

LABOUR FOCUS ON EASTERN EUROPE

Summer 1985

Vol 8 No1

£2/\$4

*Jiri Dienstbier:
German unity &
Europe*

THE ORIGIN OF
DESTALINISATION

The Secret Speech of Imre Nagy



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 gives 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 material in **Labour Focus** may be reproduced, with acknowledgement. Signed articles do not necessarily represent the view 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 USSR and Eastern Europe.

SPONSORS: Tariq Ali, Edmund Baluka, Vladimir Derer, Ivan Hartel, Eric Heffer MP, Nicholas Krasso, Leonid Plyushch, Hillel Ticktin.

MANAGING EDITORS: Michèle Lee, Oliver MacDonald.

EDITORS: Vladimir Derer, Quintin Hoare, Oliver MacDonald, Anna Paczuska, Claude Vancour.

EDITORIAL COLLECTIVE: Barbara Brown, Patrick Camiller, Andrew Csepel, Susannah Fry, Ivan Hartel, Victor Haynes, Alix Holt, Mark Jackson, Helen Jamieson, Pawel Jankowski, Michèle Lee, Anca Mihailescu, Günter Minnerup, Joe Singleton, Laura Strong. **USA:** Joanne Landy. **West Berlin:** Traude Ratsch. **France:** Catherine Verla.

Subscription Rates

Please write to Labour Focus to inquire what the new subscription rates will be. A leaflet will be sent out to all subscribers with the new rates in the near future.

LABOUR FOCUS ON EASTERN EUROPE

Box 23

136 Kingsland High Street
London E8.

In Quebec, copies of **Labour Focus** can be obtained from Peter Solonysznyj at 1276a St Zotique, Montreal.

Printed by Morning Litho (TU) Ltd.

Thanks to Phil Evans for the design for the cover and the layout of the Hungarian section.

LABOUR FOCUS ON EASTERN EUROPE

Contents

EDITORIALS

- To our long-suffering readers 1
Eastern Europe, Reaganism and the Left 1

FEATURES

- The Secret Speech of Imre Nagy 3
European Re-unification and the German Question
— Bv Jiri Dienstbier 17

POLAND

- Jaruzelski Back on the Defensive — By O. MacDonald 22
Self-Management and Solidarity
— Interview with Henryk Wujec 23

BULGARIA

- The Persecution of the Turks — By Michèle Lee 25

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

- Chartists Debate History — By Mark Jackson 27
Appeal for Nicaragua 28

YUGOSLAVIA

- The Belgrade Trial — By M. Lee 28
The League of Communists and Young People
— Interview with Boris Vuskovic 29

GDR

- Documents from the unofficial Peace Movement:
1. Fundamentals of a Peace Strategy 32
2. A History of the Peace Movement 33

LETTER

- Don't Paint the USSR in Such Rosy Colours
— By Claude Vancour 33

BOOK REVIEWS

- Enigmas of Normalisation — By Karla Joachim 34
Euromissiles: Awkward Questions for the Left — By Ben Lowe 35
Enemies' Enemies — By John Molyneux 36
When a Woman Speaks ... — By Jill Nicholls 37
Kollontai 60 Years On — By Luch Robinson 38
Economics and Crisis in the USSR — By Mike Haynes 38

To our long-suffering readers

It will not have escaped your notice that the intervals between issues of Labour Focus have been increasing recently. This has been due to a variety of technical and above all financial causes.

But we are delighted to be able to announce that the London-based publisher Verso has agreed in principle to take over the printing and distribution of a new-format Labour Focus. Discussions are still going on concerning the details of the new arrangements, but if all goes well, the first issue of the new journal will appear this autumn, and thereafter its appearance should once again become regular.

Editorial policy will, of course, remain unchanged and Labour Focus will continue to publish informational ar-

ticles, documents and analysis related to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

We apologize to our readers for all the difficulties they have experienced in receiving the journal regularly, in getting replies to correspondence and so on. But we hope, under the new arrangements, to be able, for the first time, to employ a part-time managing editor and to have a proper office.

Our final difficulty is our current debt burden — £1800 — which we cannot pass on to our new publisher. I must therefore appeal to you urgently for any contributions you may be able to make to help us clear this debt.

Oliver MacDonald

Eastern Europe, Reagan and the Left

Throughout its eight years of existence, Labour Focus has stood for two basic convictions. First, that genuine popular sovereignty and the achievement of full civil and democratic liberties in Eastern Europe and the USSR would not be handed down by decree, but would require popular struggle from below in which a reborn, autonomous working-class movement would play the central part. Secondly, that such movements and the Western Left are potential allies and we should work to make them actual allies.

When we began publication, back in 1977, the NATO powers appeared quite happy to keep to the European status quo and to accept Soviet claims to hegemony in the Eastern part of the continent.

However, the arrival of a new cold war and arms race, and the reaction to it in the shape of the Western peace movement, have dramatically changed the political contours in the West.

It is still the case that powerful forces within the West European NATO establishments continue to favour the existing division of Europe, and accordingly seek to give the Soviet leadership the guarantees it desires to ensure control in Eastern Europe. In Britain, for example, the recent spate of fortieth-anniversary editorializing showed that — with the exception of The Times, which now acts as a mouthpiece for the Reagan administration — establishment opinion is still strongly pro-Yalta. This is not a matter purely of fear of Soviet military strength, or of the danger of a nuclear holocaust. A second, largely unspoken, worry is also present: a united Europe, resulting from the rollback of Soviet power, would risk being dominated by a united Germany.

In the last few years, however, this pro-Yalta line has faced a powerful new challenge from the Reaganite Right, whose views (voiced here in Britain by The Times and more cautiously by The Economist) are now dominant in Washington and are strongly present within the CDU-CSU administration in West Germany. This trans-Atlantic current argues that it is desirable, indeed necessary, to end the division of Europe; and that it is also possible to do so by way of economic and military coercion directed against the Soviet state. This aggressive alternative to Yalta is not a plan for a Third World War. Rather it is conceived as a plan for peaceful victory in Europe, to be achieved by making military resistance on the part of the Soviet leadership practically impossible.

Some may object that there is far too much opposition both in Washington and in Western Europe for the Reaganite strategy to have much chance of being pursued consistently to the end. This may well be true. But the question remains whether we should support the strategy. And if not why not? What alternative can the Left advance that offers a better hope than the might American state for the peoples of Eastern Europe?

THE REAGANITE STRATEGY

In the first place, Washington is seeking to engage Moscow in an all-out arms race, backed by economic and technological embargoes, with the aim of imposing an intolerable burden on the Soviet economy. This, it is hoped, will lead the Soviet Union to place a ruinous burden on the East European economies, as a

result of which these inherently unstable states may face the threat or the reality of an explosive domestic crisis. When that point comes, so the argument goes, the leaderships of these states — whatever particular groups might by that time be in power — would have a powerful incentive to break ranks with Moscow and switch their international allegiance to Washington.

Historically it has been the case that, since 1945, whenever powerful mass unrest appeared to threaten existing arrangements in Eastern Europe, the assertion of Soviet military power was sufficient to put a stop to it. This Soviet military potential has also been the stumbling-block of all roll-back hopes, since any response by way of a Western armed intervention would have evoked the danger of global nuclear war. The novel element in the Reagan strategy has precisely been the attempt to achieve a regional military superiority, capable of deterring the USSR from either moving against an insurgent East European population or resisting a Western incursion. For the Pentagon has now produced plans for nuclear deep strikes (capable of hitting Soviet forces as far away as the borders of the Soviet Union itself), coupled with very rapid advances eastwards by NATO ground forces. In addition to Pershing and Cruise, the buzz codes of the US Army summarizing this new military doctrine are: ET weapons, Follow-On-Forces Attack (FOFA) and Airland Battle; the first tentative plans for ET weapons have been agreed, and the Airland Battle doctrine is already accepted by both US and FRG forces in West Germany.

Once all these plans become operational, Soviet preparations for a pre-emptive invasion of, say, a Hungary going neutral, or a Poland going revolutionary, could be met with an American-German ultimatum to hold back or face war. Up until now, the USSR has been in a position to call the American bluff, by threatening global nuclear war. Reagan's Star Wars drive is designed to tackle this problem. If successfully developed, Star Wars technology would give the USA the possibility of surviving a Soviet nuclear strike. Having 'decoupled' its security from that of Western Europe, the US could afford to risk a 'limited' nuclear war on the European continent. Its theatre superiority would be underpinned by its own inviolability. Its ultimatum to the Soviet leadership, in an East European crisis, would thus carry all-round credibility.

It is true that there are currents within the American establishment who are very much opposed to the entire Reaganite strategy. But it would be a grave error to imagine that this new aggressive plan for Europe rests on nothing more solid than the ideological fervour of the Republican Party's Right. On the contrary, it is an attempt to solve what for almost a decade has been the central problem of US foreign policy: how to establish US hegemony in Western Europe, and above all in West Germany — The German Question being today as in the past the key to the future political make-up of the continent.

Reagan's coercive strategy thus provides the vital ingredient for re-asserting US leadership in Bonn. It provides an alternative to the hitherto hegemonic SPD Ostpolitik, which was based on respect for the Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe. By way of participation in the Star Wars project, it offers the FRG, dominated

by the Right, a new role in Western Europe. The big anti-Soviet stick of this new Ostpolitik, built on military technological cooperation between FRG and USA, is meant to be combined also with big economic carrots to favoured East European regimes.

The standard objection from Yalta 'realists' of the British Foreign Office ilk is that Reagan's 'coercive diplomacy', aimed at removing Eastern Europe from Soviet control, might fail and produce a nuclear holocaust instead. This would be most unfortunate!

But would a success for the Reaganite strategy be any more fortunate, from the point of view of the peoples of Europe, East or West? For in the West, and especially in West Germany, it would mean defeating the Left in general and the peace movement in particular: such a defeat would inevitably involve a serious erosion of democratic liberties, social rights and economic welfare. At the same time, there is no guarantee whatsoever that any state prised out of the Warsaw Pact would be internally democratic: it could just as well turn out to be run by a Jaruzelski or a Ceausescu. And since even the most starry-eyed supporter of Reagan must admit that US policy is ultimately dictated by US interests, which are concerned with weakening the USSR and strengthening US hegemony in Europe, not with going round ensuring democratic procedures everywhere — and since also such organized, popular movements from below as have emerged in Eastern Europe have tended to be predominantly anti-capitalist in their social thrust — a government acceptable to US interests would clearly be more likely to be a reinforced authoritarian remnant of the old bureaucratic regime than a radical government of labour (of the kind Solidarnosc might have spawned).

Success for Reaganism demands, in addition, a resurgent, united Germany under right-wing nationalist leadership. This for the simple reason that without the Bundeswehr (Europe's most powerful army after that of the USSR) and without German capital, the Reaganite strategy is a non-starter. And it is highly doubtful, to say the least, that a Germany united by the nationalist Right in the FRG would be delicately sensitive to the interests of the nations of Central and Eastern Europe — even if it forebore, at US insistence, from destroying Poland's territorial integrity or grabbing Western Bohemia and Austria.

THE ALTERNATIVE OF THE LEFT

At first sight, it might appear that the West European Left offers no European-wide socialist strategy that includes the struggle for democratic liberties in Eastern Europe. In a West European labour movement divided between those who go along, to one degree or another, with NATO's military build-up and those who resist it, the Left protests only sporadically against human rights violations or other instances of political repression in the USSR and elsewhere in Eastern Europe. Unwilling to associate itself with the anti-Communism of the Right, it concentrates overwhelmingly on opposing NATO's military build-up.

On second thought, however, it emerges that the Left's struggle to halt and reverse the military build-up in the West can itself realistically be seen precisely as one key element in a strategy for democratization in Eastern Europe. This is clear if we take as our starting-point the assumption that genuine popular sovereignty will be established in Eastern Europe only through political mass movements there: movements in which the workers in the big factories will — as in Poland in 1980-81 — play the central role. If so, then the task of the Left in the West is to prevent the political changes produced by such a working-class movement from being pre-empted and subverted by a monstrous apparatus of Western military aggression. In other words, its task must be to help create the best possible international conditions for the emergence and success of forces of mass democracy.

Ever since the 1950s, the policy of the West has been to maintain a massive military pressure on the USSR. The bickering over details, at international East-West conferences, has been a way of avoiding any serious troop reductions in Europe. By contrast, the policy of the Left must be for massive reductions of both nuclear and conventional forces in Western Europe: this objectively helps the forces of socialist democracy in the East.

Now, any suggestion that a reduction in military forces in the West (whether through Rapacki-type agreements, removal of nuclear weapons, removal of US military bases or reductions of

conventional weapons) might actually foster movements for change in Eastern Europe brings a howl of protest from the Right. Yet there is ample evidence to show that the period of reduced tension in Europe in the early 1970s found the Soviet leadership worried lest relaxation might open the floodgates to democratic pressures from below. Endless rounds of conferences of top party officials were held to discuss how to maintain control in conditions of East-West detente — that is, in conditions of simply an easing of political tensions. The unofficial peace movement in the GDR came into being as a response to the peace movement in the Federal Republic. Can anybody seriously argue that the removal of nuclear weapons and/or US bases from the FRG would bring no popular response in the GDR on a far larger scale than that which exists there today? Under such conditions, it is not the prospect of the two Germanies drawing together that is menacing for the peoples of Eastern Europe but the Reaganite vision of a militarized Germany united by the nationalist Right.

There is in reality only one argument which the Right can muster against such a policy of the Left. This is that a reduction in Western military forces, and/or a break with the US by major West European states, would produce a Soviet invasion of Western Europe. This argument assumes that the Soviet leadership is incapable of making even a half-way rational calculation of costs and benefits. For there can be little doubt that such adventurism would be resisted vigorously on both sides of Europe. And to what Soviet advantage?

THE DEBATE ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

Strenuous efforts are made by ideologues of the Right (in this country Roger Scruton being an unsavoury example) to encourage the impression that the democratic opposition in Eastern Europe is uniformly and resolutely hostile to the efforts of the Western peace movements and the Western Left. More generally, the media here seek to portray the democratic opposition as being concerned only with the repression daily reproduced in Eastern Europe. But the reality is more complex. Major contributions to the debate on the future of Europe have now come from such voices as the Hungarian Gyorgy Konrad, and the Czechs Jaroslav Sabata and Jiri Dienstbier (see Dienstbier's important article in this issue). Contributions have come from within the unofficial peace movement in the GDR, from prominent writers in the Polish underground press like David Warszawski, as well as from Roy Medvedev in Moscow and Mihailo Markovic in Belgrade — thus demonstrating the vitality of a real and deep-going debate between the East and the Western Left. In Czechoslovakia as well, Charter 77's current documents are further than ever from the policies of the Right.

But what any East European partners in this transcontinental debate have the right to expect is unequivocal ideological and political support for the struggle for civil and democratic liberties in Eastern Europe. They have the right to demand from us no mealy-mouthed equivocations over the suppression of Solidarity in Poland, or over the jailing of political activists like Frasnyniuk, Michnik and Lis.

This is the approach that has been pursued in the British Labour movement by such well-known leaders of the Left as Eric Heffer, MP. Nobody prominent in British politics has been so outspoken in defence of victims of repression in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, while at the same time opposing NATO's military build-up and pressing for a reassessment of the Labour Party's commitment to the Atlantic alliance.

The post-war arrangements in Europe are becoming increasingly unstable. In the East this is due to the inability of the authoritarian bureaucracies to command the support of the people, keenly conscious of the discrepancy between their nominal and actual rights. In the West, it is caused by the collapse of the US-dominated post-war order based on welfare capitalism, full employment, strong social democratic parties and a nuclear alliance with the local satraps. In the new conditions, in which we now find ourselves, few tasks are more important for the Left throughout Western Europe than of strengthening our links with those struggling for progressive political change in Eastern Europe, in order to establish an alliance for socialism and democracy across the continent as a whole.



Premier Imre Nagy broadcasting on Radio Kossuth during the 1956 Revolution

Imre Nagy's Secret Speech

INTRODUCTION

by Bill Lomax

(In February 1956 at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Nikita Khrushchev stunned the Communist world with his denunciation of Stalin and his exposure of the crimes committed under the former dictator's reign of terror. Yet three years before Khrushchev's 'secret speech', very similar criticisms had

been voiced in Hungary by the new Prime Minister Imre Nagy, who charged his country's former stalinist rulers with committing grave errors and mistakes in the building of socialism, with ruling it over the people, and with building up a 'cult of personality' around their leadership.

Unlike Khrushchev's famous speech, the text of Imre Nagy's speech was never published at the time, and has remained for over thirty years hidden from history. Last year, for the first time ever, it saw the light of day in the Hungarian samizdat journal

Beszélő (News from Inside). Labour Focus is happy to be able to publish it here for the first time in English.')

At the end of June 1953, Hungary's formerly all-powerful Communist Party boss Mátyás Rákosi — 'Stalin's best Hungarian disciple' as he was known — relinquished his position as Prime Minister to the Party's little known agrarian specialist Imre Nagy. Over the next year and a half Imre Nagy's Government pursued a New Course in



Matyas Rakosi, Stalinist Party leader with delegates at the Hungarian Workers Party's Second Congress in February 1951.

economic and political policies that represented one of the first and most far-reaching attempts to reform and liberalise a Communist regime. But Rákosi and his cohorts obstructed and sabotaged Imre Nagy's programme, and finally succeeded in removing him from power in April 1955. It was only after the Twentieth Congress that Rákosi's reign was finally brought to an end, and it was only in the course of the revolution of October 1956 that Imre Nagy would return again to power. The revolution, however, was defeated by a Soviet invasion, while Imre Nagy was seized by the Russians and eighteen months later sentenced to death and executed.

For over thirty years the exact circumstances of Imre Nagy's coming to power in June 1953, and also the reasons for the failure of his New Course, have remained surrounded in mystery. The publication of his speech, together with other information that has recently become available, throws valuable new light on these questions.

After Stalin's death in March 1953 the new Soviet leaders were determined to put an end to the reign of terror that had imperilled even their own personal security, and to call a halt to the unrealistic industrialisation drive that had brought the countries of Eastern Europe to the brink of economic and social collapse. In Russia itself they introduced a collective leadership, a limited amnesty and alleviations of the penal code, while the new Soviet Premier Malenkov was known to favour a greater emphasis on light industry and the production of consumer goods to raise the people's living standards.

On 13-14 June the Hungarian leaders were summoned to Moscow for a meeting in the Kremlin where the Soviet leaders severely criticised Rákosi for his policies of excessive industrialisation, neglect of agriculture, and violations of legality. They insisted on his replacement as Prime Minister by Imre Nagy and the inauguration of a New Course in political and economic policy.

Returning to Budapest, the Hungarian

Party leaders held a series of urgent meetings in which they prepared a draft resolution on the political and economic changes needed to correct the errors in the Party's past policy, and they convened a special session of the Central Committee for 27-28 June.² The June Resolution, as it came to be called, was presented to the Central Committee on 27 June by Imre Nagy in a speech in which he pulled no punches in placing the responsibility for the mistakes committed on the Party leaders Rákosi, Gerö, Farkas and Révai. The origins of the mistakes, he charged, lay in their ruling it over the Party, their 'leaderism', and their 'cult of personality'.

Imre Nagy clearly made his speech in the confident belief that he had the full backing of the Soviets. But, unbeknown to him, events elsewhere in the bloc had already altered the balance of power in Moscow. On 17 June a workers' rising in East Berlin had to be put down by Soviet tanks, causing the Soviet leaders to have second thoughts about the wisdom of introducing reforms too hastily. Even more significant, Stalin's former secret police chief Beria had tried to manipulate the events in East Berlin to promote his own cause in the Soviet leadership struggle. But Beria played his cards badly and was arrested a day or two before 27 June, though this would only be announced two weeks later. Beria, however, had been the most strident critic of Rákosi at the earlier Moscow meeting, while his fall also marked a setback for Malenkov, the main Soviet advocate of reform and the champion of Imre Nagy.

When the Hungarian Central Committee session entered its second day on 28 June, Rákosi knew that the power struggle in Moscow had developed to his favour. He now reversed his previous day's recommendation that the June resolution be published in the press, proposing instead that the changes should be announced to the forthcoming session of Parliament. In fact none of the speeches made at the Central Committee session, neither Imre Nagy's nor Rákosi's, were made public and even news

of the session itself was severely restricted. When Imre Nagy did present his Government's programme to the Hungarian Parliament on 4 July 1953, although his speech certainly had an electrifying and dramatic impact throughout the country, it was far less radical than the one he had made before the Central Committee, while his criticisms of 'leaderism' and the 'cult of personality', and of the personal responsibility of the Party's leaders, had been quietly put to one side.³

One week later, on 11 July 1953, Imre Nagy made yet another speech to a meeting of Budapest Party activists in which, while still standing by the proposed reforms of the New Course, he was clearly on the defensive. He was immediately followed by Rákosi who, having now fully regained his self-confidence, warned that the changes would not be allowed to alter the Party's overriding aim, the building of socialism, and that reforms would be carried out only within strict limitations and in a highly restricted way. The previous day, 10 July, Beria's arrest had been publicly announced in Moscow, and Rákosi had taken this as a signal to mobilise the Party apparatus for resistance and obstruction to the planned changes and reforms. The fate of the New Course was already sealed.

Imre Nagy's speech to the Central Committee on 27 June thus represents a programme that never came near to fruition. But it represents more than just a lost opportunity. It represents a policy that was torpedoed before it was even launched, but that constituted a possibility for de-Stalinisation to be placed on the political agenda almost a full three years before the Twentieth Congress. Yet it is a possibility the knowledge of which has remained hidden from history for over thirty years. The publication of this speech now must surely lead to a serious reexamination of the entire course of events in the Soviet bloc in the decade following Stalin's death, and to a fundamental rethinking of the historical possibilities that then existed for a real and thoroughgoing de-Stalinisation.



Imre Nagy addressing Parliament during the period of his New Course. Seated on Nagy's right is Rakosi and on his left (far right of the picture) Gero.

The Report of Comrade Nagy

Delivered to the Central Committee of the Hungarian Workers' Party on 27 June 1953 in presentation of the draft resolution which, along with the report, was unanimously approved by the meeting.⁴

Respected Central Committee

Our recent discussions with the leading Soviet comrades, about which the Central Committee has been informed by Comrade Rákosi, mark a decisive turning point in the life and activity of both the country and the party. The historical perspectives opened up to us by the advice they gave us are of inestimable importance. Their sincere, plain spoken and sharp criticism, which was given in a true party spirit and in which they drew attention to our errors, as well as the way in which they offered us extraordinarily valuable lessons drawn from their own mistakes, and their readiness to offer fraternal help together with their profound proletarian internationalism, also served to show the great trust which they extended towards us. I associate myself with Comrade Rákosi, who expressed our sincere gratitude for the invaluable help which they have given to our people and to our party.⁵

In the last few years serious mistakes have been committed in the general political line and in the practical activities of our party, and the responsibility for these mistakes lies above all with Comrade Rákosi. But we cannot claim the credit for the fact that the Central Committee of our party is meeting today to discuss these mistakes, to reveal their causes and to seek an end to their harmful consequences. It was the criticisms we received that brought home to us that if we had continued to act in this way, we would have found ourselves in conflict with the people of our country. Listening to these criticisms, we suddenly came to recognise the seriousness of the errors we had committed and to realise that, if

they had been continued, they would have undermined our people's democracy. The situation, from which we now have to seek a way out, establishes with the undeniable force of the facts that however widely we may have proclaimed the well-known slogan 'We could make good use of freedom', that wasn't always the case in reality, that was only a half-truth. We didn't always, and in every respect, make use of our freedom in a way that the interests of the country, of the people, and not in the least the party, required. To tell the truth, it is in the light of the criticisms and advice that we have now received, that we can clearly see how we should have made use in the past, and how we must make use in the future of the freedom that the Soviet army gave us eight years ago.

Respected Comrades

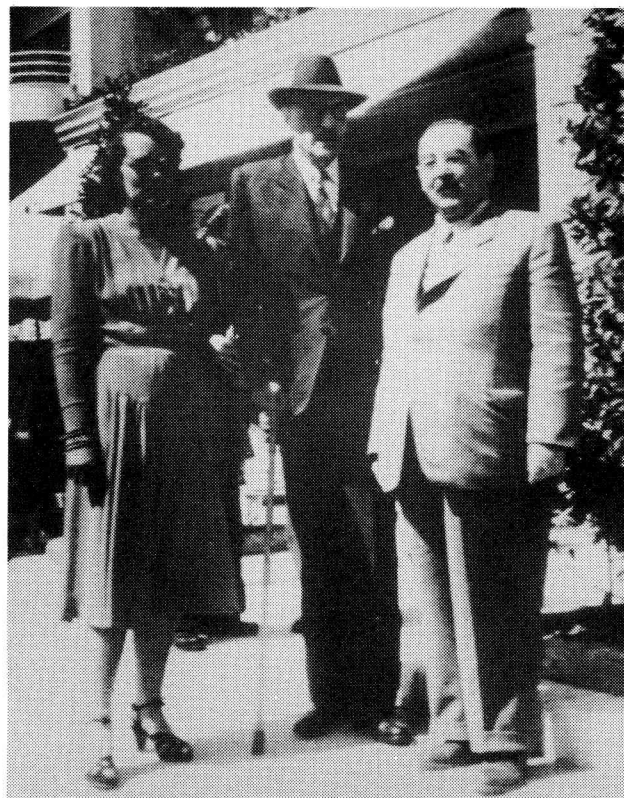
The roots of the errors that have been committed go much deeper than appeared at first glance, and it is clear from this that our primary task is to completely uncover the mistakes. This is the precondition for the successful correction of the errors. I have to say quite frankly that in this respect the work that has been done up till now is far from sufficient. Whether the mistakes will be rapidly and successfully eliminated depends on the extent to which Comrade Rákosi and those who, together with him were primarily responsible for committing them, Comrades Gerö, Révai and Farkas — those who held the real direction of the party and the country in their hands — go along with the complete uncovering of the mistakes in the way that has been indicated. It has to be said that for the most part the task is one that still lies before us. His speech today is the first time that Comrade Rákosi has expressed any reaction to the criticisms which have been applied to him personally and to his political activity.

The mistakes — for which Comrade Rákosi, as the leader of the party, bears the prime responsibility — derive from the fact

that, under his leadership, the party diverged from, and violated the principles of marxism-leninism in its own internal life, in its general policies and in its manifold practical activities. The organisational principles of the party were not respected, and the actual direction of the party was not in the hands of its elected organs but was seized by Comrades Gerö, Farkas and Révai under the leadership of Comrade Rákosi. Indeed of late even this was narrowed down, and the leadership of the party and equally of the state was essentially in the hands of two comrades, Comrades Rákosi and Gerö. They did not even inform members of the party Secretariat, even less so members of the Politburo, about many important questions. They took decisions and implemented measures in matters where they had no right to do so. Over a whole range of questions they made up their minds first, and then endowed their opinions with the status of resolutions. They did not regard other members of the party's elected organs as their equals. They despised them and frequently derided and ridiculed them, demoralising them and forcing them into passivity. This is how it came about that the party was led not by its elected organs but essentially by a clique. This inevitably resulted in a loss of principle and the violation of the party's spirit, and became the source of serious mistakes. They divided up their responsibilities amongst each other, each becoming the all-powerful leader in their respective field. Comrade Rákosi ruled over general policy, Comrade Gerö over the economic field, and Comrade Farkas the military, while Comrade Révai commanded the ideological front. The serious situation into which the party and the country fell provides the most devastating condemnation of this unprincipled and uncommunist leadership by a clique could not lead to anything other than a series of errors. This is the primary source of the mistakes.⁶

This is how the cult of personality and 'leaderism' were born, and how the entire party came to be replaced by the person of Comrade Rákosi, in total violation of the principle of collective leadership. This was manifested most clearly in the slogan made widespread throughout the country — 'Rákosi is the Party'. His personality was idolised and adulated in excessive ways. Comrade Rákosi's greatest mistake was to tolerate this adulation, this false popularity, to fail to step out against it, and to allow an atmosphere to develop around himself that was incompatible with the modesty befitting a Communist. This atmosphere pervaded the central organs of the party and, bad examples being contagious, spread down to the lower party organisations as well. This cult of personality became the forcing-house of leaderism, which is in conflict with the true party spirit. Comrade Rákosi and the other comrades in control of the party deviated from marxist principles in this question too. The anti-marxist and idealistic exaggeration of the role of personalities, which overestimates the role of 'chosen' individuals, or individuals with a 'mission', in the making of history, came to find expression in the leaderism of Comrade Rákosi and in that of Comrades Gerö, Farkas and Révai too as they came to follow his example. The extraordinarily dangerous nature of this idealistic view is that it does not seek to gain the support and trust of the people, and it denies the creative strength of the popular masses. Leaderism is also harmful and dangerous because it does not encourage initiatives and autonomous activity amongst the popular masses, but breeds passivity and idleness, because the masses come to expect everything from the leader, from single individuals. Both the cult of personality and leaderism are foreign to the people, and they inevitably lead to the party losing contact with the popular masses. This certainly happened in our country.

