Labour Focus on EASTERN EUROPE

VOLUME 10/NUMBER 1/APRIL 1988 £3/$5

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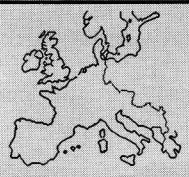

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A STRATEGY FOR EUROPE

Labour Focus on EASTERN EUROPE

STATEMENT OF AIMS

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

We are opposed to the "liberation" of Eastern Europe by Western capitalism and the exploitation of the victims of repression in these societies for the Cold War propaganda of those who prop up racist and fascist dictatorships in other parts of the world. We believe that the division of Europe can only be overcome by a common movement for socialism and democracy. We support the struggles for working class, democratic and national rights in the USSR and Eastern Europe and call on the labour movements of the West to extend their internationalist solidarity to them.

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Subscriptions

Harper & Row Distributors Ltd.
Estover
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Subscription rates

(three issues per annum)
U.K. and Europe: £12 (individuals), £25 (institutions).
Overseas (airmail) £15 (individuals), £29.50 (institutions).
Please note these rates apply as from the next issue when the cover price will be increased to £3.50. All subscription rates include postage & packaging.

Printed by Conifer Press, Fareham, Hants., England.

EDITORIAL

THE RESURGENT ANACHRONISM

THE dramatic events in Armenia and Azerbaijan have once more highlighted the importance of the national question in twentieth-century politics. The more nationalism and the nation state have been declared redundant on both the left and the right, as relics from the age of bourgeois revolution and anachronistic obstacles to the new cosmopolitan ethos of advanced capitalism, the more stubborn has been their refusal to leave the stage. On the contrary, the last two decades or so have seen a new upsurge of national struggles worldwide: from Quebec to Kazakhstan, from Tibet to Catalonia.

The ubiquitous nature of the phenomenon needs emphasising against all those who rub their hands in glee over Gorbachev's problems with the Armenians and Estonians, the Lithuanians and the Crimean Tatars, as the beginning of the end of the "Soviet empire". For many years the Western right has seen the multi-national composition of the USSR, as well as the national grievances of the peoples of Eastern Europe, as their chief hope for bringing about the collapse of Communism. The patently false assumption is that national oppression is somehow specific to "communism", or at any rate something that "communism" is unable to do without. As on many other questions, the Western right here only presents a mirrot image of the Stalinist view, which has in turn maintained that only imperialism oppresses nations and that the national question had effectively been resolved.

Roy Medvedev, in his essay on the origins of the Transcaucasian crisis in this issue, contends that the Soviet Union's record on the national question is, in fact, better than it is generally credited to be. Many readers will sharply disagree with this view, but the fact remains that nationalist agitation and mass movements for national rights are by no means specific to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Stating this is not a matter of redressing the balance or making apologies for Moscow, but rather a necessity in order to be able to come to grips with the real significance of the national question today, under both the contending systems.

For if there is anything that all these movements have in common - apart from the obvious common denominator in their ethnic, linguistic, cultural concerns which mark them as specifically *national* - it is surely not something that can be identified straightforwardly in the language of class politics. In this sense, all the premature obituaries for the nation are right: in this day and age, no social class has an "objective" interest in a further fragmentation of the world into ever smaller nation states in the way that the progress of capitalism in the 19th century demanded the consolidation of national markets. But the traditional, "orthodox" Marxist view of nationalism has always tended to neglect its *political* aspect: that it was not only the instrument of the national bourgeoisie, but also the route by which the masses entered the stage of history. To the present day, the nation state and national institutions remain the only *practical* framework of mass politics, the only bastions of political power open to direct seizure. Is it really surprising, then, that those who control them (or think that they do) are determined to hang on to them, while those who have none of their own seek to acquire them?

National movements are therefore essentially not about language, nor ethnic culture, nor home markets, but about self-determination, about democracy. The evolution of the capitalist nation state into imperialism may have betrayed the promises of the French Revolution, but the agenda of 1789 is still on the table as unfinished business. And socialist internationalism? For a generation or two of class-conscious workers, the *Internationale* did indeed begin to replace their national anthems. Social democracy and stalinism eventually put paid to that.

Thus the failure of socialism, in its dominant organisational and ideological forms, to meet the aspirations first articulated nearly two hundred years ago is the prime reason for the resurgence of nationalism. This is, of course, most glaringly obvious in the states of "actually existing socialism": in the murderous confrontation of Azerbaijanis and Armenians as much as in the militant nationalism of the Polish working class that would have horrified Rosa Luxemburg. What better place, therefore, for socialism to begin to reclaim some of the political territory lost to radical nationalism worldwide, than the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe? Democracy and self-determination for the Armenians, the Lithuanians, the Ukrainians, the Tatars, the Poles, the Hungarians (and not only those within the frontiers of Hungary), the Czechs and the Slovaks and, yes, the Kosovo Albanians would do more to attract the oppressed nations of the world to socialism than a hundred solidarity campaigns.

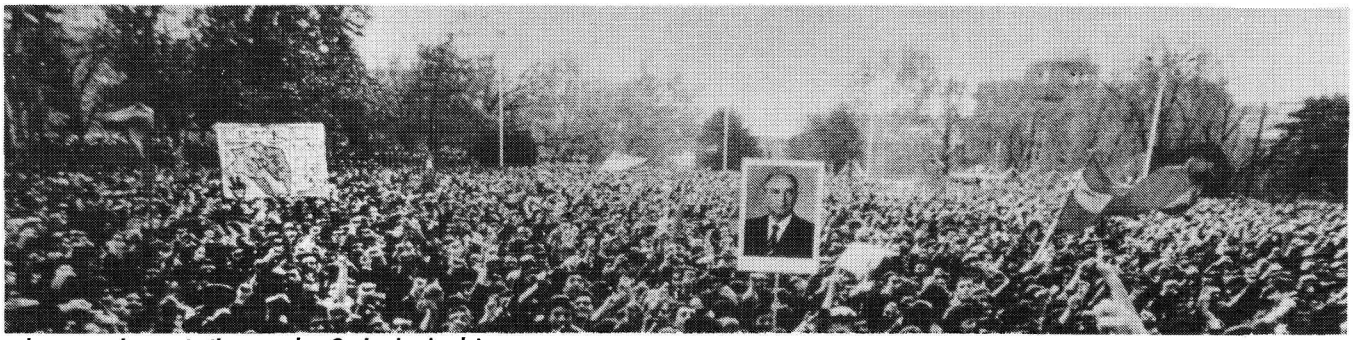
Günter Minnerup

This issue of *Labour Focus* has been delayed by negotiations with Berg Publishers which we are happy to announce have led to a successful conclusion. As from the next issue, this journal will be published and distributed by Berg, with editorial control remaining in the hands of the present collective and editorial policy unchanged. To help us in the transition to new production and distribution arrangements, the next issue will appear in September and publication will then continue three times a year in January, May and September.

Regrettably, an increase in the cover price and subscription rates has also become necessary, after more than two years of stability.

The good news, however, is that from now on *Labour Focus* will be able to benefit from a proper professional backup and enjoy some financial stability. This should also put an end to delays in publication...

Finally, please note our new editorial and subscription addresses.



Armenian mass demonstration carrying Gorbachev's picture

ZHORES MEDVEDEV

THE STATE OF PERESTROIKA BEFORE THE CPSU CONFERENCE

INTERVIEWED BY OLIVER MACDONALD

THE CRISIS IN THE CAUCASUS

We must begin with the brutal clashes in Azerbaijan and the accompanying unprecedented political mobilisation of Armenians. These are obviously events of the first importance within the USSR in their own right and carry serious implications for the future of Gorbachev's programme. But they must also be the product of a long history in the Caucasus. Could you begin by explaini g the historical background of national relations in that part of the world?

For centuries the Armenians faced strong external pressure both from Iran, from Turkey, from Azerbaijan and despite their joint Christian heritage their relations with Georgia were not very friendly. This was the reason why the Armenians voluntarily incorporated themselves into the Russian Empire centuries ago. This external threat was of course enormously heightened by the Turkish massacre of Armenians in 1915.

After the collapse of the old regime the local Soviet republics were soon, in the course of the Civil War, cut off from revolutionary Russia and from 1918 until 1923 different nationalist regimes were in power, which bitterly fought each other over territories. Already then, Nagorno-Karabakh was the object of fighting between Armenians and Azerbaijanis. When Soviet power was restored in the region by the Red Army after 1921, Nagorno-Karabakh was, in 1923, put under Azerbaijani administration because Azerbaijan, with its dominant centre of Baku, was considered the industrially most important region. Georgia also gained some areas of Armenian population at this time. We should remember that Georgia was favoured by Stalin and of course Beria was both the leading figure in Georgia and trusted by Stalin. Similarly, Bagirov, the Azerbaijani leader, was a trusted friend of Stalin's. The Armenian party leader of the day was not trusted and indeed was eventually arrested and executed. Bagirov, however, was in turn executed by Krushchev as a member of the "Beria clique".

The Georgian leader Beria was able at this time to incorporate the small nationalities along the Black Sea centred on Butumi and Sukumi and later even incorporated into Georgia a part of the Russian federation along the coast up to Sochi. Thus the republican divisions in this area were not ethnically just but based on personal and economic and other considerations.

At the time nobody took the division very seriously because they felt all decisions were in any case taken in Moscow. But when the Stalin Constitution was adopted, the rights of the constituent republics were written down in clear form and all the legislation started to be processed through the Supreme Soviets of Georgia, Armenia etc. and a republican infrastructure started to develop, albeit under very strict central control. And from this time feelings of unjust ethnic separation started to be felt very seriously. This was felt partly in connection with the appointment of administrators and managers in particular areas. And the most important issue -- one not discussed in recent British press coverage -- has been language. By law all permanent residents in a given republic must study and know the republic's official language. Thus in Nagorno-Karabakh, theArmenians must learn to speak Azerbaijani. Because it is an autonomous region it will have Armenian schools, where the main language of instruction is Armenian. But in those schools the children must also study Azerbaijani and they also have to study Russian. Also, from fifth form upwards they must study a foreign, non-Soviet language because without that you can't go to University in the Soviet Union. So the children must study four languages and this is an enormous burden. The present wave of nationalist unrest was sparked off, among other things, by the Azerbaijan attempts to eliminate the use of the Armenian language in higher education - that was the last straw.

What is the ethnic balance in Nagorno-Karabakh?

According to the 1970 census there were 1,000Russians there, 120,000 Armenians -- now probably about 150,000-- and about 27,000 Azerbaijanis -- now probably 30 or 35,000. There are probably a couple of Russian schools for the Russians and some Russified Armenians, and then Armenian and Azerbaijani schools. I think that apart from the demand for a redrawing of the republican boundaries, one of the most important long-standing demands would have been for the dropping of compulsory Azerbaijanian language teaching. Another demand was for a change in appointments policy: an Armenian has been appointed party secretary now in the region, replacing the former Russian party chief there as a concession to local demands.

Assuming that the elections for the region's Soviet were to take the more democratic form heralded at the All-Union level, we can expect that the regional Soviet would return an overwhelming Armenian majority and the region would accede to Armenia. In geographical terms this would be a large change because the region is about one third of the size of Armenia itself. But its population of only 200,000 is far less than the 3 million in Armenia itself. But you must remember that such territorial issues have very long, very sensitive histories, stretching back hundreds of years. For example, in the 15th century Armenia took up a far larger slice of what is now Soviet territory than it occupies today. I don't know what the historical sensitivities of the Azerbaijanis are in relation to the region. Apparently when the crisis erupted the all-Union Politburo and Central Committee apparatus had no knowledge whatever of the issues, and didn'ttake it seriously enough.

Do you know of any previous conflict over this particular region?

Every time there is a major anniversary of the Turkish massacre, the Armenians commemorate it with meetings and discussions, not always officially sponsored, and there is always disappointment that Moscow does not take any official notice of these commemorations. And in 1970 an official petition was sent to Moscow on Nagorno-Karabakh. This may not have been the first such petition and apparently the issue of these region has been raised

many times.

This, then was the general background to the present unrest. We know that on the present occasion the local Soviet in Nagorno-Karabakh sent a petition to Moscow for incorporation into the Armenian Republic and this petition was rejected in Moscow. But we don't yet know what prompted the local Soviet to take this initiative at this time. Its rejection produced high tension in Armenia itself.

The scale and discipline of the demonstrations in Armenia were quite extraordinary.

Yes. It is possible to speculate that the Armenian Party leadership was involved in the origin of the present events. There were rumours that Gorbachev wanted to sack the Armenian Party leader because of corruption and so on. Gorbachev probably did want to replace the local party administration. There were indications in the Soviet press of dissatisfaction with the Armenian party organisation. I therefore don't exclude the possibility that the Armenian party leadership had a hand in the events. Now it would be extremely difficult for Gorbachev to sack the Armenian Party chief: it would be taken as a national affront.

Could the same apply on the Azerbaijani side? Aliev, the Politburo member who recently retired, supposedly on health grounds, is from Azerbaijan. Was there a genuine health problem, or was it his links with the Brezhnev era that led to his demise?

Yes, partly the Brezhnev link and partly corruption. He was not known as a very corrupt figure, but he was a close friend of the Brezhnev family via Tsvigun, and Tsvigun's deputy as head of the Azerbaijani KGB before Tsvigun moved to become deputy head of the KGB under Andropov. At that time Azerbaijan was very corrupt. Tsvigun unusually was able to appoint Aliev as his successor -- normally republican KGB heads are Russians. This then enabled Aliev to become Azerbaijani Party leader when corruption and poor economic performance forced out his predecessor. Aliev was able to improve the Republic's industrial performance and this was enough to ensure Brezhnev would turn a blind eye to local corruption. We also know of occasions when Aliev presented expensive gifts to members of the Brezhnev family. Aliev's demise now may be linked with the arrest of Brezhnev's son-in-law who is due to be brought to trial very soon on many corruption charges.

Aliev's name probably came up during the investigation of Brezhnev's son-in-law. He is a healthy man so his fall was probably linked to corruption. But he won't be brought to trial because it has been a rule since Khrushchev's time that members of the Politburo are not brought to trial on such charges: this has also been the pattern with Romanov, Kunaev and Grishin.

And would the removal of Aliev have been seen by the Azerbaijani population as a national affront to their status?

Yes, exactly: the same as with Kunaev in Kazakhstan. Itwas traditional that someone from the Muslim republics should be represented on the Politburo. But Kunaev was dismissed, Rashidov died but was not replaced from Uzbekistan and now Aliev has been dismissed. And nobody has been brought even to candidate level or even to secretariat level in his place. And I believe thatAliev became very popular in Azerbaijan so that his retirement would have been considered an insult. Of course, the rioting was not immediate as it had been over Kunaev in Kazakhstan, but you needed only the spark of events in Nagorno-Karabakh to get this kind of response.

But do you think this would be enough to explain the apparent savagery of the rioting in Sumgait?

No, certainly not. There must have been other factors. I was myself very surprised by the violence of the outbreak. Such things are very unusual in the Soviet Union. There were very serious disturbances in the North Caucasus in the early 1960s and again in the 1970s. But these were of a different origin. Several muslim nations such as the Chechens and Ingush peoples had been deported from the North Caucasus in Stalin's time while some small Christian nations, the Ossetians for example, had not been moved. So when finally these muslim nations were "rehabilitated" and given permission to return there were a lot of local tensions: they were given temporary residences without the authorities making the necessary material preparations for their return, sometimes they found their former villages not vacated but lived in by Russians, Byelorussians and so on. But such tensions are easy to explain and quite different from the sudden explosion we have now seen.

I am skeptical about some of the most extreme stories about pregnant women being killed and so on but even if the official figures of 32 or 33 people killed are accurate then you must have hundreds of others seriously injured. And this is the first time in my memory that we have had a refugee problem between republics, with people fleeing from the areas where they have been living to their own ethnic republics.

Which suggests that there was a complete breakdown of the security apparatus in Sumgait. The explosion lasted two or two and a half days. How can you explain this?

First of all the police would be entirely Azerbaijanian. Secondly, they would not have expected this kind of unrest. The Soviet police is not used to this kind of behaviour and is not trained against riots; they don't know how to handle such things. All that the Soviet regular police have to deal with unrest is their uniform. They have revolvers but they do not have ammunition for them. The guns are purely a symbol.

Is it generally known in the USSR that the ordinary police have no ammunition?

Oh, yes. Only the border police and special security guards are armed with ammunition. The ordinary police are poorly educated people often from the countryside -- in Moscow it has been difficult to recruit police. So it was dangerous to allow them to shoot. So when they need to use trained, armed police for some special situation they call on special units. So that in Sumgait, you would have had armed guards on special military installations and you would have had the special units, but such forces would not have been involved in the residential areas of the city. In such areas the local police are more like civil servants checking on registration permits and passport control. Usually there is no unrest in such areas apart from dealing with drunks and there wouldn't even be much in the way of local police patrols.

So this was why the military had to be called in?

Yes, the military are now in control of the city and they would have come both from garrison camps outside the city and also from the border with Iran. They would probably be overwhelmingly Russians. They would be directly under the control of Moscow. The local party authorities would have no control over the Army. All troop movements of this type would have to be decided by the All-Union Military Council: in other words its Chairman, Gorbachev, would have to approve the movement of given divisions into the city in this situation.

What then would be the time-scale of decision-making when the Sumgait riot began? Would Moscow know more or less immediately?

No, I shouldn't think so: probably the next day. The chain of command and of information is not very efficient. If it had been a border incident there would have been an immediate military report to Moscow, but in a provincial industrial town there would be no direct link of anybody to Moscow on an official level. The Sumgait officials would first have to report to their Republican Party Central Committee and anyway usually they would try to solve the problem without reporting upwards at all. They probably tried to tackle things locally, saw that they couldn't and then swiftly realised they would need to ask Moscow for military intervention.

Turning now to the future handling of the crisis, are there any constitutional procedures laid down, or significant precedents for changing territorial boundaries within the USSR in the wake of popular discontent with them?

There are no exact precedents. I was in Georgia when there was rising unrest and a genuine popular movement in the small Turkish, Muslim nationalities centred on Batumi and Sukumi on the Black Sea. These were autonomous regions within the Georgian Republic and the Georgians were quite heavily colonising them, building sanatoria and rest homes in the best spots and so on, and causing a lot of resentment. So a movement gained momentum not to change the boundaries but to shift allegiance, so to speak, by making the regions autonomous entities within the Russian Federation rather than within the Georgian Republic. This change was felt to be preferable first because the Russians dominate in any case, but secondly because they would no longer have to learn Georgian and they also felt that their influence in general might be enhanced. So there were demonstrations in the two regions and rather than take the issue through the formal channels of their regional Soviets they established a more traditional council of elders from the members of the Soviets -- an officially informal body but one in line with their national traditions. These bodies organised a petition and took it to Moscow. They had a list of demands in addition to the transfer of jurisdiction. That latter change was not agreed by the Supreme Soviet in Moscow, but it may be that the lesser demands, for example on the Georgian language, were to some extent accepted.

In a case like this, the issue must go before the Chamber of Nationalities of the Supreme Soviet which can then decide: is this the formal procedure?

Well, it would go before the joint session of both Chambers of the Supreme Soviet: the two chambers meet jointly except for opening formalities. The Supreme Soviet would have to change the text of the Soviet Constitution

because this specifies which autonomous regions belong to which Republic, and so on. Such a change in the Constitution requires officially a simple majority, though of course such decisions have always been unanimous in the USSR. The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet is allowed to take the decision in the first instance but because a Constitutional Amendment is required, the Presidium decision would have to be ratified by the Supreme Soviet itself.

In the case of Nagorno-Karabakh a decision by the population there that they wished to be integrated into the Armenian Republic should be accepted by Azerbaijan. But there is evidently a general conflict between two nations and in such cases the Supreme Soviet has jurisdiction to decide between the two sides. That is the formal position.

What about the use of a referendum. There is provision for referenda in the Constitution. Perhaps this may be taken up in the present case.

Yes and Gorbachev has stressed that the provision for using referenda should be taken seriously. But again there is no precedent: it has never been used. There is still the old practice going back to Stalin for a projected law to be published and for there to be public discussion in the press and so on.

Then you have amendments and suggestions sent in to a commission which accepts some and rejects others: this has been the style ever since the so-called Stalin Constitution of 1936.

Clearly the whole issue of relations among the nationalities is an issue of the first importance in the Soviet Union today. Do you think that as a way of tackling these problems the government may set up real institutional mechanisms such as democratic referenda for resolving such problems.

This would be logical but I would expect the government to look at things the other way round: by setting up such mechanisms they might feel matters would become more uncertain and unpredictable and they will therefore try to defuse individual problems before the question of some mechanismsuch as a referendum is raised.

One way of defusing these national tensions that may appear attractive to the government would be by returning to what might be called the Stalin model: you represent the main nationalities through individual leaders within the top Soviet leadership. Thus there was Ordzhonikidze from Georgia, Mikoyan from Armenia, Bagirov from Azerbaijan, Kaganovich representing the Jewish people, Ukrainians and so on. Now this no longer exists: Russians dominate the top leadership. So I suspect they will try to defuse the situation now by giving representatives of the various nations prominent places in the central apparatus. For at present Uzbeks, or Azerbaijanis or Armenians feel they are not represented in the central government at all: they see nobody to whom they can appeal at the centre. You must remember that in the Soviet Union today there is a great deal of particular kinds of discontent and this tends to be expressed through writing letters to somebody at the centre, normally *Pravda*, *Izvestia*, Gorbachev, Gromyko or the Central Committee. But if a member of their own nationality was on the Politburo then an Uzbek or Armenian would write in his own language to that particular leader, regardless of his particular post. After all the leader would also be a member of the Supreme Soviet elected from his own Republic. So the nationalities would feel they have got their own powerful leader at the centre, able to take up thei case.

Presumably another way around this problem would be to strengthen the real autonomy and power of the governments of the various republics. This would mean there might be less reason for all political demands to flow towards Moscow. It could also turn the Supreme Soviet's Chamber of Nationalities into a genuinely authoritative body.

Yes and this takes us back to the so-called Leninist -- actually Stalinist -- nationality principle: supposed unity of national form and socialist content for each of the nationalities. This principle justified the centralisation of both the economy and the Communist Party at an All-Union level while allowing some cultural and administrative autonomy only to the republics. The most significant area of potential autonomy within this regime is the right of each republic to have its own criminal code under the jurisdiction of its Supreme Soviet. But in practice, the centralised party line of command dominates over the formally less centralised administrative-governmental line of command and the republics have largely copied the Soviet code. The exceptions are minor, linked to local traditions: for example, in Uzbekistan girls are allowed to marry much younger than in Russia and at one time the drug problem was treated differently there, also because of old traditions.

Could you then sum up your view of the roots of the national problem today in the USSR?

Well, there are linguistic and cultural grievances and antagonisms but I personally feel that the central issue between the nationalities is more economic. You have a great disparity between the levels of economic development in different parts of the Soviet Union, with for example the Baltic Republics having a much higher standard of living than some other regions. Yet these more developed regions find that investment resources are being channelled away from their areas to less developed parts of the USSR, for example the Central Asian Republics. This can cause great tensions because the more developed regions feel they are being penalised and that investment resources are being syphoned off to other regions. There is a similar problem, I think, in Yugoslavia, though in Yugoslavia there is less effort to redistribute investment resources. In the USSR there is also a serious labour imbalance: a considerable surplus of labour in Uzbekistan and also a surplus in Armenia. The government would like to tap this precious labour surplus, but the populations in Uzbekistan and Armenia are very reluctant to move because if they move they lose contact with their national cultural institutions. They simply won't find adequate national schools and other adequate cultural and religious facilities in regions outside their own republic.

Andropov was the first to publicly acknowledge these problems. Lots of new factories were built in Armenia but creating terrible pollution problems in the capital Yerevan. There was the scheme to divert Siberian rivers into Uzbekistan but this was blocked by conservationists. And in such circumstances where you have very serious under-employment there is a fertile ground for corruption: the use of central grants to create phoney industries in these republics, and so on. The fault really lies with the centre which has the responsibility to come up with serious solutions and has failed to do so.

Can I ask a final question before we move on to Perestroika. Up to now in the Soviet Union the only form of pluralism which was officially acknowledged within the formal framework of the state has been national pluralism. However weak these bodies may be, the various national republican Supreme Soviets and the Central Committees of the various national branches of the Communist Party are there for all to see, along with national languages and census returns and schools and so on. I remember being told about how the composition of a local Soviet was ensured to be democratic: the person explained the balance not, of course, in terms of a left-right balance but in terms of an ethnic matching of population statistics with Soviet representation in that area. And there is no other visible element of formal pluralism in the system. Does this absence not act as a vehicle for displacing other grievances onto the national and ethnic plain?

This is right. And it also means that networks within the various institutions, for example, networks of corruption, acquire an ethnic character. And the corruption is then justified in ethnic terms. And this ethnic quota system used in, for example, the local Soviets, is then counter-balanced in really important power systems like, for example, the KGB by staffing the leading echelons in the republics with Russians. This even applies in the Party in many places, although in Georgia for example it hasn't operated because the Georgians insist on the use of their own language within the party and this makes it difficult for Russians to acquire strong positions in the party there. In the old days, Stalin was prepared to crush such local resistance and could simply impose Kaganovich, a Russian Jew as leader of the Ukrainian Communist Party to insult the sensibilities of local people. But nowadays, as we have seen, such action by the Moscow leadership is very difficult, even

dangerous. This is why a figure like Shcherbitsky cannot be removed easily in Ukraine today.

Nevertheless, the growth of other forms of political pluralism will not put an end to the national question, if past experience is any guide. We should not forget the experience of the Socialist Party in the Austro-Hungarian Empire: it started out as a unified and genuine socialist party but by the turn of the century it had split along national lines. The national question is not simply a displacement of other social questions.

Yes, of course. We must recognise that an inevitable part of democratic development in the Soviet Union will be the re-emergence of national problems and these problems must be openly discussed and resolved. What we find is a great deal of ignorance of the national question amongst the Russians, including amongst Russian leaders, who imagine that these issues were long ago resolved and settled. There are some signs now that Russian party leaders are becoming more aware of the issues and more sensitive to them, slowly. Thus Gorbachev has declared that there should be a Central Committee on national questions and he has got all sorts of specialist groups and institutes involved in studying the issues. But in general there is very serious ignorance on the national question among Russians.

PERESTROIKA AT A SNAIL'S PACE?

Could we turn now to perestroika and begin with last year's economic indicators. They are pretty bad, aren't they? And this means Gorbachev enters his fourth year as the General Secretary who will re-dynamise the economy without having economic results to show for his efforts, at least in terms of aggregate figures.

This is true: I myself have not been impressed. But to be honest, I predicted that Gorbachev's belief in 1985 that he had an adequate set of policies to gain quick acceleration would prove illusory. Gorbachev's 1985 programmatic speeches led people to expect that 1987 would be the year of rapid acceleration: 1986 would be the year of the Congress and of agreeing plans and gearing up organisationally, then the results would follow amid public enthusiasm. This perspective was the old classical, commandist way of thinking: fix the targets, mobilise the people and outstrip the targets. The official target for 1987 was set at 4.5% growth for heavy industry and 4.7% for light industry, while Gorbachev indicated that he hoped for 5% growth overall. In the end there was an overall rate of growth of 2.7% and light industry fell behind targets even more seriously than machine industries. And if you analyse the newspaper reports you find that even this 2.7% rise is largely a financial rather than a material growth, produced by increased prices. In other words last year showed very serious trouble. Even more significant is that last year saw the switchof 2,500 enterprises to the new experimental economic model of self-financing and profit-making, with a new set of incentives. This sector was supervised separately from the rest of industry and it fulfilled the plan targets only up to 98.5%: in other words it also showed a short-fall. Thus, there was no significantdifference between the performance of the new sector and the old. Now 60% of all industry has been switched to the new economic system. But so far this year that 60% is showing no new acceleration: complaints about quality and performance remain thesame.

All this is an evident disappointment and the various schools of Soviet economists are trying to analyse what has gone wrong. In fact the conclusion must be that the so-called new system was working exactly the same as the old system, according to plan targets. The formal system has been changed from plan targets to state orders. The factory has to produce a certain amount of products for the state on contract, compulsorily. Then the extra can be produced for their own sales and profits. This is the formal system that is designed in theory to give enterprises an incentive. But in practice the levels at which these state orders have been set absorbs 95% of industrial capacity, and in some cases 98%. In other words the new system is not significantly different from the old plan targets. Only a tiny percentage of capacity is left for free dealings and this is far too little to make any difference for either managers or workers. Managers concerned about their careers know that so long as they meet the state orders they will not be criticised.

As for the positive financial incentive of earning extra for the enterprise from extra sales, one of the main problems here concerns the tax system. In the Soviet Union income tax is insignificant: state taxes come from enterprise output, through a turnover tax. There is no limit or national norm for this tax and therefore ministries can individually decide how much of any profit to take in tax. The law on the new enterprise system does not include any fixed and general level of tax on profits. Thus some ministries have been levying a 90% tax on profits!

Therefore an economic reform of this type must include a clear, fixed and progressive tax system. At the other end of the scale, the regulations on bankruptcy have turned out to be utterly unserious. I was very amused recently by a front page article on one particular instance of bankruptcy in Kazakhstan. The article announced the grave news of a large state farm of about 30,000 hectares being declared bankrupt because of many years of losses. Last year it lost 16 million roubles so the government decided to liquidate the state farm. This seems serious until you read what happened: it was simply fused with the neighbouring, more successful farm and that efficient farm must carry the burden, while the debts of the old farm were written off! Everything was owned and managed by the state before and everything is owned and managed by the state after. There were some losers: the director and the chief accountant and one or two other managers. They were dismissed. But this could have happened anyway under the old system. You don't need the confusing name of bankruptcy to dismiss a director. The workers on the farm of course benefitted from the liquidation by now being able to workas part of a more successful, better-off farm.

All theseproblems have led many Soviet economists to conclude that price, salary and monetary reforms are absolutely necessary in order to pursue the course of perestroika. But these are all very sensitive issues. Prices entail cutting subsidies. Both prices and wages have been fixed in set patterns for decades now and many anomalies have resulted while people have become completely accustomed to the old system, not least through using the black-market, moonlighting and so on.

What has now happened is that Gorbachev has shifted the whole time-scale for radical economic perestroika to the next five year plan starting in 1991. Prices, salaries and so on will be changed then and efforts are now being directed to preparing these changes. But in the meantime, many people -- workers and peasants -- have lost enthusiasm for the changes, expecting them to bring further difficulties and hardships rather than benefits. Then there is a currency problem, which points towards a currency reform that would be extremely unpopular. In some ways the currency problem is the main barrier to a more efficient system.There is a vast surplus of roubles within the economic system. According to official figures, in saving accounts there are now 260 billion roubles -- one thousand roubles of savings per head of the population. There is also a vast quantity of roubles in people's hands. And this money has very little to purchase. It therefore leaves the government without any flexible steering mechanism. Thoughts therefore turn towards a monetary reform of the sort carried out by Stalin at the end of the war. Such reforms are always extremely unpopular, because people's savings can be lost. Stalin used the argument that the Germans had printed a lot of money during the war to justify his monetary reform and get control over the money supply. But that type of argument cannot, of course, be used now. And as a matter of fact, the government has no idea how much money is actually in circulation at the present time. And it admits that roubles are being printed in order to ease operating problems during the reform.

What are you referring to?

This was a very important issue in some areas as a result of a change that accompanied the introduction of the new economic system this year. It was decided that the turnover tax wouldbe used in some areas to pay local salaries and the tax would be paid into local banks which would then pay out the wages. But as the newspapers reported, in the Donetsk mining region, the funds entering the banks were not sufficient to pay the wages in full. Trade did not generate sufficient funds. And people were waiting for hours in the cold to draw their salaries or savings out of the bank, but there was no money. In February there were local protests and strikes over this rouble famine and the central bank simply printed rouble notes and sent them to Donetsk to defuse the crisis.

What has happened to productivity? Has the new quality control system or the anti-alcohol campaign had an impact on that?

There has been some increase in productivity but the important point is that this has not been linked with signs of the introduction of new technology. On the alcohol front therehas been a regression. In 1986 there was a very significant decline in the number of accidents linked to alcoholism, but the figures started rising again in 1987. The official explanation is that private distilling has become very widespread. There was an interesting *Izvestia* interview recently with the Chairman of the Main Department of Public Order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs on this, and also a very remarkable discussion in the Supreme Soviet on the alcohol situation in the Moldavian Republic, and in Ukraine. This revealed that the rise in the consumption of sugar in little Moldavia since the anti-alcohol law was passed has been higher than total sugar consumption in the whole of Ukraine before the anti-alcohol law was passed! There was also a dramatic rise in crimes linked to alcohol production: murders, grievous bodily harm and so on. The March 3rd *Izvestia* interview,áentitled "Sober Statistics on Alcoholism" gives the figures. Following the introduction of theanti-alcohol laws the state output of vodka was cut by 40% with a resulting loss in tax revenue of 37 billion roubles out of a total revenue of less than 500 billion roubles a year.

We should also remember that in a recent discussion with Soviet writers,

Gorbachev made clear that in the last four five year plans, all new investment was generated from oil sales and alcohol sales. The Interior Ministry General gives the figures for people apprehended for private distilling as follows: 1985--80,000, 1986--150,000, 1987--397,000, January-February 1988--120,000. So the figures are heading well over the half a million figure for this year, and these are figures only for the people who were discovered by the police and officially recorded.

These statistics can only remind us of prohibition days in the United States. But when we look at the social data on private distilling we get a very different picture from the American bootleggers. The majority of the private distillers are pensioners. They are distilling to make up for their low pensions. The technology is simple and not expensive. And what can be done about them? They have little money so they can't be heavily fined. They can't be put in prison because that involves labour camps and pensioners can't be expected to do hard labour. That was why last year they were able to start criminal proceedings against only 11,000 people, who were probably selling on a large, commercial scale. Then we also find that more than 60% of those apprehended were women. So that while the official anti-alcohol campaign stressed the problems that wives faced from alcohol abuse, the private distillers tend to be old women! And all this has created an entirely new and very powerful black market which is probably larger than the old black market that had existed in the past. If you are an elderly lady in the village you need firewood or you need repairs to your roof and nobody would do this unless they got a gift, for example a bottle. Before, such old women would buy a bottle at the local shop. But now they can't buy it so they make it. The restrictions apply not only to vodka but to wine. Last year 150,000 hectares of vineyards were scrapped. This produced protests that the change was unjustified.

