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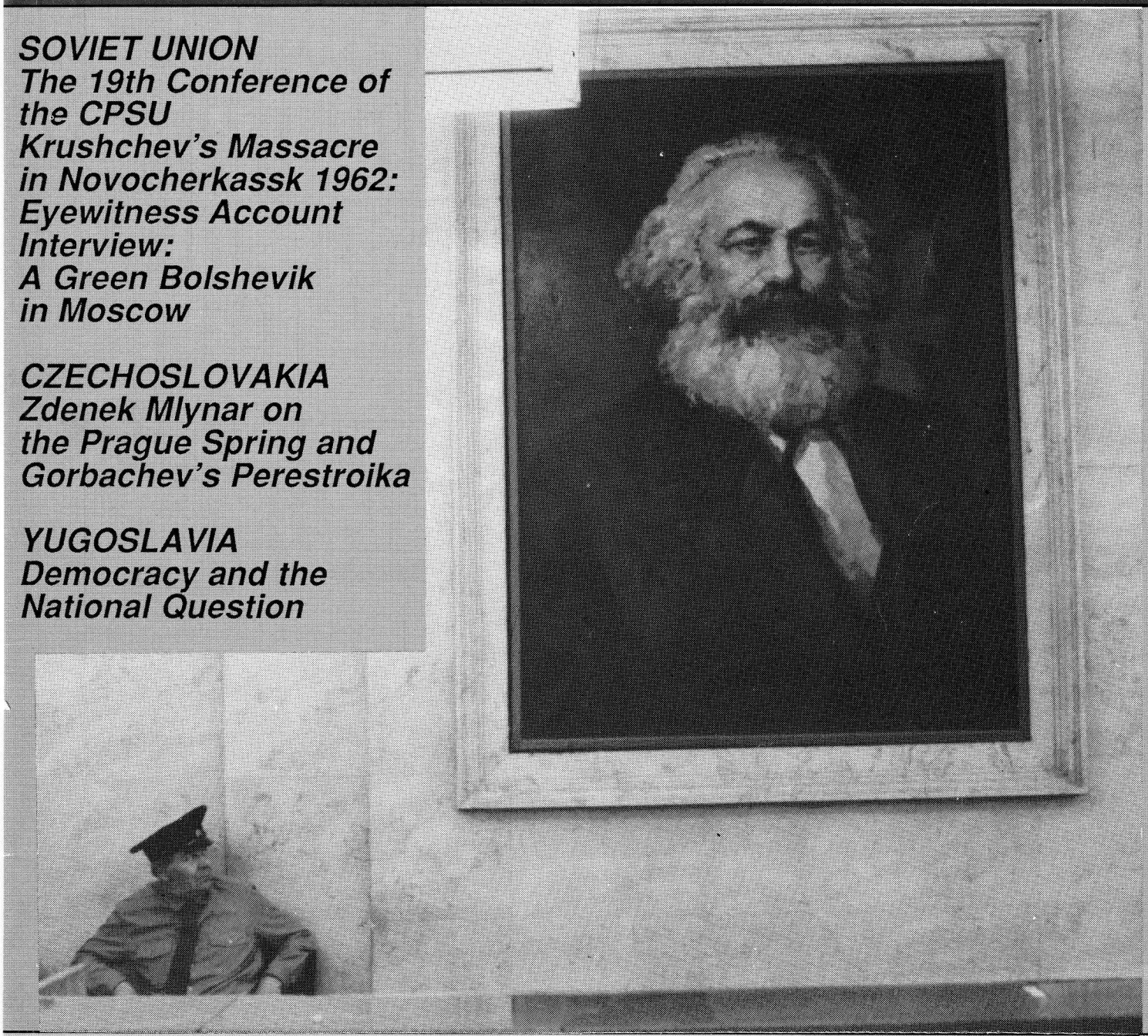

REFORM COMMUNISM
PRAGUE1968, MOSCOW 1988

Can the bureaucracy change its ways?

Labour Focus on EASTERN EUROPE

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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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EDITORIAL

WHY THE GENERAL IS NO GOMULKA

TWENTY years ago, when the Soviet tanks rolled into Prague, only the most optimistic asked the question where the "fraternal aid" against a Moscow Spring would come from. A Dubcek in the Kremlin seemed a rather forlorn hope, but how else was Eastern Europe ever going to be allowed to change after repeated armed interventions by Big Brother in Berlin 1953, Budapest 1956 and Prague 1968?

Yet today, as the vision of a reform-communist Kremlin has at last become reality and the fear of Red Army intervention in the affairs of its neighbours recedes, there are no new Gomulkas, Nagys and Dubceks in sight. The rhetoric of reform and democratisation may once again fill the columns of the central organs in Warsaw, Budapest and Prague, but without generating too much excitement. Indeed Poland's Jaruzelski, who speaks loudest of such things and whose regime is in most respects more liberal than any other in Eastern Europe, is easily the most detested political leader in the country's recent history. Similarly, Czechoslovakia's Milos Jakes and even Hungary's Karoly Grosz are raising little popular enthusiasm for their leadership, despite only just having replaced the much-loathed Husak and Kadar, veterans of the counter-reformations of 1956 and 1968.

Perhaps such things take time. But it seems more likely that the muted response to Gorbachevism in the capitals of Eastern Europe reveals more about the nature of their regimes than merely a hesitant wait-and-see attitude to developments in Moscow. Again this is most clearly illustrated by the crisis in Poland.

When General Jaruzelski restored a superficial order by declaring martial law and banning *Solidarnosc* in December 1981, the first military coup in the history of the socialist camp was not just a blow against the independent trade union movement of the Polish working class. It also put an end to the leading role of the party in Polish society, reducing it to the flimsiest possible cover for what is in effect a military dictatorship. Even the most blinkered Western commentator would now hesitate to call the Jaruzelski regime a "totalitarian dictatorship of the Communist Party".

This, however, constitutes Jaruzelski's political weakness despite his military strength. He has no effective instrument to take his fight against "industrial chaos" into the shipyards, coalmines and bus depots, but can only confront the workers as the naked embodiment of the *raison d'etat* - the riot police outside the factory gates. This is why the latest overtures to the Catholic church and Lech Walesa are not just cynical manouevres designed to isolate and discredit popular figures: Jaruzelski desperately needs to broaden his narrow base beyond the managerial layers of the security and economic apparatuses, to gain some leverage to shift Polish society towards industrial restructuring and political reorganisation.

Traditionally, Eastern European regimes have relied on the party to provide such leverage. The party organisation - not just its full-time officials and propagandists, but crucially also its rank-and-file membership - represented the real link between governors and governed. These parties, it must be remembered, were not just artificial edifices created for the convenience of autocratic regimes: they had deep roots in the history of working-class struggles against capitalism and fascism. And however repressive the regimes established by the communists, their parties continued to represent those traditions in the composition of their membership, and to attract considerable numbers of genuine political idealists as well as, of course, the inevitable careerists. The new post-war intelligentsia of Eastern Europe, moreover, rose through its ranks.

The classical era of East European reform communism began with Stalin's death in 1953, when these parties strove to free themselves from the Stalinist straightjacket. It came to an end in 1968 when the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was destroyed by the Warsaw Pact invasion and Husak's mass purges. In Hungary, the party's back had already been broken in 1956: Kadarism may have established a consumerist *modus vivendi* between the government and the people while economic circumstances were favourable, but it never restored the authority of the Hungarian communists. In Poland, the party's influence withered gradually with the decline of Gomulka's leadership: as late as 1980, when the broad reform alliance coalescing around *Solidarnosc* reached deep into its ranks, and *Solidarnosc* itself declared it was staying out of politics, the party may just have rescued its position through a decisive turn towards democratisation and workers' control over the ailing economy. Instead, the December 1981 coup blew out the lights.

The demise of the parties in whose name they still hold office has left Jaruzelski, Jakes and Grosz as mere managers of an increasingly unmanageable economic, social and political crisis. It has left a vacuum which cannot be filled by mere rhetoric. As to the real reforms initiated by these leaders, the marketisation of their economies and the liberalisation of their intellectual and artistic spheres, far from generating new enthusiasm for the leadership and reviving their parties' fortunes, will only have the opposite effect of further weakening the grip of the rump of bureaucratic communism over society. The vacuum can only be filled by the rise of new political movements and parties.

But if Jaruzelski is no Gomulka and cannot credibly cover himself in the garments of reform communism, then by the same token Walesa can no longer aspire to the restoration of a "non-political" mass trade unionism. There is nobody to whom the business of politics can now be left.

Günter Minnerup

The special June conference of the CPSU adopted a new set of ideological principles that imply sweeping changes in the Soviet political system. However, the actual measures agreed at the conference leave open most of the crucial issues that will decide how far and in what direction the political system will actually change.

OLIVER MACDONALD

THE 19th CONFERENCE AND SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY

Gorbachev's speeches to the conference marked more clearly than ever before an ideological break with the old orthodoxy of the CPSU concerning the nature of a socialist, democratic political system. But such was the resistance to the new principles that Gorbachev's own opening report, approved before hand by the Politbureau, remained equivocal in its crucial formulae. These ambiguities no doubt reflected the current stalemate in the battle between the two rival ideologists within the Politburo: Ligachev and Yakovlev. They were largely clarified only in the unscheduled speech Gorbachev made during the conference on June 30th and in one of the final resolutions.

The ideological turn

What is at stake in the debate is the question of where sovereignty lies within the Soviet system: what is the ultimate source of political authority - the party or the state organs? Answers to this fundamental issue then determine what is meant by the notion of "the leading role of the party". If ultimate authority is said to lie with the party then the "leading role of the party" is quite simply the fundamental constitutional principle of the state. If sovereignty lies in state bodies, then "the leading role of the party" is not a constitutional principle at all but a practical task for the CPSU - it has to win leadership on the basis of a legal and political order that it has no automatic right to control at all.

These seemingly abstruse terminological issues actually concentrate many of the most important events in the recent history of communism. The invasion of Czechoslovakia was justified by the Brezhnev leadership on the grounds that the Czechoslovak CP leadership were abandoning the principle of the leading role of the party by making its leading role conditional on popular acceptance. Following the invasion, all the constitutions of the Warsaw Pact states were amended to include a clause making "the leading role" a cardinal constitutional principle. In the autumn of 1980, when Solidarnosc in Poland refused to unequivocally endorse this principle of the Polish constitution, a campaign was launched by the Czechoslovak and East German leaderships and by elements in the Soviet establishment for military intervention by the Warsaw Pact to restore party control in Poland (This campaign was, of course, blocked in the Soviet Politburo which subsequently itself approved the overthrow of the party's leading role by the Polish military!).

When "the leading role of the party" remains a constitutional principle, all other constitutional and legal principles become conditional upon its maintenance. Thus, there is nothing legally irreversible about a law enshrining the principle of glasnost or freedom of opinion since all such legal rights are conditional upon the preservation of the party's leading role. In the Czechoslovak case, it was precisely the decision of the Dubcek leadership to abolish censorship which was held by the CPSU to demonstrate its readiness to see the "leading role of the party" undermined.

The fullest and most detailed elaboration of the constitutional principle of "the leading role" is contained in the Soviet constitution of 1977 - the "Brezhnev Constitution" which remains the constitution of the Soviet Union today. This explains that the party is "the nucleus" of the Soviet state. The state organs, in other words, are the appendages of the party: the state exists, so to speak, on the basis of the party, not the other way round. The party is the embodiment of sovereignty.

This was justified by Brezhnevite orthodoxy through a set of peculiar scientistic dogmas: the interests of the people can be understood through the Science of Marxism-Leninism which is the Science of the Laws of History. The party is the possessor of this Science. Therefore, the party represents the interests of the Soviet people.

The practical significance of this basic Brezhnevite doctrine is, of course, colossal. A shift of voting strength within the leading bodies of the CPSU could flush perestroika and glasnost out of the system and the Soviet people would have no legitimate body to appeal to other than the party leadership itself which had just taken the votes.

Many of Gorbachev's speeches before the 19th Conference had implied his rejection of this curious ideology but no party body had repudiated it by approving an alternative. Indeed even such a prominent reformist political theorist as Butenko, writing just before the conference, felt it necessary to insert a slab of remarks about the CPSU's automatic scientific grasp of the Truth in an article otherwise devoted precisely to the problem of ensuring how the party can in future avoid degeneration.

Gorbachev's opening report to the June conference was in large measure devoted to attacking aspects of this Brezhnevite doctrinal orthodoxy. He insisted that the CPSU does not have the monopoly of the truth. Intellectual pluralism is thus necessary to arrive at good policy. The interests, opinions and will of all important groups in society must therefore be able to express themselves openly within the system. This is a task to be achieved through democratisation. Democracy therefore means "socialist pluralism" - a phrase coined by Czechoslovak party theorists like Zdenek Mlynar in the mid-1960s which Gorbachev used repeatedly during the conference.

More fundamentally, Gorbachev called for the establishment of a "Socialist Legality State"; what we in the West might call a socialist *Rechtsstaat*. The party is supposed to be subordinated to that state legality, operating on the basis of it. Gorbachev went out of his way to establish the ideological continuity between this conception and the Khrushchevite concept of an "All-People's

State" in implicit contrast to the Brezhnevite partocratic conception.

Gorbachev also attacked the Brezhnevite doctrine that the leading role of the party was going to grow greater and greater in the future: "As problems of economic development grew increasingly complicated, the party became involved in efforts to tackle all kinds of managerial issues, and its apparatus expanded accordingly. The essence of the command-style administration system demanded that such practices were to be preserved and consolidated. Moreover, citing the record of certain periods of our history, some people claimed that this was the most effective method of tackling any development problems. This was the main argument behind the assertion that the party's leading role was growing."

But what the report did not do was to launch a frontal assault on the entire doctrine of the party's leading role as a constitutional principle. Nor did it explicitly state that sovereignty within the system must lie with the state organs, the soviets. This remained only implicit. The nearest that he came to stating this was in his remarks on the proposed new Congress of People's Deputies: "Many suggested that we turn to the record of the first post-revolutionary decades with their system of Congresses of Soviets. Those were broad and plenipotentiary people's assemblies..." The operative word here is "plenipotentiary", suggesting the Congress of People's Deputies should be the sovereign, constituent power in the state. But this was, of course, only a suggestion from "many" people, not from the Politbureau.

It is against this equivocal background that Gorbachev's unscheduled speech to the conference on June 30th can be understood. He was speaking in his capacity as chair of one of the six commissions at the conference and claimed his speech was necessary because of some confusion on the issue of "delimiting functions between party and state bodies". But in reality, the issue was not one of functions but rather of constitutional authority. (Indeed, on the functional issue concerning the role of party secretaries in relation to soviet executives, Gorbachev, as we shall see below, left matters as confused as ever).

It was in this speech that Gorbachev made his single use of the word "sovereignty". He insisted that the soviets must be seen as the sovereign body within the state and insisted that the leading role of the party was not a constitutional principle. In short, it was to be replaced by what might be called the leading role of the soviets. Yet in stating this fundamental point Gorbachev must have appeared to the unwary to have been saying almost the exact opposite. The entire issue has, in other words, been the fundamental ideological bone of contention within the leadership in the run-up to the conference and Gorbachev was using his hat as commission chairman to say things he had been prevented from saying on behalf of the Politburo in his report.

He declared: "...the point at issue, presumably, is to back up the sovereign power of the soviets with the party's prestige...." In other words, the soviets are the ultimate source of legitimate decision in the land - the ultimate source of authority, but the party will give a boost to their authority by adding its own authority to that of the soviets.

But in order to utter the magic formula - "the sovereign power of the soviets" - Gorbachev prefaced it with a statement that sounded like a Brezhnevite declaration of party sovereignty: "Some parties ascend to power through revolutions, peaceful or violent, others through election campaigns. But that party which is in office always nominates its candidates and gets them elected by democratic procedure. Such is the position of our party and we are not going to give up the role of the governing party in our country. On the contrary, we want to enhance it while admitting that we are aware of our increased responsibility at this stage of perestroika..."

This sounds like the Brezhnevite notion that, since revolutions create a new class power this class power is expressed by the party which is therefore the sovereign nucleus of the state whose rule can never be legitimately challenged. Yet Gorbachev doesn't actually say this: he simply makes the factual statement that the revolution put the party into power and expresses his own determination that the party will remain in power.

Furthermore, Gorbachev underlines his real meaning by devoting a good deal of extra time to the new way in which the party's "leading role" must be understood. This too is surrounded by some camouflage. He insists that he envisages the party's leading role being "enhanced" as a result of perestroika and the changes in the political system. He declares that the Leninist Party is the political vanguard of the people: "Our Leninist Party is exactly such a vanguard and it will enhance this role even further in the future". But once again, this apparent concession to the Brezhnevite orthodoxy was in fact exactly along the lines of the April Action Programme of the Czechoslovak Communist Party in 1968. For Gorbachev made it very clear that this future enhancement of the party's role was a political task that depended upon the party's ability to rally the people behind it, not a constitutional right maintained by administrative controls. As he put it: "I am sure the CPSU is up to this task." Thus the party's leading role is a matter, so to speak, of hope not law.

The final resolution passed unanimously by the conference, *On Democratising Soviet Society and Reforming the Political System*, marks a genuine ideological break with Brezhnevism and re-establishes the link with the earlier Khrushchevite conception of the Soviet Union as an "all people's state". The key parts read as follows: "The Soviet state was born as a tool of the dictatorship of the proletariat and, at a later stage of social development, evolved into a state of the whole people. The task now is to bring the Soviet state system into full conformity with this concept, for all matters to be decided by the people and their plenipotentiary representatives and to be handled under full and effective popular control...The reform of the political system is primarily aimed at ensuring the full authority of the Soviets of People's Deputies as the basis of the socialist state system and self-government in our country."

The incoherent element in the new soviet system

Yet the victory in principle for popular sovereignty through the soviets in place of party sovereignty is massively qualified in practice by the proposals for the projected constitutional linch-pin of the new system, the All-Union Congress of People's Deputies. It is proposed to consist of 2,250 deputies and would meet once a year to deal with fundamental issues - "the country's more important constitutional, political and socio-economic issues". This, at first sight, looks like a classical, sovereign constituent assembly. It in turn elects from among its members a smaller, bicameral USSR Supreme Soviet which would deal with all the detailed legislative work and administrative supervision and would consist of only 400 or 450 deputies.

But the extraordinary feature of the Congress of Deputies is that no less than one third of its members would be elected not territorially but by the leading bodies of various mass organisations, including the Communist Party itself. The list of the organisations able to elect such deputies, along with their quota of seats would be actually written into the Constitution.

No justification is given for this proposal in Gorbachev's report. It appears to rest on no clear principle whatever, except the old Brezhnevite idea that in some way the party and its satellite organisations do still represent the nucleus of the state with an automatic right to control the heart of the machine. It would, of course, be possible to justify a mixture of territorial and functional representation in such a Congress, but what possible functional role would the party have, other than the old Brezhnevite function of supplying the "science"?

This incoherence is made all the more serious in practice by the failure of the conference to tackle the *nomenklatura* system of appointments. The one positive fact here is the clear recognition of this failure in the resolution on glasnost, which states: "The Conference attaches special significance to glasnost in the personnel policy, and to shaping a democratic mechanism, relying on public opinion, for the promotion of leading cadres." But the resolution *On Progress in Implementing the Decisions of the 27th CPSU Congress and the Tasks of Promoting*

Perestroika contains a far more traditionalist formulation: "The party carries forward the personnel policy, ensuring a rational appointment of cadres through the democratic mechanisms of the reformed political system" (This whole paragraph, in section 5 of the resolution is, out of all the material passed by the conference, the most strongly reminiscent of the Brezhnevite doctrine). This suggests that the existing personnel system should be kept in place.

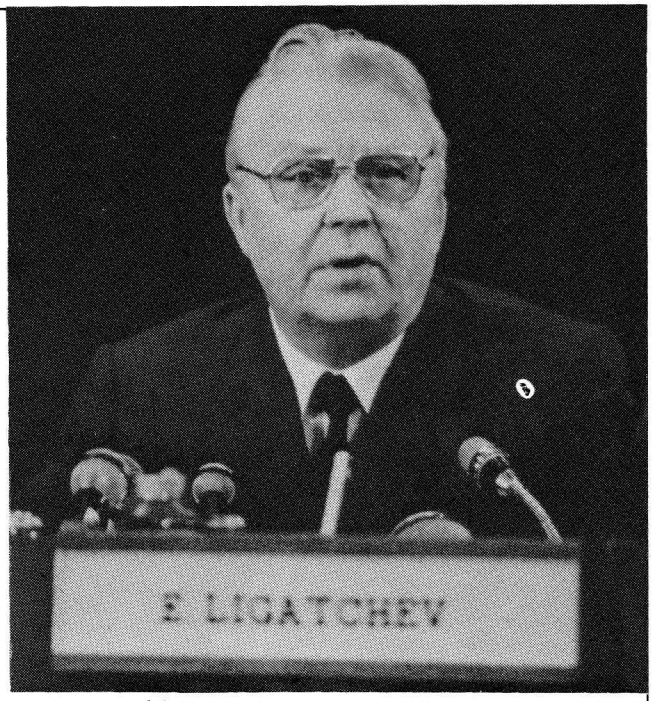
Insofar as the *nomenklatura* system of appointment from above, ratified by endorsement from below, continues to operate, it will mean that at least one third of the deputies at the annual Congress of People's Deputies will in fact be appointed by the party apparat.

This leads to the vexed question of the relation between the regional and local soviets on the one hand and the local party apparatus on the other, which was a major issue of contention in and around the conference. It is important to bear in mind the enormous importance of *oblast* (regional) level organisation within the existing Soviet political system. In practice, the power of the CPSU across the vast geographical expanse of Soviet society hinges to a great extent on the strength of its *obkom* apparatus and the *obkom* secretaries have been the very backbone of power within the party itself. Therefore the proposals on the relations between the soviets and the *obkom* secretaries are of central importance.

Gorbachev's report recommended, and the conference agreed, that the regional and district party first secretaries should, as a rule, be proposed for the post of chairperson of their appropriate soviet. The relevant party organisation would propose the secretary and the soviet deputies would then vote by secret ballot on the candidate, rejecting him (or, some time in the future, her?) if they wished.

Some Western commentators have taken this to mean that the reform will amount simply to a change of names: the *obkom* secretary will now be called the Soviet Chairman, otherwise nothing will have changed. But this will not necessarily be the case because of the other proposals for the re-organisation of the soviets. Each soviet will have an executive whose members will be elected by the soviet deputies but who will then be barred from membership of the soviet and thus barred from voting rights within it, while being answerable to it. At the same time, the soviets will have various commissions of deputies for the various fields of their work and the commissions will act as controllers of the relevant executive departments. The chairpersons of these commissions will come together in a presidium of the soviet. Thus the presidium will, so to speak, face the executive as a countervailing power. The Chairperson of the soviet - i.e. normally the party secretary - will be the chair of the presidium.

This much is clear: there is to be an effort to structure a division of power so that the soviet deputies, led by their presidium, will be able to call the executive to account and subordinate it to the authority of the deputies. But what is very unclear is the exact relation between the chairperson (i.e. the party first secretary) and the executive. Will s/he also be chairperson of the executive - the only member of it who is also a deputy in the soviet? This is not clear from the conference documents.



"Ventilated Brezhnevism" ?

But this is fundamental, for if the chair/first secretary is not only boss of the deputies but also sits on the executive, then he directs both and will scarcely wish to use his hat as chair to attack or criticise himself as a member of the executive. In short, the division of powers will in fact be subsumed under the unified dominance of the party first secretary.

When Gorbachev got up to make his unscheduled speech he said that he was going to clarify precisely this area. Yet he appears to directly contradict himself in the course of this special speech. First, he indicates quite clearly that the chairperson will be a member of the executive committee of the soviet: "...none of the executive committee members, except for the chairman, should be a deputy..." But a few minutes later he says the following: "Some comrades suggest that the party secretary [i.e. the chairperson] should stay in the executive committee. If so, he too, becomes an executive officer. But who, then, is going to supervise the execution of political decisions taken by the session? If the one who decides is also responsible for the implementation of the decision, who will be in a position to check whether he was really done it? This explains why sometimes decisions are taken and not implemented."

The final resolutions of the conference simply don't mention this nodal issue of political structure. But these two options encapsulate two alternative conceptions of what the new reformed political system should amount to.

Two alternative political structures and roles for the party

The various resolutions passed by the conference, taken as a whole, could lead towards what might be called ventilated or open-windowed Brezhnevism. But they could also lead toward an alternative structure, much more akin to checks-and-balances constitutional liberalism. Each can be briefly summarised.

Under ventilated Brezhnevism, the party's role within the political system would remain little changed from what it was before and there would be no significant separation of executive and legislative powers. What would be new would be far more opportunities for whistle-blowing within the political system and far less interference by the political system in the day-to-day running of the economy. Indeed, it would be the relative autonomy of the economy from political-managerial interference which would provide the basic guarantee of more opportunities for whistle-blowing: managers of enterprises would be less dependent on local party officials since their fate would depend on market forces. And the whole system would be far more law-based (something greatly stressed in words under Brezhnev as well). But the entire electoral system would not have a qualitatively new significance, open debates in soviets with clashes of opinion and of votes would be very rare and glasnost would be a flexible instrument of party policy. The party's *de facto* sovereignty could increasingly again move back towards *de jure* sovereignty. The *obkom* secretary would be the boss and no one would dare question his (or could it possibly be her?) right to be. Arrangement such as the composition of the Congress of People's Deputies would seem the most natural thing in the world.

Under what could be called checks-and-balances liberalism, the political system would become an arena involving open political conflict, permanent clashes of opinion and debate, with the Communist Party playing a very different role from that which it was supposed to play under Brezhnev.

The basis of this model is the idea of the Soviet state being a Socialist Legality State, governed by a constitution interpreted by an equivalent to the Supreme Courts in the West. The conference made provision for this type of body, to be called the Constitutional Review Committee, elected by the Congress of People's Deputies. This committee may rule on the legality of any law or action by the government or the citizens. Given the weight of the CPSU amongst the People's Deputies, it could effectively block an undesirable composition of the Review Committee, if not entirely control its membership. The CPSU therefore could effectively, if indirectly control those who decide the rules of the political game.

Similarly, the party would have overwhelming influence over the composition of government executives at all-Union and regional and local levels. But it would not have effective day-to-day control over the decision-making of these executives. It would also not carry direct responsibility for those decisions. And this would then enable the party to play a quite different role from the one it has traditionally played in the USSR: it could become a mediating force in day-to-day politics between government executive decisions and the population. It could even champion the interests of certain aggrieved groups protesting against certain decisions by the executive branch of government. At the same time the governmental leaders could acquire a measure of authority autonomous from the party.

This type of arrangement would introduce elements of genuine, pluralist flexibility into the system through the checks and balances of a supreme court, a hierarchy of government executives relatively independent of the party executives and with the party executives exercising direct influence on policy-making through the role of their first secretaries in the "legislative" branch of the soviets, as chairpersons of the deputies.

This model would involve a massive pruning of the party apparat so that party executives were simply unable to "pre-organise" the work of the government executives: a task that Gorbachev laid much stress on at the conference. The model would also involve a real end to the old *nomenklatura* system to put authentic political life into the elections for the soviets and the soviet executives.

The end result would be something very much like a *Rechtsstaat*, a liberal-constitutional state in which various social groups could express their interests and aspirations.

As to which of these models may actually emerge within the USSR in the coming period will, of course, depend on the course of political events and struggles over the coming months and years. And it is very possible that neither of them will win through. One of the most important features of the conference was the clear expression of at least one other possible model for the future political system of the Soviet Union. But before turning to this issue, we should note some features of the conference debate that relate to a decisive objection held by many members of the CPSU establishment to any type of checks-and-balances liberalism: the perceived threat it poses to state unity in the face of the national antagonisms within the USSR.

The national question and soviet sovereignty

By far the most burning political issue facing the Soviet leadership today is the national question in the USSR, expressed in the most immediate forms in the Caucasus and in the Baltic Republics. It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss the substance of these issues in any detail. But both in Nagorno-Karabakh and in Armenia the overwhelming majority of the population is evidently mobilised and united around a demand which has been flatly rejected by the All-Union Soviet government: the demand for the integration of Nagorno-Karabakh into Armenia. Meanwhile in the Baltic Republics, and especially in Estonia, there are powerful movements for a much more far-reaching demand: namely for independence from the USSR.

Whatever may be the outcome of these movements, the overwhelming bulk of the Soviet establishment is resolutely opposed to allowing any threat to the unity of the USSR itself. And one of the cardinal virtues of the old partocratic system was, for that establishment, its concentration of power in the hands of the CPSU and the complete subordination of republican party organisations to the central party authorities, a subordination whose sinews were central control over personnel, the central planning system, the power of the All-Union Central Committee apparatus, and above all the political secrecy in which internal CPSU politics was conducted..

Economic perestroika inevitably decentralises economic powers and thus potentially strengthens the autonomy of the republics. And a shift from party sovereignty to soviet sovereignty immediately brings to prominence the existence of the republican soviet structures and their rights to legal autonomy, while glasnost tends to bring issues of dispute into the light of day in the form of public resolutions in the soviets and public debates in the media.

It is therefore interesting to note some features of the proposed changes outlined at the 19th Conference in this connection. One of these is the creation of the Constitution Review Committee already mentioned. This may turn out to be a body that would monitor and rule not only on the USSR constitution but on the republican constitutions as well. We should also note the long overdue revival of the Soviet of Nationalities at the all-Union level. It may also be given new and greater powers over the demands and rights of republican bodies. It is also interesting that the All-Union Ministry of Internal Affairs is to be given new powers within the Republics, namely complete control over criminal investigations within these Republics. This could become a powerful weapon for maintaining central control.

Yet all of this is still no more than a set of general outlines, while the populations of various Republics are beating on the doors of the party leadership for equitable solutions to their grievances.

This brings us to the fundamental issue of the relationship between the political reforms debated at the 19th Party Conference and socialist democracy.

The Gorbachevite *Rechtsstaat* and Socialist Democracy

We described the Gorbachev conception of a Socialist Legality State as rather like a *Rechtsstaat* of the type proclaimed by liberals in the 19th century. It is now necessary to consider the relationship between this type of political system and democracy.

In the traditional 19th century liberal-constitutionalist notion of a *Rechtsstaat* there was, of course, nothing inherently democratic. There was no necessary reason why the legal-state should at the same time be one based on popular sovereignty expressed through democratic mechanisms. Quite the contrary: 19th century liberals often feared democratisation and favoured a system of checks and balances via division of powers as the way to anchor the legal-state. They often repudiated the notion of popular sovereignty, declaring that if there was to be any sovereign within the state it should be the law itself, not the people, nor some of the people.

As we saw, Gorbachev himself spoke of the soviets being "sovereign" and he also on one occasion spoke of the new political system being one of "representative democracy". And throughout his speeches he repeatedly used the words democracy, democratisation and democratic. We have also tried to show how Gorbachev evidently favours the encouragement of intellectual pluralism: since no one can have a monopoly of the truth, the truth, or at least the best available policy, must come through a common effort of interchange of ideas and information. We also argued that the Gorbachev model seems to envisage a genuine institutional pluralism within the political system in the form of what we called checks-and-balances liberalism. But pluralism does not equal democracy: it is congruous with a non-democratic liberalism though it is also an indispensible precondition for a

democratic political order.

Of course, in Western bourgeois political theory democracy is a mechanism for choosing leaders at elections from among competing political parties. The mainstream of this school of thought adds that democracy also requires that there should be a consensus amongst the parties on fundamentals (i.e. capitalism) and ideally there should be political apathy amongst the mass of the population between elections. Furthermore, it is both impractical and undesirable that the mass of the population should be in a position to positively determine policy: this should be decided by the political (and administrative) elite and deputies should not be mandated by either their electorates or their extra-parliamentary parties.

By this set of yardsticks the current CPSU political reform project is probably to be considered democratic. True, there is only one party but since within the CPSU there is as wide a range of personalities and a far wider range of political views than spans the elites of the two American parties this would seem to be a mere technical formality. Furthermore, the enormous disparities of wealth, power and influence between American or British big business and working class people, which have led one former doyen of American orthodox political theory (Charles Lindblom) to declare that the American political system is dominated by business, don't apply in the USSR today.

But American or British bourgeois conceptions of "democracy" should not be the yardsticks used by socialists for assessing the democratic content of any political system. The classical critique of parliamentary democracy made by Lenin in *State and Revolution* retains its force as far as most of the basic questions of principle are concerned. Socialist democracy is a matter of the great bulk of the people having the real capacity to stamp their will on all the great issues affecting the community. It is a matter of the self-activity of the great mass of the people in the political arena.

Gorbachev repeatedly stresses the fact that serious, democratic politics is about the activity of millions and tens of millions of people, and that what is at stake is a question of treating people with dignity and respect. But since this is the case, the question must be asked whether every single one of the 265 million people in the USSR consider themselves to be communists. The answer is obvious. And if this is the case, it means that - to put it no more strongly - a significant minority of the Soviet population experiences the world and their problems in a way that is different from the CPSU. They have not only their own point of view but their own banners and symbols as well as their own interests and opinions on policy. They also have their own particular experience of common events and their own language in which they feel at home for expressing themselves. A genuine popular democracy must involve the right of these non-communists to bring themselves onto the political arena. This is absolutely indispensible if democratisation is to involve self-activity on the part of millions of people. Very often symbolic issues are as important to the populations that have lived under communist governments of the Brezhnevite type as bread and butter issues. This was dramatically revealed in Poland in 1980 when strikers, many of whom were at best lapsed catholics, started learning religious songs and kneeling in front of priests in the shipyards. They felt themselves to be asserting their right to be treated in a dignified manner without having to pretend that they were quasi-Communists.