Comrade Rákosi and the party's other leaders, Comrades Gerö, Révai and Farkas, seriously undermined the successful realisation of the Communist principle of criticism and self-criticism, not only within the party but within the state as well. They regarded any criticism coming from below as representing the voice of the enemy, and they dealt with it as such. Instead of pointing out each other's mistakes, they defended each other from criticism, and they took even the slightest criticism as a personal insult. In their opinion it was only at lower levels that mistakes might be committed. They regarded themselves as infallible, as people who never made mistakes. At meetings of the Secretariat and the Politburo they heaped ever more violent abuse on the comrades responsible for the items under discussion. We have only to think of the many ministers and county party secretaries who were com-



Imre Nagy photographed in Nice, France in 1948 with Count Mihály Karolyi, Democratic Prime Minister of Hungary in 1918. On the left is the 'Red Countess' Andrassy, Karolyi's wife.

IMRE NAGY (1896-1958)

PRIME MINISTER DURING THE NEW COURSE OF 1953-55 AND AGAIN IN THE 1956 REVOLUTION

Imre Nagy was born on 7 June 1896 into a peasant family living near Kaposvár on the Great Hungarian Plain. Sent to the Russian front in World War I, he was taken prisoner but joined the Bolsheviks and fought with the Red Army in the Civil War. Back in Hungary he was imprisoned for two years for his political activities, then fled to Moscow in 1930 where he became the Party's specialist on agrarian questions.

Returning to Hungary at the end of 1944, Imre Nagy was Minister of Agriculture in the postwar Provisional Government, and he introduced the land reform, breaking up the large estates and distributing the land to the peasantry. He also served for a short spell as Minister of the Interior, and later as President of the National Assembly. A member of the Communist Party's Central Committee and Politburo from 1945, he was removed from these positions in 1949 because of his opposition to rapid collectivisation. He rejoined the Government in 1950 as Minister of Food Supplies, and was reappointed to the Central Committee and Politburo in 1951. In 1952 he became Minister of Compulsory Deliveries and, in November, a Deputy Prime Minister.

In June 1953, after Stalin's death, the new Soviet leaders appointed Imre Nagy as Prime Minister and authorised him to introduce a New Course of economic and political reforms. But in 1955 Party leader Rákosi succeeded in ousting Imre Nagy from the Premiership, and expelling him from his Party posts, and even from the Party itself.

In October 1956, Imre Nagy was readmitted to the Party, and on the outbreak of the revolution reappointed to the Premiership and to the Central Committee and Politburo. After initial hesitations, he came to accept the demands of the revolution and his Government abolished the secret police, restored the multiparty system, and declared Hungary's neutrality and withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact.

When the revolution was crushed by the Soviet Invasion on 4 November 1956, Imre Nagy took refuge in the Yugoslav Embassy in Budapest, but was later seized by the Russians and deported to Romania. Brought back to Budapest in April 1957, he was secretly tried in the Spring of 1958, sentenced to death on charges of treason and conspiracy to overthrow the Hungarian People's Republic, and executed on 16 June 1958.

pletely cut to pieces and had all their self-confidence destroyed. Here we can see just how the cult of personality and leaderism inevitably led to the stifling of criticism and self-criticism. Leaderism and plain spoken, bold, sharp criticism given in a true party spirit were incompatible with one another. Yet fear of self-criticism and fear of criticism from those outside the party were the most dangerous illnesses to be found within the party. 'Either we ourselves will criticise ourselves, and provide a means for those outside the party to criticise our work, and then everything will go well, or, if not, then we will not allow this criticism, we will not listen to criticism from the masses, and then we will have drifted away from the correct path, we will make one mistake after another, and it will be our unsuccessful and bad work that will provide the most serious criticism of us' — said Stalin.

That we should have to discuss the serious mistakes committed in our party, in the economy and in the state at today's session of the Central Committee is indeed due, in very large part, to the lack of a critical spirit, and to the suppression of criticism and self-criticism, for which it is the comrades who have been directing the party, in the first place Comrade Rákosi, who bear the responsibility. On the one hand leaderism, on the other hand the lack of a critical spirit, have permeated the whole of our party from top to bottom. In the lower organisations and in the countryside in particular, in the counties and the districts but above all in the village party organisations, leaderism manifested itself in arrogant and haughty behaviour, in contempt for non-party people, and in people being continually pushed around.

Yet according to the teachings of Leninism, Communists should treat non-party people as equals treat their equals. They should not keep ordering the non-party people around but should pay heed to their opinions, and they should not just teach them but should learn from them as well. Lenin described the relationship between Communists and non-party people in two words: mutual trust. Leaderism, continually pushing people around, arrogant and inflexible behaviour towards non-party people and, in the villages in particular, towards the peasantry became an obstacle to the establishment of mutual trust. One cannot speak of trust in a situation where, instead of showing respect for the people and trying to persuade them, they keep pushing them around and committing unlawful acts against them. In such a situation what emerges is lack of trust and dissatisfaction, and this often results in the party becoming cut off from the masses. The cult of personality and leaderism inevitably result in the neglect of principled party work, and the substitution of sloganising and ceremonial formalities, of endless rhythmic clapping, standing ovations and the parroting of expected phrases for the education, enlightenment and winning-over of the popular masses. All this kills initiative, criticism and self-criticism, and undermines self-conscious party discipline and the democratic principles on which the internal life of our party is based. At the same time this is something that, in the towns, but above all in the villages, is completely foreign to the people, and serves only to distance or to alienate the masses of peasants from the party and from the Communists. This explains, in no small part, why it is our party organisations in the villages that are the weakest link in the chain of our party, and why the proportion of working peasants amongst the party membership is extraordinarily low and constantly declining.

It is right for us to raise the question: How could these serious mistakes occur in the leadership of the party? No one believes that they were committed deliberately. But if they were not, then how can they be explained? The answer is given by Lenin's saying: the correct policy is the principled policy. But principled policies cannot be carried out without theoretical and ideological work. This is the root of the mistakes. When theoretical work is not carried out, when there is no debate of ideas and when the struggle of opinions is not given expression, that's when it becomes possible to engage in politicking without any marxist-leninist training and by talking off the top of one's head. That's when it's possible to engage in leaderism, and that's when the young cadres can get trodden on and pushed aside. Where theoretical work is weak, that's where lack of principle reigns, and becomes the forcing-house of mistakes and errors. Until we have changed this, we don't have and we won't have any guarantee that we won't commit new and even more serious mistakes.

MÁTYÁS RÁKOSI (1892-1971)

HUNGARY'S STALINIST DICTATOR AND COMMUNIST PARTY LEADER FROM 1945 TO JULY 1956

Mátyás Rákosi joined the Hungarian Communist Party at its formation in November 1918 and was a junior member of Béla Kun's Soviet Republic in 1919. After 4 years' exile in the Soviet Union, he returned to Hungary in 1924 to organise the illegal Communist Party but was arrested and imprisoned for 16 years. Released to the Soviet Union in 1941, Rákosi became leader of the emigré Hungarian Communists in Moscow, returning to Hungary with the Red Army in January 1945 to assume the leadership of the Hungarian Party, and to play a dominant role in the Government as Deputy Prime Minister from 1945 to 1952 and as Prime Minister from August 1952 to June 1953.

In June 1953 Rákosi was criticised and blamed for the mistakes and errors committed in the previous years, and obliged to resign from the Premiership in favour of Imre Nagy. But he remained First Secretary of the Party, resisting and obstructing the implementation of the policies of the New Course, and in 1955 he succeeded in ousting Imre Nagy from power and reestablishing his ascendancy. After the Soviet Twentieth Congress in February 1956, however, Rákosi was forced to practice self-criticism, and then in July 1956 to resign from the Party leadership and seek exile once again in the Soviet Union.

In August 1962 Rákosi was expelled from the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party formed during the 1956 revolution under the leadership of János Kádár — though it has never been explained just how or when he had gained admission to its ranks. From July 1956 Rákosi lived in exile in the Soviet Union till his death at Gorky in 1971.



1949-1952: the Cult of the Personality

NÉPSZABADSÁG

1985. június 7., péntek A HUNGÁR SZOCIALISTA MUNKÁSPÁRT KÖZPONTI LAPJA XLIII. évfolyam, 132. szám

KÁDÁR JÁNOS MONDOTT BESZÉDET A CSEPELI NAGYGYŰLÉSEN

A választás hazánk békéjét, népünk boldogulását szolgálja

Kállai Gyula megnyitója — Felszólalt Trautmann Részó, Kállai Ferenc és Bodor-Lászlóné

A választásokon, ahol a népi szocializmus és a demokrácia szellemében megvalósuló szociális fejlődés érdekében kell a szociális munkásoknak és a munkásoknak szavazniuk, a választásokon a szociális munkásoknak és a munkásoknak szavazniuk kell a szociális munkások és a munkások érdekében.

Budapesti értesítések szerint a választásokon a szociális munkások és a munkások szavazniuk kell a szociális munkások és a munkások érdekében.



A HÁROM FELSZÓLÁSÓRÓL

JÁNOS KÁDÁR (Born 1912)

HUNGARY'S LEADER SINCE THE 1956 REVOLUTION

János Kádár had been László Rajk's deputy in the underground Communist Party before 1945, and he was Minister of Interior at the time of Rajk's trial and execution in 1949. Arrested in 1951 for complicity in the Rajk affair, he was still in prison in June 1953 but was released under Imre Nagy's premiership in 1954.

Brought back into the Politburo after Rákosi's ouster in July 1956, Kádár became leader of the Party and head of the Government formed to crush the revolution on 4 November 1956. Under his rule Imre Nagy was executed in June 1958.



ERNŐ GERŐ (1898-1980)

ECONOMIC OVERLORD IN THE STALINIST ERA AND PARTY LEADER FROM JUNE 1956 TO THE REVOLUTION

Ernő Gerő joined the Communist Party while still a medical student in 1918. As a Comintern agent in Europe between the wars, he was responsible for suppressing the anarchist-POUM rising in Barcelona in May 1936. A leading member of the Moscow emigration, Gerő was often seen not just as the number two but as the real *eminence grise* behind the Rákosi regime.

The foremost advocate of rapid industrialisation, Gerő served as economic overlord under Rákosi, and as head of the National Economic Council set up in 1949 he was responsible for drawing up and implementing the Five Year Plan for 1950-55. He was appointed Minister of State in 1949 and Deputy Prime Minister in 1952.

Gerő was the only member of the former leadership clique to be included in Imre Nagy's Government in 1953, in which he served as Interior Minister and Deputy Prime Minister with continuing responsibility for the economy. He replaced Rákosi as First Party Secretary in July 1956 when the latter's position became untenable following the Soviet Twentieth Congress. Replaced in turn during the October Revolution by János Kádár, he fled to the Soviet Union returning to Hungary only in 1960.

Expelled from the Party along with Rákosi in 1962, Gerő died in Budapest in March 1980.



László Rajk in the witness box during his trial of September 1949. He was the pre-war and war-time party leader executed after his show trial.

LÁSZLO RAJK (1909-1949)

LEADER OF THE UNDERGROUND COMMUNIST PARTY BEFORE 1945. CHIEF VICTIM OF THE STALINIST PURGES. EXECUTED AFTER A SHOW TRIAL IN 1949.

László Rajk joined the illegal Communist Party as a student in 1931 fought with the International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War, and was the leader of the underground Party in Hungary before 1945.

A prominent member of the postwar Communist regime, Rajk was Minister of Interior from 1946 to 1948, and then Foreign Minister till his arrest a year later, when he was tried for treason as a Titoist and fascist spy and executed in October 1949.

In 1956 after the Twentieth Congress, Rákosi admitted Rajk's innocence. Demands for his rehabilitation, and for his murderers to be brought to justice, were a major factor leading to Rákosi's resignation in July, while his ceremonial reburial on 6 October set the stage for the revolution.

Imre Nagy's speech contains no reference to the Stalinist purges, nor any mention of Rajk's trial and execution.

JÓZSEF RÉVAI (1898-1959)

CULTURAL BOSS OF HUNGARY IN THE STALINIST PERIOD

József Révai was one of the Communist Party's most brilliant and erudite intellectuals. After several years in Muscovite emigration, he became the Party's main ideologue and chief theoretician. After 1945 he was made Editor-in-Chief of the Party daily *Szabad Nép* (Free People) and Central Committee Secretary responsible for ideology. He served as Minister of Culture from 1949 to 1953.

Though referred to by Imre Nagy as one of the Party's ruling clique, Révai was never a member of the *inner sanctum* or *troika* of Rákosi, Gerö and Farkas, and was thus, for example, not a party to the decision to stage a show trial of László Rajk. Indeed, he came near to being implicated in the trial himself.

Révai was dropped from the Government and Party leadership in June 1953, but was brought back into the Politburo after Rákosi's ouster in July 1956. Although a critic of Rákosi, he remained an unrepentant Stalinist even more opposed to Imre Nagy and his ideas. In October 1956 he took refuge in the Soviet Union, returning to Hungary in 1957 only to attack the Kádár regime for being too conciliatory and revisionist.

In his last years Révai's position came close to that later adopted by the Chinese Communists. He died in Budapest in August 1959.



MIHÁLY FARKAS (1904-1965)

THIRD MAN IN THE PARTY LEADERSHIP AFTER 1945, RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SECRET POLICE, AND MINISTER OF DEFENCE FROM 1948 TO 1953

Mihály Farkas was active between the wars in the Czechoslovak Communist Party, spent the war years in Moscow emigration, and entered the leadership of the Hungarian Party in 1945 as a Politburo member and Central Committee Secretary responsible for the police and state security. After a period in the Ministry of Interior, he joined the Government in 1948 as Minister of Defence. He was in overall control of the secret police during the Stalinist purges and show trials.

Dismissed from both the Government and Party leadership in June 1953, he changed sides, declared himself a supporter of Imre Nagy and returned to the Politburo in August 1953. He was dropped again when Rákosi ousted Imre Nagy in April 1955.

In July 1956 Farkas was expelled from the Party, and arrested and charged for his part in the Stalinist terror. In 1957 together with his son Vladimir, one of the most notorious secret police torturers, he was sentenced to 16 years imprisonment. Released under a personal amnesty in March 1960, he died in Budapest in December 1965.

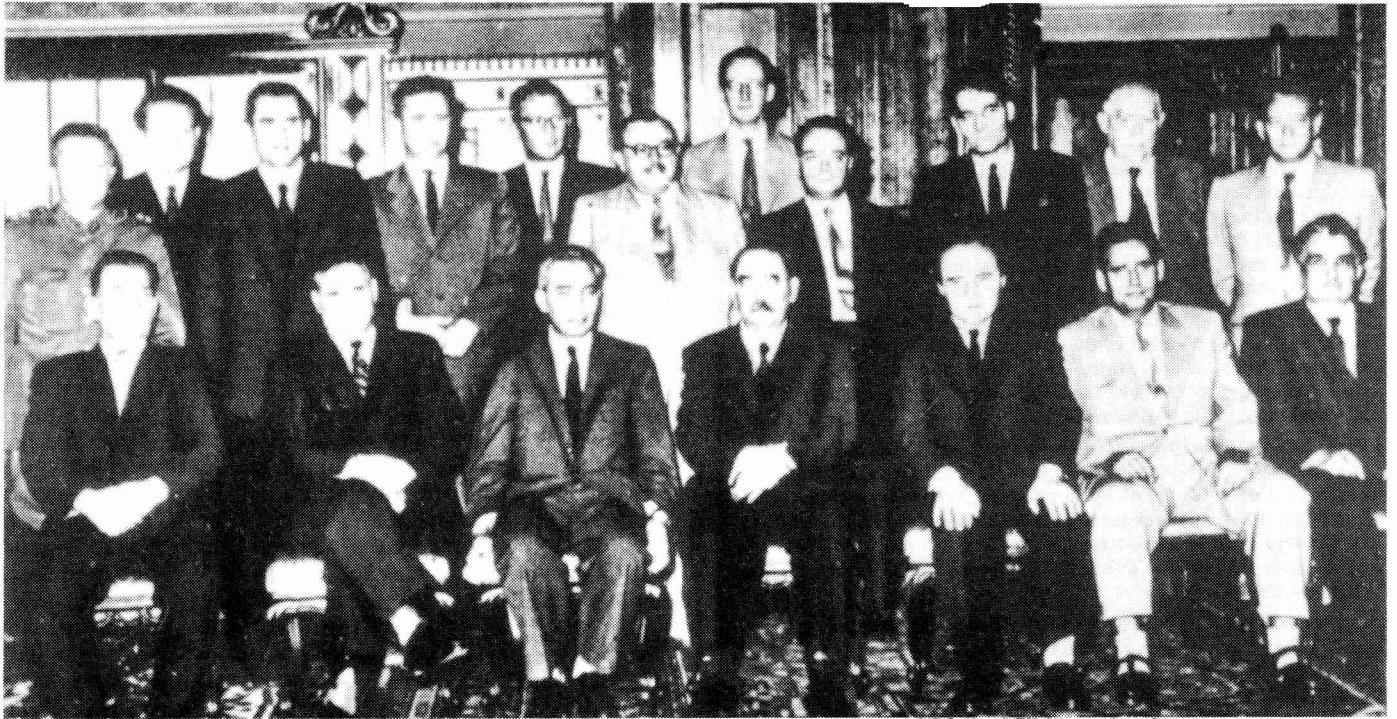
Respected Central Committee

The unprincipled and un-communist leadership of the party also led to our violating the basic principles of the people's democracy in regard to the relationship between the party and the state, as well as that between the state and the popular masses. The people's democracy means the large scale involvement of the popular masses in the work of governing, legislating and state administration. Our mistake lay in the fact that the party ruled it more than was necessary over the country's state and economic leadership. The party didn't only lay down and decide upon the measures to be implemented but it carried them out as well. The party is not suitably equipped, neither by its organisational structure, nor by its operations, composition and social character for carrying out state functions, and nor is that its task. Even so, it intervened more than was necessary in the execution of state tasks, and in doing so it violated the autonomy of the state organs, paralysed their operations, and undermined their prestige. If we recognise that our party became cut off from the broad popular masses as a result of the serious mistakes of the un-communist leadership it is clear that it was the party's ruling it over the state machinery that led to its losing contact with the popular masses. But if the state apparatus is not under the direct control and direction of the popular masses, it can lose its people's democratic character and turn into a self-interested bureaucratic organ, into an organ that acts against the interests of the people. It has to be said, Comrades, that due to the mistakes of the party leadership this is what, to a certain extent, happened. Another factor resulting from leaderism also contributed to this development.

Comrade Rákosi brought all power in the country under his own personal control: he was the General Secretary of the party, the chairman of the Council of Ministers, and the president of the People's Independence Front, and he placed the state security authority under his direct control. But however great someone's capacities may be, he cannot solve all the questions on his own. The situation that has arisen confirms this better than anything else. In his leadership both of the party and of the state, as well as in the work of the State Security authority, Comrade Rakosi committed grave errors that had potentially disastrous consequences.

Examining our state and the operations of the organs of our people's democracy, we can state without any exaggeration that the government was in reality a shadow government which ratified resolutions that had already been approved by the party, while the sphere of authority and responsibility of the ministries was severely limited. It is clear that such organs of government could not enforce the basic principles of the people's democracy throughout the state. Such organs and methods of government are not adequate to ensure the unconditional enforcement of legality in all spheres of the state and the economy. Here lie the roots of the gravest evils in our state, and of the violations of legality, which result, in the final analysis, from loss of contact with the popular masses. The essence and strength of the state and government of the people's democracy lies in the maintenance of living connections with the people. The more effective these connections are, the more lasting will be their results. Lenin called our attention to the fact that amongst the popular masses we Communists are only a drop in the ocean, and that we can only govern by giving true expression to the people's feelings. For this reason the true principle of democratic representation, the indissoluble bond between the working people and those who are entrusted with power, must be given better and fuller representation through the parliament as the highest body of the legislature. Towards this end, a new, popular content must be given to the work and spirit of the national assembly, and to the role it plays in our constitutional life. We must begin a new course here as well, one in which expression must increasingly be given to the sovereignty of the people, and to a larger role for the parliament, in the legal direction of the state, and in determining the basic principles and aims of responsible government, as well as in the exercise of the constitutional powers of the national assembly.

The government must increasingly be based on the support of the national assembly, by which it is entrusted with leading the country, and to which it is responsible for all the activities it carries out in the sphere of government. The Council of Ministers, basing itself upon the programme of legislation, must become an organ with full powers in the administration of state affairs, relying on a



Imre Nagy's First Government, formed on 3rd July 1953. Front row, left to right: Arnold Munster, Istvan Dobi, Erno Gero, Imre Nagy, Andras Hegedus...

wider sphere of authority for the ministries, and a greater responsibility of the ministers. By these and similar measures further steps must be taken towards democratising our state.

It must be frankly admitted, Comrades, that as a result of the mistakes of the party leadership we have strayed away from these principles that are based on the teachings of Lenin in the way we have conducted state affairs in our people's democracy. This has gone so far that our own state apparatus, our local councils, our organs of justice, our police and state security organs have been responsible up until the most recent times for a series of violations of legality committed in the countryside in particular, and primarily against the village population. The number of those against whom judicial or administrative proceedings have been brought and who have received larger or smaller punishments, runs into the hundreds and hundreds of thousands.⁷ This is not to mention the transgressions of legality, the abuses of power and other forms of harassment committed in the fields of compulsory deliveries, tax collections, the kulak list, and the forcible consolidation of land holdings.⁸ The dissatisfaction felt by the population against the state organs was increased by the fact that even those measures that would have otherwise been correct, necessary and legal, were themselves implemented in an inflexible and heartless way, in a way that made the life of the people a misery. The mistakes committed in this field, the violations of legality, shook the very foundation on which our state is based, the unity of the two great labouring classes, the alliance of the workers and the peasantry.

The draft resolution states that the faulty functioning of the police and the courts, the administrative methods employed over wide areas, the mass punishments, and the frequent acts of arbitrary despotism, offended the sense of justice of the broad popular masses, and undermined their trust in legal security. The system of internment is still with us, although there is no longer any need for it, and it provides opportunities for many arbitrary actions. We did not institute a supreme public prosecutor's office as required by the constitution, to assure justice and legality in the work of the courts, the police and the organs of state administration. All this led to conditions arising in the administration of justice and in the work of the courts that were intolerable in a people's democracy and more closely resembled those of a police state.

The task of the new national assembly and of the new government will be to introduce laws that will bring an end to the mistakes of the past, to disband the internment camps, and to proclaim an amnesty that will free all those persons whose release will not endanger either the state, or the security and property of the public.⁹ The problem of the internal deportees must be settled, and it must be made possible for them to choose where they wish to live, in ac-

cordance with the provisions of the existing laws as they apply to all citizens.¹⁰ Measures must be taken to ensure that the operations of local councils are carried out in a legal way. By increasing professional training, we must create the conditions whereby the economic and administrative tasks for which the councils are responsible can be well and rapidly executed. Appropriate measures must be taken to ensure the strict observance of the discipline that is obligatory in state offices. Better connections must be established between the councils and the broad popular masses by the development of permanent commissions. The central direction of the councils must be organised under the aegis of the presidential council. With these and similar measures, the local councils must be turned into firm pillars of the people's state, pillars of legality and of the rule of law. They must become organs whose wide-ranging activities will ensure the ever more comprehensive economic and political collaboration of the workers and the peasantry. The improvement of the work of the local councils and of the entire state administration in general, as well as the radical transformation of the spirit in which they work, will lead to a substantial reduction in the size of the over-bloated central apparatus which has proved to be not only bureaucratic, inflexible and heartless in its work, but also expensive to run as well. The new government must introduce laws to do away with the police's present authority to sit in judgement. It is incompatible with the basic principles of justice in a people's democracy that the force conducting investigations should sit in judgement too.¹¹

Respected Comrades

Grave mistakes have been committed in our economic policies as well. This is the area over which, I might add, Comrade Gerö exercised total power. There is no doubt that he is the one who bears primary responsibility for the situation that has arisen here, and for the mistakes that have been committed. With regard to the mistakes committed in the area of our economic policy, the biggest danger for us would be to narrow down and simplify them to questions of how they were implemented, to see them only in the pace of development, as if that was the main fault. We must recognise that serious mistakes are to be found not only in the way our economic policy was implemented but also in the general principles that directed it. Indeed the latter is where the decisive mistakes are to be found, as the draft resolution correctly states when it says that it was on the recommendation of the party leadership at the Second Congress of the party that the incorrect general line in economic policy was established.¹² The essence of the mistakes, in my opinion, is to be found in the fact that in our economic policy which is aimed at building socialism, we failed to realise the basic economic law of socialism — the constant raising

of the standard of living of the population.¹³ On the contrary, the attempt to achieve the maximum development of heavy industry, which in plain words was megalomania, was accompanied by a fall in the standard of living of the workers.

The second decisive mistake in our economic policy was expressed in the slogan that we would turn Hungary into a country of iron and steel, in the absence of the material conditions, the raw material resources, etc. that were needed. In essence this meant adopting a policy of autarchy, which represented a lack of confidence in the mutual economic assistance and political collaboration of the socialist camp. The chief principle directing our economic policy was thus characterised on one side by the excessive pace of building socialism while the living standards of the population were falling, and on the other side by striving for economic autarchy without any real base and independently of the socialist camp. This was a deviation from marxism-leninism and one which, as the draft resolution also states, could be described without exaggeration as political adventurism. This is the root of the mistakes. This is the source of every other mistake — the excessive pace of establishing heavy industry, the unfavourable development of the ratio of the A and B sectors, the constant falling behind of agriculture, the growing indebtedness of the country, and as an overall result of all these factors, the fall in the living standard of the population.¹⁴

Comrade Gerö's responsibility for the mistakes committed and for their consequences is aggravated by the fact that if anywhere, then it was first of all here, in the area of economic policy, that many signs did point to the existence of fundamental and grave errors in the planning of our national economy. Over the last one-and-a-half to two years, it became evident at meetings of the leading economic bodies of the party and the state, and at the Council of Ministers, that the plans were unrealistic and overstretched in one instance after another, and that the necessary materials were not available. Moreover the problems and mistakes were clearly indicated by the continual changes in the plan and by the significant failure to fulfil the plan's targets in the most important economic fields. Comrade Gerö took no notice of the overwhelming force of these objective factors. Unwilling to tolerate any opposition, he pushed through the clearly unrealistic plans, simply abusing the ministers or other economic leaders who raised any objections. At the same time that Comrade Gerö was stubbornly insisting on his unrealistic production and investment plans in one field of the national economy, that of heavy industry, thereby imposing excessive demands on both managers and industrial workers without providing them with the conditions necessary to fulfill them, he was particularly parsimonious when it came to the allocation of provisions to ensure increased material means and investments for improving working conditions, for social welfare, for safety at work, and for the renewal of mining or factory equipment.

In criticising our economic policy it is not sufficient just to point to the fact that it didn't provide for the ever increasing satisfaction of the needs of the population, but it must also be said quite clearly that the welfare of the industrial working class was neglected most of all. It must also be pointed out that although within the party generally the leadership was not characterised by being self-critical, and within leading party organs the party's policy was hardly subjected to criticism, sharp and concrete criticisms of economic policy and economic planning at the more technical level were made from time to time. Yet in spite of this and right up until the most recent times no changes were made in our economic policies. This can only be explained by the fact that comrade Gerö took a purely negative attitude towards these valid and justified criticisms, and that in rejecting them he could count on the support of Comrade Rákosi.

