

# *Labour Focus on* **EASTERN EUROPE**

NO. 1/1989 (VOL. 10/NUMBER 3) - £3.50/95

## **LEFT TURN**

*Digest from the journal of the Independent Socialist Clubs in the USSR*

## **REPORT ON ARMENIA**

**BORIS KAGARLITSKII**



## **YUGOSLAVIA** *Will the Centre Hold in 1989?*

*Women's Literature in  
East Germany*

## **DOCUMENTS OF THE POLISH SOCIALIST PARTY**

*Eric Heffer on Thatcher in Poland    Arrests in Prague*

# Labour Focus on EASTERN EUROPE

EDITORIAL 3

## SOVIET UNION

- Interview with Boris Kagarlitskii 4  
Report from Armenia/*Nikolai Osa* 9  
Left Turn - Voice of the Independent Socialist Clubs 15  
The Afanasyev Affair 16  
Public Meeting in Kazan 17  
Popular Front in Estonia  
Public Mandate for the 19th Party Conference 18  
A Political Demonstration in Moscow 21  
The Popular Front 22  
Yeltsin's Speech to the Central Committee 23  
Do we need an atomic power station? 24  
The Democratic Union 25

## POLAND

- Documents of the Polish Socialist Party (Democratic Revolution)  
27  
Mrs. Thatcher is no friend of Solidarity/*Eric Heffer MP* 30

## GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

- The Aesthetics of Resistance. Women's Literature in the GDR  
*Gus Fagan* 31

## CZECHOSLOVAKIA

- Defence campaign for arrested peace activists 46

## YUGOSLAVIA

- Will the Centre Hold in 1989?/*Michele Lee* 38

## BOOK REVIEWS

- 'Forum Polek'/*Lin James* 47  
Tariq Ali, 'Revolution From Above'/*Günter Minnerup* 47

## CONFERENCE

- Gorbachev and the European Left/*Gus Fagan* 48

## Sponsors

Tariq Ali, Edmund Baluka, Syd Bidwell MP, Harry Cohen MP, Mike Davis, Vladimir Derer, Tamara Deutscher, Paul Foot, Peter Grimm, Eric Heffer MP, Michael Hindley MEP, Roland Jahn, György Krassó, Michael Löwy, Ernest Mandel, Zhores Medvedev, István Mészáros, John Palmer, Arshi Pipa, Daniel Singer, Wolfgang Templin, Hillel Ticktin, Hilary Wainwright, Immanuel Wallerstein, David Winick MP.

*Sponsors carry no editorial responsibility for the journal.*

## Editor

Günter Minnerup

## Editorial collective

Barbara Brown, Patrick Camiller, Andrew Csepel, Gus Fagan, Susannah Fry, Victor Haynes, Quintin Hoare, David Holland, Alix Holt, Mark Jackson, Helen Jamieson, Michele Lee, Oliver MacDonald, Anca Mihailescu, Adam Novotny, Anna Paczuska (*Reviews*), Sean Roberts, Peter Thompson, Claude Vancour, *West Berlin* Traude Ratsch, *Paris* Catherine Verla

## STATEMENT OF AIMS

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

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

Signed articles do not necessarily represent editorial views, nor does publication of a document from Eastern Europe imply our agreement with its contents.

## Editorial address

Labour Focus on Eastern Europe  
P.O. Box 128  
Southsea, Hants  
PO4 OTT

## Subscriptions

Harper & Row Distributors Ltd.  
Estover  
Plymouth PL6 7PZ

## Subscription rates

(three issues per annum)  
U.K. and Europe: £12 (individuals), £25 (institutions).  
Overseas (airmail) £15 (individuals), £29.50 (institutions).

## Publisher's address

Berg Publishers Limited  
77 Morrell Avenue  
Oxford OX4 1NQ  
England  
Telephone (0865) 245104

© Berg Publishers and *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe* 1988

ISSN 0141-7746



Printed by Short Run Press Ltd.,  
Exeter, England.

# LOOKING AHEAD

The year 1989 promises to be the most momentous in the history of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe for a very long time. Up to now, the changes brought about by Gorbachev's perestroika and its ramifications beyond the frontiers of the USSR have been gradual, largely atmospheric and in the main been kept well within the control of the CPSU leadership. But all the while, the pressures and conflicts have been building up and much of the General Secretary's reformism has increasingly assumed the appearance of nervous crisis management.

There is, above all, the explosive issue of the restless non-Russian nationalities. The terrible tragedy of the Armenian earthquake has temporarily taken the spotlight off Nagorno-Karabakh, but the signs are that in the long term, the disaster (and its inept handling by the Soviet authorities) may have deepened the sense of injustice among Armenians. The decision to put Nagorno-Karabakh under *de facto* direct rule from Moscow seems to have come much too late to stem the tide of Armenian nationalism. Too late or not, however, it is the failure of the Gorbachev leadership to apply consistently *democratic* criteria to the issue which has deepened the widespread mistrust of Moscow's intentions.

But Armenia is not, of course, the only serious national question confronting Gorbachev. Indeed, the list seems to be lengthening all the time: first Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania; then Byelorussia, Georgia and Moldavia; and next the Ukraine? Unless the CPSU leadership can come up with a nationalities policy firmly based on the principles of equality and democracy, it is inevitable that one or more of these flashpoints will set into motion a dynamic which could seriously threaten either the integrity of the Soviet state or the survival of the Gorbachev leadership - or both. Neither the break-up of the Soviet Union nor the replacement of Gorbachev by some authoritarian, Great Russian alternative is, of course, a development to be desired by socialists, but this should not tempt us to take a stance *against* the justified demands articulated by the national movements in the various Soviet republics - on the contrary, it is only by championing the causes of democracy and self-determination against the bureaucratic wavering in the Kremlin that we can help avoid those dangers. Beginning with the next issue, *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe* will carry a series of articles analysing in depth the various national questions in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and their implications for the cause of socialism.

Beyond the frontiers of the USSR, the signs are that the relative calm in Eastern Europe which has marked the first years of Gorbachev's leadership is coming to an end. The unrest in Czechoslovakia signals the failure of the attempt by Husak's successors to restrict the meaning of *prestavba* to drives for increased economic efficiency, and *Pravda's* hostile coverage of the demonstrations in Prague's Wenceslas Square betray the nervous edginess in Moscow over any destabilisation of any of its East European allies. For contrary to some unrealistic expectations, the CPSU leadership has not shown

any great zeal in exporting democratisation: the ripple effect of Krushchev's de-Stalinisation in 1956 is still an unsettling memory for many Soviet reformers. Yet it may not be possible for Gorbachev to live much longer with the Jakeses and Honeckers if their attempts to hold the line against the increasing pressures from below drives them into ever more glaring contradiction with the letter and spirit of CPSU policy. The effective suppression of the German-language Soviet magazine *Sputnik* by the GDR authorities and the international embarrassment caused by the baton charges, arrests and trials in Prague in the run-up to the Moscow Human Rights conference may force Gorbachev into a more aggressive interventionism into the internal affairs of the fraternal parties.

Poland, too, is entering into a new stage. Both the party and the opposition appear deeply split over Jaruzelski's desperate attempt to forge some kind of new deal with the Catholic hierarchy and those sections of *Solidarnosc* and the intellectual opposition most closely aligned with the bishops. The big question is whether Walesa can deliver his side of the bargain: a new upsurge of working class militancy against the austerity drive behind all the economic reform rhetoric could bypass the old *Solidarnosc* guard and blow away the carefully constructed house of cards around the General's "national reconciliation".

1989 could indeed be the year of the working class in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. From Armenia to Yugoslavia, from Poland to Romania, it has been the power of workers' strike action that has shaken the establishment more than any number of dissident manifestos. As the economic reforms begin to bite, more workers are going to be driven into resistance to attempts to solve the crisis at the expense of their living standards and social welfare; and as the intellectual ferment and bureaucratic liberalism loosen the straitjacket of repressive atomisation and confidence is gained through the taste of action, new political currents with a genuine mass base will emerge.

Finally, 1989 also sees a new administration in the United States. The connection between the inauguration of George Bush and the build-up of explosive pressures in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe may not be immediately obvious. But already the new strong man in the White House, Chief of Staff Baker, has announced his determination to curb Gorbomania in the West. Washington is not going to help Gorbachev out of any political and economic crises, it will try to exploit them in its drive to weaken the Warsaw Pact and reassert its hegemony over Western Europe. The coincidence of crisis in the East and American pressure from the West, demands increased vigilance of the West European Left if it is not unwittingly to play into the hands of various unsavoury political forces in Washington or Moscow, London or Bonn. More than ever, it will need to start seizing the political initiative in Western Europe, and to build links with Eastern Europe, in the run-up to the new decade.

Günter Minnerup

# "POWER TO THE SOVIETS' MEANS SEPARATING THEM FROM THE PARTY"

## Interview with Boris Kagarlitskii

### Introduction

The period leading up to the 19th Party Conference (June 28 - July 1, 1988) was one of increased public political activity for the independent left groups in the USSR. In Moscow, the independent groups issued a "Public Mandate to the Party Conference", which was a set of alternative theses drawn up at two one-day conferences held in early June. The "Mandate" details a programme of political reform far more radical than anything proposed at the Party Conference: the removal of the Communist Party from all governmental functions and the transfer of power to the Soviets; the election of Soviets through genuinely free elections, rather than placing them under Communist Party tutelage as outlined at the Conference; the right of independent political associations to put forward candidates and alternative platforms at elections; open access for the independent groups to the media and the right to set up independent publications; broader rights for national minorities; and the introduction of political democracy in the management of enterprises, with power invested in democratically-elected Councils of Labour Collectives.

At the same time the independent socialist groups took steps to establish a united front organisation, known as the "Popular Front", which, as Boris Kagarlitskii describes in his interview, has not only brought together already-existing groups, but has actually begun to set up branches where members affiliate directly to the Popular Front.

The summer also saw a sharp increase in popular protest. The mass demonstrations, meetings, and strikes in Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh, and Azerbaijan over the issue of whether or not Nagorno-Karabakh would be transferred from Azerbaijan to Armenia, were the most dramatic example. However questionable may be the respective nationalist demands of the Armenians or Azerbaijanis, the fact is that a very large section of people have learned an important lesson in the *politics of mass struggle*, a lesson which other sections of the Soviet population - and, most importantly, the working class - will hopefully be quick to absorb and turn to their own advantage. But these were not the only signs of mass protest. Demonstrations and

protest meetings took place in cities across the USSR over the arbitrary and authoritarian way in which local and regional Party committees selected delegates to the Party Conference. In addition to the protests cited by Boris Kagarlitskii, 7,000 people held a semi-spontaneous demonstration and protest meeting in Omsk, a large industrial town of about half a million people in Western Siberia. In many of these protests the demonstrators were "bought off" fairly easily, with promises from local Party bosses to use more democratic procedures next time. But this does not take away the fact that people throughout the USSR are getting used to voicing their discontent through mass meetings and demonstrations, and even strikes, rather than as isolated, powerless individuals.

The Soviet authorities, at both local and national level, were uncertain how to handle such protests. In Moscow, following the protests of the Crimean Tartars in Red Square last winter, the Executive Committee of the Moscow City Soviet had issued a set of "Temporary Regulations", officially banning demonstrations in the city. However, when the independent groups began holding public demonstrations outside the *Izvestia* building, adjacent to Pushkin Square, at the end of May, the police did not at first intervene. The groups and the police reached an informal agreement that the demonstrations could take place for one hour on Saturday afternoons, followed by informal discussions in the square. For three weeks the police honoured this agreement. Then on Saturday, 18 June, they attempted to break up the demonstration, not on the grounds that it was illegal according to the "Temporary Regulations", but on the grounds that the Regulations forbade placards and banners! Over successive Saturdays police harassment of the demonstrations became heavier, with several arrests, until the independent groups decided to cut their losses by transforming the protests into "public discussions", which were not illegal (and where no banners or placards were displayed).

The crackdown in Moscow was at least partly the result of a political conflict between the independent groups and the head of the Moscow City Soviet, Saikov. On Friday, 17 June, Saikov, who is a noted

hardliner, held a "pre-Conference" meeting at which he did not accept discussions from the floor. Several members of the left groups were in the audience and tried to raise various points, but Saikov's only response was to denounce them as "anarchists" and have some of them ejected by the police. The next day the police, who are under Saikov's jurisdiction, began harassing the Pushkin Square demonstrations. This is not, however, the total explanation. "Temporary Regulations" banning demonstrations began cropping up in cities across the USSR. In Minsk, the capital of Byelorussia, the Regulations were permanent. Finally, at the end of the summer the Soviet government issued nationwide restrictions, formally banning "anti-Soviet" demonstrations. The use of the term "anti-Soviet" gives local political authorities a wide leeway for deciding which protests they will harass and which they will tolerate.

One thing is certain, however. The Soviet authorities, at least up until now, have been far more cautious in their treatment of truly mass protests, such as the strikes in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, than in their handling of small protests by the left-wing groups, whom the authorities see as having only a limited social base. In this there is a lesson. The left groups in the USSR must have as their long-range project the development of broad, organic contacts with Soviet workers, who themselves are showing signs - albeit haphazardly and sporadically - of re-appropriating the traditions of mass struggle.