It is in this context that the right to form independent organisations, including political organisations is of cardinal importance from a socialist point of view. If politics was purely a matter of social groups expressing their differing and conflicting material interests in an instrumental way, it might be possible for such political conflicts to occur within the framework of Communist party symbols and language. But this is very far from being the case in a country that has lived through 50 years of Stalinism. In such conditions one of the preconditions for genuine self-activity by tens of millions is precisely an acceptance of their right to express themselves in their own way.Gorbachev gave a dramatic illustration of this when, in concluding remarks to the conference, he accepted the need to build a monument in Moscow to the victims of Stalinism. Another such recognition was acceptance of the traditional national flag in Estonia.

One of the most important aspects of the 19th Conference was the recognition by a minority current amongst the delegates that the right of independent political organisations and parties should be recognised. This point was made by Boris Yeltsin, the former Moscow party leader, together with the centrality of asserting a basically egalitarian norm in social policy. And while the conference may well be followed by a drive to finish the political career of Yeltsin once and for all, it also marked the public emergence of a Yeltsinite political trend within the CPSU and one that evidently has strong working class roots, not least in the crucially important Urals industrial belt. In CPSU terms this current combines "leftism" on social policy and bureaucratic privileges with "rightism" in its stress on democratic liberties and the need for a contemporary equivalent to Lenin's slogan of "Down with the capitalist ministers" - in other words, down with the Ligachevites in the party leadership.

"Victory for a socialist legality state requires the triumph of socialist democracy and the outright defeat of the conservative, Brezhnevite wing of the party establishment"

Yet no current within the existing party leadership has been prepared to endorse such a fully-fledged democratic programme as that of the Yeltsinites. The General Secretary's opening report indeed contained a blanket denunciation of unspecified groups abusing democratisation that leaves it entirely up to the leadership itself to decide which groups and movements from below are to be tolerated and which not: "As you know, we have lately more than once encountered attempts to use democratic rights for undemocratic purposes. There are some who think that in this way any problems can be solved - from redrawing boundaries to setting up opposition parties. The CPSU Central Committee considers that such abuses of democratisation are fundamentally at variance with the aims of perestroika and run counter to the people's interests."

This is simply bullying bombast. There is nothing anti-democratic about redrawing the boundaries of the Republic of Armenia when that is patently the democratic will of the overwhelming majority of the population there. The Politburo's defence of the frontiers drawn by Stalin is, on any objective view, the one that lacks democratic credentials. And parties opposed to the CPSU could only be classed as anti-democratic if the CPSU's own democratic credentials and record were beyond reproach - something which Gorbachev himself strongly denies.

In conclusion, the 19th Party Conference set a course towards what could be described as a political system that involves popular control on communist power. Its rhetoric was that of thoroughgoing democratisation of the Soviet state but its programme does not seem to be democratisation so much as a liberal-constitutional state or, if the conservatives triumph, a healthier Brezhnevism. For the liberal pluralistic variant to win through will depend upon its ability to convince the Soviet people that it deserves their unconditional support. It is impossible to say with any certainty whether this support will be forthcoming. For justifiable democratic reasons that support seems to be slipping away in Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia. It seems to remain strong within the Russian intelligentsia. But the Yeltsinite current that emerged at the 19th Party Conference argues, with a great deal of cogency, that victory for a Socialist Legality State requires the triumph of socialist democracy and the outright defeat of the conservative, Brezhnevite wing of the party establishment.

The year 1962 is generally identified with the 22nd CPSU Congress and Krushchev's second wave of de-Stalinisation. In contrast to the dark era of Stalin's regime and the "years of stagnation" under Brezhnev, the Krushchev era is today increasingly seen in a more positive light as anticipating many aspects of Gorbachev's programme of reform and democratisation. But underneath the rhetoric of de-Stalinisation, the repressive structures of the Stalinist state remained largely intact, and liberalisation in the intellectual, artistic and ideological spheres did not bring democracy to the Soviet workers. In this issue we publish, for the first time in English, a detailed account of the bloody suppression of the workers' rebellion in Novocherkassk under Krushchev by a leading participant in the strike.

NOVOCHERKASSK 1962: THE SUPPRESSION OF A WORKERS' UPRISING

While the crimes of the Stalin period against the Soviet working class and the general degeneracy and corruption of the Brezhnev years have been increasingly brought to light under Gorbachev's policy of glasnost, there are a number of incidents in the postStalin period in which Soviet military force has been used to suppress popular unrest which have yet to be seriously investigated.

The bloody repression of workers' actions in the Donbass town of Novocherkassk in June 1962, although wellknown outside the USSR and mentioned in every history of the Khrushchev period or of workers' protests in the USSR, has to date been illuminated by few coherent and detailed accounts. I know of the existence of only one previous account by an eyewitness and participant, an article by Evgeny Elin in the emigre Russianlanguage journal "Posev" (No.8 1982) and reprinted from its predecesor "Nashi Dni" (Our Days) where it appeared in 1966. Elin served with Soviet forces in East Germany before defecting to the West. After several years he was forced to return to the Soviet Union following threats to his family and was apparently sentenced to ten years in the camps. During the period of the uprising Elin was a student working a year in industry at the Budenny Locomotive Factory (as the Novocherkassk Electric Locomotive Factory was also known) along with many other students. Elin's account, which is not as detailed as Pyotr Siuda's here published in *Labour Focus*, corroborates Siuda's in its broad outlines.

The fullest account in English is in volume 3 of Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* (pp. 507514) which is presumably the passage mentioned in Siuda's article and which gives, according to Siuda, a very distorted account "causing uspeakable damage to the truth about the tragedy". It is a little unclear exactly what Siuda finds objectionable here as it seems to follow his own account fairly closely apart from some disparaging remarks about students' lack of involvement in the events.

The Background to the Uprising

Details of the Novocherkassk revolt and a number of similar disturbances are given by Vadim Belotserkovsky. Siuda himself mentions the suppression of a revolt in Murom about which no details ever seem to have surfaced. Belotserkovsky also refers to unrest in Aleksandrov, Nizhni, Tagil, TemirTau, Odessa, Dneprodzerzhinsk, Lubny, Kuibyshev, Kemerovo, Krivoi Rog, Grozny, Donetsk and Yaroslavl (op. cit. p.37).

These events were ignited against a background of rising working class expectations produced by deStalinisation coupled with rapidly increasing disillusion in Khrushchev's methods and policies. Gone were the days of Stalin's repressive measures against workers for changing their jobs without authorisation: in attempts to boost productivity and reestablish the regime's legitimacy,

Khrushchev introduced two important reforms. The first of these allowed trades unions, without any increase in their independence, to become more effective in defending workers' particularly against dismissal, effectively returning to the situation prior to Stalin's draconian labour legislation. Secondly, a reform of the wagerate system reduced dependence on bonuses by increasing basis rates. Slack work rhythms and the divisive piece work system continued to predominate although there was now less scope for rates to be manipulated by enterprise managers to ensure workers were adequately remunerated a previously common practice designed to retain a stable workforce (Filtzer, pp.126128).

Government prices for agricultural produce had also risen throughout the fifties but "there was still little incentive for meat and dairy farms in particular to expand production" (Medvedev, p.170). In order to gain some income for further increases in procurement prices the Government therefore imposed a price rise on meat and dairy products on June 1st 1962.

As regards wagerates, the former chief engineer of NEVZ, Sergei Elkin, is quoted in Nikitina's article as saying "wagerates could only be lowered with the introduction of measures securing an improvement in the productivity of labour. But, unfortunately, this requirement was not always fulfilled".

The combination of the former in a region where food supplies had previously been plentiful and cheap, an appalling housing situation plus a decrease in wagerates with a totally insensitive factory management who might have been expected to collude in softening the blow to the workers served to create an explosive mixture.

What Actually Happened in Novocherkassk?

There are inevitably some conflicting accounts of the course of events. In Elin's account, when the factory management were sent a delegation by the workers to discuss the price rise and decrease in wagerates, they were nowhere to be found and had done a bunk. In Siuda's account it was precisely the highhanded attitude of Kurochkin, the factory director, that provided the impetus to the actions. This account of events is corroborated by Solzhenitsyn who also quotes the incident with the pies and opines: "Perhaps if he [Kurochkin] had answered differently it would all have blown over" (p.507).

In official Soviet sources local Party

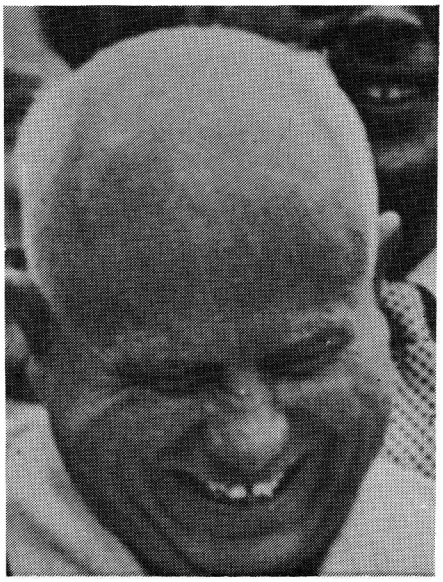
organisations are blamed for the start of the unrest by being out of touch with the mood of the workers. "'Certain Party organizations', it was reported [in "Pravda", June 9th 1962], 'have weakened their ties with the masses and fallen down on their ideological and didactic tasks'. Denouncing a 'contemptuous attitude towards workers' needs and requests', the Party organ called for 'decisively improving the work of commercial enterprises and those concerned with collective feeding and public services', while 'reinforcing the struggle...against manifestations of bourgeois ideology, idleness, cupidity, drunkenness and hooliganism'." (quoted in Tatu p.219).

Local Party organisations may have been responsible for passing on undesirable measures and have done so with not too much tact but the responsibility clearly lies with the Politburo, its attempt to retain the broad outlines of the Stalinist system it had inherited and its attempts to make workers pay for the crisis in agriculture.

The Novocherkassk events, as has been demonstrated more recently in Poland and Nagorno-Karabakh, also show the lightning speed with which any mass unrest becomes an event of major political significance in Soviettype societies. The rapid appearance of Mikoyan, Polyansky, Kozlov and up to three other Central Committee members (depending on the account) is testimony to this as is the swiftly escalated response of the state from popular militia through regular police to the army and then to the cynical use of nonRussian troops and the inevitable involvement of the KGB.

Also apparent is the participation of women and youth in the events. Solzhenitsyn's disdain for Novocherkassk students who "for their part showed little civic courage" and were "presumably glad of this excuse to do nothing" (they had been locked in their dormitories) seems to fly in the face of the available evidence. Elin's account indicates a considerable number of students among the NEVZ workforce and the leading role of women and youth in the actions in the city centre. In mid-June 1962 the Novocherkassk local paper *Znamya Kommuny* appealed for the control of 'hooliganism' particularly among the 16,000 students in municipal dormitories among whom "instances of disorder were noted". In July the local Soviet issued a decree banning children and adolescents under the age of sixteen from being on the streets after 9 p.m. unless accompanied by their parents. This decree remained in force for *two years*. In a move more recently echoed in the region of NagornoKarabakh, all foreign visitors were banned from the Rostov region from June 1st 1962 (Tatu, p.220).

The role played by women must be considered a curious omission from Siuda's account. Women "do the overwhelming bulk of domestic chores, it is they who do the queuing, and it is they who are among the first to respond to food shortages and price



Niikita Krushchev

increases" (Holubenko, p.12). According to Solzhenitsyn, on the nearby railway line, "a large number of women sat down on the tracks to hold up trains" (op. cit. p.508).

Some remaining questions

Among many unresolved questions is the number of those who died. To this question, Siuda steadfastly refuses to give even hearsay estimates, Solzhenitsyn reports that "information from a variety of sources is more or less unanimous that seventy or eighty people were killed" (p.510), Gerstenmaier says several hundred people were killed (quoted in Saunders, p.31) and Elin does not attempt an answer.

A very interesting and important question arises in Gerstenmaier's account: did a strike organisation exist in the Rostov region if not in Novocherkassk? According to Gerstenmaier "insurgents in the Donbas region [where a wave of protest strikes had occurred] reportedly considered...the demonstration in Novocherkassk unsuccessful mainly because they rebelled there without the consent of the strike organisation offices in Rostov, Lugansk, Taganrog, and other cities," and that "a planned coordinated demonstration didn't develop because of tumult breaking out over the price increases before final preparations could be made." (quoted in Saunders, p.31). Support for such a view does not appear in any other account and it must therefore be considered unproven. Certainly if such organisation did exist it shows an unusually high level of consciousness running against the grain of working-class atomisation. As Siuda points out, the Novocherkassk events themselves, despite their scale, threw up no coherent leadership.

Nikitina's Article

The publication of any material on the Novocherkassk events in a local newspaper is evidence of the permeation of glasnost through Soviet society and should receive a cautious welcome.

However, in common with the themes taken up by the Soviet press at the time, Nikitina is quick to pick up on alleged hooliganism, the idea of criminal elements fomenting the actions taken by the Novocherkassk workers and the ultimate responsibility of the factory Party organisation for what happened. She also develops a totally malicious contrast between father and son Siuda, presuming to know Siuda senior's every action and motivation and declaring him "a good organiser, a sober mind, he could probably have convinced people that outbursts of hooliganism are not in the traditions of the Russian proletariat...But the Bolshevik Siuda was dead. And his son had inherited neither his father's will nor quiet good sense. He was only one among many shouting out". Indeed, after a promising beginning in which she attempts to give the context of the Novocherkassk tragedy, much of Nikitina's article becomes a tirade against Siuda.

When it comes down to explaining the actual shootings which, of course, cannot be denied, she relies only on the testimony of a soldier. "What happened was a series of tragic accidents completely likely in such chaos. It was not the coldblooded, planned massacre Siuda tries to present it". A not completely surprising view from the side doing the shooting! The presence of Politburo members in Novocherkassk receives a mention but no explanation is given as to their role.

All questions surounding the Novocherkassk events will only be answered when the files of the KGB are thrown open to public inspection and they are called to book for their crimes. In the meantime, even Nikitina's article is an advance over past silence and denials but habits of a lifetime in slandering and deriding one's opponents die very hard indeed and, in all likelihood, Siuda will have no opportunity to respond in the official Soviet press for the foreseeable future.

SEAN ROBERTS

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PYOTR SIUDA

THE NOVOCHERKASSK TRAGEDY: 1-3 JUNE 1962 An Eyewitness Account

Throughout the 26 years since the bloody suppression of the workers' strike and demonstration in Novocherkassk on the 2nd June 1962 I had never heard these events described by anyone, anywhere at any time. Only once did I read two or three pages devoted to the tragedy in one of Solzhenitsyn's books. In Solzhenitsyn's account the events are very distorted causing unspeakable damage to the truth about the tragedy.

Now the organs of information and ideology, the current Party "chiefs" (*vozhdi*) and leaders, state rulers (*praviteli*) and officials (*chinovniki*) of every kind and grade do not tire of speaking about correcting the "mistakes" and crimes of the past decades. But even today a deathly silence is maintained with regard to the Novocherkassk tragedy. Declarations about rehabilitating the strike, demonstration and all who participated in them have been received: by the CPSU Central Committee on 5th January 1988, by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet on 8th January 1988 and by the USSR Supreme Court on 6th January 1988. Up to now not one single victim has been rehabilitated. It was only on 22nd June 1988 that an article was published for the first time in the regional Komsomol newspaper *Komsomolets* (Komsomol Member), entitled "Days of darkness, days of insight" written by O. Nikitina, which was essentially ill-disposed towards the victims of the tragedy and personally abusive to me for persistently asking questions about the tragedy. The article was reprinted in the Novocherkassk city paper and factory newssheet. Thus making the whole truth about the Novocherkassk tragedy as public as possible remains vitally necessary. This must be done for the sake of the blameless victims of the tragedy, all those condemned for taking part in the Novocherkassk workers' actions, all who are alive and relatives, both of the dead and the convicted - all participants in the events. This must be done with the aim of making public the crimes of the Party and State at that time 26 years ago against not only Novocherkassk citizens but against the workers, the people. It is a crime which ranks in history alongside the crimes of Tsarism on the 9th January 1905 [Bloody Sunday] and April 1912 in the Lena goldfields and others like them. This must be done with the aim of preventing any such crimes in the future.

As is well known, the Novocherkassk events were preceded by the processes of exposing Stalinism's crimes, proclaimed in the 1950's, of debunking the "personality cult" and attempting to humanise socialism. And the people believed in the truth of these processes. In the meantime, while condemning the "personality cult", the Party "chiefs" and state rulers kept unshakeable Stalinism itself and the criminal party-state system. The "voluntarism" of the "chiefs", rulers and officials, the authoritarian-totalitarian bureaucratic system, the leaders' tyranny and the lack of rights of those at the bottom continued to take root and develop precisely on the political platform of Stalinism and the activity of the organs of violence - KGB and MVD - remained beyond society's control.

If the victims of the tragedy and participants in the actions are not rehabilitated today then the Party and state will continue to ignore the rights of citizens to life, dignity and social justice and the powers that be, the officials, will retain the right to throw the army and coercive organs again and again against workers' groups in society acting in defence of their rights and liberties and suppress them in blood with tanks, firearms and the rest.

Until now, the Party and State have been cursed by all victims of the tragedy and all honest workers. The Party and State *must* purge themselves of their responsibility for this crime. This can only be done by bringing into the open the whole truth about the tragedy and by honestly condemning the methods and means used by Stalinism against workers and in suppressing workers' revolts.

It is a fact that, at that time, arbitrary cuts in wage-rates happened practically every year in industry. This gave officials the opportunity to secure the high indicators of growth of labour productivity demanded by the central organs, lower the cost of production without any corresponding investment, increase the mechanisation and automation of industry and implement organisational measures and qualitatively improve technological processes. Under capitalism this kind of "improving panied by workers' protests and the growth of a strike movement. Throughout the preceding dark decades in the USSR, workers' independent activity, their will and capacity for class struggle and preparedness to fight for their interests were completely paralysed. The democratisation proclaimed in the fifties, deceiving and making fools of the masses in turn, gave workers hope that they could have a successful dialogue with the authorities, with party-state officialdom. The Novocherkassk tragedy tore the mask of lies and hypocrisy from the authoritarian-totalitarian criminal party-state system.

From 1st January 1962, a campaign immediately began to reduce wage-rates in all shops of the massive Novocherkassk Electric Locomotive Works (NEVZ) [This is also referred to as the Budenny works in some accounts - Transl.]. Wage-rates fell by 30-35%. The last shop of the factory, where rates were reduced in May, was the foundry. Before then workers in the other shops had somehow become routinely used to the latest infringement of their interests. For the foundry workers the reduction in wage-rates was still deeply painful.

On the morning of June 1st 1962 a sharp (up to 35%) "temporary" rise in prices on meat, milk, eggs and their products was announced on a central radio broadcast. This was an unexpected and powerful blow at the social position of all workers in the USSR. The rise in prices could not but provoke general discontent. But the origins of the strike at NEVZ was furthered by a series of other circumstances.

In both town and factory the housing problem had not been resolved in practically any sense. Housing construction had been reduced to very low levels. In the private sector, rent on an apartment at that time varied from 35 to 50 rubles a month, i.e. from 20 to 30 per cent of a worker's monthly wage.

At that time Novocherkassk was considered a student town. Consequently there was a guarantee of foodstuffs. In the shops there were virtually no meat products or butter and, on the market, their prices were extremely high. The latest rise in state prices was inevitably reflected in an increase in market food prices.

But, of themselves, these circumstances would not have led to a strike if some self-serving scoundrel of an official had not thrown the spark of insult and lordly loutishness into the "gunpowder barrel" of popular anger and discontent. We are talking about the then director of the locomotive works, Kurochkin.

That morning, on the way to work and in the workshops, everyone was discussing the unwelcome news with growing indignance. In the foundry, workers were gathering in small groups and discussing not only the report of the rise in food prices but also the recently introduced reduction in wage-rates. They were infuriated but no one was considering protest, action or a strike. The workers had no organisation and there were no workers' leaders. The very thought of workers attempting to free themselves from social and political slavery, of rising from their knees where they had been placed by Stalinism was a terrible one. But pathetic and cowardly attempts at "democratising" society had been implemented.

Probably the foundry workers' discontent had become known to the factory Party committee and to director Kurochkin who arrived in the foundry with the Party committee secretary. The conversation they had with the workers was not businesslike but arrogant and dictatorial. While this conversation was happening, a woman with pies in her hands came up to the group of workers surrounding the director and the Party secretary. Seeing the pies, the director decided to be witty and, turning to the workers, said "If you haven't enough money for meat and sausage, eat some pies". This was the spark that led to the Novocherkassk tragedy. It was precisely this episode which pointedly reflected the scale of the workers' social and political situation in the USSR.

The workers were enraged by the director's boorishness and with a cry: "These bastards are still mocking us!" they split up into groups. One group went into the compressor factory and sounded the factory hooter. In this group were V. I. Chernykh and V. K. Vlasenko. Another group headed for the factory shops with calls to stop work and declare a strike. It must be emphasised that, neither in its initial stage, at the start of the strike, nor throughout any of the further events of 1st to 3rd June were there any groups or organs created which took on the responsibility of leading the organisation and conduct of the workers' actions. All events happened spontaneously. The initiative bubbled, boiled up and appeared from below, from among the mass of workers. No one from outside took part in the events. Absolutely no "radio voice" of any kind played a part. This is testimony to the absence of workers' representatives in the face of Stalinism, its apologists and officialdom, which had usurped all power. The appropriate conclusions should be drawn from all this. The workers' lack of will is intolerable!

The factory workers did not have to agitate for the strike. It was sufficient to call on a group of workers to strike for work to stop instantly. The mass of strikers grew like an avalanche. At that time there were roughly fourteen thousand workers at the factory [In Elin's account there twenty thousand - Transl.]. Workers on the factory premises then filled the area by the factory administration. This area could not hold all the strikers.

A group of workers took down a section of fencing surrounding some flower-beds and blocked off the railway line adjacent to the factory, hanging red rags on the fencing. This stopped the "Saratov-Rostov" passenger train and movement of trains on this part of the line. Having stopped railway traffic, the workers tried to inform people of their strike along the length of the line.

On the initiative of a factory metalworker, V. I. Chernykh, his comrade the workshop designer, V. D. Koroteev, wrote on some placards: "Give us meat and butter" and "We need houses", which they took out of the factory and fastened to one of the masts of a truck on the railway line which was then being electrified. On the engine of the passenger train someone had written: "Make mincemeat out of Khrushchev". That slogan appeared in several places. In addition to the factory hooter alarm signals began to come from the locomotive. Workers from the second and third shifts and residents of the workers' housing estates began to stream towards the factory.

The first attempts to break the strike were made by forces from the popular militia of engineering-technical workers (ITR) who tried to let the passenger train through and thus open the railway. But they found themselves powerless and were forced to back off and remove their militia armbands.

Neither the Party organs, factory administration nor the authorities entered into negotiations with the strikers. On his own initiative, the factory's chief engineer, S. N. Elkin, tried to speak to the workers although he was not empowered to negotiate and he did not specifically mention raising wage-rates, gave no sort of promises or assurances, and only encouraged the workers to cease their disturbances and return to work. Enraged workers dragged him into the cab of a goods lorry and tried to demand from him a concrete solution to their problems. I also put questions to him with which I was later charged in court.

At about mid-day, it was spread among the strikers that "the police have arrived!" The whole mass of people poured out onto the railway track towards the police. I was among the first. As I ran out onto the track I glanced from side to side. One could see the inspiration for a picture. A formidable wave of densely packed people rolled for about 350 to 400 metres along the line. But at the same time about 200 to 250 metres on the other side of the railway two columns of more than a hundred police were forming up. The trucks which had brought them up were smashed on the waste ground. Seeing the rolling, threatening wave of people,. the police immediately broke ranks. They flung themselves headlong behind their shattered vehicles and climbed without stopping and in disarray into the wagons. Only two policemen failed to make off and their legs gave way either through fear or from running. The wave of strikers could not catch up with the police. They successfully and cowardly did a bunk, casting two of their comrades to the mercy of the mass. But, even in their rage, the workers not only did not exact punishment but did not even touch the abandoned policemen and sent them off telling them that the police should keep their noses out of strikers' business. I was a witness to this and I must therefore confirm that the author of the article "Days of darkness, days of insight" is lying in declaring that "several policemen were wounded". They might have received wounds only as a result of jumping, in their panic and fear, into moving trucks. It is not necessary to slander the strikers. This episode illuminated both the unbounded cowardice of the "servants of law and order" and the workers' hatred of them. It also showed the workers' lofty nobility in not raising a hand to or touching their enemies when they saw they were powerless. This is something the author of the article could not comprehend.

As it later transpired, the police were changed into civilian dress and sent into the mass of strikers. Cowards are inevitably mean and insidious and they were therefore sent into the mass of workers with the aim of more rationally utilising their true qualities. KGB agents were also sent there equipped with miniature cameras mounted in cigarette cases and lighters and God knows what else. Photographs were also taken from a fire observation tower. Later, at the investigation, one could see literally heaps of photos on which were recorded thousands of participants in the strike. The retuned mechanism of the police state was generally operating without error.

Attempts were made to provoke the strikers. On 1st June the weather turned out to be hot without a cloud in the sky. There were no sources of water near to the factory. I remember being overcome by an excruciating thirst. But no one left the area apart from those like the delegate to the Nineteenth Party Conference, Artemov, who had neither feeling of workers' solidarity nor principles. All were united by belief in the strength and justice of their demands. At that moment a truck, piled high with cases of mineral water, approached the area trodden down by the people. The temptation for everyone was enormous. Calls resounded for the mineral water to be unpacked to quench their thirst. But common sense prevailed. Not a single bottle was taken from the lorry. All traffic on the railway was completely paralysed but the lorry of mineral water was allowed through the many thousands of people suffering from

thirst. The provocation had failed and fallen through.

Towards the end of the working day the first detachments of units of the Novocherkassk garrison arrived on the square by the factory offices. They were unarmed. Approaching the mass of people the columns of soldiers were instantly swallowed up. The strikers and soldiers fraternised, embraced and kissed. Yes, kissed. Officers managed with difficulty to extricate the soldiers from the mass of people, gather them together and lead them away from the strikers. After some time the First Secretary of the Rostov Party Regional Committee, Basov, attempted to speak from the balcony of the newly-built wing of the administration block surrounded by officials. The cowardice of the Party officials was, for everyone, not only obvious but insulting. Clearly, no one wanted to speak with the strikers on an equal basis which attested to their humiliation and lack of rights. They tried to shower Basov and his cronies with stones. But they were literally high above the mass of people, the workers, and did not, therefore, suffer a single direct hit. Basov and officials withdrew.

Armoured troop carriers with officers began to arrive on the square by the factory offices. The authorities were convinced that the soldiers of the Novocherkassk garrison were unreliable and had placed their trust in officers. Truly, a shortlived mini-process of civil war was being witnessed. The officers literally felt the force and power of the workers' hands. Their personnel carriers were smashed from side to side by the workers with amazing ease. It was pitiable to watch as colonels and majors hung on to their seats in the carriers, in no position to keep control of their bodies. The dismay and terror on their faces testified to their powerlessness to stop the workers' rage. The carriers drove away. Unorganised workers were, without weapons, thanks to their numbers and the unity of their anger, without the direct use of force and without resorting to any sort of extremism, gaining victory after victory with apparent ease. It was this which provoked horror in the "chiefs", rulers and party-state officialdom. The people had risen from their knees!

The strikers' excitement had not only not abated but had grown under the influence of the attempts to suppress their actions. A spontaneous meeting took place. The top of a pedestrian subway served as a platform. At the meeting calls were heard to dispatch delegations of workers to other cities and enterprises and to seize the city's post and telegraph with the aim of sending appeals to all cities to support the locomotive workers' strike. It was then that the first reports were heard that roads into the city had been closed - blocked by police and troops.

I had no intention of speaking at the meeting but I was disturbed by the calls to seize state establishments. I remembered well the stories of those who had taken part in the Hungarian and Georgian events [After Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" pro-Stalin demonstrations in Tbilisi were violently suppressed - Transl.]. Any attempt to seize state establishments in the town was fraught with the most dire consequences. Afterwards, the authorities characterised these calls as demands to seize power in the city. And this false accusation of theirs had worked so magically that, until very recently, I had not even attempted to get shut of this nonsense. Hearing these calls to seize state establishments, I issued a call to continue the strike, keep our self-discipline, our resolve and our organisation. I called for everyone to march into town the following morning in a demonstration, to elaborate our general demands and present them to the authorities. Calls for force and to seize state establishments were completely rejected. It was decided to march into town the following morning as a demonstration. This is also evidence that the disturbances in the town were not accompanied by extremism and violence towards representatives of the authorities. Later, both the investigation and the courts were unable to show any facts (although they tried) of extremism or violence apart from two insignificant incidents. The first of these concerned the factory chief engineer, Elkin, when he was forcibly dragged into the cab of a goods lorry, but he had not been assaulted. The second case was connected with the communist, Braginsky, who had been hit several times by his subordinates but which had neither caused him injury nor necessitated medical attention.

By late evening, when their anger had reached boiling point and they had no way of letting it off, the workers tore down a portrait of Khrushchev from the front of the factory offices. They entered all the factory offices, took out all the pictures of Khrushchev threw them into a heap in the square and made a smoky fire out of them. Towards night the mass of people around the factory gradually began to thin out. At this time a group of workers headed by the remarkable Sergei Sotnikov set out for the gas works with the aim of cutting the gas supply to industrial enterprises in the region of the city. This was a practically impossible task.

At five o'clock in the morning I was awoken by two large "explosions". Half-dressed, I leapt out of the temporary accommodation where I lived with my wife. Residents were beginning to emerge onto the street from all sides. It was explained that a "blinded" tank had brought down two high-voltage electricity pylons, the cables had touched and the electrical discharges were the "explosions" which had raised people from their beds. I set off towards the factory. About 400 to 500 metres from the railway line I began to encounter small bands of 5 to 15 people, inhabitants of the housing estate. I approached a group of people who were within about 300 to 350 metres from the railway. We all saw that the track alongside the factory and the factory itself were surrounded by soldiers armed with automatic weapons. Tanks were stationed by the factory and around the locomotive building station.

People reported that, at midnight, tanks and army military units had entered the estate, factory and town. They said that during the night residents had tried to construct makeshift barricades in front of the tanks which had overcome them without problems. Then workers began jumping on the moving tanks covering the vision slits with their clothing and "blinding" them. One such blinded tank had hurtled into a pit dug beneath the mast of a railway electrification truck. It was precisely in this way that a blinded tank brought down two high voltage electricity pylons rousing me and my neighbours from our beds.

An officer and armed soldiers approached our group. The group rapidly "melted away" leaving five to seven people. A sharp discussion started with the officer. He demanded that we go into the factory. We refused, saying let the army which had seized the factory do the working. During this exchange we did not notice two soldiers armed with automatics coming alongside us. We were thus arrested. They took us into the factory offices. All around us there were soldiers of the Transcaucasian nationalities, officers, civilians and KGB. The KGB greeted me with malicious delight saying that they had been waiting for me a while and were "pleased" to meet me. In a car accompanied by three men, apart from the driver, they took me swiftly to the City Department of Internal Affairs (GOVD), where a large staff of officials had already been working intensively to suppress the disturbances. On the way, in the car, those accompanying me had shook their fists in my face, threatened and insulted me.

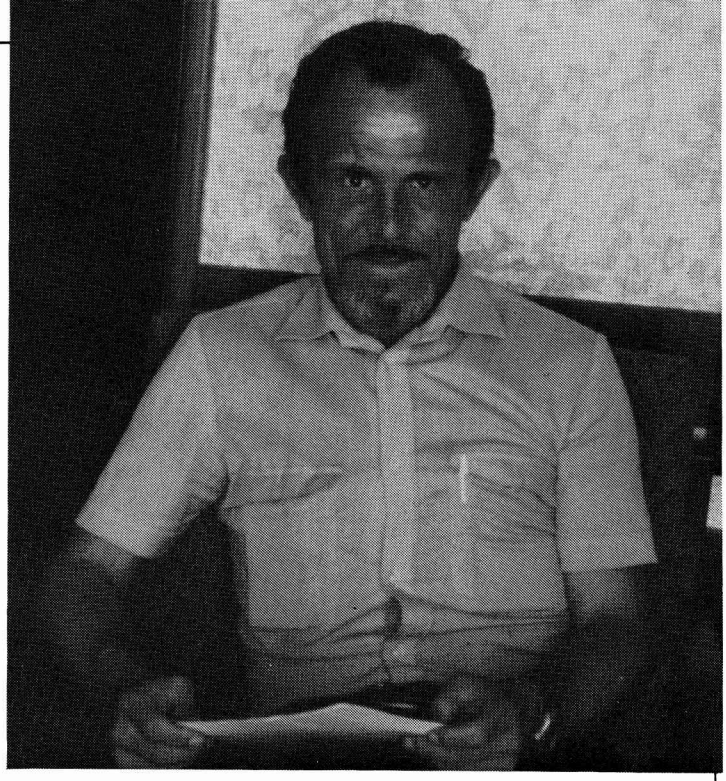
In GOVD more and more newly arrested people arrived. They led me into an office where, if my memory does not deceive me, there were about six officials. A hurried interrogation was conducted. They demanded an assurance from me that I would take no further part in any "mass disorder". I replied that I would do what the majority of workers would do. They suggested I think about it and sent me out of the office. I listened as, the other side of the door, their nervousness and tension grew. They were constantly on the telephone voicing demands that no gatherings of the people be permitted. I realised I had made a mistake and was "in the soup". I asked to see them and assured them that I had thought about it and would take no part in disorders. But in my youthfulness I could not suppress a malicious smile and gave away my intentions. They took me to a cell and about 15 to 20 minutes later they slapped five of us in a "Black Maria" and took us to Bataisk, 52 km from Novocherkassk. From that moment my part in the Novocherkassk tragedy was at an end. I spent long months and years in the Rostov

kassk prison and in a concentration camp with active participants in subsequent events of the Novocherkassk tragedy. I have assuredly endeavoured to reconstruct the course of events from fragments. I have checked and rechecked, confronted every fact and the smallest detail. I can, therefore, vouch for the accuracy of this account of events.