Two leading economic organs, the former National Economic Council and the State Planning Office, had a serious role in the mistakes.¹⁵ Directed in practice by Comrade Gerö, both organs followed a basically identical approach in their work. The National Economic Council, and to a certain extent the State Planning Office too, took over functions of the Council of Ministers, creating an undesirable duality in the state direction of economic affairs, disturbing the unity of management and reducing the role of the Council of Ministers. The work of both the Planning Office and the National Economic Council was thus characterised by



Imre Nagy with his wife Margit (Aunty Maca) and his granddaughter Kati (Katalin Janossy) at home in Budapest in the summer of 1956.

their separation from the people, and by their becoming bureaucratic organs, chasing after high indices. And if we speak of the adventurist character of our economic policy, then it is first of all the State Planning Office that we are referring to. This is the most appropriate assessment of the work of the Planning Office under Comrade Zoltán Vas.¹⁶ The work of the State Planning Office was characterised by the absence of the most elementary requirements of marxism-leninism, of scientific methods, of systematic procedures, of realism and of sound work. It was characterised by confusion and muddle, haste and indecision, and constant attempts to up everything. It took over many fields of responsibility from the ministries, and exercised a truly tyrannical rule over them. In its methods of work everything was to be found that is incompatible with what is expected of a leading economic organ operating within a people's democracy, everything from deception to intimidation. There is no other individual institution against which so many justified criticisms and charges might be brought as the Planning Office. But when urgent measures had to be taken to correct the activities of the Planning Office, the intervention was limited simply to removing certain hostile or obstructive elements, and did not touch upon the actual methods of planning, direction and work of the Planning Office. Nor was it to bring about such changes that Comrade Vas was moved from the head of the State Planning Office to another field of work.

Respected Central Committee

The party and government resolution of 1 December 1951 served to open a new course in our economic policies.¹⁷ It was undoubtedly a serious step towards eliminating the remnants of the war economy, the system of rationing and the restrictions on trade, but it did not realise and it could not have realised, the expectations that had been raised amongst the population, nor could it achieve a substantial and continuing rise in the standard of living. For the measures of 1 December 1951 to have achieved satisfactory results they would have to have been carried further, but there was no possibility for that, and that wasn't simply, nor even primarily due to the objective difficulties caused by the bad harvest of 1952. The decisive factors that made this impossible were two interrelated causes. The first was that our overstretched, unrealistic plans for industrial development which denied

agriculture the necessary investments for its development led to a fall in the standard of living of the population.¹⁸

The second cause was that, instead of reducing the excessive pace of industrialisation and the investments directed towards it, we tried to solve the problem by the increased exploitation of agricultural production and by placing greater burdens on the peasantry. In other words we sought to relieve the situation of one social class at the expense of another, all — as we have seen — without any real foundation. This was not only economically harmful but politically harmful as well, because it led to a weakening of the worker-peasant alliance. Together with the further development of the party and government resolution of 1 December 1951, the economic measures that are presently being prepared will provide a real foundation for, and make possible, the constant raising of the living standard of the population by eliminating the mistakes committed earlier in both principle and practice.

Serious mistakes have been committed in the field of agriculture too, and their consequences also have to be eliminated. This is something about which I have already spoken, but the comrades may also have seen from the draft resolution that with the over-development of industry and the excessive growth of industrial investments, our economic planning reduced the investments directed towards agricultural production. There are two sides to this question. One is a general reduction of the development of the entire agricultural production.¹⁹ This clearly shows the extent to which the organs directing our economic policy failed to reckon with the growth of needs, and demonstrates that they actually thought they could realise socialism while the living standards of the population were being reduced. The other side of the question is the neglect of the production of independent farmers. The figures for our investment, and the measure of economic assistance directed towards the private sector, show that in practice scarcely anything was done to help to raise the output of independent farmers, despite the fact that the greater part of our agricultural production is provided by independent farms, and that we could not do without them under any circumstances, particularly as we have no possibility of making up for their production from other fields of agriculture.²⁰

The other area in which grave mistakes have been committed is that of the socialist reorganisation of agriculture. As the draft resolution also states, the party's policy was incorrect in the autumn of 1948, when the decision was taken to collectivise agriculture within a space of three to four years.²¹ The party later modified the pace, but in the absence of the necessary economic and political conditions, even the modified pace was an extreme one, and this had serious and harmful consequences both politically and economically as well. First of all, the exaggerated pace of collectivisation inevitably led to violations of the voluntary principle, and to the direct or indirect employment of economic or political force, innumerable examples of which we have seen over the course of the past years. The forced pace of collectivisation alienated from us, indeed set against us, broad strata of the working peasantry and, most of all, the element most crucial to agricultural production, the middle peasantry, with whom it would have been better for us to have established a firm alliance. The excessive development of the agricultural cooperatives led to our isolation from the decisive masses of the peasantry, and to an unsettling of the worker-peasant alliance, the future of which was put in peril. The enormous consolidation of holdings that was entailed by the forced development of the cooperatives, and the mass abuses of power and violation of rights which produced insecurity amongst the land-owning and farming peasantry, resulted in the peasantry losing their productive spirit, and led to them restricting or completely abandoning their production, and offering up their land to the state or simply abandoning it to seek their means of livelihood elsewhere. There is a clearly evident and even numerically demonstrable connection between the excessive development of the cooperatives and the extraordinarily large-scale growth in the state reserves of uncultivated land.²²

It is not primarily the growth in opportunities for industrial employment, but the extraordinarily difficult conditions under which the peasantry has to carry out production that give rise to the offering up and abandoning of land. The consolidations which were meant to assist the development of large scale cooperatives

led, as a result of the excessive pace of collectivisation, to the restriction and frequently to the termination of the economic activities of a significant part of the working peasantry, or at least held this perspective in reserve for them. The successive consolidations did not serve to entice the working peasantry into joining the cooperatives, but more often resulted in their abandoning agricultural production. An inevitable consequence of the excessive development of the cooperatives, was to turn the correct policy of controlling the kulaks into a policy of liquidating them, as is clearly confirmed by the relevant figures for the last two years. This alone was a grave error. But an even greater one, if we think it over, is the fact that about the same amount of land has been abandoned by the working peasantry as has been gained by the unlawful measures carried out against the kulaks. This is one of the reasons why we have seen in the recent past the ever more determined development in the villages of a form of peasant solidarity, a peasant unity directed against the city, which could have dangerous consequences both for the worker-peasant alliance, and for the entire people's democracy.

Even if we were in favour of the excessive development of cooperatives, even then it would have been incorrect to neglect to support the individual farmers. Firstly, because the development of collective production within the cooperatives did not keep pace with the over-development of the cooperatives, and did not reach the levels of production of the middle peasant economy. Secondly, because by actually liquidating kulak farming rather than controlling it, we caused agriculture to lose significant productive forces, and these were losses for which the socialist sector was unable to make up. Thirdly, because the raising of the living standard of the population, the growth of the labour force that resulted from industrialisation, and the need for more foodstuffs and raw materials, makes necessary an increased quantity of production that cannot be assured from anywhere else but from the independent peasant sector which is responsible for the greater part of production. And finally, because the unification of the individual peasant holdings into large-scale cooperatives within the relations of the people's democracy must be achieved not by driving them to economic ruin but by developing them.

So, Comrades, it is clear that if we want to re-strengthen the badly shaken worker-peasant alliance, if we want to establish a good, friendly relationship with the working peasantry, if we want to restore their confidence in agricultural production, if we want to increase their productive spirit, if we want to improve their situation — and we must undoubtedly do all these things — then we must finally put into effect the measures presented in the draft resolution for the development of the peasantry's production, for the improvement of their material situation, and for the legal assurance of their rights. In the course of revising the plans for the national economy, the development of agricultural production requires the assurance of a significant increase in agricultural investments. The pace of developing the cooperatives must be reduced. We must make it possible for anyone who wishes to leave the cooperative to do so at the end of the economic year, and the disbandment of cooperatives must also be allowed where that is the wish of the majority of their members. Substantial assistance must be offered to independent peasant farmers to help them develop their economic activity. Stable conditions of production must be established, and any further expansion of state reserves of uncultivated land must be brought to a halt, partly by a temporary ending of consolidations, partly by allowing for the leasing out of land, and partly by slowing down the movement of collectivisation and by other economic measures as well. Similar measures must be brought in to ensure that use is made of the increased amount of fallow land too. Along with increased support for independent farmers, further relief should be given to promote the economic strengthening of the cooperatives. The payments they have to make to the state must be significantly reduced, and the fines imposed on both cooperatives and working peasants alike for failing to complete their compulsory deliveries must be abolished.

Respected Comrades

The second important area of our economic policy concerning agriculture is that of the compulsory deliveries. The way these are planned and implemented has a decisive effect on the development of our relations with the peasantry. The size of deliveries, and the

burden they place on the producers, affects not only the peasantry's standard of living but also the efficiency of their farming, their production of goods and their marketing as well. The fundamental mistake made in planning the deliveries was that the interests of production were pushed into the background, and the excessive and unrealistic plans for deliveries prevented the tasks of continuity and development from being assured. The compulsory deliveries that the plans imposed on the peasantry, and on other sectors as well, were so great that they hindered production and reduced the productive spirit, undoubtedly contributing to the offering up of land and the increase in state reserves, and opening up perhaps the widest possibilities for the illegalities committed against the peasantry and the kulaks. The mass penalties, the fines, and the harassment of the peasantry in general were caused above all else by the excessive delivery plans. Their effects were compounded through the abuses committed by the enforcement organs of the state and local councils in the course of implementing the plans. I too bear a grave responsibility for this, because I should have ensured the unconditional observance of legality.²³



Imre Nagy in the summer of 1956 among the people of Budapest.

The unrealistic planning of deliveries was in large part responsible for the change from the correct policy of limiting the kulaks to the incorrect and mistaken policy of liquidating them. In other words, the compulsory deliveries did not only serve the function of building up central government supplies, but also served as a means employed, tacitly if not quite openly, by the local council and party organs to force the peasantry into the cooperatives. At a time when the development of agriculture was being pushed ever more into the background of our economic policies and of our national economic planning, and when investments in agriculture were continually declining, these factors were not taken into account in the agricultural plans for compulsory deliveries, and this unavoidably led to substantial disparities between the production planned for and the production actually achieved. The targets for deliveries set on this unrealistic basis, which would have been excessive in any case, thus became factors hindering production. If adventurism played a large role in the work of the State Planning Office, it was by no means least in the planning of deliveries that it became apparent. We clearly saw the mistakes and we didn't keep silent about them. We took every opportunity to step out firmly against the faulty and misleading planning methods of the State Planning Office, against the unrealistic production plans, and against the excessive delivery targets. We pointed out the problems, and the consequences that would follow from them, to the

respective party organs as well. But our criticism of the excessive delivery plans was dismissed with abuse in the leading party organs, and by Comrades Rákosi and Gerö in particular. The most moderate answer we received was that we wanted to shirk our responsibilities and that we were trying to justify in advance the non-fulfillment of the plans. But it wasn't a rare event for us to be charged with opportunism too. The party leadership thus took the side of the State Planning Office with its excessive plans and adventurist policies. The larger deliveries meant that important economic and political interests of the national economy were sacrificed for the sake of momentary successes. This contributed to the development of the grave situation which it is now our task to try and put right.²⁴

If we are going to re-establish a good relationship with the peasantry and with the middle peasantry in particular, as we certainly must do; if, as we certainly must, we are going to return to the policy of limiting the kulaks which is the only correct policy in the present period; if we are going to put an end to the illegalities and harassments inflicted upon the peasantry, and we certainly must do so; then substantial changes will have to be made in our system of compulsory deliveries, and this is one of the most important tasks to which the government will attend. Our taxation policies and the methods of assessing and collecting taxes must be re-examined in a similar way because in the villages in particular, after the compulsory deliveries, tax collecting is the field where abuses have grown to mass proportions. After the deliveries, it was the erroneous taxation policy that became the chief means for implementing the mistaken policy that resulted in the liquidation of the kulaks and in the individual peasant farmers being forcibly driven into the cooperatives.

Respected Comrades

There is one matter I should like to emphasise concerning our economic policy, which is one of great political as well as economic significance, and that is the question of the kulak list. When, in the course of the socialist reorganisation of agriculture, the struggle against the kulaks came increasingly to the fore, it was precisely through the use of the kulak list that this struggle ceased to be treated as an economic and political matter and came to be treated as a purely administrative one. The diversion of the struggle against the kulaks onto an administrative path was equivalent to placing the kulaks beyond the law, to arbitrary methods of rule, which inevitably resulted in the liquidation of the kulaks. The kulak list thus played a significant role in the party's abandonment of the correct policy of limiting the kulaks.

Another grave consequence of the kulak list was that the local organs completely misinterpreted the concept of the kulak, classifying as a kulak and putting on the kulak list whoever they felt like putting there. At the same time the leaders of our party and council organs in the villages were so extraordinarily ill-prepared for the tasks they had to handle that the ground was laid open for personal animosities and vendettas to be pursued. This is how we came to see the creation of small kulaks, industrial kulaks, intellectual kulaks, and so on. The concept of kulak was increasingly extended to the middle peasants and, of late, even to the small peasants as well. In many places they were used to fill up the empty places that arose on the kulak list as a result of the policies of liquidation. In this way, instead of serving to clearly distinguish the real kulaks and separate them from the other strata of the peasantry, the kulak list served in practice to mix up the working peasantry, and chiefly the middle peasants, with the kulaks. In this way the working peasant did not know whether tomorrow he might not find himself on the kulak list. The kulak list classed the working peasant together with the kulak, as we could see throughout the country in recent times. The kulak list, which was a blunder from the very beginning, had a harmful influence on our policies towards the peasantry, and played a significant part in shaking the confidence of the working peasantry in the legal order of our people's democracy. This is why we must recommend the abolition of the kulak list and return to the only correct policy in the present period, that of limiting the kulaks. If we want to place our relationship with the working peasantry, and with the middle peasantry in particular, on the basis of a lasting alliance, and if we want to strengthen our friendly relationship with them, as we certainly must; if we want to put an end to the violations of legality and the

abuses of power, and if we want to re-establish law and order, as indeed we must, then — as the Politburo is recommending — we must abolish the kulak list. The correct policy for limiting the kulaks also requires that the tax and delivery obligations designed to liquidate the kulaks should be based on their real abilities to meet them, and that a harmony should be established — within appropriate limits — between their production and their obligations so as to allow them to carry on their production without hindrance.

Perhaps the gravest consequence of our incorrect economic policy can be seen in the development of the relationship between the party and the working class. It cannot be doubted that dissatisfaction amongst the working class has recently been on the increase. Yet it is the working class that is the depository of power and that is the leading force in the building of socialism. The fate of socialism depends upon the working class. Knowing that, we can recognise the danger that arises from the growing dissatisfaction of the workers. Stalin teaches us that the party is the general battle staff of the proletariat, but the party cannot be just the vanguard, it must be at one and the same time a unit of the class itself, that part of the class which in every root of its being is firmly bound to the class itself. The party cannot lead the class if it is not interlinked with the masses, if the two are not welded together. Our mistaken economic policy weakened this union between the vanguard and the working class. This was the greatest danger that threatened our party as a result of the grave mistakes committed by its leaders.

It was a decisive mistake of our economic policy not to pay sufficient attention to increasingly satisfying the needs of the working class, while inadequate emphasis was given to the slogan that the greatest value is man. Our party's task is before all else to make the union of the party and the working class an indestructible one, and to do so by ensuring that we should give the greatest possible attention in our plans to achieving the highest possible satisfaction of the needs of the working class. Although the draft resolution that is before the Central Committee contains correct and far-reaching measures, it could certainly be developed further in this respect. It is the comrades' task in the course of the debate to make proposals in this direction.

Respected Comrades

These very important measures which we are taking towards strengthening the national economy and the legal order place great responsibilities upon the legislature, upon the government and upon the whole state apparatus. And as we do not want to delay for a single moment in implementing the planned measures, the first task of the new government to be appointed by the coming session of the national assembly will be to urgently draw up all the laws, decrees and state regulations which the draft resolution before the Central Committee requires, and to see to their implementation as soon as possible. This means that the government's programme will be based on the principles and practical measures laid down in the draft resolution before the Central Committee.

The difficult tasks awaiting the government, and the important changes that we shall have to make in many areas of state and economic life, inevitably require a regrouping of forces and a reorganisation of the highest organs of state leadership to meet the new tasks. A substantial change from the previous situation will be an increase in the role and sphere of authority of the Council of Ministers as the new tasks demand. At the same time, both the sphere of authority of the ministers and their personal responsibility too must be increased.

*(At this point Comrade Imre Nagy spoke of the reorganisation of the Council of Ministers and the reconstruction of the government. He then continued as follows:)*²⁵

Respected Comrades

'The art of Communist leadership', Lenin said, 'consists in being able at any moment to find the one link of the chain which, if we grasp it with all our strength, will enable us to hold the whole chain in our hands, and securely prepare us for moving on to the next link.' In the present moment this link is that of fearless, sincere and open criticism, and the complete exposure of the mistakes. If we can once achieve this, then nothing will be able to

prevent us from correcting the mistakes and completing the new tasks.

The realisation of the principles and practical aims laid down in the draft resolution means a profound change, a veritable turn in the work of both the party and the state alike. A new spirit and new methods must come to prevail in the leadership. We must recognise that the magnitude of the tasks calls for a complete mobilisation of all the party's strength, organisation and influence, and demands the most far-reaching activity of every Communist. The firmness and example shown by the Communists is the seal of success. Over and above the dedicated work and discipline of the Communists, it is absolutely essential that every member of the party should recognise and agree with the new objectives. Beside the firm organisational unity of the party's ranks, the party's theoretical and ideological unity also has a decisive role and significance in completing the tasks that have been set. In developing this unity and identity of views, concerning the questions now facing the party in particular, the draft resolution before the Central Committee has a decisive role to play. This is also why a fundamental discussion of the resolution is so important because for the broad masses of party members this is what, in the final analysis, reveals the mistakes that have been committed, lays down the correct guidelines and sets out the new tasks. By supporting this document our party membership will be able to resist the enemy's attempts to spread confusion. We must also recognise that a certain resistance will be put up within the party apparatus as well as within the state machinery to the consistent implementation of the measures and tasks that have been set out. There will be some who either won't be able, or won't be willing to do away with the anti-popular methods involving abuses of power and violations of legality, who will not go along with the correction of the mistakes, who will not want to abandon the use of administrative methods, and who will try, in one way or another, to obstruct the rapid and successful implementation of measures serving the good of the popular masses. We can also be sure that the enemy too will seek to promote its work of undermining our state in this sort of way.

This is precisely why it is necessary for the party and the state, employing their great strength and influence, to be on the alert and to stand guard over the consistent implementation of the tasks that are laid down in the resolution. All the aims, which we have set before ourselves in the resolution, are for the good of our people and of our country. There can be no doubt that the country's population will accept our resolution with joy and relief. We must take care to see that they will be able to experience as soon as possible beneficial influences and tangible results by way of a significant improvement in their living conditions. Our working class, our peasantry, our intelligentsia, the entire country must see and feel that the measures of the party and the government are bringing about a profound change in their situation. This is something that we will only achieve if we don't diverge one iota from the guiding principles laid down in the resolution, if we don't stop half-way, and if we don't content ourselves with half-measures.

The prospects of a good harvest provide a favourable basis for successfully implementing our measures. For this reason, concentrating our main attention on the hectic work of reaping, threshing and harvesting, we must make the greatest efforts to complete this national task, and in doing so we will at once ensure the successful accomplishment of a significant proportion of our economic measures. With these positive measures, we will deliver the heaviest blow in recent years against the enemy, and we will at the same time win our working people and the entire country for our party and for the people's democracy. In this way we will raise our party's prestige, and increase the strength and firmness of the Hungarian front of the mighty camp of peace.

Respected Central Committee

It is my conviction that, rallying our ranks around our party's collective leadership, uniting together with the working people, strengthening the alliance of our working class with the working peasantry, and led by our party that has already so many victories behind it, we can now move forward more confidently than ever before on the road of the people's democracy to socialism.

Translation Copyright Bill Lomax 1985

NOTES

1. Imre Nagy's Report to the Central Committee was first published under the title 'Befejezetlen múlt: Nagy Imre a Központi Vezetőség előtt' (Unfinished Past: Imre Nagy before the Central Committee) in the Hungarian *samizdat* journal *Beszélő* (News from Inside), No 10, Budapest, 1984, pp. 58-76.
2. Rákosi reported back on the Moscow meeting to the Central Committee Secretariat on 17 June, and to the Politburo on 20 June, declaring that the changes about to be inaugurated would be "the greatest and the most decisive since the taking of power." The initial draft of the June resolution was drawn up by Ernő Gerő, finalised in collaboration with Rákosi, Imre Nagy and András Hegedűs, and approved by the Politburo on 25 June. The June resolution has remained unpublished to the present day, but it has recently been summarised and extensively quoted from in an official Hungarian journal of Party history. See: Bálint Szabó, 'Az új szakasz politikájának kezdetei' (The beginnings of the policies of the New Course) in *Párttörténeti Közlemények* (Bulletin of Party History), Budapest, 1983, No 2, pp. 91-139.
3. A shortened version of 'Imre Nagy's 4 July 1953 Speech to the Parliament' can be found in William Juhász (ed.), *Hungarian Social Science Reader: 1945-1963*, New York, 1965, pp. 156-163. The same collection also includes an abbreviated version of Rákosi's speech to the Meeting of Budapest Party Activists on 11 July 1953; *op.cit.*, pp. 163-166. A fuller account of Imre Nagy's ideas and of the proposals of the New Course is provided in his "memoirs" written in 1955-56 and published in the West after the 1956 revolution under the title *Imre Nagy on Communism: In Defence of the New Course*, New York and London, 1957.
4. The Hungarian Workers' Party is the name under which the Communist Party was known after its fusion with the Social Democratic Party in 1948 and up to its dissolution during the 1956 revolution. The leading organs of the HWP were the Central Leadership, Secretariat and Political Committee, although in this translation the more familiar expressions Central Committee and Politburo are used. After the 1956 revolution the Party was reorganised under the leadership of János Kádár as the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, the name by which it is still known today, and the Central Leadership was renamed the Central Committee.
5. Imre Nagy refers to the Moscow meeting of the 13-14 June 1953 at which Rákosi was severely criticised and instructed to hand over the premiership to Imre Nagy. Besides Rákosi and Imre Nagy, the Hungarian delegation included Ernő Gerő, István Dobi (Chairman of the Presidential Council, ie. Head of State), and four younger members of the Party hierarchy all in their early thirties: András Hegedűs, István Hidas, Rudolf Földvári and Béla Szalai.
6. At the beginning of 1945 the Hungarian Communist Party leaders returning from Moscow united with the leadership of the Party in Hungary to form a 14-member Central Leadership. At the Party's National Conference in May 1945 this was expanded to 25 members, and an 11-member Political Committee and 5-member Secretariat were formed. During the stalinist period, and after the fusion with the Social Democrats, the Central Committee was expanded to 60-70 members, and in practice the highest decision making body of the Party was the Secretariat rather than the Politburo, although as Imre Nagy points out real power was concentrated in the hands of three men: Rákosi, Gerő and Farkas. In fact in November 1950, unknown to either the public or party members, these three constituted themselves into a Committee of National Defence as the supreme power in the state. József Révai, the fourth member of the stalinist leadership named by Imre Nagy was never in fact a full member of this inner circle or *troika*.
7. By 'administrative proceedings' Imre Nagy refers to the powers of the police authorities to impose sentences for a range of offences that are defined in administrative regulations of the local councils, and thus lie outside the jurisdiction of the law and the courts. Between 1951 and 1953 the police used these powers to pass sentences in 850,000 cases.
8. The compulsory deliveries imposed on the peasantry during the stalinist period enabled the state to requisition at minimal prices a considerable proportion of agricultural produce. The same purpose was served by taxes in kind, whereby the peasantry had to provide the state with a percentage of their production of certain crops. The term 'kulak' was meant to be applied to rich peasants, those owning more than 25 holds (ie. 33 acres) of land, but, by 1952, 71,600 households had been classed as kulaks, amongst them 22,000 landless families. In the course of collectivisation, private farmers who had their land holdings compulsorily acquired by the cooperatives were reallocated other plots that were often more distant and of poorer quality. Almost half of the country's cultivated land was involved in these consolidations. Clearly all these measures could be, and were, imposed in a way that served to force the peasantry to abandon private production and enter the cooperatives.
9. National elections had been held on 17 May 1953 in which a vote of 98.2% was recorded for the single list of candidates put up by the



Students holding banners, including one with Nagy's pictures, during the Revolution of 1956. The placard on the left says: "We won't tolerate provocateurs within our ranks." The placard above Nagy's picture says, "Polish-Hungarian Friendship".

- Hungarian Independence Front. The new national assembly was due to convene on 4 July, when Imre Nagy would announce the composition of his new Government.
10. In 1951-52 at the height of the stalinist terror, tens of thousands of persons categorised as 'class enemies', ie. as members of the former exploiting classes, were banned from living in the capital city Budapest and forcibly deported to places of internal exile in the Hungarian countryside.
 11. Imre Nagy again refers to the powers of the police to impose sentences under administrative regulations independently of the law or the courts. Similar police powers are still in force in Hungary today, over thirty years since Imre Nagy called for their repeal.
 12. At the Second Congress of the HWP held from 25 February to 2 March 1951 the already excessive targets for industrial development laid down in the Five Year Plan for 1950-55 were raised to quite unrealistic levels — with disastrous consequences for the living standards of the Hungarian people.
 13. In a work published in 1952 and often regarded as his 'political testament' the Soviet leader Joseph Stalin had defined "the basic economic law of socialism" as "the maximum satisfaction of the constantly rising material and cultural requirements of the whole of society through the continuous expansion and perfection of socialist production on the basis of higher techniques." See: J. Stalin, *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR*, Moscow, 1952, p. 45.
 14. The A and B sectors are the terms employed in Soviet bloc marxist-leninist textbooks on economics to denote the sectors of the economy producing means of production and consumer goods respectively. The unfavourable development Imre Nagy refers to arose from investments being directed overwhelmingly to the A sector.
 15. The National Economic Council was established in 1949 as the highest organ of economic planning under the direction of Ernő Gerő. It took over the responsibilities of the Supreme Economic Council that had functioned between 1946 and 1949. It was abolished in December 1952. The State Planning Office was set up at the same time in June 1949 under Zoltán Vas who had previously directed the Supreme Economic Council.
 16. Zoltán Vas (1903-1983) was an active Communist from his youth, imprisoned for 16 years under the Horthy regime between the wars, spent the second world war in Moscow, and was one of the first Muscovite Party leaders to return to Hungary in 1944. Mayor of Budapest and Government Commissioner for Supplies in 1945, secretary to the

Supreme Economic Council from 1946 to 1949, and head of the State Planning Office from 1949 to the end of 1952. He took up a minor post in charge of the Komló coal mines in Southern Hungary in 1953 to avoid the purges, but returned to leading economic positions in 1954. During the 1956 revolution he was appointed by Imre Nagy to serve again as Government Commissioner for Supplies, and on 4 November he took refuge with the Nagy group in the Yugoslav Embassy and was later deported with them to Romania. He returned to Hungary in 1959, published his autobiography *My Eventful Life* in 1980, and died in Budapest in 1983.

