlessly. And while the legislators ponder, community teachers take their own initiatives which may cost them their jobs: in a well-ordered state, such initiatives cannot be authorised – but they must be understood.

In the last instance, Yugoslavia – understood as the country of the South Slavs – must be alien to Albanians and other non-Slavs. For the South Slav peoples, Yugoslavia is the symbol of their national unification and liberation from foreign rule. But among Albanians, there has been no such development of the Yugoslav idea – and why should there have been? For purely historical reasons, they developed the symmetrical idea of Albanian unification. To the Albanians, Yugoslav unification has symbolised the Slav danger which, before 1966 [1956? in original], found its expression in brutal persecutions in Kosovo.

Consequently, it is up to us Slavs to prove that Yugoslavia is not a state dominated by South Slavs, but a federation of all the peoples living within it. In other words, Yugoslavia must become a *federation of Balkan peoples*. This does not require a change of name – the name has become well-known and accepted in the world, not on the basis of some romantic notion of three tribes [Serbs, Croats and Slovenes] of the same [South Slav] nation, but because of a truly heroic struggle against Fascism and Stalinism. What is required is a change in our self-satisfied Balkan perceptions and habits.

Let us return once more to Tetovo. Islamic architecture shuts the house off from the street. High walls are built. This may not look very modern, not to speak of the fact that one cannot supervise what goes on behind the walls. All part of the good old Balkan tradition. Back in 1957, the Tetovo authorities ordered that the walls be lowered to a height of at most 1.5 metres; following the same tradition, the population responded by disobeying the order. Last year, the decision was taken to pull down the walls of over 2,500 houses. It is hard to decide here which is the more primitive: those who build such high walls or those who pull them down. The Kicevo authorities followed suit. On the other hand, wisdom did prevail in Gostivar.

But Gostivar did not miss the opportunity to make its own mark. Since the days of antiquity, the civilised world has adopted

the motto *de mortuis nil nisi bonum*. Yet, simply for attending a funeral, two truck drivers and a janitor in the village of Raven were thrown out of their jobs and a number of other individuals suffered various consequences.

Here, I have noted only a few events registered in the daily press over the past months. They are not claimed to be systematic or comprehensive, either in territorial terms or in the sense of covering all problems. They are simply offered as illustrations.

In Kosovo, there have been cases enough where Albanians have had an advantage in gaining employment, before the courts, etc. Such behaviour provokes a symmetrical counter-behaviour. When a new factory was built recently in the village of Batusi, though a competition for jobs was advertised not a single Albanian was taken on. It is not hard to imagine the ensuing reaction.

Six years ago, as editor of an academic journal, I was sent a prospectus from the Centre for Scientific and Technical Translations in Nis, with a list of charges. In this list, it says literally: "For translations from English, French, Russian and German into Serbian: 150.00 dinars per page. For translation from Spanish,...Bulgarian, Slovene, Macedonian, Albanian and Hungarian into Serbian: 160.00 dinars per page". It would be hard to describe more simply and precisely the Yugoslav situation. Nis, only a few kilometres away from areas inhabited by Macedonians, Albanians and Bulgarians, is culturally closer to England, France and Russia. You can buy language tapes in Yugoslavia – but not for Slovene, Macedonian or Albanian [official languages of the Federation, alongside Serbo-Croat]. And while we Slavs manage somehow to understand each other, in relation to non-Slavs there can be a breakdown of communication...

Why the student revolts?

For Kosovo to become integrated into the Yugoslav community, it is necessary first of all to accelerate the economic development of the province. But this can be done most effectively by the Kosovars themselves. For this purpose, it was necessary to train a certain number of first-rate economists. When, a quarter of a century ago, the Federation established its own economic institute – the Institute of Economic Sciences in Belgrade – systematic efforts were made to make it a place for the education of cadres from all the republics and provinces. We were successful – with the exception of Kosovo. As director of the Institute, I travelled to Pristina to select potential candidates. But nothing came of that, because the federal budget could never find the necessary resources. The same experience was repeated two years ago with the Economic Chamber of Yugoslavia.

Despite all my efforts, in the twenty years

I spent organising postgraduate studies in Belgrade and Zagreb, I never managed to teach a single student from Kosovo. The reasons for this were lack of proper grants and inadequate prior education. But the underlying reason was the *javasluk* [slovenliness] of our Balkan state (I choose this popular Turkish term deliberately)...

Social product per capita is a fairly good indicator of a region's development. The most developed region in Yugoslavia is Slovenia, the least developed is Kosovo. The table below shows the gap between these two regions in terms of income per capita for certain significant years; also, for purposes of comparison, a coefficient of variation that measures the narrowing or widening gap between all eight political regions of Yugoslavia.

Year	Gap between Slovenia and Kosovo (ratio)	Coefficient of Year Variation (all regions)
1952	4.1: 1	52
1965	4.6: 1	46
1981	5.4: 1	48
1984	6.1: 1	50

Measured by the coefficient of variation, the differences in per capita income between regions were decreasing up to 1965: after that they increased, with a tendency to return to their initial 1952 intensity. The gap between Slovenia and Kosovo has been increasing throughout, but has grown more rapidly since 1965. Expressed in constant 1972 prices, the Slovene per capita product in 1984 was 7.67 times larger than that of Kosovo. Such a difference is comparable to that to be found in economic development between Britain and North Africa. Kosovo has been falling behind not just Slovenia, but also all the other regions. In terms of the same constant prices, Kosovo's social product per capita in relation to the Yugoslav average was 43% in 1955, but only 26% in 1984.

What has increased all these differences enormously in relation to the earlier period has been the general slowing down of Yugoslav economic growth. Given the gap of 1: 4.1 in 1952 and a 6% growth rate, Kosovo would have needed 24 years to reach Slovenia's initial level of development – already too long for a socialist planned economy. With the 1984 gap of 1: 6.1 and an assumed growth rate of 2%, Kosovo would need 91 years to reach the initial Slovene level. But during those 91 years, Slovenia will be developing further ahead. One is left with a completely hopeless situation.

It is interesting to note that in the first post-revolutionary period, i.e. up to 1965, there was no emigration of Serbs and Montenegrins from Kosovo. The subsequent economic falling-behind must have given a powerful impetus to emigration. Finally,

the growing intolerance of the Albanian population changed that migration into an avalanche.

Economic backwardness generates unemployment. In 1985, unemployment in Kosovo was 3.3 times the Yugoslav average: against 210,000 employed in the social sector, 114,000 had no job. These were in the main young people, many with qualifications. Since employment is a condition of human existence – not just in the physical sense – it requires little imagination to understand what traumatic consequences such mass unemployment must have for young Kosovars.

The third component of the situation has been the students. Starting with 74% illiteracy after Liberation, in 1970 Kosovo acquired a university, which in 1981 had 26,000 regular students. *This is half as many students as there were in the whole of Yugoslavia before the war.* It is equivalent to over 10% of the total number employed in the social sector. The leap into modernisation and national awakening was enormous. But this tremendous potential will remain unused, because the majority of these students will remain unemployed. Instead of being applied productively, the energies of these young people will acquire a destructive charge of dissatisfaction, disappointment and bitterness.

Plainly, I must form plausible hypotheses as to the causes of social behaviour by analysis alone, since there are simply no empirical data. In civilised countries, the mood, perceptions and wishes of the population are ascertained in three different ways: 1. through political debate; 2. through newspaper reports; 3. through public opinion polls. The degradation of proceedings in the [Federal] Assembly and the general regression of political life have made 1. impossible: the public is presented only with stereotyped phrases, while all essential debates and confrontations take place behind closed doors... Journalists have to operate under an informal nevertheless highly rigorous censorship, which has made 2. impossible. I have not heard that a public opinion poll has ever been conducted among the Kosovars.

An additional possible source of information is provided by court records from the trials of individuals charged with crimes or offences of a political nature. No analysis of such records has been published – if it exists at all. Information is sometimes given privately, but this cannot be quoted and in my case has anyway been minimal. So one is left with the written or shouted slogans and demands of the demonstrators. This is a highly unreliable source, because we have no firm evidence as to the order of importance of these demands; furthermore, we do not know to what extent they emerged spontaneously or to what extent they were formulated by illegal organisations.

Here I must make one more preliminary observation. In a healthy political system, there is no need for illegal organisations, which is why they do not appear there. As soon as individuals – irrespective of whether their reasons are justified or not – find it more convenient to organise themselves clandestinely, then this is a warning that something is wrong with the political system. Furthermore, illegal political activity should not be confused with illegal terroristic activity, which cannot but be illegal and which represents not politics but crime.

With all the above-mentioned qualifications, I shall try to analyse our only real data: the slogans which were heard or seen in the demonstrations of 1968 and 1981. My list is based on information gathered by Hasani and Djakovic and published in their books ⁴. Given the posts which the authors had occupied, I shall assume that the list is complete and correct. I have omitted repetitions of the same slogan in different words. The classification is my own.

1968 Demonstrations

1. We want a republic
We want a constitution
2. Down with the colonial policy towards Kosovo
The national liberation struggle did not bring freedom to the Albanians
We want Presevo inside the Province ⁵
3. Freedom for political prisoners
Long live Adem Demaci ⁶
4. Long live the Kosovo liberation movement
Long live Albania
Long live Enver Hoxha
Down with traitors
5. One nation, one state, one party

1981 Demonstrations

1. We want a republic
Kosovo to the Kosovars
We are Albanians not Yugoslavs
A republic by agreement or by force
2. Trepca works while Belgrade grows ⁷
3. We demand our imprisoned comrades
Long live Adem Demaci
4. Long live the brotherhood of the Albanian people
Unification of all Albanian lands
5. Long live Marxism-Leninism. Down with revisionism
6. Some sit in comfortable posts, others have no bread
How long in the cellars
No dialogue with the red bourgeoisie
Long live the working class
We demand better conditions

Three dimensions of the political climate emerge clearly enough here. One is represented by an awakened nationalism, common to all Yugoslav regions from the late 1960s on. The second has to do with the

difficult social conditions in Kosovo. And the third is represented by irredentism.

The first two groups of demands go together, but the call for a republic I shall leave for separate analysis, since it is undoubtedly the central and most popular demand; the demand for a constitution does not reappear in 1981, because in the meantime the province had acquired one. The second group of demands is characteristic of a period when, in every Yugoslav region, analyses were made demonstrating how that precise region was exploited by all the others. The third group relates to civil rights, which were also demanded by Belgrade students in 1968. The fourth group is irredentist; it is interesting to note that in 1981 Enver Hoxha no longer appears as a national hero. The fifth group is seemingly untypical, representing the isolated appeals of ideological fanatics: the slogan “Ein Volk, ein Staat, ein Führer” was common to Hitler and Stalin, while we are well acquainted with the babble about revisionism.