In the morning workers, not only from the first shift but also other shifts, turned up at the factory. The factory was teeming with soldiers. Tanks stood at each gate. In the workshops were soldiers and civilians from outside who were clearly KGB. Despite demands not to gather in groups, workers formed little knots. Their indignation and anger was growing. Groups of workers began to abandon their workplaces and leave the shops. All had been seized by an element of rage. Small groups of workers began to merge into large ones. This process was already irreversible. Big groups of workers began to throng the factory's central thoroughfare. The factory's interior could not hold all of the workers, pressure was increasing on the gates. The workers forced the factory gates wide open and went out onto the area in front of the factory. They recalled the meeting held the previous evening and the calls for a demonstration. The mass of people, numbering many thousands, set off for the town. The march in prospect was a long one. From the factory to the town centre was about twelve kms. Several groups of workers went off to other factories with calls to support the locomotive builders. There were willing responses from building workers, power station workers, factories producing machinery for the oil industry and other small enterprises. From there columns marched into town. Red flags and portraits of Lenin appeared. The demonstrators were singing revolutionary songs. All were excited, gripped with a belief in their own strength and the justice of their demands. The column of demonstrators was growing all the time.

Approaching a bridge over the railway line and the river Tuzlov, the demonstrators saw a cordon on the bridge of two tanks and armed soldiers. The column came to a halt and stood rooted to the spot, the revolutionary singing fell quiet. Then the dense mass of people slowly moved forward. Cries of "Make way for the working class!" rang out. The cries grew into a powerful chant. Clearly, stunningly, "Make way for the working class" was repeated. The soldiers and tank crew, unable to stand in the way of the column, began to help it crawl over the tanks. The stream of people flowed round the sides and over the tanks in the cordon and onto the bridge. The excitement grew ever greater. Revolutionary songs began to sound ever more loudly and harmoniously.

The demonstration entered the town's central Moskovskaya street. I cannot give even an approximate number of demonstrators as I did not hear even rough figures but all were one in their conviction that the large town square in front of the Party City Committee (Gorkom) building (the former palace/chancellory of Ataman Voisko Donskoi), a major part of Moskovskaya Street and part of Podtelkov Prospekt were full of people. A tank stood in the square alongside a statue of Lenin. Demonstrators and children swarmed around the tank blinding it completely. This had obviously exhausted the tank crew's patience. The tank thundered a blank shot. Glass from buildings nearby showered out. The tank commander would scarcely have taken the responsibility even for a blank shot in the middle of a town.



PYOTR SIUDA TODAY

The mass of demonstrators seethed in front of the Gorkom building. The building itself was full of soldiers of Transcaucasian nationalities. Demonstrators squabbled with soldiers through the doors. One Caucasian who could not take it smashed the door-glass with the butt of his automatic and through the resulting hole threatened a woman with it. Under pressure from excited demonstrators the Gorkom doors burst asunder. The force of the mass of people bursting in swept the soldiers aside. The soldier who had threatened the woman found himself under a staircase. According to several sources there he was beaten up. This is the only known incident where a representative of the authorities, the armed forces or the army occupying the town was beaten up. The Gorkom was completely taken over by demonstrators.

Demonstrators burst into one of the offices. There on the table were cognac, tasty snacks and place settings for two people. No one could escape from the office although, as others recalled, as the Gorkom was occupied by demonstrators, many civilians who were clearly KGB had jumped from the second floor. There was no one in the office. They began to search. In the divan was a prosecutor from the regional prosecutor's office and in the bookcase was hiding A. I. Shelepin. Had not his personal bodyguard so bravely jumped from the second floor? They began to drag Shelepin and the prosecutor onto the balcony demanding that they address the demonstrators. This our leaders and guides resented and refused. Then the brandy and snacks were taken onto the balcony for the demonstrators to see. A spontaneous meeting began.

At the meeting spoke E. P. Levchenko. She reported that throughout the night and morning strikers were being arrested and beaten up. She was speaking the truth. But she could scarcely have known that many of those arrested were already no longer in the town. All voiced demands more urgently for the release of those arrested. Part of the meeting set off for the town's police department. That was also full of soldiers from the Caucasus. Demonstrators began to force their way into the building. The doors were burst open. Demonstrators surged in. At this time one of the soldiers raised his gun to a worker in blue overalls. The worker made a bid for the gun. A struggle started. The gun ended up in the worker's hands but the soldier had an automatic alarm. In the worker's hands the gun was no more than a club but he was unable to use it. Soldiers were given the order to open fire. The worker was killed on the spot. Scarcely a single bullet went to waste. The mass of people was very dense but in the police building a panic started. The demonstrators who had burst in sought cover from the bullets. They rushed into empty cells. Plainclothes police and KGB among the masses utilised the incident and slammed and bolted the cell doors shutting the demonstrators inside.

After the article was published in *Komso-*

molets people started to come to me with stories and I began receiving letters. For the time being I am unable to name the authors of these reminiscences.

I will let Ya. O. G. have his say: "The beautiful summer's morning of 2nd June 1962 sticks in my memory as, after taking an exam the previous day, I allowed myself to go to the first morning showing of a Yugoslav film. Sitting in the stalls of the "Pobeda" [Victory] cinema I could hear, from time to time, indistinct roaring noises which instinctively disturbed my soul but I had no way of knowing at the time that it was the "crowd's animal-like roar". Going out onto the central Lenin Prospekt [it was then Moskovskaya Street - P.S.] after the film I saw, in front of the police station, a large crowd which filled the whole street right up to the cinema. Not knowing what was happening I began moving in the direction of the police building drawn along by people's encouragements. The crowd was buzzing and now and then let out calls of "Let's free our comrades!" with a deafening roar. I at once recalled there had been stories the previous day about some sort of incidents at NEVZ and that a series of people had been held by the police. It became clear that the crowd were demanding the release of precisely those people. The sound of breaking glass and crack of splintering doors into the building was heard. Along with the whole crowd I began to be drawn into the gap which had been created. And it was here within the building that a sharp burst of automatic fire rang out. The avalanche of people, and me with them, was hurled back. What I could see in this crush was this fellow in a white shirt lifted on people's outstretched hands with three large bloodstains on his chest. He was about five yards away from me. They carried him to the side of a cinema. The window of the "Novosti Dnya" [News of the Day] cinema was shattered and they carried him through the hole into the foyer. My reason told me I should clear out from there. I headed off along the Prospekt and I had gone about a block when I heard behind me more shooting and around me the whistle and cracks of bullets on the asphalt of the road. I ran round the corner of Chemist No. 85 on Krasnoarmeiskaya Street, flattened my back to the wall of the building and waited for the second salvo. There were precisely salvos of automatic fire, suddenly beginning and just as suddenly dying away, and not isolated bursts of automatic fire accidentally let off by someone as it was described in the article. It was obvious that they were shooting from the side of the Gorkom which was situated at right angles to the prospect and, judging by the trajectory of the bullets over a distance of 350 to 400 metres, it is possible to surmise that they were shooting from high points on the building at an angle downwards. If it had been the soldiers surrounding the Gorkom firing then the bullets could scarcely have travelled through the dense crowd or have had such a trajectory."

Another recounted that afterwards a leading police officer boasted evily that he had lured those seeking cover from the bullets into cells and then bolted the doors. This hero was rewarded by the Government with some sort of decoration.

One of the later convicted participants in these events, wounded in the shoulder by a ricocheting bullet, told me in camp that they had been forced to store the corpses of those who had been killed in a cellar next to the State Bank. The corpses were kept in piles some still in their death agony, arms and legs twitching. Who knows perhaps among them were those who could have been saved. Typically, none of the participants could give even an approximate figure of those they had seen killed. Not one single figure was named.

The command was also given to those soldiers next to the Gorkom to open fire. But there there had been no assault or violence. The Gorkom was under the control of demonstrators. According to recently heard stories, before opening fire an order was issued by megaphone for "servicemen" to leave the crowd. By "servicemen" is probably meant those in the crowd who were "on duty" and who knew of the possibility of such a command. Another said he saw some colonel or other leaning over the railings of the Gorkom balcony vigorously wave his cap to those below. Having seen what he suspected was a prearranged signal he rushed to get out of the crowd and hide round the corner of the building. Only he went round the corner as automatic gunfire rang out. Another eyewitness recalled that he saw a detachment of internal troops enter the Gorkom building from the rear.

In the square in front of the Gorkom curious children were sitting in the trees. Behind them was Lenin's statue.

More than one witness said that an officer, having received the order to open fire, refused to convey it and shot himself in front of his unit. All the same, fire was opened at close range. At first in the air, at the trees, at the children. Down they poured, dead, wounded, frightened. In this way the Party, state and army eradicated sedition. In this way the Party affirmed the unity of Party and people. Then the fire was turned on the masses. This was not single shots from rifles but rapid fire from automatic weapons.

They have told me: a middle-aged man is running past a concrete flower vase on a pedestal. A bullet strikes him in the head and his brains instantly splatter onto the vase. A woman in a shop carries a dead infant in arms. A hairdresser is wounded at her job. A girl is lying in a pool of blood. A crazed major steps into this pool. They say: "Look where you're standing, you bastard!" The major puts a bullet through his own head on the spot. They have told me much. I will stop.

Here I will give way to a resident of a children's home at that time. I will not even mention initials: "I was then 12 years of age and was on the second floor of Children's Home No.4 where they had put us out of the way of stray bullets and I saw or, more truthfully, they pointed as Mikoyan arrived with someone in an armoured personnel carrier escorted by two tanks. Then he went into the old Komissarzhevsky Theatre (now the Power Station Club). I listened as, by loudspeaker, they ordered, probably the raging crowd which had attacked the City Party Executive Committee situated not far from our children's home to disperse. Then shots began rattling away. According to rumours a Russian officer, who did not wish to give the order to shoot, shot himself. Some non-Russian soldiers were doing the shooting, mainly from inside buildings. They took away somewhere for good not only the wounded but even those with insignificant injuries. They even shot a curious child sitting in a tree. One eyewitness who came up to us had been caught completely unawares in the skirmish and told us with a white face how that day he had seen a young mother going out of her mind because her child in arms had been shot in the head and killed. The rest I did not hear. About how a stray bullet killed a hairdresser in her office on Podtelkov Street but they did not even give her up to be buried. Those killed were probably buried somewhere in the region of Bataisk because someone in Bataisk saw them washing blood off the vehicles. And now an unknown woman has told me that she was with her husband, waiting until the commotion was over, and they decided, on coming out of hiding, to cross the street in order to get home. They saw a student on the street who was asking a soldier "Why are you shooting at us? Aren't we all the same people?" The soldier replied with a burst of automatic fire cutting him in two. These witnesses, of course, rushed for cover on seeing such genocide. Then a Komsomol woman came across a photo. The collective had saved her. A pity it wasn't Nikitina. I also know about the reward for the person who saved Kurochkin who should have been punished."

I will continue my story. They were driving up goods lorries and buses into which they threw and crammed the corpses of the victims. Not a single one of those killed was surrendered to relatives for burial. Hospitals were choked with the wounded. Nobody knows where they disappeared to. The blood was washed away by fire engines. But for a while longer brown blood stains remained on the asphalt.

More than once I happened to hear about the massacre. They told me: they open fire. The masses run in terror. The shooting stops. The masses stop, at a slow crawl they return. Again shooting. Everything is repeated. Up to now the number of killed, crippled and wounded is unknown.

No, the unrest was not suppressed through this. The square continued to seethe. Dark rumours circulated around town. Some left

the square, others arrived. They swore at the soldiers and they answered bitterly: "You shot at us in '56, now we're shooting at you" [Again probably a reference to Georgia - Transl.]. The triumph of internationalism in a multinational socialist state. What a proletarian internationalist communist party! Internationalism works, it truly serves.

Again the words of Ya. O. G.: "Coming out onto Pushkinskaya Street, I went into the student hall of residence of the Novocherkassk Polytechnical Institute (NPI) on Krylov Street. Kids from my group lived on the last real floor of the hall of residence. From the window of their room Platov Prospekt, which leads to Rostov, was clearly visible. No one believed my report that they were shooting people. I didn't want to believe it myself. From the window of the room we watched as vehicles full of soldiers moved in two directions. Troops were being taken out the town who were witnesses to the massacre and new ones were being brought in who also could not verify what had happened. Together with my fellow-students I went out of the hall of residence to the square in front of the Gorkom building. Here surrounding the Gorkom stood tanks and columns of soldiers. On the balcony of the building people were trying to say something to the crowd gathered below but their voices were drowned in the general hubbub. I only remember that when they said from the balcony that Khrushchev was on a direct line and wanted to speak with the people of Novocherkassk, the crowd chanted together "No! Down with Khrushchev". Overhead a military helicopter circled. Everyone greeted it and, thinking that there were members of the government commission on board, waved their arms and looked upwards. But beneath their feet was damp asphalt, drenched with water, and where it was uneven stood many pools of water thick and brown with blood and places where clots of blood had not been washed away by the jets from the firehoses. I do not want to write that they said that they had loaded several vehicles with corpses but the evidence on the asphalt of the square in front of the Gorkom building indicated that not just isolated individuals had suffered."

I will continue. A report arrived that members of the Politburo and Government were in the town among them A. I. Mikoyan and F. R. Kozlov. A delegation was formed from among the demonstrators without elections, spontaneously and voluntarily. The mass of workers were terrifying to the representatives of the Central Committee (CC) and Government. They hid away within the confines of a nearby tank unit. It was there that the delegation was sent. Delegate B. N. Mokrousov told the representatives of the CC and Government, paraphrasing Nekrasov's poem, "Who can live well in Russia" applied to the Khrushchev period, to Khrushchev and Brezhnev. This was fundamentally why he was sentenced by the Supreme Court of the RSFSR under the chairmanship of L. N. Smirnov to be shot.

They have said that, on learning of the tragedy, Kozlov apparently wept. Possibly, but they were crocodile tears. Mikoyan demanded that the tanks be allowed out of the square promising that he would then speak. This demand was relayed to the demonstrators. At a meeting the demonstrators responded sharply: "No! Let them see what they have done with their own hands!" They looked out on what had been done with their own hands from a height through the spotlight of a helicopter which circled the square as they flew above the streets. Mikoyan spoke on local radio. In the newspapers, even the local one, there was not a word about the events. A curfew was declared. People began to speak of the possibility of expelling all the town's inhabitants. Arrests began. At night there were incidents when stones were thrown at soldiers from round corners.

They have said that at night in the Locomotive Factory hall of residence this fellow who lived there turned up covered in mud and blood. He quickly gathered his things and asked his mates not to tell anyone they had seen him. He informed them that he had been thrown unconscious with corpses into a vehicle. The vehicle had travelled by night with the corpses to a ravine somewhere. He had jumped out of the lorry while it was moving and, exercising tremendous caution, had stolen into the residences and then hidden himself. Where the victims were being buried was still unknown. This is where a memorial to the victims of Stalinism should be.

On the 3rd of June, a Sunday, the disturbances began to subside.

Again in the words of Ya. O. G.: "After Mikoyan's speech on local radio and his concluding sentence: "Order will be restored in the town at any cost!", it became clear that what had happened had been sanctioned by Government representatives and protection from and punishment of those to blame for so vile "a crime in its cruelty and cynicism...[it is] superior to all other crimes by reactionary regimes" [from the article "Days of darkness, days of insight" P.S.] could be sought from no one. This was confirmed by the speech of the First Secretary of the Komsomol, Pavlov, before students at NPI. He spoke about everything, even about the fact that he had been hunting with Fidel Castro in Cuba, apart from the events which had just happened. He was speaking on the 3rd June 1962 in the foyer of hall of residence No.1 on Krylov Street. And when someone put the question to him "Who gave the order to shoot?", he had such a surprised look on his face and snapped that the comrade asking the question had been wrongly informed and that, on the whole, nothing had happened here. On this note the meeting was closed. No one could ask any more questions. According to a story from our group organiser, N. Kologriev, about a meeting with the aktiv of NPI Polyansky replied directly to the same question: "Who said that?". And when a student got up he went on: "Get out of the hall, you're no longer a student." And what staggered my comrade was that the student left the hall to a deathly silence. He blamed himself for his cowardice. He believed that if he had said a word in defence of that student, the whole hall would have erupted with indignation. What a stupid idea! I no longer had any conviction that this would happen." Ya. O. G. has written down some interesting reminiscences. It remains to be hoped that one day his name will be mentioned without risk to him and his letter published.

The supply of foodstuffs to the town improved. Housing construction increased. Wage-rates were not restored. Mikoyan confirmed that the question of expelling all the town's inhabitants had been considered. But the tragedy did not finish there. A period of judicial reprisals began.

Most palpably cruel was the trial at the military garrison of fourteen participants in the strike and demonstration. Seven of the fourteen were sentenced to be shot by the RSFSR Supreme Court under the chairmanship of L. N. Smirnov and with the participation of Prosecutor A. A. Kruglov. They were convicted of banditry under Article 77 and mass disorder under Article 79 of the RSFSR Criminal Code.

There was an evident purposefulness in the judicial prosecutions. In the first place they sought those previously convicted among the participants. In another trial, for example, they convicted someone with obvious and significant intellectual deviations. There was a single aim - to compromise the Novocherkassk tragedy at any cost. To carry out the investigations KGB employees were brought in from Leningrad, Moscow, Ukraine and other places.

In the prison cells, after all the trials, we tried to calculate the number of those convicted. We counted by surname and arrived at a figure of no less than 105 people. They had not been miserly with the length of the sentences. Most were from 10 to 15 years deprivation of freedom.

About 7 to 9 days after my arrest they took me out of solitary confinement. Three cars were waiting in the yard. They sat me in the backseat of one of them. Two healthy lads squeezed in on either side of me. A third sat alongside the driver. In the second car sat another comrade like me. In the third car which followed the first, there was none of the arrested, only KGB (the abundance of these parasites has always amazed me). Accompanied by such an impressive escort they conveyed us to the Ukrainian KGB investigatory isolator in Rostov region. They put us in a cell for two people.

It should be acknowledged that in the investigatory isolator the KGB's attitude to us was always extremely courteous. The isolation from the outside world was absolute. There were no newspapers or radio. The

corridors were carpeted. The guards' footsteps could not be heard. There was absolutely no creaking of bolts and peepholes. The silence was oppressively sepulchral. The electric light was on 24 hours a day. The food was plentiful and nourishing, better than we had at liberty where food supplies in shops were very poor.

But at liberty my mother was looking for me. After about three days she learnt of my arrest. She was overjoyed that I had not been killed. She wrote a letter to Mikoyan and managed to send it to him. In the letter she wrote about her husband, my father, who had been a member of the Party since 1903, began his revolutionary activity in Batumi in 1902, was a close colleague of Stalin and many of the 26 Baku Commissars, conducted revolutionary activity in Baku for eleven years, headed the revolutionary movement during the first Russian Revolution in Grozny, was a close friend of Dzhaparidze and Fioletov, was repressed in 1937 in Rostov-on-Don and, after more than a year's torture, died in Rostov prison. My mother reminded Mikoyan of his colleague in the Party and revolutionary struggle in Baku. And Mikoyan "responded".

After about two days they called me to the first interrogation. It was limited to biographical information. Again they returned me to the cell. A day later - another interrogation. It was brief. The investigator, whose surname if I am not mistaken was Kostriukov, a captain and former head of a school, showed me a thick file of a "Case" and informed me it was the "Case" of the Bolshevik-Leninist P. I. Siuda, my father. Thus after 25 years the fates of father and son had come together in the torture-chambers of the KGB. He then informed me that from "Anastas Ivanovich Mikoyan we have received a memorandum with a request" to help me in every way possible. And they really did try to help me. At first they demanded a statement about the Novocherkassk tragedy, but when they realised they would not get anything from me they did not insist. They began to insist on little: a recognition of the events as criminal and of my participation in them as mistaken. But by that time I had already found out about the terrible tragedy in Novocherkassk. Apostasy was already impossible. It was I who had called for the strike to continue and for a demonstration. I recognised completely my responsibility for the tragedy before those who had died. Apostasy would have been the most abominable treachery. I rejected freedom at such a price. And then the treatment began.

I repeat in the KGB they did not torture or beat, were extremely polite and addressed you by "Vy" [the Russian polite form of "you"]. Nevertheless, they earnestly convinced others under investigation as a preliminary that their case was concluded and that each of them would soon be released. Then a suspect treated in such a fashion would be put in my cell. Such cellmates could not think or speak about anything apart from being close to freedom. And when they called them out with their things they were overjoyed. I remember that the cells were for two prisoners. There was a time when I was on my own for about two days. Then they brought in the latest treated cellmate. It was awful to be completely isolated from the outside world and to see all the participants in the Novocherkassk tragedy returning safely to freedom. That freedom was also available to you only serves to ease one's position a tiny bit. The trouble is only that I met all those dreamers who believed the KGB convicted in prison cells and camp. But, at times, it was no easier for me. I believed too. I had just turned 25. I couldn't endure it. In the cell they allowed me to have plenty of matches. I had heard that you can poison yourself with grey matches. Unnoticed even by my cellmate I crumbled the grey ones from boxes of 20. I waited until he was asleep, dissolved the sulphur and raised the mug to my mouth. But what my cellmate did not see it turned out my guards did. I had not managed a mouthful as the door silently and instantly burst open and the mug was knocked from my hand onto the floor. There is no point in describing further scenes. We are all free to imagine them. The KGB officials realised the treatment was not producing results. The stopped it. For a psychological rest they sent me to a common cell in Novocherkassk prison. Meeting people from Novocherkassk was indeed a holiday and a rest for me. But the prison guards were distinguished by their loutishness and coarseness.

One day the sergeant of the guard came flying into the cell. He began abusing all the *Novocherkasstsi* in an hysterical tone. I was enraged, refused to take food and demanded the prosecutor. After dinner I was taken to the prosecutor. I protested most strongly. After this I never heard of a case of boorishness or crudity towards the *Novocherkasstsi* on the part of the guards. I was returned to the KGB investigatory isolator.

In September 1962 the trial took place of seven *Novocherkasstsi,* necessarily including me, in the hall of the Leninsky district people's court of Rostov-on-Don under the chairmanship of member of the judicial college of Rostov region, N. A. Yaroslavsky, with the participation of prosecutor A. P. Brizhan. The court was formally open, but no one knew of its happening in Novocherkassk. There was therefore no one from Novocherkassk apart from relatives of the accused and witnesses. The court sentenced one to seven years, three to ten years and three, including me, to twelve years deprivation of freedom each. Soon after the trial I was again sent to Novocherkassk jail. This time I met many friends.

The *Novocherkasstsi* both in prison and camp were all pretty friendly although divided into small groups and bands. One day in prison we heard the soul-piercing cries of a torture-victim. All the *Novocherkasstsi* in the cells on one corridor made a din with benches, mugs and bowls. The guards rushed around. They called for a volunteer who could confirm they were not torturing a *Novocherkassets*. I put myself forward. On the way the guard was intimidating me all the time that I would get it for everyone. Turning into the next corridor I saw them carrying some naked, soaked fellow who was unconscious. He was not from Novocherkassk. They returned me to my cell where I told the other comrades of what I had seen.

I do not remember in which month they sent the first batch of *Novocherkasstsi* to the concentration camp in Komi ASSR. It was already winter when they sent me in the second batch. The concentration camp in which the *Novocherkasstsi* were placed was situated about 40 kms. from Sindor railway station in Komi ASSR. There were sent those sentenced to deprivation of freedom with an intensified regime. Now I have already forgotten in which camp were those sentenced to strict-regime deprivation of freedom. Surprisingly, the memory has tenaciously preserved everything associated with the Novocherkassk tragedy. But here much to do with the concentration camp has been forgotten.

We joyfully met up in the camp with our fellow countrymen. But almost from the first minute we were struck dumb by the news that *Novocherkasstsi* from the first batch were under the thumb of the guards and had formed something akin to an internal camp militia. This news was extremely disturbing. We (V. Vlasenko, V. Chernykh, V. Globa, myself and others) managed to convince them that the existence of anything like that with the participation of *Novocherkasstsi* was intolerable. Thus this venture by the guards fell through.

All camp prisoners worked on logging and the construction of a narrow-gauge railway designed to take the timber away. Camp life took its own course. Periodically, petty or sharp conflicts arose with the camp administration. Once a clash with the guards ended with a burst of automatic fire intended for me but, at the last moment, another guard knocked the automatic upwards and the burst rattled high into the air. We were able to get an operative in the camp special section who had committed atrocities dismissed from the MVD. We were able to get an evening school opened with teachers from among the prisoners. At the same time we were neither submissive nor attentive to the ridiculous political studies. Once a deputy politics major could not take it and, summoning me to his office, forbade me from future attendance at political studies.

However, among the officers of the guard, there were people well- disposed towards the *Novocherkasstsi*. Once, on a day off, I was standing by the camp's small football field. Beside me stood a guard lieutenant. Waiting until there was no one around, he informed me through his teeth and without moving his lips that there had been a tragedy similar to

Novocherkassk in Murom. Thus the *Novocherkasstsi* found out about about the latest crime of the Party and State.

There were instances of brigades refusing to work as a mark of protest. But all they achieved was a split.

After Khrushchev's departure from the political arena, KGB people arrived in the camp in January 1965 to sound out the mood of the *Novocherkasstsi*. That they were very well informed about our life in camp soon became evident to everyone. The queue moved on until they summoned me. The conversation which took place was curious and somehow memorable. From the very first moments he was getting hot under the collar. To one of my retorts the KGB official uttered with arrogance and pride: "The KGB is not your natural mother but the armed vanguard of the Party". The conversation became ever more strained. A KGB colleague with a quick temper warned me that they could try and compromise me in the eyes of the *Novocherkasstsi*: "We will call for one and then another, and to a third and fourth we will carefully give them to believe that the information we have received is thanks to you". I began to laugh and drew their attention to the fact that the office window was open and that there, outside the door, was full of my comrades. I thanked him for the notice of a possible provocation. Bursting into a rage, he promised: "They will release everyone and you'll still be inside, your sentence will finish and you'll still be inside". At this the meeting finished.

Soon the case of the *Novocherkasstsi* began to be re-examined in Moscow. They lowered the sentences of myself and one of the later ones to six years. Novocherkasstsi were already beginning to be released by the Spring of 1965. But to me freedom "had no light". It was disagreeable and hard.

My mother, in traversing all of Stalinism's hellish spheres, having been sentenced in 1943 under Article 58 of the RSFSR Criminal Code to seven years deprivation of freedom, and having served the whole sentence, remained a stoical woman. She lived less in those years in Novocherkassk and was more often in Moscow. She lived in Sindor and was a safe deliverer of mail for the prisoners. Reliable communications with her had been set up. I do not recall a single break in communication or failure of the post. She bribed all for whom it was the only way. They sold themselves cheaply. It was precisely thanks to bribes that she secured a positive reference for me and my release in June 1966.

However, my release was preceded by an episode about which I must tell. A *Novocherkassets,* A. Zharov, somehow approached me with a request to help him send some letters to the outside world. I took the package and, without opening it, sent it through my usual channels. About two days later my contact came up to me and said that my mother had told him to tell me that Zharov was an informer. My blood ran cold. I requested the immediate return of the denunciations. Soon my mother sent them to me. As she later explained, she recalled that in the RSFSR Procurator's Office, along with other active *Novocherkasstsi* who remained firm in their positions, the name Zharov was mentioned. But this did not mean that he stood out although she did have occasion to hear harsh opinions of him. My mother therefore took note of the fact that the letter sent to her had been addressed to the KGB and RSFSR Procurator's Office. At this stage appeals to them were, for imprisoned *Novocherkasstsi*, strange to say the least. My mother opened the letters. When *Novocherkasstsi* lured Zharov into a school he confirmed that he was a lieutenant in the KGB. Subsequent details hold scarcely any interest.

While I was still held, my mother was granted a flat with my name also entered on the authorisation. Thus even before my release I was reliably connected to Novocherkassk.

And after my release and for many long years I continued to live actively. But these are other no less complex and painful themes.

WHAT I SAW
by E.I. Morgunova-Siuda

1st May 1988, Novocherkassk

On the 2nd June I was at work. My enterprise was then situated about a block from the centre. Somewhere at about eleven o'clock women arrive from a shop and say that there is a demonstration on Lenin Prospekt. Workers from NEVZ are marching. There are thousands in the column, workers in their work-clothes, transport workers and the column is led by children. Less than an hour after this (all my co-workers scattered aerial photographs onto the street) we heard bangs - shots. I ran along Krasnoarmeiskaya Street into the centre. At the hospital itself I encountered a motor-scooter on which was sitting a young woman with a shattered knee. Three men had been pushed by hand to the hospital on the scooter. They had clearly been shot with dumdum bullets. The woman did not cry out or moan. She sat silently with eyes wide open.

There were many people everywhere. Lenin and Krasnoarmeiskaya Streets were overflowing. I did not walk along any others. From Zhdanov Street by the First School and the bank there are many open vehicles with soldiers armed with automatic weapons which they hold horizontally in their arms. All the soldiers are of non-Russian nationalities/Asiatics.

I went up to the square. There stands a tank from which they are also shooting. All around glass has showered out of windows, doors and shop-fronts. In the square by the Party Executive Committee and in the square lay those who have been killed. There are many people like bees in a hive. Many men ran along Lenin Prospekt with cameras photographing everyone who was taking part in the events. A bus pulled up in the square. They loaded the dead onto it. The situation, having seen it in peaceful times, is stunning. And I just could not understand how they put them in there. The seats are still there, there's no space. And they took them all away. One old mother fell onto her son not wanting to give him up and screaming hysterically. He was healthy and young with one shoe on and his other foot bare. Where they took them nobody knew or knows. They did not give them to relatives. Afterwards a vehicle turned up and, with a hose, began to wash away the blood from the square. Streams of blood were flowing.

The police and KGB were working in it all. They dispersed people gathering in groups: "No more than two together!" They went up to them and broke them up.

They introduced a curfew. From the morning of the 3rd I went into town. There were many people. The morning was cool. Everyone went about in ones and twos. But in the evening whoever was not at home, on the street, was taken to the commandant's office. But life took its course. On the 3rd, a Sunday, (as always on Sunday we went dancing) I went dancing. There were no buses and it was a long way home. My friend and I ran into a military vehicle (personnel carrier) on patrol. There were many people already in the carrier. And they ordered us to clamber into the carrier as well. The two of us together asked to let me go, my house was very close, but they took my friend to the commandant's office and detained him until dinner-time on the 4th June but, according to what he said, they did not release everyone.

All of this which I saw with my own eyes has stuck in my memory as if it were on a screen.

Translated from the Russian by Sean Roberts

His grandfather a founding member of the Bolsheviks, his father a Red Army general and Soviet diplomat, himself a former officer, journalist and foreign policy researcher, Victor Alexandrovich Gershfeld is both a member of the CPSU and an activist in the unofficial Confederation of Socialist Clubs. TARIQ ALI met him in his flat during a recent visit to Moscow.

VICTOR ALEXANDROVICH GERSHFELD

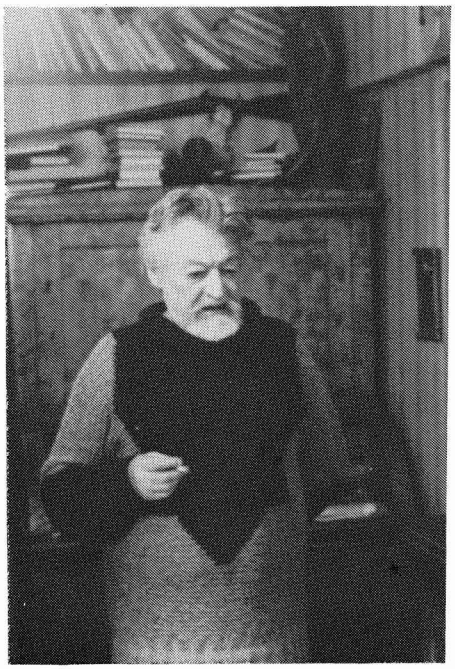
A GREEN BOLSHEVIK IN MOSCOW

Q Could you tell me something about your early life. What sort of family did you come from? How did you view the revolution?

A I was born in Moscow. My grandparents were doctors. My grandfather also was in the army - he was an officer in 1905 and 1914, it was an old family tradition. If you go to Khiva, for example, there at the local history museum you can see a picture with the following inscription: The generals Gershfeld and Garkhin are giving the command to attack. Both my grandfather and grandmother were communists. My grandfather joined the party in the first days and my father joined the Bolsheviks in 1918. At the time he studied at Moscow University and it is from there that he joined the Red Guards first and then went into the Red Army and fought in the Civil War. Later on he directly reported to Lenin on the state of affairs at the front. In *Izvestia* a map used to be published with the latest developments at the front, signed by my father. Until 1931 he held high posts, being a general in the army. Then he started having some difficulties.

Q Do you remember your father ever talking about Trotsky or Tukhachevsky?