17. The Party and Government resolution of 1 December 1951 abolished rationing and restrictions on trade in agricultural produce, and called for a policy on prices and wages that would raise living standards. Despite this the prices of consumer goods continued to rise and the level of real wages to fall.
18. By 1952 real wages, instead of rising by 35% as predicted under the Five Year Plan, had in fact fallen by 15-20% below the level for 1949.
19. Between 1945 and 1954, while agricultural production constituted almost a third of national income, only in one year (1951) did it exceed the pre-war level, while by 1952 it had fallen 20% behind it.
20. In the middle of 1953 about 60% of arable land was in the hands of private farmers, whereas they contributed on average well over 70% of agricultural production.
21. Rapid collectivisation was first advocated by Rákosi in August 1948, adopted as official policy at the Central Committee session of November 1948, and publicly launched in 1949. Although the programme originally called for 90% collectivisation to be achieved within 2-3 years, in practice the policies of compulsory deliveries and taxation in kind imposed on private farming served the economic interests of the regime better than total collectivisation, and in fact by March 1953 less than two-fifths of arable land had been brought into the socialist sector, with 26% in the hands of cooperatives and 13% in state farms.
22. The Party's agricultural policies resulted in the abandonment of approximately 10% of all cultivated land during the period of collectivisation. The abandoned and uncultivated land, euphemistically described as belonging to 'state reserves', more than doubled in the course of 1952 alone.
23. Imre Nagy refers to his responsibility for compulsory deliveries both as Minister of Food Supplies from December 1950 to January 1952, and as Minister of Compulsory Deliveries from January to November 1952.
24. It has long been known, though rarely officially acknowledged, that Imre Nagy opposed the introduction of rapid collectivisation in 1948-49. It was for this reason that he was removed from his post as head of the Central Committee's agricultural section in 1948, and final-

ly dropped from membership of the Politburo and even from the Central Committee in September 1949. He returned to the Government as Minister for Food Supplies in December 1950, was readmitted to his positions in the Party leadership at the beginning of 1951, and then from January to November 1952 he held the post of Minister of Compulsory Deliveries. His return to prominence seems to have coincided with the rise of Malenkov in the Soviet hierarchy as Stalin's heir apparent. He was made a Deputy Prime Minister in November 1952.

25. The precise details of Imre Nagy's proposed reorganisation of the Government are omitted from the Hungarian text. This may not be entirely accidental, since it cannot be excluded that the changes initially proposed may have been more radical than those finally announced to the Hungarian Parliament a week later on 4 July. Nevertheless, the changes finally announced did involve a more substantial reorganisation of the Government than has generally been recognised. Fifteen ministers, or practically a half of the former Government's members, were dropped, headed by Rákosi, Farkas, Révai, Antal Apró, Károly Kiss and István Kossa — all hard liners and former powerful stalinists. While the number of ministers was reduced by amalgamating some of the smaller ministries and only three new members were brought into the Government, the key ministries of defence, interior, culture, agriculture and foreign affairs all received new heads. Besides Imre Nagy's replacement of Rákosi as Prime Minister, the most significant changes were the dropping of Mihály Farkas and József Révai from their posts as Minister of Defence and Minister of Culture, to be replaced by István Bata and József Darvas respectively. András Hegedüs, the former Minister of State Farms and a future prime minister, was appointed Minister of Agriculture and First Deputy Prime Minister, while Béla Szalai entered the Government as Head of the State Planning Office. Besides these Government changes, 9 members of the former 14-member Party Politburo were dropped, amongst them Farkas, Révai, Apró, Kiss and 5 other stalinists, and a new, slimmer, 9-member Politburo formed with 2 new full members (Lajos Ács and Rudolf Földvári) and 2 new candidate members (István Bata and Béla Szalai).

Yet at the same time, while Rákosi had been dropped from the Government, he retained his post as leader of the Party, and his former deputy Ernő Gerő not only remained as a Politburo member and Deputy Prime Minister with continuing responsibility for the economy but also assumed the key post of Minister of the Interior. Moreover, none of the new appointees to either the Government or the Party leadership could be counted as committed or sincere supporters of Imre Nagy and his policies. The restructuring of the Government and Party leadership thus achieved the removal for the time being of several of the former leading stalinists, while leaving the reins of power still effectively in the hands of Rákosi and Gerő.



Left to right: Rakosi, Gero and Nagy — *flashy smiles conceal a murderous struggle.*

Pax Europeana (On the Thinkable and the Unthinkable)

By Jiri Dienstbier

(Below we publish a document on the related questions of European and German unity and world peace by Jiri Dienstbier. Dienstbier was a well-known radio journalist in 1968. In January 1979 he became a spokesperson for the Charter 77 human rights movement. In May 1979 he was sentenced to three years' imprisonment on political charges. After his release he returned to human rights activity and became a Charter spokesperson for the second time early this year.)

Many of the policy points in 'Pax Europeana' have been included in Charter 77 document No. 5/1985, dated 11 March 1985 and entitled 'The Prague Appeal', which is addressed to the forthcoming END (European Nuclear Disarmament) Conference in Amsterdam. This 'Prague Appeal' is signed by representatives of a broad spectrum of opinion within the Charter, including revolutionary socialist Petr Uhl, former Foreign Minister Jiri Hajek, playwright Vaclav Havel and a Jesuit priest, Josef Zverina.

This document has struck a raw nerve in Cold War circles in the West. Professor Vladimir Kusan, who writes on Czechoslovak affairs for Radio Free Europe, finds that the Chartists' 'rhetoric comes close to that of the more cavalier peace movements in Western Europe (which) is perhaps not the best means of tackling the hard realities of life'. The Chartists have failed to face up to the root of the division of Europe which, as Kusan tells us, is nothing other than 'Soviet communist expansionism'. And who can disagree with him since 'all these and other issues have been incessantly discussed at a high level of expertise in the West' (RFE Czechoslovak Situation Report 6/85). Well then.

The text of the document was taken from the Czechoslovak émigré journal Listy (No. 6, 1984) and the translation and footnotes are by Mark Jackson.)

History remains open as it always has been.

The postponement/cancellation of Erich Honecker's visit to Bonn¹, the remarks of the Italian Foreign Minister Giulia Andreotti at the *Unita* rally and the reaction to these events only go to show that our contemporary traumas, unresolved and taboo as they often are, will make themselves felt ever more insistently insofar as every mouth which tries to mention them remains gagged.

Given the current state of the European peace it is remarkable that the question of Honecker's visit was allowed to remain in the air for as long as it did. Why was it so many weeks before this much criticised visit was called off? Who gained and who lost, and what was it that was lost and gained? Who kept the joker in their hand? Could the East European leader rely on a consensus in his ruling group or a group of supporters in the Soviet leadership? Or did he get it wrong and will he have to take the consequences? Did he perhaps decide, given his age and with an eye on his biographers, to show his own nation that he was a German and that he also yearned to roll aside the boulders from which the wall, which divides both the country and the capital, is constructed.

More down to earth answers can also be found. The Federal Republic pays. It purchases pensioners, political prisoners and those who want to cross the line to the West. It pays for families to be reunited. The Federal Government underwrites multi-billion bank credits. Inter-German trade means that the GDR is de facto a member of the European Economic Community, getting the benefits without paying the contributions. Bonn thus contributes to raising the living standards of the 17 million Germans living in the North-East. But after all, would anyone be inclined to condemn this distinctive means by which the East German government cares for its own people?

Andreotti spoke the truth when he said 'pan-Germanism must be renounced; two German states exist and this is how things will have to remain'. He was talking about the past, but also, as a responsible foreign minister, referring to the present. He knows that calling into question the validity of the Yalta accords is 'much more dangerous than the nuclear arsenals'. Perhaps he means that

a divided Germany is the symbol of the unresolved European trauma, the blind alley of history, which are carried down by myths and lies, and then blocked in with both historically justified fears and false and futile resentments.

The abortive offspring of the vain hope for a lasting peace after the greatest war in history. The *raison d'être* and the consequence of the blocs. A permanent and efficient trap into which every attempt to transcend bloc politics must fall. The absurdity of a border cutting the continent in two which defies every aspiration towards peace in Europe, economic commonsense and the cultural and social unity which from the Middle Ages until modern times has created values of inestimable worth. But what does all this matter?

The lunacy of the division was so clear that it took a long time after the war before it was finally accepted that the unification of Germany was abandoned as a goal of the Great Powers. Even then, a few more years had to elapse before the fact of two states was legally recognised, both admitted to the UN and countries began to establish diplomatic relations with both. To this very day Berlin is covered by a special statute, which is and is not under the administration of four powers and both is and is not a fully fledged part of the states created by the division into spheres of influence. Mutual contacts do not take place through the classical diplomatic offices. Inter-German relations in short are something a bit different to the normal relations between two states.

After losing the war the Germans were reduced to looking on as the Great Powers agreed and disagreed. They were not too keen on the Bizonal and Trizonal solutions and the development of two 'temporary' states. It was hard to tell how long this temporary situation was to last. There was nothing to be done except to accept the collapse of the anti-Hitler coalition. Symbolic gestures remained the only solace. Thus Bonn rather than Frankfurt became the West German capital, in order to underline the fact that the temporary nature of the present arrangements is beyond all question.

The disintegration of the coalition and the outbreak of the Cold War was not, however, the only reason for the division of Germany. Germany was not carried away by the force of gravity and the destruction of German, as a European power which had threatened European stability throughout the centuries, seemed like an ideal aim, often put forward and just as often unrealised to everyone except the Germans themselves, after the war. Some Americans thought about parcelling Germany into many small states. France and England breathed a sigh of relief, not to mention the small and medium-sized nations of western, central and eastern Europe. In many places the feelings bordered on the euphoric. The most weighty factor here was Russian conservatism, used to thinking in terms of great territorial units, and accustomed to a strong German partner with which they occasionally divided up spheres of influence and great tracts of land (e.g. Poland). Perhaps the Brest-Litovsk peace³ after the First World War was also affected by this habit of thought. It is clear that it was the hope of Soviet policy that it would be best if Germany was paralysed as a whole, territorially diminished by the agreements of the Allies and constricted by a peace treaty outlawing militarism, government by monopolists or fascist influence. Beria was executed for, among other things, wishing to sell back the Eastern zone. This may have been a false accusation, but it shows that there was still room for taking a 'whole Germany' solution seriously. The state treaty of 1955 regarding Austria⁴ shows that there was a theoretical model that could be used.

After all the other variants, good and bad, realistic or absurd, had collapsed and when the birds in the bush took flight, the bird in the hand of a divided Germany remained. The *fait accompli* suited very well as a justification for a bipolar arrangement. It justified the continued presence of American and Soviet troops in Germany on the border of the newly created world order. However much both 'worlds', the particular countries in them and the rela-

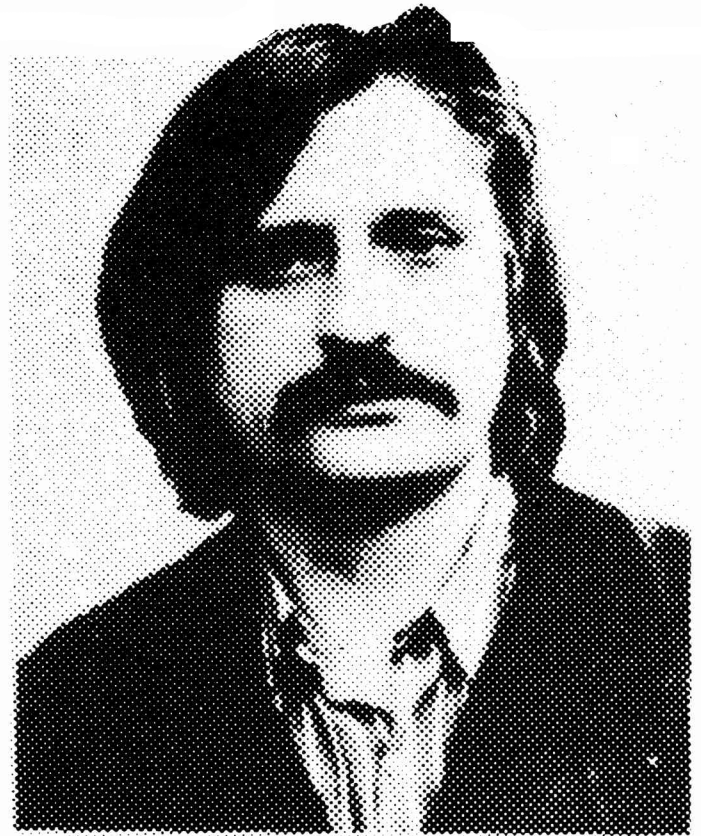
tions between the superpowers and the members of their blocs may differ, the very presence of foreign troops in Germany and in other countries underlines the second-rate status of a divided Europe. The derivative nature of policy, the mutilation of the traditional space of European activity, the need for some of the more independently-minded countries — such as France or Hungary — to develop in confines too narrow for modern economic and social needs, the impossibility of working out and implementing structural reforms in ways which go beyond the imperatives of bloc solidarity; all these factors increase the relative backwardness of Europe, a lague which is no longer true only of Central and Eastern Europe. This is shown by the difficulties which Western Europe is experiencing in economic competition with the United States and Japan.

Long after the war, the division of Germany served the internal consolidarity of the Stalinist regimes. After the terrible experiences of the war, many anti-communist people accepted an anti-German and pro-Soviet political orientation as the lesser evil. It is still possible today to hear older people say that we might still live to be grateful because the Germans remember and when it comes down to it there will be nobody but Moscow to protect us. The events of August 1968 dealt a heavy blow to this way of thinking, especially since, unbelievably and perhaps thoughtlessly, the East German army took part in the invasion, so that for the first time since the Second World War a German army entered foreign territory. Even so, fears about a possible change in the position of Germany continue to be a factor throughout Europe as Andreotti's remarks demonstrate. Similarly General Jaruzelski found it useful to remind his people that both for his own generation and throughout the centuries, a Russo-German agreement applies — perhaps above all — to Poland. The unification of Germany is still a spectre which haunts Europe. It even haunts Germany itself, something which is understandable if you try to imagine Prague's Stare mesto and Mala strana divided by roadblocks on the Charles Bridge and machine gun rests on the towers.

Occasionally on the screen you see Hitler, gesticulating behind the microphones. The cinema audience, among whom there must now only be a few who remember, rocks with laughter at this image of a circus clown. The camera turns its attention to the square in which maybe a million people are going wild with enthusiasm. Smiles freeze. Could this really have happened?

History shows most indulgence to those who, in one way or another, make it happen. The Germans are not just poor victims to whom the world has been especially unpleasant, as some of them think. Some people here have the same view especially in connection with the expulsion. However, even the youngest people mobilised for the Wehrmacht will soon be collecting their pensions, and most people on both sides of the border were born after everything was all over. This is no reason to be sentimental: even if nobody is responsible for the mistakes or crimes of their fathers, we are duty bound to understand why they took place in order to prevent their reoccurrence.

The Central European area between the Rhine and the Balkans has been marked for centuries by a society structured into larger and smaller nations. German, Czech, Polish and Hungarian kings wore different crowns. The Luxemburgs were Czech, German and Hungarian kings and the lands of the Czech crown were for a long time a decisive part of the Hapsburg realm. The uprising of the Czech estates⁵ was to a large extent an insurrection of a German-speaking Lutheran nobility and in any case had nothing to do with any kind of linguistic nationalism. At the time when France and England were constructing centralised national states, Europe between the Rhine and Russia was torn by wars of religion, crowns, power and territory, even though unity was achieved to repulse the Turkish invasion. Jan Sobieski⁶ would hardly have defended Vienna if he had realised what a deadly danger the Hapsburgs would be for his own country. The development of romantic nationalism, misused by centralising powers and by the developing Prussian state signalled the danger. The seven-year war and the partition of Poland with Russia, with Austrian assistance, was the first clear demonstration of the blind alley into which German and European history had wandered. The German revolution of 1848 similarly went off the road in this direction. Bismarck's contemporary K. Frantz vainly warned the iron Chancellor that he was ignoring the heritage of the past and his responsibilities towards it when he replaced the old principles of federalism and association by power-



Jiri Dienstbier

political pan-Germanism. Bismarck showed that he understood the other side of his work, when he refused to include the Austro-Hungarian Germans in his empire and only with reluctance annexed Alsace along with Lorraine. Even these who had aroused them, however, could not stifle the spirits which had been released in the national consciousness, spirits which not only destroyed the Danubian Empire but brought about a war and a defeat whose bastard offspring were the disfigured ideals of nazism.

It seems that these considerations are once again becoming relevant. In the light of subsequent catastrophes it has become fashionable to lament the disintegration of Austria and even to find Masaryk guilty of its destruction. An echo of the dream of the Czechs as the movers of history can be detected here even if in the negative sense. But Masaryk had certainly read Fritz Neumann who was only expressing the predominant German feeling when he wrote in *Das Ideal der Freiheit*: 'History teaches that progress is only possible through the destruction of the freedom of small nations. History has decided that there are nations which lead and nations which are led and it is hard to be more liberal than history itself ... It is not an eternal human right for people to be ruled by people of their own race.' Goebbels was later to talk of 'Kleinstaaterei'..?

It is worth recalling what Foerster, a great German Christian Democrat who tried to persuade Emperor Charles to adopt a federal solution for Austria-Hungary in August 1918 and who also tried to persuade Chancellor von Hertling in Berlin to get Germany to offer a honest peace, involving the surrender of Belgium and Alsace and an adjustment of the division of Germany, wrote:

'After the triumph of Bismarck, Austrian Germany slowly and imperceptibly began to become Prussianised and nationalist and as a consequence became ever less capable of keeping the non-German peoples under German domination, since these peoples were themselves swept up by national passions and aspirations. Only if there arose in South-Eastern Europe a progressive and forward looking union of peoples in the form of a supernational state would it be possible to oppose the panslav racial principle with something higher. But at the moment when the German representatives of the old Danubian union of peoples¹⁰ ceased to understand their own traditions, and introduced the principle of national egoism into the supernational state, the state was undermined far more effectively than it would ever have been by the inherent power of panslavism. Panslavism only gained courage and faith in itself because it saw that the Danubian state no longer understood

its own ideological basis and had thereby condemned itself to death, propelling the peoples straight towards the ideal of national states and through insufficient concern for their longing for independence committing them to the great power asylum of slav racial unity ...

The world war was a mistaken attempt by the German elements to crush through force in Eastern Europe the consequences of that very nationalist principle which they had made their own state principle.'

Foerster wrote these ideas down while in exile in Switzerland immediately before the outbreak of the second world war. He went on to ask whether his own nation was not 'inevitably destined to fulfil the curse and to continue down the road to self annihilation'. Soon afterwards the Nazis inaugurated the final act of this play.

The consequences for Germany and the Germans was: the shifting of the Baltic border some hundreds of kilometres westwards and the expulsion of millions of Germans from Central and Eastern Europe. From the ruins of Berlin there grew the wall which symbolises the division of Europe. The consequence for us was the division of Europe along a line where for thousands of years there had been no borders and the destruction of the cultural independence of Europe. The free development of the European nations is subordinated to the logic of the blocs according to which only the two superpowers are able to develop freely within the framework of their own inner historical tendencies. Even so it is doubtful whether subordination to the military-strategic imperatives of Bloc politics does not have a negative impact on the development of the political culture and life even of these nations. Not that there is any doubt at all about the impact of the situation for us Europeans.

Clearly it is true that it is not possible to change history. The cruel Jewish joke sums it up: 'When will there be a complete rehabilitation? When it becomes possible to make Jews out of soap.'

Every war has seen murder, the devastation of cities, the burning of villages, the raping of women, the violation of borders and the creation of many thousands of refugees. What happens does not occur in obedience to the rules of justice but is determined by the advancing armies. The final victory establishes the final principles. The last war was especially cruel both in its course and in its consequences.

This applies also to the question of state borders. States always have borders somewhere. Now they have their present ones. It would not make a lot of sense if we demanded back Lusatia and the whole of Silesia which for many years were under the Czech crown. No Czechs live there any more.

Nor can anything be done to reverse the population transfers. Not because it was German nazism which started the war for reasons for which the Germans themselves know they were responsible. Their leaders attempted to germanise or destroy the old national cultures and acted with great brutality. They lost, and reaped revenge, not justice. Women were also expelled, and children who had not hurt anyone nor shouted out 'Heim ins Reich'. These things were decided on by the victorious great powers. They were carried out not only by people who had reasons for revenge, even if they took it out on the whole family, but also by the worst elements of our nation. These people used the opportunity for their own enrichment and as a solace for their inferiority complexes, before during and after the war and even today. However those three million Germans have been gone now for forty years and nothing can be changed any more. What was done by the grandfathers and the fathers could only be reversed through inflicting new and pointless injustices on the children and the grandchildren who had nothing to do with any of it. For this reason the associations of expellees are in the best of cases only fossils. In the worst they are a horse on the backs of which it is possible to ride into Parliament or into a paid position. Hoping to return to Eger or Reichenberg, however, is as silly as if the Czechs were to lay claim to Vratislav or Zitava. It would be possible to create friendly associations of former inhabitants who do not want to return or to restore anything but who want to renew social, cultural or economic connections from the time when people in the region lived peacefully side by side and were more interested in what people were really like than in what language they spoke.

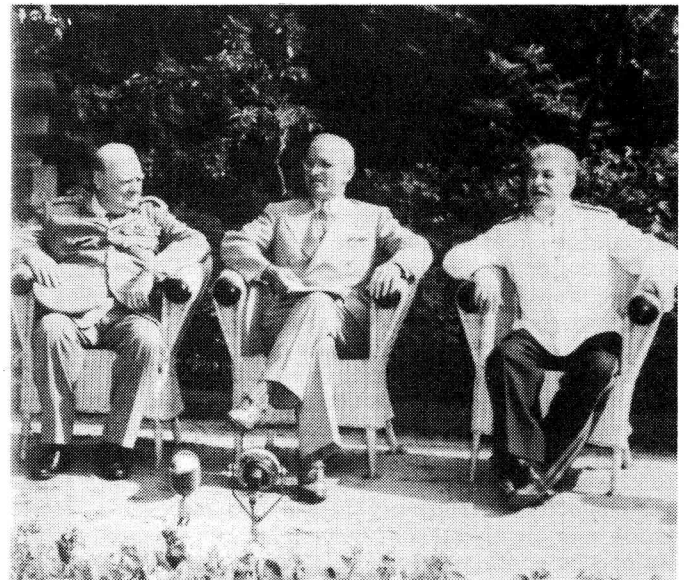
Peace settlements are not realisations of dreams of love or

friendship. All there is is a new balance of forces born from the consequences of the preceding struggles. Strength, however, is not defined only by the number of people under arms, the quantity of bows and arrows, of cannon or nuclear warheads. The remark that Stalin made about the Pope's divisions and its occasional use amongst us serves chiefly to demonstrate a particular cast of thought. Sometimes military weakness can be a political strength, as for example when the advantages of maintaining the neutrality of a particular country outweigh the costs of occupation for a potential aggressor, as was the case with Switzerland and Sweden during the Second World War.

For this reason it does not seem to me particularly important to enter into a debate about the technical aspects of European and world war. Past arms races at least took place in the realm of the possible. Nowadays useless weapons are poured forth in useless quantities. In both halves of Europe the useless rockets with nuclear warheads which are being put in place are not the cause but the consequence of the threat of war.

From a technical point of view, of course, these weapons are usable. Press the button and away they go. Europe's problems are solved, probably for all eternity. However, it serves no purpose to speculate on collective extinction, only to think about where and how it might be possible to unravel the gordian knot, since it cannot these days simply be slashed through with a sword. We have to work out how to get out of the dead ends and eventually to find ways of opening up new paths. Given the thousand year long experience of our civilisation, every new path has probably already been trod by somebody at some time. We will even find buried treasure. Before we get there, however, we will have to get rid of both the most ancient and the newest prejudices.

If we are to succeed we must also act in such a way that everybody else renounces their prejudices as well. The way to compel them to do this is by means of an open and direct appeal, to offer the peace pipe.



Still smiling at Potsdam: Churchill, Truman, Stalin in July 1945.

Recently much has been heard of Yalta. The spirit of Yalta is like all spirits. It flies wherever it wants. The most deceitful way of interpreting Yalta is to see it as an affirmation of the division of Europe into the spheres of influence of the two superpowers. That was something which was only consolidated afterwards. There was no agreement on the Polish question at Yalta, even if the concessions which Roosevelt and Churchill made to Stalin could be understood in that way. A compromise agreement was reached over Poland, that is, that free elections after the end of the war would decide the form of the government. Nothing at all was said about the fate of Czechoslovakia, which had already defined its relationship to the Soviet Union by means of a treaty on friendship and postwar collaboration. Further developments did not evolve according to some fatality or through agreements between the superpowers. Stalin had no precise notion of what Soviet influence in Central and Eastern Europe would entail and could not know how the situation would develop. He was pragmatic. Some cases

show him prepared to retreat (Iran, Greece or the Turkish border), or to accept a compromise solution if he was convinced that there would be sufficient guarantees of Soviet security (Finland) or to reach a satisfactory understanding when aggressive measures would lead to a greater danger than losing (Yugoslavia). This did not mean that he hesitated when, for example, Czechoslovakia dropped into his lap through the initiative of a strong communist party, the political impotence of the non-communist parties and the traditional indecisiveness of President Benes, who was, in any case, ill. We don't like to hear this kind of thing. We would much prefer to have had nothing to do with it, to have had bad luck and, in short, once again to be the victims of treacherous foreign powers. Numerous historians can produce convincing demonstrations of the Soviet intention to annex Czechoslovakia. It would be amazing if Soviet policy had omitted to thoroughly investigate this variant.

Only a fool does not look into a whole gamut of possibilities. Nevertheless, once we know the outcome, there is nothing simpler or more one-sided than to lay out the reasons which inevitably led to it and to exclude everything which was not realised. There is no absolute reason — neither the fact that it is 'the heart of Europe', our uranium or any other reason — that I can find which meant that Czechoslovakia could not have the status of Yugoslavia, Finland, Austria or ... a Czechoslovakia, which would be neutral but bound by treaty to deliver 90% of its uranium to the Soviet Union. Just as long as it was just a matter of uranium.

Not even the intervention of August 1968 has convinced me. We were not aiming to leave the Warsaw Pact or Comecon. We were not asking for neutrality, and in the political sphere, rather than wanting a multiparty system we thought of a democratic mechanism in which individuals and groups would express themselves as political subjects through the medium of already existing institutions. Despite the fact that we showed such respect for the realities of the European situation, we were crushed. All the existing national and international institutions were constituted in the postwar period as a consequence of the postwar development. While in the immediate postwar period even a lesser Soviet gain would have amounted to a success, in 1968 fears prevailed in Moscow that there was a danger of a lessening of Soviet influence. Whether or not you believe those fears to have been illusory or not depends on one's understanding of what the European peace really is. If you believe that this peace is sustained by the presence of Soviet and American troops, the establishment of two incompatible economic mechanisms and the tying of the internal political development of the European states to bloc politics (which in Eastern Europe has led to the disruption of the functioning of society through forcing the internal political system into the mould of a Stalinist model which developed in quite different conditions, proportions and traditions) then I am afraid that you are trapped in the vicious circle of a status quo to whose periphery it might sometimes be possible to make some cosmetic adjustments. Such a view is at odds with every social theory, including marxism and also has the disadvantage of having nothing to do with life, since on several occasions (and everywhere in the zone of direct Soviet control, with the exception of Bulgaria, through the medium of mass popular uprisings), people have demonstrated that this concept of the European peace is not something beyond question.

While in Eastern Europe any attempt to revive the dynamic development of society through the liberation of internal creative forces is frustrated, in the Western part of our divided continent on the other hand, anyone who tries to challenge the obstacles to the unification of Europe is immediately assailed with accusations of wanting 'Finlandisation'.

Firstly, the Finnish 'Finlandisation' is an outstanding success of the policy of Paasikivi and his friends who have succeeded in maintaining independence and the right to free internal development of a small nation, which had not only just been defeated in a war with a huge neighbouring power, but it had also in the past been a territorial part of that power for a long historical period. The quality of this success can only be fully appreciated if we bear in mind the tenacity with which Russia has always clung on to any territory which it had gained and how much it dislikes letting go of any of its territory.

Secondly, not only small, but also large nations can only contribute to peace if they are prepared to respect the justified in-

terests and fears of others and particularly of their neighbours. It is essential for peace that the relations between neighbouring states is friendly ... Friendship with the Soviet Union is not some kind of concession or semi-vassalage for Finland but a basic necessity. Friendly relations between the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia are also a necessity, whatever state they may be in at the moment. The situation is the same with regard to ourselves and Germany. All this is generally understood throughout central and eastern Europe. If the populations of these countries were offered the status of Finland in a free referendum they would vote for it with overwhelming enthusiasm and would certainly prefer it to transferring their allegiance into the other camp.