### Vic Graham

*There have been three major events for the independent groups during the run-up to the 19th Party Conference. There was first the petition campaign and the demonstrations in Pushkin Square, secondly the meetings of the 5th of June and the 12th of June to draft a common appeal to the Party Conference, and thirdly there has been the attempt to form the Popular Front. People in the West are unlikely to know much about any of these developments. I would like to take them each in turn. First, let's take the demonstrations in Pushkin Square.*

Probably we will not begin with the

demonstrations in Pushkin Square, because that happened after the drafting of the Public Mandate. Well you know, there was a lot of enthusiasm in this society about the Party Conference, especially after the criticism in *Pravda* of the Stalinist article of Nina Andreyeva in March, which was considered to be a kind of manifesto for the Stalinist reaction. People were quite sure that that was not unprepared, that that was probably the first step towards normalisation. So after that, when *Pravda* began to criticise Nina Andreyeva as being a kind of real political danger against which the Party must mobilise itself, and so on, people, especially intellectuals, of course liberal intellectuals, became very happy and there was a lot of enthusiasm, even a kind of euphoria, before the Party Conference, so that people were quite sure that the Party Conference would be a big step forward for perestroika - although the people on the left, for example, the left-wing groups, the socialist, marxist groups, were very skeptical about that. But anyway, the general mood was very enthusiastic. And finally, the people wanted to see who would be the delegates for the conference and the draft proposals for the conference. When the draft proposals were published, people were quite disappointed, because they were very general, without any concrete details about the democratic changes and so on, and that produced a lot of protests. And then there were also the so-called elections to the Conference, which were not elections but rather selections because delegates were not elected by Party members but rather selected by the Party district and more generally by the Party *oblast* committee. So those two disappointments against all that euphoric background were very important in producing a lot of grass roots activism - not only in Moscow, but also in Sakhalin, Astrakhan, Sverdlovsk, Kuibyshev, and so on. There were demonstrations in Kuibyshev - about 30,000 people went to the streets to protest against the names they read in the list of delegates, because these people were well-known bureaucrats and Stalinists in the city, and all the population knew them as being quite anti-perestroika. In Sakhalinsk there were strikes against the local Party leadership during the preparation of the Party Conference. Also in Astrakhan there were demonstrations and protests. There were a lot of small events like that in different parts of the country. In Sverdlovsk the workers wanted to adopt Yeltsin as their delegate to the Party Conference. There were big meetings of workers in enterprises. So people became active.

In Moscow people were less active and they had more illusions so there was, of course, some struggle to get some popular liberal figures like Afanasyev to the Party Conference. For example, once he was dropped by the Party authorities at the district level, there were small student revolts at the Historical-Archival Institute (the institute which trains archivists and which Afanasyev

heads, V.G.) and at some other places where students asked the authorities to place Afanasyev on the so-called central list. And that was finally done, although it didn't change anything in the real process of decision-making.

Anyway, in Moscow the groups were mostly concentrating on criticising the Theses (the Central Committee Theses for the Party Conference, V.G.). To criticise the Theses, to make some kind of alternative, there were two meetings in June, organised, by the way, officially. It seems that there were some official liberals who were also disappointed by the Theses and probably thought that the Theses did not do enough to satisfy their own views and positions, so they gave a hall to the left-wing groups for that criticism. They were interested in getting some criticism from the left, probably to push the very conservative wing and to gain some concessions from it.

And finally the so-called alternative theses, or Public Mandate, were where people tried to make concrete demands on changing the electoral system, on changing the legal system, and changing the laws which, for example, discriminate against minorities, abolishing Clause 5 on documents, where you must write down your nationality. We say this is quite discriminatory, because if somebody knows your nationality he can discriminate against you on the basis of this knowledge. If you're simply a citizen, why should anybody be interested in your nationality? It's your own identity problem, nothing more. So we ask to have this Clause 5 abolished from all documents, to prevent the authorities from forcing people obligatorily to tell their nationality, their national identity.

And so there were a lot of concrete proposals of different kinds: to change the educational systems, to have free elections to



BORIS KAGARLITSKII

the local Soviets; there was a problem that we must first elect local Soviets democratically and then have the Congress of Soviets in the best revolutionary tradition. All that was in our document, prepared at that time. And finally, there was an idea that the prepared draft, the alternative Theses, was good enough to become a kind of basis for a new political organisation of the left, uniting most of the left-wing groups who signed the Theses. We already had a Federation of the Socialist Clubs, which was an important step towards the unity of the left. But we wanted to have broader unity and to have some kind of mass organisation speaking for the people and to the people. So there appeared the idea that we must transform the Federation into a kind of Popular Front. At the same time there was also the situation where people are beginning to speak to a wider audience, because there was a lot of agitation among people. So the idea was that we must now not only discuss our positions in *samizdat*, and not only ask the official press to publish some pieces or our documents, because we were absolutely dependent on the official press and dependent on our own technical backwardness, because we were not able to compete with the official press. So the only way to make our ideas known to the people was simply to go to the streets. That was the reason for the demonstrations. Those were demonstrations just informing people about preparations for the creation of the Popular Front. There was an organising committee formed, and it began to popularise itself by organising demonstrations and picket lines and so on.

There was, of course, some pressure on the organising committee. It seems that the militia was quite confused, because on the one hand, they were not told that we were criminals and anti-Soviets, and they were not told that we must be repressed; on the other hand, they were not told that we were so good as to be defended, so they were quite confused. They did not know whether to disperse those demonstrations or, on the contrary, to defend them.

*The police first started to harass and break up the demonstrations on the 18th June, nine days before the Party Conference. Why do you think this happened, and who do you think was responsible for the decision suddenly to enforce the so-called Temporary Regulations in Moscow?*

It seems that all the major factions of officialdom considered that the left-wing groups had gone too far. I think that, on the one hand, the conservatives were quite angry, and it seems that the liberal groups were a bit embarrassed, considering that the left was breaking the rules, because they had wanted the left to be their loyal supporters. Radical, yes; critical, yes; but loyal supporters. Here it seems that the left-wing groups were taking their own initiatives, were trying to establish new regulations as a *fait accompli*, without

prior permission as we say in Russian. That was unacceptable even for the liberal groups in the bureaucracy because we were not consulting about our decisions with anybody. We became too independent for their taste. One group probably wanted to destroy us, the other group was a little bit angry about us, so they were not very interested in defending us. There was a period of real pressure on the groups, some people were detained, they were released.

### How many people?

First we had 12 people detained on June 18, later there were more, but all have been released. But, on the other hand, I must stress that this cannot be treated seriously as a kind of repression, but rather as a kind of pressure. Because we know what happened when the authorities really wanted to repress somebody in this country. It's not the case. They simply wanted to show us the limits, and especially before the Party Conference. It means that the liberals and conservatives finally reached some kind of agreement, some kind of deal. They didn't want the left any longer to intervene and to break their compromise.

Let's move on to the issue of the Popular Front. You've described the main aims of the alliance. Now the basic document laying out the aims of the alliance and the conditions for joining the Popular Front still hasn't reached its final form or been approved. In fact, there have been a lot of differences among the independent groups over the document and the future of the Popular Front. Can you explain as objectively as you can, since obviously your own political organisation has its own views, what the major disagreements have been about?

Well it's very easy to explain. I think the major disagreements were not political but psychological, although they were immediately transformed into a kind of political disagreement. The political disagreement on the surface was that some groups, either so-called democratic groups - not socialist-democratic, but simply democratic groups - said we want to get rid of the word "socialism" from all the draft documents. Unexpectedly they were supported by the anarchist-populist groups like *Obshchina*, which supported the idea of eliminating the word "socialism". I think the major reason was psychological, because both of those groups were really afraid of us creating a kind of homogenous and more organised Front. A Front, which is not a loose federation of separate groups, in which everybody has their own political platform, but a kind of real united organisation - maybe not in the Leninist terms, of course, and of course not centralist, but more united and more efficient. Those groups were not prepared to work in such a united organisation. They wanted to preserve not only their autonomy, which is guaranteed by the

## В Красноярском городском Совете народных депутатов

# РЕШЕНИЕ

21.06.88

О порядке проведения митингов, демонстраций, уличных шествий и других массовых мероприятий в г. Красноярске

В целях обеспечения порядка, безопасности и соблюдения интересов населения города Красноярск Совет народных депутатов принял следующее решение:

1. Проведение митингов, демонстраций, уличных шествий и других массовых мероприятий в г. Красноярске допускается только в соответствии с требованиями законодательства РСФСР.
2. Митинги, демонстрации, уличные шествия и другие массовые мероприятия должны проводиться в специально отведенных для этих целей местах.
3. Проведение митингов, демонстраций, уличных шествий и других массовых мероприятий не должно нарушать общественный порядок, безопасность и интересы населения.
4. Участники митингов, демонстраций, уличных шествий и других массовых мероприятий должны соблюдать требования законодательства РСФСР.
5. Проведение митингов, демонстраций, уличных шествий и других массовых мероприятий не должно нарушать общественный порядок, безопасность и интересы населения.

## Время

По организационным и иным мероприятиям в других обществах

### I. ОБЩИЕ ПОЛОЖЕНИЯ

1. Митинги, демонстрации, уличные шествия и другие массовые мероприятия проводятся в специально отведенных для этих целей местах.
2. Митинги, демонстрации, уличные шествия и другие массовые мероприятия должны проводиться в соответствии с требованиями законодательства РСФСР.
3. Проведение митингов, демонстраций, уличных шествий и других массовых мероприятий не должно нарушать общественный порядок, безопасность и интересы населения.

### II. ПОРЯДОК РЕШЕНИЯ

1. Разрешение на проведение митингов, демонстраций, уличных шествий и других массовых мероприятий выдается в установленном порядке.
2. В случае нарушения общественного порядка, безопасности и интересов населения проведение митингов, демонстраций, уличных шествий и других массовых мероприятий должно быть немедленно прекращено.
3. За нарушение общественного порядка, безопасности и интересов населения виновные лица могут быть привлечены к ответственности.

### III. ПОРЯДОК ПРОВЕДЕНИЯ МЕРОПРИЯТИЙ

1. Организаторы мероприятий должны обеспечить соблюдение требований законодательства РСФСР.
2. Участники мероприятий должны соблюдать требования законодательства РСФСР.
3. Проведение мероприятий не должно нарушать общественный порядок, безопасность и интересы населения.

## Полемтарин юриста

Полемтарин юриста... (The text is very dense and partially obscured by the image, but it appears to be a commentary or legal analysis.)

documents, but also it seems a kind of independence in political decision-making at all levels. For them the united front as a real united front was unacceptable, and they wanted to turn it into a loose federation. That's why the anarcho-populists realigned with the so-called "liberal right" of the left, so to speak, the groups which are democratic but not socialist.

### How many organisations are now in the Popular Front?

In Moscow, twenty-two now. But the number is changing almost every day and is growing, because there were eighteen organisations which originally formed the united front, the Popular Front. Then five of them left because of the disagreement over socialism, and now we have twenty-two. So it means that in Moscow nine new groups have joined. But the most interesting thing is that there are already a few branches of the Popular Front, meaning they are not joining any group in particular but they are joining the Popular

Front and establishing united branches of the Popular Front, which I think is our major perspective. It is more important than pulling the groups together, because if you want a real united organisation you finally have to drop most of that trash about separate groups. You can have those groups merely as either functional organisations inside the Front or tendencies of opinion, some kind of political tendencies, but not as separate groupings. That's why it's very important that people are forming united branches.

### How would voting take place in that situation, because in Moscow votes at Popular front meetings take place by organisation, each organisation having one vote?

But united branches will have their own votes also. I only wanted to say that the groups which have left the organising committee immediately began to establish their relations with the authorities, although the Popular Front is also trying to get some kind of legal relations with the authorities.

But those groups were immediately trying to establish relations with different branches of officialdom, which were quite angry about the creation of the Popular Front, so they were trying to be rewarded for leaving the Popular Front.

*Let's move on to the Party Conference. Socialists in the West will obviously want to know how independent socialists here in the USSR viewed the Conference. First, what was your general impression of what happened at the Conference?*

First of all, I think it was very interesting as a political discussion. For the first time we saw a kind of open political discussion on TV between our leaders. So, from the point of view of political education, showing who is who in the party, the conference was important. But I think that was its major importance.

*In terms of what you just said, what was the political significance of the conference in terms of showing possible differences within the leadership of the Communist Party?*

Well, we always knew about those differences, but those were rumours and now we can judge ourselves how serious they are. By the way, it seems that sometimes the differences are exaggerated. The liberals are sometimes less liberal than we supposed, and the conservatives are sometimes less conservative than we supposed. So, for some people it was a disillusionment. They thought that the differences were wider.

*Boris Yeltsin in his speech sharply criticised the proposal to make Party First Secretaries the heads of the local Soviets. Now, I want to come back to the so-called Yeltsin Affair later in the interview. Right now I want just to take up Yeltsin's point on this particular issue. Was this proposal simply a product of sloppy thinking by Gorbachev, or perhaps a political compromise between different factions in the party leadership, or does it have a more dangerous political significance?*

First of all I am quite sure that it is a result of a political compromise, because such things can't be invented in a few days. It seems that it is a very high and dangerous price paid by the liberals for their slogan "Power to the Soviets". The conservatives said "Okay, let's give power to the Soviets, but let's fuse the Party with the Soviets then". And by the way it was Mironenko, First Secretary of the Komsomol, who made it quite clear. He said during his discussion with people from the Popular Front organising committee, including Maljutin. When Maljutin began to criticise that idea of fusing party and soviet power, Mironenko answered: Well, the real power is that of the party. If you want to give the soviets real power you must simply fuse them with the power because this is the easiest administrative

decision. Maljutin responded: Okay, it is the easiest administrative decision, I think that despotism is always the easiest administrative decision ever possible. So I think this is the price, and I think the price is too high for that slogan, because if you want to give real power to the soviets you must separate them from the party, not vice versa. I think that Yeltsin gained a lot of support both among the people and in the party rank-and-file just because he was courageous enough to say openly that he disagrees with those proposals which were, by the way, not even in the Theses. They were quite unprepared in that sense.

*Before going on to the Yeltsin affair, just one further question on the conference. Did anything at all positive come out of the conference from the point of view of the aims of the independent groups?*

I think there was an important step forwards towards legal reform, which is important. You can't say that we'll have a state based on law immediately after having those reforms implemented. I am not sure about that. But it seems that it is a step forward anyway, because at last we'll have an attempt to make laws less contradictory, which will create fewer possibilities for despotism of the local bureaucrats. Although, nevertheless, it won't eliminate the despotism at all; it will continue to exist, though under different conditions.