A Of course the families of the old Bolsheviks knew each other very well and they used to meet quite often. My father met Trotsky very often in the war and once they had a clash. In the early twenties my father was in charge of some troops in the Ural steppes, in 1920 that was, and a revolt was shaping up and - just in case - my father put the Tsarist officers under house arrest because the Kulaks without military commanders were not a real force. Things were very soon sorted out but afterwards he was summoned by Trotsky, removed from his command post and sent to the Military Academy to study.
Of course, that was just the one case, but what I want to say in general here is that there is one fact which many of Trotsky's biographers overlook. They call him a leftist, being of very radical left views, but what they forget is that it was him who involved Tsarist officers and had some patronage over them. The famous General Rasilov rallied



V.A. Gershfeld

officers around himself in the Red Army on the eve of the attack on Poland. Along with other things, it just proved that Trotsky was a very sober-minded intellectual. His leftist views were not manifested in his practical deeds.
After the war my father had some differences with Trotsky on the principles of building the Red Army, because Trotsky was for a sort of police system, a militia system on the Swedish pattern. My father believed that from the point of view of the history of this country and the future of the army and state we needed a permanent standing army and I think my father was right. But once again this shows that Trotsky was not the type that drove the people by force into the army or into the so-called labour armies; on the contrary, he had quite liberal views even as far as the army was concerned. And this is what should be underlined and emphasised nowadays.
My father was younger than Tukhachevsky and he was his junior in every respect, in age as well as in rank. He had great respect for Tukhachevsky and I must say that at that time the circle of people who made up that political and economic society was quite narrow, quite small so they all lived, worked and fought together. Tukhachevsky was a brilliant commander and he and his group were the thinkers and pioneers of military art - not only in this country, but up to the Second World War they were the most brilliant in the whole world. The military exercises, the war games in the mid-thirties showed that the Red Army, except for its lack of technology, was at the time the best in terms of practical training, because it had had the unique experience of military manoeuvring in the Civil War, while the First World War had been mainly trenches. In this respect, the Civil War was the forerunner of World War Two.

Q Could we return to your father?

A Having quarrelled with Rasilov and those who determined the political making of the army he took up a diplomatic post. He became First Secretary of the Soviet Embassy in Germany. At that time his brother Eugene was First Secretary of the Soviet Embassy in France. He remained in this diplomatic work until 1937 and was quite familiar with Litvinov at that time. In the thirties he used to go personally to Stalin from Germany and then the usual happened: his brother was arrested and my father had to part with his party card for not being able to expose the enemies of the people. Stalin demanded in 1938/39 that he renounce his brother. I must say that my father got off quite lightly because he remained out of a job for a number of years and then started working for the Academy of Sciences.

Q But your uncle was killed?

A He was killed in 1941 in the panic when the troops were retreating from Moscow, but without any trial. The Germans were in the suburbs. My father and I joined the People's Militia, the volunteers recruited to defend Moscow. I was about sixteen. After that battle of Moscow, being a

youngster still, I was sent back home.

Q But did you actually participate in the defence?

A I did and I returned to the army in 1944 in the rank of sergeant. Towards the end of the war I was sent to a military school, the one named after the Supreme Soviet, and afterwards up to 1959 served in the army. I left the army during Krushchev's campaign to reduce the size of the armed forces and joined Moscow University as a student of history. After graduation, I worked for some six months on a German-language newspaper and from then on until recently - it's only two years since I retired - I worked under the Academy Of Sciences at the Institute of World Economics. But of course all this background and in particular the younger years that I spent abroad in Germany, Paris and so on, the years spent in the army which acquainted me with the life of the common people, my historical education and my work at the Institute of World Economics, all this helps me understand the present-day developments.

Q When you were in your teens did you ever hear your father talking about Stalinism and what was going on in the country? After all, this was the period when an entire generation of old Bolsheviks was destroyed. Did your father ever discuss this with you or was it a forbidden zone which could be discussed silently in one's head, but never aloud?

A This is a difficult question. You see, my father firmly and clearly stated that all the reprisals against the old Bolsheviks in the army and in the diplomatic corps were a very dangerous thing and sheer lunacy. He said that, of course, at home and I was absolutely ignorant of what he said or did not say at work. He was working in the realm of foreign relations. You should also remember that from the age of sixteen I spent most of my time away from home. Of course, I knew and my father never made it a secret for me that all these years my army career was very much hampered by all these things. In my character references, in my records, there was the reference to my uncle and to my father being expelled from the party, so I had a purely military career and never reached the top, general staff or anything like that. My father used to say that the victory of the Soviet Union in the Second World War was the victory of the Soviet people despite Stalinism. It is very difficult to go out and explain this to everyone. The victory of Soviet power despite Stalin, that is very difficult to explain to common people.

Q Could you explain the transition from working in the Institute of World Economics to becoming part of the new, unofficial perestroika movement through the Federation of Socialist Clubs?

A My work at the Institute of World Economics was always uneasy for me since I tend to stick to global views. In working out my globalist patterns I have always looked for positive solutions rather than confrontation as far as the policy of the Soviet Union is concerned. The first clash I had at the Institute was on Sino-Soviet relations and I had to my credit a number of writings on the issue. One, which has become a classic by now, was written in 1976 and called "The Possibilities of War Between China and the Soviet Union". I was even fired from the Institute in 1967/68 for my position on China and reinstated only a year later. Although I was of the opinion that Maoism, which very much smelled of Stalinism, was very detrimental for China, I still held the Soviet Union responsible for the breakup of international relations. And in spite of my great respect for Nikita Krushchev for his exposure of Stalinism, I believe that the break in Sino-Soviet relations was one of his most serious blunders, even a crime. You see, it was just a continuation of domestic policy when a lack of respect towards the human being inside the country or lack of respect towards constituent republics within a country were extended to a foreign nation. Of course, the Soviet-American detente and the spirit of Camp David were quite correct. But he should have gone to Washington via Peking and thus represented the interests of the whole socialist community.

The next conflict was over Soviet-Czechoslovak relations. Objectively speaking, of course, the Soviet Union is the stronghold of the progressive forces worldwide and the driving force in the overall development of the socialist world. But in actual fact it proved to be one of the major counter-revolutionary forces and I regard the invasion by Soviet troops of Czechoslovakia as an act of counter-revolution. It objectively merges with the counter-revolution in the West in 1968. The conservatives in the West were trying to submerge the revolution in the West, and we were trying to suppress the revolution in Eastern Europe. And thus we sort of suspended the whole revolutionary process in Europe.

Also, we are objectively to blame for the Polish events of 1980. If we had supported Czechoslovakia in 1968, the subsequent history of the whole of Europe, to say nothing of the development of revolutionary processes in Western Europe, would have been different. Of course this history goes back to Stalin's times, when Hitler annihilated the German communists but those who tried to find refuge here were killed by Stalin, and the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia also determined the relationship with China. The Chinese and Yugoslavs had every right to expect a Soviet invasion; it was a terrible distortion of Leninist foreign policy in the spirit of the traditional imperial politics of Tsarist Russia.

But such a policy is not in the interests of Russia. It was the international left-democratic movement that saved Russia in 1918 under the slogan "Hands off revolutionary Russia", and in the Second World War we fought against fascism in alliance with the world's democratic forces. In the post-war period, a great impact on the development of the two systems was made by the world revolutionary movement, with Third World revolutions preventing world imperialism from an onslaught on the Soviet Union and then the war in Vietnam showing up the futility of US military power and providing the Soviet Union with an opportunity to achieve military parity.

I'm all for Gorbachev but there still exists a tendency to underestimate the left democratic forces and movements in our world. Too much emphasis is given to the relationships between the Tsars, the monarchs, and too little to the improvement of relationships between left democratic and socialist movements. I can understand that Strauss is an important interlocutor, but on the other hand Lafontaine and the Green Party, the Labour movement, communists and all the other diversified left-progressive movements of the world are a more important factor.

Q What was the extent of your disagreements with the hierarchy at the Institute of World Economics? Was it exclusively political?

A Well, of course there was a constant friction on any issue connected with the Third or First World. I was studying at three levels, the first being the global questions so I made an attempt to work out a global, overall strategy for the Soviet Union in terms of foreign policy. I must admit that so far we have not had that overall strategy. We are only beginning to shape it, not only in politics but in other fields too, for example production, consumer relations, transport we do not yet have overall, global strategies.

As to the relationship of the Soviet Union with the developing and socialist countries, my field of interest was military strategy and here again I had a very serious clash with my Institute. One of my manuscripts was called "Peaceful Offensive". But once again this title was treated rather shallowly and they regarded it as a catch-phrase. So my idea was of a political offensive, 360 degrees clockwise around the frontiers of the Soviet Union and globally. I must say that Gorbachev addresses in the Far East, in Murmansk, and in Yugoslavia are to a certain extent in a correct direction but my idea was of a global, allround peaceful offensive. But at least what he is saying is part of that strategy. And, of

course, I had clashes on the Afghanistan issue. When we first started to contemplate the idea of invading Afghanistan they could hear my shouts all through the several storeys of the building, and not because I am a pacifist. I am an officer and a military man: if I were a young captain in the army I would be participating in the war in Afghanistan. My position was that is was a morally wrong, stupid and unproductive act. As the lawyers say, it was the abuse of the norms of necessary defence. Any kind of assistance - scientific, economic, military - was, of course, necessary, but invasion was a terrible mistake.

Q Why is someone of your obvious talents not in the CPSU?

A I am a member of the party.

Q So you're a member of the party and of the unofficial club?

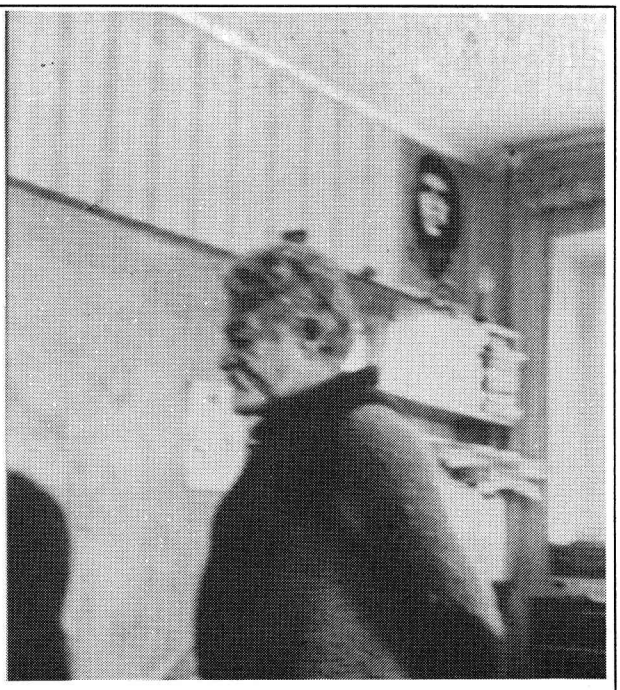
A Of course. One does not preclude the other. All my life I take the liberty of thinking and saying what I deem important and of course I have to pay for it.

Q And in the discussion up to the June conference will the party cell to which you belong let you participate and discuss policies?

A I'll try to do my best. I am doing it at every opportunity and I maintain cooperation with a number of institutes, including the new institute on Western Europe. And another direction is my interview with you. This is also part of my global efforts.

Q The first time I came to your house I was very struck by two things - your amazing collection of books and the poster of Che Guevara. He was the one person whose portrait we carried in the sixties on the streets of Europe. What do you think of Che?

A I don't believe either in god or in heroes but the image of Christ as the image of the foremost personality is very moving and touching to me. And such personalities as Che Guevara are the revolutionary heroes who continued the line of serving the people to their last breath. I am a Bolshevik and of course that is why he is my hero. The problem is not that he chose the wrong time and the wrong country where he was killed in the last battle. That was a tactical mistake, but his general line of serving the world progressive left democratic movement, that is sacred. So he is one of the saints of our revolutionary...



Gershfeld's flat: Che in background

Q I am very happy to hear you say this because in the sixties the Soviet press and the Eastern European official press were attacking him as an adventurist and nothing more.

A This can be explained unfortunately by the counter-revolution of the sixties in our country, when that son-of-a-bitch Yuri Zukov, a political analyst of *Pravda* whom I know, used the same words to describe the revolutionary students of Paris as devils and provocateurs.

Q What do you think of the chances of Gorbachev succeeding?

A Well, he has every chance of success, beyond any doubt. Another question is how complete that success would be. You see, Krushchev launched his offensive at a time when the country was not prepared and he was supported only by Moscow and Leningrad. Now Gorbachev enjoys the support of vast masses because the country has changed.

Firstly, in terms of theory, the history of all social formations has passed through certain stages, starting from dictatorship which testifies to the weakness of the formation: slavery in Rome, feudal Europe and present-day capitalism. Secondly, the Soviet Union is a great socialist world power. We are one of the two superpowers of the world. On the basis of this force, of this strength, both the internal and external changes occur. We are, of course, a young superpower and the misfortune of all these Brezhnevs and the other rubbish which is still in power is that they know that they belong to a superpower but they don't realise it. If a demonstration of some refuseniks is being dispersed nowadays or if they invade Afghanistan, this is the inferiority complex which does not give them the freedom of spirit to realise that being a great superpower we can afford all sorts of demonstrations and all sorts of regimes in Afghanistan as well as a one-sided, major reduction of military forces.

On the experience of the great reductions in the armed forces realised by Krushchev - over one million - one can state with full responsibility that it would be quite favourable for the Soviet Union to unilaterally reduce its army by 50% towards the year 2000. We must start to unilaterally reduce our armaments and troops, starting with the Pacific Ocean up to the Urals, say during three or four years, then to liquidate the China frontline leaving intact only the defence of the sea coast.

The policy of Gorbachev has undoubtedly borne great fruit already. Our next-door neighbours realise that we are a peaceful state or have become such. China has already reduced its army by one million and is working on the second million. Yugoslavia has reduced the term of military service, thus reducing the army, and Romania is cutting back on its military budget. These are our next-door neighbours, who were afraid of our interference after 1968.

And finally, my Gorbachev who I like very much, and Shevardnadze, who is also very much to my liking, are now saying that the German Question could be solved in a hundred years. For all these one hundred years I cannot agree and believe that the left and the left-democratic world movement must today change their vision of the unification of Germany, and not let the German Right monopolise it. It is quite understandable that the process of unification itself is at present seen as an obstacle to solving the problems between East and West,

to the progress of disarmament, and that the prospect of German neutrality scares NATO and the Warsaw Pact. But we, the left-democratic movement of the world must raise this question and table it for consideration right now. We must work out our stand on it and in the global system of disarmament we must also introduce this issue and fight for it. Only this can prevent the Third World War. For a neutral Scandinavia, Germany, Austria and Balkans will completely seize the space for conflict between the East and the West.

Q I just want to thank you because this has been one of the most stimulating interviews and when we publish it in Western Europe people will be amazed that a rank-and-file member of the CPSU, moreover one who is a former colonel in the Red Army, thinks and talks like this.

A Unfortunately, as in technology, the gap between innovation and its implementation is very great. We must try to bring that time, the time of implementation, closer by our words and our deeds. Both in this country and in the whole world. It is my pleasure to have you here for this interview and I am looking forward to many more meetings like this and I am sure you will come again. I feel that spiritually we are akin. Same as all the left democrats. I also regard myself as a Bolshevik but in the tradition of the 1920s, and I sympathise with the Green Party which to my mind is a very promising movement.

Q So you're really a Green Bolshevik!

A Who has anything against the colour green? You see, I am not only a theoretician - I am all for an ideal politics and I believe that science must build up an ideal politics because the functionaries of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will mar and spoil it, obviously...

So the Greens invited me on a lecture tour. I could not confirm it at that time because I am fat and lazy, but after taking counsel with my wife and friends I have decided to accept the invitation. I hope we meet again and I hope that the Soviet Union moves from a Dictatorship of Weakness to a Democracy of Strength.

This interview was conducted in Moscow by Tariq Ali for his book: ***Revolution from Above: Where is the Soviet Union Going*** **, to be published by Century Hutchinson, London, in October 1988. Extracts from the interview appear in the book, but this is the first time it is published in full.**

What is the impact of Gorbachev's reforms in the non-Russian republics of the USSR? Jeremy Lester visited Bashkiria from February to April this year.

JEREMY LESTER

PERESTROIKA IN THE PROVINCES
The View from Bashkiria

I don't believe it, an oil rig !
I've never see you here before.
Not so long ago one could still hear
the white-bearded muezzin call the faithful prayer.

Time was, no one lived here,
the Russians had not carved timbers into churches,
and here the living brought
foaming kumyss, a gift to the dead.

You are made of iron, you cannot mourn.
You obey the laws of life - there shall be oil.
You have drilled through all the strata of history,
and from on high you spit on death.

You - offspring of a motorised age,
the sign of progress in the silence of the steppes,
only the ancestors need nothing,
they might as well have soap made from their bones.

Let's say the Bashkirs raised you by the graves
as a monument to the age -
"We had our idols",
they might have said.

Only, of course, we did not know how to sell our ancestors' ashes and our forefathers' spirit.
There were no motors and motels,
there were no two motherlands, no two gods.

Then we weren't ashamed to speak
in our native tongue,
but we considered it hurtful and wrong
to be guests at our own table.

It's a pity that we, born for freedom,
do not know how to die twice :
dead, we writhe in pain -
pain which you will never experience.

You are made of iron, you cannot hear the voices of
the dead !
You have developed the formula of ages :
the children may still be rebellious sods,
but the grandchildren will bring up slaves.

But I've had it up to here with rigs.
This land is a pusfilled abscess.
I suck a verbal dummy,
but you who've drilled the planet are infected matter.[1]

Such is the description of the Republic of Bashkiria, written by one of its native inhabitants, Nizametdin Akhmetov, a dissident poet who was released from the Chelyabinsk Psychiatric Hospital in June of last year after nearly 20 years in various hospitals and prisons.

For those who know little of Bashkiria, one can offer few details of great enlightenment or great interest. Economically, as the poem so vividly points out, the region is an important oil refining and oil processing centre of the Soviet Union. It is situated on the border between Europe and Asia at the southern tip of the Ural mountains and covers a territory of 143, 600 square kilometers.

Politically, it achieved minor prominence back in 1919 when it became the first Autonomous Republic to be created under Lenin's Nationality policy. Between 1941 and 1943, it was also in the forefront by being home to the Comintern organisation and the many exiled international communists who later went on to achieve prominence in their native countries.

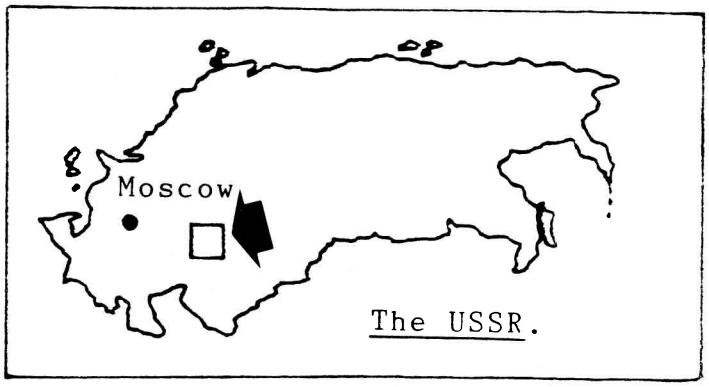
More recently, Bashkiria came under the spotlight when it was reported - in what was one of the first signs of glasnost[2] - that there had been a hijack attempt at the capital's airport, Ufa, in September 1986. It is also the birthplace of such personalities as Rudolf Nureyev and Raisa Gorbacheva.

The Soviet Union, however, is a vast land of Bashkirias and western "Sovietologists" too often forget that there is a world outside the Kremlin. The important question arises as to how far Gorbachev's attempts at reform have penetrated the more inconspicuous depths of his power domain.

Personnel changes

No one can deny that since coming to power in March 1985, Gorbachev has radically altered the party and state leaderships in the outlying regions. Between 1985 and the middle of 1987, for example, nearly 40 per cent of the first secretaries and almost half of the secretaries of the republican, *krai* and *oblast* party committees were replaced. At the *raion* and city level, 50 per cent of the party secretaries were new. Approximately one third of the local government chairmen in *oblasts* and *krais* and the same proportion of the chairmen of the Councils of ministers in the republics and autonomous republics were new; and more than half of the ministers and state committee chairmen at the all-union and republican level were replaced.[3] Moreover, as meetings and plenums were held throughout the party organisation at the end of last year to discuss the progress of perestroika, a further 89, 000 members of elected party organs were replaced for unsatisfactory work.[4]

Impressive statistics aside, however, until June 1987 personnel changes in Bashkiria had completely eluded the new General Secretary and the Republic had continued functioning under the tutelage of the long



standing First Secretary Midkhat Shakirov.

Elected to the post of First Party *Obkom* secretary in 1969, Shakirov was an unrepentent "Brezhnevite" who had achieved prominence in the Republic at a time when his former patron in the Kremlin had been eager to consolidate his own position within the Central Committee apparatus. Not surprisingly, perhaps, in the course of his long leadership, Shakirov had done very nicely for himself and for his entourage him in amassing a small private fortune, (he was particularly fond of country estates full of locally mined marble). Like many another local "baron" therefore, the new language of reform from Moscow in 1985 very much represented a personal threat to the existing status quo.

Newspaper campaign

Thus, in the course of the next two years, the local party's role was very much one of propagating the notion of "business as usual". Much lip service was paid to the principles of perestroika and the "intensification of the economy by new methods", but in practice little of substance as regards the new reforms penetrated the authoritarian walls of the Republic. Indeed, the only obstacles that were put in the way of this "business as usual" approach came from press reports that were filed periodically by the "reform-hungry" correspondents of national newspapers.

In July 1985, for example, *Pravda* turned its attention to the cadres situation in the Republican party organisation and began to question Shakirov's style of political management.[5] In December of the same year, another *Pravda* article carried details of how several party secretaries in Ufa had had to be reprimanded for the manner in which many party officials operated without effective control over their actions.[6] Six months later in the summer of 1986, the normally conservative *Sovetskaya Rossiya* accused the First Party Secretary in Ufa of "bureaucratic methods" and cited him as an example of a party official whose understanding of perestroika was seriously flawed.[7] In July 1986 it was once again the turn of *Pravda* to highlight the Republican party's deficiencies in the anti-alcohol campaign being waged in Bashkiria.[8] And in January 1987, *Moscow News* entered the fray by reporting on the illegal methods that had been used by the party authorities in the city of Oktyabrsky in opposing the registration of a new religious congregation.[9]

By far the most damning interference from "outside", however, occurred in May 1987 with a detailed account in *Pravda* of much more serious abuses of the legal system in the Bashkir party organisation.[10] The main part of the article concerned the case of an official in the Ufa City party committee, one Leonid Safronov, who in 1984 had been removed from his post of Second *Gorkom* Secretary, stripped of his medals and party membership and sentenced to six years in prison on completely false charges of misappropriating money while heading a construction enterprise. Safronov's real crime, it was reported in *Pravda*, had been the fact that he had dared to challenge Midkhat Shakirov's promotion of one of his own "entourage" to head the influential Ufa City Party Committee. This, the article went on to add, was no isolated experience in the Republic and Shakirov's whole style of leadership had been based on similar illegal persecutions.

If rumours in the city itself are to be believed, however, the story is even more interesting than *Pravda* itself revealed. According to these rumours, Safronov used to be a personal body guard for Hungary's Communist Party General Secretary, Janos Kadar, in the 1950's and somehow a message was got to Kadar of his former associate's plight. Kadar then made Gorbachev himself aware of what was going on in Ufa and it was thus on Gorbachev's own personal initiative that a campaign was launched to expose Shakirov and remove him from his First Party Secretaryship.

Whether these rumours are true or not, however, it certainly does appear that the attempt to oust Shakirov from Bashkiria was highly unusual and not a little complicated in its final completion.

On June 9 1987, the 6th plenum of the Bashkir *obkom* organisation was convened to discuss the allegations in the *Pravda* article.[11] Attending the plenum were A.K.Balagurov, head of the Central Committee's Department for Organisational and Party Work; his deputy, Konstantin Mogilnichenko; and G.V.Krivyakov, an instructor in the same department.

On recent and similar occasions in the past, the presence of these senior Central Committee figures, together with the seriousness of the charges made against an *obkom* First Party Secretary would have normally been enough to ensure his immediate removal. On this occasion, however, the eight hour long plenum only managed to relieve the Chairman of the People's Control Committee and the Chairman of the Party's Control Commission from their respective posts and had to content itself with a resolution that the *obkom* Buro "deemed it impossible for Shakirov to remain in office...and appealed to the CPSU Central Committee to consider this matter further."

New First Secretary

Two weeks later, the "Shakirov saga" was finally ended. At the 7th plenum on June 23, Shakirov and the long standing Agitprop Secretary, Takir Akhunzyanov were removed from their posts for "incorrect leadership methods, substantial deviations from the norms of party life and the persecution of workers" (in the case of Shakirov) and "for serious shortcomings and an unprincipled approach in his work" (in the case of Akhunzyanov). Replacing Shakirov as First Party Secretary in the *obkom* leadership, meanwhile, was the 55-year-old former director in the Ministry of Oil Industry, Ravmer Khabibullin.[12]

In a final *Pravda* article in July of last year on the "Shakirov case" it was reported that the 6th and 7th plenums in the Republican party organisation were "lessons in genuine democracy, glasnost and party spiritedness - full of criticism and self-criticism and a determination to put right all past mistakes. From now on, new goals have been firmly set for the future."[13] But what are these new goals and how successfully are they being translated into practice?

Republican plenum

The new First Party Secretary himself tried to answer this question at the 9th plenum of the Republican party organisation last December.

Referring to the general importance of the new reforms and the attractiveness they were lending to socialism throughout the world, Khabibullin then reiterated the importance of the 6th and 7th plenums in the Republic which, he argued, had given the impetus for Bashkiria's own participation in glasnost and perestroika. In terms of party work, for example, perestroika meant that cadres had to turn to the real issues of the day. They had to be responsive to the needs of the people, less bureaucratic and less bogged down in unnecessary red tape and paperwork. The same principles, moreover, also had to be applied at the *gorkom* and *raikom* levels. The lower party organs had to take much more responsibility for their own affairs and use their own initiative, rather than constantly referring every little detail to the higher party organisation.

Greater attention to cadre training and selection was also a vital process in the new conditions of perestroika, argued the new First Secretary:

"We need to frankly recognise that our work with party reserves has been seriously neglected. After all, it is no secret to anyone that for months now we haven't been able to find the right workers for responsible positions in the *obkom*, *gorkom* and *raikom* party hierarchies and in the Soviets and leading economic institutions. What then is the matter? Is it possible that we don't have the people worthy of promotion? They are certainly there, but the problem is, we don't know them, we don't think about future prospects and we live only for the present. We need to thoroughly learn about people and patiently educate and promote cadres, engage in open conversation about people in our collectives ... and make full use of the wide range of experiences that are available in the Republic."[14]

In practical terms, this focus on personnel policy has certainly been very important. In recent months, 36 per cent of party secretaries throughout the Republic and 64 per cent

of the departmental heads have been replaced - with the vast majority of them receiving severe reprimands for party violations of one kind or another. In one meeting alone of the Ufa City Party Committee (in September 1987), eight leading members were dismissed and 14 received severe reprimands. More significantly still, starting with the 6th plenum in June of last year, the *obkom* Buro and Secretariat have been completely overhauled. Apart from Khabibullin's replacement of Shakirov, for example, there is now a new Second *obkom* Secretary, a new Secretary for Agitprop affairs, a new Secretary for Agriculture and Light Industry, a new First Secretary in the capital, Ufa, and a new Chairman of the People's Control Committee.

Turning his attention to the economic side of perestroika, Khabibullin revealed that by the end of last year, 35 per cent of enterprises in the Republic (accounting for more than 75 per cent of industrial production) had started working along lines of self financing. Many other enterprises and organisations, however, which should have been working to the new regulations had not yet started and were continuing in the old fashion.

1987 had also proved to be a bad year in terms of fulfilling the economic plan in many industrial sectors. The areas that received most criticism were machine construction - which is currently playing a key part in the Republic's economic programme - and construction in general, where the Republic's planners are trying to solve the region's housing problem by the year 2,000 by providing a flat or house for every individual family.

Another important sector of industry, vital to the success of perestroika, which came under severe criticism, was that of light industry and consumer goods. Slowness, failure to deliver goods, poor quality and, of course, failure to overcome shortages were just some of the criticisms that were mentioned.

Finally, a key section of Khabibullin's speech was devoted to the ecological situation in the Republic. Stressing that serious problems had accumulated over a period of many years due to the nature of the Republic's industrial base, he admitted that enterprises and factories had been constructed with little or no regard to the protection of the surrounding environment. Moreover, throughout the 11th Five Year Plan and the first 2 years of the current plan, the more than 45 million roubles that had been spent on environmental protection measures had had little or no effect.

In general, then, Khabibullin's speech was remarkable for its widespread and forthright criticism of existing problems. No secretary in the *obkom*, virtually no member or candidate member of the Buro and virtually no departmental head was spared from a personal attack on his style of work, and all were given a lecture on what needed to be done in the foreseeable future. In this sense, of course, it is even more remarkable to think that Khabibullin had only held the post of First *Obkom* Secretary for 6 months; and although he is a Bashkir by nationality, one couldn't help getting the impression that certain circles must have inevitably regarded him as an "outsider" forced upon them by a Moscow leadership determined to shake the Republican party, state and social organisations out of their long years of inertia.

Theory and practice

In some spheres the new fine words coming from the *Obkom* leadership have found a practical implementation. More and more cases of political corruption are being exposed in full public view; support is being given for the principle that multi-candidate elections should become the norm of everyday life in order to give the ordinary person a much greater sense of political participation; and organisations like the Trade Unions have also been purged of corrupt and inefficient "yes men" and have been given powers designed to enhance their role and status amongst ordinary workers on the shop floor.

All too often, however, the espousal of the new reforms has gone no further than outlining the problems which everybody already knows to exist, without providing firm or practical guidelines as to what is going to be done to overcome such problems.

It is nowadays common knowledge, for example, that over the past 15 years the basic resources of the Republic's economy grew by almost four times, but industrial production only grew by 2.4 times. The number of enterprises not fulfilling the last plan grew by three times; while the quality of production has also officially deteriorated in recent years. The same kind of statistics, meanwhile, can also be cited for the agricultural sector, and the Republic in many areas was the worst producer in the whole Urals region, despite its vast potential. Indeed Ufa, a city with over a million inhabitants, holds one of the worst positions in the country as regards the provision of basic foods such as meat, milk, eggs and butter. And the practical results of this? Increasing shortages of basic commodities; lengthening queues and the need for ration cards to regulate the provision of meat, sausage and butter on a monthly basis.

Outside of the purely economic sphere, the situation looks little better. One in every ten residents in Ufa is on the waiting list for housing and can only expect to receive some kind of accommodation after 15 to 20 years. For level of comfort, Ufa is officially ranked almost last among Soviet cities with a population of one million and the transportation situation (which has to be seen to be believed) is getting more and more critical by the week. Likewise, whereas impressive administrative buildings tower high in the centre of the city, kindergartens, shops, schools, recreational facilities and polyclinics are in very short supply. In terms of preventive-medical care, for example, it appears that many practitioners do not possess high enough qualifications; medical assistance therefore is too frequently of a low level; and there is a general lack of modern techniques, modern equipment and good quality medicines in use. The provision of hospital beds in Ufa is on average 1.5 times lower than elsewhere in the Republic; there is not a single specialised children's hospital and inadequate provisions exist for maternity patients and women's advisory centres. Enterprises concerned with the manufacture of hospital equipment are years behind schedule and the capital resources vital for maintaining existing hospitals and for the building of new hospitals simply don't exist.

Finally, in terms of the actual provisions supplied to doctors, the Republic once again comes very low (58th) in the Russian Federation as a whole. In many towns and cities, certain specialised doctors are completely lacking, with the biggest concern caused by the very low numbers of gynaecologists.

Add to these problems other difficulties related to the increasing frequency of drug abuse (whereby in the past 5 years the number of criminal offences in connection with drugs in Ufa has gone up eightfold); alcohol abuse, with an increasing numbers of home distilleries due to the fact that ordinary alcohol is now so difficult to come by; shortages in sugar, due to the problem of increasing samogen production; an increasing concern that the native Bashkirs are more and more being denied their own traditions and opportunities to learn their own language; and one can indeed appreciate the reluctance of many ordinary people to openly greet the recent change in words and slogans being voiced by their authorities, before they have the chance to see the practical effect, if any, of these new words. The old maxim, "actions speak louder than words" is extremely popular at the moment wherever one goes in the Republic.

Cooperatives

One of the principal ways in which it is hoped to alleviate some of the main economic problems is the creation of more cooperative enterprises - a matter dealt with extensively by the General Secretary himself during his address to the 4th All Union Congress of Collective Farmers in March of this year. The actual provision of cooperatives and individual labour activity in the Bashkir Republic, however, is not progressing at all smoothly and is finding a very mixed response indeed.

Amongst ordinary consumers, for example, there are many that think that their prices are much too high, while others genuinely think that the service provided by the cooperatives is both quicker and better and therefore worth the extra cost.

Whatever viewpoint one takes, the number of cooperatives is increasing all the time. In

Ufa, for example, by the middle of 1987, 29 cooperatives had been established. By the autumn, this figure had more than doubled and the cooperatives were being responsible for the exchange of more than 626, 000 roubles.[15] In the Republic as a whole, meanwhile, approximately 300 cooperatives had been established by February of this year - the majority of them concerned with the production of consumer goods such as shoes, clothes and furniture or the provision of services such as restaurants and repairs.16 One very popular new cooperative has just announced that it intends to build 20 houses with all amenities by the end of this year and then sell them with attached plots of land to Ufa residents at a special auction.