In 1981, however, there appeared a new, sixth group of demands, which were of a social nature. Some of these were even formulated in the same vocabulary as those of the Belgrade students thirteen years earlier (“red bourgeoisie”). It should be pointed out that the governing stratum in Kosovo [before 1981] behaved much more unscrupulously than elsewhere in the country, so that social differences were more sharply expressed. One could argue that the demands in groups 4 and 6 – i.e. the national and the social ones – are in mutual contradiction, since it was precisely Albanian bureaucrats who constituted the “red bourgeoisie”. This is true and shows the contradictory tendencies present in the student rebellion. Their resolution – into irredentism or loyalty to Yugoslavia – does not depend exclusively or even primarily on the Kosovars.

The demand for a Republic of Kosovo

We now come to the central demand of the demonstrators: the demand for a republic. If my private informants are right, this demand is supported by a great majority of Kosovars. The demand is not wholly rational, since Kosovo really is a republic in all but name. Moreover, by comparison with the rights of a West German or US federal state, the Province of Kosovo has greater autonomy. So “republic” has a primarily symbolic meaning.

In our political circles, the demand for a republic has been proclaimed to be counter-revolutionary. I have been unable to find a single concrete explanation for this assessment, but the following reasons are sometimes put forward.

1. A republic is a sovereign state, and there cannot exist two Albanian states. Both

these statements are dubious. Let us assume the former is correct: then it must be pointed out that there exist two Korean and three German states. It does not follow that this is a particularly desirable state of affairs, but the conclusion is inescapable that history does know such solutions.

2. Nations have the right of secession, but national minorities do not. A republic is appropriate for a nation, a province for a national minority. Since the Albanians in Yugoslavia are a national minority, they can have only a province. These arguments are quite arbitrary and represent the remnants of a former political scholasticism. Every individual – at least under socialism – has the right to self-determination, hence also to national self-determination. Membership of a national minority is in this respect entirely irrelevant. The only relevant question is whether my right damages the vital interests of my neighbour. And it is precisely from this point of view that the doctrine of “self-determination up to and including secession” is untenable, for a nation as much as for a national minority... If we lived in a socialist environment, then the right to secession would be posed differently. But since we live in a jungle lorded over by two opposing blocs, the *existential conditions* of Yugoslavia demand the integrity of its territory and state. ... Does this mean all our nations and national minorities must forever remain in Yugoslavia as it is today? Of course, it does not mean that. All that is necessary is to replace the romantic notion of a *unilateral* principle of secession, which leads to fatal consequences for those who take it seriously, by the principle of agreement. In 1905, the Swedes and Norwegians agreed to separate and Norway left the kingdom of Sweden. The two nations remained friendly and their states cooperate better with one another than our republics do.

3. A republic is only the first phase, after which separation from Yugoslavia will follow. Therefore, it is necessary to prevent the establishment of a republic. Now it is true that two illegal organisations were uncovered in Kosovo – with less than two hundred members – which formulated their aims exactly in this way. But by what right can the opinion of two hundred individuals be ascribed to a whole people? Would not each and every one of us protest vigorously if somebody tried to place us under the same common denominator as our local nationalists? Is it not in fact a serious political offence to push citizens making a legitimate political demand into the embrace of political provocateurs? In any case, consistency would demand that the same logic be applied to the republics. Since in each of them there exist nationalists with separatist aspirations, all the republics too should be dissolved. Clearly, there are those who take such a view – but it is also evident where it

would lead.

Here I should like to remove a possible misunderstanding. It could be deduced that I am arguing that Kosovo should forthwith – i.e. in the course of the constitutional changes now under way – separate itself from the Republic of Serbia and proclaim itself the seventh Yugoslav republic. Such a deduction would not be correct. Kosovo joined Serbia on the basis of an agreement and could separate only on the basis of a fresh agreement – reached, moreover, at an all-Yugoslav level. Since the emigration from Kosovo has created a negative mood in the whole country, there is no hope of such an agreement.

In any case, even if such an agreement were to be reached, I think such a solution would be damaging today for Kosovo. The most immediate result would be an increasing isolation of the province and even less possibility for cultural and economic communication with other areas. Mutual ignorance would increase and with it, of course, also conflicts. Kosovo would begin to fall even further behind, bitterness would grow and frustration is no friend to rational behaviour. For discussions about a republic to start in a civilised manner, preconditions must first be created. One of these would be the return of the emigrants. This is not a task for the state organs, or at least not primarily for them: it is a task for neighbours – and for Albanian intellectuals.

Kosovo represents a tragic episode in our post-revolutionary history. However, this traumatic experience has also taught us something about ourselves. It is important that this lesson be properly assimilated.

The nature of our federation

The situation at first sight appears paradoxical. The national question in Yugoslavia has been solved at an incomparably higher level than in neighbouring countries. We are rightly proud of this. And then we experience the Kosovo eruption! The explanation that this was an enemy conspiracy is unserious – to put it most charitably. Undeniably there was indoctrination, an inadequate provincial leadership was floating on nationalistic currents and illegal groups did have some effect. The real question, however, is: how was that possible?

How do our neighbours behave? In Greece, the Macedonian minority has no national rights in the Yugoslav sense of the words. The Macedonians do not have cultural institutions of their own, political autonomy is unthinkable, the Macedonian language has been proclaimed to be nonexistent. Things have gone so far that Greece does not recognise University of Skopje diplomas. Even the Greek partisans behaved no differently.

Macedonians have met the same fate in “socialist” Bulgaria too. In that country, apart from Macedonians, there exists also a

compact Turkish minority. Turks make up some 10% of the population, yet they have been declared primordial Bulgarians. To remove all possible doubt about this, they have been forced to Bulgarise their surnames! In Romania there are over two million Hungarians, who are exposed to a permanent discrimination that has led to political relations between Romania and Hungary being frozen. Yugoslav Hungarians do not have problems of this kind. Indeed, they played host to their co-nationals in 1956, when in the face of Soviet occupation, these fled in large numbers from their own state. The Turks once carried out a genocide against their Armenians, who to this day revenge themselves by assassinating Turkish diplomats all over the world. There recently appeared a Turkish translation of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*: the Turkish editor ended up in prison, because it is written in that work that an Armenian state existed in the 11th century in southern Anatolia. In Turkey there lives one of the unhappiest peoples in our vicinity, the Kurds, who wage an unending armed struggle and are divided among five foreign and hostile states, without any prospect of unification and establishment of their own state.

In such surroundings, the Yugoslav autonomy of Kosovo – with an Albanian who is president of the Yugoslav federation precisely because he is an Albanian – appears almost incredible. Why then the student revolt?

A paradoxical situation leads to paradoxical answers. The Kosovo revolt was an expression of Yugoslavia's strength rather than weakness: a consequence of exceptional achievements rather than historical backwardness. The Yugoslav revolution raised the level of aspiration of Yugoslav citizens, including those who are Albanian, unusually high. The standard of comparison is not the Balkan performance of our neighbours, nor is it provided even by the rest of Europe. The Yugoslav revolution, quite independently, has set its own standards. It is these standards which were not satisfied: a growing gap emerged between the proclaimed aims and their realisation. The state failed, its Balkan dimension not overcome. The conservative control imposed in the early 1970s has led to a global debacle. Kosovo is only an episode in the all-Yugoslav crisis...

If the Kosovo events can teach us anything, it is an understanding that Yugoslavia is no longer simply a state of the South Slavs, but has become a *federation of Balkan peoples*. This implies no pretention to include other Balkan states: perhaps that will happen one day, perhaps it will not, but it is quite irrelevant to our current situation. Dreaming romantically of a federation that would include all the Balkan peoples, Yugoslav socialists have overlooked the fact that *such a federation is already in the making*.

If Yugoslavia is a democratic state for all

its citizens, who include among their basic rights also the right of self-determination, then there is no difference between minorities and nations: none, accordingly, between Albanians (or Hungarians, or Italians, or Turks, etc.) and Slavs... The difference between the Albanians and, say, the Italians or Turks is strictly quantitative. In relation to their “mother country” as to Yugoslavia, the Italians and Turks are small groups. (Though they have no mother country, much the same could be said for the Romanians). All these numerous small ethnic groups should have cultural autonomy – and in Yugoslavia they really do. But the Albanians, in relation to the two states [in which they live] – I do not wish to rush into stating categorically here which of the two is their “mother country” – form a large group and this demands political autonomy.

In saying this, I do not mean to prejudice other solutions. In theory, three solutions are possible. The Kosovars can realise their political autonomy – be it in the form of a province or a republic – within Yugoslavia: this solution seems most likely in the short term; in the former version, it is also constitutionally guaranteed. The Kosovars can secede and join the Republic of Albania: for this, of course, they need the agreement of all other Yugoslav peoples. Finally, the Kosovars can prepare the conditions for incorporation of the Republic of Albania into the Yugoslav federation.

This last solution represents the path chosen by other Yugoslav peoples to solve the problem of their national unification. The road to unification did not pass via the creation of a Greater Croatia or a Greater Serbia – though there were significant political groups who worked precisely for that option – but rather via the establishment of a Yugoslav federation. Even today many Croats live outside the Republic of Croatia and an even larger number of Serbs live outside the Republic of Serbia. But they all live in a common state.

Unfortunately, it has not been possible to solve all national questions in the same way. Gosposvetsko Polje [in Carinthia], which has the same historic significance for Slovenes as Kosovo has for Serbs, has remained permanently outside both Slovenia and Yugoslavia. Equally, Pirin and Aegean Macedonia have been left out of reach of the Macedonians. The frontiers of the European states have been fixed by international agreements, and there is little chance of a socialist Balkan federation or confederation in the foreseeable future.

Since unilateral secession is excluded, the question of republic or province loses its edge: it becomes above all a pragmatic question, of how to create a decentralised state apparatus appropriate to a socialist state even were it not multinational. The demand for ethnic purity – which, incidentally, I did not find expressed in a single slogan

recorded from the demonstrations – is utter nonsense, since it is not a criterion for anything. In fact, all the problems that have generated such bitter polemics (with the intervention on occasion of the public prosecutor) turn out to be pseudo-problems, once they are placed in their historical context.

The real problem lies in removing all the barriers to communication between the Yugoslav peoples; helping them to become better acquainted with one another; promoting their cultural interpenetration – and in this way eliminating the conflicts that arise because of ignorance and prejudice.