*Let's now go back to Boris Yeltsin. His speech received quite a bit of attention, not just in the Western media but here in the USSR as well. It was one of the main topics of conversation amongst politically interested people, at least here in Moscow and I assume elsewhere. There was also the speech of Baklanov, the editor of Znamya. His speech was also hard-hitting and received a very hostile reception from the delegates. In fact, on several occasions Gorbachev had to intervene to restore order and to plead with the delegates to let Baklanov finish. Now, what were the main criticisms levied by Yeltsin and Baklanov, and what was the political significance of the attack against them?*

I'd like to add Abalkin's speech to this list. I think there were three important speeches. Leonid Abalkin, academician from the Institute of Economics. That was a very important speech saying that the original concept of economic perestroika is not working and that we must rethink the concept of perestroika. By the way, more generally about Abalkin. He is considered to be a sort of Scandinavian-style social democrat, which is, by Soviet standards, far to the left of mainstream reformist thinking which is quite monetarist in its mainstream image. And that's why Abalkin is very often criticised for going too far to the left on this point, to that damned social-democratic experience, while we must

follow the American experience. People speak quite openly: when they have discussions amongst scholars, most of the scholars always operate with American Reaganomics and the Thatcherite experience as an example of a good reshaping of a country, of what must be done with our perestroika. As a good example of perestroika we have the Thatcherite economy in Britain. And Abalkin is always critical of that and that's why he's a complete outsider in mainstream establishment economic thinking. He was also wildly attacked by different delegates just for saying that we must think about the limits of democratisation under the one-party system, and about the limits of the current project of economic reform.

Baklanov's case was more specific because one of the reasons he was so angrily interrupted was his publication in *Moscow News*, where he announced from the very beginning, before the Conference, that he would speak critically of the Conference. So the audience was very angry to see him on the platform, from the very beginning, even before he began to speak. That was the major psychological reason, I think, for that situation; while some people also explain that he is Jewish and he was probably one of the only two Jews who were able to speak during the conference. But you can neither prove or disprove this fact because you can't go to speak to each of the delegates at the conference asking "Do you like him as a Jew or not?" But it seems that Baklanov simply became a kind of hate figure for the conservative mafia in Moscow, for being Jewish, open-minded, aggressive. And that was not because of his speech but because of his personality.

And Yeltsin, well that's the most important figure because Yeltsin is having a lot of popular sympathy and is becoming a kind of popular hero. Although he's always severely criticised, the more he's criticised the more popular support he gets, because people like those who are defending the truth, even against the current. So he's a kind of against-the-current figure, and for Russian political psychology it's very important to have such a figure. He's a kind of mythological hero already, he's a kind of lover of the truth.

Ø

*Is this reputation deserved politically, in terms of his political ideas?*

I think that Yeltsin doesn't have any kind of political project or political concept. He has a lot of progressive political ideas and he's quite honest. He's probably one of the most honest people in the hierarchy, the establishment. So it seems that he deserves this reputation by his honesty, although I don't think there is some kind of "Yeltsinism", or anything like that. You can speak of Trotskyism, or maybe even Gorbachevism, but not about Yeltsinism. Although it seems that there is a kind of liberal, left-wing populism in his ideas, even a radical

left-wing populism.

*At the conference he very strongly attacked party privileges and the attacks on the press.*

Yes, that's the major point. He's for justice, for more equality. While most of the perestroika liberals want to have more social differentiation, Yeltsin, on the contrary, says that we must have less social differentiation, more justice and more equality and more freedom at the same time. So that makes him popular.

*His enemies, of course, accuse him of being very authoritarian while he was the Party Secretary in Moscow. Is this true?*

Well, it seems that he is authoritarian, but

you see the whole style of party work under Brezhnev, Andropov and later was quite authoritarian. So he's the product of that epoch. He's one of the best products of this epoch.

*And one last question. What do you see coming out of the party conference in terms of political and economic changes in the Soviet Union, and what will be the main tasks in the immediate future for the independent groups?*

I think that to some extent the Popular Front will be the best by-product of the party conference, if it manages to survive. But I think in any case that the future of the country is not decided by the party conference or conferences in principle. It's the

power struggle inside of the bureaucracy and inside the society which will determine the future of the country. And I think that it's very important to prevent the power struggle from being limited to the bureaucratic establishment. One of their major privileges is the privilege of political decision-making. So one of the major points for the popular left-wing movement is to finish with this specific political privilege and to make political decision-making a case for the people.

*The interviewer for Labour Focus, on 18 July 1988, was Vic Graham.*



**FOR OVER TEN YEARS NOW  
LABOUR FOCUS  
HAS COVERED EVENTS  
AND DEVELOPMENTS  
IN THE SECOND WORLD  
FROM  
A SOCIALIST VIEWPOINT.**



**COPIES OF MOST ISSUES  
ARE STILL AVAILABLE  
TO ORDER. FOR AN  
INDEXED PRICE LIST,  
WRITE TO:**

**LABOUR FOCUS ON EASTERN EUROPE  
Back Issues Dept.  
P.O. Box 128  
Southsea, Hants.  
PO4 OTT  
ENGLAND**



Yerevan at the end of August this year. A month has passed since the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet announced the "Armenian and Azerbaijani Supreme Soviets' resolution on the question of Nagorno-Karabakh" - after which the mass strikes (though not meetings) were called off. So what is happening now in Armenia?

NIKOLAI OSA  
**REPORT  
FROM  
ARMENIA**

**Y**ou won't find answers to this in the press or on television, only from first-hand accounts - from people living in Yerevan and other Armenian cities, from members of "Karabakh" (official leaders, as usual, were not available) and from "Dadzibao", posted up in Yerevan's "Hyde Park". These tell us things that have not appeared in the national press, but which everyone knows about in Armenia. So far, no one has refuted them, but if anyone can disprove any of the facts described here, they should do so publicly, since most Armenians accept them.

I'll begin with the crux of the problem.

### The problem of Nagorno-Karabakh

From a legal standpoint, the problem in Armenia is this:

Nagorno-Karabakh is an autonomous region, with legally constituted boundaries and under the control of the Azerbaijani Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR). The vast majority of its population (75%) is of a different ethnic group from the main Azerbaijani SSR nationality. According to the 1979 census, there are 160,000 people in Nagorno-Karabakh, of whom 76% are Armenian. Under article 70 of the Soviet Constitution, which guarantees the right of nations to self-determination, the population of a region has the right to decide which Republic shall govern it (this guarantee is standard international law, and is recognised by the USSR in many international agreements). Secondly, if, as in this case, the region decides to withdraw from control by Azerbaijan, this does not contravene Article 78 of the Constitution, since it does not affect the boundaries of Azerbaijan. However, the USSR Supreme Soviet's interpretation of Article 78 would mean there are two mutually contradictory articles in the Constitution - making it unviable.

This needs to be pointed out, if only because the entire official press, as well as the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet (in the best Brezhnevite tradition) keep silent about Article 70 while continually quoting Article

78. Their failure to confront the problem seems to indicate not that we are moving towards a state based on the rule of law (as the Party promises us) but that they want to preserve the status quo at all costs. They are afraid of any challenge to it, albeit legal, in case they cannot deal with the consequences.

It is interesting that the national press report of the USSR Supreme Soviet meeting does not mention the arguments used by the Presidium of the Armenian Supreme Soviet President, Voskanyan, and the Nagorno-Karabakh District Committee First Secretary, Pogosyan. Since, in trying to find a legal solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh problem, these comrades used the very same Article 70 that the press themselves keep quoting. A more dignified solution would have been for the USSR Supreme Soviet to have acknowledged the people of Nagorno-Karabakh's right to self-determination, at the same time asking them (and I mean ask) to wait at least one to two years before exercising that right, in order to repair all the damage of the past. I think this request would have been met, as is clear from the Nagorno-Karabakh Regional Executive Committee decision of 24 August ending the second stage of the struggle. This second stage began on 20th February, the first on 5th July 1921. We know why the first stage lasted so long, but now six months have passed and the second stage needs to be discussed and analysed. After all, under democratic conditions (real, and not just talked about) everything could be decided in a few weeks, which would help central government a great deal both politically and economically.

How did the problem of Nagorno-Karabakh arise?

### Historical background

The history of Nagorno-Karabakh is outlined in a historical account published by the Armenian Academy of Science for the 19th Party Conference. It was planned to distribute this to everyone at the Conference, but the Armenian Communist Party leadership vetoed it.

Tsarism was not bothered about national interests or rights. As a result, all the territories of the Caucasus were divided up into five districts (*gubernias*), regardless of national boundaries and structures. Nagorno-Karabakh was more or less incorporated into the Elizavetpolski *gubernia*.

After the 1917 revolution, and the formation of bourgeois governments in the Caucasus, the Mussavat regime in Azerbaijan tried to seize Nagorno-Karabakh, but met with armed resistance from the population. "Karabakh and Zangezour do not recognise the Azerbaijani regime", Kirov wrote to Lenin on 3rd June 1919.

In April 1920, after the victory of Soviet power in Azerbaijan, G.N. Narimanov (Chairman of the Azerbaijani Committee of People's Soviets) tried to include Karabakh in the new Republic, but was sharply opposed by Lenin and Chicherin, who preferred occupation of the region by Soviet Russian troops to handing it over to Azerbaijan. A resolution of the Politburo of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) Central Committee (on 7th July 1920) stated that the disputed territory was temporarily occupied by Russian troops to prevent inter-regional bloodshed, and that its control would be decided by a joint commission under Russian chairmanship, "to be guided by the ethnic composition and wishes of the population".

Soviet power was established in Armenia on 29th November 1920, and on 1st December the Azerbaijani Revolutionary Committee declared it was withdrawing from the territorial dispute with Armenia. However, six months later, Narimanov defied this decision and demanded Nagorno-Karabakh be controlled by Azerbaijan. As a result, on 4th July 1921, a plenum of the Caucasian Bureau of the RCP (B) Central Committee was convened, at which a majority voted for Nagorno-Karabakh to remain under Armenian control. Narimanov then demanded the issue be referred back to the RCP (B) Central Committee. This was agreed, but next day, on 5th July, under pressure from Stalin and

without any discussion, the Bureau decided to place Nagorno-Karabakh under Azerbaijani control. So the issue was never re-examined by the RCP (B) Central Committee. On 16th July the Armenian CP Central Committee passed a resolution rejecting the Caucasian Bureau's decision.

These are the roots of the present crisis.

## Who benefits from delaying a decision?

At a meeting of the USSR Supreme Soviet, M.S. Gorbachev suggested that corrupt clans in Armenia and Azerbaijan had an interest in exploiting the situation around Nagorno-Karabakh. But he produced no evidence in support. Armenians agree with the gist of this (though in Armenia it only happened right at the beginning), but would nevertheless add: "Before talking about corrupt clans in the Caucasus, Mikhail Sergeyevich should put his own house in order". This is a view corroborated by T. Gdlyan's statement that "There is no such thing as the Uzbekh affair" - the threads from Uzbekhistan stretch to the Caucasus, to Moldavia and to Moscow.

A. Vaksberg's article in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* of 21st September told us a lot about the Azerbaijani mafia. Specifically, its leadership from within the nomenklatura. Clearly, these leaders are able to use the mafia against Nagorno-Karabakh, as we shall see later on. As regards the central corrupt clans, we know about them from the Churbanov affair,

and their power is evident in the failure to follow up the issue of corrupt delegates to the Party Conference. An article in *Sovetskaya Kultura* of 24th September revealed the extent of this, but although everyone knew about it, nothing was done.

The issue of the Armenian mafia is a special one. This does not mean it does not exist. As in other republics, it clearly involves a section of the high-ranking nomenklatura. But they were isolated and lost control of events right from the beginning. And after Igor Myryadan left the Karabakh Committee, after supporting Demvichyan, they had no official influence.

So there are two possible versions of the story - either the Armenian and Azerbaijani mafias by themselves, or these same mafias, but centrally controlled from Moscow. To see which is correct, we need to follow events carefully from February to August. Although we obviously cannot produce direct evidence, we can establish which is the more likely version, if either.

## From February to August

Most people agree now that Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh had grounds for complaint. However, for reasons we all know about, numerous requests to Moscow, as well as warnings from sociologists (*Academician Zaslavskaya*) were all ignored.

Under Brezhnevism an explosion would have been inevitable and would have been

dealt with by force. But things happened otherwise. Perestroika and democratisation enabled Nagorno-Karabakh to decide, quite legally, to ask the Azerbaijani and Armenian Supreme Soviets to settle its transfer to Armenian control.

Is such a decision provocative? That would be the old Stalinist and Brezhnevist approach. That way you could call it provocative for a lawyer to explain his rights to a client. In Soviet law, petitions can be considered for up to a month, after which time they must be replied to (affirmatively or negatively). Contravention of its own laws by the Supreme Soviet is nothing new, but this is the first time it has happened so blatantly under perestroika (five months instead of one). We all know who benefited from the delay.

So, throughout 1987, Nagorno-Karabakh tried to find a legal solution to its problem. In December, Yakovlev received a delegation in Moscow. But it was accused of not representing the people of Nagorno-Karabakh. So, to dispel any doubts, signatures were quickly collected from 90% of the adult population, supporting Nagorno-Karabakh's transfer to Armenian control. The signatures were sent to Moscow, but ignored.

Meetings and demonstrations were held in Nagorno-Karabakh from 13th February onwards, and on 20th February the regional Soviet decided on the above request for transfer. Reaction was swift.