Presumably a sharp rise in prices would mop up a large part of this huge rouble surplus. It seemed last summer after the Central Committee plenum on the economy and the new enterprise law that the government was going to raise prices quite soon. But this never in fact materialised. Was this because of a loss of nerve -- fear of widespread public protests?

They did lose their nerve because there was a general public discussion with thousands of letters protesting against price rises being published in newspapers and magazines. Many of these protests claimed that the government was trying to make up for the revenue it had lost on vodka by increasing prices on food. This was considered unjust and extortionate. There was also data that the very high levels of savings were concentrated in the wealthier minority of the population while the majority lacked large savings. At the same time it is difficult for the government to clearly separate out the wealthier groups because their wealth does not derive from official incomes. The official incomes are rather narrowly differentiated and people with large amounts of wealth have gained it outside the official salary system. Thus it is difficult for the government to formally distinguish rich from poor by income and pay the poor compensatory wage increases while raising prices.

Gorbachev now wants to introduce a progressive income tax and start an inland revenue service of the sort that exists here. But there is very little expert knowledge on how this can be done inthe Soviet Union: it involves a huge administrative change with very big social and political consequences.

So what are the main alternative schools of thought on how to move forward with perestroika, beyond such price and currency problems?

There are two schools of thought amongst economists. One calls for introducing measures that will bring sharp, temporary hardships on the population in order to bring long-term improvements, breaking through the obstacles on prices, money supply and so on. Gorbachev seems to lean in this direction by talking about the fact that perestroika is bound to bring temporary hardships. The other school, which includes Shmelyov amongst others, says that this will simply substitute one set of controls for another: the new prices will themselves be arbitrary and will lead to new imbalances requiring further crisis measures and new controls. Smelyov therefore argues for a policy that will not involve sacrifices by the population but will involve a sacrifice of economic control by the government: the government should use all its foreign currency reserves and even gain external credits in order to saturate the domestic market with consumer imports which will soak up the surplus currency in private hands, give consumers a sense of new well-being and gain revenue for new investment. This school argues the USSR should join the IMF and World Bank and even that some enterprises should sell shares, producing a kind of socialist-capitalist hybrid. They feel that this is a better way to solve the economic difficulties. Gorbachev will always try to find a middle ground, but in some situations a middle ground doesn't exist. Thus there is no clear definition of what the next stage is.

What do you think the policy should be?

I personally think that the government has to first deal with the price subsidies, which at present seem to amount to about 90 billion roubles out of a total budget of under 500 billion. Gorbachev said in his Murmansk speech that the first subsidies to be removed should be those on bread, claiming bread was so cheap that children play football with it. I have no evidence of that. Aganbegyan has said that the first subsidies to be cut should be those on meat, but this is also very sensitive. I myself think that there are important subsidies on other items -- agricultural subsidies and subsidies on newspapers, for example, that should be the first target for cutting. There is no reason for instance why newspapers should be subsidised. There is also no reason why newspapers and journals should be distributed free of charge by the postman. There could also be an end to subsidies on holidays, air-transport, perhaps of rail transport as well. Then one could perhaps go on to the more sensitive areas like the subsidies on gas and electricity prices. But leave aside the very sensitive and symbolically charged issues such as bread and meat and rents. In any case the idea of subsidising bread is not peculiar to the Soviet Union: it exists in many other countries as well, including capitalist countries.

All this gives a twofold impression about government economic policy: first that all the really difficult decisions about perestroika have not yet been taken; second, that the government is not at all sure what kinds of decisions it's going to take. It knows what it ultimately wants but has no clear view of how to get there.

Yes, that is right. The government is very dependent on the work of economic experts and is trying to evaluate different kinds of advice from them. The government tries to have an approach based on some fundamental economic analysis. Thus, they are trying to find out what the price should be for some 20,000,000 different items. They are trying to do this by computing the actual amounts of labour required in the production of each item -- a real Marxist approach to real labour costs, youmight say. But to accomplish this task they lack the basic research infrastructure: for decades prices were fixed and nobody was professionally questioning such prices through research.The last large-scale changes of prices took place under Stalin and since then, apart from Khrushchev's attempt to raise meat prices by 30%, prices have remained largely fixed.

The government is certainly seeking new ways of gaining budgetary resources and this is a large part of the explanation for Gorbachev's acceptance of the INF deal, the search for regional solutions as in Afghanistan, and so on. There is a great eagerness now to redevelop the missile producing plants into factories in the civilian sector. There is also a drive against embarking on new gigantic prestige projects. We find that after the completion of the Amur-Baikal railway there is no money to develop the regions through which it runs and because of this the railways itself cannot be used and is lying idle.

There is a new emphasis on energy conservation. The recent cancellation of nuclear installation projects in Kuban, in Odessa and Minks were not simply responses to the ecological lobby but were attempts to re-orient investment and avoid waste.

Some Western commentators are arguing that a very radical change is being launched in agriculture, a change strengthened by the autumn Central Committee Plenum on the subject. What do you think about that?

There has been no radical change in agricultural policy, no change in principle. At the end of March there will be an All-Union Congress of Collective Farms. This will adopt a new collective farms law and review the whole situation in agriculture. The collective farms make up today less than 50% of total agricultural production, so it's not the whole story. Nevertheless there will be some liberalisation in the collective farm rules at this Congress. Each collective farm from now on will be allowed to decide whether the size of private plots can be enlarged and by how much. But the rural population has declined so much, particularly in the central part of the Russian federation that agriculture now needs a lot of new investment.

Last year they tried a lot of new incentives, for example linking state and collective farm performance with profit, creating a new agricultural bank for providing them with credits, to control the quantity of credit being drawn by collective farms. Yet last year's agricultural output was very disappointing, no better than the year before.

It wasn't that bad, was it, compared to some of the harvests of the early 1980s or to what had been feared?

Well, the problem was that this year the state procurement agencies were prepared to accept a lot of grain that was wet -- the weather had been very wet and the farms don't have adequate drying facilities. The result is that grain with a lot of moisture in it weighs much more than dry grain and therefore the tonnage appears to have risen significantly but actually hasn't. And this also means that grain imports are made up now not so much of low quality fodder but of high quality wheat for bread. Wet grain has to used as feed grain rather than for food. Last year also showed a decline in fruit and vegetable output and therefore private market prices have risen and are now much higher than last year.

Gorbachev has laid great stress on the potentialities of the family brigade system that has been introduced on collective farms. Is this wrong?

Where it has been introduced it has made some difference but the problem is that there are relatively few families actually fully committed to work on the kolkhoz. There are twelve million families living in collective farm settlements and there are also twelve million kolkhozniki. So on average each family only puts one person into the kolkhoz as a member. Before the war the situation was different: on average two family members ina kolkhoz settlement were in the kolkhoz but that average has steadily declined. This means that you cannot use the family brigade widely. One family member may be in the kolkhoz while another may be working in a local town, in the local Soviet or just handling the private plot.

This problem may be the reason why Gorbachev has now shifted from the family brigade to the so-called family rent: the family becomes a tenant from the kolkhoz. But the tenancy is not long enough at present -- only seven years -- but this period may be extended at the collective farm congress soon. In China they dissolved the collective farms and rent the land for 21years, but of course conditions there are different since most people still live in rural areas there and are heavily employed in agriculture. In the Soviet Union there isn't a large surplus of labour that can be switched to family farming and there is also a shortage of small scale machinery for such sizes of farms. The whole infrastructure will have to be changed for such a turn to smaller scale farming.

So we are talking about what could be an important long-term strategic change for the better. But it is precisely about long term benefits, not quick solutions. The farm population can see real change in government policy -- brigades last year, renting this year, perhaps longer leases soon. But what the peasants will in many cases want is both a long term lease and the ability to build a house for themselves on their rented land to make it difficult to move them out. So some experts are arguing that the government must give the peasants credits to build new houses, as well as to buy machinery. And so on. And there remains the fact that average income from farming remains lower than average incomes in industry -- 150 roubles a month in farming last year against 201 roubles last year in industry. To get young people to turn away from industrial jobs to farming you will have to do something about that disparity as well.

Turning now to social policy, there has been a good deal of attention here to the new twist Gorbachev has given to the yardstick, "To Each According to his Work", and to the rather peculiar sense in which the notion "Social Justice" is now used by the leadership: as a synonym for anti-egalitarianism. This is often linked, in the minds of people here, with new ideas about a paying sector being developed within the health system. Is therea lot of debate about this in the Soviet Union?

There has been quite a lot of debate about the health service, but not much about the wider issues.

What is your view about the new ideas for the health service?

Well, you must remember that the quality of the health service was very poor. Over a number of years a pattern developed where by the most qualified doctors moved out of both general and specialist practice into a vastly inflated research and educational establishment. The reason was pay. Any doctor practicing medicine, whether a GP or a highly skilled and qualified surgeon, gets the same pay. There was a story in the papers a couple of days ago about a practising doctor who has developed and patented about a dozen new techniques of considerable importance which could be used commercially, but his salary is still 140 roubles a month like any other practising doctor. If he had been working in research he would have won all sorts of diplomas and titles and have gained a far higher income.

Private clinics used to exist in the past -- I remember them -- but then disappeared. But you must understand that they were created in order to give people working in research or educational institutions outlets for the exercise of their practical medical skills. But this was purely diagnostic work, not treatment. And you had to pay for the diagnosis: the scale of pay depended on the qualifications of the specialist. If he was a professor you would pay more for the diagnosis. Now in my view this aspect of private medicine is positive insofar as it pulls research specialists into the practical field. But the normal clinical doctor, the equivalent of the GP here, has no possibility of private practice in the Soviet Union, unlike here. In the Soviet Union private medicine is always in separate institutions and it emerged only for diagnostic purposes and prescription, not for treatment. It is a matter of citizens paying for a second opinion.

There is, however, now a new development of private treatment, but only within so-called health clubs, for example, a club of disabled people using rehabilitation medicine and so on. You pay a fee to become a member of the club and then you get physiotherapy, medical gymnastics or exercise under the supervision of doctors. This didn't exist in the past.

Gorbachev is saying that much more money should be spent on the health service and other social services. In the later Brezhnev period the share of the national budget taken upby the social services declined and he seems to want to reverse this. But should his words be taken seriously or is it purely rhetorical?

Expansion of the budget in these fields probably won't be significant until the next plan -- there certainly hasn't been a significant increase so far. But what Gorbachev wants to do is to get the various economic ministries to expand the part of their budget that they devote to their own occupational medicine systems: the enterprises would devote more of their revenue to social services -- health, education, and, of course, housing and so on. His strategy is to fund improvements in the social services through the profits made by the enterprises through the new economic mechanism. This way of funding the social services through the enterprises is not new in the Soviet Union. It used to be quite a highly developed sector of social policy, before the so-called period of stagnation: their own clinics, sanatoria, the kindergartens used to be much better provided.

Standards varied from one ministry to another. Industrial ministries have always had a great freedom of choice about how it used its resources. A rich ministry deciding to build a new factory somewhere on a green-field site could decide to build a new local hospital nearby if it wanted. This division of health facilities between ministries, by the way, was the reason why it was considered quite normal for the Ministry of the Interior to have its own psychiatric hospitals for treating criminals -- the system used by the KGB for putting people into psychiatric hospitals under its control. Now, of course, these psychiatric hospitals have been taken away from the Interior Ministry and put in the hands of the Ministry of Health. The armed forces similarly have their own hospitals.

THE SUCCESS OF '87: GLASNOST

Can we finally turn to glasnost?

Finally, to our success story!

O.K. Is it a qualitative breakthrough? Something unprecedented?

Oh, yes, it is. During the last year there has been a tremendous development in the cultural field that is quite unprecedented: a really dramatic growth in freedom of discussion, of the press, an outpouring of novels, films, not only from older cultural figures like Rybakov and Dudintsev but from entirely new, younger figures.

And the springing up of many thousands of clubs.

Yes, youth clubs, social clubs and so on. There has been a great transformation in the cultural field: not so much in the way of new works and developments in science. But the cultural intelligentsia has certainly seized its opportunity.

Do you see any new principles for the organisation of cultural life emerging?

No, I can't say that any new principles have been laid down, but perhaps because the intelligentsia feels the present conditions may not last, they have certainly pushed forward very rapidly over the last year, trying to do everything they possibly can. If we compare this with Khrushchev's time, initiative in the cultural field always came from the top, from Khrushchev. Now, in recent months we have seen Gorbachev no longer being in the lead: others are pressing further in the criticism of Stalin, of the Brezhnev period and so on. Now a lot of new ideas, new initiatives, new talents are emerging.

A great deal has been reported in the media here about developments in the cultural field and therefore we will not explore this important field. But I would like to ask, before we move on, whether there is any popular trend that is hostile to glasnost or to what might be called the fruits of glasnost?

Well, there are people who feel that glasnost is discrediting the system. And of course there is some truth in this. There was a letter published recently from someone who had been a guard in the camps. He wrote of how he had lost his health guarding the criminals like Bukharin in Siberia. Now, he says, I am an invalid and Bukharin is acclaimed. Others are very angry about criticisms of Stalin's role as a war leader. So there is a substantial minority, but still very much a minority with such views.

But what about more overtly political anti-liberal movements such as

Pamyat?

Well, Pamyat is basically nationalistic: a group rather than a movement. It is a symptom of the current ideological and cultural crisis. The official line is that Soviet history inaugurated a new and higher set of values than the values of the Old Regime and of the Russian Empire. Pamyat says this is nonsense, that old Russian values were better, there was trust between people, there was nobility of spirit, there was honour, religion enabled people to know what is right and wrong while now they don't know and the party has not set a proper example, andso on. Now the party is responding by getting some important official writers to take up and put forward arguments used by Pamyat. So now the public is being given some of these notions within the framework of official party discourse.

This is in some ways much more worrying. Are they taken up by other writers and criticised?

Oh, yes, it can be seen as worrying. And such ideas are sometimes taken up and criticised.

Moving on to what might be called the political project of reform Communism, this seemed to suffer a stunning reverse with the fall of Yeltsin. The way he was removed was very shocking in itself, and the fact of his removal was a severe blow to the credibility of Gorbachev as a strong leader committed to political change. One also has the impression that the drive within the party for qualitative political reform has lost momentum. We have no clear idea, do we, of what this approaching party conference is supposed to achieve. It was billed last year as a very important step towards political democratisation, but what role is it to actually play now?

Personally, I don't expect too much from this conference, beyond changes in personnel. Gorbachev tried to introduce new rules within the Party to bring some democratisation and also tried to introduce a new ideological background for his new strategy. But no clear picture has emerged as to what will be discussed at the conference. No project has been presented of what is to be decided or even stressing the importance of the conference. The whole programme for this conference is blank. Something about party democracy will be discussed but we have no idea what.

One would normally have expected that this last Central Committee plenum would have discussed and prepared the conference. Yet in fact it concentrated on education which is really rather a small matter in comparison, don't you agree?

Yes. This is true. There will probably be another plenum shortly before the conference. My own hunch is that the most important element at this conference will be to do with which interest groups are given representation within the top leadership. As you know, in the Soviet leadership ever since Stalin's time there has been the idea of representing power interests through allocating places for them on the top leadership: the military, the KGB, the trade unions, Leningrad and Moscow and Ukraine and so forth. Changes are made from time to time in the allocation of such posts. Thus today the trade unions are represented only at the Secretariat level, not in the Politburo. I suspect Gorbachev would like to have greater representation of economic interest groups on the Politburo for carrying through perestroika, and to change the priorities of representation at the top. The present composition is rather a haphazard collection of interest groups. Perhaps now he wants to turn it into a kind of general staff for perestroika.

Could you say something about the fall of Yeltsin. Why did it occur?

It was the result of a very serious conflict between Yeltsin and Ligachev while Gorbachev was on holiday, writing his book. Ligachev was left in full control in Moscow and he started cancelling some of the decisions which Yeltsin had taken as Moscow party leader. Moscow contains many high-level interest groups and Yeltsin tried to handle them himself as Moscow leader. I could give dozens of examples here. For example, the Moscow underground lacks adequate staff for doing the unpleasant work there. So the work used to be done by outsiders, for example, miners from the Donbas. They would be given some privileges to work on the Moscow underground. Yeltsin was wanting to limit the expansion of Moscow's population so he was against importing such workers. So residence permissionfor new people moving to Moscow was stopped. So underground construction and repairs were delayed, since there was a shortageof several thousand workers for doing the job. The department responsible for building the underground appealed to higher authority against Yeltsin's veto and Ligachev overruled Yeltsin.

The same pattern recurred in relation to other issues. For example, Yeltsin tried to close down the special shops and he reduced the number of official cars -- various measures against privileges. But he could do this only for Moscow officials directly under his supervision, not for the ministry officials. This was another source of conflicts.

Yeltsin also tried to move twenty factories outside the Moscow area because their were polluting the air in the capital. They had been violating the permissible pollution limits (a common thing in the USSR). But all Yeltsin could do was to press for decisions to relocate the factories to be taken by the relevant ministries. And Ligachev overruled him on this. All these conflicts finally led to the explosion between Yeltsin and Ligachev, and it was seen as a general conflict over the paceand extent of reform as well as a personal conflict between the two.

GORBACHEV: A QUALITATIVE OR A QUANTITATIVE CHANGE?

Last year when we interviewed you at the time of the January Plenum, your general assessment was that Gorbachev represented a more competent leader with a more modern approachto solving problems than the old Brezhnev team. But at the same time you saw him as bringing no more than quantitative improvements within essentially the traditional framework of centralised party rule. Is this still your view, or do you think the Gorbachev team has shown over the last year that it is attempting a qualitative, structural break with the past in political and social life?

There has been a qualitative change in the atmosphere within the country since the January Plenum of 1987. There is no doubt about that. And Gorbachev undoubtedly has made some surprising decisions that I did not expect.

On the other hand the leadership acts in an ad hoc way. There has certainly been a learning process in the leadership. When Gorbachev came in to power he thought that perestroika would be far easier than he has found it to be. Now they are searching around for a way forward after realising that merely mobilising enthusiasm behind a campaign is not enough. Some sociologists argue that the government has no mechanisms for analysing beforehand what the popular response to their policies will be, what the impact and outcome of any initiative will be. They argue that the government lacked the infrastructure of social research and analysis for careful policy planning. There is some truth in this and the result is rather contradictory policies and decision-making based on nothing more than general schemas.

For example, they passed a law against people living off unearned income. This was against individual private enterprise, private markets and trade. Then they found that this disrupted parts of agricultural private trade. So they then passed a very hurriedly prepared law allowing individual enterprise. This became operative from May 1987 but very few people took it up. Since there is no income tax in the USSR they had made people turning to individual enterprise get a licence: this was really a way of getting them to pay a tax in advance. But people disliked the licence because they had no clear idea what profit they might make. So the government liberalised the law, allowing part-time work. But still this was not attractive, so they allowed full-time individual enterprise. This did work, but so well that quite a number of professionals started to leave their professions to take up handicrafts or whatever. I know some dentists who gave up dentistry for this and one now makes more ina day making hats than he made in a week as a dentist.

This worried the government, so they have now switched to encouraging co-operatives which can be more easily regulated and monitored. So these co-operatives will be full-time, with proper accounting systems and taxes. Co-operatives have already started in the restaurant andcafe business. And they have been very successful. Some of them are making a lot of money. But the government has become unhappy over the fact that these restaurants are buying subsidised food from the state shops. So the new law on co-operatives says they must buy their food on the private markets, thus pushing up their prices. And Gorbachev has also said that new taxes will be put on them. So this sort of ad hoc decision-making is not very satisfactory.

Life has become more interesting, one might even say more entertaining. But there has not been a great deal of definite, firmly rooted change of either a qualitative or a quantitative sort in everyday life, leaving aside the everyday life of the cultural intelligentsia. For the workers perhaps the biggest practical change has been the switch to the three shift system, along with GosKontrol. So they feel that their work is under heavier pressure and control while their wages remain the same. So we may conclude that reforms are still only at a very early stage.

Is the current reform process irreversible?

No. It could be reversed.

Is Gorbachev's authority growing?

His influence has grown in the country as a whole. As for his authority within the Party leadership, this is more complicated since the Yeltsin affair. Before the fall of Yeltsin, Gorbachev always said that there was no opposition

to his line within the party -- only conservative personal attitudes and so on. After Yeltsin's fall he could not continue to say this and he had to start speaking of elements of resistance within the leadership, though without identifying the resisters. He also criticises what he calls bureaucracy, by which he means the governmental system. So he is trying to indicate that he does not have complete power, that he cannot alone decide what should be done. The INF treaty has now made him seem to many to be an indispensible figure in international relations.

Did the Treaty make a big impact on the Soviet population?

Not so big on the ordinary Soviet citizen. An agreement on Afghanistan would mean much more to the ordinary person in the street and, assuming that the agreement worked, it would greatly increase his popular authority. Perestroika itself has not increased his popular standing among ordinary factory workers, of course. It is a very slow, painful process of rebuilding. You know that some of the facts that the leadership has revealed are really very disturbing. For example, Ligachev's speech to the Central Committee on education revealed that 30% of the schools in the Soviet Union have no toilets; that thirty percent of hospitals have no hot water. The Minister of Health, Chazov, revealed that in 38% of Soviet cities there is no purification of tap water. This leads to infection through the drinking water. Even for someone like myself who has been very critical for years about various aspects of Soviet health care, facts like these about life under the old economic mechanism are really shocking. I had no idea that problems were of such magnitude.

Against this background, we cannot expect that improvements will come through an avalanche-like process of rapid knock-on effects of positive changes. Improvement will come through the government really accepting liability for the problems that the population has faced over many years and tackling these problems. This requires stamina from the leadership and persistence. And it especially needs many political reforms which have not been started yet. There is still a strong pressure to make do with the most minimal changes.

Has there been any change in the position of your brother?

He has signed a contract for his book, *All Stalin's Men*, to be published officially in Poland. But he is unable to publish anything in the Soviet Union. In the latest issue of *Novy Mir* his name was mentioned for the first time in an official publication. This was in an extract from the memoirs of a very famous Soviet writer, Trifonov, which *Novy Mir* is publishing. Trifonov was a close friend of Roy's and in the extract he quoted a passage from *Let History Judge*. But the journal has censored the reference to the book so that it appears as if Roy was just saying the passage. Roy has also had an a pproach from Hungary but nothing is published yet.

Zhores Medvedev is a distinguished Soviet scientist and writer who has been living and working in London since 1973. His book "Gorbachev", first published in 1986 with a revised paperback edition 1987, has been widely acclaimed as the most authoritative study so far of the background to the new policies initiated by the CPSU leader. His brother Roy, author of the article below, lives in Moscow and has established a worldwide reputation as a historian. His best-known book is "Let History Judge!".

THE EMERGENCE OF NATIONAL PROBLEMS IN SOVIET TRANSCAUCASIA

by ROY MEDVEDEV

For more than a year now both the Soviet and western press have spoken of the aggravation of national problems in the Soviet Union andáof the possibility of the influence of national and nationalist movements on the future of democratic reforms and perestroika in our country. The disorders in Kazakhstan in December 1986, the demonstrations of Crimean Tatars in Moscow and Uzbekistan, the demonstrations in the Baltic States in 1987 and 1988, the emergence of the Russian patriotic association "Pamyat'" (Memory) and the sharp polemic in the press around the activity of this association, the creation of not a few other nationalist informal groups like "Golden Horde" and "New Islam", isolated incidents in Yakutia and the republics of Central Asia and the continuing emigration of Jews and Germans from the USSR all led several months ago to the 'Soviet political leadership's decision to hold a Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU devoted specifically to national problems in the Soviet Union and to create a scientific research centre under the auspices of the Academy of Science for the study and forecasting of national processes and problems in the USSR. However, never before in the post-war period, had national conflicts in our country taken such a form and acuity as happened in February and March 1988 in Transcaucasia around the problem of Nagorno-Karabakh, a small autonomous *oblast* by our standards, populated predominantly by Armenians but within the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic.

There is an obvious connection between the events enumerated above and the perestroika begun in our country, although, of course, national conflicts and movements of a different kind arose during the period of "stagnation", during the restless years of Khrushchev's reorganisations and changes and even more so during the cult of Stalin. It cannot be denied that only glasnost and democratisation allow many of the national problems which have accumulated in our country over the past decades to be better expressed and understood. The liberalisation of the regime which is obvious to everyone and the weakening of the powerful authoritarian-bureaucratic press is revealing the not always pure sources of discontent which has accumulated in the localities by bringing to life or aggravating disagreements and arguments which existed earlier but did not seem particularly important, while social injustice and corrupt leadership were prevalent everywhere. In some cases it is precisely faith in the new leadership which is stimulating the activity of many national groups which justifiably, or even not always justifiably, consider themselves frustrated from the point of view of national rights. On the other hand, morally decaying and mafia groups from the leaderships of individual republics are attempting to defend their privileges and power precisely by passing off the loss of this influence and power as national oppression. It is evident that, in summoning the country's population to activity in the struggle for democracy and responsible participation in resolving social and political problems, Mikhail Gorbachev is involuntarily spurring Soviet people to the sort of activity displayed in recent weeks by hundreds of thousands of Armenians in holding demonstrations and brief strikes in Yerevan, and demanding a just solution to the problem of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The problem of the autonomous oblast of Nagorno-Karabakh is not a major national one, but nor is it a straightforward problem as its origins and history go back into the distant past. The lands of Nagorno-Karabakh began to be settled by Armenians back in the First Century A.D. when one of the ancient states of Eastern Transcaucasia, Caucasian Albania, began to decline and significant territories of this state from Lake Sevan to the Caspian Sea were conquered by Great Armenia. For 300 years Armenians settled the whole region of Karabakh and their national, cultural and religious influence remained predominant despite the fact that after the Fourth Century Nagorno-Karabakh changed hands many times, at first back to Albania, then to Persia, then to an Arab Kaliphate and a Khazar Khanate. For about a thousand years Nagorno-Karabakh was subject to the devastating incursions of the Mongols, Turks, Turkmen and only by the 17th Century had it been conquered by Persia. However, Turkey persisted in its claim to this small Persian domain and wars between Persia and Turkey continued until the end of the 18th Century. The khans and beks changed but the peasant population of the region, as before, consisted predominantly of Armenians with a comparatively small number of Georgians and Azerbaijanians.

In religious life the region was dominated by Gregorianism although attempts to implant Islam were continuous, persistent and not always without success. From the Church there arose the desire to establish relations with Russia; back in 1701 the first delegation from Nagorno-Karabakh headed by Bishop Minas arrived at the court of Peter the Great with a request for protection. However, the Karabakh khanate was finally annexed to Russia in 1813 by the Treaty of Gulistan after the latest Russo-Persian War. At the end of the 19th Century Nagorno-Karabakh was a part of Elizavetpol province in Transcaucasia. The capital of the province was Elizavetpol, later Gandzha and now

Kirovobad.

The Tsarist government was not concerned with the national boundaries in Transcaucasia and in 1917 the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh joined the Shushensky and Zangezursky regions. In Transcaucasia, after the fall of the Tsarist and Provisional governments in 1917 and then of the celebrated Baku Commune in 1918, there occurred not only outbursts of civil unrest but also brutal national wars including for the possession of Nagorno-Karabakh which the Armenian nationalists (Dashnaks) considered an inalienable part of Armenia and the Azerbaijani nationalists (Mussavatists) an inalienable part of Azerbaijan. Only the victory of Soviet power in Transcaucasia brought an end to this bloody internecine strife which in some mountainous regions had reduced life to 30 per cent of the population.

The Armenian population of Transcaucasia had particularly suffered. As the *Bol'shaya Sovietskaya Entsiklopedia* notes: "In Nakhichevansky region the slaughter of Armenians by Mussavatists assumed a general character. Inhabitants were butchered in the towns of Nakhichevan, Akulis, Norashen and others". If, before the Revolution, Armenians constituted 42 per cent of the population of Nakhichevansky region of Erivansky province and Azerbaijanis 57 per cent, then by the beginning of the 1920's the proportion of Armenians had fallen to 15 per cent and that of Azerbaijanis had correspondingly risen to 80 per cent. And although Nakhichevansky region did not have a common border with Azerbaijan but was geographically in Armenia, it was decided under the new national boundaries to form the Nakhichevansky Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic not within Armenia but within Azerbaijan.

Fortunately, Nagorno-Karabakh had suffered less. At the beginning of the 1920's a population of about 150,000 people continued to live there as in Nakhichevan of which, however, approximately 90 per cent were Armenians. Nevertheless, for some little known reason, it was decided to organise on this territory not an autonomous republic within Armenia along the lines of Nakhichevan, but an autonomous region within Azerbaijan which to this day is regarded by virtually all Armenians both within Nagorno-Karabakh and beyond its boundaries as an unjust and irrational solution and which became the starting point for prolonged disputes between Armenia and Azerbaijan which have become extremely aggravated at the present time.

Unfortunately, instances of discrimination against the Armenian minority in Azerbaijan as a whole, including discrimination against the Armenian majority in Nagorno-Karabakh, have been quite numerous in the past decades. During the years of Soviet power the population of Armenia has grown by four times and that of Azerbaijan by two and a half times. However, the number of Armenians in Azerbaijanian towns and villages has hardly increased and in comparative terms fallen to 7.5 per cent of the population. Particularly noticeable has been the fall in Armenians in Kirovobad and its surrounding villages i.e. in the areas bordering Armenia. The number of Armenians in Nagorno- Karabakh has remained practically unchanged for 60 years and now constitutes about 140,000 people.

The people of Armenia were the first in the Twentieth Century to experience what has come to be called genocide.

However, the number of Azerbaijanis has grown significantly and, therefore, the proportion of the Armenian population fell from 91-94 per cent to 76 per cent in 1979. The economic and cultural links between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia have not been developed. In the towns and villages of this region it is possible to watch and to listen to television broadcasts from Baku and Moscow but not from Yerevan. A number of difficulties have been created for Armenian Christians. At this time the religious activity of the Azerbaijanis who consider themselves Shiites (and not Suni like the majority of the population of Central Asia if atheists are, of course, not taken into account) has increased and not in the last place under the influence of events in IrÆn and the active radio propaganda emanating from the territory of Iran. In Stepanokert, the capital of Nagorno-Karabakh, there have been instances of the closure of schools teaching in the Armenian language. The number of Azerbaijanis in the leading organs of the autonomous region has grown disproportionately and this process was reinforced when Geidar Aliev came to power in Baku.

Not for the first time the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh have drawn attention to their unjust treatment, but all of these appeals have been ignored for a long time both in Baku and Moscow and this has provoked lawful discontent not only in Karabakh but also in Armenia. The people of Armenia were the first in the Twentieth century to experience what has come to be called genocide. In only the years 1915-16 one and a half million of the two and a half million Armenians occupying the territory of Turkish Armenia were physically annihilated and a majority of the other Armenians fled from their native land. It is not surprising that Armenians react so painfully to all forms of national injustice. Only last year a special delegation sent a letter to the Central Committee of the CPSU in Moscow signed by 75,000 Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh, i.e. practically the whole adult Armenian population of the region. Referring to the numerous instances of national discrimination, the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh requested the transfer of the area to the Armenian SSR. This letter was rejected. At that time no member of the Politburo or Central Committee Secretariat wished to be familiar with the increasingly complex situation in the area.

After the recent events in Nagorno-Karabakh, as after those in Kazakhstan, one came across several articles and assertions in the western press to the effect that the friendship of the peoples of the USSR is no more than a "myth of Soviet propaganda". These assertions are profoundly mistaken. The Soviet Union has accumulated considerable experience in resolving national problems and from this point of view our country probably encounters fewer difficulties than other multinational states. Today more than one hundred nations and peoples, belonging, moreover, to a variety of religions and races, live in the USSR, but their peaceful existence, their equality, their co-operation in the economic and cultural spheres and their respect for one another are not a myth. The reality is the formation in the USSR of a new historical, social and international community which has come to be called the "Soviet people".

One of the most harmful myths is the claim that there is within the USSR no basis for national movements, contradictions, problems and conflicts.

But there are a number of myths which exist here in respect of the national life of the country. One of the most harmful of these myths is the claim that within the USSR there is no basis for serious national movements, national contradictions, problems and conflicts. These conflicts exist and their number has even increased over the past 20 to 30 years.

As is well known, the national question always occupied an important place in the ideology of Leninism. It was usually placed third after the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the proletarian revolution and also after the peasant question. This was natural for a country such as Russia with its multinational population, a country belonging to both Europe and Asia. All Russian revolutionary parties readily drew their supporters and even their leaders from among the "non-Russians". But the Bolsheviks with their great and well thought-out national programme were more successful in this regard than the others. Without the active support of the Letts, Estonians, Finns, Poles, Georgians, Armenians, Jews, Ukrainians, Volga and Crimean Germans, Tatars, Chechens, Ingush and even Hungaria victorious in the Civil War and founded the Soviet Union. During the 1920's almost every Congress of the Party also considered a report on the national question. From time to time meetings were held on national problems. The journal "Life of the Nationalities" was published. However, in the first part of the 1930's Stalin declared that the national question had been resolved in our country "completely and definitively", that the friendship of the peoples had been established for all time and a Soviet culture had been created "national in form and socialist in content". From that time our newspapers and journals have spoken almost exclusively of the friendship and collaboration of the peoples and nations of the Soviet Union. In our multinational country there are now no mechanisms for studying or resolving national conflicts and even the Soviet of Nationalities of the Supreme Soviet does not concern itself with national problems. On the other hand we have maintained enough powerful organisations for the struggle with "bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalism". All of this is one but not the sole cause of the exacerbation of national relations in the USSR which we are now witnessing.

Among the victims of the conflict in Transcaucasia has been Glasnost, as in the first two weeks after Chernobyl.