The real problem lies in speeding up cultural and scientific development. I am sure every Yugoslav cultural worker would be pleased if, for example, the Albanian Institute in Pristina were to become a European and world centre of Albanian studies. We are still far from that, but in changed conditions the distance could easily be overcome. The basic responsibility for such a change rests with intellectual workers.

The real problem lies in a radical acceleration of Kosovo's economic development, since without that there is no solution to any of the key problems. Here, as an economist, I must warn against a dangerous prejudice, which sees speeding up Kosovo's growth as demanding "aid" from somebody. A powerful development of the Kosovo economy is as much in the Kosovars' own interest as it is in that of all other Yugoslavs: this can be demonstrated quite precisely.

Lastly, the real problem lies in overcoming the all-Yugoslav global crisis, because without that there is no solution to any of Yugoslavia's problems, the problem of Kosovo included.

Footnotes

1. Albanians make up about 20% of the Macedonian population; they inhabit a swathe of territory contiguous with Albania and Kosovo, and constitute the overwhelming majority of the population in such towns mentioned by Horvat as Tetovo, Gostivar and Kicevo.
2. All minorities in Yugoslavia have schools in their own language. Textbooks are standard throughout each republic or province, and are translated into the relevant languages as necessary.
3. Yugoslavia has no official anthem, but "Hej Slaveni" has functioned as a kind of unofficial one. There has been a long-standing debate as to whether a new anthem should be commissioned (something which has been tried unsuccessfully in the past).
4. Sinan Hasani, *Kosovo. Istine i zablude*, Zagreb 1986; Spasoje Djakovic, *Sukobi na Kosovu*, Belgrade 1984.
5. Presevo is one of the three predominantly Albanian communes in southern Serbia, adjacent to the border with Kosovo.
6. Adem Demaci was a journalist who in 1961 founded the Revolutionary Movement for Albanian Unification, with the aim of winning the right to self-determination up to and including

secession. He has spent over 23 years intermittently in prison.

7. Trepca, one of Europe's oldest lead and zinc mines situated in Kosovo, is among the province's major employers.

CONT. from p. 48

– the main pillar of the GDR's continued stability – and incorporating the churches into a more flexible domestic strategy, while at the same time resisting any serious structural reform, let alone democratisation. Some toleration of opposition activities, as long as these can be safely quarantined, is provided for in this new flexibility, if only because crude repression would tarnish his image in the West. It is within this space that groups such as the "Peace and Human Rights Initiative" are precariously operating, and despite the deepening conflict with the hierarchy some kind of working relationship with the church is therefore clearly essential for them. But this does not imply a necessarily defensive strategy aimed at nothing but survival: the events at the Brandenburg Gate showed that there are broader layers to reach out to, and the expectations raised by the Soviet reforms provide a favourable political climate for a democratic opposition to emerge beyond the confined quarters of the church – which in contrast to Poland, for instance, has only a marginal influence over a largely atheistic population.



Berlin Arrest

THE "INTERNATIONALE" AT THE BRANDENBURG GATE

Only superficial journalism or calculated political bias can interpret the events at the Brandenburg Gate as mere "scene" riots. By Sunday night, at the latest, the situation was no longer made up by youths and police only. Sightseers, passers-by and parents looking for their children experienced civil brutality, perfect and professional. In front of their eyes respectably-dressed civilians were hitting equally respectably-dressed citizens with fists and feet, dragged them from the crowd and along the road. Each comment or protest could trigger explosive brutality by the dressed-up professionals. "His state" was showing the citizen a face which he normally knows only from certain Western television series. Irritation and bitterness are being felt deep into sections of the population which are usually not bothered by youth riots. The shouts of "Prinz-Albrecht-Strasse" [the former Gestapo headquarters, ed.] certainly did not come from the generation to which most of the rock fans belong.

What became clear was how thin the veneer is under which social conflicts are hidden in the GDR. A massive mobilisation of police and security forces did not intimidate but quickly produced a politicisation. Of course, there were no political conceptions or programmes behind the cries for Gorbachev, the singing of the Internationale, the demands for freedom and democracy and for the disappearance of the wall. They signal the pressure, above all among the young generation, for more free spaces and a genuine democratisation. The peace movement and activist circles in the GDR must ask themselves to what extent their continuation of self-sufficient forms of activity, the writing of letters and petitions and their self-isolation are passing many conflicts and expectations by. The June events will yet play a considerable role in the debate over an independent work and new initiatives and forms of action within the peace movement.

**Wolfgang Templin
Peter Grimm
(East Berlin)**



For reasons of space, our regular book reviews section has had to be held over to the next issue.



Charter 77 has now entered into the eleventh year of its existence. In an interview conducted in Prague in early 1987, seven of its activists talk about their experiences and the current situation. This interview first appeared in *La Nouvelle Alternative* and was translated from the French by Mark Jackson.

THE GROWTH OF INDEPENDENT ACTIVITY

The Charter remains a marginal movement: it has only one thousand signatories, which, when one deducts those who have left the country or withdrawn their signature, leaves no more than five to six hundred. Why are there not more signatories? Is this situation going to change?

Václav Benda: First of all it is necessary to modify these figures somewhat. About 1250 people have signed the Charter; if we deduct about 20 people who have died, about 60 to 80 who have withdrawn their signatures and the 150 to 200 who have emigrated (this last figure is an estimate, which I do not however believe is too low; the impression of a massive emigration is created by the fact that it tend to involve well-known figures), that leaves 950 to 1000 signatories. For about a third of these, their signature is a "past event", even if they remain proud of it and are willing to suffer quite a lot of trouble because of it, while at the other end only about 200 or 300 people are involved in systematic activity. Clearly this modification does not affect the truth of your assertion that the Charter is a marginal movement.

From the point of view of strict accuracy, the original number of signatories has quintupled.

However, in the last few years new signatories have been more or less cancelled out by "natural losses". I am personally convinced that no spectacular change can be expected in the foreseeable future. I would give three reasons for this:

a) Most of the "theoreticians" of the Charter firmly reject the notion that it is a movement! This is a complicated and much discussed problem, but it is at least possible to say that the Charter is a community of citizens who respect certain basic principles and who are ready to assume their responsibilities for the fate of the *polis* rather than being an association with limited political

objectives aiming to win supporters or even simply "votes".

b) There are some hundreds of very active collaborators and several thousands of sympathisers who participate directly in the activities of the Charter, at least half of whom would respond favourably to a request for their signature. Apart from some well-justified exceptions, however, we would advise against it. It would be senseless to demand from our support network, from our technical services, from our contacts within the official structures and from our "fellow travellers" in general a formal declaration of their support which would limit their activity or render it impossible. It should be noted that the KOR, which we will speak about later, has always functioned with some dozens of open supporters backed up by thousands of anonymous supporters. This reason is clearly connected to the present situation. A real improvement in conditions, which would render secrecy superfluous or a severe deterioration, which would make our work impossible, so that all that would remain would be demonstrations of solidarity, would probably lead to a massive increase in the number of signatories. Even then we would remain a "marginal" force in the West European sense of the term.

c) Over the last decade a diversity of independent forms of activity have started up or grown considerably in extent, whether in the Christian milieu, in the area of culture and publishing, amongst the youth, in Slovakia, etc. Only a very small part of these activities are an offshoot of the Charter, but they are often inspired by its example and make use of the fact that the Charter has "tested in action" the opposing forces. For a long time the attention of the authorities has been concentrated on the Charter so that many things have been able to take

place somewhat out of the direct line of fire. It seems to me that over the last few years a tendency of which I myself am an enthusiastic proponent has predominated, which emphasises the effort to get the forces of the most diverse groups to work together rather than trying to get activists from the different milieux to adhere to the Charter one by one. That is to say: rather than the Charter as a supreme body or mass base of the opposition, or a "politicised" Charter providing a forum for dissatisfied youth or playing the role of a "transmission belt" for the Catholics, the effort has been towards creating reciprocal solidarity between the independent currents in our society, who share, within their diversity, certain common principles.

Jirí Dienstbier: If the Charter was a movement then it would be right to describe it as marginal. Many people however reject the title of "movement". I personally prefer the term "civil initiative". Signing the Charter is an individual act through which the signatory asserts the fact of his or her citizenship and takes public responsibility for the state of society. They all have to reach their own decision about taking such a step. Otherwise they would not be able to put up with the annoyances which accompany it (as is shown by certain cases of emigration or withdrawal of signatures). It is thus not possible to go out and canvass for signatures. Quite the contrary: at the outset Professor Patocka and other spokespersons dissuaded certain people, in particular those in higher education, from signing. Only fully grown people can make such a decision with a full sense of responsibility.

There is no sociological way of demonstrating the importance of the Charter in our society. But I know from my own experience that the

standpoint and statements of the Charter coincide with the consciousness and the feelings of an important part of our society. A large number of people follow the activities of the Charter; others prefer to work in the official institutions while cooperating anonymously with the Charter or other independent currents.

Interest varies depending on the political situation. It grows when things are on the move. But that does not necessarily mean an increase in the number of signatures. If there was a significant opening up, citizens would be able to throw themselves into a diversity of political, cultural or whatever activities, which would probably be the most useful thing to do. Even then the Charter would not lose its reason for existence. It would be essential to monitor respect for and extension of human rights even if the Charter had an office on Wenceslas Square and "Information about the Charter" was published by a public printing house.

Jirí Gruntorád: It is a complicated problem, inextricable from the lack of information. Uninformed or misinformed people are afraid of repression which they believe to be omnipresent. Well informed people are afraid of the real repression which continues. Just recently for example Marta Bendová, 14 years old daughter of Václav Benda has been unable to leave with the rest of her school on a trip to the GDR. She has been refused a passport on the grounds that it would be "contrary to the interests of the state". What is involved is a compulsory skiing training course, which is on the other side of the *Erzgebirge* on the frontier of East Germany.

Ladislav Hejdánek: As these questions make assumptions which I do not share, my reply will be somewhat polemical. Firstly,

Charter 77 is not a movement, and cannot become one, since this would be "unconstitutional", that is in contradiction with the founding document of January 1977. Charter 77 was born as a common platform for people with different opinions, convictions and attitudes but who agreed on respect for laws and human rights. Thus it was a question of staking out a position on these two points and only to a very limited extent is it possible to derive any kind of programme from it. The signatories make a commitment to respect and promote legality and human rights both now and in the future. Clearly not only signatories can make such a commitment. Thus the actual number of signatories is not the decisive question, a few dozens is enough. There would be no sense in directing our activities towards the collection of new signatures, in much the same way as it would be pointless to collect signatures on a declaration that two plus two make four.