The day before the decision, the First Secretary of the Azerbaijani CP Central Committee, Bagirov, had warned the Nagorno-Karabakh Soviet that, if they decided to leave Azerbaijani control, 100,000 armed Azerbaijanis would occupy the region. After leaving Stepanakert, he then travelled to Agdam where he spent the night before returning to Baku. It was precisely from Agdam that the first pogrom instigators came.

These thugs went into Nagorno-Karabakh to "teach the Armenians a lesson" over the transfer request. At least this is what the first national TV broadcasts seemed to say. However, in the programme "Positions", G. Borovik informed us that one of them was incited by reports of murders of Azerbaijanis in Nagorno-Karabakh. The "eye-witness" to these fabrications turned out to be a common criminal. So what was behind such a provocation? Was the instigator paid? And from the size of these "crusades" there was more than of them, too. True, only one group managed to create trouble, as a result of which two Azerbaijanis died. Armenians claim that at least one of these was shot trying to seize a weapon from a soldier. Is this true? Our national press is silent on the issue.

The Azerbaijani mafia's involvement in all this is backed up by the following events.

During this time (on 26th February) the USSR Deputy Procurator General Katusev appeared on Baku television to tell us that clashes had taken place in Nagorno-Karabakh



Pictures of the victims of Sumgait pogrom in Yerevan

between Armenians and Azerbaijanis, in which two Azerbaijanis had been killed. Nothing more. Next day, the slaughter at Sumgait occurred.

Is this true? And if so, how can we interpret the Procurator General's behaviour? As the grossest political ignorance or as conscious silence about what had taken place? Is it possible that he didn't know the facts? I don't know. But in Armenia people think his statement largely provoked Sumgait.

Demonstrations and meetings began in Armenia on February 21st. Some people in Yerevan think the circle around the nomenclatura and the intelligentsia elite gave the first impetus, but everyone agrees that the people themselves then took control, so as not to let the issue be exploited by political speculators. Because of its previous experience, the Armenian ecology group did much of the organising.

Grass roots control seems clear from the decision, after Gorbachev's television appeal on 27th February, to call off meetings and demonstrations and make up losses by working on days off. If this is Mafia involvement, what could they possibly have gained from it? However, the Azerbaijani mafia responded with Sumgait.

Writing about Sumgait is both painful and frightening. No one gets pleasure from describing the murders and the violence. But questions are being asked in Armenia which no one has yet answered. They are:

1. Who told Azerbaijanis to leave lights on in their homes during the night of 27th-28th February (so that they would not be mistaken for Armenians)?

2. How did a list of addresses of Armenians get into the hands of the pogrom instigators?

3. Who made sure the police were out of town (or, according to one version, told them to do nothing)?

4. Why weren't troops, stationed in the suburbs, sent in immediately?

5. Who coordinated the start of the pogroms in Sumgait and other Azerbaijani towns? For example, Kirovobad was spared only because people in the Armenian districts managed to erect barricades and, with the help of a few hunting rifles, hold out until the troops came.

We need answers to these questions. Because they all point to the extent of the mafia's power and influence.

How did Armenia react to the genocide of Sumgait? With protest meetings and the mass funeral procession of 8th March. This shows that people were not swayed by the mafia, who undoubtedly hoped for a "counter-Sumgait" against Azerbaijanis (and there are 160,000 in Armenia). But they failed. The people had organised themselves. And this alarmed not only the mafia, but the nomenclatura. The latter were now completely isolated. However, the mafia did not give up hope of exploiting the movement.

Suddenly, out of the blue, national televi-

sion showed an item about the poisoning of workers in a clothes factory in Massiss, near Yerevan. No more news about it followed. But everyone in Armenia knows it was due to some contaminated goods brought in from Azerbaijan. About fifty people were affected. When you realise the large number of Azerbaijanis in Massiss, this whole provocation looks like an attempt to organise a "counter-Sumgait" in Armenia. It failed. It is true that some Azerbaijanis did have their windows broken in Massiss. And a group of investigators did come down from Russia and spent three months looking into the affair. However, they managed to unearth no proof at all of provocation by Armenians.

And so March came, and we waited in anticipation. After all, Gorbachev had ended his address with the words: "The time has come for reason and decision making". So we awaited our decision. And on 24th March it came (two days before the time limit ran out). But what sort of decision was this? The Supreme Soviet gave no reply at all to our request. Instead came an announcement from the CPSU Central Committee and the USSR Central Ministry on "Measures to accelerate social and economic growth from 1988 to 1995 in the Autonomous Region of Nagorno-Karabakh". The usual sort of announcement. Without a mention of why it appeared. The customary preamble: "... much has been achieved... but there remain isolated shortcomings". And it went on to instruct the Azerbaijani Central Ministry to carry out a major plan of works in Nagorno-Karabakh.

There is nothing ostensibly wrong with this announcement. Except that it was intended to forestall the request, not to answer it. People wanted a straight answer, and they were not given one. Besides, the measures outlined would have no immediate effect and those on which work was begun, e.g. building a holiday hotel in Shushi, could only fool an outsider. Everyone in Armenia knows that Shushi is where the Azerbaijani Communist Party Central Committee holiday.

In addition, from February, Nagorno-Karabakh was effectively under a blockade. On the one, very bad road leading through Azerbaijani territory into Nagorno-Karabakh, bands of thugs were stopping cars coming from Armenia, beating up passengers and wrecking the cars. And in Shushi all Armenians (2,000 people) were driven out of their homes and forced to live in hotels in Stepanakert. So-called Azerbaijani refugees from Armenia were then housed in them. Throughout all this both the USSR Supreme Soviet and the press remained totally silent. People's patience finally ran out when a top national leader, previously renowned for his inopportune statements, told the Nagorno-Karabakh District Committee Secretary that no one was going to deal with this affair and that he had better restore order. So on March 23rd strikes began in Nagorno-Karabakh, spreading to Armenia. The result of all this was that, in June, the Nagorno-Karabakh District Committee took the unilateral deci-

## TO OUR READERS IN THE SOVIET UNION AND EASTERN EUROPE

This may be the first copy of *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe* which you have seen. We hope that it is not the last. This journal has been published for over ten years now by a group of socialists from different positions in the spectrum of left-wing politics. Our views may differ on many issues, but we all share a common commitment to the struggle for democracy as an essential part of any system that deserves the name of socialism.

We also believe that there are many common interests and concerns that unite the Western left and the democratic opposition in your countries. Our journal therefore promotes the exchange of ideas and open debate across the division of Europe and the world, and welcomes your contributions to such discussions. Our pages are open to you: we do not exercise censorship of views we may disagree with. We can translate from any language spoken in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Please let us know if you would like to receive *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe* regularly. Write to:

**Labour Focus on Eastern Europe**  
PO Box 128  
Southsea  
Hants.  
PO4 OTT  
ENGLAND

sion to withdraw from Azerbaijani control.

We will discuss methods of direct struggle later. For now, we just note that the main demands of the strikers were:

1. Lift the blockade of Nagorno-Karabakh.
2. For the USSR Supreme Soviet to reply to Nagorno-Karabakh, Armenia and Azerbaijan on the decisions taken by them.
3. Stop the entry of fake refugees, i.e. Azerbaijanis, into Nagorno-Karabakh.

If the strikes in Nagorno-Karabakh did not bother the bureaucracy too much, what really did alarm them was the massive national movement in Armenia, the meetings and demonstrations in Yerevan, involving almost the entire working population of the Republic (one meeting attracted around a million people), the complete order during the meetings and the level of consciousness and self-discipline. In fact, Armenia provided a lesson for everyone on how to struggle legally against the bureaucracy. People quickly learned to utilise existing laws, especially on mandating deputies. One or two strange things did occur here. Several deputies hid from voters and had to be tracked down. Others stated outright that they were appointed by Moscow, didn't know anything about any mandate and didn't want to know.

Trade union rules were also used to make the strikes legal. Strike decisions were taken at general meetings and then ratified and published by the union. Such proper procedure excluded any question of people being dismissed for leaving work - since, if the union had sanctioned a strike, it could not then sanction dismissal of anyone for taking part in it.

Despite the failure of the press to report such things, and despite its one-sided version of events, the movement's authority grew rapidly. What is more, neither the mafia nor any extremist groups inside or outside it succeeded in pushing people into clearly illegal, nationalistic activity. The movement now began to carry the day. Traffic police were sent from Russia and posted along the road into Nagorno-Karabakh, enabling people to travel in safety. A date was set for a USSR Presidium meeting. By now only a massive provocation could discredit the movement. And so the affair at Yerevan's *Zvartnotz* airport was instigated.

I have in front of me pages and pages of statements from witnesses - pickets, passengers, people living nearby, doctors and ambulance drivers called to the scene. From these and other eyewitness accounts, the following picture emerges:

At a meeting on July 14th, it was reported that the airport management would not recognise a strike, and that the workers there needed support. "Karabakh" members replied that this was a matter for the airport staff themselves. However, some people boarded buses (no one knows how these came to be waiting in the square) and set off for the airport. On the way they met up with people from Echmidian.

There had been picketing in and around the airport building for almost twenty-four hours. Everything was orderly. No one ran out onto the flight zone (contrary to press and television reports). Local people fed passengers free of charge.

"Karabakh" committee members did their best to dissuade picketing and get people out of the airport lounges. At about five o'clock on 5th July, it was decided to end the strike. An agreement was reached with management, it only remained to be signed and the pickets to be told. But just then troops burst into the building...

Here we must stop and ask a few questions. There had been picketing at the airport for more than twenty-four hours. The building could have been cleared many times over by then, especially using the soldiers already in the town. Knowing what followed, I suggest the army had been told to expect trouble. When this did not occur and the strike was called off and people started to disperse, they simply went in indiscriminately, following the rule "Shoot first, ask questions later".

What happened at the airport was simply this: the troops beat people up, everyone - pickets, passengers, airport staff (including the *militia*), cashiers - in their way (Russian passengers were taken away to safety). They beat people up without warning, blocking off any escape routes. Then, after driving people out of the airport, they pursued them along the road, beating them with their truncheons as they went. Almost all witnesses say the soldiers were under the influence of alcohol or drugs. They prevented ambulances from going into the airport, some even had their windows broken. They beat up doctors. It is not surprising that such violence ended in the murder of an Armenian youth.

Some enquiry was expected after this - to examine statements and, above all, to take blood samples to see if the soldiers had been taking drugs. But things turned out differently.

For several days afterwards, all cars entering the airport were searched and any sharp or pointed object (such as any driver might carry in case of a breakdown) were confiscated. These were then produced on TV in the "infamous" Baryshnikov broadcast. In addition, the press reported that a firearm had been found. All this was then, ludicrously, used to explain why the *Zvartnotz* affair was transferred from the Republic to the National Procurator General. But what is extraordinary is that, after about a month and a half, the USSR Procurator General, Nikolayev, who was dealing with the matter, tried to hand it back to the Republic. I do not know if anyone eventually agreed to take it on, but, of course, a full enquiry would be a risky business for government colleagues since someone was killed. Also, any objective investigation is now practically impossible because the troops are somewhere else and it is too late to take blood samples. However, Nikolayev's behaviour completely

goes against the media's intentions. So whose orders was he under?

A particularly nasty role in the campaign to discredit the movement was played by the above-mentioned television programme of Baryshnikov. This was shown on national TV on 14th July, four days before the meeting of the Supreme Soviet Presidium, and was obviously not intended to give an objective account of events but to confirm a certain version of them (whose?). It was absolutely full of exaggerations and distortions. At Moscow Television, two camera rooms would not set up the material (or, more precisely, said they couldn't because the equipment wasn't working!). In the third room they got things working and went ahead, but this cost them their comrades' respect.

All these facts have been hidden from the public. But others have been widely publicised. For example, on 7th July, Baryshnikov showed his edited interviews with airport passengers. Yet an unpublished letter to *Ogonek* tells us: "The television programme *Vremya* didn't explain why the sailor seen with the bandaged head began his interview: 'I've never seen anything like it... it was terrible...' But people in Yerevan found out why - thanks to Armenian TV news editor, Edward Salikov. At his own risk, and in the name of Party and human conscience, Salikov broadcast this and other interviews in full during the break in the feature film on 9th June, i.e. at about 4.30 p.m. local time. Here the sailor spoke with horror of wild beasts, unworthy of the name Soviet soldier, suddenly beating up pickets with their truncheons - among them women and children, passengers, cashiers and the *militia* who were trying to stop the rampage. This and other eyewitness accounts were seen and heard by hundreds of thousands of people in Yerevan, who could not understand how such a thing could have happened..."

Incidentally, after this broadcast, Baryshnikov disappeared from our screens. Whether he was sent on a long holiday or an overseas job as a reward for sinking so low, I don't know. I only know that, after this, he was branded forever with types like the "historian" Yakovlev, long discredited for publishing his slanderous lies about Sakharov and Solzhenitsyn.

Armenia now held its breath for a while. At the funeral of the murdered youth, thousands of mourners marched under placards saying: "Murderers, get out of Armenia". Everything was orderly, no help was needed from the authorities. And on 19th July, after the negative response from the USSR Supreme Soviet, strikes were called off. Signatures now began to be collected throughout Armenia protesting against the response, but it was nevertheless seen as a victory that any decision that any decision had been taken at all.

However, there was no progress on the question of fake refugees. On 15th August, the Nagorno-Karabakh authorities asked

Azerbaijan to allow Armenians back into their homes in Shushi. Nothing was done. On the contrary, Azerbaijanis continued to be brought into the region, as the local authorities tried their best to change its ethnic composition. And so, from 12th September, strikes began again in Nagorno-Karabakh.

The way the press dealt with the deepening crisis is typical of its approach throughout. This was an official report: "...the meeting was interrupted by inflammatory tales of ethnic clashes between Armenians and Azerbaijanis in the village of Jadjali, near

Stepanakert. Many then left the meeting and headed for the village, where mass fights took place, involving firearms and other weapons..."

So, did clashes actually occur in Jadjali? And could they, in an area whose population is purely Azerbaijani? That's the first "inaccuracy".