Every status is defined by concrete conditions which do not apply to anywhere else. The 'Finlandisation' which is so much feared could not mean that Holland or West Germany, for example, would suddenly change into some kind of Finland on the other side of the continent. What its opponents would pejoratively describe as Finlandisation could only mean the unification of Europe, not as a beggar dependent on the whims of the two superpowers but as an association of free and equal nations which would operate on the world stage as a zone of peace. The Japanese example, with its economic and technical development, unhindered by huge military demands, shows that this is not just pie in the sky. This sort of Europe would maintain military forces, not in order to conquer anyone else or to strike terror into the hearts of the superpowers; nonetheless it would dispose of sufficient human and material potential to defend itself. It would be an inevitable condition for this state of affairs that it should be guaranteed by a treaty involving all the parties to this new arrangement of the Euro-American region, and sustained by the nuclear strategic potential of the superpowers for a considerable period of time. At the moment this potential sustains the division of Europe, while this division in turn justifies the continuation of the arms race. If the opposite conception were to be accepted in all or at least a majority of the European states it would reverse the impulse towards the tendency towards militarisation and initiate a process of the gradual restriction and reduction of the nuclear arsenals.

It is self-evident that this kind of development cannot take place on the basis either of an anti-Soviet or an anti-American orientation. Both powers must be offered guarantees that the drawing together and co-operation of the European powers are aimed solely at furthering their internal development, require close and improving relations with both superpowers, first of all in the economic sphere but also in the cultural, social, scientific etc., and involving free travel and contact between people.

Those who consider that Western military might is the only guarantee of peace are either a) supporters of the untenable status quo in which we are presently condemned to live; b) chronic pessimists who believe that there is an inevitable trend towards the totalitarianism of all humanity, consoling themselves with the thought that they will not live to see it; and c) they must believe that at some stage, somehow or other, the military forces will be used and the communist evil crushed. Such people are naive.

It would, of course, be just as naive to imagine that the process I have outlined will be straightforward. But on the other hand, haven't we been caught up in its current for a long while already?

Let us recall the Bonn agreement, the Helsinki accords, the Madrid communiques¹¹, the inter-German rapprochement and, once again, ask ourselves the question: why did it take Honecker so long to bow to the pressure?

It is, however, necessary to take into account the objection, brought about by lack of confidence, uncertainty and loss of faith, that the new situation may not be any better than the old one. Under existing circumstances, one-sided disarmament, withdrawal from the blocs and unilateral declarations of neutrality are not realistic. Peace is a complex phenomenon or it will not exist at all, and the same is true of the paths which lead towards it.

It would certainly be ideal if all the governments from London to Warsaw accepted this kind of programme and put it forward in a united way to the two superpowers. But this is not possible. There is, however, a vast open space to be filled by citizens' initiatives, the peace movement, political parties, churches, professional bodies. There is also room for independent citizens' initiatives in Eastern Europe. These things are themselves the fruit of the tendencies towards an understanding both at the international

and domestic levels. Their very existence, something which would have been unthinkable in Stalin's times, is a sign of changed circumstances. Despite all their limitations and imperfections, they are a stimulus for further positive changes especially because they get the authorities accustomed to the existence of elements of independent activity in society. They are persecuted precisely to the extent that the ruling circles feel threatened in their efforts to maintain the inner status quo in uncertain international conditions. Their aim cannot be to seek a confrontation with the authorities, to attempt an overthrow or to transfer a particular country from one alliance to another. Their aim is to establish a dialogue between all social layers and groups with the idea of finding the best possible solution to social problems. This is the reason why persecution has to be resisted, because it makes dialogue impossible. They cannot, however, adopt the confrontationist stance taken by the authorities, but must continue to adhere to the search for a real dialogue. Anybody who longs for revolution, street battles and disturbances needs to understand that the logic of the blocs rules that sort of thing out. Anybody who wanted, even by peaceful means, to bring about a one-sided revision of the existing arrangements is equally out of touch. The Helsinki agreements meant a significant step towards the renewal of a traditional understanding of the concept of state sovereignty. But as long as we remain within the confines of the logic of the blocs, then it is to be expected that one-sided threats to one of them will be subjected to the full force of this logic — even if only from feelings of fear.

On the basis of this understanding we must fight together from San Francisco to Vladivostok to reverse this logic. It is my belief that this means the recognition of certain facts by the European nations:

— **No one should propose the revision of European borders.** In fact it is necessary to openly and publicly adhere to the principle of their inviolability. At the same time this requires members of the larger nations to demand equality and the possibility for the fullest development of the smaller nations. In the process of European rapprochement, the state borders will tend to become nothing more than imaginary lines similar to those which are used to demarcate districts of departments. This process is already taking place between some West European states.

— **Armament is never justified.** It is not possible to demand a one-sided disarmament or measures of disarmament only from one's own government. The demand must be placed on all European governments simultaneously. Nor must the argument be used that somebody else's armament is justified by the armament of one's own government. It is naturally also unacceptable to condemn only the escalations of another government while remaining silent about the escalations in one's own country or bloc.

— **It is necessary to demand the removal of all foreign armies from the territory of the European states and the dissolution of NATO and the Warsaw Pact.,** at least at first through the limitation and withdrawal of their troops.

— **It is necessary to recognise the right of the Germans to reunification inside the present borders of Germany,** by methods, forms, conditions and under terms which are agreed by the Germans themselves, with the agreement of both superpowers and of all the other European nations. Given the complex of problems surrounding this development, it can only take place as part of a wider process of European rapprochement. A non-nuclear and neutralised zone could be created through a series of steps, insofar as they could be agreed upon as phases of a gradual dismantling of the blocs. The form of the new German state might be that of a Federation or Confederation. The removal of the confrontation between the blocs would also eliminate a whole number of points of friction between the two systems which would, in the new conditions, and with the removal of the predominance of military concerns, develop far more freely.

— **It is necessary to consistently defend the principle of non-interference,** which is set down in all of the most important international documents, such as the UN Charter and the Helsinki accords. **Non-interference between states must be distinguished from free and open discussion between peoples.** While on the one hand states must stick to the principle that the internal arrangements and conditions inside states are exclusively the concern of the in-



habitants of that country, on the other citizens must have the right to freely ask questions, debate, support or criticise those conditions and arrangements. States are specialised institutions, while humanity is only one.

History is and always was a human creation. The conditions in which we live are the creation of the wisdom and stupidity of our forebearers. It is up to us whether or not we are happy with things as they are, and continue to allow history to be made by others or whether we try to create a world which conforms to our own longings and wishes. Without illusions. A short time from the historical point of view can be a long time from the point of view of one life. Nonetheless, history remains open.

NOTES

1. After meeting West German Chancellor Kohl at the funeral of Yuri Andropov in February 1984, East German leader Erich Honecker set in motion plans to make an official visit to West Germany. His detente plans, however, ran into the storm of a major anti-West German campaign by the Kremlin in the wake of the decision by the West Germans to accept Cruise and Pershing missiles and the visit had to be cancelled. Nevertheless, Honecker persisted for several months in refusing to bow to Soviet pressure to the point where *Pravda* launched two direct attacks on the East German leadership, a leadership which has historically shown in recent decades little sign of independent life.
2. The Yalta Conference of February 1945, as the scene of an attempt by Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin to agree on a future division of influence in Europe. The conference is now seen by Moscow as 'proving that differences between social systems constituted no obstacle to joint efforts against aggression, for peace and international security'.
3. The Brest-Litovsk treaty, which was ratified in March 1918, involved the cessation to Germany by the newly-established Bolshevik regime of large areas of the old Russian Empire in return for peace.
4. In May 1955 the four powers (Britain, France, the US and the USSR) agreed to withdraw all their troops from Austria in return for a pledge on the part of the Austrians of permanent neutrality.
5. In 1618 a group of Bohemian nobles launched an insurrection in opposition to attempts by the Hapsburgs to re-impose Catholic uniformity on the Monarchy. The uprising was crushed in 1620 and most of old Czech nobility executed.
6. Jan Sobieski, King of Poland 1674-1696, played a key role in relieving Vienna when that city was besieged by the Turks in 1683.
7. The 7-year war took place between Prussia and a coalition of Austria and Russia, and resulted in the loss by Austria to Prussians gaining Silesia in 763. The first partition of Poland between Russia, Prussia and Austria took place in 1772. In the course of the two succeeding partitions Poland disappeared from the map.
8. Tomas G. Masaryk was the first President of the first Czechoslovak Republic from its foundation in October 1918 until his death in 1937.
9. 'petty state mania'
10. The 'Danubian state' refers to the pre-1918 Austro-Hungarian monarchy.
11. The Helsinki accords were agreed on at a Conference of 35 interested nations grouped together in the 'Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe' (CSCE). The meeting among others ratified the status quo in Europe and adopted a position on human rights. It also established a framework for further meetings such as that in Madrid in 1984.

Jaruzelski Back on the Defensive

By Oliver MacDonald

By jailing three leaders of the opposition in June and passing a new package of repressive laws, the Polish authorities have acknowledged their renewed weakness resulting from the police murder of the Catholic priest Jerzy Popieluszko last year. At the same time, there are signs of a revival of Solidarity within the factories.

Last February, less than a week after the sentencing of four political policemen for the Popieluszko murder, three of the most prominent leaders of the opposition — Bogdan Lis, Wladyslaw Frasyniuk and Adam Michnik — were arrested in Gdansk. They were charged as a result of their participation in a meeting with other Solidarity leaders, including Lech Walesa, to discuss protests against proposed price rises. (The new official trade unions had also protested against the austerity measures.)

Frasyniuk, a bus driver and chairperson of Solidarity in Wroclaw, is the most prominent leader of the militant syndicalist current in the Solidarity movement; Lis, a technician from Gdansk and key organiser of the August 1980 strike and formation of Solidarity was also its most prominent Communist Party member until he was expelled from the party in 1981 and became a main leader of the underground until his arrest in 1984. Michnik, a well-known young socialist intellectual in the 1960s, became a leading theoretician of the opposition in the late 1970s and an adviser to Solidarity before being imprisoned under martial law.

The three opposition leaders received very heavy sentences — Frasyniuk received three and a half years', Michnik three years', and Lis two and a half years' imprisonment during a trial which was closed to all foreign journalists and observers. The defendants' lawyers repeatedly protested against violations to the judge — but these were brushed aside. The whole event was so poorly prepared by the state that it gave the impression of being staged for urgent political reasons — the need to rapidly demonstrate a political will to repress the opposition.

In May the government pushed through a new package of repressive laws, most of them to operate for a three-year period, designed to provide sweeping new powers to clamp down on open political activity. These emergency laws had previously been introduced in particular cities where Solidarity had been especially strongly organised, and protests were feared. They now apply to the whole country. They allow for the summary hearing and sentencing of a wide range of political offences within 48 hours of arrest. Procedure in such cases involves judgements by a single judge on the basis of no more than a police report in the absence of either the accused or a defence lawyer. Sentences in such cases can involve either obligatory unpaid labour or a fine of up to 50,000 zlotys (average monthly salaries are 18,000 zl.). They also stipulate compulsory pre-trial detention for all those



Wladyslaw Frasyniuk in Barczewo Prison — 1984

arrested for offences that could involve a 3-year jail sentence.

Along with these judicial and legislative moves, there has been a new wave of arrests and detentions since the Popieluszko affair. In the summer of last year, an amnesty had released over 600 political prisoners, but according to Minister of the Interior General Kiszczak on 10 May the number of political prisoners in pre-trial detention stood at 140 — the underground says the figure for all political prisoners is over 200.

These trends have caused disquiet amongst the supporters of the Jaruzelski group itself. The new package of repressive laws in particular has drawn public criticism from within the official political world. The Polish Jurists Association has criticised them, as have professors at Warsaw University. More significantly, protests have come from leaders of the new political Front organisation created under martial law, PRON — The Movement for National Salvation. And according to Minister of Justice Lech Domeracki, they were also criticised by elements within the Communist Party itself.

All these trends are an indication that those who instigated the murder of Father Popieluszko have to some extent succeeded in their purposes. There can be little doubt that the killing was inspired by elements within the regime hostile to the course being followed by Jaruzelski. Ever since martial law was imposed in December 1981, the Jaruzelski group has been attempting to re-establish state authority through achieving a modus vivendi with the Church hierarchy and with the professional middle classes, in return for such forces opposing continued unofficial political organisation and activi-

ty. This approach achieved a measure of success, culminating in the amnesty last summer. But it has always been opposed by a powerful element within the state and party apparatus as well as by the party leaderships of the GDR and Czechoslovakia. They have wanted a much tougher policy to weaken the Church and clamp down on the 'loyal opposition'.

The murder of Popieluszko demonstrated to all those forces that might have been prepared to seek a wide-ranging compromise with Jaruzelski, that the General was not in fact strong enough to deliver his side of any bargain, since he was clearly not fully in command of his own security apparatus.

At the same time, the murder undermined the Jaruzelski group's most consistent slogan: respect for law and order. From being a slogan used to justify the stamping out of all unofficial political activity, it became the slogan of unofficial activist groups. Citizens' committees to monitor human rights violations and police repression sprang up in the wake of the Popieluszko murder in Warsaw, Wroclaw, Krakow, Szczecin, Walbrzych and Torun, as well as other, smaller towns. They were immediately denounced as illegal, and subsequently Jan Kostecki from Szczecin was sentenced in June to two years' imprisonment for his activity within the committee.

Revival of Solidarity activity was evident in the May Day demonstrations this year. The turn-out behind Solidarity banners was bigger than in either 1983 or 1984. This seems to be more than a temporary reaction to the Popieluszko affair. Solidarity activists have made a major turn in their orientation in many factories from purely

clandestine propaganda activities towards participation in the self-management councils in an attempt to use them in the interests of employees. This orientation, spelt out below in the interview with Henryk Wujec, is already having some visible impact.

The self-management councils were established during the period of Solidarity's legality, partly through initiative from below and partly through government measures as part of a policy of decentralising economic decision-making. They were not suppressed during martial law and continue to operate in more than 6,000 enterprises, employing some five and a half million workers. The councils are elected every two years by secret ballot and, according to a recent government survey (reported in the *Financial Times*, 20 June) a fair number of them exert a real influence on management decisions. The survey says that in some thirty plants, Communist Party organisations are under pressure from the self-management councils. And at the huge

Warsaw car plant, FSO Zeran (the centre of the workers' council movement in 1956), elections to the council in April produced a 73% turn-out by the work force and the election of a markedly more radical council.

The Party leadership has now ordered members to combat Solidarity infiltration of the councils and plans to change the law to weaken them — a step that has already produced a formal protest from the FSO council.

In a speech to a conference of the new official trade unions in April, Deputy Premier Rakowski referred to the 'steadfast' Solidarity activists in the factories. He said they reminded him of Poles after the war who hoped that if they were patient and steadfast, General Anders, the leader of the British-based Polish army, would eventually arrive in Warsaw on a white horse. He went on: 'I hope that those who are so steadfast, who are so patient for something, do not find themselves in the same situation as those who forty years ago kept repeating in-

cessantly that any moment Anders was going to enter on a white horse. I think that also those who are so steadfast and who are active in work enterprises will be convinced by life that the position that they have taken is false and leads nowhere ...'

Rakowski here expressed exactly the policy of the Jaruzelski group over the last three years: to prevent the workers from being able to engage in any independent activity or have any practical perspective for independent trade unionism. This would then drive some to dream of salvation from the USA, while the more pragmatic would return to the official structures; and these in turn would be split from the others by denunciations of the 'steadfast' as tools of the US.

But at least for the moment, it appears that the Solidarity activists in the factories do not have to wait for Anders. They have a wide field of semi-legal action in at least some of the big factories and Jaruzelski's strategy of normalisation has stalled.

Self-Management and Solidarity interview with Henryk Wujec

(Henryk Wujec, a physicist and one of the main animators of the influential unofficial trade union journal Robotnik in the late 1970s, was an elected member of the Warsaw Solidarity leadership in 1980-81. Interned in December 1981 he remained in prison until being amnestied in June 1984. In May of this year he was sentenced to three months' imprisonment on a charge of leading an illegal demonstration on May Day in Warsaw.)

This interview was published in Tygodnik Mazowsze no. 113 (one of the main underground journals of Solidarity, published in Warsaw). Wujec's views almost certainly reflect mainstream opinion within the movement in Warsaw. For more information on the self-management organisations, see the article above by Oliver MacDonald. The translation published here is from Uncensored Poland, 28 February 1985.)

You are known for your belief that Solidarity should be, first and foremost, a trade union.

This, perhaps, would be pushing it too far. What I mean is that Solidarity should not forget that it is also a trade union. Perhaps my picture of things is not yet complete but it seems to me that at present Solidarity is concerned most with its own survival: with preserving its structures, publishing and distributing papers and books, organising anniversaries and other events which visually prove its existence. Somehow I have not come across Solidarity structures which are acting in a trade union capacity in the enterprises.

Why is that?

I suppose that these are the consequences of martial law. Then there were more important tasks to perform. It was necessary to fight to preserve the union through establishing cells, organising demonstrations and founding underground papers. All this involved a lot of effort. But now it has been accomplished.

In your opinion we have now reached a different stage.

Yes. The martial law period has ended, not just formally but also to a certain extent in practice. Legislation is much harsher than it was before December 1981 but it cannot be said that Poland is still an occupied country. It is possible to lead a relatively normal life, taking into account that we are in the Communist bloc. I think that to defend our union Solidarity has to do more than defend itself and now is the time to embark on some sensible initiatives to defend the working people. There are indications that in many — not



Henryk Wujec (hands clasped in front of him) on hunger strike in Warsaw in 1977.

all, but many — enterprises, the number of people involved in Solidarity is decreasing. Demand for underground publications is smaller. Perhaps the reason is that Solidarity and underground papers live in the past but people have moved on: for them the war has finished.

You think that there is a demand for purely union work ...

And we must do this work because there is nobody else to protect the interests of employees. It is left to Solidarity. It is our moral and statutory duty.

But how can it be done?

I see two courses of action. One involves Solidarity's Secret Factory Commissions — this is a difficult way of doing things but it cannot be abandoned. The other involves self-management councils and, in my opinion, at present is better suited to the circumstances. Self-management councils can act legally and may attract large groups of people. This would be difficult in the case of Secret Factory Commissions. By definition they are secret: a small group of people carries out clandestine work and in practice they remain invisible. But when a true self-management council emerges and begins to act within the law, its activities from the very

start are a concern of all workers. Moreover, it is an easier option for all those who are afraid of repression, simply because self-management can act legally. It is also important that self-management — in accordance with the Bill adopted in the Solidarity era — may perform its functions in a democratic manner. Its powers have been restricted by the legislation which is to remain in force during the period of crisis, yet they remain considerable, particularly with regard to such matters as adoption of production plans, distribution of profits, allocation of social and housing benefits, and distribution of awards and holidays. Workers' councils are in a position to control a great number of important decisions in their factories.

All this is very controversial. For one thing, when fierce conflicts break out, Secret Factory Commissions can do a better job than self-management councils — they may organize a strong protest action by the employees. There were many such cases, eg. when the management withdrew the right to free Saturdays. For another, it is not clear whether sitting on self-management councils does not have a demoralising effect on those involved. It becomes necessary to enter into various arrangements with powers that be.

Ideally, the factory should have both a good self-management council and a Secret Factory Commission to organize more resolute protest actions when needed. In fact, this opinion is shared by those Solidarity activists who sit on self-management councils. They say: we have to make deals with the management but we also need a Secret Factory Commission to make us toe the Solidarity line, so that the workers' council does not lose its sense of direction.

Then you see self-management councils as a kind of trade union that looks after workers' interests.

No. The self-management council, as the only representation of all the employees in a factory, should look after their interests, but it must also play the role of the master of the plant. Otherwise it could be easily argued that its existence is not justified. It has to take care of labour organization and the general performance of the factory, if only because this also helps the workers. Naturally, self-management councils cannot perform all those functions we envisaged for them in 1981. They cannot influence major economic decisions, they cannot decide what should be produced, since all this is decided by the central authorities. But workers' councils can do a lot on the individual plant level and all self-management activists with whom I have had a chance to talk do not want to abandon this work.

But in the situation when the economy still lies in ruins does it all make sense?

It does. People who get elected to self-management councils are experienced, know their factories, and can help to remove some obvious absurdities, without impinging on macro-economic decisions, on which we have no influence. It all makes sense on the individual plant level.

Yet in view of the way in which the whole economy is governed the improvement that can be achieved by self-management councils is negligible. People who want to take some positive action are in fact conned into taking part in a sort of make-believe performance.

I disagree. The whole thing has also a broader aspect. Workers' councils provide an opportunity to test what scope there is for action within individual factories. There are a number of self-government councils that take themselves seriously. Their work is — in a way — a foundation for the future.

How many such councils are there in the Warsaw region?

In Warsaw there are 500 plants which can elect their self-management councils. Out of this number perhaps 10% of factories have genuine councils. I could name about 20 I know of personally. If we take the three largest Warsaw plants — no self-management council exists in the Ursus tractor plant, but the FSO saloon car factory and the Warsaw Steel Mill have genuine workers' councils. I know of a small research institute where the council in practice controls everything, including the manager, almost like during the Solidarity heyday. Naturally, at some point in time they could be disbanded, so they have to moderate their ac-

tions somewhat.

But could it not be argued that in view of their actual limitations councils are made to take upon themselves too much responsibility?

A clever self-management council will never accept responsibility for anything that has been placed beyond its control. A typical situation is as follows: the manager says 'we shall take some people from our self-management council, some from our trade union, some party members, some activists from the youth organization and we shall set up a collective body which will take all decisions'. Naturally, the workers' council should not accept such a suggestion of collective responsibility. A good council will defend itself against being subordinated to others. At some point in time it has to say: 'no'. But sometimes it has to take steps which are unpopular with a large part of the workforce. Yet those who sit on a council must be aware of the strategic goals of the self-management movement and of Solidarity. We must remember the programme for a Self-governing Republic put forward by Solidarity.

Is it possible for individual councils to form larger associations with one another?

The Self-Management Bill allows such associations but in practice the authorities block such moves and thereby they violate the councils' rights. It is possible to form self-management associations within the same industry if it is done without much publicity; there are also bi-lateral agreements. At the moment associations on the regional basis can only have an informal character, although under the provisions of the Bill they are legal. So councils opt rather for quiet cooperation.

Do you think that such councils cooperating with one another can achieve some concrete results? Can they, for example, win for their workers allowances for the higher cost of living or change the rules of allocating social funds?

It is possible. I have in mind a kind of united front for self-management. For instance, in some large plants workers' councils officially put forward a programme of action which is publicly discussed. Then it is up to intellectuals and journalists to publicize the proposals in underground publications and in official papers which concern themselves with economic matters. In effect, the programme becomes known throughout Poland and other councils can lend it their support.

Workers' self-management does not have a good tradition in Poland. Earlier attempts to secure influence for workers' councils ended in failure ...

They lacked the support of a wider social movement. Now the genuine self-management councils have the support of Solidarity.

What is the biggest danger facing workers' councils at present?

It is quite clear that self-management councils, if they want to represent the interests of employees, must clash with the new trade unions or with the party organizations. Consequently, there has been some official pressure for a change in the Self-management Bill to deprive councils of some of their powers or to introduce provisions securing the party influence over them. It is difficult to say if the authorities will choose to act along this line or — and there have recently been indications pointing this way — if they will opt for a change in the Trade Unions Bill, which would give more power to the new unions at the cost of the self-management councils. We have to defend ourselves against such moves by voicing our objections in public and by preparing the ground for protest actions. Even if self-management councils are defeated, at least it will be a defeat on a battlefield. And this is very important.

I think that councils would be most seriously endangered if the Self-management Bill were changed in such a way that they could not function democratically. Then, in my opinion, the whole thing should be abandoned. But whatever we can achieve now, will not be easily won back by the Communists. If the chance to take action provided by the self-management councils is wasted, we will have no-one but ourselves to blame.

All you have said is, perhaps, realistic, but it is not particularly inspiring ...

Inspiring are those actions that bring results.

The Persecution of the Turks

By Michele Lee

In mid-January of this year, first *Reuters* and then *AFP* reported unrest in the southeastern part of Bulgaria, where the majority of the Turkish national minority lives.¹ The agencies spoke of violent armed clashes having taken place in November and December 1984, between Turkish peasants and the Bulgarian police and army, in which at least forty people had died. The Bulgarian Deputy Foreign Minister, Ivan Ganev, told foreign correspondents, however, that 'there were no incidents involving the Turkish minority' (whose size he estimated at 4-500,000²) and described the Western reports as yet another example of 'malicious anti-Bulgarian propaganda'.

On the Turkish side, a flood of articles appeared in major dailies (*Türkmen, Milliyet, Cumhuriyet*) describing 'brutal measures directed at assimilation of Turks in Bulgaria'. In contrast to the more restrained attitudes of the government itself, and its Foreign Office, the right-wing nationalist press thundered against 'genocide of our brothers abroad' (conveniently forgetting, of course, the Turkish state's own bloody record on the national question, most especially of the Armenians and the Kurds). Within a few days, 16,000 signatures were collected — by an organization representing Turkish immigrants from Bulgaria — for a petition demanding government action; this was accompanied by photographs and other documents illustrating the 'bloody treatment' of Turks in Bulgaria. A long list of Turks forced to adopt Bulgarian names was also appended. The intention was to prod not only the Turkish government, but also Turkish and world public opinion, into condemnation of Bulgaria: the petition and accompanying material was also sent to the heads of government of all Islamic states, to the US President and to the UN Human Rights Commission.

Curiously, the Bulgarian press barely reported the events and the government gave no official explanation or denials. However, the frontier with Turkey was closed 'for the time being' and the Bulgarian tourist agency *Balkan-turist* took a 'spontaneous decision' to cancel all arrangements with its Turkish counterparts, in reaction to 'the hostile and malicious anti-Bulgarian campaign conducted in the Turkish press'.

The Turkish Foreign Office was officially keen to cool the situation. At the same time, however, the Council for National Security which advises the Turkish president, the joint staff of the Turkish military intelligence as well as the intelligence service attached to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs took an active role in pursuing the matter further. On 22 February 1985, after several weeks of silence, the Turkish government official condemned the 'forced Bulgarianization of ethnic Turks'. In a protest note handed to the Bulgarian ambassador to Ankara, Arigir Konstantinov, it 'solemnly warned' Sofia that 'the Turkish government

cannot be expected to remain uninterested where the treatment of Turks in Bulgaria is concerned', and that Turkey might be forced to take 'appropriate measures'. At this time, also, the President of the Great National Assembly (the Turkish parliament) received a delegation from the Association of Balkan Turks. The delegation spoke of an acceleration of repression against the Bulgarian Turkish minority at the end of the last year, as part of a drive to force the Turks to give up their ethnic identity and their names in time for the 1985 decennial



census, scheduled to take place on 4 December 1985, and designed to prove, among other things, that Bulgaria is populated exclusively by Bulgarians. It demanded urgent intervention of the Turkish government to stop 'persecution, killing and forced assimilation' of Turks in Bulgaria.

Members of the delegation spoke of an organized and active resistance of the Turkish minority to the latest wave of repression. The Bulgarian government's first response, they said, had been to arrest Turkish national leaders (mainly intellectuals and priests) as well as other prominent individuals. The majority of those arrested had been taken to a 'concentration camp' at Haskovo — where several thousand Turks have apparently been imprisoned since December and submitted to a harsh regime and forced 're-education'. However, after the December arrests, Turkish inhabitants of villages in the Rodope mountains had armed themselves (with old, but also possibly with newly smuggled, guns) and confronted first the police and then the army, when these were sent to patrol the area, search houses and arrest 'suspects'. It seems that some 40 Bulgarians and between two and four hundred Turks died in the clashes, with a very much larger number being wounded on both sides.

A Society for Solidarity with Balkan Turks was soon formed in Turkey, which held public meetings in Ankara, Bursa, Ismir, Constantinople, Üsküdar, and many other Turkish towns (including the Turkish part of Cyprus). On these occasions the Bulgarian government was condemned for forbidding traditional and religious Turkish festivals, closing down all schools in the Turkish language and shutting all mosques and persecuting all those found in posses-

sion of literature in the Turkish language.³

Those who have recently crossed the Bulgarian frontier into Turkey have described the standard treatment visited upon Turkish villages in recent months. According to them, the police and the army first surround a village and then herd all adults to a central point. After a thorough search of their persons and their houses, their identity cards and all other official documents are taken away. The people are then asked to sign an undertaking that they will not emigrate to Turkey, and that they consider it their patriotic duty to change their Turkish names to Bulgarian ones (Kemal becoming Boris, Hasan Ivan, etc.).