Examples of this kind aside, however, numerous problems still remain. Obtaining the required premises, transport and necessary raw materials is often very difficult and very time consuming and frequently results in production delays. Other cooperatives lack the necessary economic and legal skills to make their businesses function effectively and problems with registration, basic book keeping and accountancy frequently arise.

If the ordinary consumer shows a mixed reaction to the new cooperatives, however, the same is also true of the reaction by the local party and state authorities. The number of cooperatives may be "increasing all the time", but a figure of 300 for a Republic the size of Bashkiria is still fairly small and an indication that they are really only being "tolerated" at the moment, rather than actively encouraged to provide competition for the old state monopolies. Moreover, in an article in the main Republican newspaper *Sovetskaya Bashkiriya* in February of this year, a lot of concern was expressed that too many skilled workers were giving up their state jobs to move to the cooperative sphere and as a result serious problems were being inflicted on the state sector.[17]

Informal groups

Finally, a very interesting part of the new climate of reform in the Soviet Union, in particular from a socialist point of view, has been the appearance of thousands of so-called *neformaly* groups throughout the country. The political clubs in Moscow, such as "The Club for Social Initiatives", "Perestroika" and "Democracy and Humanism" (many of which have now united into the "Democratic Union") have received most attention in the West so far, but in places like the Bashkir Republic, too, many independent groups exist and maintain links with other groups in Moscow, Leningrad and elsewhere. In Ufa, for example, there are clubs dealing with issues ranging from ecological problems to psychology, theatre, art, drama, music, philosophy and literature.

At the time of writing, it would be fair to say that there is a basic tolerance of the *neformalys* on the part of the new Republican party leadership. Most of them are provided with premises to meet and provided they do not go beyond certain boundaries, they face little harassment from the authorities. In some cases, if not many, they even receive positive support for some of the things that they do. Membership of the groups themselves, however, tends to be quite small at the moment as there is still a definite psychological barrier which individuals must cross if they want to be openly associated with a *neformaly* group.

This tolerance, however, clearly has its limits and in a speech to Komsomol members in March of this year, First Secretary Khabibullin warned members of *neformaly* groups not to cross over into the realm of "hooliganism" and "extremism".[18] Uppermost in his mind were the events that occurred in Ufa at the end of November last year.

Mass protest

For years the poor environmental situation in the city and throughout the Republic had been completely ignored by the party and state authorities. An administrative decision to build yet another environment polluting polycarbonate enterprise within the city boundary proved to be the last straw. Using their legal rights, a group of people from the city's ecology *neformaly* decided to organise a demonstration for Sunday November 29. In compliance with existing regulations, prior notice was given that a large number of people intended to gather for the purpose of discussing the current situation.

Despite the authorities' attempts to limit the demonstration, (by compelling university students to attend special lectures on that day, for example), the march down the main boulevard (Prospect October) to the city council, which was both well organised and peaceful, attracted a crowd of up to 2,000 people. On reaching the Council building, technical experts, scientists and medical experts addressed the authorities using loudspeakers and demanded that action be taken to reverse the original decision. And the reaction of the local authorities? Fear and dismay that ordinary people could use their full rights of expression in such a manner. Measures were immediately taken to restrict further demonstrations of this kind;a letter campaign was organised in all the Republican newspapers condemning the "irresponsible" actions of the demonstrators; and several members of the *neformaly* group lost their jobs.

On December 2, however, the very same day that the letter campaign was launched, *Pravda* carried a report about the serious environmental situation in Ufa and also printed a strongly worded letter signed by leading scientists, cultural figures and over 3,000 residents urging the Government to rethink its industrial policy in the city.[19] A few days later, a joint committee of republican and national ministers and experts was convened to assess the environmental situation in Ufa and concluded that the polycarbonate enterprise should indeed be built elsewhere.A passive victory, at least, then, for the supporters of glasnost and perestroika "from below".

In conclusion, the situation in Bashkiria today reminds me of a television play screened in the Soviet Union last year by the well known commentator, Fedor Burlatsky.

Entitled "The First Lessons (A Year Later)" the play is the sequel to an earlier play "Two Views From One Office" which deals with the effect of perestroika in one particular *oblast* of the Soviet Union. The *oblast* is headed by a "Gorbachevian type" First Secretary, full of idealistic slogans and intentions. Opposing him, however, are old style party secretaries worried by the "revisionist" language of the reforms and determined to preserve the "Marxist-Leninist" foundation of their region.

The play deals with events one year after the First Secretary's appointment and rather surprisingly perhaps, portrays a man who is not only finding it hard to preserve his original idealism, but who also cannot understand why the mass of the local population still fail to appreciate the changes he has tried to introduce. The answer he is given by the conservatives is telling: Officials have been replaced and corruption has been exposed, but for the general mass this only amounts to the replacement of one bureaucrat by another. In practical terms, life for the ordinary citizen is no different. Indeed, if anything, it is much worse. Expectations were raised that concrete improvements in living standards would finally come about. deficits and shortages, it was assumed, would be overcome and people's lives would take a real turn for the better. But in reality nothing at all changed, and destroyed expectations only breed bitterness.

The situation in Ufa, one year after Khabibullin's replacement of Shakirov, is not quite as demoralising as in Burlatsky's play, but scepticism, if not yet outright cynicism, does reign supreme amongst the ordinary masses. "Khabibullin is full of nice slogans", it is argued, "but we the people still have to suffer the shortages and the indignation of living with ration cards."

Expectations

Moreover, the more Khabibullin speaks, the more people begin to wonder just what kind of practical "expectations" he himself has of the reform initiatives. In his speech to Komsomol members, for example, in which he warned *neformaly* groups of not crossing the boundary of tolerance, he "irritated" (for want of a better word) many of the inhabitants of Ufa with his remark that "they" had lost the city some 56 million roubles by their campaign against the siting of the proposed polycarbonate enterprise in the city; money, he went on to argue, which could have been used in carrying out research on environmental pollution! And later on in the same speech he also spoke openly of his own

personal hostility to the constant resurrection of problems and mistakes committed by the party in the 1930s, singling out Rybakov's "Children of the Arbat", which deals with the Stalin terror, for particular criticism.[20] And more recently still, the continued reluctance of the regional party leadership to fully embrace the reforms was demonstrated throughout the process of selecting candidates for the special Party Conference in July. On more than one occasion, delegates were imposed despite complaints from ordinary workers and officials that they were incompetent or not genuine advocates of reform - or both.

Gorbachev himself, meanwhile, has frequently spoken about the "revolution of expectations" and recently defended himself by saying that the realisation of more *cultural* expectations is just as important as the continuing desire to realise an improvement in the economic expectations: "... It is not by bread alone, nor even by modern material goods that man lives. It is rather by truth and conscience, justice and freedom, morality and humanism that man lives today".[21] The statement is a very fine moral principle. Unfortunately, though, the right balance is still not there for many people and a good deal more "bread" for most of them would not go amiss. The expectations of ordinary people were further strengthened by the remarkable events at the recent Party Conference. The really crucial question, however, is this: how much longer can they go on with *unfulfilled* expectations? Of one thing we can be certain - for Khabibullin, time is most certainly of the essence. Gorbachev above him, and the ordinary masses below him, are both eager to see practical improvements on the current situation.

Footnotes

1. N. Akhmetov, *Monologue by the Rig*, Translated by Richard J. McKane and Helen Szamuely.
2. A more recent piece of glasnost has also thrown light on the Stalinist "orgy (vakkhanalii) of arrests and executions" that occurred in Ufa following the removal of First Obkom Party Secretary Bykin at the instigation of Stalin's aide Andrei Zhdanov. Cf. Yurii Karyakin, "'Zhdanovskaya Zhidkost'" ili protiv ochernitel'stva', *Ogonek*, No. 19, May 7-14 1988, pp. 25-27
3. G. Razumovsky, "Partiinuyu rabotu - na uroven' zadach perestroika", *Partiinaya zhizn*, No.12, June 1987, p.12
4. Mikhail Poltoranin, "Convince not Command", *Moscow News*, No.10, March 6, 1988, p.3
5. N. Mironov, "Ne tol'ko lichnoe delo", *Pravda*, July 25, 1985, p.2
6. *Pravda*, December 14, 1985, p.3
7. *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, June 24, 1986
8. *Pravda*, July 4, 1986.
9. Vladimir Shevelev, "We Write Two and Carry Three", *Moscow News*, No.4 1987, p.12
10. V. Prokushev, "'Presledovanie prekratit'...'", *Pravda*, May 6, 1987.p.2
11. For details see *Sovetskaya Bashkiriya*, June 10-12, 1987.
12. "Posle kritika", *Pravda*, July 6, 1987.
13. "Vysokaya distsiplina, strogii spros-vazhneishie usloviya perestroika", *Sovetskaya Bashkiriya*, December 15, 1987.p.2
15. *Sovetskaya Bashkiriya*, December 29, 1987.
16. "Bol'she kooperativov - bol'she uslug", *Sovetskaya Bashkiriya*, February 12, 1988.p.3
17. Ibid.
18. "Energiyu molodykh - delu perestroika", *Sovetskaya Bashkiriya*, March 15, 1988.p.2
19. V. Prokushev, "Za chertoi miloserdiya", *Pravda*, December 2, 1987. The article gave no mention of the demonstration on November 29, although some details of this were published in an article in Literaturnaya Gazeta on December 9. (Zhan Mindubaev, "Gorod pered litsom problemy", p.10)
20. "Energiyu molodykh...", pp.1-2
21. "Revolyutsionnoi perestroike - ideologiyu obnovleniya", *Sovetskaya Bashkiriya*, February 19, 1988.p.2 (Speech at the plenum on educational issues).

POLAND

LESZEK BUDREWICZ

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A SOCIALIST IN POLAND TODAY?

INTRODUCED AND TRANSLATED BY *DAVID HOLLAND*

The revival of the pre-war Polish Socialist Party has been an attractive prospect to certain currents in the Polish opposition for some time.

It offers the possibility of a secular social-democratic ideological tradition (as opposed to the clerical and nationalist orientation of another aspect of Polish political life), which is untainted by the unpopularity of Polish communism. It offers, too, the possibility of identification with West German or Scandinavian social democracy, perceived as models of prosperous, socially responsible capitalism. Perhaps the possibility of support from the Second International is also a factor.

The tradition of the pre-war PPS is, moreover, a national and patriotic one. It is extremely important for any left current to avoid the charge of being made up of Quislings. As Budrewicz observes, the PPS was "never afraid to be anti-soviet".

Indeed the PPS has had a continuous history as an emigre organisation, publishing *Robotnik* (The Worker), and numbering amongst its leading figures several employees of Radio Free Europe.

Attempts to revive the organisation inside Poland in 1981 and again in December 1987 have, however, been apparently unconnected with the emigre group.

Jan Jozef Lipski was named President of the new PPS, which was in itself a claim to continuity, since the elderly former KOR activist has been associated not only with the pre war PPS, but virtually the entire history of socialism in Poland.

This heritage was fused with the contribution of respected Solidarity militants, such as Jozef Pinior from Wroclaw. An unpleasant row over police penetration of the organisation in February 1988 led to the withdrawal of Lipski and three others from the leadership of the PPS.

Budrewicz' essay is representative of the kind of agnostic, ideologically sceptical, attitude which many PPS supporters can be expected to share.

Pragmatic, egalitarian and fiercely opposed to the Polish regime, there is an impatience with the inadequacy and bankruptcy of the traditional conceptual language of socialism.

Western readers familiar with the independent movements which the author is looking to as models will notice the absence of the struggle for women's emancipation (let alone lesbian and gay rights!) from the agenda. This is also representative enough of the Polish opposition, as is the influence of a profoundly Catholic culture on the equation of abortion with the death penalty.

To be a socialist today can equally well mean "to be a butcher", like Pol Pot, or "to be a sacrificial victim" like Olof Palme. Rights to the ownership of this word are a tangled matter. In Poland, however, it is almost completely unclaimed. I do not know whether there are many more people in the country, who would like to define themselves as socialists than there were when the founding meeting of the resurrected PPS (Polish Socialist Party - Transl.) was broken up by the security services. It has to be asked precisely what it means to be a social

democrat today, forced to deal with responsibility for the major part of the left-wing political tradition and the social opprobrium attaching to it.

Social justice

To be a socialist means to undertake the task of rebuilding the shattered terrain of Polish political life, when the cadres, tradition and social environment on which the former PPS depended are all lacking. To be a socialist is not to be afraid of the memory of the unwilling role in modern Polish history played by a dummy like Osobka-(known as Ozdobka - piece of flummery, Transl.) Morawski, of those who shared responsibility for the use of arms in 1970, Cyrankiewicz and finally Jablonski. It is to try and recall to memory the fates of those who died in Stalinist prisons, like Puzak, or were forced into exile, like Ciolkosz. It is to turn the Vistula in its course, by saying that the PPS is still the Party of social justice, which has always defended human rights, parliamentary democracy and independence; that it was anti-soviet, even at the cost of unpopularity with world social democracy.

"Socialism" has met the same fate as the word "political". Both are generally considered to carry bad connotations. However, Solidarity defined itself as "apolitical" in 1980-81, but when it asked the workers what its first priority should be, they replied "expel the PUWP (Polish United Workers' Party) from the factories". It is the same with "socialism". Social needs and problems are "socialist", but it is 17 years since 1970, when the workers expressed their aspirations in the language of socialism.

To be a socialist today is to undertake the difficult task of differentiating the elements of communist "verbal socialism", which should disappear from Polish social life for good and all, from those which need to be given a new lease of life. State ownership in at least some areas of the economy is an archaism. It should be possible to separate co-operatives from the state. The communist version of egalitarianism is a form of social exploitation by privileged groups, but the new PPS would be succumbing to schizophrenia if it did not defend the poor section of the community, or if it did not oppose proposals for charges for health care. To be a socialist is to determine to what degree it is appropriate to "marketise" the economy, and what relevance the models of Keynes or Galbraith have.

Activism

To want to be a socialist, however, means something more. It means to be a *social activist*, creating new developments from below, relating to the real problems of social groups, instead of the widespread tendency in the political practice of the Polish opposition to do things in a "Western fashion", dealing with interesting disputes about world view, tactics or personalities, which however involve very few people. To be a socialist is to respond to the question of how to defend people from the price rises, or the new legal code; to say what should be done about the brigade system; whether to fight back against redundancies, or whether to argue for the "Swedish system" of occupational retraining without even mentioning the humanisation of work or the development of leisure provision by local self- government.

If being a socialist is to make any sense, then first of all a series of questions need to be posed and the consequent problems addressed. This means to try and find more constructive solutions than the leaflet-arrest-telephone-radio pattern widespread amongst the opposition. It is essential that activity should be "alongside" or "as well as" social mobilisations and not instead of them. In a period of depoliticisation and given attitudes to the colour red, this is not an enviable task.

To be a socialist is to resist the temptation to participate in the latest nine-day wonder, thrown up by the establishment of some new oppositional grouping. It means resisting bitterness. Those who are prone to bitterness tend to be those who are unable to agree with "real socialism", but are unable to avoid dreaming about "unreal socialism".

Civic freedoms

To be a socialist, one must really feel that injustice, including the economic variety, is of primary importance, alongside the absence of civic freedoms, accompanying the general condition of hardship. One must want to undertake arduous *social work* and reject the idea of a road to paradise through a totally free market. To be a socialist is to understand that there is no paradise and to undertake the mission of social democracy: to promise as little as possible, but to achieve as much as possible of one's promises. It means not forgetting about the experience of the 30's, or of the Polish and Hungarian social democrats 1944-48, the experience of being totally unable to effect any defence before the aggression of rising totalitarianism. This was an experience of continual compromises and concessions, leading to the loss of social weight and prestige alike. To be a socialist in the People's Republic of Poland is to direct one's energies to persuading some of the Western social democrats by argument (fortunately this is not necessary with socialists from the Latin countries of Europe) that their policies towards the USSR and the Eastern bloc have hitherto bordered on lack of basic decency.

In the final analysis, however, to be a socialist perhaps means to succumb to delusions. Kolakowski was the first to argue this in "How to be a Conservative-Liberal-Socialist". The title of this text sounds less paradoxical every day. As a 31-year-old Pole, identifying myself to a large degree with the PPS tradition of Zaremba Arciszewski, Niedzialkowski and others, I have two important reservations and one unimportant one to add to the PPS formula for today. The last one stems from my conviction that it would be better to call the new PPS the "Social-Democratic" instead of the "Socialist" Labour Party (even though in the Polish political tradition, there are associations with the Christian Democracy). As in one of the South American countries, with "Democratic Action", this would automatically win to the Party and to democratic socialism 20% more followers. In this situation to cling to the historical name is inflexible and so not social-democratic.

Ideologies

There are two further reservations, which appear to be important. Firstly, traditional political paradigms have ceased to reflect social divisions. They arose in the 19th Century and today have lost a great deal of their political force. Taking them as a historical entirety leads to *non sequiturs*, or simply paradoxes. For example, the majority of the historic left agrees with abortion, but it does not agree with the death penalty, while most of the historic right adopts completely the reverse position. This example indicates how much historic political schemas can hinder the fresh evaluation of facts, situations and social phenomena. One side is completely preoccupied by Nicaragua, the other by Afghanistan, and so on.

Secondly, in my opinion, the significance of ideological paradigms in political life is diminishing, whether they are Christian Democratic, Socialist, Liberal or whatever. The depoliticisation of Western societies and the de-ideologisation of the societies of the East has found expression in a strict adherence to pragmatism by the parties of the past on the one hand, and on the other by a flight from previous definitions by oppositional movements. Poland affords the examples not only of KSS/KOR but also of Solidarity. The character of bodies such as the KPN only confirms the general impression. The harbingers of change and regroupment are the West German Greens or the Radical Party in Italy, even though the old divisions still find expression in their internal life. It may be that these phenomena will at some point give rise to entirely new political and ideological entities. It may be that the factors defining social divisions will change completely, in the direction of local, ethical or other determinants and that these too will be subject to further continuous change.

Therefore, I have not joined a new version of the historical PPS, although I do feel the heir of at least fifty percent of its legacy of ideas. In the place of the Party's historic three letters, I can foresee cutting across them other letters, perhaps introducing something surprising.

SURVEY

Eastern Europe has long ceased to be a homogeneous bloc where every national leadership immediately and unquestioningly follows the Moscow line. Gorbachev's new course of glasnost and perestroika has, if anything, accelerated the process of political fragmentation. Misha Glenny surveys an increasingly diverse scene.

MISHA GLENNY

UNDER THE SHADOW OF PERESTROIKA

The changes, both imagined and real, taking place in the Soviet Union have redrawn the political map in Eastern Europe irrevocably. Even if the conservatives in the Soviet Union were able to defeat Gorbachev, the process of the Warsaw Pact's political fragmentation which has accelerated since 1985 would continue. This diversity of political cultures and interest which has surfaced over the past three years has already led to a preliminary reassessment of the structures which bind the socialist countries. Links have been improved or streamlined. But although the new Soviet leadership has by no means ignored Eastern Europe, it has yet to address the question of its European allies systematically.

Adoption of a coherent approach to Eastern Europe has been made all the more difficult by Gorbachev's very recognition of national differences. The CPSU has little political influence over the Romanian Communist Party (RCP) yet Romania's economic dependence on the Soviet Union has risen sharply in the past two years. In contrast the Czechoslovak Communist Party (CPCz) derives its political legitimacy almost exclusively from its Soviet counterpart, but the country is in a much stronger bargaining position as regards its trade relations with the Soviet Union.

Bilateral cooperation

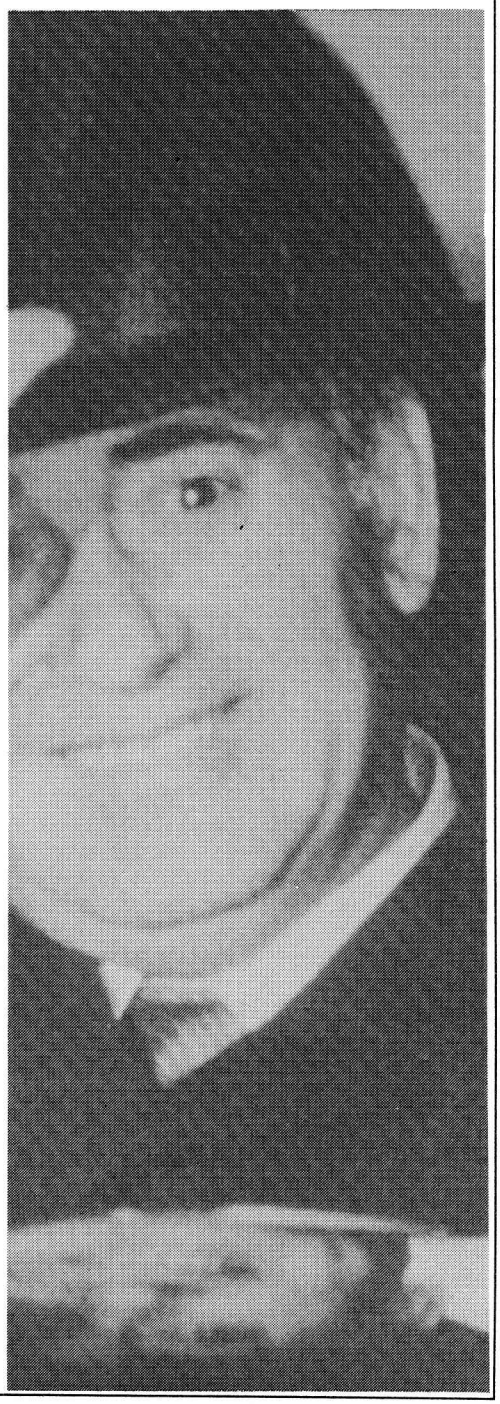
Gorbachev has not simply turned his back on Eastern Europe and allowed the national bureaucracies to get on with their own affairs. On a political level he has laid the foundations for close bi-lateral co-operation with most of the fraternal parties as well as extending the influence of multi-lateral fora. Contacts between Moscow and the East European capitals have proliferated since he came to power. Indeed soon after his election to the General Secretaryship, Gorbachev identified the strengthening of ties with Eastern Europe as his primary political goal. He has now visited every East European capital while other Central Committee secretaries and Politbureau members have been travelling regularly throughout the area. Similarly all the General Secretaries in Eastern Europe, including Milos Jakes and Karoly Grosz, have been to Moscow. Under Andropov and Gorbachev most ambassadors to Eastern Europe have been changed while Gorbachev has replaced many leading personnel in the CC department responsible for relations with fraternal parties with his own supporters. Numerous political, military and economic summits have been held, many of which were attended by Gorbachev and the East European General Secretaries.

Communication between the leadership in Moscow and its counterparts in Eastern Europe has thus improved dramatically under Gorbachev. In addition the nature of this communication appears to have changed. If the Soviet leadership wished to merely express its approval or disapproval of policies in the bloc, why develop this elaborate consultative network? In some cases the Soviet leadership may wish to learn from their partners, as it has repeatedly claimed, in others it may simply wish to hear the Czechoslovak, Polish or Bulgarian position on a range of issues. But it has clearly opened a dialogue with Eastern Europe which goes well beyond the ambassadorial messenger system preferred by Brezhnev.

Gorbachev is sensitive to the political situation prevailing in individual countries and prepared to support the idea of "national roads to socialism". How far the Soviet leadership would allow countries to go down their own roads remains unanswered although recent developments in Hungary and Poland suggest that if it does have a limit on toleration, then this considerably more generous than Brezhnev's.

Brezhnev doctrine

However there is no conclusive evidence that the present Soviet leadership has categorically ruled out military intervention in Eastern Europe during a crisis. While it is true that Gorbachev effectively renounced the Brezhnev doctrine during his visit to Yugoslavia earlier this year, it is worth remembering that Krushchev expressed similar sentiments in



Belgrade in 1955, a year before Soviet tanks entered Budapest. In addition the official Soviet line on the 20th anniversary of the Czechoslovak invasion explicitly justifies the use of Warsaw Pact forces in 1968. Some leading members of the Soviet party have called for a revision of the official assessment of 1968, indicating that there is serious disagreement in Moscow about Czechoslovakia. But for the moment the leadership has decided to support the CPCz position which maintains that the Prague Spring was hijacked some time after April 1968 by counter-revolutionaries preparing the ground for a coup "organised by a foreign power," as a recent commentary in Rude Pravo put it, meaning West Germany.

Nonetheless Gorbachev's proclaimed respect for national conditions has opened the possibility of political reform in Eastern Europe. But it also means that where conservative bureaucracies are firmly established the Soviet leader is not going to intervene and demand the immediate implementation of wide-ranging glasnost and perestroika. There is considerable evidence to suggest that Gorbachev encouraged the departure of Husak in Czechoslovakia and Kadar in Hungary. But there is no reason to suspect that he attached any conditions to his tacit support. Indeed in Czechoslovakia, Milos Jakes has not departed from the substance of Husak's policies. At the moment he is merely clearing up the mess caused by Husak's progressive lack of control over the party apparatus during his final two years in office. Karoly Grosz, Janos Berecz and Imre Poszgay had to organize their supporters to gain a majority in the Central Committee to outvote Kadar's overwhelming numerical superiority in the Politbureau at the party conference in May. It was a genuine shootout which Grosz could have lost.

Gorbachev may be prepared to risk a great deal to ensure the success of his goals in the Soviet Union. But a political crisis in Eastern Europe involving a popular mobilisation would not only threaten the cohesion of the alliance, it would also undermine his domestic position severely.

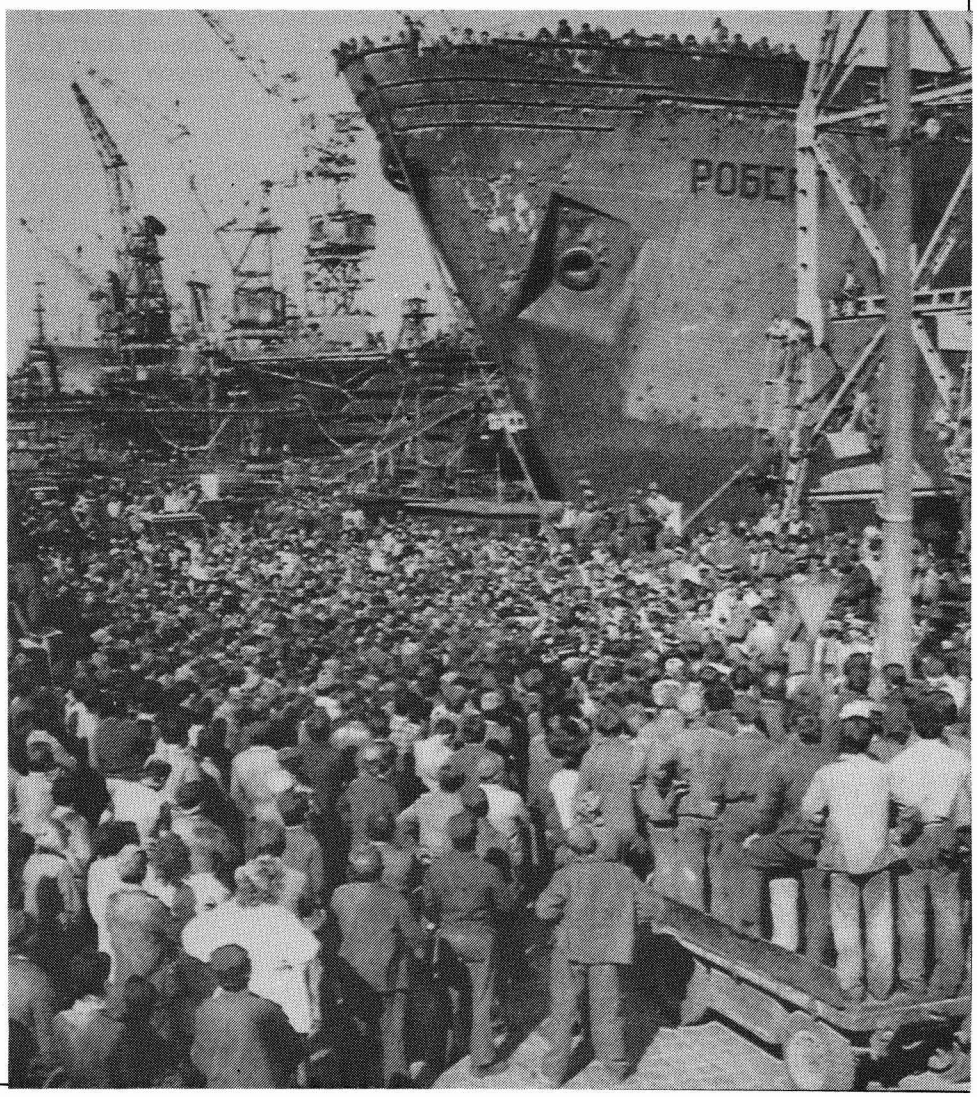
Of course there is now no homogenous approach to most issues in Moscow and this applies to Eastern Europe. Just as the conservative lobbies within the CPSU maintain their informal support network for the hardliners in Eastern Europe, so Gorbachev faces pressure from liberals in his entourage who do want to see reform pushed more aggressively in Eastern Europe. These splits indicate the difficulties which Gorbachev may face should there be a major internal CPSU discussion on relations with the bloc.

Enjoying the confidence of Gorbachev can still be a risky business for East Europeans. In May Chudomir Alexandrov spent three days in Moscow meeting with Georgi Razumovsky, the Politbureau member responsible among other things for relations with fraternal parties. Alexandrov has been attempting where possible in the last two years to speed up Bulgaria's modest reform programme. Some Bulgarian party members assumed that Alexandrov was preparing for a showdown with Zhivkov. The people purged from the BCP at July's Central Committee meeting, including Alexandrov himself, were all keen supporters of perestroistvo. From the few accounts available it appears that Zhivkov was warned by his contacts in Moscow - not Razumovsky - what was going on. Zhivkov, who has already crossed swords with Gorbachev over the issue of creeping nationalism within the Bulgarian party, guessed correctly that within the BCP there was not a strong enough caucus ready to back Alexandrov, in stark contrast to the situation in the Hungarian party. The dismissal of Alexandrov and subsequent vilification campaign against him and his relations will undoubtedly be regarded as a defeat for Gorbachev.

Two camps

Developments in Hungary are being monitored very closely in Moscow. A senior official from the CC Secretariat in Budapest explained recently that "the party (HSWP) often feels that it is being used as a guinea pig by the CPSU which wants to see how far we can go before running into trouble. There is a widespread fear among party members here that we may find ourselves inadvertently out on a limb if there is a conservative backlash in Moscow. At the same time we are tired of being accused of only announcing serious reforms when we feel that Moscow will tolerate it. This is our reform and we decided to hold our party conference before the Soviet one partly because it was urgently needed but also because the internal dynamic of our reform has to a large extent nothing to do with what is happening in Moscow."

If Gorbachev's approach develops further then autonomous social and political structures in Eastern Europe will become more marked. Already it is legitimate to divide the socialist community into opposing camps. The conservative leaderships of the GDR and Czechoslovakia have made it clear that they see no reasons to question the prevailing relations within the party or between the party and the intelligentsia or the working class. Like Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria has announced its intention to introduce fundamental economic and political reforms. But the recent purge in the BCP suggests that



Bulgaria will now join Czechoslovakia in substantially redefining the meaning of perestroika and glasnost which both countries have heralded with much pomp.

It is no co-incidence that Czechoslovakia and the GDR are virtually alone in maintaining tolerably polite relations with Romania (Bulgaria and Romania have recently exchanged bitter diplomatic words over the chronic air pollution, originating from a chemical factory in Romania, which regularly smothers the Bulgarian city of Ruse). Although the Czechoslovak press has recently voiced some muted criticism of the Romanian decision to raze some 8,000 villages to the ground to make way for Ceausescu's latest demented scheme, the leaderships in Prague and East Berlin recognise the common cause they share with Bucharest in maintaining the domestic status quo.

The dangers along the road taken by the conservative leaderships are quite easy to spot. They have been visible in Eastern Europe in one form or another since 1953. The path of the countries which are clearly committed to serious reform is even more hazardous. The Polish United Workers' Party is faced with an almost impossible situation. Its commitment to democratisation has already blown up in its face once last November when the government was defeated during a genuinely democratic referendum called to decide whether Poland's economic reform programme should be speeded up. In the last four months it has become clear that democratisation only means one thing for Polish workers - the reinstatement of Solidarity. Jaruzelski and his liberal sidekicks, Zdislaw Sadowski and Wladyslaw Baka, can tout as much glasnost as they like (and the freedom of information in Poland is considerable) but if they continue to fail in their attempts to bring down inflation and get goods back into the shops (and there is no such prospect on the horizon) then the central political problem of Solidarity will not go away.

In a recent interview with the BBC, Daniel Passant, a journalist on the pro-government weekly *Polityka*, identified the enormous difficulty of making the transition from a liberal regime to a democratic one. "Ideally we would like to see some of power sharing between the socialist government and the opposition," he said. Simultaneously he is adamant that recognition of Solidarity would mean "political suicide" for Jaruzelski. If the authorities were to reinstate the illegal trades union that would be an admission of failure. It would imply that the decision to impose martial law in 1981 was wrong, undermining the very legitimation of Jaruzelski's government.

Bold experiment

Hungary now stands on the threshold of Eastern Europe's boldest political experiment in two decades. This autumn will be a crucial test for the programme agreed between Grosz, Poszgay and Berecz. There seems little doubt that the power of the Kadar lobby has been destroyed. But the new leadership includes positions which promise conflict both within the party and between party and society. Apart from the rising nationalist anger directed at Romania, the party and government face real difficulty over the Gabcikovo/Nagymaros dam project.