Secondly, where did these reports come from? They came from people on their way through the village in buses or cars. But some vehicles had windows broken and several passengers were injured. That is, it

looked much more likely that they had been attacked by thugs on the roads around the village.

Thirdly, how could people have started fighting on the way to the village, when they themselves were all Armenians? In fact, what really happened was that they were met with gunfire as they approached the village. It turned out afterwards that women and children had been evacuated from the village in advance and houses surrounded with barbed wire.

Later on, widespread unrest did occur, including arson on both sides. But in this case, false information put out by TASS tried to create the impression that it was started by Armenians.

But let us go back to our original two different versions, and ask Comrade Gorbachev which corrupt clans were involved? A lot of evidence, especially events at *Zvartnotz*, points to central involvement. So how high up in the state apparatus do these "corrupt clans" penetrate? And when will we know who were the corrupt delegates to the Party Conference? Or else have the accusations been disproved? Questions, questions. But never any answers.

So what are the perspectives for the movement now? Will it disappear after a solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh problem (or disillusionment in it ever being solved), or will it take on new forms? It is an interesting question.

### From national to social problems

Of course, it is still too early to talk about moving towards social problems. In fact, it has been more the opposite. The media did everything they could to push people towards nationalism (as is shown above). And after their accounts of Sumgait and *Zvartnotz*, the separatists, isolated at first, were at least given a hearing. They appeared in a number of "Karabakh" committees. So journalists should be aware of what part they played in this.

However, if Nagorno-Karabakh is discussed calmly, tension will ease, people will begin to see light at the end of the tunnel, and start to deal with new tasks. Of course, the same old problems remain (corruption, ecology, economic reform), but the new situation and people's mass involvement and developing consciousness mean they now get solved more quickly.

For instance, the meetings did not just discuss Nagorno-Karabakh. In the countryside, people were more concerned with current problems like the introduction of cost effectiveness and the despotism of local "Khans" with party cards in their pockets. One meeting in Leninakan, attended by about 70,000 people, had a quite unexpected outcome. The organisers were given a note accusing the local authority secretary of bribery, and asking how to get rid of him. The affair was put to a vote, all 70,000 people agreed with the accusation and the



Red Army tanks in Yerevan street



Armenian refugees at Yerevan railway station

secretary was sacked.

Although this is an isolated case, people are nevertheless beginning to feel and use their own real power. What is this power? Who become leaders in such struggles? What role do the "Karabakh" committees play?

On 22nd July, *Trud* published the membership of the central "Karabakh" committee. The TASS correspondent, after he had listed the actual names and professions of members, failed to attach names or even pseudonyms to their statements. In addition, some of these seemed dubious or wrongly interpreted. What members say here is sharp and controversial, but no more so than the criticism we have grown used to in the press over the last three years, for instance against the nomenklatura, or calling for leaders to be elected. Is this slanderous or unlawful? The *Trud* article would have us think so. Or again, on the question of how local committees were set up - what actually happened was that the movement simply chose people with the best organisational skills.

In fact, talk of the "Karabakh" usurping power can only come from those who have lost power themselves - our current Party and Soviet leaders, afraid of losing their positions in the approaching elections to the Soviets. Members of the "Karabakh" actually see their work as, first and foremost, keeping the campaign legal and intact.

The committee has changed in the last six months, because people's positions have changed - some who did not agree stepped down in favour of others. But the main course of the work has not altered, and people have continued to support it.

If, as the press claims, there has really been a breakdown in public order in Yerevan recently, this is not because of "Karabakh", but because it may have lost its influence over extreme, more radical groups. And if TV cameras were not allowed into meetings, they have only themselves to blame. Actually, despite all their accusations about them, the media have never tried to interview committee members. True, giving an interview to national television is a risky business, since they cut it about so much they

alter its sense completely.

Strikes are, anyway, better than explosions. But distorting information pushes things precisely in that direction, whether intended or not.

Just to give an idea of who the committee members are, take Ashot Manucharyan - a head of department at Number 183 Secondary School. When he was a student, he was secretary of Yerevan University All-Union Leninist Communist Youth League - an excellent first step up the ladder to a career in the nomenklatura. But Ashot rejected all that and remained involved in the campaign. When the local party bosses expelled him, instead of appealing higher up in the Party he turned to the local support of communists in his school, who refused to recognise his expulsion. So now it is up to the regional and city Party conferences to sort the matter out.

Or take Babkren Ararktsyam, a faculty head at Yerevan University and a party member. From his statements on *Zvartnotz* alone, he is clearly no extremist. He was not interested in a political career and actually wanted to return to his scientific work.

Of course, committee members vary. Some do not want to be involved in politics, and want to get back to their jobs once the present problem is solved and the movement is no longer under attack. Others want to continue to be involved in the current social changes, if people support them. One thing is certain, they all genuinely respect the people, understand the responsibility of their positions and are ready to carry out whatever tasks and settlements are decided on.

Also it is easy enough to get removed from the committee. One mistake at a meeting, calling for extremes of any sort - either compromise with the bureaucracy or illegal methods of struggle - is enough to lose people's support. Because it is not the committee which decides things, it just considers various possibilities and presents them to the meetings. This is genuine control by the people.

As I said earlier, a new stage in the Nagorno-Karabakh campaign after 24th August. The party's local executive committee

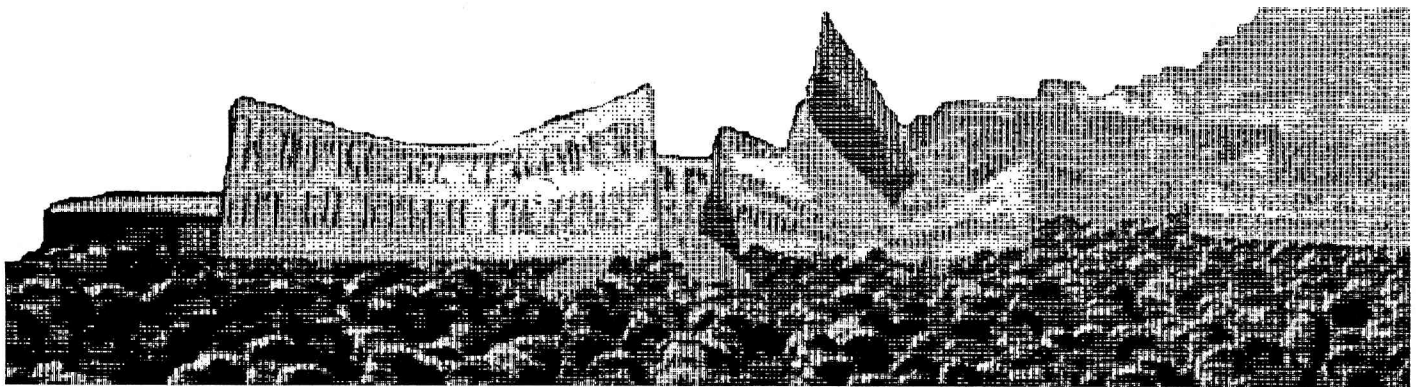
rejected the development plan of the USSR Ministry of Soviets and drew up its own, more appropriate one. In this, the 400 million roubles allocated to the region would not be used until the New Year, after more efficient, self-financing methods have been introduced.

The executive committee has listened to the Supreme Soviet; Nagorno-Karabakh is ready to work together with the USSR Ministry of Soviets, whilst at the same time applying to the Soviet of Nationalities suggesting a phased solution to the transfer problem. Surely the Supreme Soviet can now have a careful look at the legal aspects of this. And surely the press can openly and calmly discuss both the legal and the economic and social questions involved. After all, a new national problem is now presenting itself in Azerbaijan - the Kurdish question. Officially, there are only about 5,000 Kurds living in Azerbaijan. However, under Aliiev, Kurds were not allowed passports so they had to remain Azerbaijani nationals. The Kurds have not yet asked the Supreme Soviet for autonomy. But the very different situations in Armenia and Azerbaijan may make them choose Armenia as the Republic which can best ensure their rights (since in Armenia there are Kurdish schools, publishing houses and institutes of education). The process has already started, and remaining silent will not get rid of the problem, or create friendly relations between peoples. On the contrary, it will lead to a progressive sharpening of tensions and eventually to an explosion.

And so, only complete *glasnost* and mutual respect for the views of others will prevent a worsening of the situation and enable us to arrive at a gradual solution to the problem. Armenia is ready to talk. Is the Supreme Soviet? Time will tell.

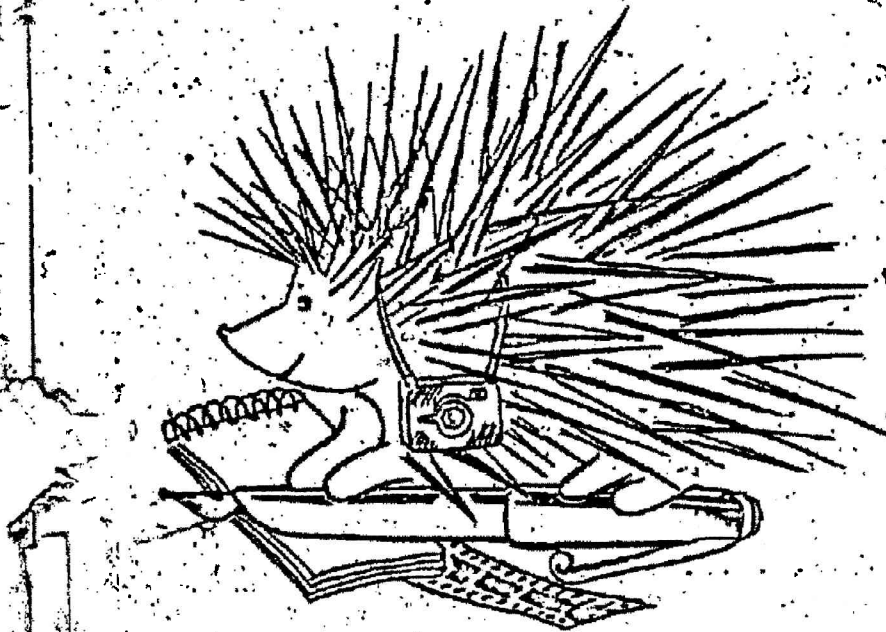
Nikolai Osa  
29.9.88

Translated from the Russian  
by Sheila Malone.



# ЛЕВЫЙ ПОВОРОТ (СВИДЕТЕЛЬ)

ИНФОРМАЦИОННЫЙ СБОРНИК  
ФЕДЕРАЦИИ СОЦИАЛИСТИЧЕСКИХ  
ОБЩЕСТВЕННЫХ КЛУБОВ



ВЫПУСК №

## Introduction

The following is a selection of articles from *Left Turn* (*Levyi Povorot*), journal of the Federation of Socialist Social Clubs (FSOK). *Left Turn* originally appeared in the Autumn of 1987 with the title "Eyewitness" (*Svidetel*) but this was changed to *Left Turn* in recognition of an earlier journal, connected with FSOK co-ordinator Boris Kagarlitskii, which was suppressed under Brezhnev. *Svidetel* is still incorporated, however, in the journal's cover.

*Labour Focus* is here publishing articles and extracts from Issues 10 and 11 of *Left Turn* which appeared in June and July 1988. Two themes permeate both issues. Firstly, the situation in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh about which we have a more up-to-date report from an FSOK special correspondent sent to Armenia and, secondly, the Nineteenth Conference of the CPSU.

The Conference provided FSOK with two important opportunities: Firstly, to elaborate and publicise a programme in respect of the

Left's vision of perestroika. The most concise and comprehensive statement of this programme is contained in the Mandate for delegates to the Conference, i.e. the platform on which they wished to see delegates elected. This Mandate reveals the distance travelled in the development of political thinking since the first enunciation of glasnost and perestroika. The most clear renunciation of the legacy of Stalinism's domination of Soviet political life comes in the rejection of the *nomenklatura* mechanism

for centrally appointing post-holders and allocating bureaucratic privileges, and for the calls for all power to be transferred to democratically-elected Soviets.

But while the Mandate concentrates on political issues it leaves crucial questions of economic restructuring unresolved - a possible indication that within FSOK itself there is an ongoing debate over the relationship between plan and market.

Privilege is, of course, a theme persistently dwelt upon by Boris Yeltsin, the text of whose speech to the Central Committee Plenum, for which he was removed, is published here. There is, it must be added, some serious doubt concerning the authenticity of this text, but the fact of its circulation in the Soviet Union alone makes it a noteworthy document. Yeltsin's outspoken comments on the need to advance perestroika have been consistently supported by FSOK and they were instrumental in attempting to mobilise public support for Yeltsin's re-statement. *Left Turn* also contains the text of Yeltsin's interview with the B.B.C. which was shown on the "Newsnight" programme during the 19th Party Conference.

The second opportunity presented by the Nineteenth Conference was for more public actions in support of perestroika. Reports in *Left Turn* from various parts of the Soviet Union detail, in particular, how the usual format for the election of Conference delegates was challenged. We publish the brief account of noted reformist Yuri Afanasyev's initial rejection and later inclusion as a delegate. Interestingly, Yuri Petrov, First Secretary of the Sverdlovsk *Obkom* in which this incident occurred, was later removed from his post and sent to Cuba as ambassador.

Kazan was the setting for a rally in support of a revolutionary perestroika prior to the Conference and also provides the source for an article on a growing theme in Soviet literature and political activity (it is present in the Nagomo-Karabakh issue) - that of ecology and environmental protection. The Kazan group take up the issue of nuclear power, an energy source generally unchallenged in Soviet thinking over the past thirty years, and more specifically the building of a nuclear power plant in the Tatar Autonomous Republic. The article reiterates many of the points made in recent years by environmental and socialist organisations in the West.