The Formation of the 'Bulgarian Socialist Nation'

Ever since the end of the war and the establishment of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, an 'invisible war' (in the words of Anton Jugov, a Bulgarian ex-Minister for Foreign Affairs) has been waged between the Bulgarian state and its Turkish national minority. After numerous, often bloody conflicts in the late 40s, Bulgaria and Turkey — under pressure from great powers — signed an agreement in the summer of 1950 according to which Ankara promised to receive a first batch of 250,000 Bulgarian Turks within three months. Each side then proceeded to make the best use of this imposed settlement. To start with, out of 600,000 (!) ethnic Turks who applied for exit visas, the Bulgarian government made its own selection which included many criminals or otherwise 'undesirable' elements. The Turkish government soon complained that 'a large number of Communist agents' were being sent to Turkey (in September 1950 Turkey and Greece were invited to join NATO), and stopped the execution of the agreement. It argued that though Ankara would continue to honour it, it would nevertheless receive only individuals who obtained, after a vetting process, a Turkish entry visa as well as the Bulgarian exit one. It is clear that, quite apart from Cold War concerns, Turkey was economically unable to absorb so many 'foreigners', particularly as large numbers of Turks and other Moslems were arriving from other Balkan states at this time as well.

Sofia, as a riposte, then introduced a new regulation, according to which the emigrants were allowed to take freely with them only their personal belongings — all other property had to be checked and a special tax and custom duty paid. In the event, only some 50,000 — mainly wealthy — Turks left; a good number of them were old enough to harbour grievances going back to the Balkan Wars (1912-13).

In the spring of 1951, at a special meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Bulgaria, a new approach to the Turkish minority was adopted. It called for a greater 'integration' of the Turks into the 'fatherland'. A large-scale (though purely administrative) admis-

sion of Turks into the party followed, and a number of their 'progressive' leaders were coopted into local and regional government bodies. However, already by 1958, the CC heard complaints that the 'Bulgarians of Turkish origin', thanks to their 'conservative and religious world outlook, are still resisting and indeed sabotaging the building of socialism'.

In the spring of 1964 a new broad 'ideological struggle' was launched: birth registry offices throughout the country were given a list of 2000 'pure Bulgarian names', prepared by the Bulgarian Academy of Science, and instructed that, whatever the ethnic affiliation of their parents, children's names had to come from that list. All personal identity cards were changed, in order to omit the earlier entry for nationality. There was an immediate revolt in the Turkish villages; hidden arsenals of old weapons were dug out and local government offices set on fire. The army intervened. Todor Zhivkov, the General Secretary of the party, at once dispatched the then highly popular General Bachvarov to stop the bloodshed and generally calm the situation. Those arrested were released, police investigations and harassment were stopped, and the Turks were allowed to keep their names — for the time being.

Incidents — and sometimes armed revolts — continued, however. The worst event took place in Paradzhiik, in 1971, when an outraged Turkish crowd lynched several local party activists — often the main carriers of Bulgarianization. Many Turks were killed and several hundred arrested in the repression which followed. When two of the arrested were subsequently sentenced to death, a protest delegation of ethnic Turks was quickly formed which in no time at all grew into a mass demonstration. When the demonstrators met the police, near the town of Samokov, the latter opened fire: according to Bulgarian sources, around ten of the 'saboteurs' were shot dead. In 1974, when a new campaign of assimilation was launched by the Bulgarian authorities, there was also a new crop of open confrontations. More recently, in 1981, there were reports in the Bulgarian press of several Turkish 'bandits' being killed by the police.

It is estimated that there are today some 9 million Bulgarian citizens of which around 900,000 are ethnic Turks, and 200,000 Bulgarian Moslems (Pomaks).² In addition, the 1946 census had registered 178,000 Macedonians and 198,000 Romanis. Today, the Bulgarian censuses no longer include the category of 'nationality'. The 1971 Bulgarian constitution says nothing about the rights of national minorities either. Bulgaria is today the only country in Eastern Europe (with the partial exception of Poland) which does not allow national minorities education in their mother tongue or the right to their own cultural life. In 1978 the Bulgarian Academy of Science reported that 'a healthy spiritual-political unity exists among Bulgarian citizens, undisturbed by such important differences as pertain to language, ethnography, religion or similar superstitions'. In that year the Bulgarian Ministry for Foreign Affairs spelled out the

official position regarding national minorities in the following terms: 'The Bulgarian state has the exclusive right to pronounce on the national composition as well as national consciousness of the population, in the whole or in parts. Therefore, all outside attempts to decide the national identity of parts of the Bulgarian nation, as well as all claims to the role of patrons to them, will be treated as interference in the internal affairs of the People's Republic of Bulgaria. Throughout Bulgarian history there never was, nor is there now, a 'Macedonian national minority': there is no Slav population which differs in ethnic affiliation, culture, style of life or religion from the Bulgarian nation. The raising of the question of so-called national minorities represents a sharp escalation of pressure and campaigns against Bulgaria. It can be explained only as an expression of hidden territorial pretensions against Bulgaria.'

There is no doubt that the strong resistance of the Turkish population over the last few months has surprised the Bulgarian party-state leadership. Nevertheless, having once made the original error, it has been determined to execute the decision of the most recent CC CPB meeting to 'accelerate the process of formation of a homogeneous socialist Bulgarian nation'. This has been allocated a great priority — it is seen as a vital condition for the faster building of socialism in Bulgaria when 'national identity, as an element of the past bourgeois society, will disappear as the population, through purification and homogenization, grows together into a single Bulgarian socialist nation'.

In an interview in the Bulgarian daily *Pirinsko Delo*, 13 March 1985, Bulgarian Central Committee Secretary Dimitar Stanishev confirmed that a broad action had been taking place for the past few months to change 'Turko-Arabic' names to Bulgarian ones. He added: 'There is and there never will be any emigration of Bulgarian citizens to Turkey. There will be no Bulgarian-Turkish talks on this question. This we shall discuss with no state since there is not a single part of the Bulgarian people which belongs to another nation. This should be understood by all. It is a firm and unchangeable position of the PR of Bulgaria and its party and state leadership.'

Regarding the 're-establishment' of names of Bulgarian citizens who have up to now held Turko-Arabic names, Stanishev categorically denied that this was an attempt at assimilation. Rather, 'that which had once, by bloody repression, been torn from the heart of the nation, is now being returned to it'. Stanishev emphasized that 'our blood brothers and sisters, whose national consciousness had for centuries been obscured by foreign invaders, are now returning to our common Bulgarian family,' which, he said, was 'a monolithic country of a single nationality'.

He said that in the 1960s and more particularly in the 70s a national rebirth took place in the Rodope region: in Smolyan, Pazardzhik, Blagoevgrad areas, a large number of Pomaks who had been once for-

cibly converted to Islam have once again started to take Bulgarian names. 'The fruitful results of this process are known to all.' The working people soon 'shrugged off their Islamic fanaticism and freed themselves from its conservative influence, their Bulgarian patriotic consciousness growing stronger all the time'. Then, at the end of 1984 and at the beginning of 1985 'a broad process, fired by new strength, spontaneous and all-embracing, of voluntary taking of Bulgarian names by our co-patriots with Turkish-Arabic ones' was started once again. 'This process, an avalanche in the real sense of the word, swept our country in two-three months and some regions in only a few days.' This spontaneous desire to change names, Stanishev said, represents a 'moment of enlightenment, of understanding by the people of their Bulgarian roots, of their belonging to the Bulgarian nation'. The people had 'wisely and far-sightedly made their historic choice' because they deeply trust the CPB and are convinced that it cares for the well-being of the people, because 'its politics corresponds to the interests of the broadest masses'. The change of names, he added, represents their 'rebirth', the discovery of 'new and limitless space of their own multi-dimensional development; it opens up a path of happiness and well-being for their children and progeny'.

Stanishev's interview should be seen as one part of a more general action by party and state functionaries to publicly state the official position on the current process of Bulgarianization of Slav and Turkish citizens of Moslem faith.

Nationalism and Socialism in Eastern Europe

The notion of 'one state — one nation' came to West Europe's Eastern periphery belatedly but therefore much more intensely. Macedonians and Albanians in Greece, Bulgarians in Romania, Greeks in Albania, Romanis practically everywhere — here are the contemporary victims of this Balkan historic backwardness. Given the ethnic complexity of the area, and the lateness of state formation — linked to struggles which are still present in living memories — the 'national question' in the peninsula has been particularly hard to resolve in practice. Yet, as far as the post-capitalist sector is concerned, this has been not just a case of 'remnants of the old order', the survival of a bourgeois and semi-colonial pre-history. The post-war flowering of nationalism in Eastern Europe has in fact largely derived from politics and ideology of 'real socialism': of socialism created on a state-national basis and welded together, above all, by a Soviet perception of the national security of the USSR. 'Socialist nationalism' has shown itself to be just as bellicose, brutal and old-fashioned as its bourgeois predecessor, despite the fact that today it often parades under the more modern banners of 'proletarian internationalism' or (just as grotesquely) 'the struggle against bourgeois nationalism'. The rise of nationalism in Eastern Europe, be it part of state policy (as in Bulgaria and Romania) or not (Poland, Yugoslavia) illuminates the

fact that those channels of reforms, which alone are relevant to the creation of an authentic socialism, have up to now, in different ways, been blocked.

In his speech before the CC CPB, on 12 October 1967, which gave tone to Bulgaria's new attitude to the national question, Todor Zhivkov read out what was in fact a programme of classical nationalism for Bulgaria, marked by an enhanced view of the role of the Bulgarian nation in the present and the glories of its past (which inevitably involves an intolerance and devaluation of other national groups, and their delegation to an inferior role in society). The speech, significantly, was entitled 'Some Basic Problems of Work of the Komsomol Among the Youth'. There is no doubt that the reduced sovereignty of Bulgaria with respect to the Soviet Union within the Warsaw Pact has combined here with an intense suspicion of the kind of social and political changes which have followed all attempts at economic reform in

Eastern Europe since the death of Stalin. The result has been a search for the Bulgarian state's legitimation and identity in the traditional sphere of nationalism.

That this nationalism has been directed against the Macedonians is not surprising, since the linguistic and ethnic proximity of the two peoples makes the project of Bulgarization seem quite attainable. (Also, it at times serves a useful card to play in the more general context of Balkan politics, since non-recognition of the Macedonian nation also leaves open territorial questions with respect to Yugoslavia.) But the pressure of Bulgarian nationalism is increasingly and logically being now turned against the non-Slav minorities, especially the Turks, who are the most numerous and combative of them all, and hence also the greatest obstacle to the dream of an ethnically pure Bulgaria. Bulgaria's increasing obsession with the past glory (culminating in 1981 when the country celebrated, with great fanfare, the 1300th

anniversary of Bulgarian statehood!) is dangerous also because it cannot fail to be returned in the same coin. In recent demonstration the Bulgarian-Turkish exiles carried banners reading: 'Better to die with a bullet in one's heart, but remain Turk'. The irony, of course, is that Bulgars were once a Turkic tribe who in the 7th century came to rule over the local Slav population.

NOTES

1. They inhabit the mountainous regions of the south and eastern part of the country, around the towns of Khaskovo, Kurazhili, Momchilgrad, Chirpan, Rasgrad, Shunen and also Burgas and Plvdiv. See the map.
2. Turkish intelligence puts the number of ethnic Turks in Bulgaria at 1,200,000. Most experts would agree to a number somewhere between 800,000 and 1,000,000.
3. Young Turks, serving their national service, in the Bulgarian army, are apparently not allowed to bear arms, but are allocated to non-combat tasks. Also, it is practically impossible to attain a university place unless you have assimilated.

Chartists Debate History

By Mark Jackson

Different currents of opinion within the Charter 77 human rights movement in Czechoslovakia came to the surface recently during a controversy over a text entitled 'The Right to History' which was issued as a Charter document in May 1984. According to a former rector of the Party College and later political prisoner, Dr Milan Hubl, the debate reflected a tension between an 'integral Catholic view and interpretation (of history) ... and the approach of undogmatic historians with marxist backgrounds'.

The document needs to be seen in the context of the sweeping purge of all Czechoslovak institutions carried out in the latter part of 1969 to get rid of people associated with the Prague Spring and to ensure that every position of influence in Czechoslovak society was held by people directly dependent on the occupation regime. Among the victims of the purge were some 200 historians expelled from the universities and institutes. As a consequence much of the creative energy of Czech historiography, as with the rest of Czech and to a lesser extent Slovak cultural life, finds its way through informal networks outside official structures.

'The Right to History' paints a picture of complete stagnation and sterility within the official institutions. 'There are no outstanding personalities in contemporary official historiography ...' while 'no official institution is currently ready to present a synthetic account of any period in history whether it be the 20th century or the Middle Ages ... Someone might object that this is impossible given that our historiography is guided by marxist methodology ... Our historiography, however, understands marxism as a way of escaping from history.' At the same time the document stakes out its own ideological terrain, criticising the of-

ficial historiography for a series of inter-related omissions: the Middle Ages are neglected, the picture of the proto-Protestant Hussite movement of the 15th century is distorted, the epoch when the Czech Lands were a part of the Hapsburg Monarchy is belittled or ignored and Czech history is not seen in its wider Central European context. In other words official historiography, it is implied, suppresses the aspects of Czech history in which the Catholic Church was prominent. More directly the authors assert that 'History without Man and without God cannot have any meaning and it is thus no wonder that the traditional debates about the meaning of Czech history have died out.'

Many of the factual assertions of 'The Right to History' were challenged. A text by four historians (Milos Hajek, Hana Mejdrova, Jaroslav Opat and Milan Otahal), which was later itself published as a Charter document, points out for example that the claim in 'The Right to History' that no works by Frantisek Palacky (one of the central figures in the 'Czech National Renaissance' of the early 19th century) are published is simply untrue, and quotes four works of Palacky's published in the last eight years as proof. Another critic, Jaroslav Meznik, associated with the 'Independent Socialist' opposition group, produced a list of 18 names of people presently working on the history of the 10th to the 13th centuries.

There is more to the objections however than matters of fact. Many critics reject the uniformly bleak balance sheet which 'The Right to History' makes of official historiography, implying thereby a different assessment of the potential political situation within the official institutions. The 'four historians' feel that the document simply presents a mirror image of the regime's attempts to divide everything according to official vs unofficial criteria

rather than according to quality. Another historian, Jan Kren, who was close to the leaders of the Prague Spring in 1968, believes that 'outstanding work was done even in the 1970s, especially in the first half', while Meznik insists that the Institute of Czechoslovak and World History, from which he himself was purged, continues to do good work. On the other hand he also points out that much good historical work now depends on the efforts of people working in their spare time.

Many critics directly challenge the underlying ideological orientation of 'The Right to History'. Petr Uhl, a revolutionary marxist recently released from jail, quotes the document's assertion that 'since ... we are in the full meaning of the word the inheritors of Christian culture and since the modern world as a whole is decisively influenced by this culture, we cannot think or act other than historically or through history' and challenges its implication that 'Christian culture' was logically connected with a historical view of the world. On the contrary, according to Uhl, ancient historiography was on a higher level than that of the Christian Middle Ages and that a struggle against the domination of the Papacy and the Church was required for a truly historical attitude to society to emerge. He points out that he himself underwent a personal evolution from Catholicism to atheism. Lubos Kohout, a former lecturer in Political Science and now a Charter signatory, rejects the idea that marxism has eliminated man and god from history and stresses the positive role it has played in bringing ordinary people into the forefront of historical thinking. Kren considers that present orthodox methodology is not marxist at all but a 'primitive and politically utilitarian equilibrium theory with an eclectic methodology, strongly influenced by contemporary "social" structuralism, concealed with marxist phraseology'.

YUGOSLAVIA

Many of the critics are particularly incensed by the way in which the document was presented in their name, even though they did not agree with its pro-Catholic ideological orientation. Kren feels that it would have been better if the document had been presented in order to start a discussion rather than as an official Charter document, while Uhl fears that the Charter is being used as a 'religious, more precisely Catholic tribune'.

No doubt with the routine appointment of the three new spokespeople at the start of 1985 much of the heat will have been taken out of the situation, but there is no doubt that the controversy has raised in an oblique form divergent political positions that are united behind the Charter's attempt to defend basic democratic rights.

(The material for this article has been taken from Informace o Charte 77 May and October 1984, supplied by Palach Press and from the Palach Press: Summary of Available Documents No. 25, January 1985.)

Appeal for Nicaragua

Ten Czechoslovak citizens have added their names to the appeal by 155 European intellectuals (see *Le Monde* 8 May 1985) calling for an end to American intervention in the affairs of Nicaragua. The ten are: Jiri Dienstbier, Jiri Hajek, Ladislav Hejdanek, Eva Kanturkova, Vaclav Malý, Milos Rejchrt, Gertruda Sekaninova-Cakrtova, Jaroslav Sabata, Anna Sabatova and Petr Uhl.

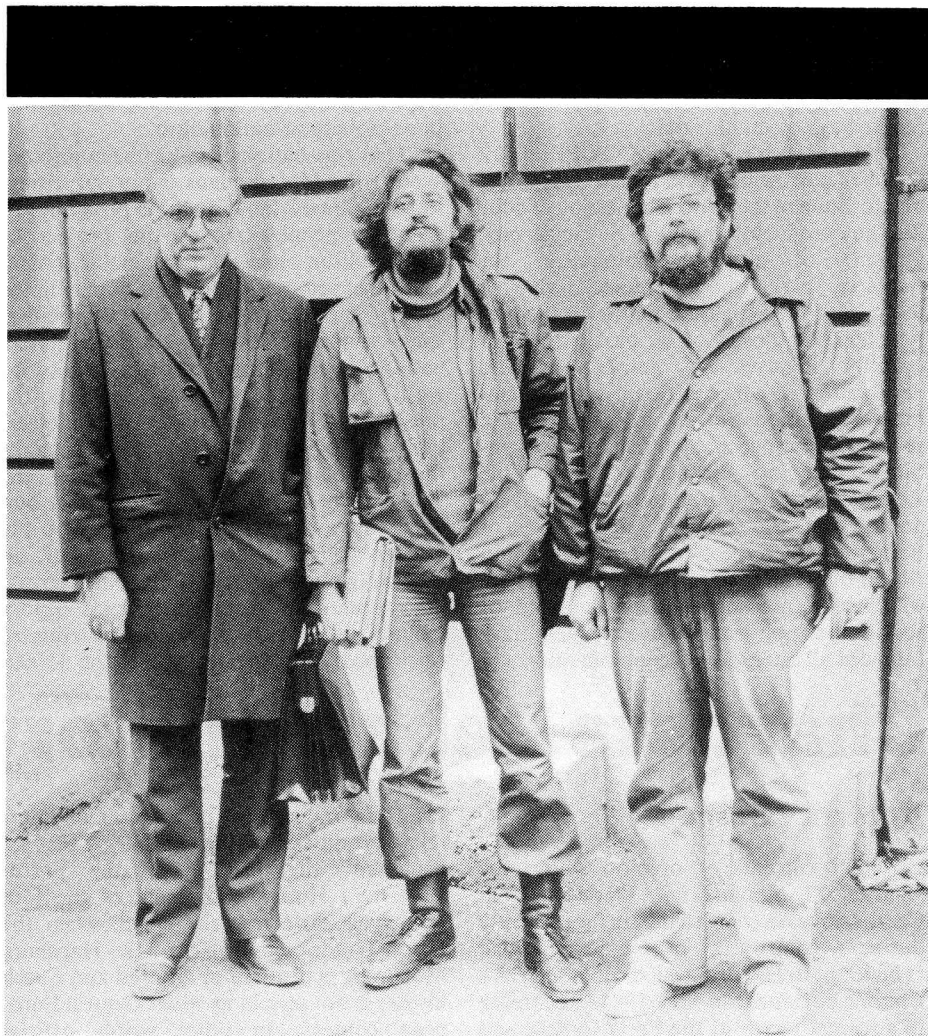
(From Informace o Charte 77 vol. 8 no. 7. Made available by Palach Press Ltd.)

Belgrade Trial

The trial of the Belgrade Six, who in August 1984 were charged with forming a counter-revolutionary organization aimed at the overthrow of the constitutional order¹ ended on 4 February 1985 in a somewhat inconclusive manner.

On the positive side, the right of Yugoslav citizens to attend meetings in their homes in order to discuss culture and society was upheld when, on 23 January 1985, the Prosecutor dropped the charge of criminal conspiracy against the six. 21 out of the 22 witnesses called by the prosecution refused to describe the 'Free University' meetings as anything but open and legal, or to testify that the six, by attending or otherwise, had engaged in counter-revolutionary activity. So, although the defence was not allowed a single witness, this in the end did not matter. The fact that the charge was dropped for lack of evidence was a welcome testimony to the Yugoslav authorities' evident desire to rid themselves of an embarrassing gaffe. (It should be remembered that members of the Yugoslav State Presidency and the country's press as a whole had found the six guilty in advance of the trial.)

In the event, Pavle Imsirovic was freed unconditionally, while the cases of Vladimir Mijanovic and Gordan Jovanovic will be taken at a subsequent date — though under what charge remains to be seen.



Three of the accused: Left to Right: Milic, Olujic, Nikolic

On the negative side, the three remaining defendants: Miodrag Milic, Milan Nikolic and Dragomir Olujic received sentences of between one and two years in prison. Milic and Olujic were convicted of hostile propaganda, while Milan Nikolic was given one and a half years' imprisonment for 'incorrectly' describing Yugoslav social and political conditions — in a seminar paper written for Professor Ralph Miliband while at Brandeis University in 1982. The three have appealed against their sentences.

In his defence speech, given on the last day of the trial, Milan Nikolic told the courtroom: 'It is clear that the Yugoslav intelligentsia ... will be unable to participate creatively in understanding and overcoming the present social crisis as long as it fears being labelled, persecuted and even tried, solely for having a critical, 'unofficial' approach. It is equally clear that only this intelligentsia is capable of new, fruitful ideas. It is therefore imperative to stop persecuting the critical intelligentsia. It is necessary to stop persecuting and imprisoning those who think differently, on the basis of false accusations and show trials. For intellectuals to be able to perform their social duty, for them to be productive, they — and not just they — need considerable freedom. Workers and peasants, white-collar workers and all those not engaged in intellectual

work require, as intellectuals do, both 'intellectual' and other freedoms, such as the freedom of political initiative, the freedom to criticize the leadership, to organize to defend their rights and interests — for example, by going on strike. In other words, they need all those freedoms which our Constitution guarantees, but which are often negated in practice even by institutions and individuals whose public responsibility is to protect the Constitution. All these rights and freedoms may be summed up fully as *developed self-management*, developed self-government, the true participation of all able adult citizens (which, naturally, does not exclude the possibility that children in schools or people in prisons or mental institutions might also take part, in certain forms and at certain levels).²

The Yugoslav Defence Committee, which was formed in Britain by several Labour MPs and socialist intellectuals on behalf of the six defendants, chaired by Eric Heffer MP, sent a letter in March to the Yugoslav Presidency seeking amnesty for the three.

NOTES

1. Reference to the last issue of *Labour Focus*.
2. The full text has been published in *New Left Review*, no.150.

The League of Communists and Young People

(Below we print the translation of an interview conducted by the Belgrade Weekly NIN with Boris Vuskovic, a professor of sociology at the University of Split, Yugoslavia, and originally published on 17 February 1985. A long-standing member of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, Vuskovic has always been something of a critic from the left, as shown by his article, 'Social Inequality in Yugoslavia', New Left Review 95 (1976). Last year, he and his colleagues from the University published a book analysing the class composition of the LCY and how this has changed since the war (Structure and Dynamic of LCY Membership, Belgrade 1984). Vuskovic speaks, therefore, not just as a committed communist, but also as a scientific authority. Alarmed by the growing inability of the LCY to confront the deep crisis of the Yugoslav state and society, he explains in this interview some of the negative trends of recent years and how they affect the country's youth — in particular those who will provide the next generation of industrial workers. Read in conjunction with Milan Nikolic's defence speech (New Left Review 150), it testifies to the continuing vitality of socialist traditions in Yugoslavia today, despite the country's social and economic troubles.)

Q. What, in your opinion, are the roots of the present crisis?

A. The roots of our crisis are often sought in the disturbances of the world economy. There is no doubt that this is true to an extent. Yet, in my opinion, world economic problems are more a catalyst than the cause of our crisis. Namely, the former high standard of living only covered up many serious problems, from crude voluntarism, incompetence and the deformation of self-management to the erosion of legal and moral standards. World economic troubles have merely uncovered much that is exclusively of our own making and for which we alone are responsible.

So, without disregarding the effects of the world economic crisis, we must speak of the sources of our own crisis, and in doing this, we cannot bypass the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY), which is the alpha and omega, the origin and influence of every debate, both positive and negative, since it is the dominant force in our society. It is simultaneously the sole political force capable of resolving the social crisis and also an accomplice in producing it. The fundamental responsibility of the LCY lies in the fact that it has proved much better at being an apologist than at being a critic of our social development. The LCY has not avoided the historic fate of every victorious party which constitutes itself as a government; as you know, moreover, every government is infinitely self-satisfied.

Q. What, in your opinion, are the consequences of this insufficiently critical and self-critical attitude of the LCY?

A. They are grave and very visible both in social reality and in the sphere of social consciousness. The absence of self-criticism, which derives from the status of the party and the state as instances of supreme social authority, has given birth to such absurdities in the economy as the white-elephant factories of Obrovac and FENI, as well as several similar mistakes for which we shall be paying for a long time. On the other hand, there is the definite formation of a consciousness of subordination in the population, which has inhibited a great creative energy of the masses and in large measure alienated them from some of our fundamental ideas. Today, when you tell somebody that communism is a deeply human vision, that it gives full meaning to human existence and social activity, people think that you are either a careerist who spins tales because it is a profitable thing to do, or a fossilized survivor of some distant past — a kind of dinosaur. It seems that this ideal, for which so many have died, has become something far away; that in social consciousness, where it does exist, it is placed where those who believe place God: in the heavens, the cosmos, on the other side of social reality. So we have lived to see the day when Reagan is selected in Yugoslavia as personality of the year! The choice, it is clear, also hides significant social choices, which for our society are far more destructive than our foreign debts. This spiritual climate was neat-

ly summed up by a student of mine who said: 'Give up your fairy tales, Professor. The important thing is to make money.'

In other words, not only has a part of the middle and older generations become capitalist — or would like to be — but this is happening to our youth as well. Indeed, what else can we expect? In a situation of rapid growth of social differences and inequality, when the income scissors span elementary physical survival at one end and jet-set style of living on the other, how could communists expect their attraction to grow? It should be said that this would not be so disastrous were the economic inequalities a result of labour, because then they could be seen as a stimulant, i.e. be incorporated into the line of our development. But it is widely known that wealth in our society is everything but due to work — which creates this dangerous mentality.

I wish I could say that my words are nothing but a sort of subjective pessimism. Unfortunately, they are based on the results of many scientific enquiries. The LCY would do well not to shut its eyes to reality.

Q. You have recently conducted a survey of the attitudes of secondary school children in Split. Do your results confirm your opinion?

A. For the past twenty years my colleagues and I have been conducting sociological studies, especially in Dalmatia. In the middle of last year, at the request of the Socialist Alliance Youth Organization, we questioned some 800 secondary school children. i.e. some 15% of the total, which for this kind of survey is a good percentage. The Youth Organization wanted to know, on the basis of scientific research, what young people considered to be important, what they think of themselves and of the society in which they live. We planned our work with meticulous detail and took great care in deriving our results, knowing what to expect if the results turned out to be politically unpalatable. We therefore paid exceptional attention to working-class youth, those who were going to become industrial workers. What we learnt surprised us enormously, especially when we compared the results of this 1984 survey with the results of similar surveys conducted over the past decade or so. The trends, in other words, turned out to be extremely negative.