Lenka Marecková: I was 14 in 1977 and I was not able to read the original Charter declaration until after my matriculation when I was living in Tabor in South Bohemia. In those days I thought that Charter 77 was something over and done with, which had been suppressed. I learnt otherwise in 1983 when I moved to Prague, where I met some of the signatories. I was very pleased to discover that it was still in existence and I began to take an interest in its activities. I know the situation in the rural areas: only a few people listen to the foreign radio broadcasts in the Czech language which would allow them to become informed. Even those that do listen do not do it systematically; the information is patchy and sometimes gets distorted when it circulates by word of mouth. Of course people can also get informed by reading *samizdat*, including "Information about the Charter", philosophical or other publications. Dozens of these publications are produced. Unfortunately the print-runs are tiny and people only get hold of them by luck.

The first big problem faced by the Charter is the shortage of information about its activities. The second is the strange psychosis which grips the population. I meet so many frightened people.

Rudolf Slánský: The Charter is neither a social nor a political movement. Even in quite normal conditions, Charter 77 would not become a mass movement. I think that the limited number of Chartists is tied to the reasons why it came into existence: in order to allow

elements of civil and political democracy to prevail against a totalitarian (more precisely super-totalitarian) regime. Thus the more repressive the regime (and Charter signatories have had experiences of many kinds of repression) the fewer people there are who want or are capable of confronting it. On the other hand if the regime becomes less repressive, then the need for a movement of this type also becomes less urgently felt. Thus, even in the future, insofar as the Charter is not able to fill in for a political or other type of movement, it is probable that there will be no spectacular growth in the number of signatories.

Petr Uhl: I experienced the birth of the Charter very closely. I recall what was said by a state spokesman: "If distribution of the Charter had not been prevented by police intervention, by a press campaign, and by other means such as the removal of the right to travel, of pension rights, or expulsion from the Union of Anti-Fascist Fighters etc., if people had not been afraid, then several million people would have signed the Charter." Fear is the principal reason why the Charter has not spread.

The Charter inhabits a kind of ghetto. About 10% of the population have some idea what the Charter is. People have a two-sided relationship to the Charter: for them the signatories are either useful lunatics or useless lunatics; to put it another way, either "somebody has to do this" or "it is useless to provoke the authorities".

The Charter influences three social milieux, who are in contact with it, and encourage it, even if some people from these milieux are critical of its activities: firstly, the milieu of expelled communists; they keep their friends informed, and discuss with the Charter, discussions which particularly in recent times have often had a critical edge. This milieu has come to life recently in relation to the tendencies which have manifested themselves in the Soviet Union under Gorbachev and related hopes for change in Czechoslovakia. Secondly, the religious milieu. Numerous Catholic clergy and lay people are in contact with the Charter. Information on repression comes constantly to the Charter, often via several intermediaries. Several Catholics are very active in the Charter. The Charter has a very strong influence in the milieu of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren: they are very much less numerous than the Catholics but both pastors and believers have signed the Charter, which is present in most of their synods in significant

numbers. Thirdly, the milieu of the cultural underground, even if unfortunately several of the leading figures have emigrated to the West. This movement, which is very informal, attracts more and more young people. It is not expressed only in music, but also through a variety of autonomous and unrestricted lifestyles. The Charter is a presence here, even if it is subject to criticism. There is a reciprocal, if complex relationship, which is very fruitful given that the people involved in the "underground" are almost all young and are often workers. Through this contact the Charter is better able to respond to the real interests of society.

Today many people believe there is a political liberalisation going on, in the USSR and here. But the repression continues. In November 1986 VONS published a comprehensive statement: the number of those in prison or otherwise sentenced is two or three times higher than a year ago. And we are only aware of a proportion of these cases. Among those persecuted for their cultural or religious activities are signatories of the Charter.

The United Nations Charter of 1945 has codified not only human rights but also those of peoples, including the right to self-determination, of deciding their own destiny in full sovereignty. This right does not figure much in the reflections and documents of Charter 77. Does the fact that Chartists signed the declaration on the 30th anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution indicate a change in this respect? Is there thinking going on about common actions or about cooperation between the small countries of the Soviet bloc?

Václav Benda: Firstly, I would like to point out that, on the purely formal level, that is to say independently of the duty to coexist in a peaceful and mutually beneficial way in the region we share, the right to self-determination (including the right to separation) has always and will continue to signify for Central Europe a catastrophe leading to acts of a genocidal character. Many Charter signatories, including myself, consider the right of peoples to self-determination (or rather, to add my own grain of salt, the right of states to sovereignty) to be a matter of priority or at least of very great importance. I think that this attitude has been expressed in a series of Charter 77 documents, certainly in the traditional August appeals calling for an end to the Soviet occupation. The fact that several "Chartists" signed the appeal on the anniversary of the

Hungarian revolution does not signal a change but a new and logical step towards a precise goal. Not only are we thinking about cooperation between the nations of the Soviet bloc (why "small nations"?), but we are doing everything possible in this direction (in fact the feigned ignorance of the questioner about what has been achieved in this regard seems almost insulting) in the given situation and in spite of the fact that a particularly fierce repression is directed against this type of activity. For the same reasons I can only promise that important initiatives are planned in this direction: those that are not involved will have to wait and see what successes we have and when.

Jirí Dienstbier: The right to self-determination is not absent from the documents of the Charter. But the notion that it is only the inhabitants of Czechoslovakia who should decide the affairs of their country is so self-evident that it seems pointless to repeat it. There is a very general point of view like the one expressed in the declaration on the 30th anniversary of the Hungarian uprising. Any more concrete conception or application of the right would have to be consciously and explicitly political, and the signatories of the Charter have very diverse political views. Even then there is a basic minimum of agreement, for example in opposing the presence of nuclear weapons in Czechoslovakia, or the demand for the withdrawal of Soviet troops; on this subject the problems of timescale and context appear in a different manner depending on how one assesses the preconditions (above all international) for realising this desire.

At the present we think more about common actions with our neighbours than we put them into practice. There are different priorities and opportunities for establishing areas of agreement but meetings and discussions are few. You will be aware of certain efforts to overcome the problem (such as the meeting between representatives of the Charter and the KOR in the Krkonose Mountains in 1978, the declaration of Czechoslovak and East German activists on the common declaration on the Hungarian anniversary. We now know more about each other. Thus here in Czechoslovakia we know of the independent Polish and Hungarian writers. Nonetheless it is always easier to communicate with Warsaw and Budapest via our friends in London or Paris than directly. And it is significant that it was not someone from Prague, Budapest and Warsaw who found

the time and energy to provide a deeper analysis of the attitudes found in these places, but the Englishman Timothy Garton Ash in his essay "Does Central Europe Exist?"

Jirí Gruntorád: I, along with thirty other people, signed the declaration on the anniversary of the Hungarian revolution. Why? I am in favour of collaboration in Central and Eastern Europe, and think that it is the way we have to go if real results are to be hoped for. We are not merely thinking about the coordination of the independent movements; such coordination already exists. There are enormous possibilities in the realm of culture, in the reciprocal translation of books, of recorded music, or of videos. Such exchanges exist if only in their initial stages. The best results have been with the Poles.

Ladislav Hejdánek: On the one hand it is enough to point to various Charter documents (on the Gypsies, on the Hungarians, on the anniversary of the foundation of Czechoslovakia etc.) in which the defence of the right of self-determination for peoples and national minorities (as with other minorities) is emphasised to see that the interviewer is poorly informed. On the other there is a lack of theoretical clarity on how in concrete situations the right of this or that minority is to be understood. Even in Western Europe, including the traditional democracies, there are urgent problems and open conflicts in this area, which have not been solved, and where sometimes not even the beginnings of a solution have been found.

The Franco regime was respected until his death; in Greece the semi-fascist junta tolerated and even supported by the democratic countries, the Irish and Basque problems are open wounds etc. In these conditions it is rather inept to reproach Charter 77 for not dedicating itself more to the right of self-determination. Even from the European point of view (without speaking of the rest of the world) our situation is no worse than elsewhere. It would be pleasant if our own "right to self-determination" were respected and we were at least granted the ability to judge what is most important for us. I would also like to emphasise the fact that the Hungarian declaration was signed purely in a personal capacity by people who, along with others, have also signed Charter 77, but it was not a document in which Charter 77 participated as such through the medium of its spokespersons.

Finally, the question about cooperation between and the future coexistence of the "small countries of the Soviet bloc" poses the serious question of the political and cultural orientation of our nations (it would be as well to recall that this is not a matter only of the small countries of the Eastern bloc!).

Personally, as far as I am concerned, I must say that I have no objection in theory to working within a large collectivity such as the Eastern bloc; I am concerned with something quite different. After the Second World War our incorporation in the Soviet bloc has had among its consequences (and beside some advantages of a secondary kind) cultural and spiritual decadence, scientific and technical backwardness, the impossibility of utilising all our natural and intellectual resources for the best possible development of society and, finally, an economic debacle which is less visible than in Poland, if one remains at the level of appearances. If the new leadership in the Soviet Union offered us certain guarantees that they will support a radical correction of this situation, which is untenable in the long term, there would be nothing to prevent closer and more intensive cooperation both within the peoples of the USSR and with the other peoples of the Eastern bloc. At the moment, unfortunately, there is no such guarantee and past experience is hardly encouraging. On the other hand, in my view, the perspectives opened up to Portugal or Greece in the context of the West European community are no more enticing and do not arouse much enthusiasm either.

Given this background, you can understand why we find ourselves more and more often recalling the thoughts of Palacky in the 19th century (if Austria did not exist it would be necessary to invent it) or what Masaryk said in "A New Europe", or even the thoughts of Dimitrov and others on some form of confederation in the region between Germany and Russia.

Lenka Marecková: I don't know what is meant by "the reflections of the Charter". I have met people who think that there should be a unanimity of thought within the Charter, and who believe that the absence of this unanimity signifies chaos. But the existence of diverse points of view is exactly the contribution of the Charter. Reflection on the right to determine one's self exist, and this problem has put in several appearances.

The nation? For me, at 24, this is not an insignificant idea. But what I feel towards the Czechs, I also feel

towards the Poles, and towards anybody who feels the same way about things. My attitude towards the nation is as rational as it is emotional. The concept of the nation which appears in certain Charter documents, for example in regard to anniversaries and in allusions to our independence in relation to the USSR can be tied to support for the individual rights of man.

Rudolf Slánský: I do not agree with the suggestion that national demands, such as the right to sovereignty etc, do not appear enough in the documents (or the thinking) of the Charter. The Charter takes note of these problems every year on the anniversary of August 21, 1968. But the Czechs are realists, pragmatists; they do not like to cause a stir for nothing and hold no faith in futile patriotic speechifying. There has not been the slightest real chance in the last years of changing the situation created by August 21, 1968. It would seem that, at the moment, given the way things are going in the USSR and Czechoslovakia things are rather different, so that there will be more and more occasions for adopting positions on this subject, even if, given the political aspects of this problem, this takes place above all outside the Charter.