The influence of developments in the Baltic Republics and particularly Estonia is quite apparent with the idea for the establishment of a Popular Front (PF). The article printed here indicates that the Popular Front is considered a means of uniting Party and non-Party forces and presenting an alternative to the CPSU without, at this stage, attempting to establish alternative political parties and that its basic political stance is for a democratic socialism although non-political organisations can be part of the PF.

The PF's *raison d'être* is therefore

different from that of the Democratic Union whose brief aims and objectives we also publish and whose objectives and activity are the object of much debate within *Left Turn*. The article on the PF also gives an indication of the fissures within the independent movement and an article in Issue 10 is highly critical of FSOK's structure claiming that it is essentially undemocratic with decisions being inadequately prepared and in fact being made by a small number of people. Articles of this kind are often

accompanied by either positive or negative responses. Unfortunately, because of their sometimes rather esoteric character and for reasons of space we are unable to publish them here.

For further information on FSOK readers are referred to *Labour Focus* Vol.9 No.3 and to Boris Kagarlitskii article "Perestroika: The Dialectic of Change" in *New Left Review* 169, May-June 1988.

Sean Roberts

## 19th Party Conference: THE AFANASYEV AFFAIR

**O**n 20th May a Party meeting took place at the Moscow Chemical-Technological Institute (MKhTI) at which the delegate to the 19th Party Conference was elected by 4th year students with Party membership of about two months. The meeting rejected the candidature of Yuri Afanasyev, Rector of the Moscow Historical-Archive Institute (MIAI). Why did this happen?

At the end of April the group principle of nominating delegates was affirmed at a meeting of Secretaries of the district's Party organisations: 12 delegates from the region (Sverdlovsk), of those - five were on a central slate and the remaining seven were from "groups", i.e. one from industrial enterprises, one from educational establishments, etc. At the beginning of May there was a meeting of Secretaries of the educational establishments' "group" which decided that, as MKhTI were winners of socialist

competition, the delegate ought to be from that Institute. Polls in MKhTI were completed with the election of the delegate at a conference of its students.

This provoked a stormy reaction of discontent from the collective of MIAI. On the 23rd May there was a meeting of the Council of the workers' collective of MIAI which considered the decision to confine the election of the delegate to MKhTI undemocratic and not ensuring adequate representation. The meeting demanded that a review of the question of delegates be postponed as it had become known that the final confirmation of candidates would take place at a session of the Sverdlovsk District Party Committee (*raikom*) on Wednesday, 25th May. A public committee was formed, headed by Professor Elizarov, who was charged with conducting a campaign in support of Afanasyev's candidacy. A first-year student proposed holding a demonstration which met with applause, but he suddenly left the meeting and later the proposal was not seriously considered. Representatives from MKhTI who spoke declared that they did not view their meeting as a "group" and that, of course, they did not deny the right of other collectives to promote their own candidates.

On the 25th May there was a closed session of the *Raikom Buro* which declined Afanasyev's candidacy. However, his candidature was afterwards put forward at a Plenum of the Moscow City Party Committee (*Gorkom*) on the initiative of the Bureau of *Gorkom* and Afanasyev was confirmed as a delegate to Conference.

Speaking at a meeting at MIAI it was emphasised that the failure of Afanasyev's candidacy had been organised by anti-perestroika forces and the instigators of the campaign existed at a somewhat higher level than the Party *raikom*.



Yuri Afanasyev



# PUBLIC MEETING IN KAZAN

On the 26th May a meeting took place in "Black Lake" (*Chernoje Ozero*) Park organised by the "Unity" (*Edinstvo*) social-political club and the Komsomol Committee of Kazan State University.

The basic aims of the meeting were a decisive protest against the recidivists of Stalinism, opposition to the threat of a "conservative coup", a call to break up the bureaucratic braking mechanism, support for the course of a broad democratisation of society, and revolutionary perestroika. The meeting was devoted to the Nineteenth Party Conference.

The meeting lasted more than three hours and had been allowed by the City authorities. The organisers, in arranging the meeting, had leant for support upon the *Gorkom* propaganda department; the City Executive Committee (*Gorispolkom*) opposed the measures. The increasing tendency for the democratic and conservative wings in the leadership to be demarcated and counterposed can once again be traced in this instance. Earlier it was planned to conduct this measure on 5th May but it had not been authorised by the *Gorispolkom* on a spurious pretext. The demonstration, planned for after the meeting, was also not authorised this time.

15 people spoke at the meeting. 300 people were in attendance and actively reacted to the calls and entered into debate. Among those present were around twenty workers from the *Gorkom* apparatus, the Party Regional Committee (*Obkom*), and three *raikom* secretaries. Employees of the Republic's KGB, distributed close by the meeting, observed what was happening with lively interest.

Participants in the meeting criticised the undemocratic procedure in the Tatar ASSR for electing delegates to the Nineteenth Party Conference and expressed their dissatisfaction at the work of the First Secretary of the Tatar *Obkom*, G.I.Usmanov, and called for the establishment of a public city platform. A polemic arose with regard to Stalin's role in the country's history, figures were cited of twelve million dead in camps and prisons, and those assembled were especially active in condemning Andreyeva's article although several tried publicly to vindicate its "principles".

About 20 slogans were displayed at the meeting: "Stalinism will not pass", "Down with the Manifesto of the anti-perestroika forces", "Who is behind Nina Andreyeva?" "Rename Zhdanov Street Akhmatova Street",

"A monument to the victims of Stalin's repressions!", "Bureaucratism is a weapon of Stalinism", "Make public the Beria affair", "Down with the special shops and privileges" etc. Written on large placards with photographs of Brezhnev and Rashidov were "Rewards according to service!" and "This must not be repeated!". The support of the Editorial Board of *Ogonek* for a firm democratic position was expressed. The discussion was often tense and, unfortunately, the District Komsomol Secretary, O. Nazarov, threatened sanctions against some speakers. Speaking at the end on the instructions of the Party *Gorkom*, he called on those present to be more actively involved in perestroika and answered questions. The number of workers for the Party *Gorkom*, forty-three, was made public and agreement was expressed that the election of delegates, this particular test of perestroika, was in many places conducted along the same lines as before and that candidates were often not considered in the wider labour collectives and were chosen in secret. Many of those present expressed their agreement with the idea of founding a public anti-bureaucratic mechanism in the city.

The meeting adopted an appeal to the delegates to the Nineteenth Conference and more than two dozen proposals for the Central Committee Theses were approved by votes including a proposal to create a Democratic Front for Perestroika.

# POPULAR FRONT IN ESTONIA

On the 1st April in the Hall of Sessions of the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian SSR the unified plenum of the leaderships of the republic's creative unions began its work. The plenum lasted two days and adopted a resolution which subsequently formed the unique intellectual framework of the platform of the Estonian Popular Front. The resolution advanced demands for the resolution of the problem of the national language (that Estonian become the sole language of the state in Estonia), the transfer of the republic onto full *khozraschet*, the granting of considerable sovereignty, the overcoming of ecological problems, and also the demand for the dismissal of the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Estonian Communist Party.

In the evening of April 13th there was a discussion on the Estonian television programme, "Let's think again!", on the theme of "How can civil initiative be utilised?" Philosopher Edgar Savisaar advanced the proposal to found a democratic movement in support of perestroika - a Popular Front. The

idea was supported by the other participants in the programme and the whole working group remained behind in the studio afterwards. The following night a declaration on the formation of the Popular Front was drawn up. This declaration was signed by 16 people. The Tallin initiative group for the Popular Front was formed.

The Popular Front Declaration of 14th April was sent to the Estonian Party Central Committee and to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian SSR, and on 16th April the Tallin group was joined by an initiative group from Tartu headed by M. Valuristin and V. Palmom.

On the 21st April representatives of the initiative group were invited to a meeting at the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet where, under the leadership of Deputy President of the Presidium, Mayi Leosk, the question of the Popular Front was considered. The need for precise organisational principles was pointed out to the members of the initiative group and it was proposed to begin a public debate on the Declaration.

On the 29th April a meeting took place at the Central Committee of the Estonian Party at which leading members of the Party and Supreme Soviet and five members of the Popular Front initiative group took part. At the meeting the idea of a Popular Front as a movement encompassing broad layers of public opinion was endorsed.

On the same day, in a live programme on Estonian radio, the resolution of this meeting was read out. On the 30th April the declaration of the Popular Front was published on the front page of the Tartu newspaper *Zdazi* with the principles elaborated and developed by the initiative group defining the structure and aims of the Front. Later that evening a special television programme was broadcast in which these questions were discussed more widely. The idea of a broad democratic movement had triumphed. Already on the Mayday demonstration the following day the people were carrying slogans in support of the Popular Front. The founding of support groups began on a mass scale throughout Estonia.

Towards the end of June a meeting was held in Tallin devoted to the departure of the Estonian delegates to the Nineteenth Party Conference. The conduct of the meeting was taken over by representatives of the Popular Front. No less than 150,000 people gathered (Finnish television estimated the numbers at 200,000).

At present, according to various estimates, from 40 to 50 thousand people have joined the Estonian Popular Front. The question is being discussed of holding a founding Congress in November, the *Popular Front Herald* is appearing with an edition of 5,000 in Estonian and 1,000 in Russian. Meanwhile the Russian population's involvement in the movement is a problem although the Estonians have not advanced sharply nationalistic positions (further, when Russian-language papers did not publish the principles of the Popular Front, the Estonians issued an ultimatum that if they continued to keep quiet about them they would be published in Russian in Estonian-language papers).

**Estonian Popular Front demonstrators in Tallinn**



# PUBLIC MANDATE FOR THE NINETEENTH PARTY CONFERENCE

ADOPTED AT A MEETING OF SELF-ACTIVE ASSOCIATIONS IN MOSCOW  
5th June, 1988 at the Palace of Youth  
12th June, 1988 at the "Energetik" House of Culture

The political situation which has taken shape prior to the Party Conference is creating profound anxiety in society. The elections were conducted in the traditional manner with apparatus employees in fact co-opting themselves. A precise and genuinely democratic electoral mechanism, distinct from that of the "stagnation period", has not been set in motion. The favourable reception given to elections carried out by regional and city committees indicates that bureaucratic tendencies in the Party apparatus continue to prevail. It can only be hoped that the manner of these elections does not tell on the results of the Conference. There is a serious danger of half-hearted decisions having a negative impact on the tempo of perestroika, exacerbating the situation in the country and leading, in the end, to a severe political crisis with an uncertain outcome. We therefore propose the following:

1. The Party Conference must open the way to an extraordinary Party Congress capable of taking major decisions.
2. In so far as a month for considering the theses was patently inadequate, a national discussion of the forthcoming reforms must be held right up to the Congress.
3. Elections to the Congress must be conducted along the lines of platforms formed in the course of the discussion.
4. A complete list of Conference delegates indicating their posts must be published in the press.
5. Delegates from public organisations, including socio-political clubs, should be invited to the Congress with the right to speak.
6. The whole of the Conference proceedings

should not only be published in the press but broadcast live on radio and television.

7. A structural reform of the Party apparatus must follow immediately after the Conference.

The Central Committee theses have a compromise and internally contradictory character: the question of a revolutionary perestroika in the political sphere is absent; concrete mechanisms for carrying out the political and economic reforms have not been proposed; there is no serious analysis of the driving forces of perestroika, of those forces resisting it and of their present alignment. Given the numerous indications of bureaucratic sabotage of the reforms after the publication of the platform of anti-perestroika forces in *Sovietskaya Rossiya* [Andreyevna's letter], it is strange to hear a call "against political confrontation and the division of social forces". Sham unity is worse than a split. The time has come for the country's leadership to choose with whom it is "going to sit in the same boat": with those who have supported perestroika as a social revolution against Stalinism's heritage, the totalitarian bureaucratic apparatus of power, universal lies and social corrosion; or with those who see it as cosmetic "alterations" or technocratic reforms in a situation of crisis for bureaucratic despotism. The solidarity of the apparatus cannot be concealed behind the slogan of "the unity of Party and People".

The most urgent tasks today are those of political reform:

1. Transform the Party from an organisation ruling "in the name of the people" through a degenerated caste of partocrats, into a genuine political organisation; to achieve this it must be stripped of all functions of authority which should be transferred to Soviets and organs of state administration and this must find expression in a Law on the Party. Article 6 of the

Constitution must be correspondingly amended. The Party only secures the realisation of its political line through Communists working in the organs of power, state institutions and social organisations.

2. Freedom of discussion must be guaranteed. For this it is necessary to legalise groups which decide to nominate candidates on the basis of platforms, the creation of unregulated Party groups of supporters of different platforms, their holding of general meetings, the systematic propagandising of their views among Communists and non-Party people both in the pages of the Party press and in independent publications. The formation of special organs for such activity must be agreed. The right of a minority to criticise a decision, even after it has come into effect, must be guaranteed.

3. Re-establish the publication of a *Pravda* discussion sheet in which can be printed the views of Communists, Komsomol and non-Party people, including those which diverge from the viewpoint of the Central Committee.

4. Hold a national debate on the one-party system in the USSR.

5. Reject the idea of creating an organ unifying the Central Control Commission (KPK) and the Central Audit Commission (TsRK) in so far as the experience of the end of the Twenties shows that an independent control/repressive organ turns into a weapon in the struggle against dissent in the Party.

6. Give assemblies of workers' collectives the right, through a secret ballot, to recall from the Party members of local Party organisations without changing their official status while they retain their functions of power.

7. Introduce the practice of preliminary discussion in primary party organisations of items on the agenda of CC Plenums.

8. Television transmission of CC Plenums and sessions of the USSR Supreme Soviet.

9. All power must be transferred to the Soviets. The electoral system must undergo radical change. Candidates can be nominated by workers' collectives, social organisations, incumbents of electoral organs and self-nomination is also permitted. Candidates are registered if they gain no less than a certain percentage of the electorate.