Austrian contractors are due to move into the Danubian village of Nagymaros in northern Hungary on October 1st. They have been commissioned to build a dam and power station there to complement the much larger artificial dam and canalisation system which is near completion on the Czechoslovak side of the border. The dam in Nagymaros is needed to compensate for the massive fluctuation in water levels which will result from the artificial waves created by the Czechoslovak system. Even senior government officials in Hungary now admit the project is an ecological and long-term economic disaster. Grosz's cabinet, which is under massive pressure from the Czechoslovak s and Austrians to complete the dam, will consider the project once more in September. If it decides to pull out, it will have to pay a total of £600 million in fines.

Popular opposition to the dam has blossomed once again in the last month and has now secured the support of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. A mass demonstration is being planned for September 12th but if this fails to stop the construction of Nagymaros then there are plans being considered to prevent work on the dam through a programme of civil disobedience similar to that which prevented a dam being built in the Austrian village of Hainburg in 1984.

In addition the government is committed to introducing legislation which should come into force on January 1st permitting the formation of independent interest groups. Political parties will not yet be tolerated but independent trades unions and other pressure groups will. Opposition to the party's monopoly on political power is growing rapidly in Hungary at the moment and the proposed law on the interest groups is being eagerly awaited by many as an acid test of the new leadership's intentions.

The price which Hungarians will have to pay for this flirtation with pluralism is likely to be high. Karoly Grosz has embarked upon a new economic reform in Hungary. The party has not only signalled its intention to start drastically cutting the massive subsidies handed out annually to heavy industry. It will also gradually relinquish its absolute control over foreign trade and investment in Hungary. From next January Western firms will be permitted to found branches in Hungary without a controlling interest of the state or the direct participation of Hungarian partners. The new leadership has already embarked upon this dramatic turn in economic policy in order to combat Hungary's $14 billion external debt (the highest per capita in Eastern Europe) and an 18% inflation rate whose underlying trend is on the rise.

The government has already clashed with SZOT, the official trades union organisation, over its fiscal policy. SZOT wrote to Peter Medgyessy, one of Grosz's Deputy Prime Ministers, in early August complaining in the strongest possible terms about the government's failure to inform the union about a 6% devaluation in the forint and a 10% increase in petrol prices. In anticipation of industrial action, SZOT has now also demanded the formulation of a law legalising strikes. Miners struck in Pecs in August demanding the restoration of bonuses which were lost as a result of last January's tax reform. The authorities conceded the miners' demands but the incident was a significant warning of what may be to come. In addition to the cut in subsidies in industry, Grosz also intends a significant reduction in funds earmarked for the social security system.

Conservative bloc

The small conservative bloc of Czechoslovakia and the GDR has one great advantage over Eastern Europe's liberal bloc of Poland and Hungary. They are economically stable. Officials in Czechoslovakia never cease pointing out that the decentralisation in Yugoslavia has resulted in economic chaos. They gloat over the Hungarian inflation rate, its foreign debt and over the country's creeping unemployment. And they point to the unparalleled social security enjoyed by citizens of Czechoslovakia and East Germany.

Within Eastern Europe Czechoslovakia and East Germany are considered the most reliable and efficient trading partners. Gorbachev is believed to think highly of the East Germany Kombinate, the vertical state combines which encompass all stages of production. It is true the the Kombinate have afforded industry a degree of autonomy from the more crippling aspects of central planning, but the success of the East Germany economy also has to be considered in the light of the cheap credits its receives from West Germany and its de facto economic membership of the EEC which is facilitated by the special relationship with the Federal Republic. Similarly the Czechoslovak government has avoided falling into the trap of an external debt/inflation spiral, which has wrecked the Polish and Yugoslav economies (and is currently threatening Hungary), by not relying on Western financial aid to stimulate growth. But its overall performance on world markets has been very poor leading to modest annual growth figures (in the early eighties the economy briefly went into reverse). Except for in a few service industries, investment in new plant and above all new technology remains dangerously low in Czechoslovakia and its economic decline within the developed world is almost certain to accelerate in the run up to the next century.

Popular opposition

Of course Gorbachev has not only redefined the rules for communist parties. The same is true for other social forces. The growth of popular opposition in Eastern Europe over the last twelve months has been striking. All bloc countries with the exception of Bulgaria have been confronted with major demonstrations or industrial action.

Perhaps most surprisingly 10,000 Romanians took to the streets in Brasov last November indicating that Ceausescu is not as secure as some people imagine. The Czechoslovak party can no longer be sure that its policy of intimidation will continue to be effective. After 1,000 people turned up last December to support Charter 77's call for a demonstration on UN Human Rights Day, the lay catholics proved capable of mobilising their supporters for large manifestations in both Prague and Bratislava. But most impressive of all were the 10,000 Czechs who gathered on the 20th anniversary of the Soviet invasion. The party and opposition alike were taken by complete surprise. The possibility of another demonstration to be held in September was being aired by participants on August 21st while the 70th anniversary of the founding in the first Czechoslovak republic on October 28th may provide the opportunity for further expression of discontent .

The situation in Poland and Hungary is very different. In the former, mass working-class opposition is an integral element within the political structure which hardly takes its cue from events happening in the Soviet Union. Its importance has increased again this year as Poland's chronic economic crisis has provoked the emergence of a more militant, younger generation of Solidarity activists which is prepared to take strike action against the advice of the most influential wing of the union's leadership. In the light of the present strike wave, Jaruzelski has apparently decided to explore the possibility of some form of co-operation with Walesa without actually conceding the demand for the recognition of Solidarity. The situation is extremely unpredictable, and further outbreaks of strikes cannot be ruled out. The workers have demonstrated that the defeat of the strikes in Nowa Huta and Gdansk in April and May by no means excluded the possibility of their future use. Indeed it only took one separate agreement made between management and workers at the Rudna copper mine after a strike threat to spark off spontaneous industrial action which for a short period was supported by workers in Jastrzebie, Szczecin, Gdansk, Stalowa Wola, Poznan and Wroclaw.

In Hungary a novel situation is developing whereby the boundaries between critical intellectuals in the party and the opposition are collapsing. Demands for the abolition of censorship and an end to party intervention in the press are now being articulated by journalists working for *Nepszabadsag*, Hungarian radio and television, and MTI, the official news agency. TDDSZ, the independent scientific workers trades union, has not been forcibly disbanded and is likely to provide the model for other workers wishing to organise.

The anti-Romanian demonstrations in June were sanctioned by the government, while the most recent statements of Poszgay and Matyas Szuros, the Central Committee Secretary for Foreign Affairs, prove that parts of the establishment are prepared to encourage mass nationalist agitation. This of course could easily blow up in the face of the party. Demonstrations are now being regarded as a very effective form of opposition in Hungary and increasingly they are running out of the authorities' control.

But with the exception of Poland, these spectacular manifestations of popular dis-

We apologise to our readers, in particular our East European readers, for our continued failure to resproduce the accented letters of the East European alphabets.

The problem is caused by our computer wordprocessing and typesetting software which provides only for the common West European accented characters. We are working on a solution and hope to be able to print all accents correctly in the next issue of the journal.

satisfaction are symptomatic of a deeper ground swell of opposition in Eastern Europe which the Gorbachev reforms and rhetoric have undoubtedly done a great deal to foster. In Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria the limits of censorship are being extended, particularly in the arts. It is hard to see this from monitoring the press and its progress is very haphazard. But there are some striking experiments being carried out in Czechoslovak theatre, the fine arts and popular music which would never have seen the light of day five years ago. Glasnost, Czechoslovak-style, may pale in comparison with its Soviet counterpart but it is frequently invoked by citizens who wish to extract information from the authorities. In one are, the ecology, this has been modestly successful . Local government in Czechoslovakia's ecological disaster regions (particularly in Bohemia and Moravia) are now beginning to publish detailed statistics of related health problems. The changes are almost imperceptible, but change there is.

It is tempting to predict that social and political tensions in Eastern Europe will erupt in the near future. It is certainly possible to identify problems in most Warsaw Pact states which have deepened since Gorbachev came to power. The influence of perestroika and glasnost on these varies considerably from country to country but it is palpable nonetheless. However the Soviet leadership is well aware that any fundamental change in Eastern Europe must be carried out in a controlled fashion, as social and political upheaval in the area would undoubtedly benefit the conservatives in the Soviet bureaucracy. Many observers have singled out Romania as the Soviet Union's greatest problem - not because Ceausescu is creating so many difficulties for the alliance but because his death is likely to spark off an explosive power struggle as the many interest groups within the establishment assert their claim to leadership, and the great potential of popular discontent in the country.

Gorbachev's room for manoeuvre in Romania is very limited, but his realistic appreciation of the situation elsewhere has provoked the creation of a much more efficient network of political relations between the CPSU and its allies. Whether this will be sufficient to cope with a major crisis is, however, open to question.

GDR

BOHLEY AND FISCHER BACK IN THE GDR

In the last issue of *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe,* we reported the expulsion of leading activists in the East German peace and human rights movement from the German Democratic Republic, but also that the novel arrangements made under the pressure of international protests - issuing the expellees with valid passports and exit visas, thus holding out the prospect of a legal return to the GDR. Since then, there has been considerable debate as to whether this promise would be kept.

The first test case was to be that of the artist Bärbel Bohley, her son Anselm and companion Werner Fischer, who spent six months in England on the invitation of the Anglican Church and who had announced some time ago that they would return to the GDR on the 6 August, three days before the expiry of their visa. In an interview just before their departure, Bohley emphasised that they had no intention of renouncing their critical attitude to the East German party and state leadership or to reduce their political activity. Underlining the significance of the decision awaiting them at the GDR's frontier, she said: "It means a lot to people when someone returns from the West and says I want to live here, to continue to open my mouth, and to refuse to be driven out. It means a lot if the GDR government declares its acceptance of that."

Bohley and Fischer were readmitted into the GDR, and are now living again in East Berlin. This is a hopeful sign for the other temporary exiles whose visa are of longer duration, but who have also declared their determination to return (see the interview with Wolfgang Templin in the last issue). The decision by the East German authorities to honour the agreement may also signify a tactical victory for those in the SED who are prepared to deal more flexibly with internal opposition and dissent: there are many signs of a battle raging within the party leadership between the advocates of a GDR version of glasnost and perestroika, and the opponents of any change. Hence the confusing and contradictory signals such as the rehabilitation of the writer Stefan Heym (whose book on the June 1953 workers' rebellion may now be published) on the one hand, and the scurrilous praise for Romanian president Ceausescu on the other. In the next issue of *Labour Focus* we will be taking a closer look at this.

One of the chief architects of the reformist Action Programme of the Czechoslovak Communist Party in 1968, a member of Dubcek's Party Presidium and Central Committee Secretary, Zdenek Mlynar was expelled from the party in 1969 and, having played a key role in establishing Charter 77, forced to emigrate in 1977. He now lives in Vienna. Below, Mlynar draws a balance sheet of the Prague Spring against the backdrop of Gorbachev's current reforms in the Soviet Union.

ZDENEK MLYNAR

THE LESSONS OF THE PRAGUE SPRING

The Prague Spring of 1968 has unquestionably become history, but by no means dead history simply to be buried in textbooks. Today, twenty years later, arguments about the true significance of the Prague Spring trigger off more political emotions and conflicting interests than only a few years ago. The reason is that they touch on several topical political problems in connection with the Soviet perestroika, and thus once again concern the interests of various groups, especially the ruling establishment in Czechoslovakia.

There is no doubt that one can argue about the significance of the Prague Spring as a whole, and about the individual phases of its development, about fundamental ideas as well as about the actions carried through at the time. An open and critical discussion about all this is necessary; without it the Prague Spring will remain a legend or a political nightmare. But an objective critical discussion is impossible today not only in Czechoslovakia; it has so far failed to materialise even within the framework of the new reform policy in the USSR. Isolated signs that a more open and new public discussion of this subject may be possible after all are apparent only in Hungary.

That is why such an indispensable discussion is all the more needed, at least within the West European Left. I believe that this is realistic for two reasons: firstly, the Prague Spring was an attempt at a specific development of socialism in a country with a strong, civilised, West European cultural and political tradition, and secondly, a critical discussion about developments in Czechoslovakia at that time could be worthwhile even in order to grasp certain problems which the Western Left is beginning to encounter in connection with Gorbachev's perestroika. This new Soviet policy needs the backing of the Left in the West. I believe that such a backing is possible but as critical solidarity which would not disguise potential differences.

One such difference is undoubtedly the varying evaluations of the Prague Spring. In Czechoslovakia there are those who are peddling over and over - and this year even with exceptional militancy - the allegation that the Prague Spring was a counter-revolutionary threat to socialism, and that only the military intervention in August 1968 savedsocialism. The politically responsible representatives in the new Soviet leadership have so far failed to adopt a clear stand on this issue. On the other hand, the overwhelming majority of the West European Left has for many years held quite different opinions, and today it regards the Prague Spring as a historic harbinger of the Soviet perestroika. It is, therefore, quite befitting that at this seminar(*) we should openly discuss the balance sheet of the Prague Spring. The Western Left cannot tolerate attempts at obstructing such a discussion even within the framework of its intrinsic support of Gorbachev's policy. After all, anti-reform forces are backing such attempts even today.

In my paper I am naturally not able to make an all-round analysis of the Prague Spring, and I shall therefore confine myself to a number of specific questions. I shall concentrate, above all, on the concepts, ideas and political steps taken as part of the reform-communist policy, i.e. the problem of reforming the system "from above", at the initiative of the ruling Communist Party. An analysis of the trends, of the orientation of values or social interests operating in Czechoslovak society at the time as "pressure from below" would go beyond the scope of this paper. Without such an analysis a review of the situation in Czechoslovakia inevitably remains rather over-simplified and one-sided.

ZDENEK MLYNAR 1968

The Prague Spring as a general trend in Soviet-type systems and as a specific Czechoslovak road

It is not possible to understand the Prague Spring without at least a very brief characterisation of the historic conditions in which it came forth. On the one hand, it was one of a number of attempts at changing the Soviet-type system after the Second World War. Yugoslavia's attempt at creating a new model of socialism after 1948, Nikita Krushchev's reforms in the USSR and their consequences in Poland in 1956, as well as Imre Nagy's attempts at reform in Hungary in 1953 and 1956 constitute, so to speak, the forerunners of the Prague Spring. The ideological concepts of the reform communists in Czechoslovakia in 1968 are virtually inconceivable without Krushchev's criticism of Stalin and without his CPSU Programme of 1961, even though the ultimate result - the political programme of the Prague Spring - goes far beyond Krushchev's policy.

But there is one thing that all these events have in common: the struggle to change the Stalin-type system. This system always plays the role of an antagonist - and that is what unites all these events. But under no circumstances can they be reduced to this common denominator because there are considerable differences between them. In this sense the Prague Spring was a unique event that cannot be repeated; it could occur

only in Czechoslovakia in the 1960s.

It was no explosion of mass discontent, it was no revolt of the governed against those who governed them,with whom the people could no longer find a common language and who surrender only to the force of a potential uprising. Those were the features of developments in Poland and Hungary in 1956 (and later again in Poland in 1980-81), but certainly not of the Prague Spring. As distinct from Krushchev's reforms, the Prague Spring was no attempt at changes predominantly in the apparatus of power; it was at the same time something that set society, the mass of the population and indeed all social strata, in motion - it was a movement both "from above" and "from below".

Even though the concepts of the nature, of the sequence of events and the pace of essential changes were not identical "at the top" and "at the bottom", and there were several clashes of interest which could have turned into situations of conflict, mutual communication was in no way impaired. It was possible to find a common language and the necessary degree of mutual trust between the initiators of the reform "from above" and efforts to change the system "from below". Opinion polls in the middle of July 1968 provided the following picture: 51% expressed confidence in the policy of the Communist Party, 33% were neutral (neither trust nor distrust) and only 16% were distrustful of the party. For the sake of comparison, those questioned were asked whether they had trusted the Communist Party before 1968, and the reply was: 23% yes, 29% neutral, 48% no. I believe that under these internal political conditions the reform programme was quite realistic.

But these conditions were the result of very specific circumstances. The decisive role in public life was played by generations which could still remember other than Stalinist conditions - both in society and within the Communist Party. The reform process within the Communist Party was advocated to a decisive degree by people who had joined the party before 1948, that is to say, before the seizure of monopoly power. The political experience of this generation was strongly influenced by the years 1945-1948.

As distinct from other Soviet-bloc countries, the Communist Party was no insignificant sect before the Second World War but a strong political party, represented in Parliament. After the war, in 1946, the communists won almost 40% in free elections, competing with four other political parties. This political upsurge as well as socialisation measures took place without the presence of the Soviet army in the country; the Soviet army had arrived in the spring of 1945, welcomed by the population as a liberator, and left in December of the same year.

Large-scale socialisation had taken place before 1948, without intervention by the Soviet army and without the monopoly power of the Communist Party: at that time the state sector was responsible for 25%, and only 24.7% came from the capitalist sector. In the distribution of the national revenue for consumption 65% went to wage-earners, 15.7% to farmers, 9.5% to artisans and the free professions, 4% to white-collar workers and only 5.8% to capitalists and landowners. Only he who identifies the building of socialism with the introduction of a Stalin-type system can deny that a qualitative transformation had taken place during that period, and that capitalism had already been overcome. Socialism was able to consolidate and develop in Czechoslovakia after 1947 by methods entirely different from those which consisted of accepting the Soviet Stalinist system in the economy and in politics. True, Sovietisation did prevail in practice but this was the result of very specific historic conditions at that time, and it was not the only alternative in the development of socialism.

SOVIET TANKS ROLL INTO PRAGUE

In 1968 all this was still very much alive in the memory both of society and of the Communist Party. In the minds of people any alternative to a Stalinist development was linked with concrete recollections of the time prior to 1948; it was anything but an abstract demand, linked in the minds of people with events they could no longer remember (as is the case in most Soviet-bloc countries today and, more particularly, in the USSR). The generation of reform communists in Czechoslovakia did not regard the basic democratic demands, especially the principle of democratic control of society in its relation to the Communist Party, as a "threat of counter-revolution". They knew from their own experience that in a democratic system the party could successfully vie for political

leadership in society even without the presence of Soviet tanks, that democratic control by the people did not mean that the masses would start hanging communists on lamp posts.

But these were the very concepts which had prevailed in the minds of the leaders in countries where conditions were fundamentally different from those in Czechoslovakia - in Poland, the GDR, Bulgaria, and also in the Soviet Union. They were probably right as regards their own countries,but they were totally mistaken with reference to Czechoslovakia in 1968. It was only after the military intervention and after twenty years of so-called "normalisation" that conditions in Czechoslovakia were adapted to those prevailing in their respective countries.

The conceptual legacy of the reform communism of the Prague Spring period

Regardless of the power-political defeat of the Czechoslovak Communist Party's reform policy, the conceptual legacy of the Prague Spring programme remains highly topical today, at a time of a fresh attempt at changing the system in the USSR. Although official propaganda in Prague is repeating over and over that the reform programme of the Prague Spring had nothing in common with Gorbachev's perestroika concepts because the "revisionists" in the CPCz had wanted to weaken socialism whereas Gorbachev was consolidating it, every unbiased person can easily discern a congruence between many fundamental notions of the two reform concepts. But the programmatical concepts of the Czechoslovak reform communists contained many elements differing from the present Soviet concepts. I believe that it is worth concentrating on the kind of problems which, on closer analysis, reveal the congruences or differences in thinking. I shall mention two such problems which I consider to be particularly significant.

First: the acknowledgement that the existing Soviet-type economic and socio-political system is the result of specific historic conditions in the USSR of the 1930s and 1940s (i.e. the period of Stalin's rule) and not the embodiment of "general laws of socialism". This had been accepted in Prague as far back as the 1960s and was recognised by Mikhail Gorbachev in his speech at the CPSU Central Committee session in January 1987 as the point of departure for essential changes in the USSR.

Even leaving aside such natural and evident problems of the so-called "personality cult" as the vast political and police terror during Stalin's time, which Krushchev had already criticised after Stalin's death and attempted to eliminate step by step, as well as the dictatorial despotism and other phenomena, the Soviet system remains the main target of criticism, and its qualitative change the essential prerequisite for the further advance of society. This applied to Czechoslovakia in 1968 and it applies to the USSR in 1988.

What were the main points of departure for the criticism of this type of the Soviet system, (i.e. without the most brutal features of the Stalin period), by reform communists in Czechoslovakia in 1968? The fundamental point of departure was the humanistic interpretation of Marxism: no social system - including socialism and communism - must be understood as an end in itself but always as a means to achieving one's objective, namely the liberation of man. In accordance with Marx, the liberation of man does not mean his political and legal freedom only, but also freedom from the dictate of material conditions which are obstructing the optimum development of human abilities as well as the maximum satisfaction and cultivation of human needs.

Against this background the Soviet model of socialism must above all be critically seen as a particularly crude, often barbaric even, form of the dictate of elementary (extensive) industrialisation over people and their needs. It leads to the opposite of what Marxism considers to be its objective: to the subjugation of all human needs, their development and cultivation, to the interests of the rudimentary progress of industrialisation. Forms of dictating to people are used in order to achieve this, which originally emanated from the class struggle, but later changed into permanent instruments of a bureaucratic rule of society.

This model must be overcome in the interests of promoting the forces of production, in the interest of a change from extensive to intensive economic growth, in the interest of implementing the so-called scientific and technical revolution without which communism (even as set forth in the 1961 CPSU Programme) is unthinkable. But the purpose of this revolution is by no means merely the further growth of the forces of production. The scientific and technical revolution will have fundamental social and human consequences: it will facilitate a whole series of development processes which have hitherto appeared to be utopian ideas. It will change the character of human labour (in favour of qualified, creative intellectual work), it will facilitate the kind of reduction in working hours which will make Marx's vision of the freedom of man beyond the factory gate a realistic prospect.

The authors of this ideological concept (especially in the book by Radovan Richta and others: *Civilisation at the Crossroads*, various editions in 1966-1969) have no doubt committed a number of simplifications, and they frequently regarded the scientific and technical revolution as some sort of panacea against all kinds of ailments. They emphasised those effects of such a revolution which fitted into their overall optimistic reflections, while ignoring others, undesirable in their opinion -for example the entire ecological problem. Twenty years ago they already believed that the scientific and technical revolution would inevitably enforce a change of the Soviet-type system, whereas in reality this system simply delayed the scientific and technical revolution for entire decades.

But in spite of this there is a fundamental concurrence between their criticism and the present criticism based on the positions of perestroika: without a change of the Soviet system, emerging as it did from Stalin's days, the road leads into a blind alley of stagnation, and revolutionary progress of the scientific and technical revolution is unfeasible. However, in the present Soviet concept the problem of the human consequences of the scientific and technical revolution, the problem of liberating man from the dictate of industrial material conditions is pushed into the background, as distinct from the visions of the Prague Spring ideologues. Present Soviet reflections frequently understand the so-called "human factor" technocratically, i.e. as an instrument of scientific and technical progress which remains an end in itself.

There can be no doubt that an open discussion of these problems, based on publications issued during the Prague Spring, would be useful and would not fail to be significant also for the Western Left. The problem of social and human linkage - from the so-called structural unemployment to ecological problems - is extremely topical; not only for theory but also for political practice, in order to overcome the so-called "crisis of the Left".

The second major problem, where both similarities and dissimilarities as well as a different approach can be observed when examining the solutions proposed by the Czechoslovak reform communists in 1968 and by the Soviet reform policy today, is a whole set of questions relating to which attributes of the present system are to be removed, and which, on the contrary, the new system which is to replace the present, is to retain.

When seeking answers to these questions one discovers many a coincidence in the practical approach of the Prague Spring programme and the programmatic documents of perestroika. For example, there is agreement that the existing system of economic management must cease to issue directives and instructions to enterprises in the form of central planning indicators, valid for virtually all operations of enterprises; that enterprises are to be given independent authority and responsibility for their economic activity - enterprises are to be run by economic and not administrative methods. Basically speaking, the market mechanism and social planning are to be linked but in a way that is qualitatively different from the present system.

There is agreement, for example, that if economic reform is to ensure truly intensive economic growth it must be accompanied by political reform. Yet political reform must imply above all democratisation, i.e. a situation where society exercises effective

control over bureaucratic apparatuses, and stimulates people to use their own initiative at work as well as in public life.

In general terms one can also notice a similar approach to the progress of democratisation. Firstly, criticism can be voiced and differing views can be stated in public, including in the press and the media in general. Secondly, there is the ongoing democratisation process within the ruling Communist Party, and efforts are being made to ensure that Party bodies (the apparatus) do not take on the tasks and authority of state and economic bodies and of other organisations. Thirdly, work collectives are recognised as a political subject; hence the need to introduce certain forms of self-management in socialist enterprises. Fourthly, there is the demand that the state acts and develops as a constitutional state with all this entails (the principles of the division and control of power, an independent judiciary, subordination of all apparatuses to the law, control of observance of laws, etc.).

Considerable differences are quite evident between the way these principles were implemented during the Prague Spring and the present reform in the USSR; they stem from the extremely different conditions and traditions (I shall come back to these differences in greater detail). But it cannot be denied that, generally speaking, there is a coincidence between all the development trends of the political system mentioned.

In the current discussion of the features needed by the new system, and of the causes of the malfunctioning and crisis produced by the old system, attempts are appearing in the USSR to determine the "obstructing mechanism" within the old system which must be totally overcome and eliminated. Such an "obstructing mechanism" is described in greater detail especially as it exists in the system of directive planning and management of the economy but not in the actual political system. The reform communist concept of changes in the political system during the Prague Spring, on the other hand, was based on the inference that such an "obstructing mechanism" - or, to be more accurate, defects resulting from the system - have a common denominator in the economic as well as in the political system.

In 1968 the Czechoslovak reform communists fully understood that the problem resided above all in the position of controlled (dominated) subjects who are prevented from behaving in an autonomous manner, i.e. to make independent assessments of various options of their own action and choose the one which a given social subject (a group or an individual) considers to be optimal. But to be able to do this the social subject must have adequate legal and organisational options (i.e. he must not be gagged by excessive centralisation) and must be given sufficient information about the situation, about himself, about various options of progress and the ensuing consequences (which means that such information must be neither concealed nor censored).

The Soviet-type system, with its roots in the Stalin era, was built in such a way that the target chosen by the centre (or just a small number of targets) had to be achieved come what may, no matter how high the price to be paid in other spheres of society. Everything not in accordance with the chosen target (with directives from the centre) was regarded as being an undesirable and disruptive phenomenon. This naturally applied also to the capacity of the most diverse social subjects to act autonomously: autonomy "down below" was an undesirable, disruptive factor and was therefore suppressed. It follows that in principle initiative and innovation-thinking were equally undesirable.

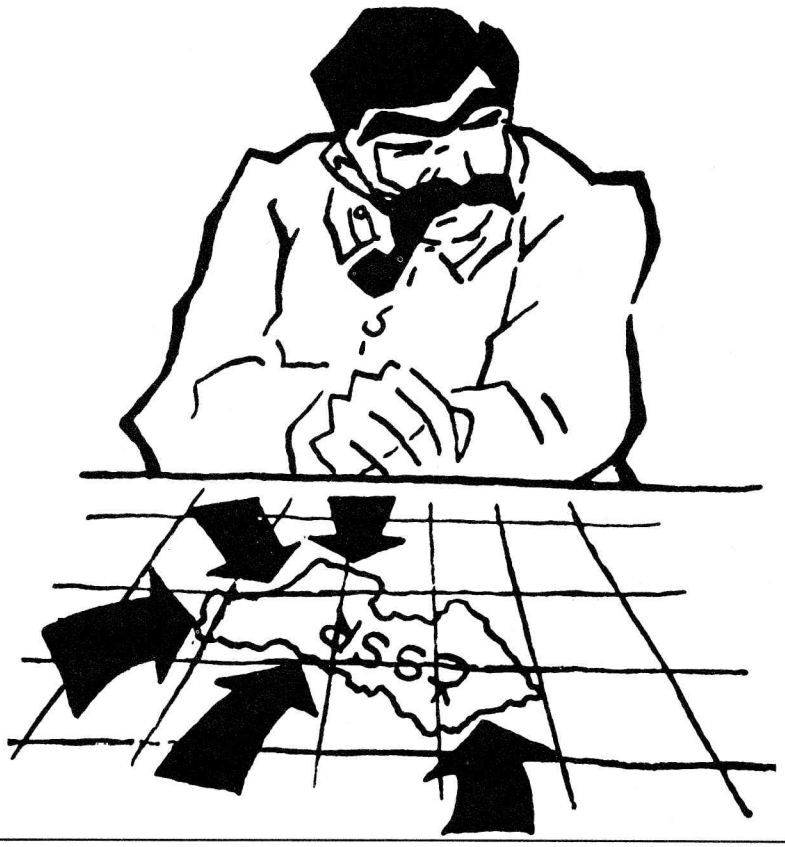
Under certain circumstances (in times of war, during the Soviet industrialisation drive, etc.) this could have been a functional advantage of the system. But this advantage became a shortcoming and inability of the system to seek optimal solutions among different alternatives, to react to new circumstances, to learn new methods under new conditions. To cope with such tasks, an economic and political system must be capable of the very opposite to what the Soviet system was capable of: it must be able to promote initiative and innovation, permit all social subjects (large social groups, collectives and individuals) to seek various solutions independently.

But how is such a necessary change of the entire system to be achieved in a situation with only one ruling party under whose leadership the old and inadequate system has developed? There is only one way out of this situation: not to expect that the ruling party will always be guided by the experience it has acquired, and that it will enable its social subjects, of its own free will, to behave autonomously; instead, it is necessary to carry out changes which in future will simply not tolerate present methods of government and control, which will prevent the ruling party from depriving its social subjects of their ability to act autonomously. This means that barriers must be erected to arbitrariness in the decision-making process which in practice could block decisions opposed by the majority of autonomous social subjects.

That was the common denominator of the planned economic and political reforms during the Prague Spring, summed up in the Action Programme of the CPCz. That was precisely why this programme had to be branded as a "revisionist" and "damaging" document when the so-called normalisation policy restored a post-Stalinist Soviet-type system in Czechoslovakia.

In the economy, a market mechanism was to act as a barrier against the recurrence of the old system, a mechanism by which economically fixed prices and sufficient competition would compel independently operating socialist economic enterprises to operate with maximum economic efficiency. Moreover, it would not permit the administrative apparatus to restrict the autonomy of enterprises. The state would have to regulate the economy, and social needs would be given priority exclusively by means of economic instruments (either by preferences or disadvantages) compatible with the autonomy of enterprises.

In political life such a barrier would be created by a system of institutionalised,



legally anchored and organisationally formulated social interests or their bearers. Even with only one ruling party, an institutionalised system of a plurality of social interests would have to be capable of preventing the abuse of power where absolute power (total control) over society is being exercised by one single centre. I believe that a critical and objective analysis of the theoretical reflections and of the documents of the Prague Spring, referring to these problems, would have a positive significance for the further progress of discussions in the USSR. What Soviet discussions are still lacking is, among other things, a more specific determination of the common denominators of all necessary system changes - the ability of social subjects to act with autonomy and the establishment of effective practical barriers in various spheres of social life against the concentration of power in the hands of a single centre.

A discussion of this aspect of the Prague Spring is today topical also for the Western Left: in this context socialism and political democracy can be linked; this is a general problem beyond the limits of Soviet-type systems.

Problems of the practical implementation of the Prague Spring reform programme

We all know that the reform communist leadership, symbolised by Alexander Dubcek, did not succeed in implementing the programme of the Prague Spring. The fact that military intervention from outside was the decisive cause of this failure makes a critical analysis of the reasons for this political defeat extremely difficult. The discussion generally focuses on the question of whether or not it had been possible to influence the Soviet military intervention, whether it need have happened had certain aspects of developments in Czechoslovakia been different.

A reply to these types of questions can never be more than a hypothesis, a mere guess. I therefore do not think that we ought to give special attention to this question in our seminar. I personally believe that the chances of preventing the military intervention were minute - especially once a reform programme with provisions such as those contained in the CPCz Action Programme had been adopted and began to be translated into reality. In the situation as it existed in the USSR at the time - and more particularly also in Poland and the GDR - these countries could be expected to show tolerance at best with the type of reforms carried out by Kadar's Hungary.

In this connection one may, of course, wonder whether the Czechoslovak leadership had been acting in a responsible manner when it announced the Czechoslovak reform programme and attempted to carry it out. In theory it may be conceded that the reform programme could have been somewhat restricted, and certain of its substantial features could well have not been made public and could have remained in the phase of internal discussions for a time - we could have tried to release the individual reform concepts and practical steps in small "doses". But such a procedure would not have corresponded to the domestic situation or to the possibilities of Czechoslovak society or in the CPCz. As I pointed out earlier, in the specific Czechoslovak conditions this would have been entirely unsatisfactory, and such a procedure would have continued to arouse the kind of resistance that had been growing as far back as in 1963-1967.

In the course of the Prague Spring we can observe a rather paradox situation: precisely because internal conditions were conducive to a radical democratic reform, the attempt to translate this reform into practice led to a growing threat from outside, constituted by the decisive political forces in the majority of Soviet-bloc countries, which at that time were already consciously rejecting risky reform experiments and, instead, were striving to stabilise the status quo of the post-Stalinist system. The greater the democratic potential in Czechoslovakia and in the CPCz, the more acute the conflict became.

