

LABOUR FOCUS ON EASTERN EUROPE

A Socialist Defence Bulletin on
Eastern Europe and the USSR

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Photo: BOB MURPHY (Socialist Challenge)

Labour Movement March to Soviet and Czech Embassies. Front row (left to right): Ian Mikardo MP, Jiri Polikan, Phillip Whitehead MP, and Tariq Ali.

**Socialists Demand:
SOVIET TROOPS OUT OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA**

PEASANT STRIKE IN POLAND

Labour Focus on Eastern Europe

STATEMENT OF AIMS

A growing number of socialists and communists are taking a stand against the suppression of democratic rights in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The Labour Movement has international responsibilities in this field as well as in the field of solidarity action with those struggling against oppression in Chile or Southern Africa or Northern Ireland.

But up to now socialists have lacked a source of frequent and reliable information about events in Eastern Europe. Coverage in the papers of the Left remains scanty, while reports in the bourgeois press are selective and slanted. The first aim of **Labour Focus on Eastern Europe** is to help fill this gap by providing a more comprehensive and regular source of information about events in that part of the world.

The mass media give ample space to Tory politicians and to some from the Labour Party who seek to use protests against repression in Eastern Europe as a cover for their own support for social inequality in Britain and for witch-hunts against those who oppose it. At the same time campaigns run by socialists in the Labour and Trade Union Movement for many years concerning victims of repression in Eastern Europe are largely ignored by the media. The second aim of this bulletin therefore is to provide comprehensive information about the activities of socialists and labour movement organisations that are taking up this issue.

Labour Focus is a completely independent bulletin whose editorial collective includes various trends of socialist and Marxist opinion. It is not a bulletin for debate on the nature of the East European states, nor is its purpose to recommend a strategy for socialists in Eastern Europe: there are other journals on the Left that take up these questions. Our purpose is to provide a comprehensive coverage of these societies with a special emphasis on significant currents campaigning for working class, democratic and national rights.

Whenever possible we will quote the sources of our information. Unless otherwise stated, all the material in **Labour Focus** may be reproduced, with acknowledgement. Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of the editorial collective.

In these ways we hope to strengthen campaigns to mobilise the considerable influence that the British Labour Movement can have in the struggles to end repression in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

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Contents

EDITORIAL

Double Standards 1

SOVIET UNION

New Support for Soviet Trade Union Association --
by Victor Haynes 2
Document:
 "Why I am Resigning from the Official Trade Unions 2
Shcharansky: A Spy? -- by Mark Jackson 2
Health Worker Gets 5 years for Exposing Psychiatric Abuse --
by Patrick Camiller 3
Documents:
 Charter 77 Solidarity with Soviet Dissidents 3
 Yuri Orlov in his own words — An Autobiographical Sketch.. 4
To be a Marxist in the USSR -- by Boris Weil 5

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Invasion Anniversary Passes, Crisis Remains --
by Mark Jackson 6
Documents:
 Charter 77 Document No. 18: Statement on
 the 10th Anniversary of the Soviet Invasion 7
 Joint Statement by Charter 77 and the Polish
 Social Self-Defence Committee (KOR) 7
Complete list of Political Prisoners in Czechoslovakia 8
Document:
 Founding Statement of the Prisoners' Defence Committee 8
Interview with Members of the Plastic People of the Universe . . 9

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT, PART 2.

Jan Tesar Replies to the Debate in Charter 77 10

HUNGARY

In the Wake of the Invasion of Czechoslovakia,
The Myth of Kadarism -- by Miklos Haraszti 14

EAST GERMANY

Document:
 Havemann Calls for Support for Jailed Marxist 16
An Interview with Rudolf Bahro 16
Charter 77 Solidarity with Bahro 18

POLAND

Document:
 Secret Leadership View of the Opposition 18
One-quarter Million Peasants Resist Pension Law 19
Documents:
 1. Peasant Committee Letter to Parliament 19
 2. Social Self-Defence Communique on Peasant Strike 19
 3. Lublin Peasants Organize 20
 4. Appeal of Lublin Peasants' Self-Defence Committee 20

LABOUR MOVEMENT

Rally and March call for Troops out of Czechoslovakia 21
Eastern Europe Solidarity Campaign Notes 21
Bukharin Rehabilitation Appeal 22
TUC Takes no Action on Repressed Soviet Workers 22
TUC Reply to Labour Party 22
Bahro Defence Notes 22

EDITORIAL

DOUBLE STANDARDS

Two separate demonstrations took place in London on the tenth anniversary of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia: one organized by the Young Tories and the other backed by various labour movement organizations.

Such a split protest was inevitable and indeed necessary. The only interest the Tories have in repression in Eastern Europe is as a platform to attack the Left, while socialists would not associate themselves with the idea of freedom embodied in the Tory Party's politics: freedom for the racist regimes of Southern Africa, freedom from trade unions, freedom from black people in Britain, freedom for private capital to throw one and a half million people out of work.

What was not inevitable about the 10th anniversary of the Soviet invasion was the fact that the Tory demonstration was very much larger than the labour movement rally and march. The Tories pulled out over 2,000 people while the labour movement demonstration mobilized a mere 300.

One reason for the disparity in numbers was the fact that thousands of socialists had gone to Brick Lane in the East End of London to protest against the racist attacks on Bengali workers that have produced a number of murders and severe injuries to black people in the East End. Such protest actions are, of course, vitally necessary especially since the Thatcher leadership of the Conservative Party has seen fit to encourage racist sentiment for electoral purposes. There was a symbolic significance in the fact that the Young Tories ended their protest by supporting the unveiling of a plaque to Jan Palach inspired by the National Association for Freedom, an extreme right-wing group famous for its costly and successful struggle to prevent Bengali workers at Grunwicks from joining a trade union.

But the coincidence of the demonstration in the East End does not settle the matter. The Tories put a full-time worker onto preparing their demonstration months in advance, whereas the Labour Party and trade union leaderships made no serious attempts to mobilize for the 10th anniversary. Within the labour movement there is still a strong inclination to ignore the realities of oppression in Eastern Europe and leave the entire issue in the hands of the right-wing.

The practical result of such an attitude is to produce a mirror image of the double standards of the Tories over basic political rights. Tory silence on Chile and South Africa is complemented by silence on the Left over the suppression of working class

rights and democratic rights in Eastern Europe. And one result of such double standards is to make many in Eastern Europe see the right-wing, anti-socialist movements in the West as their real friends.

The existence of double standards on the left over Eastern Europe is not simply an expression of intellectual and moral weakness. It is above all a huge political obstacle to socialist advance.

The oppressive policies of the Soviet leadership in Eastern Europe have acted as one of Western capitalism's most effective advertisements against the socialist movement. The invasion of Czechoslovakia 10 years ago was more than a brutal act of national oppression against the Czech and Slovak peoples. It was also an action defended by the Warsaw Pact governments in the name of socialism and as such it turned very large numbers of people in Eastern Europe into bitter enemies of what they took socialism to be — the policies of the Soviet bloc governments. The Tories use the repression in Eastern Europe for cynical electoral reasons. But the fact remains that such electoral demagoguery works — large numbers of working people actually believe it. They believe that a victory for socialism here might produce the kind of political dictatorships operating today in Eastern Europe.

The only solution is for the labour movement in the Western half of Europe to make one of its most central concerns the plight of working people in the other half of the continent. Only the most vigorous and intransigent labour movement support for those struggling for democratic and working class rights in Eastern Europe will have a serious and positive impact on the course of events inside the countries of the Soviet bloc. And only such active international solidarity will undermine and expose the Cold War, anti-socialist lobbies' propaganda against the labour movements in the West.

The lesson of the events around the tenth anniversary of the invasion of Czechoslovakia is that socialists here must wage a big struggle to swing the resources of the labour movement behind those working for socialist democracy in Eastern Europe and the USSR. A relentless campaign should be waged against double standards on this issue in the British labour movement. For socialists to try to behave like kettles calling the pot black is self-defeating. That is a game that the right-wing, with all its huge economic and political resources, is bound to win.

SOVIET UNION

New Support for Soviet Trade Union Association

A new samizdat document has recently been received in the West from a Ukrainian worker in Odessa, seeking to join the Free Trade Union Association established by Vladimir Klebanov and his comrades at the end of January. This is the first report to reach the West of new recruits to the Trade Union Association since its formation and the arrest of its leaders earlier this year.

The new recruit to the Trade Union Association, Leonid Siry, sent an appeal to the ILO and to "all trade unions in the world which are independent of governments" asking them to "defend Vladimir Klebanov and his group, and to succeed in freeing them from prisons". His appeal, dated 27 March 1978, also asked trade unions to "provide all possible moral and financial assistance for the newly

created free trade union".

For sending this appeal, Siry was interviewed by the Odessa KGB on 6 April. He was warned that if he continued his activities in defence of civil rights he would be arrested. According to Siry, the KGB major who spoke to him declared that "The Free Trade Union will not be allowed to develop as it will be destroyed at birth".

Despite these warnings, Leonid Siry decided to resign from his official trade union organisation and support the Trade Union Association. He sent his letter of resignation to the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions (the official Soviet union organisation) on 18 April.

We reproduce his letter of resignation below in full.

Leonid Siry's name has already appeared in samizdat documents reaching the West since 1975. He has a wife and seven children and his earlier protest letters to Soviet and Western officials have raised the following issues, amongst others: the material hardships faced by his large family because of his low wages and the inadequate child benefits; the ineffectiveness of the official trade union organisation, concerned only with increasing production; the absence of real elections for political posts in the USSR, and the lack of genuine equality for Ukrainians like himself. (See page ?? of this issue on the TUC and the repression of the Trade Union Association.)

By VICTOR HAYNES

Document: "Why I am Resigning from the Official Trade Unions"

To: All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions, Moscow.
Copy: Local Committee of the ChrPO Trade Union, 'Antartika', Odessa.
City Committee BTOF

DECLARATION

I, L.M.Siry, worker-lathe operator, have been in the trade union organization since 1952. I have worked at my present enterprise for 8 years. I have decided to leave the trade union for the following reasons:

1. The inability of the trade union to struggle for workers' rights. The fact that it has no right to make demands, as opposed to requests, for wage increases, lowering of prices, or improvements in the conditions of work and rest facilities.
2. The vassalage of the trade unions to state and administration superiors. The management and Party bureaux appoint local (trade union) committees and dictate them their terms. Meetings of workers appear as a mere formality.
3. The trade unions are unable to give enough help for a poor family to get 50 rubles per person — even though the family itself

cannot earn such money. [50 rubles per person is considered to be minimum for a decent standard of living - trans.].

4. The trade unions do not defend us legally either. Because of this, we are forced to take insults from unscrupulous managers and workers. For example: 'Why did you "breed" so many children?' and 'Didn't you have any light?'

5. We are given poor medical care, and our doctors are unconscientious in carrying out their duties.

6. A similar attitude is taken by teachers in school. Our children are called beggars, and teachers forbid other pupils to make friends with them.

7. Since receiving a new flat, we suffer from cold, unfinished jobs and other discomforts. Repairs have dragged out since January. They send us some kind of shoddy workers instead of proper ones.

All the above reasons have caused us to think that we are deprived people, and that a better way out of this situation is to leave your trade union as a sign of protest.

Father of a large family,
worker **Leonid Mikhailovich Siry**
199 Frunze Street, Flat 128, Odessa.

18 April 1978

(Translation by Victor Haynes.)

Shcharansky: A Spy?

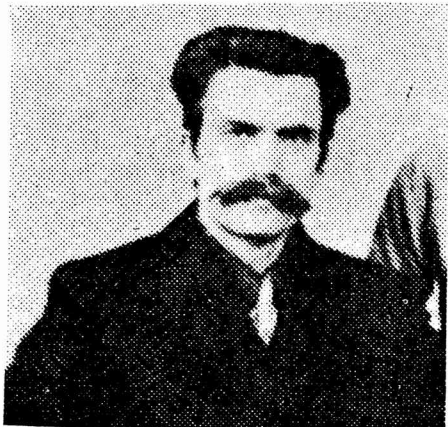
In the second week of July, the Soviet regime went through the performance of handing out pre-decided sentences to 3 of its most tenacious opponents. Jewish activist and member of the Moscow Helsinki Monitoring Group, Anatoly Shcharansky, was charged with anti-Soviet agitation and with espionage, and received 3 years in prison and 10 years in a labour camp. Alexander Ginzburg, who has been imprisoned twice before for his human rights activities, also a member of the Moscow Helsinki Group, received 8 years in a labour camp for anti-Soviet agitation,

virtually a sentence of death, given the state of his health. Viktoras Piatkus, of the Lithuanian Helsinki Group, received 10 years imprisonment and 5 years exile, also for anti-Soviet agitation, as well as homosexuality, corrupting minors and drunkenness.

The authorities threw the whole legal book at these people, but there was nothing of substance inside. Shcharansky's alleged activities as a spy for the CIA amounted to contact with an American reporter Robert Toth, to whom Shcharansky passed on information, mainly about the situation of

the 'refuseniks', Jews who have been denied permission to emigrate. Toth had contacts with US Embassy officials and seems to have been more concerned to ingratiate himself with the Pentagon than to protect Soviet dissidents, not an unusual thing for American journalists. *Newsweek* of 24 July quotes 'Washington sources' to the effect that "Shcharansky had inadvertently in some cases supplied the names of secret Soviet defence plants and research institutes masquerading as civilian establishments". This sounds sinister. But it refers to the fact that Shcharansky took

Health Worker Gets 5 years for Exposing Psychiatric Abuse



Lev Lukyanenko, member of the Ukrainian Helsinki Monitoring Group, sentenced in July to 10 years' strict regime labour camp and 5 years' exile for 'anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda'. He has already spent 15 years in prison.

Toth to see some of the 'refuseniks' who had been denied the right to emigrate on grounds of security. Shcharansky's aim was not to reveal state secrets to Toth, but quite the opposite — to show that the alleged 'security grounds' were completely spurious.

Ginzburg's crime was that he helped to distribute money from a fund established by exiled novelist Alexander Solzhenitsyn to help political prisoners and their families. The Kremlin scriptwriters, in order to add spice to the story, claimed that Ginzburg had used the money for drinking, staging 'sex orgies' and 'purchasing stolen icons'.

All three defendants treated the proceedings with the contempt they deserved. Shcharansky described the charges as 'absurd', and Ginzburg when asked his nationality replied 'prisoner'. Perhaps the most apt comment was provided by Piatkus who lay down in the witness box with his eyes shut and refused to say anything for the duration of his trial.

By MARK JACKSON

Charter 77 Solidarity with Soviet Dissidents

His Excellency, Mr. V.V. Mackevic,
Ambassador of the USSR in Prague, Czechoslovakia.