10. Deputies of Soviets must be given the opportunity to exercise their collective power in reality, for which the duration of a Soviet session must be increased in principle, and the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and Union Republics, representing the highest power in society, must work on a permanent basis. Soviets must be guaranteed the necessary material and organisational resources.

11. Begin preparations for an electoral campaign for re-elections to the Soviets at all levels according to the candidates' platforms and programmes.

12. Adopt a law on the press granting any individual or group of individuals, on the basis of individual or co-operative activity, the right to produce a periodical organ or other printed publication. The law must permit access to reprographic equipment and stocks of paper. Preliminary censorship is forbidden in the USSR. The editors and authors must take legal responsibility for the disclosure of state secrets, advocacy of violence, national or racial discrimination, hostility towards other peoples and encroachments on the dignity of citizens.

13. Pass a legislative act requiring the state organs of mass information to give all social organisations the opportunity to express their positions at a minimum in pre-election periods and during national discussions of draft laws.

14. Pass a law on glasnost in the activity of State organs.

15. Pass a law on gatherings, demonstrations, meetings and processions stipulating the order in which these rights will be realised and an exhaustive list of limitations.

16. Pass a law on social organisations stipulating a usually informal means of registration with the right to nominate candidates for elections, have their own publication, engage in economic activity, etc.

17. Hasten the reform of the whole legislature with the aim of creating a legal society and turning the existing state into a legal one. Nobody, neither the Party, organs of power, or any individual can be above the law.

18. Support associations of the "People's Front" type being formed by the forces of social organisations and groups.

19. Relieve the organs of State Security of super-legal political and ideological functions with the aim of creating genuine guarantees for the development of the democratic process. Place these organs under the permanent public control of the Soviets (with a limitation concerning state secrets). Forbid the opening of personal and official correspondence together with the tapping of telephone conversations without the prior

sanction of the organs of the Procurator's office. Examine the question, in preparing the law on the state security organs, of the expediency of breaking the KGB up into several separate services in accordance with their functions.

Create special permanent commissions in the Supreme Soviet, supervising the activity of the Ministries of Defence and Internal Affairs (MVD) and the KGB, and which make periodic public reports of their activity.

20. Establish a system of constitutional monitoring, independent of legislative and executive power - a Constitutional Court and a system of people authorised on citizens' rights and the investigation of complaints through which public commissions can be created. Introduce jury courts. The election of prosecutors to be by direct, secret ballot. The functions of supervision and state prosecution to be separated. Remove investigations from the prosecutors' functions.

21. Give citizens the right to turn to a lawyer for help from the moment an investigation begins.

22. Guarantee the right of every citizen to approach a Court in connection with the illegal actions of any official or body or decisions taken by state, administrative and law-enforcement organs, including those taken collectively, without recourse to the Procurator's Office.

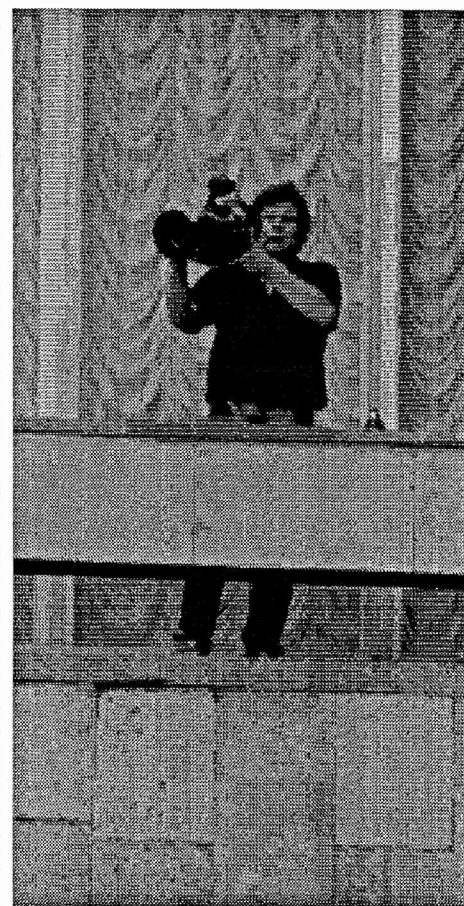
23. Hasten the review in favour of humanising the criminal law. Remove from the criminal law, without delay, norms permitting persecution for the expression of convictions, in particular repeal articles 70 and 190 from the RSFSR Criminal Code and analogous articles in the Codes of the Union Republics. A re-examination is essential of all political cases in the Twenties and Thirties and cases of believers condemned for operating cults. All political prisoners must be released immediately.

24. Maintain the gradual removal of restrictions on the movement and choice of place of residence of citizens of the USSR within the country's territory and beyond its borders. Create the preconditions for the abolition of the passport system in general.

25. Forbid Soviet forces from participating in military actions on the territory of other countries, except those of the Warsaw Pact, and also crossing the state borders of the USSR without a special public decree of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet. The movement of military units within countries of the Warsaw Pact must be strictly in accordance with established rules. Forbid military units, stationed in Warsaw Pact countries, from interfering in the political life of those countries.

26. Condemn the 1968 intervention in Czechoslovakia and the 1979 intervention in Afghanistan.

27. Abolish administrative compulsion to work. Maintain the provision of social measures aimed at preventing so-called parasitism and vagrancy with the abolition of criminal punishment for them.



*The KGB is watching...*

28. Local organs of power to be obliged to create the conditions for the genuinely free operation of religious cults, including the unimpeded provision of suitable premises and the transfer of remaining church buildings to believers.

29. Make provision for the possibility of teaching in schools on alternative curricula. Consider the expediency of establishing co-operative schools.

30. In the education system, accelerate the transition to self-management and progressive methods of teaching. Permit the use of competing textbooks and modification of the curriculum as decided by the school's educational council, while ensuring a necessary minimum of knowledge for each subject. Change the teaching of social disciplines in accordance with historical truth. Develop a spirit of free-thinking, individual responsibility, independence and human dignity among the pupils.

31. A radical improvement is needed in the higher education system for which autonomy should be granted to institutions of higher education (*Vuzy*), as well as the opportunity for them to decide independently on questions of professional activity in their relations with consumers and the state. The broadening of student self-management and student autonomy within the *Vuzy*.

32. Afford the opportunity, legislatively, for conscripts to perform alternative civilian

duties.

33. All legislation in the USSR to be in accordance with the constitution and norms of international law and, in particular, with the "International Accord on Civil and Political Rights" ratified by the USSR in 1973.

In respect of the delays in implementing laws affecting basic civil rights (according to the schedule, laws on the press, information and glasnost should have been prepared by the end of 1986) it is considered essential that these laws are implemented before the end of 1988, but that, at the present time, emergency temporary regulations are introduced regarding the publication, with a mass circulation, of the organs of independent social organisations with the right to subscription and sales through the organs of *Soyuzpechat*.

**INSTEAD OF TEMPORARY REGULATIONS ON DEMONSTRATIONS - TEMPORARY REGULATIONS ON THE PRESS!**

34. Taking into consideration the multinational character of our country, the development of federalism is considered a matter of primary importance. Increase the degree of political autonomy and independence from the centre for economic decisions by the governing bodies of the Republics. The status of the RSFSR must, in practice, be equal with that of the other Republics, removing distortions on both sides. The principle of regional self-reliance should be developed to the utmost with public aid to backward regions under strictly defined conditions. National minorities in Union republics to be granted cultural-national autonomy including the right to education in their native language. For a just and timely solution to the questions of relations between nationalities, special organs must be created under the auspices of the Soviets, and in enterprises and in organisations where this is expedient, to assist the formation of national workers' Soviets.

35. Abolish the nationality section in passports and official forms.

36. Re-establish the trades unions' role as special organs defending and representing the interests of workers, for which the existing system of trades union organisation must be radically changed, apart from trades union associations in branches of industry. Make provision for the possibility of inter-branch, territorial unions and unions based on a single specialisation. Allow the formation of parallel unions in a single enterprise. Guarantee the effective right of unions to defend the historic gains of the workers' movement and to their extension on the initiative of the unions themselves.

37. Lay down specific sanctions clause by clause for breaches of labour legislation both on the part of officials and on the part of trades union leaders.

38. Extend the system of social guarantees and workers' social security. In the near future raise the unjustly low pension to a

level comparable to the average wage. Pass a new law on pensions, making provision for compensatory measures in the event of price rises. Pass a law supporting full employment for the population which includes the state's responsibility to provide retraining for those made redundant through rationalisation of production or the cutting of departmental apparatuses and making provision for monetary assistance for the period prior to finding a new job. A sharp increase in the investment of resources in free health-care alongside the development of private medical services.

39. Remove all official privileges, such as special stores, closed so-called "medicinal food canteens", personal cars etc.

40. Eliminate the nomenklatura system of cadre-formation.

41. Introduce a Law on Labour Collectives in complete harmony with the Labour Law Code (KZOT). Consider the coming into being of genuine self-management in production as the major strategic task of the reform of production relations in the spirit of democratic socialism. At the present time only the very first steps have been taken towards this. Cost-accounting must be gradually applied both within enterprises and organisations and in the relations between enterprises and ministries. Put the Council of Workers' Collectives (STK) in charge of the enterprise's basic and working funds. The enterprise's leading personnel must work for the STK. The election of Ministers and their deputies at branch STKs to be considered expedient. Branch STKs to be given the right to decide on the liquidation of Ministries.

42. The alternative variants of economic reform to be taken to a national referendum.

43. Various levels of bodies to be created under the auspices of Soviets co-ordinating

the economic activity of enterprises of corresponding rank. These bodies must be comprised of STK representatives from the enterprises being co-ordinated.

STKs comprise delegates from shop councils and are in charge of enterprise funds.

Shop councils comprise representatives from brigades and are in charge of shop funds.

State orders must be gradually eliminated.

44. The transfer of consistently loss-making collective and state farms to unlimited hire by the rural populace to be considered expedient.

45. Consider the most important political task the trend of legislation, economic activity for maintaining the health of the population and consequently its means of living. Examine the alternatives to decisions affecting the environment. Introduce compulsory general ecological education.

Examine the expediency of the existence of the Ministry of Water Management, suspend construction projects not ecologically approved.

46. Form an organisation for the defence of consumer interests on a society-state basis with particular attention to the quality of foodstuffs.

The Nineteenth Party Conference must serve as a step up from the Stalinist system of bureaucratic arbitrariness towards the realisation of the goals of the socialist movement.

Long live democratic socialism!

Long live the unity of the progressive forces of the Communist Party and the broad democratic movement!

Long live revolutionary perestroika!

## ОБЩЕСТВЕННЫЙ НАКАЗ ПАРТИННОЙ КОНФЕРЕНЦИИ

ПРИНЯТ НА ВСТРЕЧЕ САМОДЕЯТЕЛЬНЫХ ОБЪЕДИНЕНИЙ Г. МОСКВЫ

5 июня 1988 г. Дворец Молодежи  
12 июня 1988 г. Дом культуры "Энергетик"

Сложившаяся политическая обстановка перед партконференцией вызывает глубокую озабоченность общественности. Выборы прошли традиционным путем фактической самокооптации аппаратных работников. Не было налажено четкого и подлинно демократического механизма выборов, отличного от "застойного". Бюрократические тенденции в партаппарате все еще преобладают, что выражается в положительных оценках проведенных выборов пленумами обкомов и горкомов. Можно только надеяться, что подобный характер выборов не скажется на результатах конференции. Возникает серьезная опасность половинчатых решений, что негативно скажется на темпах перестройки, обострит ситуацию в стране и приведет в конце концов к острому политическому кризису с неопределенным исходом. Поэтому мы предлагаем следующее:

1. Партконференция должна открыть путь к внеочередному съезду партии, который должен принять кардинальные решения.

2. Поскольку месячный срок на обсуждение тезисов явно недостаточен, общепартийная дискуссия по проблемам предстоящих реформ должна быть продолжена вплоть до съезда.

3. Выборы на съезде должны вестись по платформам, сформировавшимся в ходе этой дискуссии.

# A POLITICAL DEMONSTRATION IN MOSCOW

"Obshchina" (Commune) Press Centre Leaflet No.1  
by "Obshchina" Moscow correspondent, Vladimir Potapov

At about four o'clock on the evening of 28th May, in front of the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, passers-by could observe an unusual gathering of people, photographers with cameras at the ready and one or two foreign television crews. They were all waiting for something. When the clock hand was completely on the four, this whole group of around eighty people advanced towards the steps of the Bolshoi Theatre where, for several minutes, they unfurled the slogans of *Obshchina*, other Clubs in the Federation of Socialist Clubs (FSOK) and *Civil Dignity*: "Not the people for socialism, but socialism for the people", "The Nineteenth Party Conference - honest elections", "A co-operative basis for socialism", "Bureaucrats - the furnace of Perestroika", "Freedom without socialism is privilege and injustice, socialism without freedom is slavery and bestiality", "Socialism is self-management", "Down with the temporary regulations" [on demonstrations], "Registration of independent associations", "We demand a law on the press", "We demand a law on demonstrations" etc.

A member of the historical-political association *Obshchina*, teacher of history Aleksei Vasilivetskii, addressed a short speech to those assembled. He stressed that the Central Committee Theses for the Nineteenth Party Conference, published the day before, are unspecific at a time when people need real guarantees that the changes are irreversible. There are still many forces slowing down perestroika. The "temporary regulations" on meetings and demonstrations are nothing less than a blow against democratisation, in direct breach of the Soviet Constitution, but nonetheless applied in many of the country's cities. We call upon those who are not indifferent to the fate of perestroika and the fate of our country, said Aleksei Vasilivetskii, to take part in a democratic demonstration. Leaflets handed out by activists of *Obshchina* and *Civil Dignity* finished off the business: a section of those present assembled into a demonstration and the column moved off along its designated route.