With regard to the second part of your question, I consider that at the present time cooperation between the independent movements in the countries of the socialist community, if judged in real political terms, is symbolic and will remain so for a long time yet — not that symbolic efforts are without great importance.

Petr Uhl: The Charter is concerned above all with the rights of individuals, even if it is sometimes bound to take an interest in society as a whole. Personally, I do not like the use of the word "nation"; there are national minorities here as well. I do not have an emotional relationship with the Czechs, and I do not want to confuse Charter 77 with the UN Charter. Our Charter is not a reflection of the UN Charter, but is much more like the Magna Charta Libertatum of England. We are a movement for the rights of man, understood of course in the broader sense which includes the rights of the nation or of the state when these are denied.

We did not sign the declaration regarding 1956 in the name of the Charter. We often sign declarations in a personal capacity. Other signatories of the Charter are critical of these declarations. With regard to Hungary, and while there was no

criticism of the signatories, several people refused to sign. There are people, above all in the milieu of the old communists who unfortunately retain doubts about the character of the Hungarian Revolution, considering it to be partly counter-revolutionary. There are also prejudices against *Solidarnosc* in Poland. But it is not only a matter of this milieu. There are also many younger people who know very little about the past, some did not even know that there had been a revolution in Hungary in 1956. This type of declaration also has a pedagogical function, pointing out that the ideas which we are fighting for today existed previously.

Some signatories say that Charter 77 has conquered the right to be a "tolerated opposition". Do you agree?

Václav Benda: Of course I don't agree! To do so would be to sin against the ten Charter signatories who are presently in jail or subjected to so-called "protective" surveillance. It would also mean hiding the repression, the extent and methods of which (if we exclude the excesses of 1980 and 1981 which were a response to the fears of the authorities due to the events going on to our north) have remained the same in spite of the rapid changes of targets. Finally I would like to point out that those who talk complacently about the Charter 77 being like a "tolerated opposition" are above all those who do not have to directly experience the "tolerance" and have gone into emigration, whether of the external or internal kind.

Jirí Dienstbier: Since the Charter has existed for ten years it is evident that it has been tolerated. It is more interesting to ask why. The signatories of the Charter have made it quite clear that nothing, not even years in prison, will stop them from registering their opposition to the illegalities of those in power. The authorities would have to imprison some hundreds of signatories, which given the present situation both inside and outside the country would not be a realistic move. There is therefore a certain tolerance — whether with regard to the Charter or to the numerous independent initiatives which have developed over the last period: whether in relation to the Charter or on its initiative or in disagreement with the Charter and therefore faced with the need to formulate a different opinion outside of its framework. This has resulted in a definite change. It is true that the persecution continues. Nevertheless a normal public form of civic

behaviour which in the 1970s would have resulted in up to six years imprisonment has now been adopted by several hundred people. These days the repression is directed at the new spread of independent activities; the rebirth of Catholicism, the involvement of young people (the Jazz Section), activity by workers (the worker Svestka has been found guilty on a charge of drafting a literary essay on Orwell) etc. Even here there is a difference. If the Jazz Section had had the influence and results fifteen years ago that it has today, its committee members would have been sentenced without hesitation to long terms of imprisonment for incitement to revolt or sabotage. Now the authorities are reduced to attempting to demonstrate some kind of economic criminality and this with difficulty.

A civic public attitude has therefore led to a positive evolution, even if we are still very far from the European norm in cultural and political matters.

Ladislav Hejďánek: I do not think that this is a correct definition of reality. I would refer back to my answer to the first question where I stated that we do not feel ourselves to be any sort of opposition — this is expressed very clearly in our statement of aims. No Czechoslovak government can attack respect for laws or human rights as amounting to opposition, a criminal goal or as something directed against the state. This is why until now nobody has been sentenced simply for signing the Charter's statement of aims and why no spokesperson of the Charter has been tried or sentenced simply for being a spokesperson. When spokespersons and signatories are subjected to extra-judicial attacks and punishment, this is only proof of the way in which the government and administration lack respect for law and for the Constitution. This becomes even more obvious when they resort to unlikely and incredible varieties of penal proceedings, whereby they attempt to cover up their political motives by pretending that something criminal is involved. There is no question of some kind of "tolerance". The official strategy is the following: repression is directed against "marginal" signatories in order to try to isolate the "centre" of the Charter from the rest of society. Those at the "centre" are allowed to live, but are subjected to constant pressure and from time to time some are hit with heavy penalties in order to serve as a warning to the others. All the evidence suggests that the final objective would be to liquidate this "centre" when it is sufficiently

isolated and when the time is ripe.

But even here the leadership of the state and party cadres are uncertain, not knowing which way the wind from the Kremlin blows or is going to blow. The developments there are producing a contradictory effect in Czechoslovakia. On the one hand our administration is accustomed to using tough methods with dissidents, on the other it feels worried, even threatened by the way things are moving. There is a certain differentiation developing at every level; within the party officials and the political leaders there is a semi-clandestine network of people who either hope that Gorbachev will not go too far or that he will be toppled á la Krushchev. These people have no talent for tolerance.

Rudolf Slánsky: Yes, even if the degree of tolerance undergoes big changes from time to time.

Petr Uhl: The Charter is not an opposition, it has never sought and does not now seek to be one. It is, as Ladia Hejďánek says, "a new opposition". It tries to enforce the application of human rights that do not exist. This clearly means that it has a political significance. Within the Charter people with views ranging from "far left" to "right" (to use Western terminology) find a voice, but the majority of Chartists do not define themselves politically and are repelled by politics. And it is perhaps these people who form the "ideological base" of the Charter.

The Charter is tolerated to a certain extent. As soon as we orient towards a wider public or even when we take up problems which are "none of our business", the police move in. It is therefore not possible to talk of real tolerance. At the cost of many years in prison, of the departure of those who have been forced to emigrate after many conflicts, we have won for ourselves the right to express certain points of view.

What is the significance for you personally of participation in the Charter?

Václav Benda: First of all I would like to draw attention to the fact that I was not one of the famous first 241 signatories (thanks above all to the discreet efforts of friends who wanted to protect my numerous family and the good job which I had managed to get a short time previously). I only signed the Charter towards the end of January 1977 after the unleashing of a strong campaign against it. My primordial motive for signing was to express solidarity with people who were being denigrated and imprisoned,

people for most of whom I felt deep esteem both at the personal and professional levels. I and my family knew well enough what I was letting myself in for. I tend to feel a sense of acknowledgement that I have not yet been jailed rather than astonishment when I am temporarily amnestied (regarding which, as I write these lines, I have police dozing under my window; yesterday morning they announced to me that they have been "ordered to provide me with personal protection for the period necessary"; probably this is just a routine exercise but it cannot be ruled out that I will be taken away tomorrow for several years).

Nevertheless I have felt a certain "mental reserve" towards the Charter from the beginning. If it was possible I would prefer to raise the banner of the Cross and launch a direct attack on the capital rather than appealing in a somewhat schizophrenic manner to a democratic and legal façade when there is a general consensus that it is nothing but a façade. Indeed it is this consensus which is one of the principal obstacles preventing the sympathy for the Charter of a considerable part of the population from expressing itself in a more tangible form. Over the years I have come to realise — and this is the first big lesson and significance of the Charter for my personal evolution — that the Charter is more than a simple expression of necessity (given the fact that we do not have the requisite tank units at our disposal) and that its unlimited pluralism, its emphasis on truth and individual responsibility and its principle of respect for human dignity mean that it is not only the most effective means of resolving our own problems, but also represents one of the possible ways of dealing with the global political crisis and the moral and human crisis. Apart from that the Charter has had a big impact on my life: I have got to know a lot of people for whom I feel real respect and I have learnt to feel this respect for friends who were previously on the margins of my life. My faith has been reinforced by adversity and has received striking confirmation — but this is a more or less private matter of which it is useless to speak at length.

I will finish my reply with a remark by a long-standing friend and fellow believer, who emigrated in 1968, which he made with a strong dose of bitterness and envy: "Can it be possible? I have always been an anarchist and non-conformist, but you are a serious man! Now I have become a serious American professor, but you, you have turned into an adventurer!"

Jirí Dienstbier: To have got to know and to have developed ties of friendship with people who I would have otherwise only met with difficulty, since we live in different milieux whether for reasons of age, profession or opinion. The reinforcement of the conviction that people cannot be divided into young and old, Christian and atheist, teachers and workers, but between those you can count on and those you can't. This might appear banal, but in practice — and in particular in the 20th century with its fanatical ideologies — the consciousness of a common humanity has often been overridden by the sense of belonging to a particular gang, and this effect is still at work today.

Jirí Gruntorád: My involvement in the Charter is the result of a conscious sense of the need to combat anguish and repression. After all these years, I believe that our activity has been worth the trouble. My involvement accords with my beliefs as a Christian. I came to the Charter through my religious consciousness and my involvement has deepened my faith.

Ladislav Hejďánek: I have always insisted that we are not a movement. Signing the Charter and acting as its spokesperson for two years were a sort of new beginning. Every human being needs to feel that they have a useful social role, and this is a legitimate feeling. I was one of hundreds or thousands of intellectuals who were ripped out of society and thrown into "the dustbin". It was a sort of total, absolute unemployment, for it struck at my deepest being. It was not easy to put up with, especially if you saw all around you a worsening catastrophe. Unlike a lot of others, I underwent "training" in the 1950s and at the start of the 1960s. At the time this was not so deadly; I was younger and our hopes seemed to be confirmed by the events. Those who first experienced this "unemployment" after 1970 — this was the case for most of my friends amongst the old communists — have found it harder to cope with. At the moment we feel as if we are living somewhat in the future, which will be better for our children and grandchildren, although there can be no certainty about this.

Lenka Marecková: I am unable to imagine my life without it.

Rudolf Slánsky: Participation has meant for me above all an education in tolerance with regard to the opinions and attitudes of others. It has shown me that it is possible to discover what is essential, what

PROFILES

unites within diversity and differences. It has given me the opportunity to learn the force of cohesion and solidarity. It has allowed me to work together with people from all professions and views, with various characters and diverse personal qualities.

Why has Charter 77 not become a movement like the Polish KOR, which succeeded in cooperating with the factories?