Mr. Ambassador,

We are addressing ourselves to you in the name of Charter 77, in order to express the indignation of citizens concerned with the upholding of human and civil rights in our own country, at the sentences which were passed last week on Alexander Ginzburg in Kaluga, Anatoly Shcharansky in Moscow and Viktoras Piatkus in Vilnius. Consideration of all the information which we have been able to obtain has led us to the unambiguous conclusion that these three Soviet citizens were condemned because they tried to monitor the way in which the requirements of the Final Act of the Helsinki Agreement are being implemented in your country, and informed world opinion about what they found. The sentences seem to us particularly harmful in that we share ideals similar to those of the defendants, and know from our own experiences how easy it is for a court to transform the endeavours of honest citizens into so-called 'anti-state activity' and on the basis of such an interpretation to attack citizens who think critically and introduce confusion and doubt among the public. We ask you to bring our disagreement with these decisions to the attention of your government, and ask you also to communicate our request that the defendants should be released at once and the verdict annulled. We think that such an act would be an act of justice which would without doubt contribute to a better atmosphere in the world, which has been shocked by what happened last week in your country.

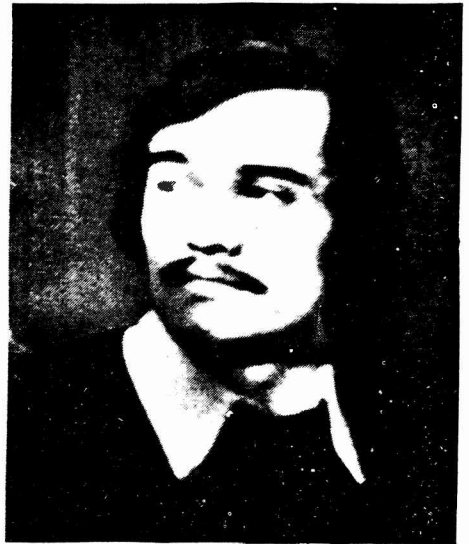
Signed by the Charter spokespersons: L. Hejdanek, M. Kubisova, J. Sabata.

22 July 1978.

On 15 August 1978, after three months spent under pre-trial arrest, Alexander Podrabinek was sentenced to five years' exile for 'systematic circulation ... of fabrications known to be false which defame the Soviet state and social system'.

'Fabrications'? 'Known to be false'? In fact, Podrabinek, who worked as an ambulance-driver in the Soviet health service, produced a book now published in the West entitled **Punitive Medicine** which thoroughly documents the use of psychiatry for repressive political purposes in the Soviet Union. Podrabinek's job meant that he was in a good position to investigate such abuse and to carry on a tireless struggle to bring it to an end. His evidence is substantiated by a considerable number of accounts — including those of Marina Voikhanskaya, formerly a Leningrad psychiatrist, Vladimir Bukovsky and Leonid Plyushch (who were both held in psychiatric prisons for a number of years).

However, perhaps the most damning testimony so far is that provided by Dr. Yuri Novikov, who was until recently one of the six section-heads at the notorious 'brain-centre' of psychiatric abuse: the Serbsky Institute of Forensic Psychiatry in Moscow. In his report to the London Podrabinek hearing on 13 July, Dr. Novikov confirmed that 'there can be no doubt' that 'the horrible and brutal practice' of psychiatric abuse really does exist in the USSR, and that it is used not only against political dissidents of all kinds but also against people converted to religious belief. He also mentioned an incident relating to the Podrabinek case which reveals the tight control of the fourth ('political') section of the Serbsky Institute over all aspects of Soviet psychiatry.



Ambulance driver Alexander Podrabinek now in exile for exposing Soviet psychiatric abuse.

During the Sixth Congress of the Soviet Psychiatric Association, of which Dr. Novikov used to be a secretary, Podrabinek attempted to photograph various members in attendance — only to be forcibly prevented from doing so by agents of the fourth section.

In a further report to the London hearing, the prominent Moscow civil rights activist Valentin Turchin described Podrabinek's courageous leading role in the **Unofficial Working Commission to Investigate the Use of Psychiatry for Political Purposes**. This commission, whose very reliable information bulletins are the major source-material on Soviet psychiatric abuse, deserves the support of all bodies in the labour movement, as well as of such professional bodies as the British Royal College of Psychiatrists.

In many ways, the use of confinement, disorienting drugs and other forms of psychiatric abuse represents the most extreme and concentrated expression of the anti-democratic basis of the Soviet regime. All socialists in Britain and other countries must do everything in their power to secure the release of Alexander Podrabinek, and to force the Soviet authorities to end a practice that arouses the revulsion of the broad masses in both the East and the West. Here in Britain the Eastern Europe Solidarity Campaign has already contacted all the main trade unions in the health service asking them to take up the case of Podrabinek. The E.E.S.C. plans to campaign for active trade union support for this courageous civil rights activist.

By PATRICK CAMILLER

Yuri Orlov in his own words — An Autobiographical Sketch

[The Soviet Government's letter to the Labour Party NEC on the Orlov case calls Dr. Yuri Orlov a 'slanderer', a 'criminal', a 'petty renegade', a man whose 'criminal activities' enabled him to be paid 'considerable sums' by 'anti-Soviet foreign centres'.

What kind of man is Orlov? What is his background? How did he become a civil rights campaigner in the USSR? Remarkably little has been written about his background in the Western press. We are therefore publishing Orlov's own short biographical account of himself — a document which also casts light on the lives of a whole generation of Soviet people.

We have received the English version of Orlov's biographical sketch from Amnesty International.]

I was born in 1924. I spent my childhood in the country (between Moscow and Smolensk), in the forests, in my father's homeland. I lived with my grandmother, who made a living by village midwifery, herbalism, needlework and knitting; there was also a vegetable garden. There was no other husbandry.

My father worked as a chauffeur in Moscow; then, when a stray orphan threw himself under his wheels (or was knocked down by chance), he became a fitter, and after that entered a workers' institute; while working as an engineer, without completing the course at the workers' institute, he died in 1933 (33 years old) of tuberculosis.

My mother came from the family of a steamship mechanic on the Kama; the family was wiped out by typhus during the civil war. She came as a stray orphan to Moscow, where she attracted my father by her red hair and her bravery, which she inherited from her mother, who used to go for smuggled fabrics to China and Persia, to supplement the mechanic's earnings.

I went to school in Moscow, where I lived with my mother and stepfather, who was a most kindly and unsuccessful artist. He worked as a labourer, then in the archives; in the first year of the war he was called up and was killed at Kharkov in 1942.

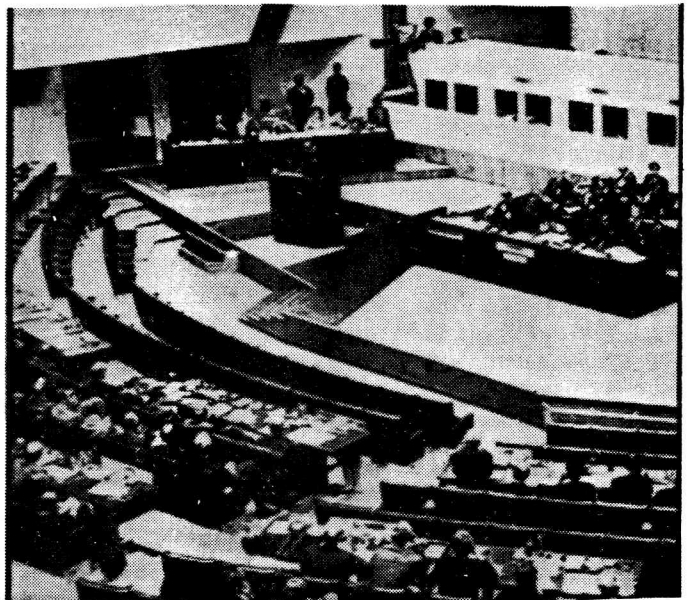
From the beginning of the war I worked as a turner in a factory. Already in 1941, an acquaintance of my uncle, who had worked for a long time at this same factory, also a labourer, said to me: "I hope that our alliance with the democratic countries in this war will lead to the democratization of our country after the war". How was it that he did not fear an informer? His words struck me, since I knew from the newspapers, books and my teachers that we were the **most democratic** country in the world, that our democracy was the only genuine one.

At the beginning of 1944, I was called up for the army, sent first of all to a military school, and then, a month before the end of the war, to the 1st Ukrainian Front. At the school I became a candidate-member of the VKP(b) [the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) - now called the Communist Party of the Soviet Union].

Some of the officers after the war were very critically disposed towards the regime. I took part in discussions (in a small group of 3 or 4 others) and spoke out against the 'dictatorship of the bureaucracy' and advocated reforms in the spirit of a 'return to the ideas of Marxism', as I understood them. While continuing my military service after the war in the Northern Caucasus, I made an intensive study of the "classics" of Marxism and of Hegel, in an endeavour to discover the "correct ideology".

I had two thick exercise books filled with seditious extracts from Engels etc. I burned them once, when I was summoned to the special department. It turned out, however, that this was a proposal to become a secret agent. For a long time I could not understand what was the actual reason for the summons, but when I understood, I gave a categorical refusal. Persuasion continued for two days; at the end one quite high-ranking official, to whom I had been conducted, asked me absolutely unexpectedly: "Why do you think that it is the same with us as the Gestapo?" This was the second remark which struck me. Strange though it seems, I **did not know**, I did not guess, and no-one told me what was the **actual** extent of the repressions in our country, and what their character was; I did not myself think of enquiring, perhaps out of fear, since it was dangerous even to ask a question. In our "circle" we did not even touch on this subject.

The end of 1946: discharge to the reserve, the completion of schooling as an external student, preparation for the entrance examinations for MGU [Moscow State University], and work at the same time as a stoker at a factory in Moscow. This employment gave me sufficient time for my studies and also bread cards.



The Helsinki Conference in session in 1975. Yuri Orlov is now in jail for attempting to monitor Soviet observance of the documents which Brezhnev signed during that conference.

I graduated from MGU (Faculty of Physical Technology and then Physics) in 1952. While there, in 1948, I had become a Party member (from among the candidates). My political doubts had been entirely cast aside during this period of study.

It is curious that, of the group of seven students who lived together in one apartment at the scientific institute where we did our practicals, **three** were agents. Incidentally, in 1951 the Faculty of Physical Technology was re-organized into an institute, whereby all the **Jews** were transferred to Kazan and Ryazan, and the Russians to MGU and the Moscow Physical-Engineering Institute. As a result one very talented lad (Eskin) threw himself out of a seventh-storey window.

In 1953 I began to work at the Institute of Theoretical and Experimental Physics, where Academician A.I. Alikhanov was director. At the beginning of 1956 I completed my thesis and my first article was published in *Nuovo Cimento*; (this was the beginning of freer publication on subjects previously suppressed as "secret", though they were not secret at all in actual fact). At the conference in Geneva in 1956 I took part in five reports.

A few days later a devastating, and of course, slanderous special article was published in *Pravda*, then came a secret letter from the Central Committee to the Party members, in which a Party assessment was given of our speeches. I was immediately dismissed by an order from "the very top", expelled from the CPSU, my name struck out from scientific reports and reviews, since "my name brings disgrace to Soviet science", as I was officially told. I was forbidden to defend my thesis.

I had no work for six months. However, money was collected in many physics institutes to assist those who had been dismissed, so that neither I myself nor my colleagues suffered great hardship.

In Moscow I was not accepted anywhere for scientific or pedagogical work. One personnel manager declared maliciously that I should have to go to a factory to be "re-forged". Shortly afterwards a law concerning 'idlers' was brought in. Accordingly, I accepted the suggestion of A.I. Alikhanyan (the brother of A.I. Alikhanov) and went to Armenia to work on a design for an electron ring accelerator.

My affairs progressed successfully there and at the end of 1958 I even managed (with some pressure) to gain permission for the defence of my thesis, and in 1963 I defended my doctoral thesis also.

During the year of the 40th anniversary of Soviet Armenia, Khrushchev while he was in Armenia gave orders to "forget the past" and I received back my permit for access to "secret work". Without this permit I was unable to see some of my own secret reports, nor could I go inside a great majority of institutes in Moscow to make use of their libraries, and I endured other, sometimes quite ludicrous, restrictions.

The order to "forget" was honourably carried out. In 1968 the Central Committee of Armenia even gave permission to leave my name on the list of candidates for the elections to the Academy and I was elected a corresponding member of the Armenian Academy. Altogether I was treated exceptionally well in Armenia.

However the results of the elections proved to be a surprise for Moscow. An intensification of pressure began: restrictions on travel, etc.; I was never allowed to go abroad.

In 1972 I had to leave Armenia for Moscow. After 6 months of tribulation, L.A. Artsimovich admitted me with difficulty to an institute under his direction.

16.9.1973: Letter to L.I. Brezhnev (concerning the campaign against Sakharov)

October 1973: initiating group of "Amnesty International"

1.1.1974: dismissed. Amburtsumyan (President of Armenian Academy of Sciences) could not accept me for work even in Armenia despite his promise.

13.2.1974: signed the "appeal" concerning the expulsion of Solzhenitsyn.

To be a Marxist in the USSR

— by Boris Weil

[Boris Weil was born at a date which resulted in his being a student at Leningrad University during the ferment of 1956-57. That was the period of the 20th Party Congress when many hoped for a return to Leninism and a thoroughgoing break with the Stalinist tradition. Boris Weil became a Marxist, was arrested for circulating writings by Togliatti and others and began a long journey through the Gulag archipelago, punctuated by a brief period of freedom from the camps in the late 1960s. Others studying with Weil at university did not take Marxist ideas so seriously and they are now professors of 'Marxism-Leninism' and the like in the institutes and research establishments of Moscow and Leningrad. Boris Weil, unable to find work after his latest spell in forced exile left the USSR for the West recently. Below he describes the fate of Marxism in the USSR.]

His article is translated from the Wiener Tagebuch (Vienna Journal) of March 1978. It is an edited version of a speech he gave to a socialist conference in Venice organized by the Il Manifesto group in 1977. The conference was concerned with the situation in Eastern Europe and the USSR. Translation is by Labour Focus.]



Boris Weil and his wife, pictured in the USSR.

Here in the West I can discuss questions which I would not be able to discuss in the Soviet Union except at certain times within the circle of my closest friends, or with fellow prisoners in the camp. It would be unthinkable anywhere else. Here I can speak in a hall with a portrait of Lenin on the wall, at a table covered with a red cloth. At home that would mean an official ceremony and an intolerable bore, which everyone would find nauseating; they would only bear it because they are forced to do so. I have always felt this way too, but here I can say what I think.

I was in the camp with Plyushch. He was declared insane there, not only because he was a "dissident", but also because he described himself as a Marxist. If Marx lived in the Soviet Union today, they would probably declare him insane too. As for Lenin it is well-known that he was virtually under house arrest for the last two and a half years of his life, isolated from the leadership of the Party.

You are aware of Lenin's words: that Russia only assimilated Marxism with great difficulty. The process is not finished. Today in Russia we have no philosophy as unpopular as Marxism —

which is understandable. The most dreadful crimes are committed under the cloak of Marxist terminology: this is why Marxism today provokes only loathing.

Such is the state of things in our country. The mass of the population is not interested in Marxism and wants nothing to do with politics, because they are disgusted by everything which has been imposed on them by force.