In the last weeks the Soviet press and television has spoken of the normalisation of the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia. The facts, however, testify to the oppo ite: the problem has not been solved, it has only been temporarily set aside and in many respects it has become even more acute as witnessed by the tragic events in the Azerbaijanian town of Sumgait where a bloody anti-Armenian pogrom was organised. An extremely tense situation has arisen in several major Azerbaijanian cities - Kirovobad, Nakhichevan and even in Baku. Not only in Armenia but also in Moscow have appeared the first refugees from Azerbaijan - individual Armenian families arriving at their relatives and friends "for a while" and avoiding the pogroms. Many Armenians living in Azerbaijan are afraid to venture out from their homes at night. All of these events are painfully felt in Erevan and throughout Armenia. Different sources quote different figures for the victims of the disorders and excesses - from 30 to 300 killed and even more wounded.

Unfortunately among the victims of the national conflict which has erupted in Transcaucasia has proved to be glasnost as was the case in the first two weeks after the Chernobyl catastrophe. According to the reports of the Soviet media and TASS it is impossible to tell the scale or even the character of the events which have occurred. There was, for example, a short report on the "disorders" in Nagorno- Karabakh but it was incomprehensible as to what was concealed behind the word "disorders". TASS reports have referred to a resolution of the CPSU Central Committee relating to the events in Nagorno-Karabakh, but the text of this resolution has not yet been published.

Nothing has been reported in the press of the biggest demonstrations in our history in Erevan, which continued for several days and of the demands being advanced by the demonstrators. Not even historical material on the Nagorno-Karabakh autonomous region has been published. In recent days we have read a number of reports of the demonstrations in Bangladesh and the Palestinian towns but not of what has being going on in Baku and Erevan. We have not even read Gorbachev's appeal to the peoples of Armenia and Azerbaijan. There has been no report in the press of the fact that four members of the highest organs of power in Moscow - Demichev, Razumovsky, Lukyanov and Dolgikh - were present in Armenia and Azerbaijan during this time and possibly continue to be there. We have received no information about the meeting between Gorbachev and Yakovlev on the one hand and representatives of the Armenian intelligentsia on the other.

Ihappened to find out purely by accident that among the group of Armenians was the well-known author Sil'va Kaputikyan and Zory Balayan, a popular commentator in Armenia. *Pravda* published the brief discussion with USSR Deputy General Procurator, A. Katusev, who had been in Nagorno-Karabakh at the end of February. This eminent procurator decisively protested against the spreading of any sorts of rumour or conjecture "which is frequently accepted uncritically". He refuted the rumour that 60 Armenians had been murdered in Karabakh. At the same time he spoke confusedly of "instances of the infringement of rights which are punishable by the criminal law". But what are these infringements of rights? Massacres, assaults, rapes? Not a word about any of this. There is no sort of clarity about the bloody events in Sumgait. The TASS report spoke of the killing of 31 people of "various nationalities". But how many were victims? It is obvious to everyone that the majority of those killed, and even more so of old people and women, were Armenians, but it is perfectly possible that, in defending their families and homes, male Armenians killed several from among the "hooligan elements". The events in Sumgait happened after the demonstrations in

ROY MEDVEDEV

Yerevan and Gorbachev's meeting with representatives of the Armenian intelligentsia. These events must have sharply changed the situation in Azerbaijan and Armenia but we know nothing about this. The position of the Armenian Church and Katalikos is also unknown to us.

At meetings of the Party *aktiv* in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh at the end of February, decisions were taken of the inexpediency of transferring Nagorno-Karabakh from Azerbaijan to Armenia as being contrary to the interests of the workers of the Armenian and Azerbaijanian Union Republics. However, no convincing and reasonable arguments have been produced on this score. The majority of the Armenian population of Karabakh or even all the Armenians of this region are in favour of union with Armenia and, without doubt, Armenia would only welcome this. Of course, the resolution of this question must observe the series of legal procedures stipulated by the Constitution of the USSR. In fact, the population of Nagorno-Karabakh has already expressed its will or at least the will of the majority. This referendum could be repeated under the supervision of some sort of special commission. The Constitution of the USSR provides for the right of the USSR Supreme Soviet to change the boundaries between Union republics and to form autonomous oblasts within any of them. Naturally, the problem of Nagorno-Karabakh must be discussed beforehand by the Supreme Soviets of Armenia and Azerbaijan. In the event of disagreement a session must be called of the USSR Supreme Soviet or Soviet of Nationalities for detailed study of the whole range of problems which have arisen. As is well known, a session of the Supreme Soviet must be convened if demanded by one of the Union republics.

The injustice of the position in which Nagorno-Karabakh finds itself is evident and the bloody events which occurred in Sumgait and could still happen in other areas of Azerbaijan only underline the naturalness and rationality for transferring Nagorno-Karabakh into the Armenian SSR. The references of the press to the difficulties of such a transfer from the point of view of supply or the economic development of the *oblast* which has been directed up till now towards Azerbaijan are unconvincing, as hundreds of more difficult economic problems are being solved now in the country.

There is another danger of a more fundamental kind which has not been expressed in public - the danger of precedent. It is well known that many Georgians consider the region of Saingalo a part of Georgia which was illegally incorporated into Azerbaijan in 1922. But at the present time in this region Georgians constitute a clear minority of the population and half of these are not Christian but Muslim. From a historical point of view Saingalo is undoubtedly a part of the former territory of Georgia and there are many monuments to Georgian culture which must be preserved as the property of all. However, the religious and national make-up of this region had changed a long time before the Revolution and therefore the resolution of this conflict is somewhat more complicated than the problem of Nagorno-Karabakh - although, of course, many of the actions of the Azerbaijanian authorities in this region have been clearly erroneous (not to put it more strongly).

It should be remembered, however, that the indigenous population of Abkhazia had several similar claims but this time toward the leadership of the Georgian SSR (and a part of this problem has been successfully resolved). But all of these national problems and contradictions will not disappear of their own accord. They must be resolved.

Do these events of the recent past in Transcaucasia or other national regions constitute a threat to Gorbachev's policies and reputation? Of course, these events are a serious test of the durability of the present policy of reform. If Moscow keeps the argument between the Armenians and Azerbaijanis in mind then it will act as an arbitrator in a difficult dispute and this will put to the test the ability of the country's present leadership to find a just and reasonable solution to a problem which has emerged from the past but which must be resolved today. An intelligent and just solution to this problem will signify progress in the cause of perestroika and not its defeat.

INDEPENDENT VOICES FROM GLASNOST AND PERESTROIKA

The following three items are translated from the bulletin *Tochka Zreniya* (Viewpoint), issues no.1 and 2/3 of which have recently been received by *Labour Focus*. It is subtitled "a regular socio-political bulletin of the social group for the furtherance of perestroika". These bulletins were published from March to August 1987.
The authors feel that perestroika has "not yet gone beyond the realm of words to the realm of deeds" and that such a bulletin is essential as a means of discussion and exchange of ideas on all questions which can assist the development of glasnost and perestroika.
The first article outlines the reasons for establishing the Group for the furtherance of perestroika and its proposals for other such organisations. The second article details some of the present problems of democratisation in the Soviet Union. The third item is a short appeal to the Supreme Soviet regarding the establishment of a memorial to the victims of repression.
The other two items in this section are from the group *Obshchina* (Commune). The first is a statement of its political principles and the second its statutes which give an interesting insight into how such groups are organising although clearly there will be differences between groups. *Labour Focus* hopes to publish further articles and material from the independent Soviet groups in future issues.
Sean Roberts

ON THE FOUNDATION OF THE SOCIAL GROUP FOR THE SUPPORT AND FURTHERANCE OF PERESTROIKA

As was mentioned at the January Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee, the serious inadequacies in the functioning of the institutions of socialist democracy and the appearance of elements of corrosion have told on the spiritual level of our society and have provoked a fall in interest in public affairs, a lack of spirituality and scepticism. It was also said that breaking the mechanism holding back the economy and society and the accelerating movement forward were possible only by means of activating the human factor to the utmost and by the democratisation of all spheres of the life of society. For the success of the process of restructuring and democratic renewal which has begun and which has many serious enemies in various sections of the administrative apparatus, mass support from below for the changes has crucial significance. In conditions where people have become used to relating in a sceptical way to mass campaigns manipulated from above and to the "organised" activity of the existing social organisations, it is extraordinarily important to give a new impulse to the development of informal, genuinely independent social activity in support of perestroika by drawing into it a significant number of those not in the Party. In this connection we have decided to come out with the initiative of founding social groups for the furtherance of the perestroika of our society on the path to democratisation.

The search for specific organisational forms of activity of such groups is something for the free creativity of the masses, here wewould just like to introduce some very general proposals into the discussion. So as to give maximum organisational flexibility to the proposed groups, it would be possible to envisage their foundation at both an industry and an area level and also to envisage the possibility of associations of people with the same views unconnected by common work or neighbourhood. In creating social groups in enterprises and institutions it is extremely important to protect them from the pressure of the authorities, so we propose, as a rule, not to include workers in leadership positions in groups which are created in sub-units subordinate to them.

The maximum free "productive output" of the work of the social groups has principal significance. In this connection we propose the foundation, as a basic form of activity of the social groups, of discussion clubs with their own press free from prior censorship. Of course, a link is needed with the present mass media which can be maintained, in particular, by inviting correspondents to meetings of the discussion clubs. However, the key to success at the beginning will be the possibility of social groups or associates of such groups publishing and distributing their own publications which can serve as an affirmation of Lenin's principles of the freedom of the press.

In Lenin's words "the freedom of the press signifies that the opinions of all citizens can be freely expressed". As is well known although not usually recalled, Lenin proposed to safeguard, in the socialist state, the widest freedom of the press within the framework of the law. To this end, he made such proposals as introducing representatives of opposition parties onto all editorial boards in proportion to their support in society, unconditional guarantees for the publication of any material in support of which had been collected a sufficient number of signatures. If the possibility of realising the first proposal disappeared with the elimination of a legal opposition then the second is completely achievable and can be used as ammunition by the publications of the social groups. Participants in the social groups must have the right to publish freely any opinions, proposals and discussion materials which conform with the stated principles and known requirements of the law on the inadmissability of propagandising violence, national and racial hatred, disclosure of state secrets (understood as information relating to defence but not as broadly as it has usually been interpreted by the bureaucracy for whom there is a "secret" at every step) etc. Breaches of these principle relating to publication must be answerable to the courts and not to Glavlit or other officials.

In Soviet conditions it seems expedient to seek permission to establish small co-operative publishing houses which can begin functioning as the rented facilities of participants in the social groups and afterwards become self-financing. Initially, it is possible to propose producing a monthly collection containing material from the regular discussions, articles which extend the boundaries of glasnost' and proposals for practical organisation. Mimeographed publications seem to be the easiest and most accessible and it is possible to begin with these before gaining permission to hire the appropriate equipment and premises.

CORRECTION

In our last issue (No.3/1987) we carried a text entitled "Preamble to the Programme of the KSI". We have been asked to point out that, while the Russian text translated by us may have had that title, it was in fact a contribution to the discussion by an individual member of the KSI and never formally adopted by the Clubs, as a "Preamble" or anything else.

Editor

VICTOR KUZIN

SOME PROBLEMS OF INTERNAL POLITICAL RESTRUCTURING: DEMOCRATISATION, GLASNOST, CRITICISM AND HISTORICAL MEMORY

Nowadays one can hardly be accused of over-exaggeration in asserting that our country is living through perhaps the most crucial and decisive moment in the whole seventy-year history of its existence since October 1917. A very close similarity can be discerned between October 1917 and the present day: the depth and acuity of the social contradictions which have now come to a head, as then, demand courage of thought and radical action in the choice of course and methods for overcoming the crisis situation.

April 1985, a definite landmark on a distant and difficult road, has become the familiar line from which the democratic movement, previously nourished exclusively by the energy, persistence and heroism of isolated individuals which very often resulted in self-sacrifice, began to assume the character of a developing process in improving the health of society. This process, while developing sluggishly and timidly, is nevertheless gradually encroaching into more and more new areas. The democratic movement is striving to underpin socialism, its science, ideology, philosophy, economics,politics and legislation with the only acceptable foundation: the extensive and free self-management of society. Only by achieving this goal will the comparison of the process which has begun to a revolution be transformed from an agitational slogan into a strictly scientific verification.

After the Twenty-Seventh Congress of the CPSU, and with each subsequent Plenum of the Central Committee, the regular ideas of the democratic movement, which is more or less spontaneous in its character, are gaining official support and are becoming part of the general programme of socialist renewal. The first and most important demand of this programme is the breaking down of the bureaucratic mechanism of political leadership of society which is foreign tothe nature of socialism, the abolition of the privileged hierarchy of departmental heads which has become isolated from the people and its replacement with a well thought out system of civic responsibility, energetic and conscious activity of the workers organising themselves and expressing and promoting their interests directly or through their own representatives elected by the free and capable will of the people.

However, up to now there have been no noticeable moves towards the realisation of these tasks. Despite clear support for the ideas of political democratisation among wide layers of public opinion and the striving of many conscious citizens to assist in their realisation through their own personal participation and initiative, such resolution has not received, in many cases, support from the top. The preconceptions of the old political thinking continue to suffice, the basis of which consists of still existing stereotypes which place an equals sign between any preliminary, unsanctioned social activity, especially if it is carried out in an organised form, and that which is harmful, anti-people and anti-state.

It is natural to expect that progressive changes in the political system will, in the first instance, run up against massive difficulties and obstacles. This is not surprising in so far as the question of power which is fundamental to the fate of perestroika is being decided: will the bureaucrat be at its helm or not. The question of power, as is well-known, is the "crux" of any revolution and, in the event of defeat, it is precisely the bureaucrat who has it to lose.

Having seventy years of experience behind us and comprehending it in its entirety, it would be unserious in discussing revolutionary changes to be limited at the same time to appeasement and compromise with the bearers of worthless principles and wrong approaches in the sphere of state power and political influence to which all the threads of leadership of society are reduced. Thus, in our opinion, restructuring of the political system must be viewed as the key link which, when pulled, draws out the whole chain. With each passing day it becomes more evident that without it our successes will be incomplete, in doubt and, most importantly, insecure.

Preparedness for such work can be seen entirely as the highest criterion of political maturity of the moving forces of perestroika. For anyone who really desires its triumphant conclusion and shares its aims there is not and cannot be an alternative to democratisation and, first and foremost, the creation of democracy in the sense of a code of norms of political behaviour respected by all members of society.

It is necessary to put into practice the declarations of resolve to have done with the grave legacy of the 30's, 50's, 60's and 70's. This should be done without any hitches, without jumping over any stages, without omissions, without hasty and premature celebrations and by mercilessly exposing the horrific deformities which have for many years disfigured the image of socialism in our country. Casting aside hypocrisy and fake bashfulness it is necessary to become immersed in the genuine, serious, all-consuming work of eliminating the factors which have engendered these deformities. The problems which have accumulated must be honestly recognised and resolved in order of their importance, beginning with those that are general and fundamental.

Continuing to be silent about "awkward" problems or declaring them non-existent by referring to some "higher interests", we, as history testifies, have deceived and will deceive as before only ourselves. Starting out from false premises in a policy for society is hopeless and, in the end, suicidal. By trying to save socialism today by such means we risk losing it definitively and irreversibly tomorrow.

On the agenda is the dual task of the spiritual and practical cleansing of our society and, in point of fact, returning in many respects to socialism anew. Only by comprehending and re-comprehending what we have experienced and what we are experiencing, by recognising the genuine historical landmarks, by differentiating between real and imaginary human values can every conscientious citizen be aroused to take full personal responsibility for, and their rightful position in, what is going on .

While mentioning the positive fact that, after April 1985, the spiritual life of society was liberated to a significant degree, it should be emphasised, at the same time, that this has become a far from universal phenomenon. Candour, glasnost and criticism have become more or less widespread in the economy and cultural life, but in practice have not touched the spheres of politics and social science. These gains of perestroika have, up to now, been unevenly spread along the verticals and horizontals of the social structure. But, the most important thing, so that this does not seem paradoxical to anyone, is that they are objectively the offspring of bureaucratic sanction, and exist to the extent that and for as long as someone sees fit. For, so far, they have not had a sound political or juridical foundation and this remains the case. It is hardly possible to continuing drawing up estimates which derive only from the subjective factor. This is not the first time that our history has come up against how variable the winds of change can be when built on such a foundation. As regards perestroika which must profoundly transform the very deepest strata of society, then to assign a crucial place to the efforts being strained by the centre is clearly hopeless.

To gamble on the dynamism, enterprise and development of creative potential, arousing within it patriotism and civil concern, and,at the same time, to continue to manipulate its consciousness by delaying, filtering and measuring the dosage while remaining completely silent about information on the many facets of its own life and the lives of other countries and peoples are incompatible approaches. These and many other, far from dialectical, contradictions continue to exist, indicating how difficult it is to part at once with the weight of delusion and prejudice which continues to pull back on our shoulders. The "new people" are not devoid of corrosive bureaucratic thinking with its instinctive lack of faith in the people, paternalistic ambitions and other "survivals".

In reality, there is still as lamentably little confidence in democracy as there is democracy itself in social life.

Thus far an illumination of the procedures of decision-making of the higher organs (CPSU CC, USSR Supreme Soviet, USSR Council of Ministers, USSR Procuracy, USSR Supreme Court, All-Union Central Council of Trades Unions etc.) which, one way or another, affect the interests of a majority of workers has not been related to an active conception of glasnost. Some have found it possible, as before, to prepare and approve, without any preliminary public discussion, laws on individual labour, on information and the press, and on the procedure for appeal against the unlawful actions of people in positions of responsibility who encroach upon the rights of the citizen. Objective social statistics, full information about foreign political events and much else is concealed from the population.

While rushing to declare the abolition of forbidden zones and addresses for criticism, they are not, in reality, hurrying at all to push the limitations aside.

The policies of the Central Committee of the CPSU, notwithstanding all their evident merits and many weaknesses are, in principle, beyond criticism. It would be unreasonable to ignore the fact that such weaknesses are possible and even inevitable with a new generation of politicians whose experience and psychology were formed in the conditions of the depersonalisation of the individual, its suppression and subordination to the all-powerful closed elite apparatus of the bureauc-

racy. Anyone not accepting its laws was expelled. These weaknesses become more apparent the further we travel along the road of breaking with the customary model of thinking and behaviour. It is so indisputable that this chronic disease cannot be treated exclusively with the medicine of self-criticism if only because no-one is the best judge of themselves.

The question is, therefore, about intellectual and psychological pressure on every cell of the socio-political structure lasting for decades and being ended only by the collective efforts of all members and groups in society.

From our point of view, there is in society today no such organised force in a position to elaborate single-handedly the strategy and tactics of socialist renewal and with the moral right to take upon itself total responsibility for its successful outcome.

In such a case, is it not justified that criticism, glasnost and public opinion exist in society solely in the form of Party criticism, glasnost and public opinion as the Party holds in fact (and in the overwhelming majority of cases, in law) a monopoly on the sources of information? Can it not be considered, therefore, that all information circulating in society with their assistance is capable of reflecting and, in reality, does reflect social truth in its socially necessary fullness? But if you start from this latter assumption then the need for restructuring as a revolutionary act could not have arisen. History confirms just the opposite: the Party monopoly repeatedly led to reality being passed off as what was subjectively desirable. It should be remembered that it was not so long ago that we could not read the truth in a single edition of *Pravda*. The functioning of information in society must, it seems to us, be conducted in accordance with the demands of deepening democratisation and broadening of social self-management. It is clear that when such a monopoly is counterposed to public opinion it is undemocratic and if it becomes united with it then its preservation is inconceivable and even harmful (for this is nothing other than a ready-made precondition for a bureaucratic clampdown). Such a continuity in approach to glasnost as exists between the old and new leadership of the CPSU, in our opinion, does not find logical expression in the context of the declared aims of perestroika.

It is thought that Soviet society must eventually gain the possibility of seeing itself as it is in the mirror of public opinion so as to recognise, in good time, problems that are arising and to mobilise resources effectively to overcome them. It is impossible to start from the interests of the workers and to forbid them this!

The cutting-off of glasnost and criticism beyond reasonable limits is the expression of a conservative bureaucratic orientation. We should recall how a halt was called to glasnost and criticism as soon as it became a conscientiously deepening investigation of the problems of social justice and there was discussion about several principled questions regarding the way of life of the privileged strata of the Party-State Nomenklatura. Thus Soviet citizens do not know what laws are being established, in what forms and at what rates this layer is compensated for its labour and how this is correlated with its end result.

In proposing serious discussions about the use of new approaches, a reassessment of values, the destruction of stereotypes, an appeal to break with dependent moods and social activity, and for creativity and independence in thought and behaviour, the present-day press is silently implying (and sometimes directly suggesting) to the readers that every success of the people, every one of its achievements and victories is possible only "under leadership" and that it is essential to it. The writers are not embarrassed even by the fact that it is only now that the present generation of Soviet people have more than enough grounds for doubting the strength of such views. Nevertheless,this point of view continues to be perceived by many as axiomatic and the very idea of exposing it to doubt with the present scope of glasnost and criticism seems heretical and almost sacrilegious.

Raising something to a cult at whatever cost and blind faith have always been foreign to atheists and, consequently, to genuine Communists. But what will allow an unbiased view to be expressed even if only on the principal points of the history of the CPSU?

The Transformation of the CPSU from 1918 into the sole ruling party had already led, by the 1920's, to the gradual emergence of the ideological and organisational prerequisites for the formation in the subsequent period of the extended system of Party-State bureaucracy and for the establishment of its total domination over society. From ïthis moment in the activity of the CPSU its relations with the masses rapidly began to evaporate. Candour, trust, bold experimentation and creative discussions which are inherent in socialist democracy at any stage of its development, respect for the will of the working majority and the dignity of the individual disappeared. Instead of broadening socialist self-management in proportion to the overcoming of antagonistic class contradictions within society, the opposite developed and was perfected - state forms of bureaucratic subordination and repression. "Leaderism" was cultivated on the survivals of patriarchal psychology. Tyranny was created behind the screen of revolutionary justice, class vigilance and calls to "strengthen legality and law and order". Instead of a flexible socialist system of social and economic relations, administrative management was implanted and flourished as a universal method. "The chastising sword of the revolution" was brought down mercilessly upon all who, one way or another, opposed the "only true" line irrespective of origin, position, service or party loyalty. This was carried out in the name of (and often with the help of) a misled nation against the best of its people. With the scope of the "preventive work" people who were not involved very often became victims to be on the safe side, so to speak. In essence, the boundaries between morality and immorality, legality and lawlessness and the state and anarchy were destroyed.

Twice, under Brezhnev (from 1964 to 1982) and still earlier under Stalin (from 1922 to 1953), this "line" gained the upper hand in the Party leadership and both times it could not be stopped other than as a consequence of the death of the "fathers of the people". It was precisely at this time that the blasphemous thesis of the "inviolable block of Communists and non-Party people" was devised which reconciled within itself, without contradiction, the silence of the people and the total control of the bureaucracy. Then, under the false mask of the "socialist state of all the people", the smug triumph of the bureaucratic system was paraded as an object of envy and an example for imitation by all of advanced mankind. Raising itself to the peak of conceit, and having placed at the very heart the greatest mystification of all time and of all peoples, the former bureaucratic leadership of the CPSU cynically imprinted the apotheosis of its political might in the 1977 Constitution, "the most democratic in the world".

How long can this acting, which is equally tragic, absurd and comic, continue on the stages of world history?

We cannot say at the moment that we comprehend everything in our own history correctly by calling things by their proper names because new understanding is preceded by new knowledge - complete, detailed and specific. We do not have at our disposal such knowledge of our own history at the moment. But without it, it is impossible to judge what is accidental in our history and what is natural, what is an "isolated incident" and what a "typical phenomenon". Two or three confessions from the highest platform cannot substitute, in the eyes of the people, for the publication of fundamental investigations into the broad spectrum of problems of our history and are especially insufficient for judging whether the currently

APPEAL TO THE SUPREME SOVIET OF THE USSR

WE, the undersigned citizens of the USSR, appeal to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR with the request that it be agreed to build a MEMORIAL, dedicated to the victims of the illegal and political terror of the Stalin period.

Today, when historical justice is being restored, the time has come to perpetuate the memory of those millions of our compatriots who perished.

The elimination of political, military, state and religious activists, millions of peasants, representatives of the intelligentsia and workers and the persecution of national minorities - can we forget about this only a few decades later?

We are deeply convinced that the preservation of the memory of the victims of repression is essential for the improvement of life in society and state.

This Memorial must become not only the expression of universal grief but an information, education and research centre which will prevent the tragic events and lawlessness of recent years from being consigned to oblivion.

We propose to set up a SOCIAL FUND for the collection of means for the erection of this Memorial.

Control over the building and work of the Memorial must be exercised by an organising SOCIAL COMMITTEE elected by participants in the movement for the creation of the Memorial.

The erection of such a Memorial, an action unprecedented in the history of our state, will express the maturity of social consciousness, mark a significant contribution towards the achievement of a peaceful world and do credit to our time.

proposed system of measures is adequate for the task of overcoming the "dark" sides of the past.

Perhaps there is not time to use the fortunate opportunity that has been granted to explain, eventually on a strictly scientific basis, what in our history is due to objective difficulties and what to unforgivable subjective errors (including speculative attempts to pass one off as the other). And these are errors! Who bears the responsibility in each specific case? What is their real cost?

The time has come to proclaim openly and before the people the objective balance-sheet of victories and defeats, naming the real heroes and villains. It is not a calamity if some of them change places, if some fade away and others, on the other hand, are resurrected from non-existence. All who speak and act in the name of the people must account for their actions.

This will be the genuine democratic socialist attitude to history which, and this is felt particularly acutely at the moment, must be the property of all the people and which cannot exist for the people if it does not teach them wisdom.

Today, as never before, it is obvious that any encroachments on the historical memory from whatever source, hiding behind whatever plausible aims and in whatever forms, serve to perpetuate the conscious and self-serving deception of the Soviet people which is condemned to the role of passive observer of the eternal wanderings of the "powers that be" in an endless cycle of trespass and "repentance".

DECLARATION OF THE HISTORICAL-POLITICAL CLUB "OBSHCHINA"

We, members of the historical-political club "Obshchina", make the following declaration:

1. The goal and the means of historical progress is the liberation of the human individual. Societies and states, unions and groups have the right to exist only if they play the role of a step along mankind's road towards spiritual and material liberation. Everything which hinders or ceases to serve this purpose is reactionary and must be overcome.

2. Abstract universal happiness does n t exist, nor does abstract universal freedom. General happiness is the sum of small, individual happinesses, general freedom is the freedom of each. The cult of the power of the state or society, the cult of the obligatory subordination of the interests of the individual to some higher interests are the remnants of the old religious teleology, of the belief in a force which, in a human society, stands above people and is independent of their will.

3. To be free means to live among free and equal people, to be free not only from exploitation but from the need to exploit, to use force against other people and to submit not only others but oneself to such force. Therefore, freedom of the individual can only be conceived as the solidarity of free people. For "the individual freedom of each person becomes a reality and possible only as a result of the collective freedom of society of which people are a part" (M. A. Bakhunin).

4. The liberation of mankind is impossible in a society where social and political equality is absent, exploitation thrives, where the right to decide the lives of thousands of people belongs to dozens of bureaucrats.

5. There is not and cannot be human liberation outside of a socialism which has set itself the goal of the liquidation of classes and the withering away of the state. This social and moral aim has been beautifully expressed by the outstanding Russian revolutionary P. L. Lavrov: "The battle cry of workers' socialism consists of two formulas: the ceasing of the exploitation of man by man and the ceasing of the control of man by man!" Therefore we, as supporters of the complete liberation of the individual and adherents of the ideals of humanism, share the course, proclaimed in 1917, for the building of a classless and state-less communist society.

We are ideological opponents of those for whom democratisation means the rejection of socialism and is analogous with bourgeois individualism.

6. But history teaches us that without democracy, self-management, and political and economic freedom for the workers, socialism becomes an empty phrase, a mere slogan concealing the total power of the bureaucracy, that self-sufficient caste of officials, divorced from the needs and aspirations of the working people.

7. Neither bourgeois democracy nor barrack communism guarantees the free development of the individual. Again M. A. Bakhunin said: "Freedom without socialism is privilege and injustice. Socialism without freedom is slavery and bestiality!"

8. Socialism is not a belief or a dogma, it is not the barracks of "universal happiness". It is a system which must guarantee the workers the greatest freedom of thought and initiative as well as self-determination. It must be more ethical and economically more comfortable than capitalism. Only then will it have the right to existence. Today our motto must be the words: not the people for socialism, but socialism for the people!

9. We understand the perestroika, taking place in our country today, as the struggle of popular socialism against bureaucratic pseudo-socialism. In accordance with our concept of perestroika, we will propagate and strive for the realisation of the following principles:

- the liquidation of bureaucratic monopoly on information and the taking of decisions;
- the development of self-management in the spheres of politics and production;
- the transfer of the social means of production to the complete control of the collectives of the self-managing enterprises;
- the democratisation of the system of planning;
- the broadening of the sphere of action for commodity-money relations as the basic mechanism for regulating the economic life of the country while maintaining the social gains of the workers;
- the reduction of society's expenditure on the maintenance of the state;
- the democratisation of the electoral system and its improvement on the basis of the principle of delegation which presupposes that all higher organs must consist of delegates coordinated by them from lower organisations with the guarantee for the latter of the right of recall and replacement of its delegates at any time; the establishment of a level of competence of the higher organs by the will of the majority of the lower organisations;
- the creation of a system of juridical and political guarantees, rights and liberties of the individual, social organisations and labour collectives;
- the granting to social and socio-political organisations and movements of a clear juridical statute corresponding to their place in the social life of the country.

10. One of the forms of popular support for perestroika has become the spontaneous movement of social and socio-political clubs active in the socio-political, ecological-cultural and other spheres. In this movement we can see one of the means of development of social self-management and its supplanting of the administrative-bureaucratic structures.

11. However, in recent times, forces have become active in society opposed to transformation or playing into the hands of the most reactionary circles of the bureaucracy. This has provoked the appearance and growth within the independent movement of groups and associations propagating racism and chauvinism, fascism and Stalinism, anti-socialist ideology and extreme methods of action. Having decided not to come out against perestroika openly, the reactionaries promote their own recipes for reform. It seems to us that the most cynical and dangerous in this regard are the Stalinists and neo-Stalinists who are attempting to put together a "broad front" around them on positions of great power chauvinism and militant nationalism. Within its ranks, supporters of "a second industrialisation" are raising their heads, those who understand that extensive methods of development of the economy have been exhausted and are striving to achieve intensification at the expense of the people by "turning the screw", sharply increasing discipline and reducing the consumption funds, with a single goal: to save their privileges at all costs and preserve the old economic mechanism.

No less dubious and dangerous seems to us to be the ideological doctrine of the "Westerners" for whom perestroika means simply copying the economic and political institutions of bourgeois democracy. They are indifferent to the fact that such a turn of events will strike, in the first place, at the least protected layers of our society, that, in this situation, the "hero of the day" will become the Russian entrepreneur - in essence, a common "Asiatic" swindler and speculator, who has "washed away" the millions stolen during the years of hardship and understands his entrepreneurial activity exclusively as the freedom to rob and speculate. Democratisation for such people is an expansion of the power of the technical intelligentsia and the "civilised" layers of the bureaucracy. Such disdain for the interests of the people and their traditional forms of self-organisation will inevitably lead to the loss of mass support for the reforms, their discrediting and failure. This is why cohesion and unity is required of the forces which support the course towards the development of socialism and democracy proclaimed at the 27th Congress of the CPSU.

12. "Obshchina" sees its basic task, in the first instance, in assisting the consolidation of social and socio-political organisations standing on positions of socialism and democracy, in propagating socialist ideology within the informal movement, in overcoming the political illiteracy of the "informals" which is one of the causes of extremism, in propagating historical and political knowledge, in elaborating and promoting its concept of perestroika, self-management and the independent movement.

See also: *The Organisational Structure of the Historical-Political Club Obshchina* on Page 29

POLAND

Continuing our documentation of the debates in the Polish opposition (see the texts by Jadwiga Staniszkis and Leszek Nowak in the last two issues of *Labour Focus*), we print below an important essay by Jacek Kuron which was at the centre of a debate on the perspectives of Solidarnosc at a meeting of what was then the Solidarity Provisional Council in September 1987. Our thanks to the *Information Centre for Polish Affairs* for their kind permission to reprint this material which was first translated and published in their *Uncensored Poland News Bulletin* No. 22, 13 November 1987.

JACEK KURON

LANDSCAPE AFTER THE BATTLE

Many Solidarity people and people in other independent movements have a growing feeling of having reached a deadlock. Maybe even the word "deadlock" is not strong enough. It described well the situation in the years 1982-83 when this strong was not capable of achieving successes. Today we still have not successes, and in addition even the greatest optimists admit that the influence of Solidarity activists on the "silent majority" has been drastically reduced.

We do not achieve successes, even though after the release of political prisoners, it became clear that the authorities have regained their sensitivity to public pressure. Anyway, in many cases the pressures have proved to be effective. For instance, the Freedom and Peace movement achieved a few victories, the joint action of self-governments blocking the package of anti-worker laws was a success. Why is this list so short?

Certainly it would not be possible today to organise effective pressure to achieve pay increases on a national scale. In the conditions of economic ruin, it is impossible to have a joint fight for increases in salaries for all the workers. This would only lead to price increases, while stopping price increases would result in market shortages.

Solidarity, the greatest independent force in Polish society, has come to its present organisational structure in the first months of the so-called war (martial law). Today, it finds it difficult to adjust to a completely new situation. This maladjustment is the main reason for the present crisis within the movement. The movement's structures are at present its main stumbling block.

A counter-revolution - and what started on 13 December 1981 could be described as such - never returns the social situation to the time before the revolution. It is always a more or less successful attempt to adopt all that can be adopted from a revolution; renewal ofthe system without changing its essence. Jaruzelski is therefore right when he says that there is no return to the situation from before August 1980, or before December 1981.

I am not about to analyse the intentions of the General and his team here. I only draw my conclusions on the basis of what they are doing. Without doubt they possess incomparably better skills at social manipulation than all their predecessors. After 13 December (1981) they managed to persuade the people that they would not bow under any pressure even if they had to drown the whole country in blood. At the same time they obviously understand that if they want to stay in power, they cannot push the Poles into a corner; they have been making certain concessions to society all along the way. But they made sure that it always looked as if these concessions were some special favour from the squire, and not a result of the anger of the people.