Václav Benda: The KOR has played an important role, but nonetheless only that of a midwife in relation to the appearance and development of the new workers' movement in Poland. I have already said several times that the Charter is not an exclusively intellectual movement, and that its statements have a significance for the evolution of the whole of society (at least for the Catholics and the youth). There are a whole series of reasons why the appeals of the opposition in Czechoslovakia do not have the same mobilising impact as, for example, in Poland – such as: resignation after the defeat in 1968 or the fact that the reckoning for the economic crisis has been delayed. I would like to draw your attention to a reason which has not been examined in depth, even by the Charter, but which is closely connected to the myth of “the factory” and “the workers' movement”. Officially the “working class” is in power here and it is in fact the case that – with some important exceptions – its standard of living is relatively high. The punchline, however, is that the basic wage is just about sufficient to allow the worker to die slowly of hunger; the real income of the worker comes from overtime and various other perks and premiums. In this way the old trade union gains are turned into their opposite; the worker no longer struggles for the eight-hour day but demands to be allowed to work twelve or even sixteen hours. (I can prove thus almost incredible statement by examples from various branches of industry; while legally the number of permitted hours of overtime is restricted, in reality the government makes so many exceptions that the law is made empty of content; I have myself had to turn down, with regret, a stoker's job which required an 84-hour week, but which was very well paid).

This fact has other consequences: it is not necessary to legally prosecute or fire a difficult worker, who demands for example respect for safety regulations or a decent wage. If they simply apply the law regarding overtime and thereby

reduce his premiums, this worker will very rapidly come to his senses or will leave the job of his own accord. If we then remember that the Czechoslovak state has the monopoly over hiring and firing (as it has over housing, access to education and training and I don't know what else) we have a situation of servile dependence. In this situation the passivity of the workers is less surprising than the fact that some workers continue to try to resist this situation. I would like to conclude my remarks by a warning: in the insane situation which prevails in Czechoslovakia even the traditional weapon of the workers, that is to say the strike, has an ambivalent meaning. Politically this would be a catastrophe for the regime, but economically, given the inefficiency and outright absurdity of most of the sectors of production, it would be to the advantage of society and the state.

Jiri Dienstbier: The KOR came into being to assist the workers who were persecuted after the events in Ursus and Radom. This relation to the factories, which originated with a precise purpose, later took on a larger content. The Charter does not address itself to any particular group of citizens, but to each member of society in particular, whether it is a dissident or the president. It is not interested in the political organisation of society or any of its parts but in ensuring respect for certain basic principles attained by European civilisation, principles with which numerous governments have expressed their formal agreement by their ratification of international pacts on human rights. The Charter and the KOR have offered a common vision of the renewal of a free civil society, but their means and methods are different.

Jiri Gruntorád: We face totally different conditions here to those in Poland: there is a totally different situation, especially economically. There are also differences of historical tradition. At the same time, we can learn a lot from the Poles and we must respond to the inspiration of their independent activity.

Ladislav Hejdanek: This question is at once somewhat dogmatic and naive. It is necessary to take account of the fact that society and the workers in particular have been systematically anaesthetised for a long time. Their standard of living has only declined slowly over the past few years and the relatively low level of wages (compared for example to East Germany) is

compensated by the possibility of additional income (of various kinds which are not always socially acceptable). This is the essential difference with Poland. The other difference is the uprooting or reduction to servility of a whole layer of intellectuals which took place in the 1950s, a process which was only slightly modified in the 1960s and which got worse again in the 1970s. Throughout all this time we could not even dream of the type of situation which has prevailed in the Polish universities. From the start, besides, the repression has been harder and more systematic, and the resistance minimal; we lack, among other things, the historic premises for this resistance, the famous “historic basis of reaction”. This is why Charter 77 cannot develop into a KOR and still less into a Solidarity. This background is lacking here and it has been necessary to begin at the beginning. And this is without mentioning the Czech mentality, so totally different from the Polish mentality, nor the historic roots.

Rudolf Slánsky: I think that Solidarity arose in Poland above all – though, naturally, not exclusively – as a response to a profound and prolonged social crisis which was getting worse and which the rulers were unable to cope with. It is only against such a background that Solidarity has been able to form itself into a mass movement and, given the conditions created by a totalitarian regime, has inevitably developed into a political movement. Contrary to what has been happening in Poland, there is no social crisis in Czechoslovakia and the standard of living is relatively high and stable. In these conditions there is no terrain on which a Solidarity-type movement could develop. In other conditions, to the degree in which the political crisis develops in particular, we will see movements of a different type develop.

Václav Benda: aged 41, mathematician and philosopher, currently a stoker. One of the founders of VONS (the Committee for the Defence of the Unjustly Prosecuted), this practising Catholic was in prison for four years between 1979 and 1983. Charter spokesperson in 1979 and 1984.

Jiri Dienstbier: aged 50, journalist and writer, currently a stoker. Charter spokesperson in 1979. Co-founder of VONS, was in prison for three years between 1979 and 1982. A communist until 1969, he now locates himself in the “democratic socialist current”.

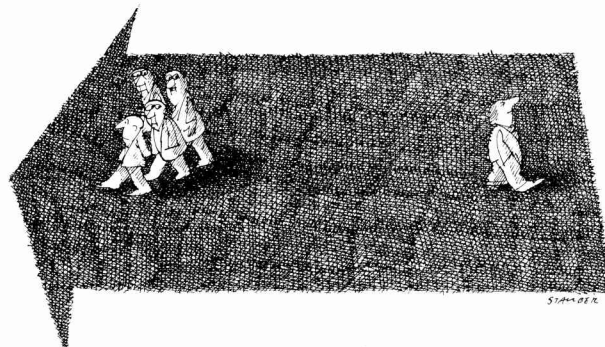
Jiri Gruntorád: aged 35, worker and religious believer. Signed Charter in 1978, first imprisoned in 1979, he was sentenced to four years in prison in 1980 for activity in “independent publications”.

Ladislav Hejdanek: aged 60, philosopher, then a manual worker, currently retired because of disability. In prison for seven months in 1971-72. A Protestant committed to the renovation of his Church. One of the founders of the Charter, and spokesperson from 1977 to 1979 and in 1980.

Lenka Marecková: aged 24, signed Charter two years ago, a member of VONS for one year. Spent seven months in prison for publicly reciting her own “subversive” verse.

Rudolf Slánsky: aged 52, engineer and economist, now employed by a housing cooperative. Frequently harrassed by the police, he has never been held in jail for more than a day (his father was hanged in 1952). Expelled from the Communist Party in 1970, he locates himself within the “socialist current”.

Petr Uhl: aged 46, engineer, currently a stoker. One of the initiators of the Charter and co-founder of VONS, he has spent nine of the years between 1969 and 1984 in prison. Locates himself within a “Trotskyist and self-management current”.



Mikhail Gorbachev completed his get-to-know-you tour of the Warsaw Pact allies with two intriguing official visits to Czechoslovakia and Romania in April and May. The contrast between the two trips could not have been greater. During his forty-eight hour stay in Bucharest, Gorbachev was upstaged and visibly nauseated by Nicolae Ceausescu, whose long descent into madness has recently accelerated rather dramatically. Soviet-Romanian relations are very bad and will continue to be so while Ceausescu remains in power, which probably means until his death.

HANS STAREK

“PRESTAVBA” RULES — BUT WHAT IS IT?

In Prague a very different tale is unfolding. The situation is much more complex and considerably more important. Verbally the CPCz leadership has made a 180 degrees turn in the last six months. Its most insistent political reference point until last autumn was the *Pouceni*, the Lessons from the Crisis Years. These were the policies drawn up in 1971 after the Party purge had been completed. They were designed “to reestablish the leading role of the Party in political, economic and social life”. They have been added to and mildly tampered with since but not substantially altered.

But now Czechoslovak politicians and the press, having taken their lead from Gorbachev, maintain that the time has come for *perestroika*, or *prestavba* as it is known in Czech. A government committed to resisting reform for over fifteen years now concedes in principle that reform is desirable. It is interesting to note here that despite this officials repeatedly stress that the *Pouceni* were no error but a necessity from which *prestavba* naturally flows.

This about-turn in Czechoslovakia raises some interesting issues. Firstly it is the only Soviet ally in Eastern Europe (apart from Bulgaria) to have changed direction under Gorbachev's influence. In Hungary and Poland the new policies are perceived as more or less confirming an existing state of affairs, while the GDR refuses almost as resolutely as Romania to assimilate *glasnost* and *perestroika*. Part of the CPCz must now be thinking, “Was this verbal commitment to renewal really necessary?”

Can of worms

Secondly the Presidium must decide what relevance *prestavba* has to the Czech situation. Once that has been agreed on, if indeed it can be, it must then consider how best to implement the policy or whether it is happier retaining *prestavba* merely as a verbal sop to Moscow. One thing is most striking. Although *prestavba* is the object of intense debate within the press, *otevrenost*,

the Czech name for *glasnost*, is afforded but short shrift.

On balance Gorbachev gave the impression in Prague of being content with the response of the CPCz to the developments in the Soviet Union. During his walkabout and his visit to the CKD factory in Prague, he made several fairly clear remarks about 1968. Contrary to the hopes of many Czechs, not to mention the surreal suppositions of many Western correspondents, he firmly rejected any possible reinterpretation of the Prague Spring. At a time when the revision of Soviet history is adding to his domestic difficulties, it would be extremely rash to open what the Czechoslovak Presidium recognises as a very nasty can of worms. Since the visit *Rude Pravo* has repeated his remarks on '68 more than once.

Nonetheless Gorbachev's praise for his colleagues in Prague was less than fulsome. He did not hail the CPCz's achievements with nearly as much enthusiasm as he had those of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party on a visit to Budapest last June.

Disappointment

Similarly the hysteria with which he was greeted by the crowds on the Prague walkabout cannot have passed him by. This was a fascinating event. Several people have since remarked that the confused and wisened Husak, who shuffled behind Gorbachev's entourage of pressmen and minders looking like a lost dog, engendered real pity in them. He must have been aware that politically his number is up. If not today, then within the next three years or so.

This is confirmed by the little information that has emerged about Gorbachev's closed meetings with Husak and other Presidium members. The major discussion on internal Czechoslovak issues centred on cadre policy and the leadership. The Soviet leader apparently made no specific demands or enquiries about individual Presidium members or their positions. However it seems he did request that a mechanism be designed be-

fore the next Party Congress in 1991 which could ensure not only a smooth succession of the First Secretary, but of the Politburo as a whole.

Many ordinary people and a few important commentators both in Czechoslovakia and in emigration had placed modest hopes on the Gorbachev visit. It would be an exaggeration to say they expected any changes, but they were perhaps anticipating a clarification of the leadership's positions in the wake of *perestroika* and *glasnost*. Although mild, one could feel the disappointment.