To be sure, our rulers are always quoting Marx and Lenin, but in reality Marxism means nothing to them. For them Marxism is a compilation of quotations. As the occasion demands, they will use some quotation or other, just as they would play a card in a game of patience. In the pack of cards there is always some quotation they can use.

From a critical, living theory Marxism has degenerated into a collection of quotations: any event can be explained or justified by some kind of quotation. There are learned people working in institutes of Marxism-Leninism who describe themselves as Marxists; they have made Marxism into a commercial enterprise and live on the dividends from **Capital**. As a Marxist you can live on these dividends, be a Russian bourgeois — and it pays very well! These people studied with me and my friends. They constitute the new generation

of ideologues which was formed after Stalin's death.

Today they carry weight. They are not doing time in the prisons. They have their summer villas. We are the ones who ended up in prison, in the camps, in exile or even under psychiatric treatment. The official Marxists have no critical spirit; it has been lost without trace, and this is why the workers detest the ideologues. The regime destroys everyone who wants to think in a genuinely Marxist way. All this contributes to the fact that the "dissidents" have to a large extent turned away from Marxism — understandably.

In the eyes of our friends, Marxists like Plyushch and myself are considered idiots. People consider it idiotic to read the official texts, which are printed in millions of copies and which sit untouched on the shelves of libraries and bookshops. When I left the Soviet Union I brought out with me the third edition of Lenin's **Collected Works**, the one published under Bukharin's supervision. My friends were astonished — why do such a thing? The Russian customs officials were taken aback, too. "Why do you need these?", they asked me. To Soviet citizens such a thing seemed inconceivable. I was able to read Marx in prison and in the camp, as Marx is not forbidden. Reading the gospel is forbidden: if you are caught at

it, you will end up in the tank [the punishment cell - ed.]. You can read Marx to your heart's content — it's just that the warders find it incomprehensible: "Why are you reading Marx and Lenin?" The camp administration looked on us with suspicion. It is natural for religious people to read the bible, but who on earth would want to read Marx!

Hence it is perhaps all the more understandable why the dissident movement is not of a socialist, proletarian character but is largely, though not exclusively, composed of intellectuals. After many years a formula has been found, with neither statutes nor programme, but a living formula which is constantly renewing itself: the movement for the defence of human rights. The authorities are not in a position to destroy it — perhaps it will destroy itself, because many of its exponents emigrate. We could ask why most of the members of this current are not Marxists but scientists who are concerned about human rights. Obviously, in such a state, whether one is Marxist, Christian or positivist, the key task is to stand up for human rights and fight for freedom of expression and freedom of information. We consider this to be an important pre-condition for socialism.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Invasion Anniversary Passes, Crisis Remains

Czechoslovakia was quiet on the 10th anniversary of the invasion by 600,000 Warsaw Pact troops. The only open protest reported was a silent vigil by a group of students who took it in turns to stand by the statue of the patron saint of the Czechs, St. Wenceslas, in the centre of Prague. A rumoured boycott of public transport did not materialize, and neither did preventive arrests of leading opponents of the regime. Instead they were merely advised by the police to spend the weekend away from Prague, advice which many of them took.

Charter 77 issued Document No. 18, which is published below, pointing out that the invasion remains the source of a continual national crisis, while the **Listy** group of Czechoslovak socialist oppositionists in exile put out an Appeal for the Socialist and Communist Parties to demand the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Czechoslovakia.

It is clear that the opposition does not consider that the time is ripe for launching a struggle which goes beyond the Charter 77 initiative. **The Times** quoted one dissident as saying that "there is no point in

flamboyant acts that land us in jail and hand the police an excuse for tougher surveillance", while Trotskyist Petr Uhl, in a document published in **Socialist Challenge** (17 August 1978) considered that "it would be wrong to conclude that, in the near future, political currents will emerge .. grow stronger and pass over into a confrontation with the state power".

The lack of excitement over the anniversary weekend does not mean, however, that the Husak regime has solved its political problems. The current leadership in Prague has been unable to take any initiatives to tackle the growing contradictions of the rigidly centralized economy, while the issue of the invasion continues to divide the international working class movement and provoke international condemnation. As the French Trade Union Federation, CGT, which is dominated by the French Communist Party, remarked, the situation in Czechoslovakia "has not evolved". The hyper-sensitivity of the Husak regime to international criticism was shown by the shrill campaign in the official press justifying the invasion, and by remarks by Party leaders such as one by Husak himself

attacking "the dirty campaign against Czechoslovakia by enemy propaganda in the last few days".

70,000 Soviet troops remain on Czechoslovak soil as the final guarantee of the present regime.

The future lies with the opposition. And the great achievement of Charter 77 has been that it has enabled the opposition, which was extremely weak and divided after the wave of trials in 1972, to find a new unity and morale and reach out and involve hundreds of people who were not politically active before. One indication of this is the hunger strike which took place on 14-15 July in solidarity with political prisoners in Czechoslovakia. Of the 175 names which are known of the 242 participants, some two-fifths are workers, and most of the rest students and white-collar workers. The overwhelming majority were not involved in political activity before the appearance of the Charter.

By MARK JACKSON

Charter 77 Document No. 18

Statement on the 10th Anniversary of the Soviet Invasion

Ten years will have elapsed in a few days since the military intervention of the five Warsaw Pact countries against the territory of our Republic. It was carried out without the knowledge and consent of the supreme bodies of the Czechoslovak State - the President of the Republic, the Government and National Assembly, as well as without the knowledge and consent of the leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, its First Secretary, its Presidium or Central Committee.

The entry of these armies was an unlawful act committed in breach of the United Nations Charter, the Warsaw Treaty, the Soviet-Czechoslovak Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Assistance of 12 December 1943, as well as the Convention regarding the definition of aggression, signed by both States and still valid today. Its unlawful character was also fully confirmed by the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, signed in Helsinki on 1 August 1975, which in Article VI, dealing with the principles of peaceful coexistence, contains the commitment to refrain in all circumstances from any intervention, especially armed intervention, by a State or group of States, against another State.

The presence of Soviet troops on the territory of our State was subsequently regulated in the Treaty of 16 October 1968 between Czechoslovakia and the USSR, although not even this Treaty legalized the entry of the armies. Under this Treaty, the Soviet troops were to remain on Czechoslovak territory **temporarily**, and explicitly "in order to ensure the security of the countries of the socialist community in the face of the growing revanchist designs of the West German militaristic forces".

Our question, arising directly from the text of the Treaty, is whether the reason of the presence of the troops in our country remains valid even after the normalization of relations between the Warsaw Treaty countries and the Federal Republic of Germany, ensured by the Treaty between the Soviet Union and the Federal Republic of Germany on the renunciation of force in mutual relations (1970), an analogous Treaty between the People's Republic of Poland and the Federal Republic of

Germany (1970), the Treaty regulating relations between the two German States (1972), and the Treaty on relations between Czechoslovakia and the Federal Republic of Germany (1973), together with the signing by the USSR of the Four-power Agreement on Berlin, and especially by the participation of all the countries of the Warsaw Treaty community and the Federal Republic of Germany in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. The urgency of this question has, furthermore, been underlined by this year's visits of the President of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and of the Chairman of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet to Federal Germany as well as their very clear acknowledgement of the peaceful character of the Federal Republic of Germany, just as by the relations which our country and the other Warsaw Treaty countries maintain with it. What is more, no mention has been made on any of these occasions of the danger used in the Treaty of 16 October 1968 to justify the temporary presence of Soviet troops on Czechoslovak territory.

These are facts from which the Governments of the countries concerned should draw conclusions which would correspond not merely to the normalization of relations with the Federal Republic of Germany but, more particularly, to the normalization of Czechoslovak-Soviet relations: the presence of troops of one State on the territory of another in peace-time is decidedly not a situation commonly regarded as normal.

The fact that the August 1968 intervention has so seriously complicated Czechoslovakia's internal development and that the effects of this complication are still felt today only underlines this conclusion.

Signed by the Charter spokespeople: **Ladislav Hejdanek, Marta Kubisova, Jaroslav Sabata**

Prague and Brno

12 August 1978

(Document and Translation made available by **Palach Press.**)

Joint Statement by Charter 77 and the Polish KOR

[In August 1978 representatives of the Polish Social Self-Defence Committee met members of Charter 77 on the Polish-Czechoslovak border. They exchanged information about their activities, discussed future co-operation and agreed on a common statement to mark the tenth anniversary of the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia and events in Poland in 1968.]

STATEMENT

Ten years have passed since the troops of five Warsaw Pact countries occupied Czechoslovakia to suppress the aspirations of its people to freedom. A brake was put on the democratization process and on the hopes of all democratic Europe. In the name of humanistic values, the people of Czechoslovakia had developed an alternative to the totalitarian system. In the same year, the aspirations for freedom of the Polish intelligentsia were suppressed by force.

The ten years that have passed have clearly proved the viability of the ideas of the Prague Spring and the democratic movement in Polish society — despite all that the spokespersons for the

anti-democratic order and national non-sovereignty can say. Many people from both countries have, because of their support for these ideas, paid and still pay a very high price. They have been removed from public life, deprived of work and freedom and even sometimes of life. Continuing repression is part and parcel of the life of our friends in the USSR and other countries who fight and suffer for the same aims.

In the days around this tenth anniversary we are standing together in defending truth and freedom, in defending true human rights, democracy, social justice and national independence. We declare our common intention to maintain faith in these ideals and to act in the same spirit. Human dignity as an inviolate value which gives meaning to the lives of individuals and nations is the source of all our aspirations and actions. And it is from this source that our profound feelings of solidarity with our many friends in the world who cherish the same ideas springs.

(Document and translation made available by **The Appeal for the Polish Workers.**)

Complete List of Political Prisoners in Czechoslovakia

[Below we publish the most comprehensive list of political prisoners in Czechoslovakia to have appeared recently in the West. It appeared in the Times of 21 August. Inside Czechoslovakia active defence of political prisoners is being taken up by the **COMMITTEE TO DEFEND THE UNJUSTLY PERSECUTED (VONS)**. As of mid-July VONS has issued 19 communiques giving details of cases of political repression. On 14 July a hunger strike involving 242 participants took place in solidarity with political prisoners. It is interesting to note that 5 of the 17 signatories of the initial VONS appeal of 27 April are signatories of the '100 Years of Czech Socialism' document, which represented the first explicit attempt to formulate a political position in opposition to the Dubcekite 'reform communists' inside the Charter. The VONS activists appear to be predominantly from the more radical wing of the Charter 77 movement.

SERVING SENTENCES

Jiri Lederer, 57, journalist, three years' imprisonment.

Ales Machacek, 32, agronomist, 3½ years for distributing literature and Charter documents.

Vladimir Lastuvka, 35, nuclear physicist, 2½ years for distributing literature and Charter documents.

Miloslav Cerny, 48, worker, 3 years for allegedly making and distributing posters supporting Charter 77.

Frantisek Pitor, 57, worker, 3 years for distribution of Charter Declaration.

Ales Brezina, 30, former student of theological faculty, Charter signatory, 2½ years for being a conscientious objector.

Ivan Jirous, 34, art historian, 18 months for allegedly inciting remarks at an art exhibition. Director of the Plastic People rock group, signatory of the Charter. His third time in prison.

Gustav Vlasaty, 48, worker, 20 months.

Miloslav Lojek, 29, worker, 15 months for distributing Charter documents in the Army.

Peter Pohl, scientist, 20 months. Charter signatory.

Milan Turek, 21, worker, 18 months, arrested in connection with a clash with police at a folk concert in Kdyne, southern Bohemia.

Jiri Kriz, 25, worker, 18 months, same as above.

Viktor Groh, 23, worker, 20 months, Charter signatory, same as above.

Ladislav Opava, 19, worker, 10 months, same as above.

Zdenek Cervenak, 20, worker, two years, same as above.

Vojtech Dzurko, 21, unemployed, one year, same as above.

IN DETENTION AWAITING TRIAL

Petr Cibulka, 25, worker, detained since April this year, charged with incitement because he allegedly distributed Charter documents and underground music tapes.

Vera Cibulkova, his mother, same as above.

Libor Chloupek, 23, librarian, same as above.

Petr Pospichal, 18, printing apprentice, detained since 4 May, same as above.

Founding Statement of the Defence Committee

COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENCE OF THOSE UNJUSTLY PROSECUTED

In the spirit of the task which Charter 77 has set itself, and in agreement with its attempt to support the growth of associations formed on a narrower basis aimed at more partial tasks, after several months of preliminary work, the undersigned have decided to form a "Committee for the Defence of the Unjustly Prosecuted". The aim of this Committee is to follow up the cases of people who have been prosecuted or who have been imprisoned for expressing their convictions or who have been the victims of police and judicial arbitrariness. We make these cases known both to the public and official bodies, and, insofar as we can, help the people affected. At the same time we want to work alongside everyone, both here and abroad, who shows an interest in such collaboration. We would ask citizens to bring such cases to our attention, preferably in person. We believe that the activity of our Committee can contribute to preventing people from being unjustly prosecuted and imprisoned.

Prague

27 April 1978

Signed by: Rudolf Battek, Otta Bednarova, Jarmila Belikova, Vaclav Benda, Jiri Dienstbier, Vaclav Havel, Premysl Janyr, Elzbieta Ledererova, Vaclav Maly, Ivan Medek, Dana Nemcova, Ludvik Pacovsky, Jiri Ruml, Gertruda Sekaninova-Cakrtova, Anna Sabatova, Jan Tesar, Petr Uhl.



Charter spokesperson Jaroslav Sabata [left] with his daughter Anna Sabatova, her husband Trotskyist and Charter activist Petr Uhl [right] and their two children.

Pavel Novak, 35, worker, detained since 21 April, charged with subversion of the republic because he allegedly prepared and distributed leaflets and other written material.

Josef Brychta, 56, same as above.

Michal Kobal, 30, worker, Charter signatory, detained from early February this year, charged with incitement because he allegedly distributed documents discussing Czechoslovak politics.

Ivan Manasek, 23, student, Charter signatory, detained since 24 February, charged for same reasons as Michal Kobal.

Vojtech Vala, 36, former diplomat, in detention since last October for alleged attempt to leave the republic illegally.

Robert Merganz, 50, technician, Charter signatory, same as above.

Jaroslav Dvorak, technician, Charter signatory, same as above.

Zdenek Tesinsky, 50, former pilot, same as above.

Vaclav Novotny, 50, former journalist, same as above.

Jan Simsa, 51, former clergyman, Charter signatory, in detention since 30 May. Allegedly assaulted a police officer during a house search. Seriously ill.

Frantisek Hrabal, 26, worker, in detention since 16 February, charged with subversion of the republic for allegedly distributing political essays. Seriously ill.

PEOPLE CHARGED AND AWAITING TRIAL WHILE TEMPORARILY RELEASED FROM CUSTODY

Jiri Grusa, 40, writer, Charter signatory, charged with incitement because of the content of his novel and for allowing distribution of the book. Held since 1 June and recently released.

Pavel Roubal, 30, technician, Charter signatory, charged with incitement because he allegedly allowed his flat to be used for binding samizdat literature.

Vera Vranova, 57, railway worker, Charter signatory, interrogated in connection with 'crimes' committed by Michal Kobal.