Solidarity played a vital role in shaping the situation in the country after August and - what is at least of equal importance - it did not allow itself to be liquidated after the 13th. We broke their monopoly on information. We achieved and successfully defended institutional pluralism in Poland which bore fruit in the official-state sphere, the sanitised authorities.

JACEK KURON

The truth which had been shouted out during those sixteen months has reached nearly the whole of society. In the underground we have maintained freedom of press and publication on an unprecedented scale. The authorities were therefore faced with a choice: either to carry on with their pointless propaganda or to agree to real information in the mass media. They chose the latter. And even though there are still many lies, misrepresentations and gaps in information, in the image presented of social and economic reality in the widest sense, truth definitely prevails. Every literate citizen can on the basis of the information presented come to his/her own judgement. Maybe they were hoping to return to the old practices once they quashed independent information. But they did not quash it. Instead, they put in action a new mechanism with new journalists and editors and this cannot now be reversed without upheavals.

During the post-August freedom, the myth of the nations's moral and political unity was dispersed. Clearly, as never before, the diverse interests of various social groups came to light. The belief that various interests must have their institutional expression, their representation, became prevalent. The authorities accepted this principle. When after December they started appointing various consultative bodies, new unions, councils and committees, it all looked like a puppet theatre. However, the experience of Solidarity and the existence of independent-competition created an atmosphere of social pressure. In this atmosphere, the declared readiness to represent various interests could not remain in the realms of fiction - the official institutions became to a degree genuine.

The government-sponsored new unions, whatever one's opinions of them, bear a closer resemblance to Solidarity than to the old unions. The Consumers' Federation and the ecological clubs really attempt to defend the consumers' interests and to protect the

environment. Such social initiatives as the economic associations which are currently applying for (official) registration, coming from the rank and file, give hope for the future.

The opinion can still be heard that all the recent changes in the system are just words without much substance. This is a major misunderstanding of the mechanisms on which the communists' rule is based. The most important of those mechanisms is atomisation, the breaking of social ties. This is possible only when the official view of the world prevails: a homogeneous image produced by the Party authorities, divorced from reality. The substance of this image is the official language. When it is the only way of communicating on public matters, it renders impossible any communication between people, and all independent activity.

In Poland, the official vision of the world has practically ceased to exist. All those who want to can find out about public matters and discuss them in a common language reflecting reality. What is more, it is possible to organise for independent action: officially, for action concerning smaller local matters, unofficially and at no great risk - for all others.

There is quite a popular belief that taking up smaller matters is pointless because the system is the source of all evil and must be changed as a whole. It is true that the system which is falling apart before our very eyes, derives its character from its totality. It means, however, that every change affects this totality.

One of the consequences of the destruction of the official image of reality is the fact that sociological studies today give quite a decent knowledge about Polish society, quite a clear picture emerges from them.

Between a dozen and twenty percent of adult inhabitants of this country unequivocally support the Polish authorities and by the same token, the existing order. About twenty percent can be considered as definite opponents of the system; they are mostly Solidarity supporters, even though not necessarily supporters of the underground.The former and the latter have no hesitation in proclaiming their views and it is they who are heard on various occasions.

The rest, in their majority, value peace and quiet, security, and order. Possibly the memory of the great fear from a few years ago plays its part here, also weariness from the constant effort of making ends meet. The longing for peace and security creates a sort of acceptance of the authorities - whatever they are, they are preferable to the dangers carried by opposition. Hence the disinclination to undertake any activities which could result in public disorder, or which are just forbidden. Similarly, the majority of people are more afraid of emery shelves in the shops than of price increases, and even appreciate an improvement in the supply of goods on the market more than lower prices and longer queues in the shops.

At least 20 percent of Poles live in poverty today and devote all their energy to saving their families from hunger. Public matters are of no concern to them at all. Those, most numerous, who managed not to fall below the minimum standard of living are not interested in politics either; keeping up the standard of living which they have achieved, demands continuous effort from them.

Having said all this, the great majority in the population has no trust in the authorities at all; it does not believe in their good intentions, nor in their competence to run the economy efficiently. The latter refers even to the part of people who identify with the ruling classes. Not many are inclined to associate an improvement in their personal circumstances with initiatives which are allowed or encouraged by the authorities. At the same time there is very little faith among people in the effectiveness of any opposition activities. The reaction to these activities is fear rather than hope and this is true for any programmes for Polish independence as well as any moves for greater democracy.

The authorities have been moderately successful in achieving their aim of pacifying the public, then. They realise, however, that fear and apathy cannot be a basis for government. This can be achieved only through a radical improvement in living conditions, but the general disenchantment makes it impossible to engage in the work of reform and reconstruction. On the other hand, the authorities dare not adopt any bolder solutions for fear of public hostility.

The reform demands a radical cutback in the *nomenklatura*, but it is the authorities' only social base. The rulers in Poland have bonds of solidarity and privilege, but they are also the organisers of social and political life. There is a clear conflict between thosetwo roles - which divides the heart and mind of every apparatchik and is externalised as divisions within the Party/state machine. Some, who identify with the role of the *nomenklatura*, want to hold on to power by pacification of society, of which they are afraid. Others, who identify more with the role of organiser, want to consolidate their rule through reforms, reconstruction and improvements in the standard of living. They need society as an ally, hence their sensitivity to social pressure created by localised protests and actions, particularly in the economy. The planned limits of social independence were to be just on such a scale. One of the characteristics of the dynamics of social movements, however, is that no-one can set its limits in advance.

The most spectacular example of a reformist attitude in the face of a threat to the communists' rule is, of course, Gorbachev. Similarly, as in Poland, he needs considerable public support to reform the system and he tries to activate it. Even in the unlikely case of him being brought down, this would not solve the problems which he attempted to tackle, on the contrary, it would aggravate them. And because these are burning questions for the Soviet Union, successors would soon emerge. Also, social forces once activated are like a genie let out of a bottle; they are not easily controlled.

The process started by Gorbachev creates a favourable climate for the reformists among the Polish authorities, it increases their influence. Also, the conflicts among the Soviet elite add fuel to the battle within the Polish Party-state machine, because each group there has got its people here. The more bitter this fight, the more sensitive must the parties become to social pressure. In addition, the Soviets even now have stopped to be the bogey which used to be invoked by the Polish Communist Party to scare the reformists, and the reformists in their turn - Polish society.

This situation has to an enormous extent been shaped by Solidarity which itself has not adapted to it neither practically nor psychologically.

In a situation when the official press takes up real problems from our life and writes the truth about them, even the best of the underground publications cannot compare with it. Similarly, when the interests of our various groups and milieux begin to be represented by officially recognised institutions, no underground structure can compete with it.

This definitely does not mean that the underground publications or the not legalised structures have lost their *raison d'etre*. After all, they still constitute the basis for a pluralistic society. To adapt to the new situation, however, they should undergo a basicrestructuring, but this is being blocked by the collective attitude of Solidarity activists which has been shaped in the underground.

All the Solidarity structures active at present have emerged in the underground after 13 December 1981, i.e. at the start of the war (martial law). The use of words alone - war, underground - defines the attitude of the people active in the movement.

And after all, these were not empty words then, if just for the simple reason that each activist faced a long prison sentence in case of arrest. It seemed certain that if we did not win, we would have to serve these prison sentences. In those conditions, the current thinking was in these terms: us or them, we shall win or we shall rot in jail, all or nothing. The Solidarity leadership talked sometimes about an understanding with the ruling communists, but no-one believed in such an understanding, and to tell the truth, nobody wanted it much. Such effort, risk-taking, fear and courage deserved some recompense which could only be a clear

victory.

While these attitudes on the one hand, and fear, weariness and mistrust on the other, separate us from the major part of society, the conviction of their own superiority grew among the people of the underground, together with a feeling of disappointment and resentment and even in some cases of contempt. In this situation it was virtually impossible to notice the complex character of the counter-revolution and the partial success achieved by the movement. If we had not achieved everything, it meant that nothing had changed.

Nothing must be changed - shouted nearly all the people from the underground in unison - when Walesa, with a group of leading Solidarity activists appointed a leadership which was to work in the open, in an attempt to adapt quickly Solidarity's structures to the new situation. A major conflict has divided Solidarity and revealed other conflicts which had remained concealed until then. They absorbed nearly all the movement's energy just at a time when it should have been concentrated on the difficult task of restructuring.

Organisational structures are by their nature conservative. This is particularly true of clandestine structures as public opinion has no control over them and this makes them not very sensitive to public pressure. This conservatism has caused some Solidarity leaders to join those in independent society who proclaim themselves in favour of a definite solution - action aimed exclusively at regaining independence. This has weakened the orientation aiming at obtaining reforms through public pressure. And it was this orientation from which Solidarity emerged. And this orientation is unquestionably most important to the functioning of public life - without it the radically independent trend isisolated and realistic-conciliatory movements fade or, even worse, change into collaboration.

As public life abhors a vacuum, the chances for independent, reformist activity have been taken up outside Solidarity and as if against it - in groups who define themselves as being on the right. I have in mind here the new liberals and new nationalists. The former call for a development of private enterprise which should gradually and quietly change Poland's economic system. The latter want an agreement with Russia over the heads of the ruling communists and our neighbours in the east, the nations who are part of the Soviet Union today. The common characteristic of those two trends is that they underestimate social forces, which alone decide Poland's policies. Naturally, private enterprise should be supported, but in the struggle for economic reform, it is only one of many elements, an important one, but not the most important: left alone, without radical market reform, private enterprise will not survive.

This is no place for polemics with new national concepts which to me, personally, are totally alien. I just want to stress that, paradoxically, they are categorised by thinking in terms of state policy. (To come to terms with the Soviet Union means to conduct state policy). One can imagine, of course, that in the future such a policy will be possible and useful. But the future as well as the present are shaped in action by social movements - and these can develop only in a programme of reforms.

Solidarity and the entire independent society will probably overcome the present crisis of non-adaptation mainly by creating new structures based on new forms of activity. The more so, that the youngest Solidarity members are now in their thirties, and the majority in their forties. And the dynamics of all social movements is determined by young people. It is no coincidence that since last autumn the movement we have heard most about was Freedom and Peace. It is no coincidence that for some time now various youngsters occasionally ridicule the Solidarity "war veterans".

To keep pace with reality, we must work out in a great discussion an appraisal of the situation of our country and of the Soviet bloc, of our society, our movement and the government. We do not have to agree, but our points of view must correspond to reality and to each other. We must also by trial and error seek new forms of action so at least in the beginning very many initiatives are needed and in all possible fields. It is worth noting that in many workplaces informal Solidarity milieux have formed independently of those existing already. In the editorial offices of *The Worker* in Warsaw a list has been compiled of various independent actions by the workers, usually on the initiative of those very milieux.

In discussion and in practice we must find the answer to the question of how to take advantage of the opportunity for partial, official, yet independent action.

Obviously, not all problems can be taken up in such actions. Political thought, i.e. reflections on the future order of the Polish Republic and ways leading to it, cannot be developed through such actions. It is not possible to work in the official sphere on the shaping of relations between Poles, Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Byelorussians and people of other nations in Eastern Europe. How vital, therefore, are unofficial political clubs, associations, clandestine publishers.

The question remains how various Solidar-

ity structures are to change to adapt to new tasks. In answering it, it should be remembered that if the tendencies presented here remain, the clandestine sphere will be elitist in character and so will be the scope of its influence.

It is the official and unofficial spheres which are now of the greatest significance - all kinds of cooperatives, partnerships, self-governments, particularly local ones, associations, independent but officially recognised publishers. Here the movement has got the opportunity to regain its popular character. People truly devoted to Solidarity, but fearful of illegality and all kinds of unrest, can join the official activities which have our support. What is equally important, in this way the extent to which society makes decisions concerning itself, is radically increased - it can in reality start building from the foundations a democratic order. I believe that Solidarity structures should service this kind of activity. To initiate various actions, to organise professional help, to provide publishing facilities, to organise all sorts of actions putting pressure on the authorities. In the workplaces all possible official means, starting with meetings and ending with the new unions, should be taken advantage of.

As I have already said, in the official sphere only local and partial activities are possible. This is why no headquarters or national or even regional leaderships have the capacity to work out a comprehensive programme for such activities. It must evolve in various milieux of the Solidarity movement.

Barring some radical changes, we are facing a long process of teaching society subjectivity - building institutions independent from the state, particularly in the economy. Unfortunately, this will be accompanied by growing wage differentiations and deeper social divisions.

In the next few years, there is bound to be a clash between some increasingly independent spheres of the economy and the so-called basic branches in industry where the *nomenklatura* rules. It will mean a bitter conflict between the reformist group in the party- state machine which has some popular support and the party hardliners (it cannot be ruled out that the latter will have the support of part of the workforce in large enterprises threatened by the reform). If there is not a sudden departure in the Soviet Union from Gorbachev's present policies this will probably be a time of a considerable acceleration of democratic changes.

It is impossible to predict whether the process of disintegration of the totalitarian system and the building of a democratic order will be effected by peaceful evolution. This will most probably be determined by the situation in the Soviet Union. Let me express the conviction, however, that it is in the interests of the Poles and all the other nations in the Soviet bloc that these changes should be accomplished by way of evolution.

Many Solidarity activists, and it is often those in the workplaces, expect in the not too distant future violent demonstrations by the workers. The policies announced by the authorities which will consist for a long time yet of increasing prices and blocking wage rises, seem to point that way. On the other hand, the situation described above is not conducive to violent demonstrations: the desire for peace and the reluctance to take risks, and also the opportunities to make money by the more enterprising individuals. Also, it is quite widely understood that possible pay rises in the entire economy will only compound the difficulties in market supply. Finally, there is the fact that the growing pauperisation is not felt so much by the workers in large factories where the trouble could possibly start. It is workers in small enterprises, large families, pensioners, who first become poorer and they do not constitute a force to cause a social explosion.

The mechanism of such an explosion is pure alchemy, it is impossible to predict it and therefore to rule it out completely. In no circumstances, however, should a repetition of August 1980 be expected. Any possible social unrest will not significantly change the situation, unless it comes at a moment when the conflict in the state apparatus between the supporters of the reform and its opponents comes to a head, or Gorbachev's policies come suddenly to an end in the Soviet Union. As I have already said, I believe this last possibility to be unlikely and short-term.

No matter what happens, it has to be remembered that readiness does not mean waiting. It means action. The more dynamic we are today in acting officially, the better our chances will be to bide our time during any difficult situation and to seize any possible opportunity.

SOLIDARITY'S PROVISIONAL COUNCIL DISCUSSES "LANDSCAPE AFTER THE BATTLE"

Kuron's article became a topic of a discussion at a September meeting of Solidarity's Provisional Council (since dissolved and, together with the TKK replaced by Solidarity's National Executive Commission). What follows is a summary of this discussion, after *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, No. 220, 16 September 1987.

Jozef Pinior: I think that youth in factories is interested in normal trade union activities. Only, so far they had no opportunities to embark on this way as the activities have stayed within the domain of the Solidarity generation. In Wroclaw new founding committees of Solidarity are being formed and as it turns out they are made of young people, who at first used to take part in various street demonstrations, who were active in youth movements such as Freedom and Peace, for example. And now they begin to see the advantages of purely unionist activities, in their factories.

Henryk Wujec: I don't agree with Jacek when he says that young people do not support Solidarity activities. Critical opinions voiced by them are proof of their active interest. If the students' press in Wroclaw criticises some of the RKS's [Regional Commission of Solidarity] decisions it is a very good sign, there is nothing wrong with it, our own press should do the same. The Solidarity movement in its broadest sense encompasses such movements as Freedom and peace or Fighting Youth Federation. They are trying to approach us, and if they can find nobody willing to talk to them, it is our fault, not theirs.

A.B.: It's quite a normal phenomenon that young people should search for their own forms of expressing their views by taking off from the ideals they believe to be closest to their own. After all, you cannot expect them to take off from ZMS [Socialist Youth Association - official youth organisation affiliated to the Party]. What kind of activities can they adopt in the present circumstances? There are two possibilities: either publishing and distribution, launching a new paper or activities like those taken up by Freedom and Peace. I am afraid we can't think of any other as long as there are no official or semi-official forms.

What worries me however, is a tendency to analyse the term "Solidarity". A Freedom and Peace activist, for example, said in a discussion broadcast by the BBC that Solidarity is also a "Freedom and Peace"

federation of Independent Poland], or "Res Publica". I think this is an exaggerated view. Kuron's article lacks a clear identification of Solidarity as such. If we want to make Solidarity look more attractive to the young we ought to make its stand more clear. By its stand I mean both its stand vis-a-vis the authorities and other opposition circles. We should alsostress more that Solidarity is the centre, and vital to this.

Bogdan Lis: The crisis does not stem from the fact that there are no young people in Solidarity. There are a lot of them. However, they are not members of the leadership - both on local, factory and regional level and the national. I think that we should seriously consider restructuring. Perhaps our thinking is somehow biased. Our attitudes have been formed by our activities before August [1980], during August and after the imposition of martial law - by our underground activity. Sometimes when people approach me with ideas I discard them simply because those people don't have such a long experience. But they can only gain this experience as we have done - through activity. &I think that the crisis stems from lack of successful results. This leads to a negative attitude to everything that is being done, to a feeling that Solidarity on the shop-floor is passing away. The new wave of emigration is a symptom of the crisis.

Wladyslaw Frasyniuk: Bogdan speaks of a lack of successful results and I think that if we look at Solidarity in its broadest sense - that is, a movement encompassing all - then success becomes identified with independence.

There will be no youth in Solidarity until we ourselves start to appoint new, young people in our local organisations. The young have been discouraged by, among other things, the fact that from the very beginning they have had no responsibility for individual decisions, individual action, or even words in Solidarity. Apart from that they have not been given opportunities for promotion, because they have been considered to be "unreasonable", "inexperienced", or because of their own interests, for the sake of "their own safety".

The way has been blocked for them. Is this regrettable? No, I think it's fortunate. Because as it turned out youth proved capable of organising themselves very well, independently. They were the first to undertake open activities. In Wroclaw they participate in all actions called for by Solidarity. Fifteen or sixteen year olds form their own organisations, launch their own periodicals, coordinate their activities on a national level. They have already been through the experience of being detained or investigated. When I started I was 26. Now, imagine what stage they'll be at when they are my age - 38. It is up to us whether we treat them as partners deserving of autonomous promotion. They also want to sign appeals and statements and to strengthen their identity. And after all, at present Solidarity has no other option than to undertake open initiatives.

All the advisory bodies have disintegrated and now Solidarity ought to reconstruct them, create a strong intellectual background in the open. Many shop-floor activists turn to readingreports from the meetings of the "Consultative Council" [official] because we ourselves remain silent. It is essential that the Provisional Council of Soli create a platform for an open political discussion.

Whereas on the shop-floor Solidarity should remain as a typical trade union and for those activities young people must be recruited.

Bogdan Borusewicz: I wholly agree with Kuron's analysis. The idea of open activities is not new. Workers' councils were most promising in this respect but somehow they have not been very effective. Of course we can carry on counting on them but there is a danger. In every factory the number of activists is limited and once they enter self-management bodies they have to take part in negotiations and want to negotiate - they join another category of activists. As long as Solidarity is illegal - according to Jaruzelski's law - undertaking legal activities is bound to drive people out of Solidarity. I am not sure whether this is to our advantage. It's true that shop-floor organisations tend to take a narrow black-and-white view but I still wouldn't like to lose what I've got.

A.B.: Bogdan Lis spoke about the feeling of no success. But August [1980], which brought probably the greatest success in the last 200 years' history of social movements is such a short time - is deeply rooted in the nature of Solidarity. The two weeks in August transformed social consciousness, culture, social energies and public institutions to the extent which would normally require twenty years. And now no achievements lesser than the great victory of 1980 can be seen as success. This is something we have to live with.

I agree with Kuron in that the present, provisional order cannot prevail; either we move forward or there will be a sudden regression. There are plenty of possibilities. For example, Jaruzelski may now ant to follow Gorbachev's perestroika - but in the case of Poland openness which would be good for Bulgaria is not enough. In Poland there can be no visible openness below the level of Solidarity.

I also agree that it is pure speculation whether there will be an open social conflict or not. I agree that it is very likely that in case of such conflict the authorities would be inclined to manipulate rather than use force. This is one of the changes that occurred in the last year. Theoretically this may be see as an argument for pushing fast ahead. But personally, I am very much afraid that for the Soviet leadership it might then become a signal to withhold the reform. Poland awakens their fear both for historical reasons and because we have an organised opposition. And in this respect we can talk of a certain success of the last year. In spite of all negative phenomena mentioned before, wehave not lost all chances. It is possible to go forward from our present positions, forward to some kind of participation in the process of changing reality.

We should be open to changes but there should also be a certain point, certain principle, the departure from which would amount to betrayal. And indeed this is Walesa's formula from 1982: anything can be subject for negotiations except for our demand to legalise the union. Members and supporters of Solidarity will have to enter various official structures sooner or later and therefore it is not enough to speak of a mere following of the ideals of Solidarity. This does not mean anything now. Some official leader from the OPZZ [new unions] can come out and declare that he is representing the ideals of Solidarity. It has already been announced that the unions carry "the heritage of August". It is not even enough to speak of the opposition if Jaruzelski himself states at the OPZZ meeting that we are all the opposition. We have to speak of a clearly defined Solidarity, its structure both central and regional being a concrete point of reference. Solidarity has to come up with a broad formula of how to break into the official sphere. From this point of view we have the same problem as the authorities: they will give us certain freedom in order to bring about our destruction. Urban has said that the way is open to everybody who abandons political surrealism. Solidarity is what he means. The same intentions stood behind the decision to allow *Res Publica* to be published officially. I'd like "the republicans" to be our fifth column in the domain of the authorities, but they have to bear in mind that the authorities on their part would like to have them as their fifth column in our midst.

We have to repeat that the situation has changed even if by saying so we risk some conflicts with our activists who believe that the situation can change only when the union is legalised. We must get this point through. Also, there can be no discussion about the future without taking into consideration the developments in the Soviet Union. Many dogmas of Soviet policy are now questioned. A classic example here may be the Afghan problem. Even Najib, the Soviet protegee, mentions the legalisation of some underground groups or even a coalition government. It might happen as well that the formula mentioned by the Soviets in the Afghan context may become a starting point for political solutions in our country.

Janusz Palubicki: Let me come back to the problem of youth. A year and a half ago the TRZ [clandestine Factory Commission of Solidarity] in the Wielopolska Region issued a resolution on admitting new members who were too young to join Solidarity during its illegal existence. The move proved effective, although only partially. The problem cannot be solved on a regional level, we need

solutions on a national level.

The structures that have been preserved on the shop-floor arenot those which had been most effective but those which managed to hide well. Young people see that the trade unionist roots are becoming more and more superficial. Even if they manage to enter the representation they do not see promotional prospects - the union structures are based on anonymity. That is why it would be sensible to act publicly. Only I am not sure if the formula adopted by, say, the RKW [Regional Executive Committee] in Warsaw can be applied on the shop-floor. There is a danger that it might lead to conflicts with the present structures and so, to their weakening.

Henryk Wujec: The idea of admitting new members has emerged at the Ursus Works, too. The Organisational Committee of Solidarity included ten people, and the workers from individual departments signed a statement saying that they consider those people to be their representatives. Thus in a sense they joined the union. The problem is that this is still not the programme for action.

Zbigniew Bujak: It is extremely difficult to find people willing to undertake some initiatives in factories. People would like to follow the example of Walesa and Bujak. They think they would become famous immediately. And instead there is this long, slow work to be done.

Henryk Wujec: In his article Kuron speaks of activities on a small scale. But we should also work out a general consistent programme for political reforms - a programme even surpassing present possibilities. One obvious point of such a programme is the question of trade union pluralism. We ought to prepare a proposal concerning the bill on associations. Similarly we should work out proposals for changes in electoral law for the elections to local authorities. I believe it is possible to press effectively for democratic elections to local government. If we do not do it now, we'll have to wait until the next election. Of course, democratisation of the centre is also an important issue.

I don't know whether this could be pursued through a social economic council or a second chamber in the Sejm [parliament]. We have to work out a stand which would gradually win popular support and which would become accepted by the whole of society.

Apart from all of this, we have to respond to the current circumstances, and first of all, to price rises. Because the rises had been planned about the 14% level, the authorities introduced a 12% limit on wage increases. Above this limit tax is five times higher. This does not particularly worry big factories and enterprises because management can grant a higher wage increase and argue that it was necessary in order to keep staff at present levels, and they can get tax reliefs. Recently the authorities even decreed that in certain branches of industry tax reliefs are to be granted automatically and not individually as before. The 12% limit hits the weakest and lowest paid groupsespecially that this year price rises reach 20-25% on average. &The programme of Solidarity should include a demand for withdrawal of this absurd 12% limit. It should also include a demand for a rise in minimum wages as well as the minimum pension and family allowance. The problem of compensation for the price rises will become even more pressing next year as there will be substantial rises envisaged for the second stage of the implementation of the reform. We also have to address the problem of the referendum announced by General Jaruzelski; we have to decide whether we want to participate in it and what we think it should include. Soon another matter is going to arise - namely that of the changes to the Labour Code. But it is not enough to respond to the moves made by the authorities. We must also come up with our own proposals. The Labour Code in its present version needs changes in line with the conventions of the International Labour Organisation. The changes should be based on a report on the state of labour law and its observance. It is necessary to compile such a report. The system of social welfare poses a similar problem. The present system was created in the 1950s and does not correspond to the current situation at all. All this requires a lot of work - we have to engage various experts.

Finally, we should support Solidarity founding committees, help them in their search for practical solutions. It is an initiative which proved attractive in strong enterprises. There are already several such committees in some factories around Poland.

Jozef Pinior: And others follow suit. People hear about those committees and organise them at their own factories.

Jacek Kuron: We all speak of open activities - they are undoubtedly a key issue. And here comes a problem which wasperhaps most evident in what has been said by Bogdan Borusewicz. It is possible to carry on open activity with a distinct mark of "Solidarity". But the essential front constitutes pressure on the authorities - and this can be best exerted without this "Solidarity" mark. And of course such solutions pose danger to our identity. One is not to go beyond underground activity - but then we are bound to pass away. The other is to initiate and support activities within the official sphere and this way mark our presence.

The next key identity problem is what to expose in our postulates: the demand for the legalisation of Solidarity or that for trade union pluralism. Our postulates should be realistic - the demand for legalisation of Solidarity is not. However, the road from trade union pluralism to the reinstatement of Solidarity is not so long.

The sensational derailment of the Jaruzelski government's plans in last November's referendum signalled a further deepening of the long drawn out Polish crisis. Is Poland drifting towards another social and political explosion?

DAVID HOLLAND

POLAND AFTER THE REFERENDUM

The voters were asked if they were in favour of two propositions. The first asked whether the voter was in favour of "full realisation of the radical plan for overhauling the economy presented to the Sejm, aimed at significant improvements in living standards, in the knowledge that this will require a difficult two to three year period of transition." The second asked if the voter favoured "the Polish model of deep democratisation of political life, aimed at strengthening self management, widening civic rights and increasing civic participation in the government of the country."

To these questions 11.6 million people (66 % of the poll) voted yes to the first proposition and 4.8 million (27.7 %) voted no. To the second question 12.1 million (69% of the poll) voted yes and 4.3 million (24.6%), no.[1]

In any normal plebiscitary dictatorship, the government would have tucked a satisfying victory under its belt and proceeded with its austerity programme. But the Polish electoral law specified that more than 50% of those registered to vote had to vote "yes" for the propositions to be endorsed. What is more the ballot paper required voters to cross out "no" if they meant "yes" and "yes" if they meant "no": rather confusing!

This sort of rigid, formal requirement may be alright for the traditional East European election, of the Albanian variety, in which everything is rigged anyway, but it is risky in less controlled conditions, such as those currently prevailing in Poland - as events showed. The government failed to get its 50% plus and was left to put a brave face on it, claiming that this showed how democratic the "Polish model" was.

Sullen apathy

This was not very convincing, in a system in which no legal opposition is allowed to function (even though an illegal one is partly tolerated). The opposition was able to claim victory, even though its handling of the referendum issue had been clumsy and divided.

The Solidarity National Executive commented: "the number of people who either ignored the referendum altogether or voted no, reflects the gradual awakening of society and its determination to guard its social and political interests".[2]

This was an assessment as unrealistically optimistic in its own way as Jaruzelski and Urban's. What the result did show was that the regime had been lulled into a false sense of security by its successful orchestration of elections for the People's Councils and the Sejm, despite boycott calls from the opposition. It revealed a sullen apathy and a deep skepticism about the government's fine words on democratisation and raising living standards. For most Poles in 1988, economic reform means price increases and further immiseration and talk about political reform is a sour joke.

This mood does not augur well for the future, from any point of view. Its objective basis is all too clear. The stagnant standard of living and the absence of any prospect that the Polish economy is likely to recover, is driving more and more Poles to take the traditional route of emigration. 15,000 Poles settled in West Germany alone in 1987. According to a recent survey, 80% of Polish students are actively considering emigration[3].

The official paper *Slowo Powszechne*, recently quoted the housing waiting list in Warsaw as 56 years - unless you have the right connections of course.

Those who think the UK health service is experiencing problems, should take a look at the chaos, collapse and miserable wages in the Polish socialised medical service.[4]

Meanwhile, the external debt has risen to 37 billion dollars and the 1988 plan, modified after the defeat in the referendum, still proposes price increases of 40% for food and 50-100% for heating and rents. Inflation is running at 26-27% annually.

Credibility gap

A regime which promised material progress in exchange for the constraints imposed upon national independence contained in client status to the Soviet Union, in fact produced a staggering economic crisis, resulting from gross and persistent economic mismanagement. Against this background, the programme of economic reform that has been touted by the government for the last seven years, arouses ambivalent responses. There is a deep credibility gap: a sullen disinterest in the interminable official prattle about economic reform. Officially, the "implementation of the second stage" of the reform is now under-way, with a fair wind from Moscow to help it along. However ambiguous signals continue to be given. There is a continuing vagueness on key issues. "Consideration" is to be given to the liquidation of bankrupt and uneconomic enterprises. Subsidies are to be "limited." Such vagueness, at this late stage, continues to raise doubts about the reality of the long promised de-centralising economic reform.

On the other hand, the number of "enterprises of special national importance, where the workers' council is deprived of a role in hiring and firing the Director, is to be reduced from 11,000 to about 400. There is to be some expansion of enterprise self-financing. Legal compulsion is being relinquished in some areas, but often only when economic compulsion can effectively take its place. Sixteen ministries are to be dissolved and replaced with eight new ones with a wider brief.

Contrariwise, the marketisation tendency is impugned by a distinct tendency to lend official support to the establishment of super syndicates: associations grouping thousands of enterprises. i.e. all those in coal mining and power production and associated activities. 40% of the supervisory boards of these associations are to be drawn from the workers' councils of component enterprises. Most of the others will be appointed by the appropriate Ministry. The principles of enterprise autonomy and workers' self management, central to the original reform conception, will therefore be further eroded.

Private sector

Perhaps most attention has been attracted to some significant concessions to the private sector. The maximum ceiling of the number of workers private enterprises may employ has been raised and such firms are to be permitted to buy the assets of liquidating firms. Some guarantees are also offered that the private sector will be assured supplies of raw material inputs. It remains to be seen whether the kind of secure operating conditions that will actually tempt private enterprises to invest can actually be made available. The private sector is already far from negligible. Apart from agriculture, which is predominantly in private hands,

official figures indicate that about a million workers are in about 300,000 private workshops.

It seems that the inability to "grasp the nettle" of qualitative economic reform continues. This was dramatised by the failure of the referendum. The habits and exigencies of an established bureaucratic economic system are part of the explanation. The political risks of an explosive response from the population are another. The measures of "political democratisation", which envisage the possibility of candidates with differing views standing for the local elections (but not Solidarity or real opposition candidates), are really pretty small beer. The warnings of the leadership of the official (OPZZ) trade unions and the Socio-Economic Committee of the Sejm point to the dangers of attempting new austerity measures, however necessary, in the face of a hostile population.

Opposition

The leadership of the opposition, insofar as this fragmented and divided movement can still be said to have a leadership, is inclined to pragmatism and is intellectually committed to marketising solutions. It is therefore very reluctant to actually oppose reform, even when it is recognised it will have an unpleasant effect on living standards. Hence its uncertainty on the referendum : it did not call for a "no" vote, or abstention, but simply recommended ignoring it as an irrelevance. Walesa demonstratively went fishing. Prominent figures in the Solidarity leadership rather insist that the reform can only be implemented if it is lent credibility by legalising the opposition and drawing it into co-operation.

In contradistinction to this tendency and in concert with a îgrowing political diversification in the opposition, is a mutinous resistance to any truck with the imposition of reforms and a reiteration of trade union themes. This means concentrating on strike action to demand wage rises to compensate for price increases. Naturally, such an attitude has a popular resonance, which the opposition sorely needs. What is more, determined local strike action often yields results.[6]

This militant workerist tendency was lent a voice last September by 22 Solidarity leaders who wrote to Walesa, demanding that the union concentrate on defending living standards. This group was headed by Andrzej Gwiazda, a long standing antagonist of Walesa.[7] Such small groups of ideologically "left" opposition as exist‹ tend to be attracted to such a current, since it allows them to oppose the market as a panacea for all social ills.

The open letter was a symptom of a general splintering of the political opposition. The initiative in active protest has passed from the generation of militants formed in 1980-81 to a more youthful layer of students and young workers.

"Peace and Freedom"

This can be seen in the vigorous defiance offered by the "Peace and Freedom" movement, from which a number of activists have recently been sentenced to punitive terms of imprisonment, for resisting conscription by refusing to take the military oath (which amongst other things pledges friendship to the Soviet Union). The traditional high prestige of the military in Poland has been much damaged in the eyes of young Poles by its willingness to be used as a tool in the imposition of martial law. Walesa is said to have been openly scornful of the anti-patriotic implications of refusal of military service.