“Chance to argue”

In Vienna Zdenek Mlynar, Gorbachev's most enthusiastic supporter among former Czech communists was disappointed, but he still insisted that “support for his [Gorbachev's] policies is still preference No. 1 for everyone who wants to see a positive development not only in the Soviet Union, but in the whole world”.

In a piece written immediately after Gorbachev's visit, Mlynar continues by considering the innovation of the Gorbachevian rhetoric in Czechoslovakia: “It is decisive that the idea of the necessity of change has again become the official political line after twenty years”.

Inside Czechoslovakia people are not so convinced by this argument but some agree that the verbal acceptance of Gorbachev's policies has created a certain dilemma for the CPCz. In an interview a month ago the dramatist Vaclav Havel pointed out that “because the leadership has verbally embraced the Gorbachev course so vehemently whilst not intending to change anything in reality, that gives people a chance to argue that such policies should be realised. And this is already beginning to happen”.

As if to illustrate Havel's point, one of Czechoslovakia's most popular television actors, Milos Kopecky, made an astonishing contribution to the official Actors' Union Congress at the beginning of May in which he called for the wholesale resignation of the

present leadership.

But any such changes would be a matter for the Czechoslovaks and not for Gorbachev. The former rector of the CPCz cadre school and one-time close friend of Husak, Milan Hubl, insists in a *samizdat* article that it is a mistake to indulge in the politics of nostalgia when examining the new Soviet leader: "Gorbachev's conception of social change is simply different from the events which happened here in 1968. You don't have to like the fact, but it is political reality".

Stability

Hubl is one of the more sceptical critics. As such he belongs to a surprisingly heterogeneous group. One of the most forceful of these is Petr Uhl who argues that politically the only demand Gorbachev has of Czechoslovakia is stability. "Therefore", he explained, "he is much more likely to support Bilak and the Stalinists, because the last thing he wants is another '68 on his hands. He has enough problems in the Soviet Union at the moment". Uhl insists that Gorbachev's domestic policies are merely a liberalisation similar to what Krushchev attempted and that people are expecting too much of the General Secretary.

The sceptics consider their position vindicated by the visit. And although few critics are as unimpressed by Gorbachev as Uhl, there has clearly been a reassessment by many of the speed with which events in the Soviet Union can begin to influence developments in Czechoslovakia.

Now that the excitement surrounding Gorbachev's visit has calmed, a pattern is emerging which would seem to confirm the theory that for the moment the Presidium is under no pressure to substantially alter its policies. There is considerable talk in the

media of *prestavba*. All party and enterprise organisations are allegedly involved in feverish discussions about its implementation, spurred on by regular articles in *Rude Pravo* which insist that policy is both correct and absolutely necessary.

But at all levels within the Party, it is abundantly clear that desperate confusion reigns as to what *prestavba* actually means. "No-one knows what *prestavba* is", a top-level cadre who is an economist by training explained, "there is a group of economists who have been asked to work out an explanation of *prestavba* and they have just started producing their first batch of material. But this is highly theoretical and for the moment useless for the Party's basic organisations, let alone the enterprises".

The Party has also tied itself in a theoretical knot as it tries to distinguish between the value of *perestroika* and that of *glasnost*. When considering the former it talks of the Soviet Union in the old terms of "glorious model, everlasting inspiration" etc. But on *glasnost*, the national road to socialism has suddenly come back into fashion, that it, we do not need to follow the Soviet example because we have entirely different conditions here.

Odious speech

Whilst one sees the occasional snippet of *glasnost* here and there in Czechoslovakia (more frequently in the Slovak media, interestingly enough), the leadership has also been tasteless enough to taunt the population with the concept of *glasnost*. In one of the most odious speeches of the last year, a candidate member of the Presidium and Central Committee Secretary for Ideology, Jan Fojtik, made some highly provocative remarks during a contribution to the forthcoming 70th anniversary of the Russian

Revolution published in *Rude Pravo* on June 12th:

"Glasnost, that is open politics and being broadly informative, must become a key concept in our political and ideological work. In general it is essential to link ideological work with the process of democratisation... In the restructuring (*prestavba*) of ideological work we must pay particular attention to the mass media... We come to this conclusion in particular because of some basic lessons learnt during the sixties. The party can not allow itself to lose control of the mass media. But this control is not based on administrative methods, we have no censorship nor do we intend to introduce it."

By using these words, Fojtik makes it plain that the leadership will define what is *glasnost* and what not. The CPCz appears to want much tighter control on the media than Gorbachev does in the Soviet Union, but that is no surprise. But by claiming in the context of *glasnost* that there is no censorship in Czechoslovakia Fojtik has outraged many ordinary citizens. There is a general feeling that now Gorbachev has been and gone and the leadership has survived it, it is free to do what it likes. One historian turned mason remarked on reading Fojtik's speech, "I believe that they are trying to rub people's nose in the dust. If I were to paraphrase the speech I would say 'Gorbachev did not interfere with the way we run things, so don't forget that what I say goes'."

Despite this middle-level party cadres are appealing to Western correspondents not to get too impatient with the CPCz. Their defence is always the same — we want *glasnost* as well, real *glasnost*, but you can't expect it to be introduced overnight. While the Party does appear to be giving Western correspondents greater access to information, this is of little comfort to the average citizen, who seems set to suffer another few years of tedious political stasis.

CONT. from p.47

conjunction with the Soviet Union, however, is kept completely silent. The role of our journal could be to force more information into the official media by softening up the taboos of the state publicity machine.

The second great deficiency of the press is that it gives no space for different opinions. It is of fundamental importance for us that we are able to reform and politicise public consciousness from an ecological viewpoint in order to be in the position at all of exercising influence on the decisions of the state.

Labour Focus: What are, in your opinion, the most serious environmental problems in Hungary today?

Langmar: The weightiest problem is perhaps the deterioration and destruction of natural water sources. Three quarters of our ground and spa waters are polluted. Three quarters of our drinking water reservoirs are

in danger and the drinking water of 1,500 communities is already unfit for human consumption. We are proportionately the fourth worst air polluters in Europe and the exploitative attitude to our forests with the total clearance system continues. It is just as characteristic that a significant proportion of our rapidly increasing incidence of cancer and lung diseases can be attributed to environmental pollution. More serious than the concrete facts, however, is that the rate of destruction is accelerating and that there are no mechanisms to stop this process within the present structures.

Labour Focus: What, in the light of this situation, are your most important demands of the Hungarian leadership?

Langmar: The most pressing need is for a unitary ministry of environmental protection with the necessary authority to carry out its tasks. In order to find a way out of this

situation both discussions and social initiatives are necessary. For that reason work by environmentalist groups would have to be permitted and an effective legal procedure against environmental pollution should also be available to the individual citizen. In the local communities, the conditions should be provided for genuine self-government. The people are demanding a greater degree of influence over their own fate than before, and that includes questions of environmental protection.

Labour Focus: How do the Hungarian authorities react to your activities?

Langmar: For some weeks the police followed me somewhat ostentatiously with about 15 to 20 people. A considerable number of copies of VIZJEL were confiscated during a recent house search. In the last few days, I have also just been told of my dismissal from work.

Nothing like it had ever been seen by the pedestrians and motorists of the Hungarian capital: Young people in white overalls, wearing gas masks and mouth protection, protesting against the unbearable pollution of the air. "No to Acid Rain!" and "We Want to Breathe Air Not Carbon Monoxide!" were their demands, supported by detailed statistics in their leaflets.

HUBERTUS KNABE

"UNUSUAL METHODS" — HUNGARY'S GROWING ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

It was not Greenpeace switching its activism to the socialist countries, but a mobilisation by the official Environment Clubs in Budapest at the end of April, by permission of the authorities. "Unusual methods, but not so rare elsewhere", the reform-oriented economic journal *HVG* commented, and proceeded to take the opportunity for a general assault on the failings of the government's environmental policies.

Growing problems

The protection of the environment has during the past few years emerged as a major topic in the smallest country of the Warsaw Pact, as growing environmental problems have enraged the population in many areas:

- 10,000 Hungarian citizens signed a petition to parliament protesting against a gigantic dam building project on the northern section of the Danube river which, according to experts, will have devastating consequences for the environment;
- in the industrial town of Dorog, 2,000 people protested against the construction of a waste incineration plant, the fumes from which will affect a nearby residential area;
- a Budapest Environment Club has been mobilising for years against the operation of a quarry south of Pecs, which has been eating ever more deeply into a nature reserve in circumvention of the relevant laws;
- under pressure from popular protests a lucrative scheme for the import of waste from Austria, which endangered the drinking water in the town of Mosonmagyaróvár, had to be cancelled last year.

The concern among Hungarian citizens has a serious background as the long-standing neglect of environmental protection has led to a build-up of problems that has become unmanageable for a country with a seven billion dollars debt in the West. Last year

the secretary of state in charge of environmental policies, Kalman Abraham, self-critically conceded that "we have not managed to develop ecological policies of sufficient efficiency, and to stop the deterioration in the quality of the environment".

Air pollution has continuously increased in this traditionally rather under-industrialised country. According to official statistics, forty per cent of the population are living in areas with heavily polluted air, and the extent of the damage caused by air pollution is estimated at about 20 to 25 billion forint. 1.4 million tons of sulphuric acid are emitted from the chimneys each year, in addition to 350,000 tons of industrial dust emissions, 250,000 nitrogen oxides and 510 tons of carcinogenic lead-containing materials which originate primarily from the ageing fleet of over half a million two-cylinder cars. As a result, the critical maximum measurements are being exceeded by a factor of hundred at peak times in Budapest, the frequency of lung diseases has dramatically increased, and a quarter of Hungarian oak trees are showing signs of damage. *Water pollution* is at least equally alarming, since only 18% of the waste water produced is being properly treated (0.3% in Budapest), and in agriculture 90% is not treated at all. As a result, during bacteriological tests of the subsoil water 38% of the samples were found unsatisfactory. Many fish have died in Lake Balaton and the Danube river. Around 600 settlements are receiving their drinking water in tank lorries, canisters or cardboard packaging since babies died and children grew up physically and mentally retarded because of the nitrate-polluted water supplies. Even the water quality in the famous thermal springs of Budapest has continuously deteriorated. Environmental problem number three is the unsolved question of *waste disposal*, which for many years

had been left to the factories and communes themselves. Of the 60 million cubic metres of waste produced annually, only 40% are being disposed of properly, while highly toxic wastes are "disappearing" in factory yards and collective farms because of the lack of supervision and sites. There was a public scandal in 1982 when toxic waste from the *Chinoin* medical plant polluted the drinking water in the town of Vac. In another case, a village had to have its water wells closed because a farming cooperative had simply buried in the soil 430 barrels of poison from the Hungarian Cable Works. Finally, another source of conflicts is *energy policy*, because, rather than cut consumption, ever more investment is being pumped into new power stations. A third of Hungary's electric energy originates from the nuclear power plant in Paks which has come to be regarded with suspicion by the population since the Soviet reactor accident. The coal-fired stations have no equipment for desulphurisation, while the Danube dam-building project is threatening the forests and water reserves of seven million people. Furthermore, recent revelations show that there are plans to construct a turbine power plant in the strictly-protected United Nations biosphere reserve "Predikáloszék".