Robert Gombik, 29, clergyman, Charter signatory, charged with subversion because he allegedly distributed Charter Declaration.

Marian Zajicek, 27, clergyman, same as above.

Oldrich Tomek, 57, worker, one year, sentenced in February 1977 for incitement against the republic. Very ill so has not yet begun serving sentence.

Interview with members of the Plastic People of the Universe

[In previous issues we have commented on the repression of the 'rock underground' movement in Czechoslovakia. Many rock underground supporters have been active in the Charter 77 movement. At the moment one of its leading figures, Ivan Jirous, is serving an 18 month sentence for 'hooliganism'. Here we publish an interview with two supporters. The interview first appeared in the French weekly, *Politique Hebdo*, No. 307 of April 1978, and was translated by Mark Jackson.]

Plastic People — that's a surprising name for a Czechoslovak group. Why did you choose it?

We took it from a song of that name by Frank Zappa. In it Zappa talked about people "without opinions", about the silent majority and the bourgeoisie, in general about people who conform. But we also looked at the name from an Andy Warhol point of view. Warhol says "I would rather be plastic than real." It is partly a reaction to, but more an attack on the idea, the slogan and the grand myth which was repeated interminably in 1968 in Czechoslovakia: "It is necessary to be human". It was a way of distinguishing ourselves from the prevalent ideology. When we shouted "we are plastic!" it was like a slap in the face of the authorities. We have turned the meaning of this name back to front, and made a kind of artistic declaration out of it. The "Plastic People" are the exact opposite of the conformists, the plastic people. Thus the name has become an ironic social joke for us.

The inspirer of the group, Milan Hlavsa, has a really bizarre cast of mind. His imagination has taken a very strange direction. I have seen the way that he works since the beginning. Once we were in a condemned house where we were rehearsing in the cellar. He came in and said: "I have a marvellous idea for a song. It is called 'Crematorium Smoke'." He said to me, "I want you to compose something around that idea." The composition that finally came out was very wild with a lot of feedback and improvisation. This was in 1972, just at the time when we changed over from singing in English to singing in Czech.

Apart from music, what are your other cultural references?

Every artist who has strayed from the official line and has been exposed to repression has inevitably come into contact with the poetry of Egon Bondy. He is one of the greatest Czechoslovak poets of the century. He did most of his writing in the

1940s. His attitude of total dissent, on the social, political and linguistic levels at the same time, places him alongside Heinrich Böll or the Soviet dissidents. We were very young when we discovered him. It really triggered something inside us. The meeting between the Czechoslovak "Beat Generation" and his poetry has made up our cultural universe. His works, which nobody published, circulated under the counter. They were our first "samizdat". At one of our last legal concerts, in 1972, Bondy came. He jumped onto the front of the stage, singing and dancing. Then he shouted at us, "This is genius. This bunch are going to put my stuff to music." And since the place where we rehearsed was knocked down, Bondy lent us a studio: a blockhouse 3 or 4 metres large.



Copyright Plastic People Defence Fund
Plastic People out of doors and out of earshot of the authorities.

Why did you start off singing in English?

English is considered the mother language of rock. French groups often sign in English for the same kind of reasons. In our country, however, the simple fact that you blindly copy something from outside has a subversive side to it. Later on, though, the Plastic People wanted to get away from the idea of copying the West. The groups then began to develop their own styles and true identity.

That's right. When it all began we were 16 or 17 and we copied the Stones and the Doors, which was the best way to learn. Here's a funny thing for example: at the first concert of the group there were lots of painted things on the stage, including a big placard saying "Our father is Jim

Morrison". To write such a slogan was to shit on everything to do with paternity. We continued to sing other people's songs for years for ... educative reasons, even if the word "educative" appears crazy at first. We were principally influenced by groups which are quite well accepted nowadays, like the Velvet Underground. We managed to get hold of some records of Anglo-Saxon groups.

Are there a lot of rock groups in the Eastern European countries?

The situation in Poland, and even in Hungary is certainly better than for us. At the time of the great trial of Czechoslovak rock groups in 1976, which put a lot of people in prison, an article in the Party journal *Rude Pravo* claimed that there were around 1400 rock groups in the country. It is rather hard to see or hear them though. If you go to Prague, you can go to a rock concert every 3 weeks, and even then it is risky and there are lots of police around.

Rock groups in Europe present a particular image. Is it the same in Czechoslovakia?

Long hair is important. It used to be, some time ago, a real sign of protest, because it was completely unusual in 1970. Now there is more long hair in Czechoslovakia than in the West, where punks have short hair. A lot of Czech groups have tried to reproduce the look of American groups, but that doesn't work. The social-cultural environment is different, and so the style doesn't lend itself. In the first months there would be long steel rods and flying saucers on the stage ... the groups are looking for an image but do not have the ways and means of projecting it outside the stage because all the media are normalized. There is no mechanism for creating and projecting a message which is outside the framework of the institution.

The groups play on the same equipment, and give concerts for the same people. A lot of members of the groups are interchangeable. When we were arrested in 1976, the police confiscated three quarters of the equipment. Now the group plays on stuff borrowed from bands who are recognized by the state and therefore have the right to play.

Can you describe how young people have begun to build a front of resistance to the normalisation of 1968?

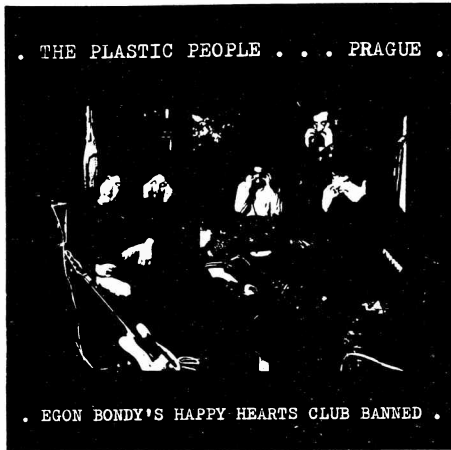
Every year about May, there is a sort of spontaneous commemoration against Normalization. Young students and workers initiate it. A lot have been expelled from college or thrown into

prison. Young people quickly realized that there can be no compromise with the regime of occupation. They therefore embodied a mood of radicalism. Apart from the intellectual opposition and the dissidents, illegal groups were created like the Revolutionary Youth Movement. In 1976, because of the trial of the Plastic People on charges of parasitism, people realized that this cultural movement, which had grown apart from the opposition movement over the years, had become very important. This counter culture was becoming a point of reference and a meeting place for young people. That's why, even though the Plastic People is not an oppositional group, but has merely demanded cultural autonomy, the regime decided to shut it up. But they miscalculated however. The fusion of the fight for human rights in Charter 77 and the cultural struggle symbolized by the Plastic People will provide new headaches for the regime ...

Are you in contact with the political opposition?

Yes, but only since the trial. Most of the activists pretended not to know us. Some of them genuinely hated us. They could not fit us into the framework of a particular political line. When we were arrested the papers depicted us as drug addicts and mad people. As a matter of fact the members of the group are only great lovers of beer. For the first time the opposition held out a hand to us saying, "Do you want help?". They had grasped what was going on among the youth. They wrote letters, organized meetings, and it really did help us because the final sentences were lighter than they would have been. The opposition was very struck by our mode of defence at the trial. Simply, "We do what we do, and we do what we feel a need to do. Nothing more." So everyone arrived at a compromise, at a platform. Quite simply: Freedom of

expression. The opposition has finally realized that its tired old slogans were not very effective. What people wanted was to defend a more fundamental right, the right to creation. Young workers, people without either money or official platforms found a meeting place here. Everyone began to understand that they were not only speaking for themselves.



Plastic People Album plus booklet on Czech Underground Music. Available soon from record shops.

What's the repression against rock groups like at the moment?

Three years ago, when we wanted to organize a concert on a boat on a river, the cops intervened. Most of the members of the group ended up inside.

The drummer got two years because he refused to go into the army. The manager has been in prison three times, once for 18 months. In September he was released, but four weeks later he was arrested again after he made a speech which the authorities didn't like at an exhibition of a non-conformist painter who was a friend of his. He has not been charged. No trial has taken place. Like all prisoners in

Czechoslovakia he has to pay for the pleasure! You pay a big sum which the wages for the work carried out in prison doesn't cover, so that when you get out you still owe a considerable amount to the state.

Are there other forms of cultural dissent?

Yes, of course. The basic idea of the underground is to create a second culture, completely independent of the official one, for the state has a monopoly of culture (cinema, theatre, books, music, absolutely everything!).

How have you related to "capitalist culture"?

In Europe and the United States everything has been absorbed and made official. But here such "references" are a Molotov cocktail. The official culture here is so strict and rigid that nothing changes. We did not start off underground, we have ended up there.

Are the Sex Pistols in Great Britain and the Plastic People in Czechoslovakia the same sort of thing? What do you think of punks?

I think that some of the groups are very near to us in their way of thinking and in their approach to music. When I arrived in London after being expelled from Czechoslovakia I went to a punk concert. There was the same atmosphere there as with us, a certain sense of solidarity. And then all these lies about the punks being violent and fascists. I get the impression that the punks in England are also people who have no other solution and who have made rock something alive and vital. They have reached the essence of the thing and created a whole ethos out of it. Of course, with punk, as with other things, by-products are created which are meant to soften the protest. With us, however, no softening is possible.

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

Jan Tesar Replies to the Debate in Charter 77

[In our last issue we published the contributions of a number of prominent Chartists in response to an open letter by Jan Tesar on perspectives for the Charter 77 human rights movement. Here we publish Tesar's reply to the discussion. In his original letter Tesar launched an attack on the perspectives and methods of the group of 'reform communists' within the Charter (a grouping whose policies are based on those of the Communist Party leadership under Dubcek during the Prague Spring of 1968) and on Jiri Hajek, one of its leading figures. A discussion then developed around the themes of 'radicalism' or 'moderation' in tackling the problems which the Charter 77 movement faces in its struggle.

It appears that a similar debate had earlier taken place within the

Charter in September 1977 when some activists felt that it was necessary to take a more combative attitude to the regime and to introduce some elements of formal organisation into the activities of the Charter. The dispute was resolved by the election of two new spokespeople and by a statement which laid emphasis on the fact that the original Charter Declaration had explicitly foreseen the possibility of different groups taking initiatives on their own account within the general aims of the Charter.

Indications that the discussion is an ongoing one are given by one of the current spokespeople for the Charter, Jaroslav Sabata, in an interview with an Austrian magazine, Abendblatt. Sabata

states that the Charter must have a "more permanent character" and that its documents must be "more widely discussed ... including with people who are critical". He gives a breakdown of the political composition of the Charter, remarking that the "reform communists" are mainly "ex-professors and Party functionaries" and from the moderate wing of the movement, while the more working class element tends to be more radical. Sabata himself, although a regional CP official in 1968, has supported the document "100 Years of Czech Socialism" (published in Labour Focus Vol.2 No.2) which he describes as an attempt to present a clear "socialist alternative" to all currents who see their struggle essentially as one within the Communist Party. Although people from very different political backgrounds are to be found supporting "100 Years of Czech Socialism", he states that all are united on the principle of "democratic self-management".

Sabata warns, however, that "the process of political maturation inside the Charter is not yet finished". There will no doubt be further contributions to this discussion, which we hope we will be able to publish in future issues of Labour Focus.]

My open letter to Professor Hajek, who was at the time a spokesperson of the Charter, has been criticized by several authors. Some emphasize the need to respect Czech law — which, logically, gives the impression that I called on people to do the opposite. Not surprisingly, I must here officially deny such an interpretation. Anyway, some aspects of the polemic are still relevant and, mindful of the limited space, I will answer those points on which I have not yet written.

Dr. Lubos Kohout's letter.

Here there was a misunderstanding, which was mostly my fault. In order to define **contemporary** intellectual and political currents, I used traditional historical definitions. Mea culpa. Some definition has to be used, but it is often difficult to find ones not yet **irrevocably associated** with a concrete historical situation. My use of the term 'radical' should not be linked with any historical situation but deduced etymologically: radix — root. This was originally how it was understood; the term only gradually became a definition for utopians. In Kohout's text there is an important note in brackets which ascribes to the 'totally pluralistic conceptions' of the Prague Spring a share of the guilt for its failure. This point corresponds to one train of thought in the international literature about 1968 and thus has a wider significance. But since the letter is a criticism of my positions, I can state that in 1968 I did not belong to the intellectuals who are called extremists. In late 1967 and early '68, I was still writing to friends abroad that I considered the present highest representative (i.e. Novotny) the best solution, and that I feared those who were preparing his downfall. I was brought to this position because I recognized that, of all the countries in the Soviet bloc, we had the most freedom and that this freedom had gradually increased under Novotny's rule. Obviously I was not against the attempt to re-establish full state sovereignty and attain a European level of civil liberties, even if there was little hope of success. But from the very beginning, I always thought that the policy of the Dubcekites was impossible because it lacked any awareness of the risks. The idea that we could achieve freedom with Soviet blessing was **utopian**. Only two lines were realistic: that of Novotny and that of radical opposition by all means possible. And so after the fall of Novotny, I prayed for the fall of Dubcek and his replacement by a Czechoslovak Tito. I very much respected Dr Kohout for so bravely defending a similar point of view in 1969; in fact I envied him for being able to win over better people than **me**. And now, 10 years later, I definitely do not think that the reason for our defeat was so-called extremist demands: it was much more the incapability and irresponsibility of the

Dubcek **entourage**. What pro-Soviet authors say is true: Dubcek and others were expressly warned in March, and again subsequently, that the Soviet Union did not intend to relinquish its role in Czechoslovakia. Dubcek's **characteristic approach** to the last Soviet warning is also well known. Indeed, Dr. Kohout was the first to compare it with Tito's attitude in a similar — but in every way more difficult — situation. It is precisely in this difference that I see the basic inner reason for our failure; and I say this even though I have plenty of reasons to respect Dubcek for his stand from 1970-76. It is important to say this out loud, since the Czechs have a traditional tendency to complain about Great Powers who abandon them, thereby justifying their own pusillanimity. It is necessary, even though it destroys the unity of a people in opposition.

Sensible people all over the world understood from Dubcek's policies that he must have had an agreement with someone in Moscow, and that he expected support from that quarter. Today, the inexplicable thoughtlessness of that time is rationalized by indicating that such support was counted on; but everyone forgets to add from whom it could have been expected. This idea occurs once again in Hajek's interview, and so I deemed it necessary to write that I disagreed with Hajek's policies in 1968. I am, of course, aware that our foreign minister is not actually responsible for foreign policy. Equally, I am sincerely pleased that Hajek found his way to the Charter — which is not the rule with former members of the Dubcek administration.