This is a young generation whose parents grew up under our own, communist, 'patronage'. They are mostly city children. The fathers of two thirds of them are workers, their mothers housewives. One quarter of the fathers are members of the LCY. In other words, this is a generation with an exceptionally positive class 'pedigree'.

Q: Could you tell us some of the concrete results of this survey?

A. The first thing which stands out is their positive attitude to self-management. Namely, to the question: 'What does self-management mean to you?', one half replied that self-management is a true realization of the ideals of democracy and socialism; one quarter considered it to be an important ideal, but unrealizable in practice; while one quarter considered it to be no different from other forms of social organization, or regarded it as 'mere rhetoric and slogans'. The distribution thus shows a largely positive attitude to self-management, coloured by a strong dose of scepticism which represents not so much a rejection of self-management itself as a critique of our practice of it.

This dissatisfaction with concrete social reality is reflected in a significant withdrawal from politics. Namely, to the question: 'To what degree are you interested in politics?', more than two thirds of those interviewed (68%) replied that they were 'little interested or not at all'. Twice as many as in 1968, when this was the reply of only one third (31%). This negative attitude to political engagement on the part of our youth no doubt comes from their very critical view of the possibility of influencing the political life of our country.

You see, when we asked them: 'Who in reality creates political life in the country: self-managers, public opinion, influential individuals or the socio-political organizations as such?', we got an interesting distribution of their views. Exactly half of them think

that the decisive influence in our political life comes from the socio-political organizations, followed by influential individuals or groups (45%). However, two thirds (61%) believe that self-managers have 'little or no influence' and more than three quarters (78%) hold that 'public opinion is almost without influence'. Naturally, with such a view of the situation, it is perfectly understandable why political engagement does not attract them.

This is reflected also in the fact that their interest in joining the LCY is rapidly declining. Whereas in 1968 more than a third wanted to join the LCY, this figure is now halved (to 15%) and the number who do not want to be members has doubled (to 46%).

Similar shifts were registered also in their choice of the personality with whom they identify. In 1968 Lenin was almost at the top of the list, chosen by 40% of those interviewed. Today, with only 5% of votes, Lenin is found at the bottom of the list — together with Caroline of Monaco!

Q. How did work, as a fundamental social value, fare in the answers?

A. Pretty miserably, and probably rightly so. We asked the children what is most necessary for success in life, and gave them the possibility of choosing between a number of answers: knowledge, work, university diploma, aggressiveness, influential connections, luck. Their answers, in rank order, show that 83% thought that influential connections and acquaintances were indispensable for success in life, and almost the same number (79%) chose aggressiveness. In accordance with this, two thirds believed that work and knowledge have little or no influence on success in life.

This is a disastrous result for our society, and to a large extent reflects our social reality. Even if it were not true, it is nevertheless highly significant that the young generation believes it to be so, a fact which will decisively influence its behaviour.

Q. How about church and religion?

A. In contrast with work and knowledge, they did well! Of the total number of those interviewed, as many as 52% declared themselves to be religious, 28% indifferent and 19% atheists. To judge this distribution, however, it is important to understand two things. Firstly, in comparison with other parts of Yugoslavia, Dalmatia has always had an above-average identification with religion, so that this must be taken into account when evaluating the percentages. Secondly, one should take into account the fact that the very young, like the old, tend to be more religious. Nevertheless, we must take very seriously the fact that the percentage of young people who declare themselves as religious is much higher than in earlier surveys, which testifies to a general growth of religious feelings among our youth. In the research we carried out in 1968, for example, only 32% of secondary school children declared themselves to be religious — the same number as those who declared themselves to be atheist. Now the percentage of believers has almost doubled. The most religious segment, moreover, turned out to working class youth!

Q. What do you think has happened to the young generation?

A. When talking of the young generation, there is no doubt that much of its 'undesirable' ideas and behaviour comes from fact that our social problems affect young people in particular. In our society, they are a 'problem' as soon as they are born. There are, to start with, an insufficient number of nursery schools, then there is a merciless struggle in secondary school for the right to choose a profession; this battle continues even more intensely in the universities, and in the end the young are found queuing up in front of unemployment offices. I try to compare this generation with my own. Granted, we were not well fed and clothed, but society received us everywhere with open arms. We were not a 'problem' but the hope of our society, it is not surprising that we, the young, formed work brigades, became 'superworkers', joined the youth section of the party in large numbers, etc. We did not need a God, because we held our destiny firmly in our hands. So what has changed?

One of the fundamental differences between the old and the new generations is to be found in the fact that we grew up in a period of unprecedented social momentum, when our growth rate was one of the highest in the world. Now this rate has dropped to one of the

lowest places, and the new generation confronts a long-term economic crisis, which brings with it numerous existential problems such as unemployment and a rapid fall in living standards. We never related our difficulties to subjective social forces; on the contrary, we connected them with our success. Today, this is evidently no longer the case.

Naturally, the economic crisis is reflected in all areas of social life, from culture to politics. Our unity has been seriously eroded. We see in others the origin of our troubles and dangers, which breeds suspicion and accusations, so that our society is gradually acquiring certain features of the pre-war one. Archaic ideas for overcoming the crisis are being revived, such as the introduction of a 'firm hand' (which would return us to Orwellian times) or the long-gone bourgeois parliamentarism, which would be the end of us all. I think it is therefore very important to keep one's head and work out exactly how we came to this state of affairs, so that it can never be repeated. This is a complex and responsible task, which cannot be solved through slogans. In our search for solutions, we must first of all create a more democratic society, not proclaim that it is already here!

What has gone wrong?

As I have already said, no debate about the crisis can bypass the LCY as the leading social force, and as an accomplice in its fermentation. If we look at the LCY, a number of things are immediately clear.

Firstly, let us look back and see what social prospects a prewar party member had. Roughly speaking — several years in prison. Therefore, only the really committed joined the party. But with the victory of the revolution, with the conquest of power, the party became attractive also for those who were not communist. So what do we see? Following the war, the party — in ever larger leaps — acquired a huge membership: in the latest period (1972-80) it gained more than one million new members. This mass intake has cancelled all serious criteria of membership, leading the LCY to lose its vital political character. Also, the class composition of its membership has changed for the worse. Up to the 1950s, the party essentially constituted an alliance of workers and peasants. Later (after the experiment in forced collectivization), the peasantry was quickly replaced by functionaries — an important layer during the etatistic phase. A permanent influx of middle layers was continuing at the same time, which in every way marginalized the workers, so that today they are the social group least represented in the party* It is understandable that this class composition of the party

* The relative weight of the working class in the party is illustrated by the table below. Figures relate to 1982 and are drawn from *Structure and Dynamic of LCY Membership* by Boris Vuskovic and others, Belgrade 1984.

Social category	% of members	% of social layer
workers (industry and service)	30.6	8 and 16
specialists	24.1	50
administrators	11.6	25
students and schoolchildren over 18	8.8	33 and 12
old age and pensioners	6.7	11
leaders and functionaries	6.3	80-90
peasants	3.9	2-3
unemployed	3.6	—

Between 1972 and 1982, party membership grew by about a million. In this period, the index of growth of the individual categories shows the following trend (1972=100)

unemployed: 741; students/schoolchildren: 335; specialists: 232
workers: 220

The working class intake was further diluted by one fifth of worker members leaving the class to join the party/state apparatuses. Indeed, it appears that 50% of state/economic functionaries were formerly highly qualified or semi-qualified workers.

membership, combined with the disappearance of necessary ideological-political criteria, has changed the class character of the party and also its potential for action. The membership, in short, has become increasingly incapable of carrying through its class programme.

Secondly, the League of Communists was the initiator of the far-reaching self-managing transformation of our society. It thereby created for itself a problem, insofar as it was also the party of government. However, the LCY did not adequately follow through the process of self-managing restructuring, by changing its own self-conception: it remained the party of government. As a result, we never got very far in realizing the political concept of a self-managing society. Other socio-political organizations (the Socialist Alliance, for example) never really lived up to the idea of a people's front. This means that today, in practice, the LCY is the only active cadre bodies — since they have been reduced to a membership of professional office-holders. This is the real source of pressure to enter the LCY, because to remain outside it is, to a large extent, to be condemned to political passivity.

Thirdly, in accordance with our very complicated society, the self-managing tendencies have also been accompanied by a degree of decentralization: the transfer of power from federal to republican/provincial and communal organs. Yet, however much this may have been absolutely necessary, we must also bear in mind that decentralization/polycentrism is not the same as democratization. On the contrary, the polycentric character of political power, connected with the techno-bureaucratic structure of the LCY membership, has increasingly pushed aside self-management as the instrument for democratization of social power. Self-management has been arrested at the level of distribution of power between the federation and the republics/provinces, without ever reaching the vital relations inside the organizations of associated labour. This is why I personally do not pay much attention to the often acrimonious debate surrounding possible normative changes in our political system, because these discussions remain at the level of interaction between the federation and republics/provinces, without contributing in any way to the realization of self-management in the basic units of our social life. Defending its 'states', the techno-bureaucracy has refeudalized Yugoslavia, a process during which it sought support less and less in the working class and more and more in territorial/national consolidation. Thus we see constant propaganda against 'other' nationalism, while one's 'own' is considered to be benign if not positive.

EAST GERMANY

Fundamentals of a Peace Strategy

(The following discussion paper was submitted to the third European Disarmament Convention in Perugia in July 1984 by a group of East Berlin peace activists. The translation from the German is by Günter Minnerup.)

1. The frequently mentioned confrontation between the big powers, the armaments escalation and the increase in political tensions are indisputably a consequence of the socio-economic antagonisms within the contemporary Western and Eastern societies. The mainspring of the increased insecurity are the global mechanisms of capital accumulation which promote the production of armaments, an exploitative attitude to nature and imperialist ambitions. These mechanisms are not anonymous in the sense of a general question of responsibility, but features of late capitalist class rule. The criminal and his victim are not identical.

The Eastern bloc countries, in contrast to their own claims, are on the whole a new form of antagonistic class rule which has its origins in the Soviet model and was transplanted to the Eastern bloc by military and political force. The politically mediated bureaucratic class rule (party and state) is based on state ownership of the means of production; it lacks the economic dynamism inherent in capitalism and the microeconomic efficiency of the capitalist economy. As a result there is a permanent economic lag,

Naturally, it would be senseless to negate the complexity of the Yugoslav community, but it does not mean that its 'unity in diversity' can be achieved through erecting fresh internal barriers.

Q. At this time, while we conduct this interview, we hear of nationalist escalations in many parts of the country, including in Dalmatia and especially in Split. Does your research help us at all to answer, at least in part, the question raised today: why should chauvinist and fascist tendencies make their appearance in Red Split, among its youth in particular?

A. Our research has not yet been completed, and does not allow me to state categorically what causes these nationalist excesses, which have been a shock to us all. However, there are some questions in our survey, the answers to which can serve as indicators also for the growth of nationalism among the young. For example, to the question: 'What do you think of national equality in our country?', 18% of the children questioned replied that it is fully practiced; but 28% said that full equality of nations and nationalities had not been achieved, and believes that it is one of our important problems. Equally, it is indicative that twice as many believe that nationalism will grow in the future. Furthermore, a certain separateness exists, which can also provide a solid base for nationalism: 21% of those asked said that they would never marry someone of another nationality, although the person might be suitable in every other way. All this indicates that nationalist consciousness cannot be explained outside the context of social events, since we know very well that the social and economic crisis has hit the young especially severely.

Q. Many say that they are surprised by this eruption of nationalism. As a sociologist, are you also surprised?

A. I am not surprised at all. In a crisis of the dominant ideas and values, it is logical that traditional 'well tried' ideas like nationalism and religion should be rehabilitated. In this context, I would like to ask: do these nationalist excesses, particularly those which evoke the worst spectres from our past — Pavelić and Miha-jlović — always also express a clear political choice in favour of their 'ideas'? Why should we not see this as one more sign of reaction to our youth's lack of perspectives, rather than as a political choice? I do not believe that these children really know, for example, who Pavelić was and what he offered and did. If our research has many lessons, it is that our young generation urgently needs a hope for the future.

a compulsion to ideological legitimation, a political pressure for rearmament and increasing militarisation of society. Because of the economic weakness it is not foreign policy aggression which matters so much as the economic burdens and the internal effect. This does not mean that the bureaucratic systems are a better guarantee of peace — as is proved by conflicts between China and the Soviet Union. The commitment of the Soviet Union to disarmament is based on its economic weakness. The absence of the economic base of a capital accumulation process means that foreign policy aggression is not an essential feature of the system. The conflict between the blocs is not an ideological one. The socialist aspiration to world revolution was abandoned by the Soviet Union as early as the mid-twenties.

2. The internal situation in the GDR is characterised by state repression through the justice and security apparatus against the peace circles and other emancipatory groups. The state attempts to further limit the already limited spaces for the peace movement through new legislation. In addition there is the deliberate social pressure on the members of the peace movement (Berufsverbot, unemployment and expulsion from the SED party). The peace circles have repeatedly been decimated by emigration from the GDR, with these departures not primarily having quantitative but

qualitative consequences (the loss of experience). In general the peace movement in the GDR is too much under the influence of the Church and not thinking and acting on political analysis.

3. A positive feature is the increasing development of the peace movement to a broad survival movement in which ecological, emancipatory and social questions are involved. This survival movement should attempt to implant itself more strongly in the factories and forge an alliance with the workers' movement. Such an alliance, however, must not bring the peace movement into dependence on the social-democratic, trade-union or communist bureaucracy. It must be bloc-transcending, anti-militaristic, anti-bureaucratic as well as enlightening in orientation and support all attempts at social self-organisation. The survival movement must preserve its basic democratic, anti-bureaucratic structures for it is only on this basis that it will be able to develop the ability to act and forge alliances. Since the causes of Rearmament and militarism are rooted in the systems and not in ideologies the peace movement, while not abandoning its enlightening impulse to rethink, must not labour under the illusion that peace can be achieved through general re-education. Thus the view that the main task of the peace movement is the elimination of enemy perceptions must be challenged. What needs to be done is to analyse enemy perceptions for their content, to distinguish real enemies and adversaries of the peace movement from allies or potential allies.

EAST GERMANY

A History of the Peace Movement

(The following text was written by an activist in an East Berlin peace group whose identity must remain anonymous. It was submitted to the third European Nuclear Disarmament Convention in Perugia and is here published for the first time in English. The translation is by Peter Thompson.)

1. Short outline of peace actions since 1961

Only after the building of the wall in August 1961 was general military service introduced in the GDR. That which the mass emigration from the GDR had prevented for so long became reality in January 1962. This came as a great shock to the majority of GDR citizens, not least because for years the state had polemicized against conscription, rearmament, and the sale of war toys in West Germany. What the state had not expected, however, was the large number of conscientious objectors (around 3000 in 1962-64), even given the fact that they ran the risk of a prison sentence. Alongside this protest movement, which was in fact less a movement than the sum total of many individual decisions of politics, belief and conscience, ran the attempts of the protestant church to defuse the situation through dialogue with the state. On 12 March 1962 bishops Krummacker and Mitzenheim met with Prime Minister Stoph and secretary for church affairs Seigewasser. For the church representatives the negotiations were to deal with four major points:

- the exercise of the basic right to freedom of belief and conscience even for soldiers, which in effect meant the guarantee of the right to take part in religious services and other church events;
- an interpretation of the soldiers' oath that would leave room for the religious convictions of the individual;
- the opportunity to explain the problems of conscientious objection whilst at the same time emphasising that the church did not generally preach resistance to the draft;
- exemption from military service for those undergoing religious training.

The state for its part declared itself to be prepared to come to an agreement on all four points. In the case of objection to military service, they claimed to be more than capable of deciding who was objecting out of basic religious conviction and who was doing it purely from an 'anti' position.

Equally we have to discuss within the peace movement the forms of resistance. Resistance must not only be discussed abstractly on the basis of ethical and moral principles but also on the basis of its political practicability and in the context of a given situation.

4. On the basis of this analysis and orientation towards action a number of **realistic** demands can be formulated which are to be raised by the peace movement East and West. The main thing here is not a hope of winning the governments to these steps, but the attempt to build a mass base on these foundations:

- limited, calculable, unilateral disarmament steps
- reduction of militarism (child education, civil defence)
- a Europe free of ABC (Atomic, Ballistic, and Chemical) weapons from Poland to Portugal
- recognition of an autonomous peace movement and of all other autonomous social movements.

Added to the pacifist basis and the development of the idea of 'social defence' must be the demand for a comprehensive democratisation of the army in order to avoid excluding it *a priori* from the peace movement.

We expect you to begin, and intensify, the contact and dialogue with us, as it is only with the greatest difficulty that we can do this from our side. Let us not tire in our mutual public solidarity.

For your peace and ours, for your freedom and ours!

On 7 September 1964 the decree setting out the non-armed alternative to military service, to be carried out in construction units attached to the national defence forces, was issued. In a declaration presented by the church leadership at their conference in 1965, they evaluated conscientious objection as a christian witness for peace and non-violence. They declared that in a world dominated by the nuclear threat conscientious objection out of christian witness to peace should have priority over military service. The state protested at this declaration and demanded its withdrawal. The church was not prepared to do so, but at the conference in 1966 the church leaders presented an addendum designed to appease. This addendum emphasised that the offer of support was purely for spiritual purposes and that the aim was to keep the conscience alive in all decisions but not to judge either for or against military service as such. Least of all did they wish through this declaration to put into question the peace policies of the GDR.

In the following 15 years peace activists were largely confined to groups of former 'Bausoldaten' (those who had chosen the non-armed alternative service in construction units, Bau = construction). Their echo in the wider community remained very slight. National events, such as the conference of 'Bausoldaten' in Leipzig (which was held annually and has now become the 'Leipzig peace seminar') or the first of the GDR's peace seminars in Königswalle which began to take place at the end of the sixties, had generally no more than 30 to 70 participants on average.

With the decision by NATO to station Cruise and Pershing II in Europe and the stepping up of the arms race as well as the appearance of the western peace movement there has been noticeable, since 1979, a large growth of interest in the theme of peace. Countless new peace groups and seminars are springing up especially in large cities such as Karl-Marx-Stadt, Dresden, Rostock, Berlin, Leipzig, Meissen and the number of participants in these groups is growing in leaps and bounds. Large events such as the Dresden Forum in 1981 with 5000 participants and the Berlin peace workshops with 3-500 participants illustrate this clearly.

Peace was a central theme at the church conferences in the GDR during 1983. Since 1981 there have, as in West Germany, been the so-called 'peace decades'. The number of participating parishes and parishioners has grown consistently in the past few years. In March 1983 the first central peace seminar took place in

Berlin. The state has attempted to forbid these seminars as it fears the construction of a national organisation. The church leadership and the peace groups, however, persevered and the second national peace conference was held in Eisenach in 1984 with the third planned for 1985 in Mecklenburg.

Sensitizing and motivating for the GDR peace movement, however, were not only the missile deployments, rearmament and growth of the peace movement in the west, but also, and primarily, the increasing internal militarisation of the GDR. For example:

— The introduction of military education into schools, against which the church organized petitions at their conferences in Erfurt and Stralsund as well as objections from the church leadership.

— The extension of civil defence and civil defence exercises with blackout and siren testing in many cities. The subject of civil defence is a predominant theme in many peace group discussions and letters to the authorities.

— The new military service laws of 1982 in which military service for women would also be compulsory in times of mobilisation or emergency. Since then there has been in many cities the appearance of 'Women for Peace'. Two of these, Ulrike Poppe and Bärbel Bohley, were imprisoned in December 1983 but released again as a result of international protest in January 1984.

— The progressive militarisation of education in kindergartens, primary schools, comics and the production of war toys (card games, construction sets) which have been issued as educationally valuable toys since the end of the seventies. From the first year of school education, there are annual pioneer manoeuvres which all pupils have to take part in. This is a compulsory school event in which self produced epaulettes and military hats are worn by the children whilst they take part in these manoeuvres which usually take the form of field exercises in which school bags are used as backpacks.

A central theme of the peace movement was and is conscientious objection to military service. In 1980 the 'Aktion SOFD' (action for a social peace service) was formed which promoted the idea of an alternative to military service based on the lines of the West German social service alternative to the army. This was supported by the protestant church. The state's 'No' to this demand was unequivocal. Today the main method of articulating a will to peace is still through conscientious objection and this is borne out strongly by the growing number of 'Bausoldaten', total objectors and objectors to reserve service.

Since 1981 pacifism has been another major theme in peace circles. In this area the deliberations of the theological study

department of the federation of protestant churches in the GDR have had a considerable influence on the general discussion. In the problem areas of objection, pacifism, education for peace, in particular children's education, and non-violent defence there has been the greatest amount of theoretical discussion amongst peace circles.

2. Peace movement actions in the GDR

Up until the end of the seventies the activities of the peace movement were largely confined to the boundaries of the church, and in particular the protestant church. These activities were expressed to the state mainly in forms such as petitions, individual conscientious objection and participation in public debates. Since 1981, however, they have found forms which have begun to step outside the confines of the church, i.e. challenging the prevalent concepts of legality. Part and parcel of this are the autonomous peace groups, the most famous of which are perhaps the former Jena group and the autonomous women's groups, which find themselves now, in 1984, under a phase of increased state repression (arrests in Leipzig, Weimar, Potsdam, Karl-Marx-Stadt and Berlin) that has forced them to retreat back to church confines. The borders, in particular on a personal level, between autonomous and church groups are blurred.

Actions outside the church were, and still are:

- silent protests,
- candlelight vigils (in front of the embassies of the USSR and the USA on 1 September 1983),
- distribution of leaflets (this led to the Dresden Forum in 1983),
- graffiti actions (in Annaberg-Buchholz in 1983 local transport was immobilised for three hours when all buses were sprayed with peace slogans inside the bus depot),
- participation in the FDJ (Free German Youth, the youth wing of the ruling party) Whitsuntide demos carrying independent banners and placards (for this several arrests were made). In 1983 the state gave permission for such participation in certain areas providing the placards were cleared with the authorities beforehand;
- women's demonstrations of conscientious objection (in October 1983 women made a point of sending off their letters of conscientious objection wearing black clothes at Alexanderplatz Post Office),
- fasts for peace,
- personal peace treaties drawn up.

LETTER

Don't Paint the USSR in Such Rosy Colours

As one of the editors of *Labour Focus*, I am writing to complain against the content of the second half of your editorial 'Two Polish Voices' published in the summer 1984 issue. It misrepresents Kuron's statement and more generally the whole position of the Polish opposition and takes the name of the editors in vain.

To start with, you should have waited and given the full text of Kuron's letter in the same issue. As regards your comment, starting with the words 'Let us spell out what this means' it is quite unacceptable.

Labour Focus, as it says in its statement of aims, 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'. But in your editorial — which was not submitted to the editors beforehand — that is precisely what you are doing, imposing a strategy which might be that of the ex-IMG but which is simply out of place here. Besides, it is certainly one which is not shared by a majority of the magazine's sponsors and editors, not to mention our readers, in East and West.

As one of the editors, I have been approached from several quarters by friends who want, as I do, *Labour Focus* to stick to its brief — information on East European societies and on their oppositions. Moreover, your editorial is recommending a strategy not only to socialists in Eastern Europe, but also to the peace movement in the West which is even more outside your brief.

As regards Kuron, your comment deforms his statement: the demilitarisation of Poland and of the two Germanies does

not mean 'the effective withdrawal of the huge American military machine on continental Europe', as US and allied NATO forces in West European countries outside West Germany would not themselves withdraw under that revamped Rapacki plan. You fall into the NATO and Soviet trap as both want public opinion to dissociate nuclear and conventional forces and, among the former, to dissociate the strategic from the tactical ones while the truth is that West European defence remains based on the US strategic umbrella and the US strategic superiority.

That is why the END is so right in wanting the *missiles* out, on both sides and to engage in unilateral *steps* while recommending denuclearised zones and simultaneous denuclearisation by two countries, one from each bloc. But your editorial is an implicit attack of the END position. Conversely, the ex-IMG and their strange bed-fellows, the political friends of Moscow (the stalinist CPs and assorted fellow travellers) do want to allow the USSR, as you do, a 'military advantage in Europe', to quote your own

BOOK REVIEWS

words. But the rest of CND, END and most of the Left in Western Europe, just like Kuron and others in the East, certainly want nothing of the kind. In his taped contribution to the West Berlin conference of February 1985, the same Kuron says that 'in treating the Superpowers equally, the Western peace movements failed to understand the nature of totalitarianism' (his words as reported in the *New Statesman*, 15 February 1985). Kuron added that 'all partial arms limitation agreements gave an advantage to the Soviets' and that the only effective 'control of agreements' is 'control by society'. While not accepting it, he saw the arms race as 'indispensable until such control exists' (*ditto*, the last three quotations being direct extracts from Kuron's speech).

I do not think that between June 1984 and January 1985, Kuron found and lost again his faith in the Fourth International line which does not even 'treat the two superpowers equally' but considers that one of them, the USSR — the one which oppresses Kuron's country — is merely the victim of the USA, the latter being the sole in-

itiator and culprit in the arms race. In your editorial, you do paint the USSR in such rosy colours, equating the Soviet state's line with the Soviet people's, indicating that *both* simply feel fear and want security.

One could also object to your passage about the USSR 'not overrunning Yugoslavia in 1948-49' only because of a 'fear of attack from the West'. In fact, 'action from below' — to use your words — and 'control by society' — to use Kuron's — over national defence and independence were precisely major ingredients in Yugoslavia's survival in 1948-49 as they had been in 1941-45. I thought that the implicit common 'strategy' which is underlying *Labour Focus's* statement of aims and which unites us all with one another — and with Kuron and his friends for that matter — is a stress on the independent input by public opinion as opposed to that of bureaucratic and aggressive states. As Michnik put it in his interview in *Der Spiegel*, reprinted in the *Newsletter of the Eastern Europe Solidarity Campaign* (November 1984), 'the way to peace is not

through a pacification of public sentiment but through a movement to bring the security system under social control'.

Do not let down these heroic friends of ours who are fighting in earnest for democracy and self-managed socialism in Eastern Europe by trying to sell in *Labour Focus* the line of a 'workers' state', the *USSR, needing to have a 'military advantage'*, nay, a '*strategic superiority in Europe*'(!) — the last two expressions are from your editorial — in order to achieve, to quote you again, 'lasting peace in Europe and freedom for Poles'. If you do so, *Labour Focus* would lose credibility everywhere and become a laughing stock in Eastern Europe.

One last point to which I am, just like all people from the 'workers' states' particularly sensitive: avoid the 'workers' states' phraseology, e.g. 'lasting peace', 'launching pad', 'ruling circles' — or provide your readers in the East with Alka Seltzer anti-sickness tablets.

Yours fraternally,
Claude Vancour

Enigmas of Normalisation

The Restoration of Order

The Normalization of Czechoslovakia,
Milan Simecka, *Verso*, 1984

Simecka's account of the 'normalization' process in Czechoslovakia in the 1970's describes two simultaneous developments in so-called 'existing socialism'. The state has perfected methods of gaining the near total submission of the people, yet at the same time he argues this imposition of order is superficial. 'Order for whom?', Simecka asks. Who benefits from the fact that daily papers regurgitate the same 'truths' every day, that legality has lost all meaning, and that the population is systematically silenced, humiliated and reduced to queuing for its daily necessities?

A centralized state can achieve all this because it is the sole employer of labour. The obligation to work is absolute, there is no choice. Everyone is on the "State's payroll". The monopoly extends beyond the present generation of workers. Children are used to bring about their parents' loyalty, for who would jeopardize the future of their children in a society which has so many pitfalls? Children are thus "hostages of the State", though "there was no public decree" to that effect. "Such a decree would not look good", Simecka comments.

Simecka points out that this control differs from that in capitalist societies, where power is exercised through different economic relationships, and unemployment has produced its own horrors. What capitalism has not produced, and cannot produce, is the 'see-through' cynicism of those who obey. Stories about workers in 'existing socialism' who drink beer instead of working, are plentiful. The state's lies and propaganda are ignored as long as they do not impinge on people's private lives. Even the secret policeman has become an object

of ridicule. Many prominent Party personnel are examples of how to survive well whilst doing little. Everyone joyfully joins in the game of corruption and mutual bribery. Privatization helps to accelerate a mood of political disinterest and stupor, and also produces a lack of commitment among those who are supposed to be pillars of the new social order.