Other symptoms of youthful protest have been increasing support for activity on ecology issues; the demonstrations in several Polish cities by students on the anniversary of the repression of the student movement in March 1968 and the lively satirical street theatre "happenings" mounted by the Orange Alternative in Krakow.[8]

This radicalisation outside the framework of Solidarity is despite the union's efforts to remain the focus of oppositional opinion by progressively emerging into "above ground" open activities. This has meant the declaration in October 1987 of an open national executive (KKW) and open regional structures, whilst "founding committees" of Solidarity have demanded legal registration in the courts as factory level unions - hitherto unsuccessfully.[9] Solidarity was also able to organise a public debate in Warsaw, last November. A significant number of people also now write in the Underground Press under their own names, which establishes a claim for this literature to emerge from clandestinity.

Another explosion?

Solidarity leaders do not deny that their union is weak and divided.[10] Opposition however has not been marginalised by the regime's "normalisation" programme. The debacle of the referendum; the incidence of demonstrations and strikes; the still flourishing underground press and the springing up of oppositional activities in new areas, all testify to this.

Another explosion inthe relentless cycle of crisis may not be far away in Poland. It is unlikely that it will be as restrained or as unified as the 1980-81 movement. Veteran oppositionist Jacek Kuron, writing in September last year observed that: "Many Solidarity activists - and it is often those in the workplaces - expect violent demonstrations by the workers in the not too distant future."

He went on to argue that social unrest could only have a constructive political effect if political space was afforded by a split amongst Poland's bureaucratic rulers, or if the Soviet leadership went into crisis.[11]

At the time of writing, it seems not unlikely that the decisive crisis of the Gorbachev leadership will be posed by the challenge of social unrest, whether it is in Soviet Armenia, Rumania, Hungary - or Poland.

Footnotes

1. *Dziennik Polski*, 30/11/87
2. KKW statement on 5/12/87. From *Uncensored Poland*, Information Centre for Polish Affairs.
3. As above. This high quality but expensive service is strongly recommended. Much information below, not further acknowledged, has been gleaned from it.
4. *Dziennik Polski*, 24/2/88. "Petycja pracownikow sluzby zdrownia". Cf. also "Emptier Plates and Bigger Truncheons", *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*, Vol. 9, No.1, March-June 1987.
6. There are numerous reports of strikes in Poland winning pay concessions. The dismissal of the Minister for Labour in February has been attributed to official dissatisfaction with this state of affairs. Cf. "Strajki nadal skuteczna bronia", *Dziennik Polski*, 12/2/88.
7. cf. Interview with Gwiazda reprinted from *International Viewpoint* by *Socialist Organiser*.
8. Orange Alternative has called demonstrations jokingly calling for the rehabilitation of Trotsky, which testifies less to the influence of Trotskyism in contemporary Poland than to the patent absurdity to Polish youth of such slogans. From an Orange Alternative leaflet: "Are the queues for toilet paper an expression of:
   a) A call for culture.
   b) The call of nature.
   c) The leading role of the Party in a society of developed socialism."
9. e.g. in Szczecin at the St. Mozejko plant or Dolmel in Wroclaw, which appealed (unsuccessfully) to the Supreme Court.
10. cf. KKW statement of 5th December.
11. from "Landscape after the Battle", reprinted in this issue of *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Change of some kind seems at last to be coming to Czechoslovakia, one of the most conservative of the East European countries. Gustav Husak, who swept to power in 1969 with Soviet backing was replaced as First Secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (CPCz) last December, retaining only the largely symbolic role of President.

ADAM NOVOTNY

AFTER HUSAK : REFORM?

Husak was old and unwell, and his role in the 'normalisation' after 1968 had made him one of the most hated leaders in Eastern Europe. Orthodoxy and inflexibility, cornerstones of CPCz thought since 1968 have been increasingly incompatible with developments in Moscow, and despite many speeches about reform, the Husak clique seemed incapable of effecting change. The small, relatively advanced Czechoslovak economy has gone from crisis to crisis since the dismantling of the reforms after 1968. Gross rates of economic growth in 1987 were about 2%, despite the exclusion of the notoriously bad and inefficient service sector. The selection of Milos Jakes as First Secretary of the CPCz was welcomed in Prague, Bratislava and Moscow as an opportunity to let in some new blood.

What does this ousting of Husak mean? Most oppositionists have been skeptical about the significance of Husak's replacement, which has been caused by much less than a victory of reformists over hardliners. Jakes is not known as a reformer, and has changed little since coming to power. Indeed he seems to prefer the traditional Brezhnevite mixture of labour discipline and top-down ideological campaigns. Though his role in 1968-69 is unclear, Jakes was closely involved with the purge of half a million members of the CPCz (about half the membership) after 1968.

Conservatives versus reformers?

In the west, leadership questions in Eastern Europe are often reduced to a simple conflict of conservative and reform factions. In reality, these differences have always proved to be less significant than the great commonality of interests between bureaucratic factions in the maintenance of power over the working class. The depth of the crisis in Czechoslovakia, differences of approach, rivalries between powerful ministries, cliques and patronage make for a shifting and unclear division of Party loyalties. Lubomir Strougal, the Politbureau member most identified with reformism, increasingly vocal about the failure of economic planners since 1969, has himself been Prime Minister since 1970. Husak himself supported Dubcek's reforms in 1968, switching sides and leading the conservative reaction after the 'fraternal' invasion.

Jakes can count on less support than Gorbachev within the Party. The purges and mass resignations after 1969 meant the loss of half a million members, in a population of 15 million. Those who left were arguably the most dynamic, committed ones. Unlike the USSR and GDR, democratic socialists and radicals are almost all outside the Party. While the Party still draws some support from the working class, it contains fewer worker members and bureaucrats of working class origin than ever before. Within the Party real enthusiasm for building socialism is rare. Most members join for career reasons, and realise that "actually existing socialism" is incompatible with real democratic change. After all, the very basis of Party policy since 1969 has been the rejection of any reform as one step towards the reimposition of capitalism.

There seems to be little belief in socialism in the CPCz today. Though most people inside and outside the Party support the basis of a socialist system, socialised property, rough income equality and a strong welfare system, the strongest ideology in Czechoslovakia today is a family-centred consumerism and a reluctance to "get involved" in political change. This new ideology has been encouraged by the bureaucracy to maintain some kind of support despite having lost any active loyalty from workers. Thus, while some moves are being made to allow private enterprise to revitalise the service sectors, the prison population remains among the highest in Europe, relative to the size of the country. The CPCz as it is today could never initiate a reform movement along the lines of Dubcek's, nor could it hope to control such a movement. After all, the progressive reforms introduced by the Party in 1968 were increasingly overtaken by the workers' own economic and political demands, which the Dubcek group could not tolerate.

Cautious Change

The clearest indication of the caution surrounding the overdue change to a reforming leadership is that reformist Lubomir Strougal is thought more likely to follow Husak into obscurity than unrepentant hard-liners like Ukrainian-born Vasil Bilak. Jakes, much more than Gorbachev in the USSR or Kadar in Hungary, will be expected by the Party elite to reform without rocking the boat. This is likely to mean a concentration on traditional methods, a cautious approach, and avoidance of even the minimal threat to the bureaucracy that perestroika and 'gulash socialism' have meant in the USSR and Hungary, at least until the crisis becomes so severe that real changes are unavoidable.

Gorbachev's speeches have emphasised that greater democracy and participation is inseparable from economic reform, that in fact the two are increasingly complementary. This is still unacceptable in Czechoslovakia, where the party leadership is keen to explain how Czechoslovakia shouldn't blindly follow developments in the USSR, but develop in its own way!

Getting out of the crisis

The economic situation is very serious. The country faces deep economic problems, nearly all the result of the bureaucracy's control over society. This gives Jakes little choice of options. Workers are reluctant to accept reforms in the "national interest", which offer them no direct economic or political benefits. This was the reason for the workers' lukewarm interest in the 1968 reform package, which concentrated on introducing market efficiency, until workers own demands for participation and the formation of cooperatives became real possibilities. Any serious reforms by the Party, such as increased labour discipline and wage differentials, a market mechanism, and increased managerial independence, all mean a temporary and serious decline in living

standards for the working class. Moves which try to spread the burden of reconstruction would soon threaten sections of a bureaucracy which has been untouchable for twenty years. Like Gorbachev, Jakes may realise that he cannot tinker with the system and expect results, that he has to change the bureaucracy to preserve its power.

It seems, then, that the important questions in understanding reform and glasnost in Eastern Europe are not just about the outlook of local leaders and their alliances with Moscow. We need to look at the social and economic structure in Czechoslovakia to see who will support various reform measures and for what reasons. Attempts to reform the economy would threaten powerful, traditional sections of the economy, which would suffer in a transfer of resources to modern, more efficient sectors, and an introduction of the criteria of market profitability. Collectives and private entrepreneurs could make large profits in a deregulation of services and light industry, certainly stirring up resentment among managers and workers in larger, unprofitable state enterprises, without having much effect on economic growth, or providing an applicable model for other areas of the economy. In Hungary, for example, private trade comprises only about 5% of economic activity, is concentrated in the capital, and includes many enterprises supplying luxury goods to foreign tourists. It is quite possible that, if the reform process does not produce quick results and an improved standard of living (through higher personal wages, or an improvement in the quality or quantity of the goods and services the state provides) then groups of workers in threatened industries may side with "their" conservative bureaucrats against reformers who threaten their lifestyle and wages. This happened to some extent after the 1968 invasion, when the reform movement started to slow down, and its democratic components were reversed.

Skilled workers

Western commentators have made much of surveys showing that skilled workers are more keen to see the introduction of market mechanisms than less skilled workers. It has been suggested that these male workers will swing behind the Party at the expense of the unskilled, young, female sectors of the workforce. Although these arguments are put forward by some analysts in Eastern Europe, they reflect political debates on the left in Western Europe much more than the reality in Eastern Europe, where the working class is by far the largest social grouping, is growing, and contains a much smaller number of intermediate, middle-class professions. The skilled workers who appear so keen on market conditions, are also the most determined that the regime maintains the present level of social security and full employment. We should realise that the regime's pronouncements on reform are as yet very vague, and that people will often speak in favour of reform in general terms, despite the big differences between their own interests and the government's plans.

The state of the opposition

The depressed nature of the czech opposition can perhaps be seen from the nature of two demonstrations held in Prague last December. On the 8th was the annual demonstration of young people on the anniversary of John Lennon's death. A vigil of about 50 people was maintained on the Kampa island all day, despite police identity checks, photography, and assault with police dogs. Most people at this demonstration talked of their desire for greater autonomy in the cultural field, and an end to police harassment of young people. On the 10th, about 1,500 people demonstrated in the Old Town Square at the statue of Jan Hus (a national hero and martyr for the counter-reformation). Prevented by a small number of police and a large number of plain clothed security agents from making speeches or attaching statements or flowers to the statue, this too was a quiet, static demonstration, with no placards, and a little chanting of "We want freedom".

No above ground organisation

The most striking characteristic of these demonstrations, for a western activist, was the small role of organised groups. There were no leaflets, banners, speeches, or discussions among demonstrators, who were taking part only as individuals. People from the civil rights group Charter 77 who wanted to speak at the demonstration were placed under temporary house arrest. Talking to people at this second demonstration, all wanted "freedom", but for some this meant national freedom from the Russians, for others a western lifestyle, for others liberal democratic rights, for yet others moves towards some kind of democratic socialism along the lines of the 1968 changes.

The level of repression in Czechoslovakia has made it extremely difficult for oppositionists to organise and work publicly, compared to Hungary or even the GDR. The severest repression has fallen on those attempting to develop links between workers and students, or attempting to develop a socialist alternative. There has also been severe repression of religious activists concerned with social problems, or connected to the more dynamic Polish church groups. This lack of political organisation is not simply due to the dangers of leafleting or speaking in public. To a large extent it follows from the dominant ideology in the opposition. It is important to realise that since the level of repression prevents the formation of democratic policy making structures in the opposition, the samizdat words of a few famous writers and intellectual critics have had an influence beyond their base of support, just as in Poland since military rule the leadership of Solidarity has been much more vocal than rank and file groups.

The dominant group in the Czech opposition is probably Charter 77, a human rights group formed to demand observance of the 1977 Helsinki accords on human rights. Its members are often involved in local initiatives and cultural activities, and it allows for contacts between activists, the production of reports on social problems, and contacts with supporters in the western countries. "The Charter", as the organisation is usually called, is a civil rights organisation only, and has avoided developing a coherent political outlook, since this would change the nature of its work, and alienate many activists who abhor "politics" as they have experienced it.

The dominance of intellectual "dissidents", and the civil rights experience have shaped the ideological and political beliefs and discussions of the opposition. Two main strands of opposition thought are an individualistic conception of democratic rights (that is to say, western social democracy is the kind of democratic system envisaged, not control by workers over their own work and lives) and, secondly, a "non-political" concentration on developing civic courage, "living within the truth" as some Chartists put it. This means encouraging people to become active as citizens, to demand that the establishment respects its own laws and international conventions. Many activists see the purpose of demonstrations as gradually drawing people into the opposition, encouraging individual civic courage, and forcing the regime to acknowledge a slightly wider right to gather, on this day, in this place, for a peaceful, non-confrontational demonstration. The aim has not really been to build a political opposition, or even an organised movement.

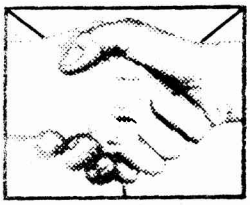
The writers and artists who dominate Charter 77 often point to the Czech national character as the basis of their approach, combining those essentially European ideas of democracy, liberty, and individualism (ideas which "Asiatic Russian society" is thought too primitive to value) with the pragmatism and cynicism of a small nation that has seen great powers come and go, and survived by quiet defiance, recognising the flaws of great ideologies, without rushing in to unequal conflicts. Elegant as the arguments are, they don't explain history. Competing nationalisms have plagued the workers movements in Eastern Europe since the formation of the workers' movements in Austria-Hungary, the Russian Empire, and the Balkan kingdoms. The Czech intellectuals who develop these ideas need to look at their own role in building these nationalisms, their collaboration with the Party up to 1968, and their role in 1968-69 of controlling and limiting workers' opposition. The demands of the non-Party intelligentsia in the late 60s, phrased in general terms of democracy, economic efficiency, promotion by qualification rather than political credentials, and cultural openings to Western Europe, were not expressions of some "national" interest so much of s their own interest in becoming a

new economic and bureaucratic elite. In explaining why workers didn't follow them, socialist oppositionists argue, the intelligentsia should blame their own programme and priorities, not some special weakness compared to the fiery Poles and Magyars.

Thus, a number of Charter and other activists reject the "living within the truth" approach, which they see as reflecting the individualistic philosophical or religious beliefs of a few famous Chartists. These political activists have seen the main task of the opposition as the development of a second culture of meetings, publications and entertainment, in which contacts can be made, people can receive support and work together, engaging in political and trade union activity as conditions permit (there is general agreement that such work is virtually impossible at the moment). For example, the Jazz Section of the Czech Musicians' Union, before it was dissolved by the authorities, had become an umbrella for a whole range of cultural activities, bringing many young people into contact with alternative and independent activity for the first time. After its dissolution on false charges of tax evasion, a dynamic solidarity movement was built, generating support among foreign musicians and artists, as well as large numbers of music lovers in Czechoslovakia. This campaign against the victimisation of the Jazz Section's officers simultaneously developed demands for free expression and a real popular culture. It exposed the legal system, and the collusion of police, Party and courts. Unfortunately, the opposition wastoo small, too underdeveloped in trades unions and in many areas of the country, to be more successful, or to make contact with many of the people who could have been brought into opposition activity over the issue.

International solidarity

As the regimes of the eastern bloc gradually allow greater travel abroad, as part of their attempt to diffuse hostility to their misrule into consumerist apathy, possibilities for forming international links are improving. Most importantt, but most difficult, are contacts with opposition movements in other East European countries. As well as regime hostility to such contacts, traditional nationalisms, kept smouldering by the regimes, are often opposed to each other. For example, there is a repressed Hungarian minority in Slovakia, and a repressed Slovak minority in Hungary. Slovaks will talk of 200 years of repression, when Slovakia was a mountainous backwater of Hungary. Hungarians will talk of the one in three Hungarians living in neighbouring countries after the treaty of Trianon in 1918. Czechoslovaks and Poles dispute the ownership of the mining town of Tesin in north Moravia. The languages of neighbouring countries (except Russian) are hardly taught in Czechoslovakia, in part because they are also the languages of oppressed ethnic minorities (German, Polish, Romany, Ukrainian, Magyar). Nevertheless, contacts are being made between the Czech and Polish oppositions, aided by the similarity of the languages, and with Hungary, because of the ease of travel and the slightly more tolerant treatment of opposition there. There is also contact and a good exchange of literature with religious groups in southern Poland.



biuletyn informacyjny

WROCŁAW luty 1988r. nr. 3

PISMO SOLIDARNOŚCI POLSKO-CZECHOSŁOWACKIEJ

DOMAGAMY SIĘ UWOLNIENIA WIĘŹNIÓW POLITYCZNYCH W POLSCE I CSRS:

Mariusza Bajdy, Piotra Bednarza, Jacka Borcza, Sławomira Dutkiewicza Krzysztofa Gotowickiego, Jana Andrzeja Górnego, Adama Hodysza, Oskar Kasperka, Andrzeja Kołodzieja, Kazimierza Krauze, Hanny Łukowskiej-K. Kornela Morawieckiego, Gabriela Płaminiaka, Piotra Różyckiego, Kazim Sokołowskiego, Andrzeja Marka Supińskiego, Bogusława Szybalskiego, K. tofa Szymańskiego, Jarosława Waliszewskiego, Krzysztofa Wolfa, Wojci Woźniaka, Piotra Zdrzyłkiego, Romana Zwiercana
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Niebawem ukaże się numer specjalny naszego Biuletynu w całości poświ kwestii więźniów politycznych w naszych krajach.

W czterdziestą rocznicę zamachu stanu

Mija 40 lat od dokonania przewrotu, w wyniku którego komuniści przej pełnię władzy w Czechosłowacji. Zanim do tego doszło, przez kilka la Czechosłowacja była krajem, który wydawał się enklawą wolności w Eur Wschodniej po II wojnie światowej. Był to jedyny kraj, w którym komu cieszyli się rzeczywistym poparciem społecznym, niezależnie od popar sowieckiego protektora.

Front page of the bulletin of the "Polish-Czech solidarity" initiative frmed after a recent meeting between activists of Charter 77 and Solidarnosc.

Non-Communists and Anti-Communists

Of course, peoples' reaction to the crisis is not automatically to support the opposition. This is particularly true of young people, who have not experienced either the massive support for socialism after World War Two, the years of Stalinism, or the growing belief in the possibility of "socialism with a human face" in the late 1960s, but only the stagnation and second rate consumerism of the last 20 years. A notable feature of recent years has been a revival of Christianity, and the growth of circles of "born again" youth. The reasons for this development are easy to see. Many young people are upset by the contradiction between what their parents believe, and how they speak in private and in public. This, the level of repression, visible stagnation, and compulsory education in Marxism-Leninism and the history of the world workers movement and the CPCz has left many young people cynical of any kind of change, or of the validity of political explanations of the world. The official youth organisation, the League of Socialist Youth, has an upper age limit of 35, with most top functionaries older than this. Since membership is practically essential to do well in higher education, it increasingly consists of an inactive, paper membership, and has little ideological or educational input into young peoples' lives. Events in Poland , of course, have encouraged some young Christians to take part in opposition activities, and suppressing this activity has been an increasing concern of the regime.

The regimes in Eastern Europe, and their apologists in the west, often claim that the main opposition to the regime in times of crisis is a pro-capitalist right wing. In fact, in Hungary 1956, Czechoslovakia 1968 and Poland 1980-81, organised right groups were minimal, and received little support from workers. Indeed, it is a sign of the Communists' lack of confidence in their own system that they believe it only takes a little

persuasion for mobilised, even armed workers, to hand the factories over to capitalists, and vote fascists into positions of power over them. In Czechoslovakia today, there is little real likelihood of a strong anti-communist movement. As has been said, a majority of workers support the basis of a socialist system, even if they hate the administrators of the system and distrust the warped language of marxism they have had rammed down their throats in school. the unions, newspapers and on television. Those who would benefit from moves towards a market and greater wage differentials would be most likely to support the reformists in the Party, not risk their relatively privileged positions by demanding something they have little power to bring about. They are also likely to realise that they benefit from the maintenance of order by the state, and not from the politicisation of the mass of workers.

The slow growth of Gorbachev's reform movement has revitalised many activists, and forced a new discussion of the tasks of the opposition. The differences emerging because of the potential of glasnost are of more significance to us as socialists than the inevitable differences between political and individualist-moral oppositionists. Petr Uhl, one of the few Trotskyists active in Charter 77, has argued that the real growth of a reform-communist current in the opposition will mean an increasing division among activists, in their attitude to the authorities and to each other.

It is increasingly clear that the most homogenous group of activists around Charter 77, sharing a common background , are those who left the Party or were expelled after 1968. Uhl is wary not so much of their one-time membership of the CPCz but their privileged lifestyle up to 1968, based on holding power over the workers, and crushing dissent.

The reform-communist current sees a real chance for progress in the liberalisation underway in the USSR. They envisage an institutionalised role for an opposition committed to reform, opposing conservative and bureaucratic opponents of change, and acting as a monitor of progress, a "left wing of the reform movement" as one reform-communist has put it. This outlook is shared by some liberal oppositionists, who see a role for themselves in the media, and the legitimisation of civil rights work. Popular discussion about the return of Alexander Dubcek to politics, with an interview given in October 1987 (printed in L'Unita on January 10th 1988) shows that not only are reform communist ideas increasingly popular after a decade of despondency and apathy, but that the beliefs of many reform communists in the leading role of the Communist Party, a directed media, and a block on direct democracy for workers remain, and were in fact strengthened by the fraternal invasion and the Solidarity movement in Poland. Reform communists manage to believe both in an evolutionary and gradualist transition to a (somewhat) democratic, elite-dominated state socialism, and in the real risk that any amount of independent activity opposed to this directed transition can easily destroy the whole process, and lead to a restoration of stalinism.

Their emerging policy of openly engaging official bodies in a reasonable, loyal dialogue, is possible only for a few self styled leaders and representatives, probably those already famous at home or abroad. Part of such a strategy would of course be the discouragement and prevention of uncontrolled activity by ordinary people. This would threaten the growth of a consensus with what remains of a liberal Party leadership, and, as in 1968, would inevitably raise demands neither the regime nor the reform communists could support - party pluralism, workers' democracy, a free press and so on. Thus, the reform communists would end up opposing the development of a coherent political opposition in which they were just a strand. Uhl argues the need to continue building parallel structures, engaging official institutions from below only when conditions are favourable. Charter 77's has a tried and tested method of public "dialogue" with the regime over its worst abuses of the population. The purpose of this "dialogue" is not to persuade the authorities that they have made a few little mistakes, but to make public the realities of the system. This is the reason the Charter works openly, and publishes all its correspondence. This approach is quite different from the tactical manoeuvering and cooperation proposed by prominent reform-communists within Charter 77 and the opposition, mixed as it is with illusions of cooperation, reasonable dialogue, rehabilitation, even a return to lost positions of power and privilege.

THE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE HISTORICAL-POLITICAL CLUB "OBSHCHINA"

1. The historical-political club "Obshchina" consists of a federation of sections which have been created along specific lines of work. Membership of "Obshchina" is possible only through participation in one of these sections.

2. At present sections exist in "Obshchina" which are conducting work in the following areas:
- the editorial of "Obshchina";
- COMCON (the Commission for Contacts)
- work with the socialist clubs, representing the interests of "Obshchina" and propagating its views in the informal movement;
- pedagogical section: elaborating problems relating to school, linking with the pedagogical movement, representing the interests of "Obshchina" in the pedagogical social movement;
- the section of self-management of production: work in the FSOK production group, relationship with workers' organisations, elaboration of projects of self-management of production;
- ecological-cultural section: work to heighten the role of the public in preserving nature, historical and cultural monuments, relationship with the ecological-cultural movement and representing the interests of "Obshchina" within it;
- section for corresponding members;
- "Alliance" (a youth group which has collective membership of "Obshchina"): work with senior school students, in school political clubs, publication of an inter-school newspaper;

3. All members of "Obshchina" belong to any one of its sections and have the right to vote at meetings of that section.

4. Members of "Obshchina" have the right to participate in the work of other sections and be present at meetings of that section with a consultative vote.

5. The highest organ of each section is its general meeting. The general meeting of the section reviews current questions, approves programmes and documents of the section, prepares the proposals of the section for the Council of "Obshchina", elects and re-elects, as necessary, the co-ordinator and acting secretary and accepts candidates into membership of "Obshchina" (candidate membership is not more than six months).

6. The general meeting of the section is considered valid if no less than two-thirds of the members and candidate members of "Obshchina" working in that section are present and the time and place of the meeting had previously been notified to the co- ordinators of the other sections and the acting secretary of the Council of the Association.

7. The section organises the work of "Obshchina" within its own sphere, has the right to represent "Obshchina" on questions falling within its competence and accept candidates into membership of "Obshchina" with their subsequent declaration to the Council.

8. A general meeting of a section is called as necessary either by demand of members of the section or by decision of the Council of "Obshchina".

9. The "Alliance" group determines its own internal structure autonomously, its relations with "Obshchina" being regulated by a bilateral agreement.

10. The highest organ of "Obshchina" is the Council of the Association. The Council is composed of delegates from the sections. The number of delegates from the sections to each meeting is not limited for, irrespective of the number of delegates, each section has two votes at its disposal on Council, the allocation of votes within the delegation being determined by the section.

11. The Council of the Association accepts the Declaration and Statutes, concludes and ratifies agreements between clubs, confirms and revokes documents from the sections, hears their reports, confirms the decisions of sections to accept new members of "Obshchina", appeals against the actions of sections and their representatives, forbids speaking in the name of the club, takes the decision to establish new sections and close old ones.

12. On all of the above issues, the Council is empowered to take decisions if representatives of all sections of the Association are present at its meeting. The Council's decision is passed by majority vote.

13. The Council elects a secretary for the purposes of calling meetings of the Council, managing and keeping documentation. S/he has the right to a consultative vote at meetings.

14. Meetings of the Council must be called at least once every two weeks or more frequently at the request of one of the sections.

15. Membership records of the sections are kept by the secretary of the Council. On request members of "Obshchina" can transfer from one section to another. They must inform the acting secretary and co-ordinator of their intention so that the change can be entered into the records.

16. In the event that any of the sections ceases practical activity or its members flagrantly violate the Statutes and principles of the Declaration, or compromise "Obshchina" by their behaviour, such section can be closed by decision of the Council (in accordance with Articles 11 and 12). Its candidate members are excluded from "Obshchina", and its full members must begin work with other sections or submit to the Council the programme for a new section within the period of one month. Members of "Obshchina" who do not work with any of the sections during the course of a month are automatically excluded from membership of the Association.

17. A section has the right to nullify the vote of its representative.

18. The exclusion of members of "Obshchina" takes place in their presence except in cases where they refuse to be present for unacceptable reasons.

ROMANIA

In 1987, according to official statistics, 6499 refugees crossed the border. The unofficial figure is twice as high. Three refugees who attempted to cross unofficially were shot by the militia. Yet this is not the Berlin Wall, but the border between Romania and Hungary. Refugees fleeing from one socialist country to *another* socialist country - surely a novel development in the Eastern bloc.

GUS FAGAN

MISERY UNDER THE "CONDUCATOR"

These refugees are, of course, from among the Hungarian minority in Romania. Whereas previously official applications from those wanting to settle in Hungary gave "family reunion" as the official reason, now many of them cite "the scourge of Ceausescu" and "hunger".

The problem is not limited to the ethnic minorities. News from Romania towards the end of 1987 were dominated by reports of unrest and mass demonstrations in Brasov, Romania's second largest city where, on 15 November, a spontaneous mass demonstration of thousands of industrial workers was joined by members of the public. The demonstrators then marched to Communist Party headquarters and, in scenes reminiscent of Gdansk 1970, broke into the mayor's office and burned pictures of Ceausescu in the street. Their slogans were "We want bread" and "Down with the dictator".

Refugees fleeing from hunger and mass demonstrations demanding bread are signs that, at least economically, things are very bad in Romania.

The economy

The crisis of the regime in Romania is reflected in a number of ways: the absurd concentration of power in the Ceausescu family (see box); the rapid turnover of top political personnel; megalomanic ventures such as the massive construction project inthe centre of Bucharest meant to be a monument to the great "Conducator"(Führer); the official propagation of nationalist mythology and the increasing reliance on the powerful and pervasive security apparatus.

Underlying this is a crisis of socio-economic structures which has turned Romania into the Ethiopia of Eastern Europe. We get some idea of this problem when we look at the statistics for economic growth between 1971 and 1981:

1971-75 (average)	1976-80 (average)	1981
11.3%	7.2%	2.1%

Official statistics show recovery after 1983 but most Western economists regard the figures as suspect and believe that output has stagnated since 1981.[1]

The Romanian economy is the most centralised in Eastern Europe with many decisions made by the "Conducator" himself. In the 1970s the regime invested heavily in the development of a massive oil refinery and petrochemical industry, hoping to be able to export its output. For various reasons, such as the need to import crude and the energy needs of the domestic economy, this strategy was a drastic failure and was a major cause of Romania's indebtedness to the West. Ceausescu has embarked on an ambitious programme to eliminate the foreign debt even *ahead* of schedule and it is this which has led to the enforced austerity. Imports of energy, raw materials, components, machinery and equipment have been cut back drastically. Basic materials and goods are being exported and there is pressure to reduce domestic material consumption by between 20-30 per cent while simultaneously increasing output.This has led to rather harsh conditions for the ordinary people since not only refined oil but also foodstuffs and consumer goods are being exported.

Gross indebtedness has been run down from a peak of $10.2 bn at the end of 1981 to $5.4 bn at the end of 1987 (estimate by *The Economist*). Imports from OECD countries were cut from $3.7 bn in 1980 to $1.6 bn in 1986.

One of the problems in dealing with Romania is the unreliability of official statistics. For instance, in 1986 the authorities claimed an economic growth of 7.3% (NMP - net material product). However, official data themselves showed that in that same year investment grew by a mere 1.2%, exports fell by 12% while consumption rose only slightly (in reality probably stagnated). So what was the growth in NMP used for? According to the *Economist Intelligence Unit Report 1987-88*, "the fact that virtually all domestic data given for 1985 and 1986 are believed to be thoroughly misleading is probably an indication of how serious the economic plight of Romania has become".[2]

The real state of the economy can be seen in the dire circumstances of the daily struggle for survival this past winter.

Living conditions

In Bucharest this winter the shelves in most shops are empty. During the summer pictures of Ceausescu replaced commodities in shop windows but this winter the pictures have been removed. In the department store *Victoria* there are no queues for the Romanian-made washing machines in the basement because the amount of electricity they would need for three washes would just about use up the monthly ration of electricity of 35 kilowatt hours per family.

In the University Library across from the Central Committee building the students have to dress warmly because there is no heating. There is also no heating in any shop, pub or hotel. Of course, the Central Committee building is warm. Cinemas, theatres and pubs all close at 9 o'clock. The empty streets have dim lights every two hundred meters. Household bulbs may not exceed 40 watts.

According to one Bucharest teacher quoted by the West German magazine *Der Spiegel*, "the worst thing about all this is that the search for food just dominates one's whole life. Finding enough to eat is like a madness, it occupies one's mind day and night. For four winters now it's been like that."[3]

Rations this winter have been incredibly small: 1.5 kilos flour, 1.2 kilos sugar, 300 grams butter or cheese and 4 kilos of potatoes per month as well as 300 grams of bread per day. In such conditions, of course, the black market flourishes. The price of a kilo of coffee is 1000 lei (the average monthly wage is 2500 lei).

In addition to the spontaneous outburst in Brasov there have been sporadic protests from students but no organised popular opposition. According to one student who is against Ceausescu but favours "democratic

socialism", the struggle to get by leaves room for little else. "Although the majority of the people have nothing, they're afraid of losing the little they have, whether it's an ice-cold flat, a poorly paid job, an entrance to university or a yearly bonus in the factory. This fear weakens people; it cripples their anger as well as their solidarity".[4]

Dissatisfaction from within the apparatus surfaces occasionally. One leading party member, the 71-years-old Silviu Brucan, well-known resistance fighter in the Second World War, condemned Ceausescu's policies in an interview broadcast by Radio Free Europe and heard in Bucharest. "If the party continues in this way," said Brucan, "it will isolate itself from the working class. The new decree on energy saving basically calls on the workers to freeze in their bedrooms." Ceausescu's response was to fire the Finance Minister, Alexandru Babe. And every day the party newspapers hammer home the demands for "more effort, greater productivity and better production." If there are problems, it's the workers' own fault.

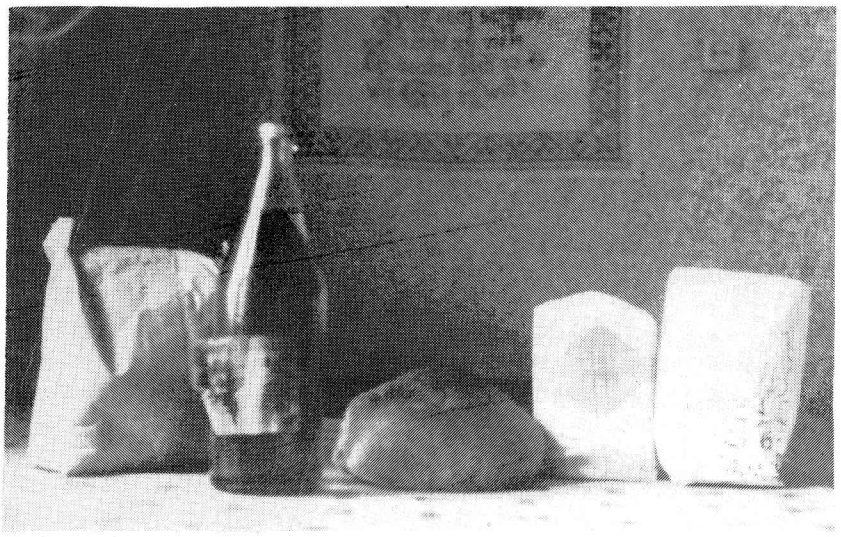
The Hungarian minority

The national question is emerging once again as a serious challenge to the political system of Eastern Europe. A rapidly developing national protest movement in Armenia confronted Gorbachev with a major crisis in the same month in which West German Foreign Minister Genscher warned publicly of the "possible collapse" of Yugoslavia. A week later, at the beginning of March 1988, a conference organised in Budapest by the informal Hungarian Democratic Forum issued a statement in which it spoke of the "dangerous situation" existing in Romania as a result of the oppression of the Hungarian minority in that country.