Unlike Lubos Kohout, I was not one of the foremost intellectuals of the Prague Spring: but like him, I was not then an active proponent of the pluralist idea. There are thus no personal motives behind my disagreement with the view that it was these 'radicals', or primarily they, who should bear the Czech part of the responsibility for August. Extremism was only a reaction to the illusions and weakness of the government. Without intellectuals and extremists there would have been **nothing at all**, even under the weak Dubcek government which simply gave in to pressure; still less would democratic socialism have remained since '68 as a tradition for Czechoslovakia and Europe. I agree with the view that Frantisek Kriegel (1) expressed in his Spanish interview: namely, that the Prague Spring has not finished and was not defeated, because its ideas and its problems live on. If this is the case, it is only thanks to those who put forward such ideas, and to that small number of politicians (like Kriegel) who have stood behind them to the end. Those who came forward as 'moderates', measured and politically experienced, can only be thanked for the national calamity which 1968 brought upon us. I would like to see Lubos Kohout adopt the position he did in spring 1969: if he is parting company with this past, I obviously do not want to force him in any way, but I am very sorry. In any case, I thank him for enabling me to explain what I mean by the word 'radical', and to use the historical example closest to us in order to prove both the unhistorical nature of the 'moderates' and the continuing validity of the ideas and actions of the 'radicals'. Obviously I did not express this clearly enough in my letter to Hajek.

We should pay some attention to the official irresponsibility of 1968 and attempt to find the reasons for it. Some of these are undoubtedly social in character: those who carried out Dubcek's policies generally **had no feeling that they were unfree**, or else took this for a mere 'mistake'; hence their illusion and then disillusion about 'reality', their lamentations when they finally came to their senses, and finally their torpidity and resignation. I think, however, that there are also deeper reasons. Czech politics has always been 'optimistic'; it has counted on the goodwill of those in power or on the existence of a powerful ally, without having any realistic basis for this belief, still less trying to create this 'optimistic' situation by independent actions. Most of our neighbours have learnt that the strong despise the weak, and that the small state which wants to be independent must above all

realize this fact, and then resolve the basic problem one way or the other. The Czechs really believe in the magnanimity of the powerful, sometimes as a reward for their own loyalty; and natural disillusion has always been the way out of the famous Czech capitulations. When Tito broke (with the Soviets - tr.) he mobilized, Ceausescu (2) — in the national tradition — leant on China. The Czechs imagined, quite irrationally, that the great power would give them permission and that if it didn't, well, there was nothing they could do. Benes (3) dealt similarly with Stalin, Hacha (4) with Hitler. But there is more to it than analogy. Czech politics had these characteristics (faith in being rewarded for loyalty) for many years under Austria. We are obviously not talking only of undeveloped state consciousness and low political culture, but of one manifestation of the characteristic inconsistency in Czech thought, going back to the 16th and 17th centuries and even to Hussitism.(5) And if we wonder whether Czech history has any continuity at all, it is quite possible that it consists precisely in this. A patriot may say proudly: 'Somehow it's always worked out all right for us.' I answer that it has worked out so well that we have had 20 years of an independent modern Czech state, while other smaller and equally exposed nations can count their independence in centuries. It's difficult to say if this reassures anyone — and it's a pointless debate.

I must take up the gauntlet which Kohout has thrown down! Yes, I too approve of the assassination of Heydrich! (6) I would add that from the point of view of Czech representation abroad, this action was essential because there was a need to cancel out the negative impression that Czech loyalty to the Nazis had made on European public opinion. The outcome of the war was uncertain and the re-establishment of an independent state — even in the case of an Allied victory — was not at all a foregone conclusion. Dr Benes desperately needed proof that the Czechs were on the side of the Allies. Either they wanted their state or they didn't: if they wanted it, they had to understand that the world is cruel and doesn't grant freedom for nothing. As far as I am concerned, I definitely support Czech state independence and civil liberties in a Czech state, and I place these values higher than many others. I would, of course, have preferred the Czechs to have behaved towards the Nazis in the regal manner of Hakon in Norway or of the Grand Duke and citizens of Luxembourg (7). Then there would have been no need for the fateful assassination.

I may be accused (though not by Dr Kohout) of using foreign models. I freely admit that this is so: that I admire all our neighbouring 'eternal enemies' — the Poles and the Magyars (8); the Germans and even the Russians; and that I even envy them and consider that what is Czech does not seem to me to be good at all. In 1966 I published something in which I acknowledged my Czech patriotism as an inescapable feeling of responsibility — in no way a feeling of happiness, pride or pleasure. I have nothing to add to that.

Perhaps Kohout will complain that here I am writing about something different from before. I wanted to point out that in the ideas of a section of the 'ex-communists' as I defined them in my first letter, and — as I maintain — truthfully, I can find the former supporters of Dubcek. Equally, however, I wanted to say that Dubcek and his policies have their Czech roots. I am sorry that in my letter to Hajek I left this out and thus offended the ex-communists.

Dr. L. Hejdanek's letter.

We have been speaking about the inconsistency and shallowness of Czech thinking and its natural escape route. Here I come to Dr. L. Hejdanek's letter: not to me, just about me.

The kernel of Hejdanek's letter is one sentence: 'The majority of Czechoslovak laws are not bad.' This is then backed up by the argument that it is only a question of their being adhered to. Well then, I maintain that the Czech legal system in its entirety is bad. To say this does not mean at all that anyone who supports this point of view is actually calling on people consciously to break

the law. I declare that I am not doing this. My conclusions lead me elsewhere altogether.

First of all, however, an argument to support the initial theses. I will be comforted if Dr. Hejdanek can 'knock it soundly', let alone refute it. There are 3 actual levels on which one can interpret the conflict between these 2 theses: 1. political, 2. juridical, 3. philosophical/historical. (Why I divide them will become obvious.)

1. My assertion that Czech laws are 'bad' (I use Hejdanek's term) is based on a paraphrase (a quotation would be too long) of an authoritative statement made by the head of the government in Parliament. He said that our legal system, both as a whole and in each particular, is and must be **the instrument of the politics of the Party**. I underline what seems to me as bad as it is true. If anyone maintains the opposite, he is obviously welcome to his views. I would state only that he must think **either** that the paraphrased statement is true, **or** that such a state of affairs is not bad. Anyone who supports the first point of view is, I think politically very naive, and anyone who supports the second simply has completely different political ideas from me. Even the CPCz Action Programme of Spring 1968 had fundamental reservations about the legal system; and from that time only the position of Slovakia has changed for the better, much else for the worse. He who denies this need only turn back to the Action Programme.



Jiri Hajek, the former Charter spokesperson to whom Jan Tesar addressed his original open letter, starting the debate. Hajek has since resigned as spokesperson for health reasons, giving way to Jaroslav Sabata.

2. The dispute about the 'badness' or otherwise of the laws can be conducted outside the conflict of the two political points of view. And so I shall divide it off. Our laws (as a whole and as they mutually confront one another) are bad even from a purely legal point of view. They have even been included in theoretical legal studies as negative examples. They were assessed as bad also by Czech legal experts in the spring of 1968.

Czech laws are (in their entirety) bad especially because: a) one cannot act according to them — exclusively according to them — in any area of social life and especially not in economic life; and b) Czech laws contradict one another to a degree unusual in other countries.

3. One can also examine the historico-philosophical conflict between the two theses as part of an attempt to comprehend the basis of a totalitarian system. 'Bad' laws (as understood in point 2) are the mark of a totalitarian system of the Bolshevik or, more generally, 'left' type. This is one of the points that strikingly distinguish it from established totalitarianism of the fascist, Nazi type. It is a question of the ideological style of either type of regime. In totalitarianism of the Bolshevik type, there is generally on the one hand a utopia of arrivisme and thus disturbance of the

status quo, and on the other hand a special understanding of humanism and democracy. By contrast, totalitarianism of the fascist type is both less utopian or disruptive and openly and assertively anti-humanist and anti-democratic. From this it follows, in terms of legal practice, that the fascist state can support anything and is also capable of controlling anything. Thus, it has strict rules for everything up to and including the dispensation to torture, and at the top there is the 'führerprinzip' as the ultima ratio. Bolshevik states in the consolidated phase have vast problems, on the one hand trying to close the gap between reality and dream, on the other trying to conceal their power mechanism. And so we get cults and de-cults, sacrificial lambs, and so on. Bad legality and legal nihilism are a permanent feature of the system. The difference between the two types of totalitarianism appears as an antagonism between the 'orderly state' and its opposite.

I would welcome other colleagues to join the discussion on the above three points. Of particular importance and relevance would be a (not merely theoretical) analysis of the legislative and overall judicial system of the entire Czechoslovak dictatorship, as well as of its links with political power.

Without pre-empting such a discussion, I would like to point to some very relevant features of the general state of society and of the conditions for political opposition connected with the above-mentioned circumstances. The Charter or its spokespersons often point to the need to bring previous legal norms into line with accepted international agreements. This is, however, only a small example of a much more general situation: the most typical thing about it all is how easily the state leadership accepted international commitments when international and propagandistic reasons so dictated. This reflects a very characteristic approach to law and legal norms as instruments of propaganda, whose creation and exposition are the subject of stark calculation. (See, for example, the amendment to the 1975 constitution, the political trials, etc.) These all result from a concept of law as a mere instrument of the policies of the ruling party. Post-classical European civilisation is of course based on the completely opposite concept — on law as a limitation on the power of the ruler. If we want to become at least spiritually a part of this civilisation, we must rehabilitate this concept among our people. And we can do it, it depends on us.

In our society there is a situation of as it were general illegality. In the course of everyday life, nearly every citizen is continually forced to transgress some law or decree — essentially because the laws in general are bad from the standpoint of point 2, paras a and b. The end result is a general and critical decline in the legal consciousness of the entire society. From time to time even the general procurator says how respect for the law has declined among our citizens. The moral condemnation which society formerly showed to those who broke the law has entirely disappeared. Even the man in the street appreciates this situation because he meets it at every step. You come across it all the time, and then you come across oppositional intellectuals who maintain that Czech laws aren't bad. What a surprise that they and their activities are simply seen as a further absurdity in the absurd world in which one must live.

Let me continue, however. The instrument of the dictatorship which rules us is the legal system; but it is nonetheless disorder for all that. Laws which are 'bad' from the standpoint of section 1 or especially 2 create a situation where everyone who expresses his views in some way can be imprisoned whenever necessary; whole significant social groups are thus maintained in a state of dependence and acquiescence vis-a-vis political power. This is true particularly of managers and the technical intelligentsia, but also of everyone who occupies some sort of position of control. It is also one of the reasons for the stagnation of extensive areas of social life. Within the complex of all other factors, it is precisely this difference between totalitarianism of the fascist and Bolshevik types which makes the fascist type, in comparison, technologically and economically progressive. We would not be

exaggerating if we said that the lack of legal norms, their non-specificity and mutual contradictions are a significant precondition of the functioning of a dictatorship of the given type, and that to overcome this state of legal despotism would be to overcome the **totalness** of the dictatorship.

The difference in legal situation between fascist and Bolshevik dictatorships results in different conditions for activity of that political opposition which appears when either totalitarianism is beginning to collapse. Opposition in dictatorships of the fascist type is at an advantage in that these dictatorships do not control the economic life of society to the same extent as a Bolshevik system. The opposition thus has economic possibilities and can therefore be broader. But the legal system puts it at a great disadvantage. The fascist state is always a 'rechtsstaat', strictly regulating relations in society. The opposition can be successful only in expressing an obvious conflict with the existing legal situation — which leads, on the one hand, to a strong inclination to go underground and use force, and on the other (for this reason, but it would probably happen anyway) to fiercer repression. This puts it in a position comparable to that of the opposition in the later Bolshevik phases. The opposition in Bolshevik countries has a much easier legal position, because the situation of legal disorder (which is an instrument of the dictatorship) is an advantage for it as well. In the jungle of uncodified relationships and contradictory norms, a space can be found for its legality; and since a regime of that type understands laws in terms of propaganda and actually makes humanist and democratic principles a feature of its own propaganda, the opposition can come forward as a force which is not only completely legal but also — if it so wishes — completely legitimate.

It naturally follows that the dictatorship will try to control and codify this clearing in the jungle (see the 'leading role' and other changes in East European constitutions); and that the opposition **must** continually fight, extend and improve the legality of its own position and activity. If the opposition succeeds in defending 'its' territory, it has no need to 'put itself outside the law'. It must remember, however, that its opponent will not seek to push it out of this no-man's-land by force, hoping that it will leave it and take shelter underground. If the opposition does not want to fall in with its enemy's wishes, it must wage a continual struggle concerning its own legality. The conflict will take place at the very limit of legality, and it must be based on **continual pressure** by the opposition to push the limit back to its own advantage. This takes place in the widest possible context, in as many spheres of social life as possible.

L. Hejdanek reproaches me for not outlining a programme in my two-page letter to Hajek. Although this is a curious reproach, I accept it, and will formulate such a programme here. With two reservations, however: 1. that the word 'programme' does not imply some sort of ideological document but, quite concretely, the expression of a coherent view of what can and should be done now, albeit within a long-term perspective; and 2. that the programme is only for the narrow sphere of possible social activity which we have talked about here. We must take as our starting point the real political system and the 'state of socialist legality' which I have briefly described — at least until Dr. Hejdanek can refute my propositions.

The first general conclusion is that simply calling on people to keep the laws is purely platonic and solves nothing. On the other side, it is obvious that a state of inadequate, incompletely solved legality, and the existence of numerous mutually contradictory norms in the most various spheres of life, is a significant source of power giving the dictatorship a certain room for manoeuvre. Overcoming the state of inadequate legality could in this situation (together, of course, with other necessary conditions which I won't deal with here) become the means to gradually overcoming totalitarian dictatorship and creating civil society. This can, however, begin to happen if and only if positive pressure is brought to bear by the political opposition. And so my

'programmatic' conclusion for this area is: we must develop a constructive effort and proceed gradually, according to our strength, from actions of solidarity with the victims of judicial despotism to suggestions for legislative reform. But we must also succeed in developing positive pressure for the realization of such reforms. This is a path which is obviously incredibly demanding, but in a long-term perspective, it is the only real one. To the person who objects that it is beyond our strength, I would answer: possibly, but in that case we must think the objection through and say that the entire historical situation of overcoming totalitarian dictatorship is beyond our strength. The alternative for the opposition to the positive approach to social problems (the concrete application of which in several large areas I here suggest) is empty phrasemongering. This can take two basic forms: one conservative, which maintains that our laws aren't bad, and the other (theoretically) 'revolutionary', which would like to sweep them away. Both are simply pious wishes.

For the wider theoretical framework of these ideas, I would draw the reader's attention to what I wrote for the Venice Biennale, where I attempted to formulate a direction for the programme asked of me. I have been awaiting Dr. Hejdanek's criticisms for 5 months, as well as his views on applying what I call a **policy of positive approach** by the opposition to the problems of society in the dying days of totalitarianism. So far he has only banalised my ideas in his 'letter to a friend', recommending some kind of free housing association that is quite illusory at the moment. Since the government knows very well from its own experience what the least free co-operation means as an economic basis for political opposition, it will not permit it for a long time yet ... It is no accident that the severest legal penalties are those against 'unauthorized entrepreneurship'. (Are we taking any notice of this feature of the present political system? It is not a symptom of the regime's irrationality but of its ingenuity.) Many years must pass before we get to that point. However, there are similar

possibilities in other directions, as I have already mentioned. If they have no connection with economic enterprises, their legality is safer or more easily achieved, and so interest in these areas is a great deal more relevant.