Simecka attempts to reveal the innermost instability of 'existing socialism'. He argues that as private property has been abolished, "no person can become dependent on another through money". In such circumstances, the "political authority of the ruling party and the privileged groups is not real, merely functional!" There is a degree of almost "anarchic freedom", he claims, because though authority is imposed, you are free not to respect it. This is not merely freedom under slavery. Simecka further illustrates how the state is gradually discovering that after devising the system of privileges and rewards to those who display servility, it is now saddled with 'propagandists whom no one believes, journalists who are only capable of writing tripe, university rectors devoid of moral or academic authority, ... film makers whose films no one goes to see..'

Simecka ends on an optimistic note, saying that the wide-spread anti-authoritarianism among the majority of the population, together with the 'existing socialism's' creation of a "homogenous people" may become the "fertile soil" for future political change. A welcome possibility if it's true.

Simecka's book poses many unanswered questions, most of which stem from his confused analysis of the relationship between the state and its "homogenous people". If we ask, as Simecka does, "Why such a system did not collapse long ago?", it becomes difficult to accept his explanations which boil

down to the "integration of (people's) daily lives into the system". "The major incentive to adapt to the new conditions", writes Simecka, "was the awareness that there was no alternative?" There is a specific Czech ingredient in this bizarre self-enslavement. Simecka recollects his first encounter with the interrogators. He admits he felt surprised and was naive and ignorant of his rights. "Civilized people do not scream or defend themselves, they go like lambs," he concludes.

For Simecka, all culture and politics ended with the Prague Spring of 1968. I do not wish to belittle the fact that 'normalization' in Czechoslovakia means a sure death for its culture, which has always been an important symbol of independence. Unfortunately, Simecka's deeply felt disillusionment with the present, and the realization that all his previously held ideals have been betrayed, clouds his analysis with an abstract optimism reminiscent of 1968. He presents a picture of an evil state, in the shape of "a narrow stratum of privileged individuals who directly exercise power", confronting a separate "homogenous people". Simecka is bitter about what he terms the "narrow stratum". "I was to encounter people of every political hue in the ruling party", adding that there is little which can be called communist about 'existing socialism'. The Party "has no time for Marx: it has to run the national economy and the State." At the same time Simecka unreservedly idealizes what he calls the "homogenous people". For him, the "social homogeneity" is a positive attribute, and "gives rise also to a certain ethical democracy". But what is the nature of conflict between this "ethical democracy" and the state? "It is not as if of the proletariat ever existed: There has never been anything but the shameless dictatorship of the ruling party", he argues. This affirmation, if it is correct, tells us that

tells us that “ethical democracy” may only mean everyone has an equal share of misery. More importantly, it contradicts one important point made throughout the book, that the system of ‘existing socialism’ does not perpetuate itself only through the arbitrary use of power. It has enmeshed its citizens in an intricate web of economic and political relationships, which enable the “narrow stratum” to extend its influence.

If we look at the Action Programme of Dubcek’s government, in April 1968, however, we see that its democratic reform did not stand for the removal of the evil clique of hardliners at the top. The Action Programme explicitly stated that it would not encourage previous egalitarian practices but would aim at an ‘achievement oriented’

society where the skilled and the trained could look forward to new enhancements. This indicates that the “homogenous people” were not there, nor were they ready to create a real socialism. The nostalgia for 1968 needs careful scrutiny. The same goes for the introduction by Z. Mlynar. 1968 undoubtedly gave rise to street politics, something rarely seen in Czechoslovakia, something beyond the reach of the bureaucratic arm of the authorities. But the ‘Party and the masses’ analysis is too crude.

Where Simecka is perhaps at his best, and it takes up the main bulk of the book, is in his descriptions of the new dark age descending on Czechoslovakia now. Vividly he introduces us to the inquisitor’s practices in this truly Kafkaesque world. The house

searches as “legalized humiliation”, the systematic intimidation through shockwaves of invisible terror in the neighbourhood, the blacklisting and screening performed by former friends; it is all there. A world where order has been restored not by physical violence, but by “civilized violence”, with smiles and formalities.

The book, enlivened by a good translation, is an account of life inside ‘normal, consolidated’ socialism by one of its inmates, outraged that yet again history may be re-written as a whole people is silenced. Stories from within can significantly demystify ‘existing socialism’, but can they also explain it?

Karla Joachim

Euromissiles: Askward Issues for the Left

Strobe Talbott, *Deadly Gambits*, Picador, £9.45 hdbk, £3.95 pbk.

Diane Johnstone, *The Politics of Euromissiles*, Verso, 1984, £4.95.

Leaving aside those books that deal with the Euromissiles issue from a British perspective, these are two of the most important books that have so far come out on the topic. Talbott’s book is a devastating attack on the ‘arms control’ politics of the Reagan Administration, revealing in the most intimate detail how and why particular decisions came to be taken within the Washington Establishment. Johnstone’s book is concerned with the response to the Euromissiles crisis on the part, in particular, of the French Socialists, the German Social Democrats and the Italian left-wing parties. Of greatest interest is the fraught interaction between the French and the West Germans, which has thrown up some very awkward issues for the European left as a whole.

Diane Johnstone, a radical American journalist based in Paris, writes as someone who stands to the left of the social democratic leaderships in France and West Germany. Strobe Talbott, a *Time* correspondent based in Washington, writes as someone in the Carter-Mondale mode — ie to the left of the Reagan Administration. Both are close to the Establishments they are principally concerned with, and have thereby gained privileged access to information. At the same time, both have a critical standpoint which allows them to use their access to good purpose. Don’t expect too much in the way of hard analysis from these books, then, but revel in the stream of insights.

The real strengths of Talbott’s book are twofold: he describes in full the detailed preparation of devices designed to hoodwink the European populace into acceptance of cruise, Pershing II and other US missiles — notably such devices as the ‘zero option’ and the ‘START’ proposal. Secondly, he shows the extent to which internal battles within Washington over political-military issues were instrumental in fomenting the crisis in NATO in the 1981-83 period. In these battles, official opinion in NATO Europe was often just a ‘useful ally’ for one side, rather than a full participant in

debates, and the new NATO bodies created to allow for greater European participation became little more than appendages to their American chairmen.

One episode in particular, in October 1981, reveals the value of Talbott’s attention to detail. The debate over the ‘zero option’, which the Administration was now intent in using as its own weapon in the propaganda war over cruise, (you’ll remember the ‘zero option’ proposal — no land-based nuclear missiles in Europe, and ignore sea-based and air-based missiles). The two men whose views carried most weight in such matters were the ‘Prince of Darkness’, Richard Perle and Richard Burt — Assistant Secretaries at the Departments of Defense and State respectively. The disagreement between the two Richards — a disagreement which lies behind much of the Euromissiles controversy — was essentially over how best to manage the Euromissiles crisis. As Talbott puts it, “The object of making a proposal and undertaking negotiations was damage limitation, public relations, and getting the new NATO missiles deployed with a minimum of anguish and recrimination inside the Alliance. Burt’s disagreement with Perle over the zero option was a matter of how to attain that goal.” (p.62)

Neither Perle nor Burt wanted any negotiations with the Russians to succeed. Burt wanted the zero option to be flexible to allow tricks to be played more effectively on European public opinion. Perle saw the zero option as being a good enough trick in itself, and the danger of flexibility was that it might lead to an agreement with the Russians. Burt’s power base in NATO was the Special Consultative Group, which was responsible for devising positions for negotiations with the Soviets on cruise and Pershing II. Perle’s power base was the High Level Group, which was responsible for the NATO nuclear planning in the ‘European Theatre’. Both groups were foils for intra-Washington power play, and Talbott shows that European leaders and top officials were willing dupes. At one point, for example, he describes how Thatcher was won as an ally for Burt with the willing assistance of David Gilmore of the British Foreign Office (pp 180-1).

The conflict over the zero option, which was never fully resolved, broadened into a general conflict over nuclear arms policy as a whole. The arms negotiators in Geneva received conflicting signals as a result of this, although in the end the failure of the negotiations was due to the fact that Washington had no interest in an agreement. The episode that symbolised this more than any other was the sacking of arms negotiator Eugene Rostow during the Geneva talks in 1982. Rostow was himself a prominent hawk, and had played no small role in stimulating a new Cold War atmosphere in the 1970s. But for the superhawks in Washington he was far too keen to reach an agreement to be allowed to stay on in Geneva. Paul Nitze, the chief negotiator, nearly suffered the same fate because of his ‘walk in the woods’ agreement with the Russians. But this ageing hawk was allowed to stay on after the provisional agreement was stamped on by Perle, Burt and others (with a little help from Moscow ...).

A note on Reagan here: Talbott indicates that the President stayed aloof from the arguments largely because he did not understand them. His role throughout was to put finishing touches to his speeches to add the ‘hollywood touch’, and to ask idiotic questions of his advisers on the most elementary matters. Thus, in a debate over the relative merits of the SALT II Treaty, Reagan asked Bobby Inman, Deputy Director of the CIA, if the SS19 was the Soviet’s biggest missile.

“No”, said Inman, “that’s the SS18”

“So”, declared Reagan, “they’ve even switched the numbers on their missiles in order to confuse us!”

Inman clarified: “No. It’s we who assign the numbers to their weapons systems on the sequence that we observe them.”

As indicated by this and earlier points, Talbott is strong on anecdotes and insights, but weak on analysis. Johnstone’s book is not overstrong on analysis, either, but there is at least a brief section providing some context to the divisions within the US Administration and between the US and Western Europe. She describes the new global (non-Atlanticist) orientation of the

Reaganauts, and highlights the emphasis on the Rapid Deployment Force as the key symbol of this orientation. With Washington determined to commit forces worldwide to the defence of US interests (commercial, financial or otherwise), there is renewed tension over the priority commitment to European 'defence' through NATO. NATO Europe has to choose: help America to police the world or kiss goodbye to at least a good part of US forces and weaponry in Europe. As Johnstone shows, this issue is still to be resolved, although the European Establishment has already bent a good part of the way towards a deputy sheriff role.

At the heart of Johnstone's book — and in my view its real strength — are two long and admirable chapters on France and West Germany, dealing above all with the ever-deepening conflict between their respective Socialist/social democratic parties as the controversy over the Euromissiles intensified. We see the French Socialists becoming ever more reactionary and pro-American even as Reagan was talking openly about 'limited nuclear war' in Europe. And we see the West German SPD shifting away from its fervent pro-Americanism, seeing off the likes of Helmut Schmidt, the former Chancellor, and identifying itself more and more with the peace movement.

What Johnstone shows is that these changes, and the intense debates and controversies accompanying them, throw up some of the most decisive but also the most difficult issues for the European peace movement. The accusation levelled most frequently at the West German movement by the French left is that its neutralist stance is nothing less than nationalism in disguise. German nationalism is an evil genie that French Socialists and conservatives alike wish to see kept tightly in its bottle. Consequently, the French Left would prefer to move towards a stronger Europe in a stronger NATO than do anything to encourage neutralistic tendencies in its German counterpart.

West German neutralism apart, there is a remarkable degree of unity on the French Left both in support of the French nuclear forces and in solidarity with oppositional movements in Eastern Europe. It seems that the 'loosening of the blocs' must come, according to French radicals, in eastern Europe before it comes in western Europe. Meanwhile NATO will increase its reliance on nuclear weapons, build up its conventional forces, and combine together to dampen neutralist impulses.

Johnstone is extremely critical of the present preoccupations of the French Left, and

she tends to put her faith in the new radicalism emerging in West Germany, Holland and elsewhere — a radicalism that has derived its strength in no small degree from the Euromissiles crisis. "The peace issue", she writes, "has the potential of providing a central point for the recomposition of the Left in the developed countries ... The issue of industrial conversion from war to peaceful needs, democratically defined, can be the driving wedge in the battle to bring the economy under democratic control!" (p.209).

Fine aspirations, to be sure, but they seem still further away in 1985 than when Johnstone was concluding her book early in 1984, while the new European 'Gaullism' she so violently condemns (quite justifiably) appears still resurgent. This brings me back to the 'decisive issues' referred to earlier. For there appears to be no doubt that, over the medium and long term, Western Europe and America will move in different directions. But if this is accompanied in Europe by a drift towards nationalist solutions rather than an internationalist and democratic socialism the consequences could be disastrous for all Europeans, both in the East and the West.

Ben Lowe

Enemies' Enemies

Victor Serge
Memoirs of a Revolution
Writers & Readers, £6.95
 Victor Serge
Midnight in the Century
Writers & Readers, £6.95

Victor Serge died in Mexico in 1947, exiled, isolated and impoverished having recently written a couple of books 'for his desk drawer' but with little immediate hope of getting them published. Yet Serge is a writer of immense contemporary relevance.

We live in a world dominated by the confrontation of two gigantic tyrannies. The struggle between them threatens to eat up not only all the physical territory of the globe, dividing it into opposed spheres of influence, but also all the intellectual space as well. Each tyranny justifies its crimes by the crimes of the other. Grenada for Afghanistan, Czechoslovakia for Vietnam, cruise missiles for SS-20s, SS-20s for cruise missiles.

Each says to its people you must accept our rule for the only alternative is the rule of the other. Each says to its dissenters you are evil and traitorous because 'objectively or subjectively you are helping the other. So strong is the ideological grip exercised by this monstrous polarity that many dissenters having pierced the ideological smokescreen of their own rulers felt obliged to fall for that of the other side. They succumb to the powerful but false logic of 'my enemy's enemy must be my friend'. Solzhenitsyn sings the praises of 'free' America, Scargill of 'socialist' Poland.

Serge speaks directly to this dilemma. He

does so because he confronted it in the most acute form, as a Trotskyist oppositionist in Russia in the 1930s — a period he describes, in a telling phrase, as 'midnight in the century' when Stalin in Russia faced Hitler in Germany. Hitler and Stalin reinforced each other then much as Stalin and Chernenko do today. How to fight Hitler without aiding Stalin? How to fight Stalin without aiding Hitler?

Serge's answer, his solution to the dilemma, is uncompromising and uncomplicated. It is simply that he will oppose all oppression wherever he finds it. He does not arrive at this answer through theory (though Serge is not ignorant of theory); but on the basis of his whole life experience. The child of exiles from Tsarist Russia, Serge was 'born to revolution' as some are 'born to the manor'. An anarchist in Paris before the First World War, a prisoner for five years during the war, an insurrectionist in Barcelona in 1919, then a critical convert to Bolshevism in Russia, it was a life totally dedicated to the struggle of the oppressed for bread and freedom. To accommodate to the Stalinist bureaucracy, or to Hitler, or to Western capitalism would be to renounce and deny his life, his friends, his comrades, his beliefs, himself. Others there were, who through fear, ambition or confused dogma, were ready to make such a denial. Not so Serge. To him hatred of oppression, love of liberty, identification with the oppressed burned too strongly for any doctrine of acquiescence.

This then is the central message of all Serge's writings. It emerges with equal force from both his magnificent *Memoirs* and from his fictional account of the victims of

Stalin's purges.

However the 'message' is by no means the only reason for reading Serge. For both the historian and the revolutionary Serge is an indispensable and almost unique eyewitness. The rise and fall of the Russian Revolution, and with it the rise and fall of the whole European revolutionary movement is the greatest drama and greatest tragedy of the twentieth century. It has been chronicled, dramatised and analysed in thousands upon thousands of academic tomes, but how many of these books bring the drama to life? This, however, is precisely what Serge does.

He introduces us, personally, to all the Revolution's characters, great and small, and to all its characteristic types. From him we get the fell and the smell of that whole lost generation of revolutionaries — its idealists and its mercenaries, its intellectuals and its workers, its ascetics and its hedonists, its poets and its bureaucrats, its renegades and its martyrs.

The mission of bearing witness was a conscious one. Serge records a meeting with Natalia Sedova, Trotsky's widow in Mexico in the late forties and reflects that she and he are perhaps the only ones left in the whole world who remember what the Revolution and the Bolsheviks 'were really like'. The claim was doubtless an exaggeration, but not by much. At any rate the mission was accomplished and thanks to Serge's artistry and honesty we too are able at least to get a glimpse of what they 'were really like'.

Of the two books under review here it is Serge's *Memoirs* that is, for me, the most powerful. This is partly because of its

greater sweep and variety, but also partly for autobiographical reasons. I first came across it about sixteen years ago and it was one of the books which introduced me to the revolutionary tradition. I read it with a passion and it became for me a book I identified with and which left an imprint on my life. To recommend it in a review is merely to continue a standard practice.

But this is not to slight *Midnight in the Century*. Reading this tale of political prisoners who find their different ways to a GPU isolator in 1934, comparisons to two other books, Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*, and Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago*, immediately sprang to mind. The latter are, of course, infinitely more renowned, and will doubtless remain so, at least until after the

revolution, but nonetheless *Midnight in the Century* is in some respects superior to both of them.

Darkness at Noon is an ingenious reconstruction but it is artificial — the work of a clever outsider. Koestler had not lived what he was writing about. Consequently it seems very impressive to those who do not know the Russian Revolution intimately, but in reality its arguments and its logic are never quite authentic. This cannot be said of Solzhenitsyn. He has grasped the workings of the Stalinist terror machine down to its smallest detail and yet his understanding is also limited. He understands *what* happened, but not *why*. Above all he has no understanding of the Revolution or of revolutionaries. Consequently his indict-

ment, though an extraordinary tour de force, remains one-sided, and one dimensional. In contrast Serge's book, though slighter in literary terms, is written from a broader and deeper understanding of the total historical and human context of the purges.

In sum, therefore, Victor Serge is obligatory reading for anyone who is a) interested in radical alternatives to the false choices offered by the Cold War, b) interested in the history and politics of the Soviet Union, c) interested in the history and ideas of the European revolutionary movement. That, I think, should cover just about all the readers of Labour Focus on Eastern Europe.

John Molyneux

When A Woman Speaks

Moscow Women

by Carole Hansson and Karin Liden, published by Allison and Busby, £3.95

Women and Russia

edited by Tatiana Mamonova, Basil Blackwell

Both these books have a connection with 'Almanach: Woman and Russia', the first feminist samizdat, which first appeared in Leningrad in 1979 and was published in Britain by Sheba in 1980. The two Swedish women who did the interviews which make up 'Moscow Women' also helped publish the Almanach in Sweden. Tatiana Mamonova, editor of 'Women and Russia', was exiled from the Soviet Union for her key role in producing the Almanach. From the West she now keeps in contact with what remains of that autonomous feminist upsurge in the USSR, and has gathered some of their subsequent writings, some of her own, and some from the first Almanach into this volume, published here by Basil Blackwell but lifted wholesale from an America edition (unfortunately, as many references and comparisons in the section introductions remain American).

The two books differ in that 'Moscow Women' talks to thirteen women who are not involved in any feminist or protest movement. They complain all right — about queues, overcrowding, lack of money, cruelty during childbirth, woman's double burden as (low) paid worker and housewife/mother — but do not argue for generalised change as the Almanach women do. The accounts are personal, individual, detailed, contradictory. What they do have in common with the Almanach writers is a poetic quality, aspiring above the mundane, and a yearning for lost 'femininity', which they feel is denied expression by the society of drudgery in which they live. The 'Moscow Women' try to define femininity: "delicacy, a little mystery, an ability to bring out the attractive qualities within oneself and to hide the bad ones"; "femininity is that luminous essential something that separates us from animals — it's both self-sacrifice and independence, both weakness and strength";

"I think femininity is inborn; not least of all it's having a nice figure"; "it's important to know you're a woman — soft, calm, considerate." These are qualities not valued in the marketplace and so women lose them. The interviewees tend to be more definite and dogmatic about what male and female roles should be than even non-feminist British women would be: men's careers are more important because "the women bring up the children. To have children is probably their main goal in life"; boys are bolder and stronger, "girls should always be charming and sweet"; "men are more adventurous, more goal oriented. They want to get somewhere. I myself don't feel like being a boss or leader of any kind." "Whose career do you think is the most important?" ask the Swedes of an energetic and happy hairdresser. "The man's, naturally."

This is not to say that the women don't also feel resentment. "Of course women have problems vis a vis careers that men don't have. If I could work continually, and didn't have to stay home frequently with the children, I might be able to get another job. But when my daughter is sick, I can't go to work. Men don't have that problem; they hardly ever stay home for the sake of a child." "The newspapers show men on March 8 (*International Women's Day*) cooking and cleaning and shopping and scrubbing floors. But it's really the women who do everything" "When I look at my husband I'm jealous."

The interviews are unusual in their intimacy, refreshing in their vibrancy and eagerness, but depressing in that the women do fall back nostalgically on stereotypes and that there is no way to express and channel their sense of disappointment and discontent.

"Women and Russia" is a more *political* book — although this is downplayed by leading articles in the Almanach, the movement, divisions within it and repression of it, until the end, under the heading 'Women and the State'. One writer being sentenced to four years in a labour camp and two years of internal exile, and another dying in suspicious circumstances, are mentioned as footnotes at the very end.

These women too reflect on the essence of

femininity, assuming for example — as some Western feminists do — that women are natural peacemakers because they create life. But on the whole, the pieces are less mystical and more documentary than in the original Almanach, with vivid descriptions of the lives of Soviet prisoners, drug addicts, lesbians and career women. Complaints about women having to do heavy labour are not couched as appeals on the grounds of their essential otherness, but more practically: women actually do *heavier* work than men, as well as doing the housework. "On collective and state farms, women do the hardest and most exhausting work while the men are employed as administrators, agronomists, accountants, warehouse managers or highpaid tractor and combine drivers." Only then, having shown that women do *more* than an equal share of manual labour, does she add that this labour is particularly damaging "if a woman is pregnant or menstruating or recovering from an abortion (which happens here quite often because good contraception is unavailable here)"

Unlike the earlier Almanach, this collection frequently explains to an outside reader how things are "here". Exile or contact with Western feminist literature and even visitors means they can make comparisons with women's situation in the West, between the peace movements East and West, and the social systems. They see their feminism (which Tatiana Mamonova always defines as 'humanism') as pushing towards the democratisation of Soviet society ('the world centre of totalitarianism', one calls it) through a "psychological revolution of consciousness". They say that the everyday problems of Soviet women "have developed into an everyday gulag for our women", who are "deprived of the elementary right to make their pain known to the public". Their little Almanach they see as an opportunity to express that pain. And as a woman, working ironically for a state publishing house, says at the end of her interview in 'Moscow Women', "It's terrifying when a woman speaks. The truth comes out, and the real pain emerges."

Jill Nicholls

Kollontai 60 Years On

Alexandra Kollontai:

Selected Writings,

translated with introduction and commentaries by Alix Holt,
Allison and Busby, 1977, reprinted 1984, £4.95

Sexual Relations and the Class Struggle; Communism and the Family,

both introduced by Lindsey German,
SWP, 1984, 50p each

One of the few fictional pieces in *Selected Writings*, written in 1922, is set in 1970. In it, Kollontai describes the commune of the future:

“Everyone works at their own vocation for two hours a day, contributing in this way to the running of the commune. The rest of the time the individual is free to devote his or her energies to the type of work he or she enjoys ... Young men and women work together at the same professions. Life is organised so that people do not live in families but in groups, according to their ages... In the communes there are no rich people and no poor people... The commune has no enemies... The younger generation does not know what war is.”

Students of Eastern Europe look at Kollontai's vision of the future and wonder what went wrong. None of these works will pro-

vide an answer — and indeed, the fault hardly lies with Kollontai herself — but the range of her speeches and articles collected in the *Selected Writings* does at least reveal the weaknesses and inconsistencies in her approach; reading between the lines one is also sometimes made aware of the hostility and incomprehension she encountered from others. One of the problems clearly is that she was primarily a political activist. Nearly everything in the book, (which also includes the two pieces issued as pamphlets) is political propaganda, designed to gloss over problems and inspire people with a vision of the future. There is little place for pessimism or criticism, especially of one's comrades. *Sexual Relations and Class Struggle* (1919) and *Communism and the Family* (1918) are typical examples. They describe a future in which feelings of “comradely solidarity” will be more powerful than feelings of sexual possessiveness. Housework and childcare will have been socialised and the family unit — the great source of women's oppression — will no longer need to exist. Yet in describing this, Kollontai refers only in passing to some of the problems, for example what she describes as the “psychology of modern man”, which will need to be overcome. She assumes that the workers will naturally have the correct ideas on such matters and that these will inevitably triumph. Furthermore, she seems to ignore the problems of sex roles and “women's work”. Housework and childcare she sees as exclusively a woman's burden until taken over by the state — and

even then one infers that it will be done by other women.

The irony is that she is aware from her own experiences of the difficulties which “male psychology” could put in the way of women's organisation. The *Selected Writings* contain one example of this, her account of her (usually frustrated) efforts to help women organise in the pre-war German Social Democrats. Alix Holt's useful and informative commentaries provide other instances closer to home. Another article, ‘Prostitution and Ways of Fighting It’ (1912) reveals a little of the problems she encountered after the revolution. While she condemned prostitution utterly she appreciated that it was at least partly caused by women's continued low economic status and political backwardness. In the article we see her opposing both those socialists who thought that prostitution would disappear automatically once the basis of communism was strengthened and those who thought it should be made a criminal offence and that prostitutes should be rounded up and put in forced labour camps.

These are welcome reprints, although the book is undoubtedly the better buy. Both pamphlets are handicapped by the same rather uninspired introduction, and they can inevitably give no picture of Kollontai's life — either her role in the workers' opposition or her retreat from politics and subsequent diplomatic career under Stalin.

Lucy Robinson

Economics and Crisis in the USSR

Roger Munting,

The Economic Development of the USSR,

Croom Helm, 1982, £7.95

David Wilson,

The Demand for Energy in the Soviet Union,

Croom Helm, 1983, £18.95

Roger Munting has undertaken the difficult task of writing an introductory work to compete with the well-known economic histories of Dobb and Nove. Since Nove's book was published there have been four main revisions to our understanding of Soviet history each of which Munting reflects. Firstly, we now know that class differentiation in the countryside had not produced a kulak class and that ‘rich’ peasants were not the cause of any shortfalls in grain supply to the towns. Secondly, we now understand better the mechanics of the five year plan which was technically feasible but which was not applied in any case and therefore cannot explain the pattern of development. Thirdly, we now know that it was the working class and not the peasants who provided the main investment surplus in the 1930's although there is still much debate over precise contributions (to which Munting is a helpful guide). And finally and most recently there

is now good reason to think that a maximum of some 4-5 million were in the labour camps in 1937 as opposed to earlier estimates of up to 20 million.

While it would be naive to suggest that such revisions disprove any ‘theories of the USSR’ they do pose uncomfortable problems for some. If the kulaks were not a threat then the traditional rationalisation of Stalinism as well as the idea of some internal drive to industrialisation seems undercut. Equally the ‘disappearance of planning in the plan’ and the degree of exploitation of the working class raises obvious difficulties both for pro-Soviet accounts and orthodox Trotskyist discussions which stress the role of the ‘plan’ and the way in which the ruling ‘elite’ was constrained to unconsciously respond to the needs of the working class. And the lower estimate of the camp population while in no way reducing the barbarity of Soviet industrialisation does pose problems for those who see the Soviet Union as some special mode of production — perhaps an Asian despotism — based on terror.

Unfortunately issues like this are studiously avoided by Munting. Indeed his method is very much like that of standard Soviet economic histories which present

commentaries on a dizzy array of statistics mostly culled from easily accessible handbooks. Where he differs is in constantly reminding us of the goals of the different five year plans. Almost inevitably he identifies large shortfalls between plan and reality but this does not seem to prompt the question of the value of the plan as a standard of judgement, nor what purpose it actually serves or where the real dynamics of Soviet society really lie.

In the absence of any consideration of the latter standard Western accounts usually stress that Soviet difficulties are explained either by inefficiency which is Munting's theme or supply problems and diminishing returns. David Wilson's, *The Demand for Energy in the Soviet Union* shows that so far as energy is concerned the idea of a major ‘crisis’ has been much exaggerated. This is a highly detailed study that will only be of interest to specialists though this is not to deprecate the hard work that has gone into it and the value of the conclusions. But like Munting it still leaves us confronting a stagnating giant without any real appreciation of the nature of its crisis.

Mike Haynes