I believe that under these circumstances the reform communist leadership had only one possibility: to retain the maximum political initiative towards a democratisation in its own hands, to take the initiative in implementing speedy democratisation measures and, thereby, anticipate a situation where strong pressure was mounting "from below" while the necessary changes "from above" were being postponed or not carried out. In its attempt to retain the initiative the leadership had to look quickly for allies abroad who would, after all, be a factor which the Soviet leadership would have to take into consideration. In brief, I would say that in my opinion the special CPCz Congress should have been held as soon as possible, in May 1968. The Action Programme could have become the line of the Party congress, a new Central Committee could have been elected on the basis of such a political line, the conflicts in the political leadership could thus have been eliminated because its members would have felt that there was now long-term stability. Had the congress met in May it would have been possible to arrange a gathering of delegations from other parties present - and persuade at least a group of communist parties (Yugoslavia, Italy, France, and others) to come out in support of the Action Programme. This would have permitted the leadership of certain parties in the Warsaw Treaty countries to express their own standpoint (Hungary and, from a different angle, Romania). After such a move the military intervention would have been far more difficult (and an intervention would certainly not have taken place before May).

Parliamentary elections should also not have been put off, in my opinion. An early change of the electoral law would have ensured, if not an optimal democratisation of the voting procedure, at least a more democratic method of proposing candidates; it would also have ensured a genuine choice between more than one candidates - and once these innovations had been tried out the elections could have taken place in June 1968. This would have given tens of thousands of elected officials a greater feeling of stability. The promulgation of the law on the National Front should also not have been postponed because, politically, it was clear that a system of several political parties could not have developed during the next few years without a platform of political monopoly. This law could have eliminated the uncertainties on the nature of the proposed law on assembly and association in the sense that it would have been clear that the reform would not provide for political organisations outside the National Front.

To ensure that political initiative remained firmly in the hands of the leadership it was essential that this leadership should not have concealed certain uncomfortable facts such as the systematically growing criticism of the Prague Spring by most of the Warsaw Treaty countries. Instead, the danger of such a development should have been discussed quite openly; it should have been mentioned as a warning factor to which many practical aspects of the reform should have been subordinated. In this connection it was also wrong that the leadership failed to retain some kind of legal provision which would have allowed it to intervene in the activities of the mass media even, if necessary, by banning the publication of certain items of news or opinions. After all, this was also in conflict with the CPCz Action Programme which provided for the abolition of preliminary censorship but not for a state of affairs where the dissemination of certain standpoints or commentaries could be banned neither by a court decision or in any other way.I repeat that in saying this I do not claim that this would have been the way to preclude the military intervention. But as distinct from Alexander Dubcek in his interview with *L'Unita* I believe that twenty years later all the members of the then CPCz leadership have every reason for some self-critical reflections about their activities at the time. It simply is not true that in practice there never was an alternative to the one which was looming - this is never the case in history. Politics, as we know, is the "art of the possible", and the reform leadership of the Prague Spring did not always fully master this art. It remains an inarguable and sad fact that twenty years after the Prague Spring, conditions for a democratic change of the system in Czechoslovakia are worse than before, and that after the defeat of the Prague Spring the specifically democratic potential of the country has been systematically destroyed. Naturally, the blame lies with those who decided the military intervention and who, for the next twenty years, have been pursuing a policy of suppressing all reforms. But the question of the blame is not

the only one that arises in this connection. I therefore believe that neither the authors nor the political leaders of the 1968 reform programme are justified in feeling that they are deeply hurt heroes, and that all this no longer concerns them.

Even though the Prague Spring was a very specific process which would have been impossible elsewhere, certain generalisations can nevertheless be derived from its practical programme, which are significant also for future attempts at reform in Soviet-type systems, not excluding Gorbachev's present attempt. Firstly, it is the lesson that as the reform is put into practice a situation inevitably arises where the old system of management no longer operates satisfactorily but the new one is still far from efficient. This applies in general terms as well as to individual sectors of social life, for example the economy, ideology, etc. Under such circumstances conflicts between potential extremes easily come to a head - for example, between the opponents of reform and their most radical champions. Both maintain that time is ripe for the implementation of their plans: the opponents try to prove that there is "chaos", while the radicals want to demonstrate that the infraction of the ability to function is the result of "half-hearted reforms".

The experience of the Prague Spring shows that provided we start from the premise that the system is to be reformed "from above" but also "from below", but is not to lead to eruption or a "revolution from below", everything must be done to ensure that such an "intermediary state of affairs" is of the shortest possible duration. In such a situation it is wrong to postpone planned measures towards change in the hope that they would be more perfect, more consistent if taken later, and so on. On the contrary, what is needed is swift action and a demonstration that the leadership is capable of acting - and that these acts provide scope for the advance of the reform. If the leadership is incapable of this, such scope will be imposed by pressure "from below", and the leadership will have to yield.

The second lesson of the Prague Spring is that wherever possible practical reforms of the existing system should take place simultaneously at all levels so that the system as a whole changes gradually: this avoids one sector of the system changing completely, while the others remain unchanged and, consequently, without an effective impact. This, I believe, is what happened during the Prague Spring with regard to freedom of expression and of the press. Since the easiest thing is to bring about a qualitative change in this sector - all that is needed is to abolish censorship and lift other restrictions - it was the first sector where a complete change occurred. But since changes in other sectors of the political system were constantly being put off the free press evidently became the only, one can even say the monopoly, sphere where democratisation was making an impact.

This, and certainly not freedom of expression or of the press, had been a political weakness. There were no correctives which in a functioning democratic pluralist system guarantee that the publication of certain views in the press is not identified with the actual process of decision-making. The press provides information and conveys various positions and opinions - but in the democratic structures of a system of power and administration, in the running of society, political decisions are made elsewhere. During the Prague Spring these were obsolete, unchanged, devoid of true authority: everyone knew that they would soon be replaced (the CPCz Central Committee after the congress, Parliament and national committees after elections, etc.). The press, freed of censorship, became not the "seventh superpower" but in some cases the only true force with authority among the democratically-thinking majority of society.

The third lesson of the course of the Prague Spring bears witness to the exceptional significance of unity (and,in the negative sense, of the rift) in the political leadership of the reform process. In reforms of Soviet-type systems the situation in the leadership appears to be of exceptional importance. As the reform advances different views clash, various groups and alliances are formed depending on the type of issue at stake. Arguments about the pace and about the more or less radical image of reforms are by and large inevitable. It seems that a situation where a united standpoint on crucial issues, albeit a compromise, can be achieved, would be optimal; and the policy which is actually being pursued must then submit to such a united (compromise) approach, or those who are not prepared to submit must be made to leave the leadership. Otherwise there will be a split, and one section of the leadership will be acting against the other, various groups would see in their opposite numbers enemies in the struggle for power positions, etc.

In Czechoslovakia this process - supported especially by the postponement of the Party congress - resulted in a section of the leadership teaming up with foreign forces and preparing the intervention against the reform policy. But the responsibility that developments reached such a state of affairs lay to a certain extent with the entire leadership at the time, more particularly with its top representatives.

If we compare these features of the practical policy during the Prague Spring with the reform policy in the USSR since 1985 we note that Gorbachev has so far fortunately managed to be more successful in all these aspects. From the very beginning he has attached primary significance to protecting his domestic reforms also internationally. He is introducing the reform programme step by step - from less demanding system themes (as far back as at the 27th Congress in 1986) to a radical democratisation policy (January 1987) and an attempt to introduce a programme of system changes (the All-Union CPSU Conference during the past few days). The Soviet leadership carried out certain important measures - the Party Congress in February 1986 and the Conference in June 1988 - and did not postpone them, even though there was no shortage of recommendations by the more radical supporters of reform to postpone them in order to be able to "advance further with greater consistency". The new version of the CPSU Programme adopted by the 1986 Congress no longer expresses the essence of the perestroika policy - yet it was important that the Congress took place when it did, and that perestroika was not being implemented in an interim atmosphere.

Similarly, the "glasnost" policy is not accompanied by the kind of shortcomings mentioned in connection with the freedom of the press during the Prague Spring. And as regards the situation within the party leadership, it appears that not even the clumsy demotion of Boris Yeltsin, done the "old way", nor the compromises with positions attributed mainly to Ligachev, have endangered the overall reform course - or led to a split within the leadership.

But this, of course, does not mean that there are no serious threats to the perestroika policy, though of a different type. It is not possible to deal with them at length in this paper. But they more or less coincide with the same hazards with which Krushchev had been unable to cope in his day. Yet we do not find the kind of political mistakes which we registered in Czechoslovakia in 1968.

I hope that from this critical analysis of the Prague Spring policy it follows quite unambiguously and unconditionally that even though I am in favour of a critical discussion of the Prague Spring I totally and firmly reject the concept that in 1968 socialism in Czechoslovakia had been threatened by a looming "counter-revolution". This concept is the result of the kind of thinking of those who decided to launch the military intervention against the Prague Spring. From subsequent developments it follows that these people identified socialism with a Soviet-type Stalinist system, and they presented any qualitative change as an attempt at "counter-revolution". Developments in Czechoslovakia in 1968 provided them with quite a few ostensible motives because, as I pointed out, they took place under the influence of Czechoslovakia's democratic experience prior to the imposition of the Stalinist model. Czechoslovakia as a country which has for centuries developed historically in the context of West European traditions, and consequently with the same political culture, will make any future major attempt at changing the existing system differently than the USSR. All the most significant guarantees of the domestic political success of the 1968 reform were at the same time the cause of serious difficulties, if Western political culture is seen as something hostile to socialism while the

civilisation and political culture of Russia (i.e. often traditions of despotism) are regarded as something that is in keeping with socialism. Traditions of a parliamentary system, freedom of expression and association in the sense of a parliamentary pluralist democracy, the concept of the political party as a civic subject and not as a semi-clerical organisation, the principle of a constitutional state and civic rights as the guarantee of the independence of the bearers of these rights, even if such an autonomy is irksome to the state or the regime - all this is part of the political culture of the West and of Czechoslovakia as well. True, between 1948 and 1968, with the brief exception of the Prague Spring, this political culture had been suppressed by different methods. The past twenty years of the so-called normalisation policy have caused particular damage - entire young generations have been deprived of a situation which would correspond to this political culture.

It is only natural that the attempt at reform in 1968 aroused all these suppressed factors of political culture, inspired by the West European tradition. This complicated the possibility of a reform "from above", and it was difficult to stop the disintegration of the Soviet-type system taking place at a pace that was perhaps too fast, too radical and above all unbalanced. I believe, for example, that the one-sided role of the free press which I criticised is also connected with this cultural and political tradition. The fact that Russia does not possess such traditions on the one hand facilitates the situation for reform communists in the USSR (pressure "from below" often does not put forward demands which cannot be fulfilled) but at the same time makes true democratisation more difficult. As Gorbachev said, the entire society will first have to "learn democracy" in elementary situations.

A Final Remark

When reviewing the Prague Spring policy twenty years later one must also try to formulate prospects and expectations for the future. I believe that in an historical context where twenty years are virtually irrelevant, the Prague Spring has been designated as a positive projection of current endeavours for a qualitative transformation of the Soviet system. It is of no consequence what Mikhail Gorbachev wants to or is able to say about this: if he wraps himself in silence or says whatever he likes, this will not change historical facts by one iota.

I am not one of those who believes that the way out of the current profound crisis in Czechoslovakia - which is, above all, a political and moral crisis and has its roots in the total discredit of values traditionally linked with socialism - can be conceived as a repetition of the Prague Spring. I think that neither society nor the CPCz today possess the kind of crucial conditions which twenty years ago led to the Prague Spring. There is no need for those who represented the attempt at reform at that time to return to political offices. What is important is that those who crushed this attempt at the time and who for twenty years have been pursuing a policy of devastating Czechoslovakia's democratic potential at long last relinquish all decisive political positions. Without this the new and younger generation will not gain access to decisive political positions; it is a generation that is no longer in the grip of its own past to the extent of not being able to look for new paths of development. Only a political team which represents this generation can inaugurate a reform process "from above" - and this is the indispensable condition if endeavours for democratisation "from below", which never cease entirely, are to transform into a process where a new power-political alternative can emerge.

There can be no doubt that the badly needed changes to the system in Czechoslovakia will not be introduced from outside, by Gorbachev, but that they are possible only to the extent that domestic forces strive to introduce them. But this does not mean that the new Soviet leadership could not and should not do more than it has been doing so far to assist a necessary reform process in Czechoslovakia.

Czechoslovakia today is a typical example of how the words of the new Soviet leadership on the right of each country to an autonomous and specific road are changing into empty phrases because for forty years everything that could permit such an autonomous and specific road was suppressed by the ruling of Soviet leaderships. This, of course, applies not only to Czechoslovakia, but it is particularly pronounced there, since the effects of the 1968 invasion are still very much alive.

After this act of brute force Czechoslovakia - including its Communist Party where one third of the membership has been thrown out - is a crippled political subject, the result of Brezhnev's Soviet leadership. The offer by Brezhnev's heirs to grant crippled political subjects independence is, of course, not an act atoning for past brutality, but at best an empty phrase, at worst a manifestation of hypocrisy.

By sustaining its attitude to the events of 1968, especially to the military intervention against the Prague Spring, the new Soviet leadership not only maintains the status quo, since it is evidently afraid that a possible new radical turn might well escape its political control. By condoning Brezhnevism as a political atmosphere in Czechoslovakia, and by condoning the hackneyed lies about the Prague Spring, it is gradually and increasingly discrediting its own policy of perestroika in the eyes of Czechoslovak society - which had originally expected more than just verbose statements from this policy; it had hoped that this policy would offer real possibilities for its own, that is to say, for a democratic development in Czechoslovakia.

I believe that the attitude of the new Soviet leadership to the military intervention against the Prague Spring is of special significance for the West European Left. It will demonstrate whether, and to what extent, this leadership is capable of conducting a truly equal constructive dialogue with the Western Left. It appears that the new Soviet leadership does not even feel it worthwhile to take account of the fact that the great majority of the Western Left has a fundamentally different view about the Soviet military intervention and the Prague Spring; it seems reluctant to make an open statement on the subject. But there is also a second, no less important aspect which I have already mentioned indirectly. The evaluation of the Prague Spring as a process leading to counter-revolution is closely linked with the type of attitude one is prepared to adopt towards West European political culture, to its concept of socialism and democracy.

The Prague Spring can be brandished as "counter-revolutionary" only if the West European concept of socialism and democracy itself is seen as something anti-socialist. "Western"equals capitalist, anti-socialist - this monstrous reflection is at the bottom of such an approach. The struggle for the right to an open, critical discussion of the Prague Spring, the struggle for the possibility of such a discussion even in the Soviet-bloc countries, including Czechoslovakia, the demand for an unequivocal condemnation of the military intervention against the Prague Spring as a step which was the product of old, Brezhnevian, and not of Gorbachovian, political thinking - all this is in the very political interest of the entire Western Left. This Left is thus fighting for recognition of its own position in the world-wide endeavour for progress and socialism; it is fighting to ensure that the Soviet side should treat it as an equal political partner in future. And, vice versa, to tolerate continued public lies about the Prague Spring or, at best, to tolerate silence means that the Western Left accepts the infamous role of "useful idiot" who, if necessary, can act as a mere facade even, say, in the Kremlin, but whose views, if they prove to be inconvenient, are not taken seriously.

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Translation into English supplied by the author and slightly edited.

MICHELE LEE

DEMOCRACY AND THE NATIONAL QUESTION

Analysis of Yugoslav history and politics has traditionally veered towards two opposite extremes: exclusive preoccupation either with class or with nation. The Left, for its part, has tended to undervalue the importance of the national question, treating it at best as of secondary importance and at worst as a "bourgeois deviation" from the class struggle. More frequent, however, has been an inclination to concentrate on the supposedly eternal national "problem" in Yugoslavia: in the West, academic works and media alike almost invariably describe the country's multi-national character, and its consequent decentralisation, as the main cause of its problems.

Both tendencies have shared a common premise: that national self-government and socialist order somehow stand in fundamental contradiction with one other - or, to put it differently, that multi-national states are inherently unstable. Yet history has offered widely different options to multi-national states. At the end of the First World War, while Austria-Hungary disintegrated in favour of independent national states, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was being born contemporaneously from the ashes of Imperial Russia. Indeed, the end of the former was signalled by the arrival of the revolution which, in the guise of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' deputies as early as March 1917 had endorsed the principle of self- determination as the solution to the national problem in Central and Eastern Europe[1]. In 1941 the unitary Yugoslav monarchy fell apart, only to be replaced a few years later by the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia. In both the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, national liberation was a necessary condition of social revolution. Hence, their federal constitutions, based on the principle of national self-determination, were essentially revolutionary class acts. Socialist democracy and national equality have remained inseparably connected - it is not accidental that political dispossession of the working class, and with it of the population as a whole, has gone hand in hand with the rise of state-sponsored nationalism and the persecution of national minorities in countries like the Soviet Union (despite its constitution), China, Romania, Bulgaria - and today also in Yugoslavia.

Political, economic and cultural equality of the nationalities has remained a visible indicator of the state of health of Yugoslav democracy. Bureaucratic reaction, in contrast, has preferred to present itself as "class-based" and a-national (albeit with a strong Slav bias)[2]. The same is true of the regional bureaucracies which, following the suppression of the country's left in 1968, have been putting themselves forward as champions of individual national interests - and the more so as the economy has increasingly been sliding towards anarchy. The absence of democracy - both within the party (appointment from above, rather than election from below, of the Federal and Republican Central Committees; ban on tendencies within the party) and in society at large - has prevented the political integration that only a free, all-Yugoslav debate around alternative political programmes could achieve. The result has been a tacit legitimation of nationalism, while at the same time the "struggle against nationalism" has been used as an ideological cover in inner-party struggles and for suppressing critics outside the party. In the 1970s, a campaign against "Croat nationalism" was used to purge the party of its liberal wing, and the opportunity was taken to send several student leaders to prison as well as to close down journals like *Praxis*. In the 1980s, the main fire was directed against "Albanian nationalism" - as the leadership struggled to contain the effects of Tito's death, which coincided in time with the "discovery" of a $20 billion foreign debt and a catastrophic economic situation. Today it seems to be the Slovenes" turn to join Croat and Albanian "separatists" as the universal enemy.

The political ferment in Slovenia - and in particular the official toleration there of explicit opposition - has caused considerable consternation in the centres of power elsewhere in the country (with the partial exception of Croatia). There, the effects of economic and political crisis have resulted in a growing authoritarianism, which in certain areas has acquired a strong nationalist form.

Only a year ago the liberal wing of the Serbian party was unceremoniously removed for refusing to sanction an openly nationalist campaign to strip Kosovo and Vojvodina, the two Provinces of the Republic of Serbia where most of the country's national minorities live, of their autonomy.

The critical forays of the Slovene youth paper *Mladina* have instilled real fears among the conservatives, who prefer to stifle criticism by recourse to more traditional methods. Their problem is that the growing democratisation of public life in Slovenia enjoys official sanction. In the cold war now raging within the country's leadership, the attitude to the developments in Slovenia has become a totemic symbol of divide between liberals and conservatives. Harangues against *Mladina* in particular, and Slovenia in general, provide the daily staple diet in sections of the media under conservative control. The Slovene party leadership has clearly underestimated the subversive effect their own local experiment in democracy is having on the rest of the country. Not only *Mladina*'s refusal to respect republican frontiers, but also the readiness of Slovene deputies to take up in the Federal Assembly cases of police repression in the conservatives" own back yards[3], have inevitably exposed the vulnerability of the Slovene party's strategy of seeking an all-Yugoslav agreement on economic reform while leaving the degree of "internal" democracy to be decided by individual republican leaderships. A response was bound to come.

The military's intervention this spring and summer against democratic tendencies in Slovenia, described below, has left much egg on the generals' faces: a strong element of farce was introduced by the Army's attempt to justify its action on the grounds that a "counter-revolution" was taking place in Slovenia. A spontaneous mass solidarity with the victims ensured that what began as a trial against three *Mladina* journalists and a pacifist sergeant of the Yugoslav People's Army was soon turned into a people's trial of the Army itself. Chief coordinator of this democratic mass movement has been the Committee for Protection of Human Rights.

Given that a virtually total mobilisation of the Slovene nation has occurred, a most interesting debate on the relationship between nationalism and democracy has begun in the Slovene press, on which we report below.

The Ljubljana trial, and the spontaneous mass mobilization which it has provoked in Slovenia, have occurred against the back-

ground of quite different developments further south. In the Yugoslav southern regions, the tragedy of ethnic conflict seems set to repeat itself, as anti-Albanian chauvinist hysteria is being fanned by the resident bureaucrats and all those who are profiting from the current system of distribution of material and political privilege. A Committee of Kosovo Serbs and Montenegrins has emerged, with official support from the current Serbian party and state leadership, as a political force in its own right: the first time in Yugoslavia's post-war history that an openly nationalist formation has enjoyed open official backing. The trade-off is clear: Serbian official politics presents these bigots as "freedom fighters", while the "freedom fighters" organize mass meetings to press for full support for the Serbian bureaucrats' attempt to strip Kosovo and Vojvodina of their autonomy. For the time being, Yugoslav unitarists and Serb nationalists have joined forces in persecuting all those who show insufficient respect for the state and the party. The press in Belgrade, with few exceptions, has become the organ of this unholy alliance, as its daily and weekly editions churn out an endlessly repeated litany of nationalist and authoritarian demands[4]. Not a single Serbian politician has distanced himself from those of their supporters who paint slogans on the walls of Romanian houses in Vojvodina saying "Mother Serbia Rules Here!" or adorn the public buildings there and elsewhere with the more popular "Kill Albanians!" and "Hang Vlassi!" [the Kosovo party leader of Albanian origin], or raise the call for arms at mass meetings.

To be sure, the Serbs have no monopoly on nationalism in Yugoslavia. In Macedonia, for example, state-sponsored nationalism has been used quite cynically to divert popular attention from the Republican leadership's economic mis-management: the Republic's bankruptcy has coincided not only with mass workers' strikes, but also with an onslaught on education in the Albanian language, designed to confine tens of thousands of Albanian children to a future of manual labour or unemployment. The specific danger of Serb nationalism lies in its unique potential power to affect a re-structuring of the state - thus opening the door to lasting political instability and possibly also to counter-revolution.

The rise of Serb nationalism, and of unitarist tendencies in parts of the state apparatus, are fanning fear among Yugoslavs of all ethnic groups that their national rights are in danger, and that a victory of bureaucratic reaction could result in the removal of what liberties they today enjoy.

In Slovenia, this fear has encouraged spontaneous mass resistance to Army pressure against the "Slovene Spring". During the trial of the Ljubljana Four, the emphasis within the solidarity movement was on unity in action. Once the trial was over, however, differences regarding the relationship between nationalism and democracy could once again be publicly debated.

Let us start at the beginning, however. Last March, following a public row, the Yugoslav Federal prosecutor forced his Slovene Republican counterpart to start proceedings against two journalists: Franci Zavrl, the chief editor of *Mladina*, official journal of the Alliance of Socialist Youth of Slovenia (ASYS), and Andrej Novak of the Ljubljana bi-weekly *Teleks*, on the grounds that they had insulted Branko Mamula, the Yugoslav Minister of Defence (now retired)[5]. Following an impressive show of support for the accused in Slovenia, the two journalists were acquitted. The Federal prosecutor responded by appealing against this verdict, but his appeal was rejected at the end of July. By the time this small victory was registered in the daily press, however, it no longer seemed relevant, for by then Zavrl was being sentenced to eighteen months in prison by a different court - a military one - concluding a long sequence of events that had started at approximately at the same time: March 1988.

At the beginning of May, rumours spread through Ljubljana that in March the Army had planned widespread arrests of Slovene intellectuals and activists, and had been stopped only by a vigorous protest from Slovenia's highest party and state officials. The rumours proved to have a solid foundation, as was shown by the leaked minutes of a closed meeting of the Federal Party Presidency which had taken place on 29 March.[6]

This meeting had been called specifically to discuss the situation in Slovenia, and in particular increased criticism of the Army in the pages of *Mladina* and other Slovene journals. In advance of the meeting, a Draft Statement had been produced for adoption by the Presidency. This Draft Statement mirrored the position already expressed by a body called the Military Council[7] four days earlier, namely that a "counterrevolution" was taking place in the Republic. In an unprecedented gesture, the Military Council had made its conclusion public on 28 March, i.e. on the eve of the Presidency meeting[8]. The Draft Document also, it seems, included references to Slovene "separatism".

At the meeting itself, Milan Kucan, Slovene party leader, in the name of the Republican leadership, rejected the Draft Document as "unacceptable": "We cannot take responsibility for such a document. It will be impossible to reach unity in the League of Communists of Slovenia on such a basis, above all with respect to the assessment that there is a counterrevolution taking place in Slovenia". He argued that although "the general socio-political situation in Slovenia" was "very complex", the Document was biased against that Republic, since the problems found there were actually common to the country as a whole. The root of these problems lay, in his opinion, in the economy: "This document does not deal with the problems of economic development, which are nevertheless decisive."

That the economic crisis was not confined to the poorer Yugoslav regions, but had also struck Slovenia, Kucan illustrated with a telling paragraph: "We have advance notice of general strikes being organized in the health service, in the building industry, and in education. We have been told that managers in the engineering and textile industries are planning to resign collectively.

We do not have the resources for a technological renewal, for a structural adaptation of our economy; yet this is a developmental imperative, without which we shall come to a standstill... We are no longer dealing with stagnation, but with regression, and with a whole series of economic, social and political problems which are causing, unfortunately, also intra-national tensions. This is because the first to be hit will be blue-collar workers, among whom there are around 100,000 workers from other republics. ... Big confrontations have already begun."

Kucan reminded those present that in this situation the Slovene leadership was on its own: "We cannot expect anybody to help us here. There is nobody to help. Two republics [Montenegro and Macedonia] are in the financial and economic situation in which they are [i.e. bankrupt]. Bosnia has its own additional problems [as a result of the "Agrokomerc" affair]. The same is true for Serbia. We know, therefore, that this is something we must undertake alone, and we shall do so. But we ask you that at least you do not hinder us in our political action."

Adoption of the Draft Document would, in Kucan's opinion, also have a most negative effect on the coming Party Conference (which took place in May) diverting its attention from by far the most important question - the economy. "Differentiation on the issue of economic development is essential, since without it there is no way out of the crisis." The basic task of the Party Conference was "the elaboration of a programme of economic development, which will foresee both social and political conflicts, but which, because of the persuasiveness of its orientation for the majority of the people, can acquire the majority consensus in each republic and province, and which can for this reason overcome conflicts and escalations." By contrast, a "confrontation articulated in the language of special war, of search for enemies, does not provide answers to the necessary development of socialism. This can be reached only by confrontation between different concepts of socialism."

It was, after all, he argued, the crisis of the economies of "real socialism" which had led to the communists' retreat. "Communists are on the defensive [in Yugoslavia] because our policies are producing no results, no turn for the better, no promising perspective. This is why communists are silent and on the defensive under the assault of their critics and an opposition that uses arguments drawn from reality: the situation supplies them with ammunition, and arguments drawn from

reality are more convincing than ones drawn from ideology."

Kucan reminded his audience of what Gorbachev had said on his recent visit to Yugoslavia. "He said...that he and the Army in the Soviet Union are attacked by the West because of fear of *perestroika*. And if crisis has to do with the [economic] development of socialism, then it cannot be solved primarily or exclusively by political means. For this very reason it is essential to trust those individuals, organs and forces which are trying to solve the crisis by economic means, including the state - since it is impossible to come out of this crisis without the intervention of the state in the economy. And this demands a reaffirmation of the role of the state, which is becoming increasingly weak, inefficient and incompetent. The state must begin to function like a real state, hence must free itself from political and bureaucratic voluntarism and pressure."

Kucan was particularly insistent that the party leadership call off the anti-Slovene campaign currently being waged in Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia, with the connivance of the republican leaderships: "An anti-Yugoslav mood is growing in Slovenia in reaction to the growth of the anti-Slovene mood in the country. ...there is no readiness [by the local leaderships] to calm the situation, which is now overheated." The charges aired in the press that the editors of *Mladina,* and indeed the Slovene party leadership, were instruments of a special war being waged against Yugoslavia by world capitalism, were absurd. With this kind of argument, one could equally well "'prove' that my positions and those of Vidoje [Zarkovic, head of the Montenegrin party] equal those of Ustashe and Chetniks[9] - one can use such methods to prove anything".

Kucan went on to remind the Party Presidency of the multinational character of Yugoslav party and state organisation. "Our attention is drawn in particular to the statement [found in the Military Council's proclamation] that Yugoslavia is a *unitary* federal country. Not long ago one of our delegates was likewise told by the President of the Executive Council [Branko Mikulic] that we need a *unified* economic policy[10]. These are influential people. Is this not objectively an argument that the fundamental relations in the Federation, and the principles on which they are based, should be altered?"

The Slovene leader now came to the crux of his whole intervention: the status of the Military Council. It seems that neither the Party nor the State presidencies had been consulted by the Military Council before it took the decision to make public its views on the developments in Slovenia - on the eve of a Party Presidency meeting convened to discuss the subject! "Does this mean", asked Kucan, "that this body has become an independent subject in the political life of the country? That it can independently make such far-reaching political judgments which - given its authority and the need to strengthen it - have enormous political weight?[11] In the same way that the words of Comrade Mamula, spoken at the political conference of the Yugoslav People's Army, had great political weight?" Having initially been tempted to go public with a dispute on this issue, the Slovene leadership had decided against it - apparently because they had not felt that a public confrontation would get them very far, while it would certainly have further "inflamed" the already high local sensitivity on the question of the military's competence. "But we are in favour of the Party Presidency therefore making its position clear on this. For this is the only right place for such a discussion."

At this point Kucan raised something that was not a purely formal question of the constitution or of party primacy, but a very concrete issue indeed. For what Kucan said next was to lead, just two months later, to a spontaneous mobilization in Slovenia which, in its scope and importance, is without precedent in post-war Yugoslavia. He raised "a question" about "the instruction, which the commander of the [Ljubljana] military district has told us he received following the Military Council meeting, to make direct contact with the Republican Internal Affairs Secretary in regard to action to be initiated in the Republic. He asked if we were in a position to control the situation which might arise after the arrests, since it was assumed that people would come out onto the streets. He said that his main task was to safeguard himself, military barracks and military personnel, but that they were ready to help us".

"Our comrades, the Secretary and Deputy Secretary said that they could not discuss this without us. They searched for me and found me, and we spoke to him together with Dolanc[12]. Naturally we refused to discuss the matter, since we said we knew nothing about it. We also said that we were fully aware that any such action, which did not take into account the very subtle political situation in Slovenia, would have irreparable consequences for which the political leadership could not take any responsibility. ...I told the Army Commander that our Committee for Social Self-Protection also knew nothing about the instruction he had received."

"This is why I protest here most strongly against such a procedure. Not against the Commander, who was very correct, but against such a practice, since it would fundamentally alter relations within society and the position of its political subjects - their jurisdiction, their responsibilities. Such a procedure for solving relations and problems in the Federation is highly dubious and unacceptable, and we wish to have the Presidency's position on this."

The consternation in Slovenia following the leaking of this document was understandably great, and the conviction that the Republic had barely escaped a "military coup" became widespread. This in turn explains the mass character of the mobilisation that followed the incarceration by the military police of Janez Jansa, a journalist of *Mladina*, well known for his critical writings on the Army[13], on 31 May. Jansa was followed within days by Ivan Borstner, a junior officer in the Yugoslav People's Army, and David Tasic, another journalist on the staff of *Mladina*. The three were charged with having in their possession a secret military document. Finally, two weeks later, *Mladina*'s chief editor Zavrl was charged with the same offence, though he escaped prison since the warrant for his arrest found him recovering in a Ljubljana hospital from a nervous breakdown following months of political harassment. Within hours of the news of Jansa's arrest, the editors of several Slovene journals (*Mladina, Katedra, Tribuna*) and the producers of Radio-Student, joined by representatives of Slovene "alternative movements", formed a Committee to Defend Janez Jansa - which soon changed its name to the Committee for Protection of Human Rights. Since the Army initially refused all access to the accused, and since it also refused them civilian lawyers, the Committee came up with the following key demands: that the three be released from prison immediately; that they be allowed civilian lawyers; and that the public be admitted to the main part of the trial. The Army, referring to the letter of the Criminal Code, refused all of them. The Committee saw its task as including also the regular and accurate dissemination of news. All in all, the Committee became an indispensable public institution, outside the control of the Slovene leadership albeit maintaining cordial relations with it.

As Yugoslav public opinion woke up to the fact that the Army has the right to hold and try civilians in peacetime, the Committee began collecting signatures in support of its demands. In under a month it gathered some 100,000, mostly - though not exclusively - in Slovenia. The Committee was joined also by over 500 organizations - schools and higher education institutions, hospitals, enterprises, cultural and professional associations, local party cells, etc. - covering all sectors of Slovene society[14]. The Republican Assembly, the Socialist Alliance of Working People of Slovenia, the Republican Presidency and even the party leadership voiced their support to differing degrees with the demands of the Committee. There is no doubt that the months of June and July saw a virtually complete national mobilisation, carried out within strictly legal limits. At one point it seemed that the moment would give birth to an inner-party horizontal movement of reform, but although an Aktiv of Communists and Non-Communists for Democracy did get off the ground, it soon disintegrated under the weight of conflicting programmes and ideas. And an early offer by metal-workers to initiate a general strike was politely and firmly declined!