Of course, I agree with Hejdanek that even if a single Charter signatory rejected a wider understanding of the Charter than that contained in its founding document, then we would have to respect his view. In that case, of course, if the status quo did not suit us, we would have to create something new. As far as I am concerned, the existing situation does not suit me, and although I am aware that overcoming it will take years, I would be glad if that time were not needlessly prolonged.

(Document made available by **Palach Press Agency**. Translation is by **Susannah Fry**.)

Footnotes.

1. Frantisek Kriegel: member of Party Presidium in 1968. Only member of Dubcek team present in Moscow not to sign Moscow Protocols. Signed Charter. Now under 24-hour surveillance. Signed **100 Years of Czech Socialism**.
2. Nicolae Ceausescu: Head of Romanian Party and state.
3. Eduard Benes: Czechoslovak President 1945-48. After war saw guarantee of Czechoslovak independence in Soviet Union.
4. Emil Hacha: State President of puppet Nazi Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia 1939-45. Attempted to prevent complete nazification through a policy of concessions to the Nazis.
5. Mediaeval Czech revolutionary religious and social movement.
6. Heydrich was Nazi gauleiter of occupied Czechoslovakia. Assassinated by squad from London-based army. Nazis subsequently organized massive reprisals.
7. King Hakon VII organized Norwegian wartime resistance from London 1940-45. The Grand Duke of Luxembourg refused to collaborate with the Nazis.

HUNGARY

In the Wake of the Invasion of Czechoslovakia, The Myth of Kadarism - by Miklos Haraszti

[Miklos Haraszti is a Hungarian sociologist who was twice jailed in Hungary for political activities and released both times after a hunger strike. He has written a book on factory life in Hungary, published in 1977 by Penguin under the title *A Worker in a Worker's State*. He now lives in West Berlin. The article published here was sent as a contribution to the activities of the Eastern Europe Solidarity Campaign in protest at the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. Translation from Hungarian is by Anca Mihailescu.]

It is hard not to be pessimistic in Eastern Europe ten years after August 1968. This is its most important result and differentiates it from the fight for democracy of 1956.

1956 was an unexpected explosion. The hurried Soviet fire-fighting job, although quite merciless, left optimism behind — rather like an untimely aeroplane expedition that only bad wind conditions turn into tragedy. In 1968, however, it was precisely the elements of such optimism that were blown to pieces by the carefully planned and collective diplomatic-military

manoeuvre.

Most painful of all is the fact that the authorities' cynical self-justification of their reprisals as a simple surgical operation had some basis in reality. An optimist is today often bound to feel that he is confronted with a whole community of pessimists. His 'illness' marks him out from the 'normal' prison population, which pursues not the dream of liberation but realistically achievable benefits.

August 1968 staked out the definitive frontiers. It cleared away the last illusions concerning the possibility of a democratic transformation of power. It created a closed society which allows no conflict with its basic principles, offering peace and security for those integrated within it. As a matter of fact, it was only after 1968 that the old Stalinist dream came true: the dream of ruling through authority and enforceable laws rather than through brutal and 'lawless' force. The Stalinist constitutional state came true. What the right-wing dictatorships have never lastingly achieved — to turn the destruction of human rights into a 'natural' condition — has become a living reality in Eastern Europe since August 1968.

Hungary's development paradoxically throws light on the nature of this change. Here, nothing seems to have happened apart from participation in the invasion. The country has changed smoothly, without dramatic victims, from a hopeful into a submissive society, in order that 'concessions' might be obtained in return that do not weaken the bases of integration. Here they did not tear down the flowers as in Prague, they simply froze them. They did not blow out the reform programmes, but let them blow themselves out and prove that the democratic hopes bound up with them had been futile. After 1956 there were still quite a few people who trusted in the impossible, hoping that the indivisible power would divide up according to a set of rules. They thought that voluntary self-censorship could give birth to freedom of speech. The intelligentsia assisted political and economic stabilization, deluded into thinking that the pragmatism of stabilization actually pointed towards more noble ends. The intervention cleared all that away. It began to appear that reforms only lead to a more flexible variant of the monolith; that self-censorship only hardens the complicity

characteristic of directed culture and gets rid of any deeper-going message. The technocrats, scientists and humanists secured a place within the power structures and paid a big price for it.



Party leader Kadar posing for the camera in a friendly discussion with some farm workers.

But this is not all the intervention achieved within pacified, integrated Hungary. It also managed to make the system popular in the world at large. For a section of the press, the Hungarian development represents neither a model of more smoothly integrated deprivation of civil rights, nor the saddest possible situation, but quite simply a desirable and fortunate evolution. Beside the heavy-handed neighbouring regimes, the pale Hungarian contrast becomes a tempting sight. I think this is really frightening. Such congratulations of elastic dictatorship painfully remind me of a kind of professional tribute of recognition — one, moreover, which often embellishes the facts. Thus, there is generally one political trial per working-day in Hungary, and most of them end with a prison sentence. From time to time, a statement is allowed to appear about the repression. But there is still a widespread view that human rights are treated in a different way in Hungary. Even such a respectable and unbiased organization as Amnesty International leaves Hungary blank on its world map of political prisoners.

In fact, the only change is that for the last few years, well-known intellectuals have not been put in jail. Other, nameless workers, intellectuals and youth are the victims not only of repression, but also of the fact that the world has not understood the nature of the post-1968 'evolution'. Hungary today is not a crack but a bastion of the post-Stalinist edifice.

So, is there no hope? Since 1968 nothing has offered any hope for the development of the official societies. And yet, this hopelessness has brought into being something that is a more secure basis for future democratic development than any concessions by the authorities.

Throughout Eastern Europe have appeared men who have broken from the state culture: the 'dissidents'. They break with those up-to-date recipes for progress which state that we must integrate ourselves into the machinery, busily awaiting and demanding, each in his own 'station', that the machinery change course. The dissidents want change now, immediately: they make their freedom real. They speak and act without self-censorship, because they have become aware that freedom either lies in the human being or nowhere at all. They are opposed not only to repression but also to utopias. They renounce history's complicated scenario and recognize only one plan — that of absolute human dignity.

The existence of such dignity attacks the heart of the dictatorship of the common good. Its awakening is met with cruel terror, but for the first time this terror strikes not at innocent victims but at real law-breakers. If there are fewer trials in 'liberal' Hungary, this is simply due to the fact that there are fewer such people. However rare and isolated these 'civil-righters' are in the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, the GDR or Romania, however much this phenomenon may contribute to a 'worsening of the climate', it alone represents the real path towards progress and open democratic communication. And the Polish example directly proves that the opposition can stay the hand of terror, provided that it reaches the level of communication between workers and intellectuals. No one should mourn the wasted dream of a forward-moving state socialism that was destroyed ten years ago in August. That dream was the East European disease. The 'hopeless' struggle of the movement for democratic rights constitutes the first real sign of health.

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EAST GERMANY

Robert Havemann calls for International Pressure against the imprisonment of Bahro

[Robert Havemann is one of the most prominent figures in the East German opposition. A member of the German Communist Party before the war, he shared a German prison camp with the present First Secretary of the SED, Erich Honecker. Because of his many years of active participation in the struggle for socialist democracy in East Germany, Havemann has been expelled from the SED, prevented from publishing and subjected to continual threats, abuse and harassment.]

When Rudolf Bahro was arrested last summer, it appeared obvious that it was for the publication of his book *The Alternative* by the publishing house of the DGB. For this reason there were many protests including from leading representatives of West European Communist Parties, amongst others from the chairman of the Spanish CP, Santiago Carrillo.

The item in *Neues Deutschland* of 1 July 1978 on Rudolf Bahro's sentence of eight years prison by the City Court of Berlin, however, seems to indicate that this was not the case. Bahro's book and his sharp criticism of socialism as it actually exists as well as his other publications on these matters are not mentioned by a single word in the *Neues Deutschland* report.

I conclude from this, first of all, the politically important fact that the court saw no indictable offence in these publications by Bahro. It has thus followed Article 27 in the constitution of the GDR which says that every citizen has the right to articulate his opinions freely and publicly, and that this right is not limited by any employment situation and that no one shall be discriminated against if he makes use of this right.

An Interview with Rudolf Bahro

[On 30 June Rudolf Bahro was jailed for 8 years by an East Berlin court for 'espionage'. His crime was to allow his book *The Alternative*, a Critique of Socialism as it Actually Exists to be published by the West German trade unions. The book has been widely acclaimed by socialists in the West as a major Marxist study of East European societies.

The East German government's repressive action against Bahro has only served to increase the popularity of The Alternative both inside and outside East Germany. It has been on the West German best seller lists for several months and has been translated into several languages. (The English translation is due to appear in December.) Bahro's appeal against his sentence was recently rejected, despite considerable pressure from socialists in Western Europe for his release.

On this, the anniversary of Bahro's imprisonment, we are publishing for the first time in English an interview that he gave to Lutz Lehmann for the West

German TV station ARD. The interview was shown on 23 August 1977, the day before his arrest. Translation from the German for Labour Focus is by Anca Mihailescu. Another interview with Bahro appeared in Labour Focus Vol. 1 No. 5.]

When did you first realize, Mr. Bahro, that actually existing socialism is not at all identical with its theoretical bases?

That is a long story. It was clear from the start, and I too could see that certain things were different from the communist ideal. But for many years I thought that these defects and problems could be remedied within the framework of existing relations and under the kind of leadership we already have. Only when I realized that these were insurpassable barriers and that the system is therefore not open to a genuinely socialist and communist perspective, only then did I decide to choose this path.

The initial period of reflection covers the period between 13 August 1961 and 21 August 1968. Like very many other communists, especially those from the

younger generation, I hoped that we on this side of the wall would now be able to base ourselves on a certain security and stability; and that we were on the point of making an important experiment through which we would attempt to win the masses to our side and so get out of the situation of confrontation with the population.

Since the politically as well as scientifically very important book by Bahro has met with a very lively interest everywhere here and abroad, it will understandably appear strange and give rise to misinterpretations if we are now told that this eminent Marxist theoretician had committed treason and worked for foreign intelligence agencies. That is an astonishing contradiction.

I therefore believe that the public has a right to hear more about the trial of Rudolf Bahro and his proven crimes. It also has to be asked why the public was only informed of the trial after proceedings are already over.

The sentence has not yet become effective. Has there been an appeal and by whom? Did Bahro plead guilty to the charges? Who was his defence counsel, and how did the defence plead? Would it not be in the interest of the GDR to publish the trial's transcript, at least the most important parts?

If Rudolf Bahro's case was that of an agent in the service of foreign intelligence, as it appears from the report in *Neues Deutschland*, it would not be worth much attention, if — and that is what is special about it — Bahro was not the author of a very important book, a book in which a Marxist and Communist directs his unsparing criticism at precisely the political system whose court has now sentenced him.

This is the reason why the German and international public have to demand precise and complete information in Bahro's case, about the entire proceedings of the trial. Only then will it be possible to make rational judgments on Bahro's sentence.

I thought — wrongly as it turned out — that a certain beginning was opening up between 1961 and 1968. I remember the 1963 Politbureau communique on the youth as an example of the room for criticising the bureaucracy from below — criticism whose purpose was to destroy tendencies toward inertness and give free play to initiative. In the last analysis, however, these were just tactical manoeuvres: nothing came out of them. Then came the experiment in Czechoslovakia, followed by its liquidation. That was the point at which I could no longer go on as before. So 21 August really decided my present position. After then I began not merely to prepare, but to do serious study for my book. At the beginning of the seventies I started to write it.

As I understand it, your view is that the bureaucratic apparatus is more than just an instrument, that it has become an end in itself.

Yes, my intention was not to write a narrowly political book dealing only with the political surface of our society. **Der Spiegel** gave a very one-sided account of my book by placing the critique of the Party apparatus at the centre of attention. Of course many parts do present such a critique. But the book is in reality an economic-philosophical work. I analyse our relations of production, pointing out the function of the bureaucratic superstructure within those relations. I show that it is in fact a characteristic of the system, and that our non-capitalist order is a system of bureaucratic centralism. In doing so, I take the story a long way back.

I further argue that Marx was convinced that modern communism will, in a certain sense, also involve a process of return to primitive communism. For him there was a relationship between the two.

As regards actually existing socialism, I show that it corresponds, in a reverse direction, to the road that issued in class society — to ancient economic despotism. Thus, in ancient Egypt, there was also a bureaucracy and theocracy — a hierarchy which did not privately own the means of production, but largely controlled the collective social processes of work and life. As in our society, individuals grasped their situation as one of 'subalternity'.

You have described the two opposing structures as usurpation of the apparatus and mass subalternity. What does this involve in practice?

The essence of the problem is that all essential decision-making processes — from one end to the other — are so centralized that the great majority of individuals are excluded from decisions where their own lives, and not just their material well-being, are at stake. Thus, human beings are virtually forced to become 'subalternized', privatized, withdrawn into their private lives. The result is that they quite irrelevantly consider the well-being offered by the other system as the ultimate goal of the individual development of essential human powers.

Is this what the Western visitor sees as the conspicuous petty-bourgeois mentality or philistinism of the GDR population?

Yes, that is the appearance which the situation I have described brings about among the masses. I think that it derives from the existing system rather than from some age-old Prussian-German tradition — although that does of course play a role.

This situation of domination at the top and subalternity below must have economic consequences at the level of production and the work-process.

Yes, I have spent the last ten years in industry — most recently in an industrial leadership function. The discoveries I made there relate directly to this point and largely flow into my book.

It must be said that these relationships result in a constant and progressive destruction of work-morale and work-discipline in our industry. This appears above all in what the Hungarian Marxist philosopher Andras Hegedus has called organized irresponsibility: that is, the direct consequence of subalternity. We have here relations of subalternity and organized irresponsibility, and this causes great damage to the economy. The very high level of disorganization and lack of motivation concerns not only the worker but also cadres in middle-leadership positions. In our country, it is quite possible to dissipate such important undertakings as a big investment. For this interesting work is done with great reluctance by apathetic individuals who have no feeling of success. And this is determined by the way in which our entire system is controlled from above.

What you have written, Mr. Bahro, is surely the work of a heretic. To whom is it addressed?

Heretic — for once we can take this notion in its real meaning. Towards the end of the Middle Ages, the Reformation had a public among circles of theologians, monks or militant Christian laymen who stood very close to the Church. And that was true long before things finally burst out with Luther.

Now, in the case of our social relations, many communists organized in the Czechoslovak Party before 1968 actually held views that were entirely different from the ones they were supposed to express as Party officials. I would say quite definitely: people do think in the GDR. Many are to some extent familiar with Marxism and have long since reached positions similar to mine. What is really at issue now is whether we should speak out loud or put up with things, perhaps seeking some protection from Strauss or from reactionary forces in West Germany. Anyway I could see no other solution than the one I have chosen. And the problems I am throwing up are on the agenda in the heads of countless people in the GDR.