Officially there are 1.7 million Hungarians living in Romania. The Hungarians estimate the real figure to be between 2.5 and 3 million. About 20,000 of them are now living in Hungary, often without official approval. At the end of February 1988 about 500 of them demonstrated in front of the Romanian embassy inBudapest.

In Transylvania, where the majority of the Hungarians live, Hungarian schools, as well as classes in Hungarian have been cut back. The Hungarian language radio programme, which used to be seven hours, was cut to one. The Hungarian TV programme was abolished altogether. Books printed in Hungary are not legally available and even the Hungarian party daily, *Nepszabadsag*, is prohibited. The Olympic medal winner, Nadia Comaneci, was forced to deny her Hungarian origins (her real name is Anna Kemenes).The repression, the flow of refugees, the rising tide of national anger in Hungary have created a serious rift between the two countries. At the last meeting between Kadar and Ceausescu in 1977, Kadar claimed that "the national question has been finally resolved by socialism". He even expressed the hope that the Hungarian minority in Transylvania would "build a bridge between our two nations". All that is now a thing of the past. "Those of Hungarian nationality living outside our borders are part of the Hungarian people", said Central Committee Secretary Szürös earlier this year. "They have the right to expect that Hungary will feel responsible for them."

It was in Transylvania in 1977 that the biggest working class protest in the modern history of Romania occurred - the strike by miners in the Jiu valley. Altogether 35,000 workers took part in the strike, of whom 20% were Hungarians. According to reports at the time, there were no problems emerging from the ethnic differences within the working class. Both groups of workers were united against the authorities.[5]



The weekly ration for a Romanian in 1986

Gorbachev's challenge

The coming to power of the Gorbachev team in the Soviet Union has exacerbated tensions within many of the East European regimes, not least in Romania. No one can doubt the power of the Soviet leadership to exert pressure on the political leaderships of the other states for changes in both policy and personnel. This is a particular challenge for Romania because its leadership (the Byzantine dynasty built around Ceausescu) and its policy (rejection of reform) are both unacceptable, in the long term, to Moscow.

This was evident at the time of Gorbachev's visit to Romania in May 1987. Although there were no open disagreements, Gorbachev made it clear in public where he stood. In his speech, broadcast live in Romania, he insisted that "fundamental radical reforms" were necessary, not just for the Soviet Union, but for the whole socialist bloc. In obvious reference to Romanian economic policy, he argued that improved living standards and greater availability of consumer goods were essential to economic efficiency. Without once mentioning Ceausescu by name, he described perestroika as "a school for forming new leaders". He argued for "the release from office of people who cannot cope with their work, ... or who have compromised themselves through lack of principle or nepotism."

Gorbachev also raised the problem of national minorities: "It is known what great importance it (relations with minorities, G.F.) has for us and what great importance Lenin accorded to all aspects of national relations, asking that delicacy and special attention be given to solving these problems." The British *Sunday Times* reported at the time of the visit, on the basis of "senior Soviet sources", that the Hungarian government had tried to persuade Gorbachev to call off the visit because it might be seen as tacit approval of Ceausescu's treatment of the Hungarian minority. It is not known whether Gorbachev raised this directly with Ceausescu. In any case, Ceausescu rejected the implied criticism and, in his speech to the Bucharest rally, said that all Romanian citizens, "notwithstanding their nationality", enjoyed "ideal living and working conditions" in Romania.

At the end of 1987, therefore, the status quo remains in Romania and, in the short term, Ceausescu's regime is not in danger of collapse. However, Romania's dependence on Soviet oil and trade as well as increasing social unrest (Brasov) and the open expression of criticism from leading Romanian communists suggest that in the longer term Romania cannot resist the pressure for change.

Dissent

One of those prominent communists to express criticism is Ion Iliescu, removed from the Central Committee and government posts in 1984 after his pro-reform views ran foul of Ceausescu and his wife Elena. Iliescu was an associate of Gorbachev when he was secretary of the Union of Romanian Students in the Soviet Union from 1950 to 1953. It was rumoured that Gorbachev spoke on behalf of Iliescu when he was in Bucharest

in May. Iliescu is believed to have support among Romanian intellectuals and in the Politbureau. The 3rd September issue of *Romania Literara*, the most authoritative weekly published by the Romanian Writers' Union, carried an article by Iliescu in which he condemned the "political decision-making forces" as "conservative" and as "instruments of inertia" and "the main sources of the phenomenaof social alienation". It is unlikely that Ceausescu would have approved the publication of this article without some form of outside intervention. These events have led to speculation that Iliescu may be Gorbachev's favourite for the succession. He would probably also be favoured by a considerable number of the intellectual and technocratic elite as well as former communists and pro-Soviet elements in the party. Iliescu is 57 years old and is presently director of the Bucharest Technical PublishingHouse.

Another prominent dissident is Mihai Botez, an internationally known expert on planning and management and a former high-ranking economic adviser to the Romanian government. He quit in 1977 because of disagreement with the regime's policies. A recent interview with Botez has been published in the West in which he speaks of the "volcano of discontent simmering underneath" the existing order. According to Botez, Romanian intellectuals are increasingly looking to Moscow and to the Gorbachev leadership "because of its technocratic-oriented and rational approach to policy." There is intense interest among the Romanian intelligentsia in the Gorbachev reforms and the Soviet press is in great demand. Botez is an articulate critic of the regime's economic policies and speaks on behalf of the technical intelligentsia which has seen its role in decision-making taken over by party activists who carry out Ceausescu's arbitrary economic policies.

Karoly Kiraly, an ethnic Hungarian and a former member of the CP leadership, resigned his post in 1972 in protest at the regime's policy towards the Hungarian minority. He is still a party member but endorsed the October 1986 joint declaration by dissidents from five East European countries on the 13th anniversary of the Hungarian revolution[7]. Kiraly is now the director of a meat-canning factory in Tirgu-Mures (Marosvasarhely) in Transylvania. According to an unconfirmed report in a Hungarian samizdat source from Romania, Gorbachev met with Kiraly during his visit to Romania[8]). In an interview published in Britain, Kiraly says that "real Stalinism exists in Romania today" and compares "this Stalinism and the resultant tensions to the period before the 1956 revolution" in Hungary[9].

The support which any of those prominent individual dissidents have inside the Communist Party is very much a matter of speculation. What is certain is that there is no organised opposition and no links between dissident intellectuals and the working class. In recent years a few prominent members of the pre-war National Peasant Party and Liberal Party have issued statements which have been widely reported in the Western press. Ioan Puiu (NPP) and Ion Bratianu have expressed support for human rights, a parliamentary form of government and a mixed economy. Literary dissent is practically non-existent. Two dissident writers, the poet Dorin Tudoran and the novelist Bujor Nedelcovici were very isolated and both emigrated a few years ago.

The only known samizdat publication is one produced by a small network of ethnic Hungarian intellectuals in several Transylvanian cities. This is the journal *Erdelyi Magyar Hirugynokseg* (Hungarian Press of Transylvania), a mimeographed news bulletin which reaches the West regularly. This was the main source for reports on the social protests and strikes in Transylvania in November 1986.

There is also a large German ethnic minority in Romania and quite a few of them live in the city of Brasov, scene of

"PAPA DOC" NICOLAE AND HIS DYNASTY

In August 1987 NICOLAE CEAUSESCU held the posts of President of the Republic, President of the Council of State, General Secretary of the Romanian Communist Party, Head of the Political Executive Committee (Politbureau), Chairman of the National Defence Council and the Supreme Council of Socio-Economic Development.

ELENA, his wife, is a full member of the Central Committee, a member of the Politbureau, is First Deputy Prime Minister, Chairwoman of the National Council for Science and Technology and Vice-Chair of the Supreme Council of Socio-Economic Development. She played a leading role in the development of the petro-chemical industry and it was at one time assumed that she would succeed her husband.

Their elder son, NICU, aged 38, the assumed heir, is Minister for Youth, a full member of the Central Committee and a candidate member of the Politbureau. He owns several houses and is a fancy dresser. Nicu's wife, POLIANA, is also a full member of the Central Committee.

The President's brothers also have prominent positions. ION is a full member of the Central Committee and First Vice-Chairman of the State Planning Committee. Another brother, ILIE, is Deputy Minister of Defence and head of the committee which controls the army. Ceausescu, his wife Elena and brother-in-law MANEA MANESCU are all members of the seven-member Permanent Bureau of the Politbureau.Elena's family are also prominent in party and state positions. Her brother GHEORGHE PETRESCU is a Deputy Prime Minister.
Nicolae Ceausescu was 70 in January 1988.

November's mass unrest. In fact, details of this unrest reached the West via reports in the West German press from this group. A group of ten young ethnic German writers, known as the *Aktionsgruppe Banat*, have for the past few years protested against the restrictions on ethnic German cultural life. When the scale of the economic misery in Romania became widely known in West Germany this winter, West German semi-official agencies sent food parcels which were rejected by the Romanian government.

Although individual dissidents speak of widespread discontent, there is no suggestion of organised opposition. Mihai Botez suggests that the parallel in Romania today is not with pre-1956 Hungary but with pre-1970 Poland, in other words, a period leading into major unrest and protests by workers but still well before the formation of an organised public opposition.

Ceausescu still intends to pursue a policy of debt elimination by the end of the current decade. The export of basic necessities and restriction of imports will mean continued austerity for the next few years. Change in economic policy seems unlikely without a change in leadership, but the Soviets would probably not welcome a succession crisis in Romania at a time when the economic reform programme at home is facing difficulties of its own. The prospect therefore is one of more hard winters and growing popular discontent.

Footnotes

1. *Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) Romania 1967-88*, p.11
2. ibid.
3. *Der Spiegel*, 28 December 1987, p. 92
4. ibid.
5. For an account of the miners' strike in 1977, see *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*, Vol. 1/No. 5, 1977
6. The interview with Botez was first published in the Paris weekly, *L'Express*, 28 May 1987.
7. The Declaration can be found in *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*, Vol. 8/No. 3, November 1986, p. 28.
8. The report, originally published in *Erdelyi Magyar Hirugynokseg* (Hungarian Press of Transylvania), was cited in the West German newspaper *Die Weltt*, 19 June 1987.9. *East European Reporter*, Spring 1987, p. 46-48.

HUNGARY

CHRIS CORRIN

HUNGARIAN GLASNOST?

"Klubs" and associations have been springing up throughout Hungary in the last four months, dealing with situations as far apart as mothers' and toddlers' needs, lesbian and gay rights and the role of independent trade unions. The recent banning of a meeting of probably the most politically important club shows a realisation by the Party of the pivotal importance of such grassroots political groups - putting real political debate on the agenda.

This "Rakpart Klub" (named after a Pest-side section of the Danube) has been in operation since 1983. It was banned from 1985-87 but not before facilitating the setting up of the *Duna Kör* (Danube Circle) - effectively the Hungarian Greens, which has been active against the Austro-Hungarian Dam project at Visegrad. In January 1988, the Rakpart Klub organised a meeting making available a representative of the Hungarian Parliament to answer any questions from Hungarian citizens. Genuinely "open" face-to-face meetings with Communist Party politicians in Eastern Europe are very rare.

These clubs are not just from Budapest (e.g. the organisation of populist writers) and the club movement reached the point of establishing a Club Council which was able to make political representations. An unusual "success" story in this mould concerns the refusal in January of the Hungarian government of about 200 refugees from Transylvania. The Club Council made a proclamation within 48 hours, which demanded that the government withdraw this order and pressed the Hungarian authorities to "sort this out with the other governments concerned". This government decision was also attacked by writers and other organisations. Within ten days the government had withdrawn its decision and gave asylum to the refugees.

Independent unions?

In the Rakpart Klub there is potential for many new political developments. On the 19th February a hall packed with 400 people was the site of a heated debate about starting an independent trade union for individuals and groups in Hungary concerned with science and academic work. This meeting ended with a unanimous declaration stating that people were unsatisfied with the official trade unions and would like to organise an independent trade union the purposes of which would be to fight against inflation (wage policies) and to fight against unemployment (which is growing) in defence of workers' rights. At their organisational meeting on 22nd March the aims and objectives were more clearly defined, and a counter-declaration was issued against the recent attacks in the press by the National Union Secretariat. As yet this campaign is in its infancy, and given that it remains an "intellectual" endeavour, we are unlikely to see a Hungarian Solidarnosc emerging.

This excited political climate is a fragile one, as the banning of the following Friday evening meeting (26th February) of the Rakpart Klub showed. This was to have been an opportunity for the radical journalists to attempt to organise and form a club. Itwas feared in Hungary that the government would use the opportunity of March 15th, the anniversary of the 1848 revolution and traditionally an occasion for radical and youthful manifestations of discontent, to take all-out repressive measures.

Speakers at the day-time commemoration included Tamas Miklos Gaspar (an outspoken defender of Hungarian minority rights) who called for the government to resign, whilst another speaker demanded the withdrawal of Russian troops from Hungary. Despite his arrest that morning, a statement was read out from Gabor Demsky. Miklos Haraszti was also arrested and ill-treated (possibly due to his involvement in the circulation of a petition concerning conscientious objection in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union which is still being circulated *and signed* in the USSR). In the evening a more radical demonstration took place with young people gathering to show their opposition to the "dead-end system" in which they have to live.

However, despite the eight arrests and various house searches this annual demonstration of dissatisfaction was not harshly oppressed. Also, the meetings continue. On March 22nd a follow-up meeting (from 6th March) took place of the Democratic Forum which is concerned with Hungarian minorities - there had been too many contributions for one meeting. At this second meeting, there were 32 contributions including those from Czechoslovakia and Romania. This issue remains very much on the agenda.

Is the Hungarian regime experiencing some form of "glasnost"? The reality is that the passive legitimation which the Kadarist compromise built up after the revolution of 1956 is rapidly fading away, not just in Hungarian society in general but also among Party members. Kadarism has reached the end of the road. The government is troubled by internal tensions within the Party and also by the political strings attached to the loans from Western finance capital. If the International Monetary Fund calls for redundancies and lay-offs in so-called "non-economic" sectors, how can this be squared with a socialist policy of full employment? It cannot, of course, but it can be crudely "bodged" - and such bodging has for some time now been the hallmark of the Hungarian state's decision-making.

So far, however, despite the appearance of the clubs and associations and the continued distribution of samizdat literature, there has been *no sustained, unified fightback*. But this could change radically at any time with some sudden political "blow-up" which could be just around the corner - on April 1st, once again, prices are due to rise

Earlier this year, mass arrests in the GDR and expulsions to the West made the headlines. It appeared that the East German leadership were signalling that glasnost was not for them, and joining the Romanians in the vanguard of the Stalinist resistance to any talk of reform and democratisation.

KEVIN BALL

REAFFIRMING THE LIMITS

For many years, the GDR was among the most repressive of the East European states... It is now clear that things have changed, perhaps irrevocably". So we wrote in the last issue of Labour Focus. The printer's ink had hardly dried on those words when, on the night of 24/25 November 1987, at around midnight, the GDR's State Security police raided the premises of the East Berlin church which houses the Ecology Library. Large amounts of material were confiscated and seven people arrested. Although all of them were released soon after and the Ecology Library allowed to continue, the raid had to be a clear warning signal.

On their own admission, the *Stasi* (common East German abbreviation for the State Security) were primarily after the production and editorial facilities of *Grenzfall*, the journal published by members of the independent Peace and Human Rights Initiative. As it turned out, only one more issue of *Grenzfall* would be published before, in January this year, the Stasi moved decisively against leading activists of both the Ecology Library and the Peace and Human Rights Initiative, as well as other prominent individuals in the independent movement. Following an official rally to commemorate the 1919 murder of the German communist leaders Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht on January 17th, during which a group of about one hundred demonstrators had produced their own banners, Stephan Krawczyk, Freya Klier, Bärbel Bohley, Werner Fischer, Wolfgang and Regina Templin, Ralf Hirsch and several others were arrested on charges that ranged from "unlawful assembly" to "treason".

Berufsverbot

Media attention in the West centred on the arrest of Stephan Krawczyk, a singer and songwriter whose performances to packed audiences in church halls had made him a figurehead of nonconformist youth in the GDR. Krawczyk was picked up on his way to the Luxemburg rally where he intended to protest against the *Berufsverbot* imposed against him when he was banned from officially sponsored public performances in 1985. But the politically most significant arrests were those of the leading activists in the Human Rights initiative.

No other section of the East German independent peace movement had pushed the limits of official toleration as far as this group: by refusing to confine their activities strictly to the organisational framework provided by the Protestant church, by directly tackling some of the most sensitive social and political issues for the East German regime today.

Exit visa

One of these issues, and probably the most explosive one, is that of free travel and emigration. Since many East Germans have relations in West Germany and are attracted by the much higher living standards in the Federal Republic - which they are very familiar with as a result of West German radio and TV - the GDR has always had an emigration problem. Between 1949 and the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961, about three million refugees (out of a population of 18 million) departed for the FRG. The detente of the 1970s, in particular the signing of the Helsinki Treaty, have revived such desires and there have been hundreds of thousands of applications for exit visa over the last decade, despite the harassment experienced by applicants.

More recently, the authorities have relaxed travel restrictions to West Germany, but have used this relaxation as a reward for good political behaviour and performance at work, often judged by totally arbitrary criteria.

The inability to travel to Western countries has antagonised many people, especially the young, who would undoubtedly return to the GDR from such touristic excursions. The bitterness over such restrictions often turns the merely curious or adventurous into potential emigres, thus adding to the ranks of those who wish to leave mainly for economic or family reasons.

Some members of the Human Rights initiative, including Templin, quite properly began to take up the plight of those refused exit or travel visa as a burning political issue, even though they themselves had always stressed the need to stay in the GDR and work for political change and democratisation. Many of those arrested and interrogated after January 17th - whose exit visa applications were then quickly processed - had apparently mentioned Templin's involvement and the Stasi tried to use this in order to confuse the political issues involved. The charges of "treasonable contact with West Berlin circles controlled by Western secret services" were intended to put pressure on those arrested to agree to apply to exit visa applications of their own.

When the "treason" charges and the threat of up to ten years' imprisonment failed to have the desired effect, and widespread protests from both within the GDR and abroad put the regime on the defensive, negotiations took place with church representatives and lawyers which eventually reached a compromise solution: the arrested would leave the GDR on study visits to West Germany or Britain with proper passports and visa, and be allowed to return to the GDR after a certain period.

Passports

There is no doubt that the enforced absence of these leading activists represents a serious blow to the independent movement in the GDR. Yet, as a victory for the Stasi, it falls far short of the sort of wholesale clear-out of the entire scene demanded by hardliners in the party, state and security apparatus. On the contrary, the unprecedented broad solidarity movement right across East Germany after the arrests has drawn new layers into political involvement and served to consolidate the existing groups. Most significantly perhaps, the concession of granting Templin, Bohley, Fischer, Wollenberger and others (although not Krawczyk, Klier and Hirsch) a passport and the right to returnhas set an important precedent: time will tell what these concessions are worth in practice, when the first of these temporary exiles knocks on the gates demanding readmission to the GDR.

It is more difficult to gauge the meaning of these events in terms of the more general political evolution of the GDR and, in particular, the relationship of forces within the party and the state apparatus. Both the party leader, Erich Honecker (who is 78), and the Minister for State Security, Erich Mielke (who is 80), are due to retire before too long and it is just possible to detect signs of an internal struggle not only over the succession in personnel, but more importantly in political perspectives.

The very nature of the GDR, however, as the smaller and poorer part of a divided nation, and its strategically vulnerable position as a frontline state, prevent the clear crystallisation of these contradictory stances into "conservative" and "reformist" currents, at least for the time being. Of course there are more "enlightened" functionaries who are prepared to relegate repression to a last resort and to experiment with more flexible and sophisticated responses to social contradictions, just as there are the blockheads who yearn for a return to the golden age of Walter Ulbricht. Both, however, are tied to each other by a common "siege mentality" given the pressures emanating from the West and, in recent years, the instability of their Eastern neighbour Poland.

It is possible that the Soviet perestroika, combined with the increasing decomposition of the European status quo, may be about to change this, but until it does, the Protestant church will continue to play a role in East German society which is quite out of proportion to its actual size and religious influence. The church in its more worldly role operates both as a sanctuary for dissent and as a social worker of some value to the regime. On issues such as ecology, some of the unorthodox thought first articulated in and around the church has even found its way into party think-tanks and theoretical journals. Not least, its close links with the Western churches have provided the SED with some useful diplomatic channels.

Not surprisingly, this has produced a special brand of "statesmen" of the church within socialism" who have become quite adept at playing the role of mediator between the independent movements and the state. They need the nonconformist, critical milieu to breath new life into their otherwise increasingly fossilised church life, and are therefore prepared to afford a certain amount of institutional protection for such activities against the attentions of the Stasi. But they view with suspicion and sometimes open hostility anything that threatens to compromise the church's special relationship with the state, and have made no secret of their desire to curb the independent political activities of groups such as the Peace and Human Rights Initiative.

In this sense then, the compromise reached after the January arrests was in the interests of both church and state. Far from marking a breakdown in relations between the two, it cemented the relationship by clearly restating the limits of "socialist democracy" in the GDR: unorthodox discussions and cultural activities under the control of the church hierarchy - yes; political opposition and independent publications - no.

This is what Templin, Bohley and the others will be up against when (or, perhaps more to the point: if) they are allowed to return to the GDR.

"WE SHALL BE BACK"

INTERVIEW WITH WOLFGANG TEMPLIN

How do you explain the timing of the attack on you?

I think that the timing of the attacks on the independent groups in the GDR has a lot to do with the fact that in recent years the peace movement has tended to go beyond activities within the framework of the church, on the periphery of the church, and begun to take up broader social contradictions and conflicts in the GDR, such as democratisation and human rights. This trend was, of course, carefully noted by the authorities. They did not, as many feared, react with immediate repression in order to nip these developments in the bud, and thus an independent, albeit very small publication like *Grenzfall* could appear for nearly one and a half years and the independent Human Rights Initiative could work without constantly being in danger of arrests. Throughout the year 1987 new approaches and new forms of activity were being tried out: the Ecology Library, the "Kirchentag from below", the independent participation in the Olof Palme Peace March. This raised hopes among some that there had already been a fundamental change for the better in the attitude of officialdom towards the independent movement - hopes which proved exaggerated after Honecker's visit to Bonn and the completion of the Berlin Anniversary festivities. From about October 1987...

The police raid on the Ecology Library...

Yes, and when the wave of arrests came in January it was clear that a drastic deterioration of the political climate had occurred. Police surveillance and repressive measures increased, which in part certainly reflected the growing unrest in the population and growing economic difficulties. But also growing conflicts within the leadership and within the party over the general direction of policies.

Conflicts in connection with developments in the Soviet Union?

Certainly. Much as the SED insists that the Soviet reforms are irrelevant to the GDR, they are being raised and debated by the party ranks. There are clear signs that very different options concerning future political initiatives and the employment of various political instruments are under consideration.

The Western media have tended to portray your arrest and expulsion as a fundamental return to a more repressive era.

I consider this interpretation to be mistaken. People tend to expect either an immediate push for reforms in the GDR, or alternatively a negative development and drastic repression. I don't think either is really on the cards at the moment. The politics of the GDR has in recent years been marked by shifts and manoeuvres and this will continue. Because of the existing and increasing external dependencies, both economic and political, an appearance of tolerance and conciliation will remain desirable and the demands for a course of harsher repression from certain quarters will continue to be resisted.

You have mentioned unrest in the population as one of the reasons for the wave of arrests. What causes this unrest, and what explains the current upsurge in emigration?

It is the way in which the GDR deals with a number of domestic problems and conflicts: ecological issues highlighting the lack of political rights, the generally widespread feeling of being manipulated and excluded from the decision-making. The high- handed way in which gifts are handed out with the intention of rewarding some and punishing others...

...as, during the last year, in the question of travel permits to the West?

Exactly. Such a clumsy attempt to let off steam and open a small valve was simply bound to achieve the opposite, an increasing pressure for free travel. Many of those who have applied for an exit visa would not have done so if there had been a real relaxation in the GDR, a move towards legal security for instance. It is not so much the attraction of Western consumerism, although this is still a factor, but the absence of real democracy and the feeling that things aren't going to change in this respect. The unrest among youth and the current emigration movement are clear symptoms of the bitterness.

You have spoken of the as yet unpredictable reverberations of Soviet glasnost and perestroika in the party and state apparatus. But what about their effects on public attitudes? Does it encourage people to stand up for their rights with more confidence?

There is a lot of resonance for the new type of political leadership as personified by Gorbachev. The public solidarity actions in over thirty towns and cities in the GDR following our arrest are a reaction which, in the past, would have been totally unthinkable in the GDR.

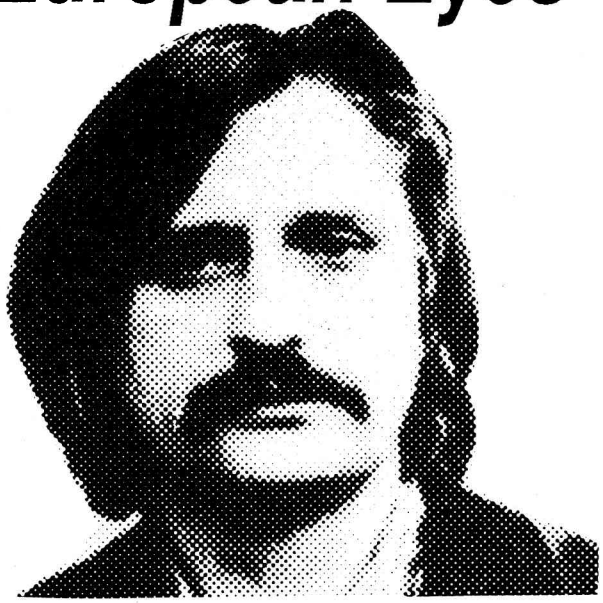
What are your plans for the future?

We are finding ourselves here in the Federal Republic in a completely unprecedented situation. We are here as political activists which we will continue to be as we were in the GDR. But we are also here as citizens of the GDR, with a valid passport. We shall take the agreement which has led to this situation by its word. We want to, and we shall, return to the GDR, and we wish to use the time spent here as a period of learning and study in the best sense: that is, to take back with us as much as possible of our experience with the peace and social movements here, and to involve ourselves in political developments here.

In *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe* No. 2/1987 Peter Brandt and Günter Minnerup argued for a socialist strategy in Europe to be based on a break with the Atlantic alliance, a "new deal" with the Soviet Union which would also create new space for the free development of Eastern Europe, and a democratic solution to the German Question. The essay aroused considerable interest and controversy and also appeared in *Die Neue Gesellschaft/Frankfurter Hefte* (No. 8, 1987), the official discussion journal of the West German SPD. Below we print the first reaction from Eastern Europe, by Jiri Dienstbier, a prominent signatory and currently a spokesperson of the Czechoslovak human rights movement Charter 77. Further contributions to this necessary and important debate will follow in future issues.

JIRI DIENSTBIER

A STRATEGY FOR EUROPE Through Central European Eyes



JIRI DIENSTBIER

(These remarks have been inspired by the article "Eastern Europe and the German Question" by Peter Brandt and Günter Minnerup, by the text "A Model for Detente" by Mary Kaldor and Mient Jan Faber, as well as by shifts in power relations.)

Despite the fact that many continue to assert the opposite, an awareness of the dysfunctional and dangerous dead end represented by the post-war status quo is now a common feature of the thinking of both ruling circles and independent movements in East and West alike. The persistence of the status quo is not the result of its usefulness but of fears about what will happen if we open Pandora's box. If the Americans go away, will the Russians subjugate Europe? If theRussians leave and are not able to return, what will the Czechoslovaks, the Poles or the Germans get up to?

The Europeans, gasping for breath in a poisonous atmosphere, follow the latest terrorist action on their television screens. What should be done? Knowing what previous attempts at change this century have meant, people do not want to take the risk that things may get worse. The "silent majority" hope that it will somehow be possible to see out their days in private life. However even in their sleep they are disturbed by nightmarish visions. On a visit to Prague an official of a leading New York bank complained that he was awakened in the night by thoughts of nuclear death. "His worries on our head", say the Czechs. Evenso, many of them justify their flight into social inactivity by the expectation of nuclear destruction.

Paradoxically this very despair is not totally hopeless. The bipolar superpower confrontation, the ever-rising technological level of the war danger, the threats to the environment and forebodings of the dangers inherent in the unresolved traumas of the Third World, all serve to highlight global questions and tend to displace the remnants of the national and ideological hatreds which were the reason for the decline of Europe.

Thoughts about perspectives for a peace which would replace the existing situation of no peace, no war have weakened the influence of the antiquated military-police, economic and ideological bureaucracies and have become a source of support for the free development of the individual and the democratic development of society, and bear witness to the fact that the black and white view of the world is dissipating. Illusions about one-sided and once-for-all-time solutions are not only morally unacceptable but above all politically impractical. The idea is getting through that either we all prosper or nobody does. The attempt to make contact across the barriers which artificially divide Europe is bearing fruit, among others in the greater permeability of the barriers themselves.

But if the debate is to develop onto the higher level of concrete common actions we need more than the general, abstractly-formulated aim of European unity. We also need to establish riteria cwhich will allow us to evaluate common positions and acts and exclude the misunderstandings which flow from different concepts, from diverse historical experiences, and the influences of different prejudices in particular European societies. We also need a political strategy which enables us to achieve our aims.

A young English woman, genuinely outraged both by the presence of American missiles in England and by the persecution of the signatories of Charter 77, surprised me with the questions: "Who is on the left, Jaruzelski or Walesa?" The communist general or the catholic worker?

Here we have the problem of criteria in a nutshell.

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When many people in the West look at the East they easily arrive at the conclusion that the public is in the grip of nationalism, Russophobia, uncritical admiration for the consumer society in the West and support for apolicy of pressure on the Soviet Union. Such attitudes do really exist. They are not, however, the result of rightist or nationalist ideologies, but have their origins in the concrete experiences of daily life. The political system, which was imported from the Soviet Union, is antagonistic to the traditions and needs of these societies and acts as a brake on social and economic development and has sometimes meant the restriction or even suppression of previously established freedoms. So far every attempt at reform has been frustrated. The system describes itself as socialist; it is therefore the word "socialist" whichpeople use to describe their negative experiences. For them socialism is what exists, "actually existing socialism". The citizens of our country, prevented from understanding the surrounding world by numerous obstacles, including censorship and jamming devices, who every few years or so save up enough for a trip to the West, as long as this is permitted, are shocked by the variety and quantity of goods in the shops and tend to think that they have been carried off to heaven. A 35-years-old worker went to West Germany for the first time this summer by car with his wife. In Nuremberg they went to buy fruit and vegetables. "My wife stood there", he told me, "looked at the counter and burst into tears. I could not stop her. It was ghastly."

The conceptual confusion is not limited to "socialism". Some Western visitors have explained to me the distaste which the words "freedom" and "democracy" arouse in their friends. These words have been taken over by the political-military establishment who justify arms build-ups and social manipulation by references to the "defence of democracy and freedom" against the "communist danger".

Further discussion soon reveals that the real aims of the different sides in this debate are in fact in agreement. Responsibility for one's own life, for one's work and for society. That is: freedom, democracy, justice. Or to give it a leftist phraseology, which is now even the official Gorbachevite terminology, the identity of democracy and socialism.

In the meantime, however, the fact remains that this sort of socialism does not exist and least of all in Central and Eastern Europe. The social order here offers its citizens less freedoms, less cultural and material values and a lesser share in the administration of public business than in Western Europe. To the English woman, it is therefore necessary to reply that at least in our part of Europe her question lacks any politically relevant meaning, at least until the time comes when it will be possible to formulate and test out in practice alternative political programmes. I would rather speak about a division into the proponents of an open or of a closed society, whether in power or in opposition. The decisive thing is whether in the application of one's opinions, of one's view of the world and one's beliefs one respects the values of others as of equal worth and inviolable or whether one forces, or wishes to force, others to accept your point of view as the only possible one, or as the dominant one. Whoever adheres to the principle of the open society is our ally, whatever their ideological standpoint.

Whoever wants to search for a new European perspective must neither open Pandora's box nor refrain from insisting on justified demands. Neither promises nor illusions but only real guarantees can overcome existing prejudices and win support for each new partial step towards a united Europe on a democratic basis. Such guarantees must be more than measures offering a merely temporary security, but which hold within them the certainty of new explosions - as has occurred with the recurrent Polish crisis - or even of a global catastrophe.

Nor should we necessarily consider our opponents as enemies. A dialogue with them is a condition of the historical compromises without which it is impossible to break out of the status quo. Many of the obstacles to this transformation are the result of the deformation of legitimate interests by the employment of illegitimate means, in attempts to ensure social and national security and to make revenge impossible. The solution which was reached after the Second World War is, however, evidently false and illegitimate. It has created parasitic layers whose privileges stem from the bipolar confrontation, and who are concerned about no interests other than their own - and this involves the rigid permanence of both internal and international relations.

There already exist some international political instruments which can be used to bring about changes. This is true first of all of the Helsinki process and its follow-up conferences. The need to use this process, and to strengthen its institutional base in governmental, but still more in unofficial civil forums, is already understood and accepted by a broader spectrum of democratic forces in Europe than was the case until recently.