The peak of the Committee's activity

coincided with the formal annual session of the Federal Assembly's legal subcommittee, at which the Federal public prosecutor complained that the Slovene judiciary, by failing to act against "verbal delict" as defined by Article 133 of the Yugoslav Penal Code, had introduced "deformations" into the all-Yugoslav penal practice! What is more, the Army added insult to injury by insisting - contrary to constitutional stipulations - that the trial be conducted in the Serbo-Croat language. The ridiculous and offensive spectacle of a Yugoslav Federal body trying Slovene citizens in the capital of the Slovene state in Serbo-Croat, against the express demand both of the defendants and of all popular and official bodies, could not but be seen as a form of national denigration and a unitarist provocation. It was understood as a sign of things to come.[15]

When, on 28th July, Ivan Borstner was sentenced to four years in prison, Janez Jansa and Franci Zavrl to eighteen months and David Tasic to five months, the conviction grew that not only democracy but also the Slovene nation had been on trial. The Slovene leadership and the Committee at this point opted for different responses. The party and state leadership did throughout the trial express their desire that the Four be defended by civilian lawyers and preferably in a civilian court; but they never questioned the legality of the Army's action. At the same time, they protested most vigorously to the Federal State Presidency against the infringement that had taken place of the constitutionally-guaranteed status of the Slovene language both in Slovenia and in the Federal institutions. Their appeal failed, since the Federation - in an act that can only increase the Slovene sense of alienation from Belgrade - took the side of the Army. The Committee, for its part, while agreeing that the question of the language was important, also refused to accept the verdicts as legally valid, not only because it questioned the military's right to try civilians in peacetime, but also because the trial had involved numerous transgressions of legal norms. The Committee furthermore has demanded that the Slovene State Presidency, together with the appropriate members of the Republican Assembly, should examine the secret document at the centre of the trial, since there was a justified suspicion that this document related to anti-constitutional activity by the Army. By mid-August, both the defendants and the military prosecutor had appealed against the sentences.

There is no doubt that the trial represented a defeat of the Slovene leadership's current strategy, elements of which can be gleaned from Kucan's speech quoted above. The Army's intervention in Slovenia has spelt out the limits of the Republican leadership's power, and this was confirmed by the Federal state's refusal to defend the constitutional status of the Slovene language. The Slovene quest for recognition of the right of minorities to exist in the party - raised at the May Party Conference and supported there by the Croat liberals - has thus come to nothing. When the Slovene President Stanovnik, in an open bid to give the Slovene case the kind of nationalist justification which the Serbian leadership has used in its own quest for greater power - stated publicly that the Slovenes wished to be left to conduct their own affairs without outside interference just as the Serbs wished to be "masters in their own house", this was received with muted outrage by the neighbouring Croat party, where the liberal wing still holds a majority and which has therefore been supportive of Slovenia. Finally, the Slovene leadership's confidence in its ability to maintain a national consensus suffered with the emergence of the Committee for Protection of Human Rights, frequently critical of official inaction. The idea that one could have agreement on the economy without an all-Yugoslav commitment to democratisation turned out to be a mirage.

The Slovene Left, at the same time, became increasingly aware of the fact that, even though the Slovene party had been an important factor in the democratisation of public life in Slovenia, it was unable or unwilling to formulate an all-Yugoslav democratic platform that would be acceptable to non-Slovenes. Without such a platform, it is impossible to defeat the growing bureaucratic counter-revolution; the latter's defeat, on the other hand, would open the way for a radical democratic transformation of the moribund political structures, as an indispensable condition for solving the economic and social crisis. In the interregnum created by the appeals - pending the outcome of which the defendants were released from prison - some of the Committee activists began to take stock of the new situation posed by developments not only in Slovenia but also elsewhere in Yugoslavia.

The debate was opened by Miha Kovac in *Teleks*, with an article entitled "The Nation Will Prevail". In this article, Kovac contrasted the Slovene politicians" strong concern for the language with their meek acceptance of the Army's diktat on the legal and democratic issues raised by the trial. He argued, therefore, that the Slovene leadership, like its Serbian counterpart, views Yugoslavia solely through national spectacles: "What unites Slovene, Serb and Federal political forums is that they all behave as if the Yugoslav nations were homogenised and undifferentiated wholes. One immediate consequence is that this commitment to national sovereignty draws a veil over the responsibility of the individual [national] bureaucracies for the current social catastrophe". The other consequence is that "the [national] community's problems are sought outside of it. The various quarrels between the Yugoslav nations about who exploits whom are a direct consequence of the undemocratic social order", which - constituted around the nation as the main social subject - prevents an all-Yugoslav debate on the most vital issue of political democracy. "Therefore, paradoxically, it is nationalism that unites the Yugoslav nations. The more the Slovenes swear by their Central European heritage, which is supposed to differentiate them from other Yugoslavs, the more Balkanised do they become; the more they chafe against the stupid [Federal] government in Belgrade, the more they become blind to the foolishness of their own bureaucracy; the more independent they are, the less disturbed they are by the absence of democracy in Yugoslavia."

Kovac was answered in the following issue by Tomaz Mastnak. Mastnak's main argument revolved around the thesis that "the homogenisation of the Slovene nation differs from the homogenisation of the Serb one". Mastnak pointed out that the mass mobilisation in Slovenia had been spontaneous, that it had emerged outside the official structures, "although it did not treat the latter as something contrary or even hostile to it. The movement was at all times in communication with them and was prepared - when necessary and possible - to cooperate with them." However, "the initiative remained always with the people, who organised themselves politically and formulated their own exact and reliable criteria for judging the politicians' activity. So long as the politicians fulfilled popular expectations, the people saw in them their representatives." In this interaction between the people and the political structures, therefore, official politics had "acknowledged the hegemony of the mass movement. The empirical evidence, however, is that the Slovene political structure only rarely fulfilled all the popular expectations... meeting the people only halfway. It also happened that individual politicians betrayed the hopes and expectations of the people, and the people responded by not recognising them as their own. Each day the politicians' legitimacy was put to the test." What had occurred in Slovenia, therefore, could not be described as a national homogenisation: "The people organised themselves by creating a political bloc which is not identical to the official, self-appointed political structures. The effect of this crucial split has been a de-homogenisation of the Slovene nation: now one can see more accurately than before who is who and what is what, and this is valid as much for individuals as for institutions."

Herein, according to Mastnak, lies the fundamental difference between the mobilisation in Slovenia and in Serbia. "The platform for homogenisation of the Slovene nation has been the struggle for political democracy, the defence of fundamental human rights, the battle for a legal state. The starting point of Serb mobilization has been *Blut und Boden*: Kosovo and the Serb blood spilled on that piece of land [in the 14th century Battle of Kosovo]. Serb nationalism wishes to set itself up as a state-dominated community, whereas Slovene nationalism organizes as a society wishing to supervise the national

state. This is why the former identifies easily with the Army, whereas the latter is anti-militarist. The former aims at state expansion, which it wishes to sanction with a new constitution; the latter limits itself to safeguarding the modicum of the constitutional guarantees of its state sovereignty. The greatest difference between Slovene and Serb nationalism is that ... the social movement in Slovenia establishes the state as state whereas the pro-state Serb nationalism destroys the state as state... and transforms it into an instrument of the party." For, "the only Slovene politician for whom we can say that he has not only retained his credibility but also gained additional esteem has been the state president Stanovnik. In Serbia, on the other hand, at the centre of attention is the party chief Milosevic." And whereas the national movement in Slovenia "never took a stand against any other Yugoslav nationality', the Serb national mobilisation "has needed enemy nations". Altogether, whereas the national mobilisation in Slovenia "was understood as a moment - today a key and decisive moment - of the struggle for democracy in Yugoslavia", Serb nationalism has emerged as an anti-democratic force: it "demands military intervention (at least in Kosovo) and is not too bothered by constitutional norms".

Mastnak, however, did not limit himself to empirical conclusions but sought to pose the difference between the two nationalisms also on a principled plane. He challenged the idea that all nationalisms were regressive, arguing that "the political nature of nationalism is contingent". Comparing Slovenia to the Soviet Baltic Republics, he contended that "in that they [i.e. small nations] resist the totalitarianism of large nations", their nationalism inevitably has democratic consequences. "To be sure, Slovene nationalism could become totalitarian [i.e. articulate itself as a substantialist ideology] if democracy were suppressed - if it did not succeed. Serb nationalism, however, would become definitely totalitarian if it were to succeed - for then democracy would be suppressed." Pointing to the fact that people with different political positions worked together in the Committee for Protection of Human Rights without having to explore these differences, he saw it as symbolic of the kind of homogenisation that had taken place within the Slovene nation as a result of the trial.

The fundamental objection to this way of looking at things, raised by Kovac in the following issue of *Teleks*, centred on Mastnak's distinction between democratic and totalitarian nationalisms. Kovac argued that Slovene nationalism, like all nationalisms, is a mixture of old and new ideological elements, not all of which bear affixed a democratic meaning. If one were to accept the premise of an essentially democratic nature of Slovene nationalism, then not only would this minimise the importance of internal differentiation within the Slovene nation - which has constituted the latter as a terrain in its own right of struggle between democratic and anti-democratic forces, and which has therefore played a dominant role in the national formation - but also "the history of post-war Yugoslavia would appear... as repeated attempts by the Yugoslav bureaucracy to suppress the democratic tendencies of the Slovene party." Such a "democratic nationalism" would consequently "be blind to the deeply undemocratic character of post-war Slovene history and to the rich contribution of Slovene national ideology to the formation of the existing Yugoslav socio-political system". In other words, the Slovene "democratic nationalism" would be blind to its own responsibility in establishing a system which is still able to produce "a pogrom-like mentality ("Kill Azem!") and a cult of personality ("Slobodan, Freedom!")[16] in one part of the Serb nation." Is Slovene "democratic nationalism" not also responsible for the fact that "in Serbia the barrier between "popular" and "official" nationalism has fallen - as when Kosovo Serbs march against all those who do not agree with the Serbian leadership?"

Suppose that we accept, Kovac argued, that Slovene nationalism is democratic because it defends a minority against the violence of the majority, then how can one explain the rightist tendencies within Slovene society which seek to replace a democratic model of social supervision by a corporatist concept of the state? "A nationalism which is aware that the nation is not a homogeneous whole and acts in support of the latter's - and hence also its own - heterogeneity, is no longer nationalism. Why then call it so? Why should one clothe the democratic idea, which Mastnak supports, in national dress?"

In the rest of his reply, Kovac expressed his doubt that mobilisation on a national basis could be an answer to the Yugoslav "tragicomedy". "It is impossible to articulate a democratic ideology in the language of democratic nationalism." Only an all-Yugoslav democratic movement, capable of hegemonising the disparate Yugoslav nationalisms, could prevent the triumph of the Yugoslav Right.

A final comment (for the time being) has come from a third Slovene intellectual, Lev Kreft. Noting that the debate between Kovac and Mastnak expressed a dilemma as to whether democratic rights or the Slovene nation's statehood should be defended as a priority, Kreft declared the counterposition to be essentially false: "The importance of the national question in the present political moment lies precisely in the fact that it is dangerous to separate it from the whole question of democracy." For once this is done, then the problematic is firmly back to where it was in 1848 and thereafter: "trading away democracy in order to preserve a small domestic autocracy'. For Kreft, Mastnak was right to emphasise the democratic and spontaneous character of the mass movement of solidarity with the defendants; where he was wrong, however, was to introduce a distinction between democratic and totalitarian nationalisms in the contemporary Yugoslav situation. All nationalisms, Kovac was right to warn, are prey to totalitarian homogenisation. Mastnak, in fact, had committed once again the mistake made by the young Marx in 1848.

"In the oscillation between extreme proletarian internationalism, which denies the importance of the national question, and state-sponsored national chauvinism, all that popular movements can do is to fight for all democratic rights." Kreft emphasised how important it was for Slovene democrats to be aware of the dangerous ability of nationalism to coopt any struggle for a "legal state". A Slovene who imputes an "Asiatic" mentality to the Serb nation cannot be considered a democrat, any more than can a Serb who wishes to reduce Kosovo to the condition of a Bantustan within Serbia. The Slovene politicians, who acquired their current position of power in the early 1970s, have seen the crisis weakening the two elements of their distinct status within the Yugoslav bureaucracy: Slovenia's economic power and domestic national consensus. "The homogenisation which a 'democratic nationalism' could bring about would work for them, and in the final instance only for them", Kreft concluded.

If one compares this debate with a similar one which took place two or three generations ago, in the 1920s, within the young Communist Party of Yugoslavia, one is struck as much by the similarities as by the differences. Sixty years ago, such a debate would have been carried in an all-Yugoslav party theoretical paper, whereas today it is locally circumscribed.[17] In the current debate, the operative categories are "civil society" and "legal state": the spontaneous mass mobilisation in solidarity with the four defendants is seen as confirmation of the emergence of a "civil society" in action for a "legal state". The young CPY spoke instead in terms of "working class" and "revolution".

Yet some of the questions raised by the current debate in Slovenia have also confronted the socialist and democratic left in the past - they were certainly present in the 1920s. Can nationalism at certain times play a democratic/progressive role? If so, what implications does this have for forming alliances with the classes/elites in power? Can one have a social/democratic transformation within a single Yugoslav nation without a simultaneous transformation of the kind in Yugoslavia as a whole?

The CPY emerged from its debates in the 1920s and 1930s with the understanding that the national question was a democratic issue of vital importance for the working class and that it had to solved comprehensively. Furthermore, it posited the question of democracy not as an abstract category, but as a concrete problem of organisation and power - hence the party's commitment to a federal arrangement. Indeed, if one surveys the historical record of the CPY on the

national question, its superiority over those of its nationalist and liberal competitors is undeniable. Unlike them, the CPY took as its starting position that nations did not exist as undifferentiated or harmonious entities, but were instead antagonistic totalities. It therefore subsumed the national question, without obliterating it, into the question of self-determination of one segment of the nation: the working class. The national problem in post-revolutionary society therefore emerges as an aspect of the relationship between the state and the class, or - to put it more precisely - as a consequence of the revolution's failure to redefine the national identity and the state in the manner and direction required for the establishment of a new socialist order.

Yugoslavia's multi-national composition, and the consequent federalisation of its state structure, has tended to obscure the class foundation of the state there, hence also the real roots of its current crisis: the political dispossession of the working class - which has guaranteed the political impotence of all other social layers. The Yugoslav bureaucracy has not as yet denied the historic role that the struggles and aspirations of this class have played in revolutionary or democratic (including national) gains at home and abroad. But it has consigned this role firmly to the past. For today, it seems, all is different: the class as such no longer has any positive role to play in society. Instead, the working class has become "labour" (as in the phrase: "we need a market not only in products but also in capital and labour"). No longer treated as the vanguard class, Yugoslav workers have instead become a "problem" in couplets such as: "the unemployment problem", "the problem of industrial restructuring", of "industrial management", etc. Self-management is being quietly buried, without anything in particular being put in its place to stabilise the relationship between the workers and the state. Militant resistance by workers to the government's austerity measures - which have reduced their wages to an existential minimum - is feared by conservatives and liberals alike.

Over these past twelve months, the workers have with increasing frequency been travelling - on foot or in large convoys of buses and trucks - to demonstrate before the Federal Assembly building on Belgrade's Marx-Engels Square. Despite the absence of active support from the intelligentsia, their slogans point to their growing radicalisation.

The legal right to strike has not figured among their demands, doubtless because the workers have already asserted this right in action. Despite this, the Federal authorities have shown a sudden readiness to consider inclusion of the right to strike into forthcoming constitutional amendments. This turnabout, after years of unproductive public debate, ensued after the occupation of the Federal Assembly last June by workers employed in the huge (22,000 workers) rubber and shoe enterprise of "Borovo" in Croatia. Following a 30% cut in their wages (stipulated by the Federal government's austerity measures), 2,000 "Borovo" workers appeared in Belgrade, where they demanded a meeting with Federal officials. After being left waiting for five or six hours in scorching heat to "soften up" prior to the encounter, their patience finally ran out and they pushed past guards to invade the Assembly rooms - a act unprecedented in post-war Europe. Once inside the building, the first thing they encountered was the national mythologies of the Yugoslav nations, embodied in the statues of, respectively, the obscure mediaeval Slovene Prince Kocelj, the equally mediaeval and obscure Croat King Tomislav, the somewhat less obscure (since four centuries later) Serb Emperor Dushan, and finally Alexander Karadjordje, leader of the early 19th century Serb uprising against the Ottomans and perhaps most deserving of inclusion in this national Pantheon. These ancient national totems were erected after World War One - their living equivalents, however, were nowhere to be seen.

Outside the Assembly the "Borovo" workers had been shouting slogans very similar to those voiced only weeks before by workers of the Belgrade truck factory "Zmaj": "Out with the thiefs!", "We want bread!", "Down with the red bourgeoisie!". Entering the Assembly and finding it deserted, their mood became quite ugly. Violence was avoided, however, by the belated appearance from hiding of Jovan Popovski, President of the Federal Assembly, and Nenad Krekic, an ex-manager of "Borovo", who talked to the workers, promising to suspend the wage cuts. In a subsequent interview given to the press, Popovski talked warmly of the need to bring in strike legislation, since not only "it is impossible to reason with workers when they are so enraged", but also such legislation would encourage the workers to limit their activity to their enterprises. If the Constitution is amended to include a right to strike, this will thus be done in a form and manner designed to contain workers' freedom of action. However, given the parlous state of the Yugoslav economy, the immediate effect of such legislation could only be minimal.

The constitutional amendments currently being discussed include also the possibility of a more direct representation of citizens. The Yugoslav bureaucracy has quietly shed its professed earlier quest for a "Yugoslav" socialist democracy, in favour of a search for a "modern" state, "adequate to the demands of the 21st century". However, its problems would only begin here. For the kind of state to which its liberal wing today aspires was constituted historically in the form of a *national* state. Such aspirations thus carry within themselves an impetus towards the transformation of Yugoslavia into a confederation of national states - something which, of course, would be quite unacceptable to many of the Yugoslav nations[18]. It is also the case that the working class shows little interest in such a project. Over the past few years, the Federal Assembly has been visited by striking workers from Macedonia, Kosovo, Serbia, Bosnia and Croatia. But their slogans have included no specifically Macedonian, Albanian, Serb or Croat national demands. The workers have instead denounced their political dispossession as a class, and demanded - in addition to amelioration of their rapidly declining living standards - the removal of those responsible for the country's crisis. Since the real value of workers' wages is continuing to decline drastically, beginning with this autumn the country is set to witness an even more powerful strike wave, possibly culminating in a general strike. In July of this year, police guarding the Federal Assembly buildings were instructed to allow workers to break their cordon - so far an open physical confrontation between the workers and the repressive apparatus of the state has been avoided. It seems that this policy is now under review. There are warnings in the press that, were the policy indeed to change, a "Polonisation" of Yugoslavia would ensue.

The country's republican and provincial leaderships have been trying to coopt their workers by fanning at best a sense of national self-sufficiency and at worst an atmosphere of nationalist revanchism. Herein lies the importance of the debate between Kovac, Mastnak and Kreft. It has come up with some important pointers for the future: the democratic movement must remain independent; it must hegemonise the national question; hence it must be not only Slovene but also Croat, Serb, Albanian, Macedonian, etc - i.e. it must become all-Yugoslav or the rightist offensive will triumph. A "Polonisation" of Yugoslavia would be a catastrophe for the workers as much as for the Yugoslav democratic intelligentsia. An alliance between them would make such an outcome much more difficult.

Footnotes

1.This principle was subsequently endorsed by the Westem Allies, who limited it to Europe only. The Bolsheviks were alone in extending it to the European colonies in Africa and Asia. Their victory in Russia forced the Westem Allies to sanction the break-up of the Habsburg Monarchy, thus ensuring the birth in 1918 of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (later renamed Yugoslavia).

2. Since state bureaucracy needs a national dress (cf. the great problem which 1848 and its aftermath posed in this regard to the Habsburg Imperial-Royal bureaucracy), the Yugoslav unitarists have been trying, unsuccessfully, to construct a Yugoslav nation out of bits of Panslavism, local folklore colour (peasant handicraft, folk poetry, etc.) and, of course, patriotism.

3. Vika Potocnjak, a Slovene delegate to the Federal Assembly, has become something of a Yugoslav heroine following her vigorous defence of the villagers of Vevcani (Macedonia) and Mosevac (Bosnia) against brutal police assaults sponsored by the local politicians. In both cases, popular resistance was organized by members of the Alliance of Socialist Youth, who showed exemplary courage and determination.

4. The Belgrade journal *Duga* recently published a special issue given over to the critics of Branko Horvat's book on the Albanian national question in Yugoslavia (see *Labour Focus*, vol.9, no.2). The cover of the issue carried a portrait of a mediaeval Serbian queen, with the following verses printed at her feet: "They have gouged

out your eyes, beautiful picture!... An Albanian has gouged out your eyes with his knife!". Shkelzen Maliqui, an Albanian intellectual with impeccable anti-nationalist credentials, commented on this lie by referring the reader to the mediaeval local Orthodox custom of using "the holy dust of icons and frescoes to prepare medical potions and amulets". *Danas*, Zagreb, 16 August 1988. The vast majority of the contributors to *Duga* are members of the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences. Not one of them has disassociated himself from the cover or its message - not even such former editors of *Praxis* as Mihailo Markovic and Ljuba Tadic. Branko Horvat's endeavours to initiate an all-Yugoslav rational discussion of the subject has eamed him in the Belgrade press the kind of vilification normally reserved for the country's outright enemies: his competence, personal integrity and motives have all been questioned, in a manner that goes well beyond civilized norms of discourse; while his ethnic origins have been sufficient to tar him him with pro-Ustasha sympathies - this despite the fact that this particular Croat's Yugoslav orientation is well-known and beyond dispute. Branko Horvat was in his early teens when he joined the partisans.

5. See *Labour Focus*, vol.10, no.1.

6. *Mladina*'s attempt to publish relevant sections of this document was stopped by official Slovene intervention. However, they were published in the Zagreb student journal *Polet* and the Belgrade weekly *NIN*. The contents of the leaked minutes were subsequently confirmed in a speech given by Milan Kucan, head of the Slovene party, at a July meeting of the Slovene party's Central Committee.

7. The Military Council is an advisory body (made up exclusively of military personnel) to the Minister of Defence, himself traditionally a soldier.

8. The Military Council stated that in Slovenia there was a "harmonisation of open attacks on the Army by enemies engaged in a special war against Yugoslavia. Their aim was: a) to compromise the military cadre and thus break up the unity of the Army; b) to alienate the youth from military service; c) to prevent cooperation between the YPA and the armed forces of friendly non-aligned countries or national liberation movements" [a reference to Mladina's campaign against arms sales to Ethiopia].

9. Ustashe and Chetniks were Croat and Serb nationalist and anti-communist formations which collaborated with the occupying forces during World War Two and were responsible for mass murders. In a March issue of the Belgrade main daily *Politika*, Mladina was accused of pro-Ustashe sympathies.

10. On this occasion, the delegates from Croatia and Slovenia unsuccessfully moved a vote of no-confidence in the current Yugoslav government.

11. At the conference in question, Mamula sharply criticized tolerance of "enemy activity" in Slovenia, particularly in the independent and semi-official media. Uniquely in eastern Europe, the Yugoslav party is organized in the Army as a separate branch of the LCY, with the right to a seat in the Federal Party Presidency. This has led one prominent Slovene intellectual, Tomaz Mastnak, to conclude that the Army is essentially the armed branch of the party - i.e. that the party and state are not only *de facto* but also *de jure* merged at the most crucial juncture.

12. Stane Dolanc, who enjoys the military's confidence, represents Slovenia at the Federal State Presidency, where he is responsible for liaison with the Army.

13. Janez Jansa was a ASYA functionary in charge of relations with the army (Yugoslav recruits are liable for a call-up as soon as they are 18) who helped to formulate the ASYA position on the Army, including such issues as greater social accountability of the army, opening up military matters to public scrutiny. Thus *Mladina* took a public stand against the sale of arms to Ethiopia and other repressive states in the Third World, against the army's desire to built itself its own supersonic plane, in support of conscientious objection, against traditional military parades on 1 May, for greater national equality in the army, etc. Jansa has a degree in People's Self-Defence, Yugoslavia's unique answer to a standing army.

14. A list of signatories was last published in *Mladina* of 29 July 1988.

15. This is not the first time, of course, that violation of defendants' right to be tried in their own language has taken place in Yugoslavia. The use of Serbo-Croat is quite common in trials of ethnic Albanians - and ethnic Albanians form four-fifths of Yugoslavia's political prisoners.

16. Slobodan is the first name of the Serbian party leader Milosevic, etymologically linked to the word *sloboda* meaning freedom.

17. Various plans to publish *Mladina* and/or other Slovene journals also in Serbo-Croat have so far come to nothing. It is difficult to understand why, given the relatively small costs involved.

18. It would affect, in particular, the rights of the Serb nation, a substantial proportion of which lives outside the Republic of Serbia in the Republics of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia. Like other Yugoslav nations, so also the Serb one is threatened by the rise of nationalism in the country as a whole.

BOOK REVIEWS

Janina Bauman
A Dream of Belonging. My Years in Postwar Poland
Virago

The shameful survival and periodic outbreaks of anti-Semitism in Poland form the tragic backcloth to Janina Bauman's post-war autobiography. Having survived the holocaust she is anxious to emigrate to Israel. Though she acknowledges the brave solidarity of Poles she feels "an unwanted stranger", sensing that surviving Jews are also a painful reminder to some Poles of "a guilty conscience".

The central, terrible irony of the book is that she is dissuaded from Zionism by her future husband, Conrad, a committed socialist, who later becomes a victim of the anti-Semitic purges of the late sixties.

Janina Bauman's story is the perilous rise and shattering fall of an enthusiast. Once decided to stay and make a life in Poland she displays enormous energy and determination. She prospers, as does her academic husband, to whom she overplays the devoted and admiring wife.

The Baumans become part of the upwardly mobile socialist intelligentsia. His academic career blossoms and she finds interesting, rewarding work and promotions in the film industry. Occasional episodes of Stalinist totalitarianism intrude, but give her cause for concern more in retrospect as portents of her own future fate. At the time they do not inhibit her confidence and determination to get on. There is a growing uneasy impression of a remarkably self-centred life. The Polish post-war system is successful, it seems, as long as it provides a context in which the Baumans succeed. Examples of intolerance to others are quoted but do not hold her up; she is remarkably short on solidarity.

Her interesting, lively and rewarding life is shattered when the latent anti-Semitism resurfaces in the wake of the 1967 Arab-Israeli conflict. By then the Gomulka leadership, hailed also by the Baumans in 1956, is running out of steam and credibility. The frustrations and disappointments are channelled by the vicious and ambitious reactionaries around Moczar into anti-Semitism. Some disillusioned and resentful intellectuals are prey to the cynical realisation that there will be more good jobs available if Jews are hounded out. The events then become a growing nightmare of slights, insults, hostility and threats. Janina Bauman who had thought a return to anti-Semitism "unthinkable" now feels "a long-forgotten sense of menace creep into my heart".

There is the devastating realisation that the new Poland in which she had so enthusiastically succeeded and where she "belonged" has not shaken off the crippling blight of racial intolerance. That the spectre of anti-Semitism could so easily be evoked by the politically unscrupulous is a shattering blow.

Janina Bauman writes with vigour, clarity and courage. She has penetrating things to say about life in Britain observed with the East European eye.

Her book tells us little of the causes of anti-Semitism in modern Poland, but recounts vividly the terror of being its victim.

Michael Hindley

Boris Kagarlitsky
The Thinking Reed. Intellectuals and the Soviet State from 1917 to the Present
Verso Books, London 1988, £17.50

Book-length treatments of the Soviet intelligentsia are uncommon in English, even more so when they deal with a political rather than a sociological analysis, Lionel Churchward's "The Soviet Intelligentsia" immediately springing to mind in the latter regard.

This is curious because the intelligentsia is such a marked phenomenon in Russian and Soviet history that the Russian word has been adopted by the English language as a collective description for intellectuals in general. However, the usage of the term in Russian is a much richer one, going beyond simple engagement in mental work to imply a moral and ideological content. The intelligentsia emerged from different social classes, was held together primarily by ideas and, in conditions of repression, communicated its ideas most frequently through the medium of creative literature.

Kagarlitsky develops an historical analysis of the intelligentsia and by locating its activity in relation to other forces constructs a whole analysis of the Soviet social formation. Kagarlitsky uses the term "statocracy" to describe the ruling social stratum which he considers to be analogous to that which existed under the Asiatic Mode of Production. While recognising that Soviet-type societies are non-capitalist and while rejecting "new-class" analyses there does appear to be some room for discussion about the precise character of this formation which Kagarlitsky considers distinct from bureaucracy used, in my opinion, in the too purely sociological sense of a layer of officials. Kagarlitsky's extension of statocracy to social layers observable in non-Soviet societies which are still capitalist, e.g. Mexico, does seem very problematical and detracts from the very specific circumstances of the origins of the Soviet bureaucracy in an isolated post-capitalist society. He also does seem to place too much emphasis on the opposition of culture and bureaucracy thus implying that a

lack of the former was primary in the development of the latter.

These reservations apart, it would be impossible in a review of this length to do justice to the richness of ideas and the incredible depth of sources, in several languages, contained in the book which is divided into two parts. The first, "The Thinking Reed" itself, was completed in 1982 when the author was a mere 24 years old and shortly before his imprisonment for belonging to an organisation of Young Socialists. The volume is rounded off with a collection of material which helps to bring the work up-to-date. Among these are a speech already published in *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*, a chapter on the intelligentsia's reaction and development under Gorbachev which originally appeared in *New Left Review* and an interesting interview with Kagarlitsky by Alexander Cockburn. This shows the rapid development of the young left intelligentsia with their renewed interest in socialist and Marxist theory which has followed on the heels of the failure of the dissent of the 1970's and the opportunities opened up by the Gorbachev period.

This book is an essential document for understanding the foment of ideas in the Soviet Union and I hope it will provide a basis for fruitful discussion between the Soviet and Western lefts.

Sean Roberts

[redacted]

Ronald W. Clark
Lenin. The Man Behind the Mask
Faber and Faber, pp. 564, ill. hb.
£17.95

A tremendous amount of work went into the making of this big and handsome volume; and it is very sad indeed that the author did not live long enough to see it in its finished form and in print. Ronald W. Clark has also to his credit *The Life of Bertrand Russell*, a book on "the life and times" of Einstein, as well as *Freud: The Man and the Cause*. He belongs to the breed of those "allrounders" - "competent biographers" in the genre of the once famous German Emil Ludwig who also wrote on Freud, Masaryk, Lincoln as well as on Jesus and Kaiser Wilhelm. Such admirable versatility testifies to an exceptional ability to collect knowledge which, however, is not always matched by understanding.

Sovietologists will not, of course, look kindly on the work of an author who does not know Russian, who uses only material available in translation, and shows too little discrimination in relying on second and third-hand sources. Clark only feels truly at home when dealing with Western documentation; he is at his best when he relates in great detail the fluctuating attitudes towards Russia among her Western allies in the period of the First World War, during the February upheaval, in October 1917 and during the Civil War. He effectively shows the helpless incomprehension with which the bourgeois governments viewed the phenomenon of a proletarian revolution on an unprecedented scale.

With the introduction of NEP the fear of Russia somewhat abated: the Bolsheviks seemed a little more human because they were prepared to engage in trade and commerce. The belief that "commerce has a sobering influence" and helps to "dispose of wild theories" was expressed in the House of Commons by Lloyd George who found that, after all, Lenin was "a man after his own heart... if he does a little business... a little trading, a little exchange of commodities..." Not without humour Clark recalls that George Lansbury went even further, testifying that the Bolsheviks were "doing what Christians call the Lord's work" and Lenin's life-work was like "that of one of the saints of old".

Russia, devastated by wars, revolutions, allied intervention and barbarous civil, war was not exactly a place where even the most saintly Bolsheviks could be doing what was meant by "the Lord's work". In the chapter entitled "The End of Democracy - Terror" Clark tries his best to convey the full horror of the desperate, tragic and hopeless fate of the young republic's struggle for its very survival.

To the introduction of the New Economic Policy, which was supposed to have tamed the revolution, Clark devotes a justifiable amount of attention, wisely relying on copious quotations from Lenin himself. In our days, the days of Gorbachev's perestroika and the current debate on economic reform in the Soviet Union, these quotations have a curiously topical ring and are of particular interest.

Clark's biography is packed with quotations from works of journalists, politicians, diplomats and historians; it is also full of eyewitness accounts and reminiscences of many who knew Lenin or came into contact with him no matter how casual or brief; there is also a fair share of anecdotes which all make for entertaining reading. But the reader should be warned that as a historical account the book is highly unreliable.

Clark conscientiously notes all Lenin's major works. But he does not tell us what it was that Lenin actually wrote, and so we do not really learn what was his contribution to 20th century thought either as a philosopher, or an economist, or a theoretician of revolutionary Marxism. The man is there but his spirit eludes the biographer.

The portrait which emerges from these pages is not unsympathetic, and Clark manages to convey what was so characteristic in Lenin's personality: his singleness of purpose, his unrelenting straining towards his goal. The subtitle *The Man Behind the Mask* may be intriguing but is on the author's own showing not correct. Right through the narrative we see a man of quite unusual directness to whom any play-acting or histrionics was foreign. On the last page of his book he says that "Lenin under the microscope is remarkably like the public figure that has been painted since the early days of the Revolution". Lenin's undogmatic approach, his political flexibility and ability to "bend with the wind", to "*reculer pour mieux sauter*", to admit defeat and to change tactics has been known to all: to his contemporaries as well as to scholars and historians. It was not a "mask" which Clark has allegedly lifted.

A word should perhaps be said about the new method of dealing with notes: they are all at the end of the book but are not indicated in the text. At what point then are we required to look them up? And it so happens that when the author makes a really startling assertion (for instance, that Trotsky met von Seeckt prior to Rapallo) no reference is supplied at all (no, Trotsky did not meet von Seeckt).

Tamara Deutscher

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