The official call has gone out to make further progress the central issue. The slogan is: 'Growth, Welfare, Stability'. Certainly attractive goals for the masses. Then you come along and say clearly that you want a cultural revolution. How and by whom could it be made?

Obviously I cannot explain this in the time available. The whole of the third part of my book is devoted to this question. I count on the fact that, both in the GDR and in the other countries of actually existing socialism, there is a vast amount of what I term 'surplus consciousness' — that is to say, psychological energy and capacities which are no longer directly linked to the daily work-process and the normal working of the apparatus. This means that there are strong emancipatory forces at work which are not organized and cannot therefore be used. Our system is so organized that everything which presses forward is atomized and weak, and can only be discussed behind closed doors. There you can say a lot of things.



Picket at GDR Embassy demands Bahro's release.

However, it is not possible in that way to seriously discuss perspectives and make proposals. So the problem is: how can the scattered forces that are prevented from organizing by the police be brought together in order to discuss the perspectives of cultural revolution to which I refer? When I use the term cultural revolution, I of course do so in the very general Marxist sense, not at all in the Maoist one. We must practically attempt to replace bourgeois civilisation, whose horizon we have not yet been able to overcome, with an alternative, another type of civilisation.

'The Alternative' - in fact that is the title of your book, 'The Alternative to Actually Existing Socialism'. But will it not be pointed out that many phenomena in the GDR are due to the fact that the state finds itself in a specific politico-strategic position at the crossroads between East and West?

There is something in what you say about the GDR's specific position. But you know, my book is not really a critique of the GDR, as *Der Spiegel* rather hurriedly described it. My book is a critique of actually existing socialism. And its roots, history and structure can only be understood if one analyses the road taken in Russia — what I call the road from agrarian to industrial despotism. I mean, it is not enough to denounce: one must understand the essence of the system and then draw out new perspectives.

I hope that, after the initial sensation has died down, my book will reach beyond the immediate specific situation of the GDR, and that it will be possible to discuss the question of a different overall policy in all the countries of actually existing socialism.

The next time I get coverage in *Der Spiegel*, I would like it to make clear that I am not

hoping to form a party tomorrow. History and politics are not made that way. I want to provide a theoretical basis for the communist opposition, which is already a potentiality in all the countries of actually existing socialism. That is the purpose of my book.

FACT OR FICTION?

The Bahro Defence Committee's bulletin on the GDR reports a current East Berlin joke. A man is standing on a street corner, shouting "The Central Committee is full of incompetent apparatchiks, selfish careerists and bungling bureaucrats!" The efficient secret police immediately arrests him. For defamation and libel? Certainly not. For "betraying state secrets"!

Those who think this is a fictitious story should examine the case of Rudolf Bahro.

Charter 77 Solidarity with Bahro

Charter 77 expresses its disquiet and indignation over the verdict of the court of the German Democratic Republic, which recently condemned a citizen of the GDR, Rudolf Bahro to 8 years' imprisonment. We are convinced that the aim of this judgment is to silence the author of the book, *The Alternative*, which is an original analysis of the social system of the GDR and the other East European countries. The legal measures taken against the

Marxist economist and philosopher Rudolf Bahro represent an attack on civil and political rights and on the growth of a critical consciousness in the GDR and in other countries.

Signed by Charter spokespeople: **Ladislav Hejdanek, Marta Kubisova, Jaroslav Sabata** 22 July 1978

POLAND

Secret Party View of the Opposition

[*The following document was drawn up by the Central Committee for use by CC lecturers in discussions with the Party membership about the opposition. The Polish original states that the text was edited by the Education and Ideology Dept. of the CC from a speech given to CC lecturers by "Comrade T. Palimaka, Head of the Administration Dept. of the CC of the PUWP" (the Polish CP). The speech was given on 20 April 1978.*

The text shows the way in which the Party apparatus attempts to win support within the Party for its handling of the opposition - it does not by any means represent the leadership's own assessment of the situation. For example, the text mentions the 10th anniversary of the student demonstrations in March 1968 and it suggests that the opposition attempted to mount a significant action on the anniversary this year. In fact, however, the Party leadership would be well aware that no such action was in reality planned by the opposition. The text thus claims victories over the opposition where no battle was joined. The author on the other hand avoids any mention of the opposition's growing contacts inside the working class -- a matter of major concern to the secret police.]

In the last few years we have seen an intensification of imperialist sabotage directed against Poland and other countries of the socialist bloc. At the roots of this increase in acts of sabotage lies their unwillingness to consolidate detente, as well as the continuing growth of the forces of socialism in the world.

Anti-socialist activity is a minor factor in the political and social life in our country. It is carried out by individuals and small groups who have long been known for their espousal of

revisionist-Zionist, social-democratic, right-wing clerical and liberal-bourgeois positions. Their social basis is confined to narrow, though vociferous circles of educational workers, a few students, a small number of writers, and other representatives of the cultural world. These people are striving to force themselves upon the life of the country by dreaming up the existence of a broad social movement, which is supposed to be challenging the politics of the PUWP. They negate the whole process of building socialism in the Polish People's Republic ... In the last few months, the anti-communist forces in Poland have suffered a series of resounding defeats. Despite their efforts, they did not succeed in making their presence felt during Carter's visit. The high level of attendance at meetings of the National Unity Front (1), together with the number of votes cast for NUF candidates in elections to the national councils, represents a setback to these people. They also failed to gain student support for the provocations they had prepared for the tenth anniversary of March 1968 (2). Nevertheless, during the last few months substantially new elements have appeared in the activities of anti-socialist forces in Poland — above all, the expansion and strengthening of illegal organisational structures, which have printing facilities and financial resources, as well as various links with abroad, particularly with organisations engaged in sabotage. Among such structures are the KSS-KOR, ROBCZIO, the SKS in Krakow, Warsaw, Gdansk, Poznan and Wroclaw, the TKN and ULS associated with them, the Polish Section of AI, and the independent cultural club. (3) Their tendency to assume dramatic forms and methods of enemy behaviour is particularly noticeable: for example, their remarkably aggressive and defiant attitude towards representatives of national bodies; their use of

active forms of defiance during the dissolution of illegal meetings; and other open manifestations of hostile attitudes. (Insults directed against militia personnel.)

The anti-socialist groups propagate their activities through ever-growing printing facilities. Taken as a whole, the ongoing circulation of their nineteen illegal publications totals about 20,000 copies — half of which are seized by the SB (secret police) ... Since autumn 1977 we have witnessed a growth in hostile elements among the academic youth. Apart from other things, this can be seen in the widening geographical distribution of the SKS; the relatively broad range of literary and educational activity; and the organisation of improvised actions of an anti-socialist character. The so-called 'flying universities' are particularly dangerous from the point of view of the numbers involved and the support given by a section of technical teaching staff.

One-quarter Million Peasants Resist Pension Law

[The most remarkable mass action since the workers' strikes in June 1976 took place in the Lublin region of south-east Poland this summer. Peasants from a large number of villages organized a food strike and organized a self-defence committee embracing representatives from many villages; at the same time some one quarter of a million peasants throughout the country refused to pay contributions to the pension fund required by a new pension law.]

Until recently Polish peasants, three quarters of whom are private farmers, received no pensions. In the early 1970s the Gierek leadership offered peasants pensions if they handed their private plots over to the state. But with the growing agricultural and food

Footnot

1. The National Unity Front is the official election front linking the Polish CP with its satellite parties and non-Party candidates in a single electoral slate.
2. In March 1968 student demonstrations for freedom of expression were used by the Moczarite faction inside the CP for a major anti-semitic campaign of repression against the intelligentsia, the students and the liberalisers within the Party.
3. The initials stand for the following organisations: KSS-KOR is the Social Self-Defence Committee (Workers' Defence Committee); ROBCZIO is the Movement for human and Citizens' Rights; SKS is the Student Solidarity Committee, unofficial student committees; TKN is the Association of Academic Courses which operates an unofficial university syllabus; ULS stands for the Flying Universities which operate in a similar way to TKN; AI is Amnesty International, and the independent cultural club is an informal discussion club in Warsaw.

(Document made available by the Polish quarterly, **Aneks**. Translation is by **Krystyna Kozakiewicz**.)

supply crisis from 1974 onwards, the regime decided to use a more comprehensive pension scheme for peasants as a means of introducing a disguised tax into the countryside to change the balance of exchange between town and country. Hence a new pension law promulgated last year, making peasants give compulsory payments to a pension fund for 25 years in return for a pension of 1,500 zlotys a month -- 500 zlotys lower than the minimum pension in the cities.]

This law provoked widespread peasant resistance. The Lublin area where the peasants organized is one of the poorest agricultural regions of the country with predominantly very small private peasant plots.]

1. Peasant Committee Letter to Parliament

To the Chairman of the State Council of the Polish People's Republic, Parliament, Warsaw.

Last year, Parliament enacted a decree on farmers' pensions after only very limited consultation with the villages. This decree further emphasizes the disproportions between town and country; it is prejudicial to the farmers' interests; and it subjects the rural population to new, compulsory financial burdens. Throughout the country, local councils have begun to collect the pension contributions, treating them as obligatory. Villages give and have given enough to the state. In the last thirty years, the village has given the State millions of zlotys in taxes and compulsory sales. The money is used, for among other purposes, to cover the state farms' deficit, and yet the authorities do everything in their power to get the peasants to give away their lands. We think that we should be provided with a pension from state funds — like the urban population. We protest against being burdened with this new tax: the pension contribution. We demand that the law recognize the equality of town and country.

On 25 July, the tax collector came to Kolonia Gorne in Milejow

district (where Janusz Rozek lives). A number of people, mainly women, gathered from Kolonia Gorne and neighbouring villages of Zalesie, preventing the tax collector from carrying out his duties. He threatened to call the police, but the farmers replied that they would resist them as well. At that the official left the village. He came again on the 26th and was refused for the second time. The next day it became known that many people in various villages — Zalesie, Wolka, Gorne, Kajetanowka, Ostrowek — had been called in by the police with absolutely no explanation. The farmers held a meeting and decided to call a one-day milk-strike in protest against being called for interrogation. (The interrogation concerned the affair with the tax-collector.) On the 28th, Zalesie, Kajetanowka, Wolka Lancuchowska and part of Gorne went on strike again. (On the 29th the whole of Zalesie struck again because the majority of interrogations took place there.) On the 29th it was the turn of that part of Gorne which did not go on strike on the 28th, Ostrowek, Klucz, Ciechanki Lancuchowskie and Supczyn. On the 27th the tax collector had been a little drunk when he arrived. And so the farmers had thrown him onto a manure wagon and taken him to the bus stop so that he could get back to town.

2. Social Self-Defence Committee Communique on Peasant Strike

On 25 July 1978, in a number of villages of Lublin Province (Kolonia Gorne, Zalesie, Wolka, Gorne, Kajetanowka, Klucz) the local inhabitants jointly refused to give the tax collector the pension contributions they were supposed to pay and forced him to leave empty-handed. The same happened when he came on the 26th. On the 27th the inhabitants of one village carried the tax-collector out of the village. The same day, the inhabitants of the above-mentioned villages were summoned to police headquarters in Milejow. The interrogations were not recorded and consisted mainly of assorted threats. In protest against this illegal act, people in some of the villages decided to go on strike and refused to deliver milk for one day. On 28 July, farmers from Zalesie, Kajetanowka, Wolka Lancuchowska and part of Gorne also refused to deliver milk. On the 29th, the inhabitants of

Zalesie went on strike and were joined by some of the inhabitants of Gornego, Ostrowek, Klucz, Ciechanki Lancuchowskie and Supczyn. On 30 July a meeting in Ostrowek was attended by over 200 peasants from the neighbouring villages. After discussing the matter for several hours the peasants decided that the pension scheme should be reassessed and that the farmers should be involved in any decisions concerning the state's agricultural policy. The meeting formed an ad-hoc Farmers' Self-Defence Committee, made up of farmers from 16 villages. This committee was authorized to engage in discussions with the authorities and to organize defence in the event of any possible repression. The meeting's resolution ended with a call to all farmers in Poland to form self-defence committees and to take up the initiative (of the peasants in the Lublin area).

This action by the peasants could not have taken the authorities by surprise. Peasant refusals to contribute to the pension fund have taken on a mass character. By May 240,000 peasants had refused to pay. In connection with this development, the Social Self-Defence Committee (KSS-KOR), in a statement issued on 19 June 1978, designated the Polish People's Republic's agricultural policy as socially harmful, and described the present form of the peasant pension law as a threat to economic and social stability. KSS-KOR warned against implementing this law. To prevent incalculable consequences KSS-KOR prepared certain amendments to the statute, alterations which were ignored at the time. The authorities went ahead to implement the pension laws.

Such precipitate action is a sign of extreme irresponsibility, especially when carried out during the harvest season. The peasants by contrast have demonstrated discretion and judiciousness in appointing their own representatives to discuss with the authorities — the only means of relieving the atmosphere of social tension. By defending their rights, the peasants are at the

3. Lublin Peasants Organize

We, the peasants of the Lublin region, and particularly of the villages of Zalesie, Kajetanowka, Kolonia Gorne, Wolka Lancuchowska, Lancuvhow, Ciechanki Lancuchowskie, Antoniow, Trzeciakow, Kolonia Ostrowek, Jaszczow, Ostrowek, Maryniow, Szpica, Poplawy, Wola Korybutowa, Zawadow, Subczyn, Klucz and others have held a public meeting of about 200 people at Ostrowek on 30 July 1978. We demand that agents of the secret police be cleared out of our region. We also demand the cancellation of demands for money and the calling off of the bailiffs.

Last year the Parliament of the Polish People's Republic passed a law on pensions for farmers and their families. This law requires that peasants contribute to the pension fund. In our villages we have all refused to make such contributions. The authorities have reacted by sending the bailiffs against us to seize our live-stock and grazing land. At the same time, a number of us have been subjected to interrogations by the Security Services who demand the reasons for our non-payment of contributions.

In response to these practices we have undertaken an agricultural strike and have occupied the milk depots between 28th July and 30 July. The following villages have participated in this strike: Zalesie, Wolka Lancuchowska, Ciechanki Lancuchowskie, Ostrowek, Kolonia Ostrowek, Subczyn Klucz, Kolonia Gorne, Kajetanowka. In these villages the strike was supported almost 100%. The Ciechanki milk depot, for example, which normally receives about 3,500 litres of milk a day, acquired only 160 litres during the three days of the strike. We make this warning: if the authorities persist in their action against our villages, they risk provoking a more protracted and widespread strike. At the same time we demand that they suspend the pension law until a real debate takes place on farmers' pensions — the discussions held up to now have been nothing but pure fiction. We have been denied access to the details of the proposed law in their entirety and therefore we are not able to make any comments on the law.

Since we first failed to pay our contributions we have been awaiting the arrival of government representatives with whom we wanted to discuss both the pension law and the agricultural situation in general. Instead they sent us bailiffs and police spies.

By striking, we want to draw the government's attention to various problems:

- *there should be no question of passing a law which transforms the agricultural system without obtaining a special mandate from the peasants to their elected representatives.

- *such a law, including the methods of its application, should receive preliminary discussion in its entirety and the demands of the electors should be respected.