It is especially important that, by signing international pacts about human rights, governments have accepted criteria by which not only other governments but also their own peoples can judge them. Those who imagined that they were signing simply a scrap

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of paper were mistaken. The development of European civilisation consists above all of the admittance of ever wider layers of the population into citizenship. Human rights are not therefore some abstract ideology but the supreme real consequence of this development. Their affirmation in international law only confirms what exists as a common heritage in the consciousness of the European nations, even, in fact especially, when they are suppressed. If they are thrown away they come back like a boomerang. And more, as the development of the Soviet Union demonstrates, to ignore these principles leads sooner or later to a social crisis, and the only way out of this crisis and onto the road of renewed development is through attempting to renew or realise what subsists in the European cultural-political consciousness as *normality*.

If the danger - or the security - of the present status quo is based on the American-Soviet strategic balance, then the unavoidable questions is: What to replace it with? Or, more dynamically, with what and how to gradually replace it?

In the paper "Eastern Europe and the German Question" (*Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*, Vol. 9, No. 2, July-October 1987), Peter Brandt and Günter Minnerup formulate their vision in this way: "A democratic and socialist Europe on the basis of equality and self-determination for all the peoples of the continent, without the USA but secured by a new type of historic compromise with the European and global power USSR; which

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would rest on mutual and common interests and thereby not only make the Soviet domination of Eastern Europe obsolete but also create more favourable conditions for a profound democratic-socialist transformation of the Soviet Union itself". The authors, however, recognise that an effective European security system, even one built on the basis of a revision of the position of the two German states, would require "a principled decision by the Soviet leadership to unconditionally and verifiably relinquish its political and military advantages on the European continent in favour of a fair accommodation between itself and the peoples of Western and *Eastern* Europe".

I would like to agree, with almost everything. However...

To talk about a socialist perspective also means to take note of the consequences of the disintegration of the socialist movement in the twentieth century. The international idea, and the International itself, and common interests in general have always turned out to be weaker than different short-term political priorities and the needs ofstates.

During the First World War there were only a few exceptions amongst the socialists to national particularism - for example Karl Liebknecht and in a different way Bohumir Smeral (Czech Social Democrat and founder of Czechoslovak CP - Transl.). The only party to remain internationalist as a whole was the Bolshevik Party: not, however, primarily for internationalist reasons. Their attempt to introduce socialism into a country where no preconditions existed other than the will of a smal lgroup of revolutionaries led them into a new particularism: they fell into the Stalinist trap, which concealed behind class rhetoric the unsolved problems of civilisation and the power requirements of the Soviet state.

The social democrats, however, also lost any common perspective face to face with this reality. Hitler's accession to power was among other things the result of the impossibility of reaching agreement between the German communists and social democrats, between ideological-political blindness and resignation.

The success of the Swedish social democracy and most recently of the Craxi government in Italy, and Brandt's *Ostpolitik* remain isolated. Even when Peter Glotz talks about a united European left, until now the social democrats have not created a solid model of a common European perspective. And much less is there any perspective which could gain the consensus of a majority of democratic societies, without which socialism has not, as its "actually existing" model shows, any socialist content nor the possibility of providing a pan-European vision.

We do not know where the present developments in the Soviet Union will lead. The socialist movement and its theoreticians originally understood socialism as the addition to the political and civil rights which already existed of social rights, creating more equal conditions for all through the removal of the privileges which flow from massive inequalities in the sphere of ownership of property, and the extension of representative democracy through self-management.

The attempt to achieve a structural transformation beyond Stalinism and Gorbachev's identification of socialism and democracy could be a political reflection of the fact that the conditions now at last exist in the USSR for the fulfillment of the aims of the October Revolution. Provided that this is the real nature of the processes at work, and it is not thwarted, then it is only now that a socialist perspective opens up for the Soviet Union.

In any case, a situation has arisen which offers the possibility for new political initiatives. What until only recently seemed fantastic, can today hopefully turn into an opportunity for overcoming the subordination to the status quo. It would therefore be senseless to rule out the possibility that the Soviet Union will take a principled decision and accept the freedom not only of the Western but also of the Eastern European nations as providing the best guarantees of its own security and a new source for its own development. In fact, one measure of the quality of Soviet democracy would be its ability to accept and integrate external and internal impulses.

However, even if the Soviet Union were to take this principled decision, this would not remove the psycho-political consequences of its weight as a great power on the European continent. It is hard to found European security on a "historical compromise with the European and global power of the USSR", since it is precisely the case that this power is not only European, but also - and above all - global. Because the world of power continues to have more force than the world of ideas, such a compromise requires a partner of equal weight. And in fact fears about the decline of American influence and the "new isolationism" are even today leading the West European statesmen in the direction of ideas about how to construct a military-strategic power structure within the West European community. In taking this road down a new blind alley, they can rely on the support of the majority of the population, who give priority to the certainties of a balance of power above the uncertain outcome of a compromise, even if a historic one, based on declarations of good will.

It is not possible to go around the American role in Europe. The fact that the Soviet Union is a European power and the United States is not - even if it arose mainly on the basis of immigration from Europe - can sometimes lead to the oversimplification: we need to reach an agreement with the Soviet Union, but the Americans can go away.

Brandt and Minnerup show in the course of their analysis of the new Soviet Westpolitik that Gorbachev's unilateral concessions in Europe do not mean a strategic weakening of the position of the USSR as long as agreement is reached on the removal of American missiles from Europe along with at least some American troops: neither the SS-20, the short range missiles nor the huge tank armies are really necessary as a counterweight to intercontinental missiles or even the Strategic Defence Initiative. We might also add that the Americans can withdraw from Europe without reducing the security of the United States itself. Even in the hypothetical case that the territory and resources of Western Europe were to fall into Soviet hands - which is an absurd idea - they would still be protected by their nuclear weapons beyond the ocean. The only thing which they would not be protected from is a general nuclear catastrophe.

This American position is well understood and sometimes leads to fears - what if the United States really did leave Europe? And why has it not yet done so? According to the leftist answer, they are imperialists, cultural imperialists, global cops. The great power and technological weight of the USA does, in fact, lead to the adoption of positions which are not in harmony with the interests of those affected by them. A certain "arrogance of power"

(William Fulbright) results from the widespread belief amongst Americans that all problems can best be solved by accepting their values as the best. It is however necessary to add that theUnited States are prepared to defend more in Europe than their own territory. There is not only idealism here, but also a sense of responsibility. The same criteria must be applied to this as to ourselves and to the Soviet presence in Europe outside its own territory. It is not an idealist construction, but a political fact that the division of Europe is a function of the Soviet-US confrontation. At the same time the division of Europe has become the main source of this confrontation.

Since getting out ofthis situation requires the removal of all foreign troops from the territories of European countries, the American presence is an important element of this process. This has been true since the end of the war. The occupation of only a small part of Czechoslovak territory enabled President Truman to successfully request of Stalin in November 1945 that all foreign troops should be withdrawn from Czechoslovakia by the end of the year.

The Americans decided not to persist with this sort of policy. They gave priority to the construction of a Western alliance over and above the attempt to force the withdrawal of foreign troops, to arrive at a peace treaty with Germany and establish the conditions for free European development. The justifications for the solution which was chosen are, to say the least, dubious. After the wartime losses Stalin was able to mobilise the population for the defence of the country, but for nothing else. He certainly did not have the resources for an attack on Europe and retreated everywhere where there was the will to resist. This was not only true in Iran, where the Americans took up the demand for the withdrawal of Soviet troops, but also in Yugoslavia for whom nobody spoke up. An agreement was made with Finland, and in any case the Americans had the monopoly of the nuclear bomb.

The post-war settlement has failed and the situation now has to be resolved after a forty-years delay. It would be unproductive simply to demand that the Americans should go away. They know themselves that they have not fulfilled their role, and because of the responsibilities which they have assumed they cannot simply drop everything and go. And this is despite the fact that the defence expenditures which flow from this involvement are beginning to seriously weaken the American economy itself. It should not also escape us that American thinking, which has hitherto operated with a black/white view of the world, has rapidly adapted to the new international situation and is now far more promising than the positions of some Western European politicians who seem frightened by the maturation of the inevitable changes in the status quo.

The development of European integration cannot be directed either against the Soviet Union or against the United States. Europe has an interest in each step towards Soviet-American understanding. At the same time Europe must be ready to articulate its interests. And these interests are not national, "class", or regional, but common and pan-European.

It is striking how insistently in Western European debates the concept "Europe" is only applied to Western European society. The Parliament of the West European community describes itself as the European Parliament. In our part of divided Europe, European consciousness is stronger. Integration limited to the Comecon is less an intention than a virtue borne of necessity: Groupings within the power structures who presently rule in Central and Eastern Europe by the grace of previous conservative establishments in the USSR see it as a guarantee of their hold on power at least in their lifetimes. According to Brandt and

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Minnerup, there are groups in Western Europe who are tied in a similar way to immobility.

It is not possible to replace the bipolar confrontation in the northern hemisphere by any partial solution - such as a new relationship between Western Europe and the Soviet Union. A multilateral solution is needed in which the different parties will be balanced in such a way that there is no dominant force and no fear of such a predominance occurring. This means that any solution must rely on the maximum and best forms of decentralisation of the subjects of this process, in a system sufficiently flexible to accommodate changing needs.

It must not aim at uniformity, typified by the American "melting pot" (which is today challenged by Hispanic, black and other cultural trends in the USA), nor through attempts at the creation of a united "Soviet people", communicating in Russian (and also called into question by the growing self-confidence of the nations of the USSR), but at the interaction of groups and national cultures, of autonomous creative elements of the colourful palette of pluralistic European culture and civilisation. Each individual and group interest which is justified in the spirit of European political culture and civilisation must have the opportunity to express itself. The mechanisms of public political control must be available to all the participants of the European process, to every European citizen as a basic precondition of success.

The goal is the demolition of the Berlin Wall, first in our heads and then in reality.

The German question is a veritable symbol of the division of Europe. The attitude towards it is the litmus test for the maturity of attempts to create a "common European home" for all parties, including the party of the apathetic. The position on the German question always signifies the extent to which someone is still entangled in national prejudices, the false notion of a "world divided by class", which in fact conceals a refusal to surrender positions of power and privilege, or at least the dubious sense of security which the bipolar division brings.

It is not so much a question of devising formal models for reunifying Germany (and certainly not of questioning existing borders or reversing population transfers - these days such ideas exist only in the heads of lunatics or in the pens of leftist propagandists, and arouse derision rather than fear).

I think that Richard von Weizsäcker expressed it well when he said that "Germany did not begin with Bismarck or end with Hitler". "Two states in Germany" is not a novelty in German history. The long periods of federalism, undergoing a variety of changes, provide a source for moderate solutions. On the other hand it is a dead end to suggest that these two German states are like fire and water, a proposition formulated by Erich Honecker and, in the same bipolar spirit, repeated by Helmut Kohl.

As in the whole of Europe, so in Germany the borders have lost their function as barriers, a function which is an absurd anomaly in the present moment of European history. They only

found this function in this century, and especially after the Second World War. Now in Western Europe the borders have almost disappeared again. Thus even here we have contemporary models for their removal.

Whether within this open Europe without barriers, the Germans decide that they want one, two or several state systems is entirely up to them, it is their right, just as it is the right of any community to organise itself according to its longings and needs.

The time has come for the Germans who are fighting for the ending of the division of Europe and of Germany to formulate their own ideas on how the German question can change from being an obstacle to becoming a means towards European unity. They would have to give special attention to the system of guarantees which would exclude any threats in the future. It is also necessary to be clear that such guarantees cannot arise unless democratic decision-making processes are in place throughout Europe, so that interests can be articulated and then brought into harmony through a democratic consensus. For this reason it is valuable that Peter Brandt and Günter Minnerup set about the task of destroying prejudices not from a nationalist but from a democratic point of view.

They also assert that "the true kernel of European political reality is the relationship between Germany (East and West) and the Soviet Union and that therefore the alteration of the status quo in Europe is, above all else, dependent on the structuring of this relationship". This is certainly at least symbolically true. Itcould also give a political signpost: we must start somewhere and why not here? The new basic law of Germany cannot however only be agreed between Germany and the Soviet Union, or, as the case may be, between Western Europe and the Soviet Union. Any perspective of such a new Rapallo would re-awaken, for example, Polish fears that a Russo-German agreement would present a threat to Polish interests: even if a new division or partition of Poland is not on the cards, the existence of a real political danger has already been demonstrated - for example by the refusal of the Western establishments, but also of sections of the independent and peace movements to grasp Solidarity's significance as a constructive element in a positive European development.

Such attitudes, which see manifestations of the suppressed interests of the societies to the East of the Sumava and the Elbe as disruptive elements of attempts to bring about agreements between states have already proved their inefficacy - and have contributed to the failure of the first phase of relaxation. However, the decisive obstacle to a German-Soviet agreement is the fact that the Germans themselves cannot formulate a common position until all the participants in the European process, including the United States, arrive at the basic political decision to replace the bipolar confrontation by collaboration in the framework of a new unity.

The fact that Kohl expressed his agreement with Honecker's remark about the fire and water shows that the political will does not exist at the present time either in Berlin or in Bonn. We see, therefore, that "the true kernel of European political reality" shifts, depending on where you look at it from - here from the point of view of intra-German relations.

It is necessary to reject the sterile notion that the justified aspirations of the inhabitants of Central and Eastern Europe are a destabilising factor.

Mary Kaldor and Mient Jan Faber shift the focus again when they ask Eastern Europe to help Western Europe. This is not, however, possible, as Brandt and Minnerup also understand, without the renewal of sovereignty of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Not because they would become opponents of the Soviet Union, or even change their alliances, even if this were possible, but so that they can formulate their interests as equal participants in the European process, rather than paying lip service to this principle through the co-ordinated foreign policy of the Warsaw Pact, as with the boycotts of the Olympics.

An Eastern policy on the basis of Western unity, the need for which has been expressed by Peter Glotz, and which does not presently exist, will not be created by the development of German-Soviet relations nor by the development of relations between Western Europe and the Soviet Union. It is necessary to reject the sterile notion that the justified aspirations of the inhabitants of Central and Eastern Europe are a destabilising factor. Quite the contrary: unless they are satisfied then the situation will remain fundamentally unstable, and there will be follow-ups to 1953, 1956, 1968 and 1980-81. Every time the necessary changes are suppressed by force we are plunged back into the vicious circle of the Cold War.

It is possible that Gorbachev's statement in the Italian paper *L'Unita* to the effect that an assessment of 1968 is "the business of the Czechoslovak comrades" represents a hint that Soviet policy might change in a good direction - even if he was intentionally ambiguous and avoided taking a position on the Soviet share in the 20-years-old Czechoslovak crisis. The development of the reform in Hungary, attempts at reform in Poland, Honecker's visit to Bonn, the change of direction of Todor Zivkov etc, show that this is not all mere rhetoric. We should not forget, however, that these minor changes have not dropped from the skies. A recognition that it is necessary to begin to overcome at least some of the obstacles to social development has been won at the cost of huge struggles. This is dramatically evident today in the life-and-death contest between progressive and conservative forces in Soviet society.

This positive development should not lull us to sleep or call up new illusions, all the more in that we do not know if they will crystallise into qualitative changes. Those who want to support this development should not fall into the error of thinking that it will be hindered by the assertion of justified political demands. If the struggles within the societies of Central and Eastern Europe are really a struggle between the forces of progress and reaction, then its progressive protagonists are our allies. However, we will find out their real position by how they respond to justified demands. We should not put them forward in an ultimatist fashion. We must also understand how complicated the struggle will be and not expect instant solutions. We have to patiently untie the tangled string, not cut it. Nevertheless we must call things by their real names and calmly and factually insist that it is necessary to create the conditions for a solution without which a positive development would be impossible today.

Both Mary Kaldor and Mient Jan Faber and Peter Brandt and Günter Minnerup note the decline in American influence and address themselves to the danger that the power vacuum will be filled by a "Western European defence system". They chart the

moves to disarmament in the Eastern half of Europe in reaction to the dramatic changes in the Soviet Union. "But the question of security remains untouched", since negotiations based on the senseless notion of a balance of power cannot lead to "much more than the re-affirmation of the status quo". And they believe that"the decline in the American presence in Western Europe must be met by changes in the political relations between the Soviet Union and the other countries of the Warsaw Pact". Their vision is one of a "demilitarised Europe, with open borders between East and West, and with meaningful detente and democracy", and the means are to be "the further removal of whole categories of nuclear weapons, a reduction in conventional weapons, the increase in contacts between European countries at all levels, the right for everyone to travel, tolerance, mutual respect and an open mind".

The fact that similar ideas have been coming out of England, Holland, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary and all places else, bears witness to the fact that, despite all the barriers, a common European consciousness exists. If several years ago each was speaking a separate part, now our voices are beginning to come together.

And what now? ask Kaldor and Faber.

In my view, our thinking and action needs to develop at two different independent levels: at the principled and at the strategic-tactical levels.

The principled level is formed out of the common values of European political culture and is not open to discussion. These are those normal and normative values which were fought for by generations of our predecessors. Because they are the outcome of the political struggles of the past - Magna Charta, Habeas Corpus, the Declarations of Human Rights from the French and American revolutions, social rights etc - they are in fact now "pre-political" values. Therefore we should not compromise on demands for freedom of expression, of assembly, of thought and belief, of unrestricted travel, even if this means we have to sacrifice what might seem to be the best possible concrete result from some negotiation. This does not mean that we should reject any dealings with those who do not respect such values. It has to be made plain, however, that any departure from this norm reduces the value of any agreement, and that compromise must not be capitulation, but a means to expand the area of human freedom and the scope of democratic conditions.

At the strategic-tactical level, efforts in Western Europe have chieflybeen concentrated on demands for limitation of weapons' systems, and in Eastern Europe on the removal of the obstacles to the renewal of normality. In recent years mutual recognition and an understanding of the demands of others have developed in the direction of a synthesis.

We could draw up a long list of concrete demands on which there is agreement, and another of those on which agreement should be possible. Among these belong the German question, as well as Polish Solidarity and institutions independent of the state in Central and Eastern Europe, the solution to technological unemployment, the filling of the vacant bishoprics in Czechoslovakia, the international arms trade, environmental pollution etc.

Positive developments in relations between the superpowers have once again thrust the question of maintaining security to the forefront. Discussions about further categories of nuclear weapons will continue and the Soviet Union has expressed its readiness to reconsider its attitude to the asymmetry of conventional forces in Europe. Proposals about nuclear-free zones, the banning of chemical weapons and many other things are on the negotiating table. It is also possible to think about the extension of the neutral zones in Central Europe as the first step towards the disbandment of the blocs.

Fears about an attack by conventional forces are a specific problem of European security. Negotiations about a transition to a decentralised defence have not even begun. The conception of a balance of power, with all its complex calculations, disputes between experts and problems of verification, cannot lead to a breakthrough, even if it has finally produced partial agreements. I have a concrete proposal: let us stop counting who has which weapon and let us make enemy number one one weapon of attack in particular: the tank.

The abolition of tanks and armoured cars, whose modern variants have long ago developed beyond traditional ideas of conventional weapons, would cripple the offensive potential without affecting the defensive capabilities of any country and would exert pressure towards a defensive military doctrine. It would be easy to verify their liquidation with modern satellite systems and the naked eye. Even if some were kept hidden, they would be no use, if it was not possible to test them and to train crews in the field.

The removal of tanks would have exceptional economic and ecological consequences. They visibly destroy the countryside - more than any other weapons, millions of tons of iron and of other metals, megawatts of energy and of human labour are locked up in them: all this would be saved.

The liquidation of the tank would also have exceptional psychological-political consequences. When people think of war they always call to the mind the image of a tank. For the inhabitants of Central and Eastern Europe, the tank is the symbol of Berlin 1953, Budapest 1956, Prague 1968 and Warsaw 1981. If the possibility that "the tanks will come" is excluded, this will not only increase confidence, it will provide it with a solid foundation.

The demand for the abolition of the tank is straightforward and comprehensive to everyone. It would be hard to justify opposing it: the tank is an instrument of aggression, the destruction of the environment and of economic waste.

It is something more than a weapon, it is a product of the creative spirit of our civilisation driven to the point of absurdity and the very borders of self-destruction. It is the vehicle which carries our civilisation to the crossroad of destiny.

October 1987

Translated from the Czech by Mark Jackson.

I have a concrete proposal: Let us make Enemy Number One the tank. For the inhabitants of Eastern Europe, the tank is the symbol of Berlin 1953, Budapest 1956, Prague 1968 and Warsaw 1981. It is a product of the creative spirit of our civilisation driven to the point of absurdity.

YUGOSLAVIA

On 15 March one hundred and forty years ago, two weeks after the publication of The Communist Manifesto, a revolution erupted in the Habsburg Monarchy which was both national and democratic in content: on that occasion, the Monarchy's South Slavs declared themselves in favour of unification within a common Yugoslav state. Today, on the anniversary of the 1848 revolution, the Western press reported the concern of France and West Germany that Yugoslavia may actually disintegrate, both economically and politically. The main problem, according to foreign ministers Delors and Genscher, is that the central government in Belgrade is simply too weak to tackle the problems of an insolvent economy.[1]

MICHELE LEE

AWAITING THE FUTURE

In March 1988 a whole number of pressing issues - ranging from competing national claims via the collapsing economy - to the nature and scope of the common state - are firmly present on the country's political agenda, not least because of the ruling party's impotence, flounderings and determination to avoid every opportunity for self-reform. Only the apparatus of repression seems to be intact - its activities, however, increasingly questioned by a press that reflects not only the country's leadership's internal differences, but also the uneven political and economic development of Yugoslavia's constituent republics.

Characteristic in this respect is the current dispute between the Federal and the Slovene public prosecutors, following a wave of criticism in sections of the Slovene press of a recent visit made by Branko Mamula, the Yugoslav minister of defence, to Ethiopia. *Mladina,* the weekly paper of the Slovene Socialist Youth Alliance, has questioned the rightness of selling arms to a government that is at war with its own people, arguing that the Ethiopian masses need not arms but food[2]. Confusing Admiral Mamula's civilian with his military function, *Mladina* aimed its criticism at the Yugoslav Peoples' Army itself: fear that Yugoslavia may be nurturing its own Jaruzelski has become widespread in the northernmost republi[3]c. This prompted the Federal government to lean onthe SLovene judiciary to institute criminal proceedings against *Mladina*'s editor Frani Zavrl, and another Slovene journalist, Andrej Novak of *Teleks*, for their 'attack' on the army. The Slovene public prosecutor complied and countered the ensuing public outrage by referring to his own impotence before the constitutional powers of the Federal instance. Irritated by this lack of bureaucratic solidarity, the Federal prosecutor responded by publicly denying any role in the affair, thus in effect calling his republican colleague a liar. Hence, what began as a case of 'the state versus the press' turned into a case of 'the federation versus the Slovene republic'- and inevitably also into one of the 'Slovene national problem'[4]. For its part, *Mladina* has remained unbowed: its print run has almost doubled in the last year, to 30,000 copies, which is a staggering number given that the Slovene nation in Yugoslavia numbers less than 2 million people and that Mladina is a youth paper.

The fact that official Serbian press had called precisely for such action (i.e. criminal prosecution of Slovene editors and journalists), with the once great Belgrade daily Politika - now reduced to role of local party rag - even accusing Mladina of state treason, is not accidental. This is because the leadership of that republic has nailed its flag firmly to the mast of a new centralism. What is more, the Serbian party is today headed by a man widely perceived as a neo-Stalinist. The spectre of a recharged authoritarian state, under the guise of Yugoslav unitarism, haunts today Yugoslav critical intelligentsia, irrespective of its regional and ethnic membership.

This fear is fuelled by the continued fall in the gross national product: unprecedented economic stagnation and high inflation have remained impervious to the various 'reforms' undertaken by successive Yugoslav governments[5]. It is universally acknowledged that lastyear was like its predecessors, only worse; and that this year will conform to the same pattern. However, this response does not take into account the tectonic shift which has taken place in Yugoslav politics, transforming the familiar landscape into a wholly new terrain. Post-war Yugoslavia was built on a consensus between the two main forces: the working class and the Party. Today, this consensus no longer exists. A visible aspect of this momentous development is the growing militancy of workers in industry and social services. Workers today are better organised and increasingly ready to take their demands for a living wage and responsible government onto the streets and before government buildings. The time when workers on strike remained within factory walls is gone for good; today they are marching and occupying city squares. To be sure, workers' self-organisation is only at its initial stage, but one should not underestimate the damage which this growing self-reliance is inflicting upon the party bureaucracy, unaccustomed as it is to open confrontation with its historic base. As a result, the party is in disarray: the rising pressure exerted at its base can no longer be accommodated by the apparatus. The greater the gulf between the two, the more profound and systemic does the crisis becomes. Workers' strikes should not be seen as only defensive: it is a necessary stage of the class's positive self-definition.

The vacuum opened up by this breach is today being filled by increasingly radical (though not necessarily left-wing) programmes drawn by the country's intelligentsia. Their comprehensive character, however, contain a central vagueness regarding the question of who is to be the agent of the necessary reform. The choice of the agent and the character of the reform are intimately related: no assessment of the latter can be made without reference to the former. Without disregarding considerable differentiation, one can speak toady of the existence of two broad fronts - both of which, however, share the premise that political democratisation is vital if control is to be re-established over the rapidly deteriorating political and economic life of the country. One approach seeks. on the one hand, the, removal of the state from control of the economy (regulation of the latter being left basically to 'free market forces), and, on the other, removal of the party's control over the state, replacing it with a system of parliamentary democracy. Whether such a system should be multi-party or not is a matter of debate: while some argue that democracy depends on freedom to organise, others fear that freely constituted parties would become vehicles of national strife, citing the history of pre-war Yugoslavia as a negative example. There are differences regarding the extent to which the electoral system should be adjusted to reflect the multi-ethnic composition of the country: in Slovenia, for example, the idea of replacing the existing federation with a confederation has been rapidly gaining groundamong otherwise quite dissimilar political currents; this reflects above all Slovene

industry's frustration with the rising demands made upon it by the Federal government, especially in order to subsidise the latter's foreign currency obligations, but also the fear of centre-led bureaucratic counter-revolution. Similar frustration exists in Croatia, another main exporter to the West. In Serbia, on the other hand, it is almost part of the local common sense that Yugoslavia is already not a federation but a confederation, and that the main task lies in the amending the 1974 Constitution in favour of greater centralisation. Whereas in Slovenia and Croatia, there is the emergence of a working relationship between the intellectuals and the party leaderships on what is called 'modernisation' of the economy and the state, in Serbia the basis for this is increasingly provided by nationalism[6]. The developments in Serbia over the past few years can best be described as tragic for the country as a whole[7]. Likewise, in the three federal units who only only a year ago declared themselves bankrupt (Macedonia, Kosovo and Montenegro), dependency on a redistributive Federal centre is the starting point of any discussion on political reform.

Whatever the differences, however, democratisation of the state and liberalisation of the economy - with the workers having the right to organise free trade unions - commands practically universal agreement. That this projection heralds an end to the Yugoslav system of self-management is either implied or positively argued. Indeed, giventhat one is dealing here with affirmation of the market in both goods and labour, and that the reform is likely to lead to an increase in the already high level of unemployment (some 1.2 million out of a working population of 6 or 7, unevenly distributed among the Yugoslav regions), it is obvious why the working class is ruled out as the main carrier of the reform. The choice falls instead on state institutions, such as the Federal/ republican assemblies. Even the idea of an imposed constitution and a government of 'good men and true' has been mooted. In an economy plummeting below the level of subsistence, it is assumed that workers would not resist such changes even if they did not approve of them: the majority might even welcome an extension of democracy coupled with a promise of economic revival. The texts of Omerza and Korosic published bellow, albeit written from very different political starting points, both belong to this first broad current. The central argument in both texts is that the existing category of social ownership - the foundation stone of Yugoslavia's post-war system, since it structures relations of production there - should be abolished. This, of course, implies a complete transformation of internal and external economic and political relations. Some of this is spelt out in Korosic's own programme. It would be difficult to underestimate the scope of change envisaged in this orientation.

The other current seeks the path of change not only but also through democratisation of the party. Such a position was recently expressed, in a rare public appearance, by Gajo Petrovic, one of the most respected of Yugoslav philosophers and a founding father of the journal *Praxis*: 'In recent times one increasingly hears the opinion that the situation inside the Yugoslav League of Communists is so hopelessly bad that the organisation should be left to die its own death. It is argued that one should instead try to create outside and independently of the Party - through some other existing (or new) institution or body, or outside all institutions and bodies - if not a socialist democracy, then at least some kind of civil society or legal state. Some of these ideas undoubtedly have merit. But it is wrong simply to leave the Party out of such thinking. The LCY is, not only factually but also constitutionally, the ruling state party (which I do not approve, but merely point out), so without its democratisation and de-bureaucratisation no serious democratisation of the whole society is possible. A bureaucratised LCY will fight by all means to maintain its political monopoly. Only a democratised LCY would consent to "political pluralism" in any form. This is why the struggle for democratisation is a necessary moment of the struggle for democratisation of society as a whole; and it is the right and duty of every citizen of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to criticise the bad situation in the LCY and to support the democratisation ofthat organisation'.[8]

This is an advice that cannot be faulted. Indeed, one of the most surprising aspects of Yugoslav polities today is the absence of suggestions regarding this most pressing and important task. The character of the reforms being undertaken in the USSR and China seems, if anything, to have strengthened public lack of interest in the condition and affairs of the Party. Even those 'liberal' and left-leaning currents within the LCY who, only a year ago, were advocating the creation of a 'progressive bloc' of anti-bureaucratic forces in and out of the party, or the transformation of the Socialist Alliance into an 'oppositional' force, have fallen silent. The few gains made in Croatia, where the last election of the republican party's central committee involved a choice of candidates, have turned out to have been quite ephemeral. In Serbia proper, a substantial regression has been registered with the recent change in leadership. Only in Slovenia is the space for alternative tendencies and programmes actually being enlarged. The weakness of the federal government, moreover, is an expression of this uneven political development: it is due, in the last instance, to the collapse of the LCY as a party in any meaningful sense of the word; to its implosion into a purely bureaucratic, state-dominated core. Democratisation of the LCY, both organisationally and politically, is therefore a *sine qua non* of any positive resolution of the Yugoslav crisis. Again, this poses the question of who is to be the agent of de- bureaucratisation of the LCY. For Petrovic, this should be the Yugoslav citizens. To judge by by the Polish experience, however, it is more likely to be the increasingly self-confident and self-organised working class.

No programme which does not appeal to the latter's class interests is likely to succeed: the party bureaucracy, with its long experience of governing, is fully aware of this, which is why it feels itself impotent. The economic crisis has grown out of the long-term conflict between its own privileges and the interests of this class: the result is the growing disintegration of Yugoslavia as a political and economic unity. Unable to make a radical turn either to the right or to the left, since both threaten it with loss of power, its ideological machinery is churning out programmes and documents that satisfy nobody. Though considerable differences exist within it[9] are balanced by the equally strong tendencyto close ranks. The key to the balance of power within the Party lies , in the last instance, of what the working class does in the period ahead.

The texts below indicate that the reform that is necessary for ending the Yugoslav crisis must be as comprehensive as the crisis itself. These authors, and many others who have written programmatic texts, have made a vital contribution in doing so. Yet they both suffer from the same weakness: defeatism. Whereas Korosic openly admits that the country is condemned to the *status quo*, Omerza, belonging to a different generation, hopes against hop that at least some of the leadership can be made to see reason and act accordingly. This sense of defeatism is quite realistic, within the framework of their perspectives. However, no successful blueprint for a thoroughgoing reform of the sclerotic institutions of the Yugoslav state and politics can be drawn unless it is pivoted on the working class, and hence also on the historic interest of that class. As Omerza writes, today the dead are strangling the living. The future, however, belongs to life: at least one can say that some green shoots are visible today in the bleak landscape of Yugoslav politics. This is because the ground itself is changing, in conformity with the tectonic shift itself.

Footnotes

1. *The Guardian*, London, 7/3/1988. This is a year of several anniversaries for the Yugoslavs: seventy years ago Yugoslavia came into being; forty years ago it broke with Stalin's Cominform; twenty years ago the student movement provided the glimpse of a political revolution.
2. *Mladina*, Ljubljana, 12/2/1988.
3. Though this fear may not be realistic, recourse to the army at some future date cannot be excluded. An actual military coup is highly improbable, though candidates may be found among the large number of retired military officers, of whom as many as 10,000 live in Novi Sad, 7,000 in Split; there are apparently 800 retired generals and 18,000 retired colonels living in Belgrade. Organised in their own associations, and with time on their hands, they have been busy recommending a policy of the "firm hand" as a universal medicine for the country's ills. *Mladina* in particular and the Slovene Socialist Youth Association in general have been their

favourite targets. There are some signs also that the middle layer of active army cadre is getting restless now that their living standards are falling, along with those of other citizens.

4. The editors of the army journal *The People's Army* joined in this campaign. They argued in favour of legal proceedings on the grounds that *Mladina*'s articles are "only one expression of anti- socialist and anti-self-management destructive activity on the position of nationalism and separatism. (*Mladina*'s) attack on the army is an attack on Yugoslavia". Quoted in *Danas*, 1/3/1988. Mamula's own response, in contrast, was more tempered. As the campaign against *Mladina* grew to include calls for a purge of the Slovene leadership, the leadership decided to comply with the Federal request.

5. In 1987 investment fell by 16%; capital reserve funds to 16.5% of the GNP; losses in the economy in the first nine months were up 155%; inflation was at 170%. "The two years of Mikulic's government have been catastrophic. Between 1987 and 1988 the economy has practically collapsed under the combined effects of falls in production, exports, imports, investment, capital reserves and personal incomes. The effects of this collapse may not look dramatic, since we do not have a stock exchange and people are not throwing themselves out of windows, but everybody knows that we have become the sick man of Europe", Cedo Zic, *Start*, Zagreb, 5/3/1988.

6. The "ethnocentric" bloc in Serbia is, of course, not a monolithic entity. Optimists argue that some of its elements, such as the Belgrade Committee for Freedom of Thought and Expression, even provide welcome humorous relief. When not concerned with the Albanian birth rate, its members are busy redrawing internal Yugoslav frontiers. Its suggestion for amending the current Yugoslav constitution include "elevation" of the Republic of Croatia's regions of Istria, Dalmatia and of the erstwhile HabsburgMilitary Border to the status of Autonomous Provinces, to balance the two in the Republic of Serbia. They also argue against the principle of national equality at the federal level: it is, apparently, unjust that one Montenegrin vote should have the same weight as 18 Serb ones.