Resistance

The fundamental reason for this negative balance sheet is the insufficient weight of environmental protection in the spheres of politics and economics. A law for the protection of the environment was not adopted until 1976 — six years later than in the GDR —, and another two years later the "National Office for Environmental and Nature Protection" commenced work. Its head, Secretary of State Abraham, is not a member of the Council of Ministers and there is no Ministry of the Environment. As

the other ministries would not surrender such important responsibilities as health, water, agriculture, forestry or radiation protection, the office only got responsibility for areas which nobody else wanted: nature preservation, waste disposal, air pollution. The enterprises, too, obstruct environmental protection policies. When the huge combines were formed, the environment was simply overlooked in the allocation of investment funds. Now, in the midst of economic depression, the newly-independent enterprises are expected to finance the necessary re-equipment out of their own means – which they refuse to do. As the economic journal *HVG* pointed out, the priority of “productive” over “unproductive” investments leads to a situation where equipment for environmental protection is only purchased if it can be regarded as profitable in itself.

Damage caused to the economy and growing popular concern have now pushed the Hungarian leadership into a series of countermeasures. A Committee for Urban Development and Environmental Protection has been formed by parliament, and the Council of Ministers granted the Environ-

ment Office greater powers of control and direction in August 1985. Environmental investments by the enterprises can now be subsidised by a central fund. Among the practical measures are a six million forint programme for the reduction of dust emissions by 75% and a new decree on air pollution which will by the end of the decade impose a penal tax on enterprises emitting any of 320 listed substances. In October, a 15 billion forint programme for the installation of de-sulphurisation filters in large power plants is to be decided upon, in order to comply with the decision to reduce sulphuric acid emissions by 30% taken by the Munich environment conference. Substantial funds are also being claimed by the measures to save Lake Balaton and the construction of four regulated storage sites as well as two incineration plants for toxic waste, which are partially financed by World Bank loans.

Politically weak

It is known in Hungary, however, that these measures cannot reverse the trend. There is no money for a programme against nitrogen oxides, the new air pollution decree is prov-

ing a blunt instrument because the enterprises are supposed to supervise themselves and control rests with the politically weak local councils. The five billion forint allocated until 1990 for air cleaning measures are not even sufficient to arrest the deterioration of the present situation. On top of this, the Ministry of Transport now proposes to relax the speed limits on motorways and major highways.

As far as water pollution is concerned, while the measured values have partially improved in Lake Balaton and the Danube, the nitrate pollution of the subsoil water continues to increase. Nor is, in the view of the party daily *Nepszabadsag*, the 300 million forint programme for the improvement of waste disposal sufficient “to even maintain the quality of our environment at present levels”. There is a lack of the technical, organisational and human resources required for the control of proper disposal procedures, prompting the head of the Environment Office to soberly state in early March that “I do not think that we are now in any way better off than in 1980 when we began to familiarise ourselves with the concept of toxic waste”.

cont. p.45

Since June of last year a journal has appeared in Hungary that one can neither subscribe to nor buy at any kiosk. VIZJEL (“Watermark”), the first independent environmental journal in Eastern Europe, produced underground by critical ecologists in Budapest. *Labour Focus* talked to the editor, Ferenc Langmar.

“... IN CONSTANT FEAR OF BEING BROKEN UP”

INTERVIEW WITH EDITOR OF HUNGARIAN ECOLOGY JOURNAL

Labour Focus: Your journal represents a novelty in the socialist countries. What was your reason for undertaking this initiative?

Langmar: It all began with the fight against the dam-building project on the Danube. We tried out all sorts of things to bring it to a halt, but the most effective means, the mass media, remained unfortunately totally closed to us. The authorities have also prevented us from working as a legally registered club which meant that our activity became very risky. Later I tried to stand as a candidate for the national assembly with an environmental programme, but the elections were misused, with no regard for the law at all, as a mere political spectacle.

That is why people hardly register the increasing environmental problems and do not treat them in accordance with their importance. Also the existing underground press, which has functioned for some years

now, did not, at least until the beginning of the protest against the dam system, take note of this problem. Therefore it is enormously important that we now consider ecological questions openly, honestly and with the appropriate gravity. That is what VIZJEL is attempting to do.

Labour Focus: What are the themes of your journal and under what conditions does it appear in Hungary?

Langmar: The subtitle calls it “a journal of environmental protection”. The spectrum extends from concrete ecological problems such as the dam system or the case of a dangerous special refuse dump to more general questions such as a legal study on the legality and illegality of environmental movements under socialism.

Our journal appears under quite difficult circumstances. We are not allowed to commission a printer and we even have difficulties in buying paper. Duplication takes

place secretly and with very primitive means, the same goes for transport. We can also only sell it from hand to hand and one is constantly afraid that the whole thing will be broken up. For that reason we can also only appear quite infrequently.

Labour Focus: Recently the state-controlled media have also discovered the environment for themselves. Isn't there a danger that you may become superfluous?

Langmar: Unfortunately not because the mass media is, in many different ways, not true to its own role. For one thing information is simply kept secret or manipulated, as the following example will show. In an area on the bend in the Danube which the UN has declared a core biosphere reserve the authorities, in conjunction with the Soviet Union, are planning to build a reservoir to produce peak period electricity. The press only publishes minimal information about it. That it is being undertaken in

A rock concert near the Berlin Wall led to clashes between the People's Police and four thousand youths chanting "The Wall Must Go!", "We Want Gorbachev!" and "Freedom, Democracy!".

KEVIN BALL

ONLY ROCK'N'ROLL?

The three days of Whitsuntide rock music in front of the old Reichstag building only yards from the Wall, featuring well-known stars such as David Bowie and the Eurythmics, were part of the festivities marking the 750th anniversary of the former German capital in the Western half of the divided city. Similar concerts had taken place there before, and it was by no means unusual for East Berlin rock fans to gather near the Brandenburg Gate to listen. The pushing and shoving between the assembled crowd of youths and the police got out of control, however, when the police cordon was broken and the security forces reacted with unprecedented brutality, particularly on the Sunday and Monday evenings. Between one and two hundred people were arrested and held in gymnasiums, garages and a firestation overnight, some savagely beaten.

Slogans

In some ways these scenes were reminiscent of the clashes after a rock concert at Alexanderplatz ten years ago, when two policemen were rumoured to have been beaten to death by the incensed crowd. Then, the name of Wolf Biermann – the left-wing singer and songwriter expelled from the GDR a year earlier – was reported to have been chanted: now once again it was the slogans spontaneously adopted by large sections of the crowd which raised at least as many eyebrows as the actual events themselves. Some Western commentators went as far as drawing parallels with the uprising of 17 June 1953, while the official East German news media, after initially denying that anything had happened at all, blamed provocations by West German journalists. Neither was right: the events proved only the volatility of the mood among sections of East German youth, and how quickly this mood can acquire a political edge under certain circumstances.

The Wall was an obvious target of the crowd's anger, given that it separated them from the scene of the concert. The chanting of the name of the CPSU General Secretary by rebellious East German youths, however, represents an intriguing historical novelty which would have been unthinkable in the days of Brezhnev or Stalin, even Krushchev. Perhaps more than anywhere else in Eastern Europe, Gorbachev has become a symbol of the hopes for reform and democratisation in the GDR – the most directly

dependent on the Soviet Union of all the Warsaw Pact states. Glasnost and Perestroika have appeared as graffiti on East Berlin walls, quickly to be overpainted by bucket-and-brush squads of the police, and posters bearing the General Secretary's portrait have greeted early morning commuters at underground stations before they could be removed by the ever-vigilant security forces.

Open letter

When Gorbachev visited the capital of the GDR for a Warsaw Pact meeting at the end of May, these hopes were given expression by an Open Letter from the "Peace and Human Rights Initiative" which also pointed out the unusually low profile given to his visit in the official East German media. Perhaps significantly, a delegation from the Human Rights group, after phoning the Soviet Embassy and announcing their intentions, were received by a polite official to deliver their letter. After the Whitsun clashes at the Wall, an embassy spokesman also raised some eyebrows by cheerfully welcoming the chanting of Gorbachev's name as a sign that the East Germans were backing Moscow's new course. Clearly, all is not well between the Kremlin and East Berlin.

At the end of June, however, Honecker put on his own demonstration of openness by allowing the first-ever East Berlin Kirchentag (Church Festival) to go ahead in a blaze of publicity. Conceived as one of the highlights of the GDR's own 750th anniversary celebrations, thousands of lay members of the Protestant churches congregated in East Berlin for a week of prayers, discussions and cultural events. As a manifestation of the new understanding between the Protestant church leadership and the state, it was an undoubted success despite some minor irritations such as the closure of a photo



exhibition featuring pictures of the June 1953 uprising and the construction of the Wall. On the other hand, however, the anxiousness of the Protestant hierarchy to please the authorities with their "responsible" attitude led to an open conflict with the independent peace, ecology, feminist, third world and human rights groups which have sprung up within the orbit of the church when the traditional annual "Peace Workshop" was cancelled and the Kirchentag agenda manipulated in order to prevent any embarrassing incidents. The independent groups retaliated by announcing a "Kirchentag from below" and threatening to occupy one of the official meeting places unless they were provided with accommodation.

"Glasnost"

A last-minute compromise was eventually found, and the "Kirchentag from below" went ahead unmolested with over a thousand participants from all over the GDR. In a final resolution, the provision of an East Berlin parish as an exclusive organising centre for the activities of the independent groups was demanded, and large banners proclaiming "Glasnost in State and Church" were paraded in front of over 20,000 at the closing ceremony of the official Kirchentag held at a football stadium. But the conflict between a church leadership determined to foster good relations with the state and the independent young radicals has not been resolved: an offer to hold the "Peace Workshop" this autumn was angrily rejected by the independents because of the detailed conditions attached to it.

It is clear that the East German party and state leadership is pursuing its own version of perestroika which is quite different from the hopes raised by the Gorbachev speeches. For Honecker, the trick consists of improving economic relations with West Germany