- *the agricultural situation necessitates consultation between

same time defending the interests of the entire society. Only through the peasants' independent representatives participating in decision-making can we avoid an intensification of the food problem, itself the consequence of an arbitrary agricultural policy.

So long as state policy aims to liquidate individual peasant plots and so long as independent peasant representatives are not involved in the formation of agricultural policy, the urban population will continue to suffer food shortages.

KSS-KOR urges active support for and solidarity with the farmers of Lublin province. We believe their stand is proof of a sense of responsibility for the fate of the country as a whole in its present difficult situation and that their initiative stands as an exemplary action for all the peasants of Poland.

(Document made available by Aneks. Translation by Vira Somko.)

government and peasants on State policy towards farmers and the catastrophic consequences of this policy.

*police terror should be stopped.

At this meeting we elected representatives of the peasants of our region. They form the **Provisional Committee for Peasants' Self-Defence**. The Committee members are: *[There follows a list of 16 representatives from 16 different villages - ed.]*

We authorize the said Committee to enter into negotiations with the authorities about the present strike, its consequences and the situation of the peasants in our region. We demand that they organize our self-defence in the case of reprisals. We have decided that no village must negotiate separately with the authorities. We call on all peasants to get in contact with us. This unjust law, which is detrimental to our interests, can be changed, if all peasants unite in demanding it. If we want to win, we must act together, consult each other and elect committees which will present our demands to the authorities.

4. Appeal of Lublin Peasants' Self-Defence Committee

Brother farmers!

For thirty years the authorities have been oppressing the farmer. The communists first destroyed the Polish Peasant Party (PPP), which represented the real interests of the farmers, and then forcibly introduced collective farms. Although they have had to make compromises, they have stuck to their ultimate objective of taking away the farmers' land and collectivizing the villages. The present pension scheme also serves this purpose. It is not yet known when this pension law will be implemented. But contributions must already be paid to the fund, and this is the real issue.

We farmers of the Milejow district, Lublin Province, decided that we would not pay into this fund. At first there was some commotion and people were threatened with the police and higher taxes. But the threats remained just that. Many other households throughout the country have reacted in the same way. According to the press, 250,000 people have not paid contributions. In Lisia Gora, Tarnow Province, only 42 out of 2,675 paid up, and we could give numerous similar cases. The time has come for farmers to struggle resolutely for their rights. We ourselves are quite determined. We appeal to you: fight for your rights as well, do not accept any new taxes! We have organized because it is easier to act and defend our rights and interests collectively. Join us! Make contact with us! Here are our names and addresses:

Janusz Rozek, Kolonia Gorne, 21-020 Milejow; **Jan Skoczylas**, Wolka Lancuchowska, 21-020 Milejow; **Edward Paczkowski**, wies Klucz, poczta Ciechanki Lancuchowskie.

March Calls for Troops Out of Czechoslovakia

On Sunday 20 August some hundreds of socialists marched to the Soviet and Czechoslovak Embassies, demanding the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Czechoslovakia and an end to the repression in that country. (See the picture on the cover of this issue.)

Both the march and the rally at Speakers' Corner that preceded it were organized jointly by the **Committee to Defend Czechoslovak Socialists** and the **Eastern Europe Solidarity Campaign**. The protest action was officially supported by the Labour Party, the Young Communist League and the International Marxist Group (British Section of the Trotskyist Fourth International), as well as by the printing workers' union, NATSOPA. Although the British Communist Party did not officially support the demonstration at least one local CP branch independently participated.

About 300 people at Speakers' Corner

listened to a large number of speeches: Monty Johnstone of the Czech Committee, Simon Hebditch and Phillip Whitehead MP from the EESC, Tariq Ali of the IMG and a speaker from the YCL read out a statement. The main speakers were Jiri Pelikan (pictured here) the editor of **Listy**, Bob Wright speaking on behalf of the Executive Committee of the Engineering Union, the AUEW, and Ian Mikardo MP speaking on behalf of the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party. The rally was chaired by Reg Williams of the CPSA.

About 250 people then marched to the Soviet and Czechoslovak Embassies. The marchers were demanding that Soviet troops, occupying Czechoslovakia since the invasion 10 years ago, be withdrawn. They demanded the release of all political prisoners in Czechoslovakia, an end to political sackings from work in that country, an end to harassment of Charter

77 activists and respect for basic civil and democratic rights in that country.

The small size of the labour movement demonstration was partly explained by the fact that some thousands of socialists were demonstrating simultaneously in the East end of London where several Bengali workers have been murdered and beaten up by right-wing racist hooligans. But another important factor weakening the numbers on the Czechoslovak demonstration was the fact that the Labour and Trade Union leaderships have not yet begun to seriously mobilize British socialist opinion in this country behind those struggling for basic civil rights in Eastern Europe.

On the same afternoon, the Young Tories gained the support of more than 2,000 people for a march and rally in Trafalgar Square protesting against the Soviet invasion.

By OLIVER MACDONALD

EESC Campaign Notes

***Appeal for Bahro taken to the Embassy:** On 18 July the EESC and the Bahro Defence Committee sent a delegation to the Embassy of the German Democratic Republic with an appeal signed by many prominent Labour Party and Communist Party members, including a number of MPs, calling for the release of Rudolf Bahro. The delegation, composed of Phillip Whitehead MP, the Hon. President of the EESC, Vladimir Derer, the convenor of the EESC and Günter Minnerup, the Secretary of the Bahro Defence Committee was refused entry into the Embassy and the Consulate in the basement was hurriedly locked to avoid receiving the delegation.

***Picket of the GDR Embassy for Bahro's Release:** on the same day, 18 July, the EESC and the Bahro Defence Committee organised a picket of the GDR Embassy demanding R. Bahro's immediate release. About 30 people took part, including a number of those attending the Communist University, a major annual Marxist education conference organized by the British Communist Party.

***Letter signed by over 170 Labour MPs for the release of Shcharansky and Ginzburg:** a letter drawn up by the EESC and circulated throughout the Parliamentary Labour Party by EESC Hon. Chairman Eric Heffer MP and EESC Hon. President Phillip Whitehead MP was signed by over 170 Labour MPs and presented to the Soviet Embassy on 19 July.

***Press Conference Launches Appeal for the Withdrawal of Soviet Troops from Czechoslovakia:** On 18 August the EESC held a press conference at which Jiri Pelikan, Prof. Edward Goldstücker and Jan Kavan outlined the present situation in Czechoslovakia and issued an appeal on behalf of the **Listy** group of Czechoslovak Socialist Oppositionists for the withdrawal of



Phillip Whitehead MP and G. Minnerup, blocked entry to GDR Embassy.

Soviet occupation forces from Czechoslovakia. The appeal was addressed to western Socialist and Communist Parties, urging them to raise the demand for the withdrawal of Soviet troops with the Soviet Communist Party leadership. Eric Heffer MP, a member of the Labour Party's National Executive Committee, issued an immediate response to the **Listy** Appeal, supporting their demand and promising to raise the matter on the Labour Party leadership. The press conference was chaired by Phillip Whitehead.

***Meeting on the 10th Anniversary of the Invasion of Czechoslovakia:** On Saturday 19 August the EESC held its first public meeting. 120 people attended a meeting at the Conway Hall — some had to be turned away because the small hall was full — to hear Jiri Pelikan speak on the lessons of the Prague Spring and the Soviet invasion. The Russian socialist Zhores Medvedev also spoke on the impact of events in Czechoslovakia upon the emerging civil rights movement in the USSR. A film on the history of Czechoslovakia up to and including the Prague Spring was followed by discussion. The meeting ended with a second film of the invasion, made at the time by the official Czech TV service, operating in clandestinity.

***Podrabinek Case raised with Health Unions:** in response to the trial of Alexander Podrabinek (see page 3 of this issue) the EESC has written to the four main unions involved in the health service — the TGWU, the GMWU, NUPE and COHSE — outlining the facts of the Podrabinek case and asking these unions to work for Podrabinek's release. The EESC is planning to mount a campaign amongst health workers here on behalf of A. Podrabinek, a Moscow ambulance driver.

***EESC Pamphlet on "The British Labour Movement and Oppression in Eastern Europe" out soon:** The EESC's first pamphlet has gone to press and will be on sale by mid-September. The pamphlet provides a detailed account of the way in which working class rights and democratic rights are violated in Eastern Europe, takes up misconceptions about Eastern Europe common in the British labour movement, and explains why socialists in Britain must actively defend victims of oppression in Eastern Europe and the USSR. The EESC hopes that the pamphlet will be a valuable aid to those in the labour movement concerned to campaign on these issues.

***Trade Union Delegation planned to demand an end to the repression of the Trade Union Association in the USSR:** The EESC is hoping to win support amongst trade unionists for a delegation to be sent to the Soviet Embassy later this year from a wide range of trade unions, demanding that the Soviet Free Trade Union Association, formed in February by Vladimir Klebanov and his comrades, be allowed to function without police harassment.

For more information about the EESC and its activities write to:
Eastern Europe Solidarity Campaign,
c/o Vladimir Derer,
10 Park Drive,
London NW11 7SH.

TUC Takes no Action on Repressed Soviet Workers

LEN MURRAY REPLY
TO LABOUR PARTY

Since our last issue appeared the Labour Party's NEC has finally supported Eric Heffer's motion in support of the right of the Soviet Free Trade Union Association to function without repression in the USSR. But the body to which the Trade Union Association specifically appealed for support, the TUC, still refuses to make any public statement of opposition to the KGB's drive to crush the organization.

On 25 May, the head of the official Soviet trade unions, A.I. Shibayev, wrote to the TUC General Secretary explaining that the official unions would not support the Trade Union Association on the grounds that the official unions were the only unions in the USSR and the Trade Union Association did not have any work-place organization. Shibayev went on to say that anyone who wished to work could work in the USSR - an apparent reference to the fact that members of the Trade Union Association are denied work for political reasons.

The TUC General Council apparently considered that Shibayev's letter was a serious and valuable explanation of the situation. Len Murray's official letter to Ron Hayward, General Secretary of the Labour Party, dated 3 July declares that Shibayev's "comments were directed at the substance of the matter". We reproduce Len Murray's letter here in full so that our readers can judge for themselves whether the TUC leaders are concerning themselves with the substance of the matter in the case of the Trade Union Association.

The basic fact in this case is that a number of workers who attempted to form an independent trade union in the USSR are now in jail or psychiatric hospitals because of their initiative. Others are prevented from gaining work by

being black-listed for political reasons. And the members of the Trade Union Association have appealed to Western unions independent of government control to help it to function.

The TUC has so far entirely ignored the repression of Vladimir Klebanov and his comrades. It has entirely ignored the question of whether or not such a group should have the democratic right to function openly. And it has concentrated its entire attention upon asking the completely state-controlled unions in the USSR what they think of this independent, oppositional trade union group. The only hint of a positive gesture from the TUC is the double negative in Len Murray's letter, where he says that an investigation "would not be undesirable".

There are, however, signs of disquiet from other quarters in the trade union movement. The AUEW has decided to break off all relations with the official Soviet trade unions, although it is not clear that this represents a real decision to give active support to workers struggling for their rights in Eastern Europe. The executive of APEX, the Association of Professional, Executive, Clerical and Computer Staffs has passed a resolution calling on the TUC to contact its counter-parts in Eastern Europe to request that they "protect their members' rights as the TUC would protect its members' rights in similar circumstances".

The EESC is hoping to organize support within the trade union movement for a delegation of trade union representatives to go to the Soviet Embassy later on this year to protest against the suppression of the Trade Union Association. Trade unionists willing to help with this activity should write to the EESC for information on how they could help.

Dear Mr. Hayward,

I am writing with reference to my previous letter to you dated 12 June relating to matters raised in a motion from Mr. Eric Heffer in connection with an Association of Free Trade Unions in the USSR.

In my letter I indicated that we had sought the comments of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions in regard to the allegations made by the Soviet group, that we had received a reply which would be considered by the General Council at their June meeting, and that I would then be in touch with you again. In my letter of 12 June I also referred to formal complaints which the ICFTU and the World Confederation of Labour had submitted to the ILO and you will be aware that since then the ILO has decided to investigate these complaints.

The General Council have now considered the Soviet reply and I am attaching the English version of the letter as received from the AUCCTU.

When the letter from the AUCCTU was considered the view was expressed that their comments were directed to the substance of the matter, that the nature and tone of the comments and the fact that they had been made at all appeared to confirm that by consistently pursuing a policy of dealing with selected sensitive matters relevant to trade union issues through informal approaches the General Council were achieving their aim of opening and sustaining a channel for exchanges that could not otherwise take place.

Some doubt was expressed whether the complaint submitted to the ILO by the ICFTU under the terms of a Convention relating to trade union freedom could in this case be of serious substance, but it was pointed out that the investigation resulting from this complaint would not be undesirable. The outcome of the complaint will be considered by the General Council when it becomes available, and this without prejudice to informal enquiries about individuals involved being made on a suitable occasion.

Yours sincerely,
Lionel Murray
General Secretary

Bahro Defence Notes

In response to the sentencing of Rudolf Bahro, the Bahro Defence Committee helped to organize, along with the EESC, a delegation to the GDR Embassy with an appeal for Bahro's release, and a picket of the Embassy on 18 July. (See EESC Campaign Notes and pictures in this issue.) The Committee has also produced a dossier on the Bahro case including a biography of Bahro, extracts from Bahro's book, a detailed account of the Bahro case, the text of the Committee's Appeal for Bahro's release, and a survey of international protest activities against the jailing of the East German Marxist.

The first number of the Information Bulletin on events in the GDR has just been produced by the Committee. It contains details of latest developments in the Bahro case. Money is urgently needed to step up the defence campaign and the British Committee, along with the West German

and French Bahro Committees, is producing a poster demanding "Freedom for Rudolf Bahro". This should be available from the Committee in September.

The main international focus of the defence campaign in coming weeks will be a large conference being organized in Berlin in October. The conference will stretch over three days and be followed by a protest demonstration in the centre of West Berlin. The Conference will be devoted to discussing some of the key issues raised by Bahro's book *The Alternative* and it will be attended by socialists from all over Europe.

All further details can be obtained from:
Rudolf Bahro Defence Committee,
c/o Günter Minnerup,
School of Languages and Area Studies,
Portsmouth Polytechnic,
Hampshire Terrace,
Portsmouth, Hants.

WIDE BACKING FOR BUKHARIN REHABILITATION APPEAL

The International Appeal to the Soviet authorities for the complete rehabilitation of Nikolai Bukharin has gained very wide support from leading Communists and Socialists throughout Western Europe. This appeal is being organized internationally by the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation (both *Labour Weekly* and *Labour Focus* wrongly reported that the Foundation was concerned only with the British coordination of the appeal). It is exactly 40 years since Bukharin and other old Bolsheviks were sentenced at the 3rd Moscow Show Trial for being agents of Hitler. Bukharin, called by Lenin the favourite of the Party and its leading theoretician, was executed and despite repeated attempts to gain his rehabilitation, the Soviet Party leadership still insists on his guilt.