7. This is evident in the Belgrade press. The daily *Politika* and the weekly *Nin*, once leading Yugoslav journals both in quality and readership, are now in the service of a parochial dogmatism. Only in the last few months, the circulation of *Nin* has dropped from 200,000 to 70,000 copies. The back pages of *Politika* are today given over to interminable obsessive features on Serbia's past: its battles, its dynasties, its unique sufferings. This change is all the more serious given that Belgrade is Yugoslavia's capital city.

8. *Danas*, Zagreb, 23/2/1988.

9. The brutality with which the struggle within the bureaucracy is waged, at meetings and in the press, is degrading the country's public life on a daily basis. Today, it is a common occurrence for journals published in one republic to be banned in another: the recent arrest of the *Mladina* street vendor in Zagreb was paralleled by the confiscation of another Slovene youth paper, *Katedra*, in Belgrade. In a ringing denunciation of this practice, a well-known Belgrade journalist wrote recently that "protection" of the readers of one region from information coming from "foreign" territories elsewhere in the country is turning all Yugoslavs into foreigners in their own land. Alexander Tijanic, "The Art of Disintegration", *Danas*, Zagreb, 1/3/1988.

MARIJAN KOROSIC

Condemned to the Status Quo[1]

The first analyses of the Yugoslav crisis appeared back in 1979, but since then the negative trends have continued. Today, we are dealing with a general and not only an economic crisis. What is happening in Yugoslavia today is senseless. It is against common sense that a three-member working-class family, with both mother and father working, after paying the household bills, is left with money enough to buy only a litre of milk, a kilogramme of bread and one egg daily. It is contrary to common sense that, in the name of economic stabilisation, pensioners are robbed of a month of their pension. Also, although there is a great demand - even among those who can afford to buy - for housing, our building workers are jobless. We could produce an infinity of such examples. The crisis which has engulfed the Yugoslav society and is embedded in it very foundations would be illogical even for a Third World country. It is keeping a large part of the population in poverty, difficulties and impotence. If I were a populist I would now repeat the old maxim: the source of the crisis is the poverty of the masses. But how has this come to be, when we live in beautiful and promising times? Peace reigns in Europe and there is no danger of an armed aggression against Yugoslavia. Why such a poverty in a country which is reasonably well endowed with raw materials and is populated with intelligent and hard-working people? Why is it that we cannot find a solution to the crisis?

The fundamental problem lies in the socio-economic system, that is, in its fundamental category of 'social ownership', which we economists do not understand. What kind of ownership is it when the Constitution defines it as nobody's and everybody's? What problems arise from this can best be seen in the events following the bankruptcy of Agrokomerc. Nobody knew what to do in such a case; to whom theproperty belonged. The result was that the property was dissipated: something that had been created, which worked and produced value,was destroyed. The socio-economic system does not allow the competition of other forms of ownership. Private ownership, which today is something quite different from what it had been in Marx's time, is a category that could be developed in harmony rather than conflict with the Constitution, but this is not allowed.

Further problems relate to the fragmentation of the economy into thousands of Basic Organisations of Associated Labour and the again fundamental category of income, which also does not make sense. This system legitimises the situation in which everybody tries to maximise their income not by efficiency, the lowering cf production costs, but by raising prices. We are therefore condemned to an inflation of around 200%. Without competition, without a market mechanism to determine income sources and decision-making, there is no way out of the crisis. The market mechanism must be primary, with state plan stepping in to correct the market where it is necessary: in the infrastructure, the building of roads and railways and in agriculture. This does not imply the elimination of social ownership, but its redefinition. Slavko Goldstein and I have produced a ten-point programme for solving the crisis aimed at stimulating rather than restricting economic activity. The fundamental demand of thisprogramme is that the state should declare itself in favour of an open economy. We have also demanded that the work currently expended on amending the constitution be suspended as inadequate. The basic trend of these amendments is positive, but they do not go far enough. For example, it is suggested that the current land maximum be raised from 10 to 15 hectares, which is logical but will be ineffective since a family can, with the help of agricultural machinery which is available today. work 150 to 200 hectares. All amendments are of this nature: not one of them represents a real turn of the kind we need today.

Our suggestion that the Yugoslav Assembly, on the basis of Article 301 of the Constitution, initiates emergency measures including appointment of a Provisional Government that would put them into practice, has caused much commotion. Lawyers say that this is impossible and that we are interpreting the Constitution incorrectly. If this is true that there is no way out of this situation through normal [constitutional] channels.

We have also been criticised for arguing that the Fund for the development of underdeveloped republics and Kosovo be suspended. We have however suggested that it be replaced with a Bank for Development, through which aid would be directed on the basis of economic criteria.

We have also suggested a consistent and rigorous strengthening of a monetary authority independent of political power. Healthy currency is the most effective opposition to any government. Self-management must mean the independence of every economic subject, and so also of banks, both national and commercial.

Further, be believe that it is important to reduce budgetary spending. This relates in the first instance to defence. Some 70% of the [federal] budget is spent on the armed forces and a similar sum goes [from other sources] to General People's Defence and Social Self-Protection - that is, 10% of the GNP goes for this purpose. This is undoubtedly excessive. Today, there is no real danger of war and we even see weapons being destroyed - not many, but it is a good sign nevertheless.

Our demand that we revise he the principles of our foreign policy and turn towards Europe has caused strong reactions, in particular from [previous foreign secretary] Raif Disdarevic and [prime minister] Branko Mikulic. We believe, however, that Yugoslavia will be unable torealise its development ambitions by relying on underdeveloped countries. Yugoslavia must strive to become a member of the Common Market while retaining its socialist system. This does not mean weakening ties with the countries of Eastern Europe and the Third World. Finally, as our Point No.10 we wrote: 'The LCY should go back to its most important and most progressive principles proclaimed in its Ljubljana programme of 1958, when it gave up the role of the "ruling party" and

chose for itself the role of leader in the development of a pluralist socialist democracy...

Korosic's lecture was followed with a questions-and-answers session. Several members of the audience asked who would be the agent of the necessary change. Korosic's replies included the following: ' We appeal to the LCY but we are not sure that it can play this role. The working class? It is, as Zupanov[3] has shown, conservative and in coalition with the political bureaucracy. We do not have a productive intelligentsia. I believe that Branko Horvat was right when he said that we have only sold intellectuals, people who have sold themselves for a few pieces of silver. So, our programme is bound to remain utopian.'

The speaker was criticised for describing the 1965-74 period as 'the most brilliant phase of Yugoslav development': how could this be when a million people migrated, including 20,000 university-educated men and women. He replied: 'We cannot solve our crisis, increase our exports and restructure our economy and maintain the existing level of employment. One must reject one part of the organism for others to develop, and the labour force cannot simply be 'decanted' elsewhere. It must take this burden and endure the transitional period. Why is it bad for people to emigrate? If we had endured then, if your fellow students had not rebelled so much in '68, if they in the last instance had not overthrown the reform, the majority would have returned and we would all be living better today.'

When I talked earlier of possible subjects of change, I had intentionally omitted the one which I believe to be the main subject of change in all societies today. This is the technical intelligentsia - I intentionally use this neutral term rather than "technocracy". They can use their knowledge and skills not in order to acquire power but for the benefit of and wellbeing of every individual and all the people. This role could in the main be played by young people with modern skills.'

Footnotes

1. This is a shortened version of a lecture given to Zagreb students on the 19/1/1988 and subsequently published in the local student paper *Studentski list*. When the issue appeared, it was confiscated and most of its print run destroyed. The reason for this punitive action by the Croatian authorities was this article, in addition to three others dealing, respectively, with misuse of psychiatry in Yugoslav penal institutions, harassment of the Slovene student paper *Katedra* (published in Maribor) and the sexual policy of some Belgrade journalists. This last article was condemned in the Zagreb press as "sexist", and it seems with reason. More recently, Croatian police manhandled a street vendor of *Mladina*: the cover of the issue sold, portraying an exhibition of war meorabilia in a fictional museum of revolution, included a supposed Italian wartime poster carrying the slogan "The End of Yugoslavia" to which the authorities took exception.

2. In December 1987, Korosic and Goldstein, another economist, published a ten-point programme: 1) The Yugoslav Assembly should declare a completely open economy: a) every citizen can set himself up as an independent economic subject; b) the Law of Associated Labour should be suspended; c) plurality of ownership forms should be introduced, which - in addition to the existing state/social ownership - would allow also private, cooperative and shareholding forms; d) complete freedom of import and export; e) free wage formation in the social sector; f) the current system of enterprise income calculation should be ended; g) most prices to be freed from control; h) positive encouragement of private initiative and accumulation; i) closure of unprofitable enterprises. 2) the present work on constitutional amendments should be stopped. Using existing constitutional powers, the Assembly will nominate a Council for Constitutional Reform, with wide powers, which will work on the basis of alternative programmes submitted to it. These will, in turn, be submitted to the nation for decision. 3) The Assembly will bring a Provisional Law, valid for two years, to oversee the transition to the new constitution. The transition will involve preparation of new elections to the Assembly. In the meantime, a Provisional Government would run the country. 4) Greater powers should be given to the republics, that would recognise established economic and cultural differences. 5) Federal laws to strictly safeguard the unity and integrity of the Yugoslav internal market. 6) Greater authority to and independence of the National Bank from the state. 7) Reduction of the state budget and reform of administration. 8) Regeneration of business ethic on the basis of strict respect for the law. 9) Abandonment of the politics of non-alignment in favour of a greater orientation towards Europe, including membership of the economic blocs. 10) The LCY is to give up its political autonomy and become a vanguard organisation, a leader in the struggle for socialist democracy. *Danas*, 1/12/1987.

3. Josip Zupanov is a well-known Yugoslav sociologist, author of several studies of the country's industrial sector.

IGOR OMERZA

A Little Ship on a Blue Sea[1]

In this past year as in every other, Yugoslav citizens have been faced with a cornucopia of incomprehensible political and procedural ritual. The year just ended was full of laws adopted under extraordinary (and not so extraordinary) measures; acceptances and rejections of federal and other resolutions; reform of, and alterations to, the anti-inflation programme; intensification of 'serious' debates on changes to the Constitution and to the Law of Associated Labour. The menu was made more attractive by the sudden appearance of the latest act in the political cabaret: for the first time, the possibility was raised of the federal government's resignation. Has all this activity produced a single spark of hope for the weary nation? As much as is left of the last year's snow. Why should this be?

The Ship of Fools

Despite the liveliness of political events, which - through the republican-provincial fights in the Federal Assembly or behind the scenes - disclose an increasingly real and visible multi-party system, there is no hope whatsoever that this colourful interaction of diverse material interests might produce a lasting reversal of Yugoslavia's economic, social, cultural and moral decline. Even those devoid of genius or prophetic power can predict that, despite all this 'turbulence' at the political summit, inflation will continue to grow uncontrollably, the exhaustion of the economy and its productive capacity will intensify, the material and moral wellbeing of the majority of the citizens will continue to deteriorate, and the already unbearable condition of the social services will grow worse.

If one were observing quite objectively the evolution of events, one can easily gain the impression that Yugoslavia is a ship of fools, piloted by a demented captain and crew who - precisely because they are unaware of their own madness - are competently guiding the ship to an inevitable doom.

Such an impression would not be quite correct. For many, if not most, members of the Yugoslav political aristocracy are conscious of the catastrophic situation of the country and the complete hopelessness of their own crisis-management. However - for such reasons as: fear of losing social and material privileges; ideological and personal blindness with respect to Edward Kardelj's theoretical legacy; total lack of criticism of themselves and their activities; and, finally, their feeble (if existent) theoretical formation - the party and state elite are unable to contemplate asurgical cut into the tissue of the Yugoslav state body. What does this imply?

Social Ownership - Quo Vadis?

It should be clear even to a blind man that the Yugoslav political and economic structure is badly deformed, and that this painful and unbearable situation has for decades now been developing and reproducing itself in an accelerating and increasingly frightening spiral. Incorrect, misconceived, and voluntarist allocation of social productive resources started immediately after the War, though this was disguised at first by revolutionary elan, by the relatively small scale of production and by an insatiable market; later also by injection of foreign capital.

The historical roots of this deformation lie indirectly in world, and above all East European, developments since the start of the century. In a direct sense, however, they stem from the manner in which relations of production have been formed and have functioned in post-war Yugoslavia. Above all, they lie in the political and ideological settlement at the start of the 1970s. I shall return to this in a moment.

Relations of production are largely expressed as property relations. In Yugoslavia, they are defined as relations which grow out of social ownership. The totality of relations of production form the economic structure of the society, which is enveloped in political, social and cultural relations and in various political forms (dominated by the ideology of the ruling class). Hence any change in the economic structure must begin with a change in the relations of production: that is, in our case, with a fundamental restructuring of so-called social ownership.

It is understandable that our political bureaucracy should continuously and, in a hair-splitting and pedantic fashion, stress the inviolability of existing social property. For it is clever enough to realise that it stands or falls with it. Those, on the other hand, who are not particularly concerned with the happy fate or otherwise of Yugoslavia's leaders, but who take state and social development too seriously either to laugh at the madmen or to leave it to the particular interest of a small minority in society, must allow themselves the luxury of saying everything they think about this social property. Happy are these days when you can think what you want, write what you think and publish what you write in *Mladina*!

Factories to the Workers!

It is not possible to solve the multidimensional Yugoslav crisis with any particular set of economic measures (even if the government were headed byGod the Father or Alexander Bajt[2]. Absolutely

nothing can be hoped for from the enforced, and totally scholastic, changes to the Constitution and the Law of Associated Labour. Rather, one must grasp problems by their roots; for its is necessary to revolutionise old social and political relations, which are deeply intertwined and which have become a fetter on social development. It is necessary to put together an effective and winning combination of economic science and operational politics.

Such an alternative would: first, define social property as the collective property of the workers employed in a give enterprise; secondly, allow mixed enterprises to exist, since the two could easily co-exist in mutual cross-fertilisation (this would require that share ownership be simultaneously legalised); thirdly, require only minimal capital as condition for establishing a new productive unit; fourthly, allow foreign capital (productive and financial) invested in Yugoslavia to retain its private character; fifthly, allow and protect (under some federal emergency law) classical private investment in Yugoslavia, based on the profit and loss motive. THis would bring the downfall and final destruction of the sterile and meaningless mechanism of the self-managing association of labour and resources.

The Paths and Detours of Theory and Practice

Social ownership, as presently defined, prevents the development of a market economy, since it allows (because of a lax and imprecise constitutional definition) a continuous transfer and socialisation of the social surplus value, separating it from workers' control and economic rationality. It is not surprising that our social 'scientists' have exhaustingly and pedantically systematised this concept wholly devoid of content. One is reminded here of those 'well-meaning' scholastics of the Middle Ages who spent centuries debating whether saint Mary's conception was immaculate or not.

Realisation of the above seemingly simple programme would, I am profoundly convinced, establish tolerable conditions for the emergence of that celebrated - and here in Yugoslavia often too-much idealised and too-little understood - commodity production. Only at this point does the modern state become effective. Naturally, one can expect those permanent and well-paid guardians of socialism to attack sharply all this, on the grounds that it constitutes an attack on ocialism and promises the restoration of capitalism. Their task would be made easier if they could prove that socialism exists either here in Yugoslavia or anywhere else in the world, or persuade their public that socialism can be built on the basis of an ever-diminishing material foundation. How can one attack something that does not exist?

I personally believe that here in Yugoslavia we have today a dominance of capitalist economic categories, albeit suppressed, clogged up and deformed beyond recognition; and that their elimination is possible only through their full development. THis is why I cannot describe this programme theoretically - and with due respect to those who have devoted their lives to the struggle against capitalism - as anything but a programme for revitalisation of Yugoslavia's real, though suppressed, capitalism. This process is necessary if we wish at some point in the future to realise our dream of a happy communist finale to our Yugoslav and common history.

The Dead Hold the Living

I must now return to the 1970s, here in Yugoslavia and in the world. At the end of the 1960s the world, above all its most developed part, witnessed the end of the long wave of capitalist boom - which had gained momentum through military spending in the Second World War, and through the fairly large increase in surplus-value extraction made possible by the atomisation of workers' power as a result of fascism and war. The end of the high rate of growth and employment in the capitalist world operated, through the medium of the international market and its institutions, to produce a considerable effect on the position and perspective of the so-called developing countries. In no time at all, an unprecedented struggle among the major capitalist states began, whereas here on the periphery it was a matter of finding a more comfortable position in the changing circumstances of the world capitalist economy. Yugoslavia found itself on the crossroads. The choice was either to enter the game with its strongest cards, or to sacrifice state and social development on the holy altar of the party's political monopoly, which has survived beyond its natural time. The majority of the key actors did not even understand the global implications of this dilemma. The uncomprehending majority of the time understood only that this monopoly must be given a new ideological cover. Two simultaneous responses emerged in the event. The first was swept away along with the progressive currents in the parties of Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia. In this manner, a historic opportunity to create a more democratic state was lost. The second response, formulated by Edward Kardelj and sVladimir Bakaric, was to dress the good, old well-tried 'Bolshevism' up in new clothes, thus legitimising a new theoretical legacy by which the whole of the party nomenklatura today swears, and which is one of the main culprits for the current global crisis, being at the same time the high wall against which all progressive and meaningful discourse about how to get out of thecrisis has broken... This is why the first task of all who wish to propose a concrete and radical change in the economic structure is to use all available guns to blow up and scientifically destroy so-called self-managing socialism and its concepts: free exchange of labour; revenue-inspired cooperation and agreement; associated labour; social property that belongs to nobody and everybody; the pluralism of self- managing interests; and so on.

Without exposing the empty content of 'self-managing scholasticism' - which enjoys powerful and many-sided protection from the party and thus exerts a deadly influence on real events - it is impossible to think through any essential change in the Yugoslav system of production. If we do not destroy the 'self- managing' theoretical legacy, it will collapse on its own, in which case we shall end up inheriting bayonets.

A wide-ranging cadre renovation of party-state functions would make no essential difference, since Yugoslav cadre policy is like the dragon that grows and new and stronger head for each that is cut off. The 'electoral' sieve in any case lets through only those who have sworn to uphold the existing theoretical dogma, which, as I have tried to indicate. is the main barrier to all real social development.

At all events, the dead 1970s have been the deadly cradle of the catastrophe of the 1980s. If reason were to prevail over our party's wish for undivided power, then men of Kavcic's[3] cast could steer the Yugoslav boat into a calm port. However, those in Slovenia and Yugoslavia who, in the 1970s, successfully defended and strengthened their positions remain in power today - at the price of the country's development.

Footnotes

1. *Mladina*, 8/1/1988

2. Alexander Bajt is one of Slovenia's best-known economists, head of the Economic Institute in Ljubljana and a tireless advocate of a "sound money" policy.

3. Stane Kavcic, wartime secretary of the Slovene Communist Youth Organisation, subsequently occupied highest party and state posts in Slovenia and Yugoslavia. In the early 1970s he was purged, in the context of a vituperous campaign against "technocracy", for advocating some of the measures outlined here. Kavcic died two years ago, in complete political isolation broken only by a new crop of younger intellectual activists.

AGNIA MENDELEEVA

"I'M OF VYSOTSKY'S GENERATION AND I LOVE IT!"

On 24 January 1988, the eve of the 50th anniversary of Vladimir Vysotsky's birthday, seven years and six months after his death, *Vladimir Vysotsky. Four Quarters Of A Journey* was launched at the Luzhniki Stadium in Moscow. Eleven thousand people poured in through eleven police and druzhinniki-guarded entrances, leaving many out in the cold and in the vain hope of grabbing a spare ticket. Inside, there were half a dozen long winding queues. The pleasantly couth voice of Pyotr Mikhailovich, Taganka Theatre's script editor and director of the projected Vysotsky Museum, cajoled the public through the loudspeakers at regular intervals: "Do maintain order and dignity! Be nice to each other on this occasion, momentous to us all. Every guest is guaranteed a copy of the book, programme and poster. There are definitely enough for everyone here..."

And indeed, by 8 pm - the start of the anniversary performance - after a reasonable amount of pushing and shoving, everyone in sight was gently nursing a grey paperback with the adored face on both the front and back covers. The publisher's name, *Fizkultura i Sport*, printed boldly beneath the portrait, was a slight dampener. The price, 5 roubles, was a surprise but not a problem. Who cares if it was one eighth of the average weekly wage or that the asking price of a similar volume had rarely exceeded one rouble! Once out of the building the book would easily be worth a full week's wages, and also the profit, as well as the box-office return that night, would help finance the Vysotsky Museum that had failed to open for the anniversary celebrations due to lack of funds.

The blurb on the back read: "Vladimir Semyonovich Vysotsky was born on 25 January, 1938, in Moscow. In 1960, graduated from the Actors' Department of the MKhAT Studio. Worked on the Pushkin Moscow Drama Theatre, the Moscow Theatre of Miniatures and, from 1964 to 1980, the Taganka Moscow Drama and Comedy Theatre where he played more than 20 parts. Toured extensively with concert programmes all over the country and abroad. Acted in 30 broad- screen and television films and in eight radio plays. Wrote about 600 poems. Died on 25 July, 1980. In 1987, was awarded the USSR State Prize (posthumously)."

Compare the above with the back cover of an Elvis Presley biography: "...The World's greatest superstar-...devastating insight into the departed King of Rock's career...totally devastating..." etc. - all for 95 pence! Vysotsky's career as a poet was never, as long as he lived, aided or harmed by any commercial or official promotion. One censored poem published in *The Day Of Poverty*, some 20 out of about a thousand, songs released on small records, one brief television interview and a number of acerbic articles - were all the publicity he got over nearly 20 years.

Nonetheless - or maybe or the more so - Vysotsky's songs, recorded, dubbed and re-dubbed on amateur tapes, spread all over the Soviet Union, from Sakhalin to the Balticand on across the border, into Poland, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia... From the mid-60s until his death - the years now branded "the period of stagnation" - Vysotsky emerged as the only person regularly to address an audience of tens of millions, who could say: "Not with one single word do I lie..." - and be believed.

Four Quarters Of A Journey is a second repayment by Soviet publishers on their enormous and ultimately unpayable debt to Vysotsky. It is superior in quality to *Nerv*, a collection of 132 songs brought out in 1981. There are 32 pages of photographs that each of the lucky 200,000 will invite all his or her friends to feast their eyes upon. In much the same way, groups of friends used to gather around the lucky ones who had just come into the possession of a tape with a new batch of Vysotsky's songs. Waves of such gatherings would roll from Moscow in all directions with the average speed of a long-distance train. The feeling then and now will, of course, be different.

Whether these songs were parodies of Russian folklore themes, the sports series, a continuation of the "anti-alcoholic" series, charged with explosive ambivalent laughter, or the shatteringly intense *Wolf Hunt* and the war song series, beneath the overt emotional reaction there was always the deeply comforting feeling of complicity, of trustful understanding. This great artiste, who possessed the awesome power to make you laugh or cry at his will, saw life as you did and was not trying to pretend he did not an all-pervading tendency in the Soviet verbal arts until recently. Every new batch of songs confirmed that Vysotsky had neither been silenced nor had given up.

Professor Gerald S. Smith in his brilliant *Songs to seven Strings. Russian guitar poetry and Soviet "Mass Song"* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington 1984) - the only authoritative source on the subject in English so far - wonders "what kind of moral guidance can possibly be found in Vysotsky's songs?" But is it really moral guidance that we are looking for in art? What sort of moral did we get out of Dostoevsky when we were told at school that Raskolnikov had revolutionary spirit, which was good, and at University, that he was an anarchist murderer, which was bad? Re-reading Dostoevsky outside the curriculum, we each time had a different understanding of his message.

We did not expect Vysotsky to tell us what was good and what was bad; we knew it instinctively, as a nation always does. But in the "period of stagnation", this was knowledge at the level of the individual. Gone were the times when people got together to survive, as in the 40s, or to create, as in the 50s and early 60s. Survival seemed assured, creativity was stifled. Hypocrisy, cynicism and drunkenness were spreading like dry rot. Vysotsky, through his poetry, joined his energy with ours, returned each of us a share of confidence that we were not, as we were beginning to fear, alone in our quest for moral solutions.

A 70-year-old woman, met in the courtyard of the house where Vysotsky was born, told me: "Even his street songs were about real life, deeply penetrating. But the powers that be didn't give him a chance... We're only beginning to live and understand a little about how things are. Do you know what times we have lived through?!"

ВЛАДИМИР ВЫСОЦКИЙ

A medical student, 23, in Moscow from the provinces to study: "Vysotsky is popular with and appeals intimately to the active people of my generation, who have to compromise their principles in order to succeed or because they are too weak to defend them, i.e. the ambitious but unfulfilled ones. They live through Vysotsky's songs. No one seems to appreciate these ideals in our day. Suddenly you hear a great personality, theatre and film star, poet worshipped by the nation, who clearly and powerfully supports them".

A Doctor of Physics, 50, from a scientific town near Moscow: "I'm of Vysotsky's generation and I love it. His poetry reflected an upsurge of civic enthusiasm in our generation and retained it even when it was over and we seemed to be sinking deeper every day into some sort or irritable lethargy. In the long years that followed he alone kept up our hope. We looked forward with impatience to his new songs, knew he would tell us something in them. He even helped us retain some faith in our government: if he was not yet put away it meant there was still some breathing space left to us. Vysotsky made me as a person. The year I was very ill and so depressed I didn't want to live, I heard *The Wolf Hunt*. It shook me up. I regained the will to carry on, to fight and enjoy it. We have survived with and through him. This made the present recovery possible."

Four Quarters Of A Journey is prefaced by a few paragraphs quoting Aleksandr Ivanchenkov, cosmonaut, twice Hero of the Soviet Union, who took Vysotsky's songs along on a 140-day trip in space. Reminiscences by Vysotsky's son, his colleagues and various sports personalities (the latter an irritating reminder of the publisher's speciality but all come up with sincere and valuable contributions) take up a third of the book. Less than half of the songs presented in this volume had appeared in *Nerv*.

SOS - Save Our Souls is among the notable new additions. It is about a submarine that has got into trouble. The refrain goes:

Save our souls!
We're raving from lack of air.
Save our souls!
Hurry to our rescue!
Do hear us on dry land -
Our call is getting softer.
And terror cuts our souls
Up in half...

As happened with virtually every song ostensibly dedicated by Vysots-

ky to a specific profession, his audiences from all walks of life felt it was for and about themselves. So that when having shouted the song at the top of his incredibly powerful, raucous voice, Vysotsky repeated softly at the end:

"Save our souls!
Save our souls..."

- his listeners, stunned into silence, knew he was whispering out their own latent terror. First sung in 1967, the song was generally regarded as prophetic of the mood that was settling in.

The selection of songs is arbitrary as it is bound to be when you choose eighty out of about a thousand. It so happened that most of Vysotsky's dazzling humour has been left out. The exception is the last, sporting selection aptly entitled *The Leaps and Frowns of Fate*. Vysotsky explained, tongue-in-cheek: "I treat the problems of sports very seriously and sing songs about it. These songs are mostly humourous. But, I believe, all my sports songs are concerned both with sports and with other things too: each sports song has drama in it... For there is a lot of room for drama in sports: one wants to win and the other wants to win... There is a paradox for you because only one can."

Song about a high-jumper is a good example of a sports song concerned "with other things too". The high-jumper, in the best traditions of Vysotsky's self-willed characters, stubbornly refuses to change his "wrong right jumping leg for the right left one". The refrain goes:

But I'll taste of the forbidden fruit
- I'm a tough egg,
And I'll pull fame by the tail
when I've won,
For they all start jumping with
their left leg
But MY jumping leg is the
RIGHT one.

Considering most of the *Four Quarters Of A Journey*'s Soviet readers will have all the songs included, and more, on tape, the 50-odd pages of Vysotsky's own commentary - the most comprehensive selection yet published - are the most valuable part of the book. Those who did not know Vysotsky personally and for whom his image mingles involuntarily with the predominantly first-person characters of his songs will have a surprise. From beneath the light banter, stripped of repetitions, inevitable as Vysotsky could give up to five concerts a day, there emerges a lucid critic of his own work.

Thus for example, talking about the numerous imitations of his songs which had been fiercely attacked by critics and officials as authentically his and degrading, he offered his listeners the following tip: "...if you come across some tape-recordings which contain, firstly, bad language and, secondly, that *cheap prose of life* - you can immediately tell they are not mine." Or, to the question of what he mainly regarded himself as: a poet, an actor or a composer: "I think that a combination of different genres and elements of several art-sthat I practice and attempt to synthesise might be a new genre. Each new epoch conceives some new forms of art... If tape- recorders had been around 150 years ago some of Aleksandr Sergeyevich's (Pushkin) poetry may have been recorded on tape only..."

Vysotsky's name has been lovingly surrounded by legends. Some of these are myths, others - like workers at Naberezhnye Chelny lifting and carrying for a few steps the coach in which sat Vysotsky - true. Here is one of the latest legends. Kunyayev, the petty poet turned critic, who had written a particularly baleful article against Vysotsky in the 70s, wrote another one a few years after Vysotsky's death. This time he denounced the late poet's mourners who thronged in their thousands to his grave and, barbarians as they were, trampled upon and destroyed the nearby grave of a Major Ivanov. It soon turned out that the defiled grave only existed in Kunyayev's mind, planted there deliberately by some practical jokers. The telephone in Kunyayev's flat apparently rang non-stop for months, with people telling the wretched critic what exactly they thought of him, forcing him to change his telephone number. But to no avail - after a short break the telephone went mad again. And no wonder: pinned to a post by Vysotsky's grave was a little note: "Kunyayev's NEW telephone number: ..." You do not play Canute to the Russian spirit.

Brian Pearce
How Haig saved Lenin
Macmillan 1987, 138 pp.

Brian Pearce's fascinating book deals with the final stages of the First World War. Quite rightly, he points out its culmination was very different from the conclusion of the Second World War. After the battle of Stalingrad (1942-3), the issue was not in doubt; it was merely a question of time before the downfall of the Third Reich. By contrast, the First World War could have gone either way. In the spring offensive of 1918, German troops, their morale high, went into battle joyously, believing that victory was within their grasp. Only as their advance was slowed down and they started taking unacceptable losses did it become clear defeat was staring them in the face.

Brian Pearce really puts forward three propositions. First, that the October Revolution took place because of the disintegration of the Tsar's armies. In other words, soldiers voted against the war with their feet, trekking to the cities to swell the disgruntled workers in the soviets. Yet, if military collapse on the Eastern front was a precondition for success, Pearce argues, secondly, that exactly the opposite was necessary on the Western front - the Allied armies had not to disintegrate. Otherwise a victorious Wehrmacht would again have been able to turn on Russia, easily crushing the Bolsheviks. And, thirdly, Pearce contends, this scenario did not happen because of the resolute resistance of British troops, stopping the Germans' advance and eventually routing them. So, consequently, but for the unwitting help of Haig, Lenin would have been evicted from the Kremlin.

The book examines, in an extremely detailed manner, diplomatic and military events. What worries me is that a crucial factor escapes consideration. Just as in today's capitalist world, the strength (or weakness) of a given country depends upon keeping the subordination of the workers and securing their co-operation in the various changes required to maintain its position in the competitive struggle, so amid the tensions of world war, the state of the home front becomes vitally important. Workers' class consciousness has always remained a highly combustible substance, liable without notice to wreck the best laid plans of their masters. Yet, Pearce never seriously analyses the development of industrial militancy or war resistance in the belligerent countries. With his eyes firmly fixed on what the various ruling classes were doing, it is as if he had never heard that an individual once wrote: "All history is the history of class struggle."

Raymond Challinor

Lech Walesa
A Path of Hope
Collins Harvill

"Cometh the time, cometh the man" is a political cliche which has maintained currency because it is so accurate. And nowhere more so recently than in the personage of Lech Walesa, who for many outside and, more importantly, inside Poland, came to be synonymous with the fate of Solidarity.

He is a difficult character for us Westerners to comprehend. He is shrewd and forthright, yet naive and totally unsophisticated. He is also basically conservative, yet finely tuned at picking up the mood of fellow workers and certainly motivated by a sincere and irrepressible commitment to improve their working and social conditions. In his autobiography he emerges as a great compromiser with a tenacity and stubbornness to stay at the negotiating table at plant or national level. What is distinctively Polish, however, is the deep and mystical Catholicism and the evocation of "Destiny" mixed with the pragmatism of the shopfloor.

Walesa's political activity starts with genuine indignation at the working conditions in the shipyards and his credibility as a spokesman at the crucial juncture of August 1980 is well earned and based on his integrity as a fighter against filthy and dangerous conditions, unfair wages systems and corruption. Walesa clearly sees the role of Solidarity as a defender of workers' rights, and seems to have no further ambition than establishing that union in a position similar to that occupied by the British TUC in the halcyon days of the "social contract" with the Labour Government of the late 1970s. An acceptance of the status quo in return for co-responsibility in steering the macro and micro economy.

Despite giving numerous examples of the deceit and duplicity of the ruling authorities, Walesa displays an intractable propensity to be duped. He is consistently over-optimistic and trusting and often tricked and outmanoeuvred, admitting over one incident "And that's where I let myself be had, right down the line". Clearly, the authorities always regarded Walesa as a potential collaborator, and to his immense credit he has held out, whether against straight cash offers from management in the shipyards, right through to turning down offers to be the head of Jaruzelski's new union.

Walesa does still have enormous formative influence on the mood of the opposition in Poland. To me he seems to have adopted a similar role to the late Cardinal Wyszynski, that of figure-head and rallying point which the state can try to ignore, but not discount.

A crisis in the Polish economy is inevitable, and when it comes the Polish state will have to broaden its base of dialogue if theCommunist Party is to maintain its control. Walesa's strategy of keeping the title of Chairman of Solidarity, as a sign of Solidarity's survival is surely correct - time is on his side. With each crisis in Poland, 1956, 1970, 1976 and 1980 the working class has developed its skill and experience in organising opposition and gaining ground. They now have a nationally and internationally known figure-head, and history has always shown the importance of such a rallying point.

Michael Hindley