In the narrow approach to Pushkin Street a daring captain from the 17th Police Department attempted to stop the column. The demonstrators responded to the demand

to give up their objective by singing "Bravely, comrades, in step!", and then began to "by-pass" the guardian of law and order. This was the last obstacle in the way of the demonstrators who proceeded along Moscow's main street, Gorky Street, past the Moscow Soviet building on Soviet Square, past the editorial building of *Moscow News* on Pushkin Square and stopped on the pedestrian square in front of the *Izvestia* complex. Representatives from *Obshchina*, *Civil Dignity*, *Union of Worker-Communists* and several other groups spoke at the meeting which took place and in which a minimum of 600 people took part.

The general mood of those involved in the meeting can be described in the words of Andrei Isaev (*Obshchina*) - "There's no need to be afraid!" Moscow history student, Aleksandr Shubin (*Obshchina*), emphasised in his speech that elections in many organisations to the Nineteenth Party Conference, on the decisions of which practically hangs the fate of every citizen in the USSR, were antidemocratic - those elected being either "dummies" or apparatchiks, paid functionaries. If the Nineteenth Party Conference proceeded in the spirit of the Nineteenth Party Congress this would mean for the country price-rises on food products, the downfall of democratisation and an undoubted worsening of the working class's living conditions. The people therefore must have the opportunity to tell the Party what it wants of it and not be constrained by any sort of "Temporary regulations".

Aleksei Vasilivetskii (*Obshchina*) declared that there was absurdly little time for discussing the Theses and that they were of a particularly abstract nature, no reflection could be found in them of painful questions on State orders to enterprises and also the guaranteeing of citizens' constitutional rights.

Viktor Zolotarev (*Civil Dignity*) subjected to criticism the "Temporary regulations" on meetings and demonstrations, adopted by the Moscow Soviet on 11th August 1987 (Resolution No. 2075) and effective in some other cities. Over the past few months around fifty non-political demonstrations and meetings had been banned on the basis of these "Regulations" in Leningrad alone. Zolotarev spoke of the illegality of this act and proclaimed the slogan "The Constitution is above regulations".

Vladimir Gurbolikov (*Obshchina*), also well-known for his work in the "Freedom" (*Svoboda*) Association, added to Zolotarev by saying that, at the time of the FSOK rally on

1st May 1988, the organisers came up against a horrible fact: the Moscow Regional Executive Committee had adopted the "Temporary Regulations" for Moscow Region according to which, if they were followed to the letter, any excursion into the forest by more than two people would require permission. This information was met with laughter by those assembled. Unfortunately, it was laughter that was far from happy.

Before closing the meeting at 5 p.m. (we should say, incidentally, that preliminary permission was not granted. Informal groups in Moscow had already been stubbornly ignoring the "Regulations" for about a month), the organisers called upon those gathered to establish on this site, in front of the *Izvestia* building, a permanent place for open public discussions and meetings in as much as, on the pedestrianised square, it would be impossible to interfere with the traffic. It was declared that, every Saturday at 4 p.m., representatives of the various initiative groups would gather on this spot and propagandise their ideas and pose the authorities with serious questions requiring solutions.

Anna Zolotareva (*Civil Dignity*) provided a certain emotional dimension: "I'm 18 years old", she said, "and all the years I've lived in the USSR I've never seen anything like this. It's so good that all this is now possible. However, the right to meetings has not so far been guaranteed and public opinion cannot rely on a 'kind Tsar', it must seize this right for itself".

Now when this brilliantly organised demonstration has finished (police attempts to seize some school pupils from *Alliance* after 5 p.m. were cut short by public opinion), a couple of words need to be said on preparation. On Tuesday, 24th May, a majority of the Moscow Council of FSOK declared itself in favour of supporting the initiative by *Obshchina* and *Civil Dignity* (participating in the demonstration were *Forest People*, *UKI*, *Alliance*, *Che Guevara* and *Alejandro Diaz International Brigades* and other FSOK clubs). Opposed were *Activists for a Democratic Perestroika* and representatives of the expanding *Socialist Initiative* (SI) group led by Boris Kagarlitskii. The same *Socialist Initiative* in whose declaration there are not a few fine words on "the personal responsibility of each one of us for the fate of socialism and the fate of the motherland", "the awakening and activating of socialist initiative" and "the right to free will" etc. Although the arguments of this group of the need to familiarise themselves with the Central Committee Theses before the demonstration had faded away by the 27th May, the decision to stay at home remained in force. It can only be welcomed that *Socialist Initiative* members, Gershfeld and Krymkin, came on the demonstration despite the SI Council's decision, showing that they understand the need to supplement words with actions. It is a pity that other SI members evidently did not understand this.

It is a cause for regret that active participants in the independent socialist movement - members of the Moscow group of the *All-Union Social-Political Club* (VSPK) were unable to take part in the demonstration having been informed about it by German Ivantsovsky (?) who on Tuesday had participated in the FSOK Council and, along with SI, voted against the demonstration without being empowered to do so by

the Moscow group of VSPK.

Nevertheless, *Obshchina* expresses its confidence that the errors and mistakes committed by its allies in the independent socialist movement will not serve as a reason for serious differences and insults and not have a bearing on the preparation for the association of all informal socialist organisations in a Socialist Front projected for August of this year.

Stalinist positions and also organisations calling for the violent overthrow of the constitutional system.

The PF does not have strict party discipline and does not make provision for individual membership.

In order to realise its tasks the PF participates in electoral campaigns, elaborates and tables draft laws and decrees for discussion by the Soviets, publishes its own printed organ etc. As in Estonia, it is considered impossible to hold leading positions jointly in the PF and Party-State organs.

The creation of the Popular Front will undoubtedly become a major step in activating the mass of workers and the successful realisation of the social initiatives now arising.

By way of an exchange of experience: the May rally of the Federation of Socialist Clubs (FSOK), the meeting at the Palace of Youth, the Democratic Union and the PF organising committees, have, in our view, one very real inadequacy: the irregular and undemocratic procedure for taking decisions.

Attempts can be observed of foisting opinions and profiting from haste and the lack of acquaintance of a majority of groups with the documents prepared. When will the initiative groups, formed in various circumstances, understand that, so that their work does not go to waste, they must vote only after a discussion of these initiatives within the groups, and that every group otherwise has the right to recall their delegate? It is precisely this which causes many splits and insults within the informal movement. It is this which explains the founding of the so-called "National Front" (*Obshchenarodnyi Front*) - parts of five groups which have broken away from the majority. But this should not happen. Undoubtedly, the reason for the differences is a major one - the mention of the principle of "the struggle for the building of democratic socialism" in the working document produced by the Organising Committee of the Popular Front. However, it is better explained by M. Malyutin, one of the most consistent fighters for retaining this phrase. So consistent that it was precisely because of his presence on the PF Organising Committee (and that of A. Danilov and V. Ponomarev) that members of the "National Front" formed their own (independent) initiative group...



# THE POPULAR FRONT

Recently, the idea of founding a Popular Front, uniting the progressive wing of the CPSU and the broad democratic movement, has been widely discussed in social circles. Today, when the functioning of the institution of official social organisations is, on the whole, ineffectual and informal groups are limited by the level of club activity, the opportunity arises for creating a broad social organisation capable of ensuring the socialisation of the mass of workers and giving organisational form to the movement in support of perestroika which could, in a short space of time, encompass a large part of the country's socially active population. In the opinion of many participants in the discussion, such an organisation could become the Popular Front.

## Public Opinion

The idea of creating "people's committees" in defence of perestroika has been repeatedly expressed over the past two years in various cities and currently enjoys significant popularity among workers and sections of the intelligentsia. Until recently, the demand for the formation of a Popular Front was advanced mainly in the major provincial and regional centres. However, after the organisation of the Popular Front in Estonia and, to some degree, under the influence of the resonance generated by the congress of dissident groups (the "Democratic Union"), the spread of the idea of a Popular Front of socialist forces assumed a headlong character, taking hold in Moscow, Leningrad and several other cities. In the near future, a further and possibly extraordinarily rapid spread of support for this idea should be expected.

From society's point of view, the Popular Front is a real and much more appropriate alternative in present conditions to the multi-party system advanced by the "Democratic Union" and a series of other groups.

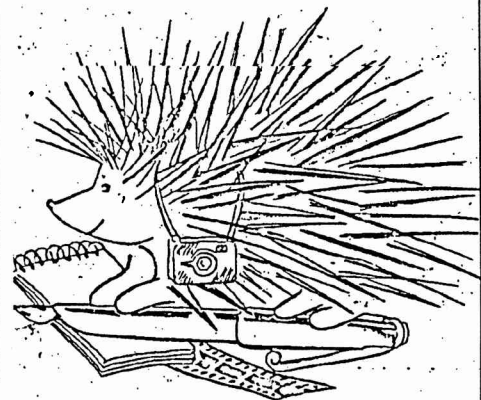
The slogan of the Popular Front is enjoying significant success among the so-called "informal movement". Taking the feelings of workers and intellectuals into account, the idea of the Popular Front can be considered, at present, to have gained wide support among the population.

## The Organisational Principles of the Popular Front

The basic principles of the projected Popular Front, as prepared by the Moscow Organising Committee, are as follows:

The Popular Front (PF) is a socio-political association of citizens of the USSR actively participating in the restructuring of Soviet society and in the struggle to build democratic socialism in our country. The Popular Front must include social clubs and groups founded on socialist principles or (in the case of religious and non-political associations) not opposed to the ideals of democracy, humanism and socialism. The founding of Popular Front cells is envisaged on a wide basis in enterprises and institutions as are special agreements between the PF and existing voluntary societies, creative unions etc., of importance at Republican and all-Union levels.

Co-operatives may become members of the Popular Front if they have non-commercial aims in their constitution and practical activity. Entry to the PF is forbidden to groups advocating nationalist, anti-socialist or



# YELTSIN'S SPEECH TO THE CC PLENUM 21st OCTOBER 1987

From the Editors [of *Left Turn*]: Following numerous requests we are printing one of the distributed variants of comrade B.N. Yeltsin's speech at the October C.C. Plenum. The text, as Roy Medvedev remarks (see *Left Turn* No.6), is a fake, but close to the original. Quotations cited by M.S. Gorbachev in his speech to the Plenum of the Moscow City Committee (*Gorkom*) are absent from the text. In the published interview [conducted with the B.B.C.], B.N. Yeltsin gives, among other things, an evaluation of the document and comments on several positions contained in the text.

Comrades!

As on all present, Gorbachev's report has made a big impression on me. This heroic road which our people has travelled in the 70 years of building socialism is reflected in the report in all its complexity. Yes, we are pioneers and this has probably been the cause of several difficult and agonising pages in our history. And, of course, Comrade Gorbachev is right that if we wish to move forward with confidence, we must know and learn from our mistakes on this road so that they will never be repeated.

A detailed and objective analysis is given in the report of the stormy and, at times, contradictory political life of our planet. The leading and, I would say, fundamental role of our state in this life has been shown. And we are right, comrades, to be proud of the beneficial and positive influence which our country has on international events.

I think that I am not mistaken if I say that we all listened with great enthusiasm to that part of Comrade Gorbachev's report in which was shown the essence and prospects for the restructuring of social life being carried out today in our country. Yes, it is difficult to overestimate the significance of our society's restructuring for the fate of socialism on earth. Yes, it is precisely at this moment that the question of whether there is or is not a socialist society on the planet is being resolved. And this, comrades, is precisely the reason why I would like to dwell on several unhealthy phenomena slowing down and, in certain instances, even stopping the course of perestroika.

Mikhail Sergeyevich suggested that I postpone discussion of these questions until after the Jubilee celebrations. But I think that a celebratory, festive mood does not hinder but helps us, with all Party responsibility and integrity, to examine these questions and provide a principled assessment of them.

As you know, comrades, many workers' letters are addressed to the Moscow *Gorkom* and to me personally, in which Muscovites share their thoughts, doubts and hopes in relation to the course of perestroika. And so,



comrades, when you begin to read this postbag and seek an answer, the festive, jubilee mood evaporates. Yes, comrades, it's difficult for me to explain to a factory worker why, in the seventieth year of his political power, he has to queue for hours for sausages containing more starch than meat, while on our festive tables there is sturgeon, caviare and other delicacies obtained without effort in a place where he would not be allowed anywhere near.

How can I explain this to veterans who took part in the Civil War and who can now be numbered on the fingers of one hand? Have you seen the list of produce on their holiday order? They fetched it in and showed me. And how I listen when they say that it's crumbs from the lord's table. And you understand, comrades, which table they have in mind! How can I look them in the eye? You see, in not sparing their lives, they have conquered and entrusted us with power. What do I reply to them?

I think, comrades that all these feeding-troughs, as they are called by the people, are a legacy of the great period of stagnation. And it's time to finish with it. And those for whom all possible privileges are the main thing in Party work and in life, I don't think, comrades, they should be on this road with us. You don't have to shout at me, Comrade Ligachev. And you don't have to lecture me. No, I'm not a little boy, I have such a principled position.

I must tell you, comrades, with all candour, that it is difficult to work when, instead of concrete comradely assistance you get coarse outbursts or moral instruction. In this regard, comrades I must ask the Politburo to save me from Raisa Maksimovna's [Gorbachev] petty interference and her daily telephone calls and scoldings.

Comrades, I have some sorry figures

prepared about the administrative apparatus in Moscow and various departments but I won't spoil the festive mood of those present with them, the more so as a majority of comrades know them already. You will recall how many talks there were, how many resolutions were passed, but the size of our bureaucracy in most departments has hardly gone down, and in the agro-industrial complex, for example, its even increased. This is where the brake is! This is where perestroika is slipping! This is where all our good ideas are sticking in the bureaucratic mire. Comrades, it must be clearly understood that, as long as we do not break up the army of bureaucrats and red-tape merchants, and it is precisely an army, there will be no path for perestroika and all our resolutions and directions will be buried by a flood of instructions and circulars.

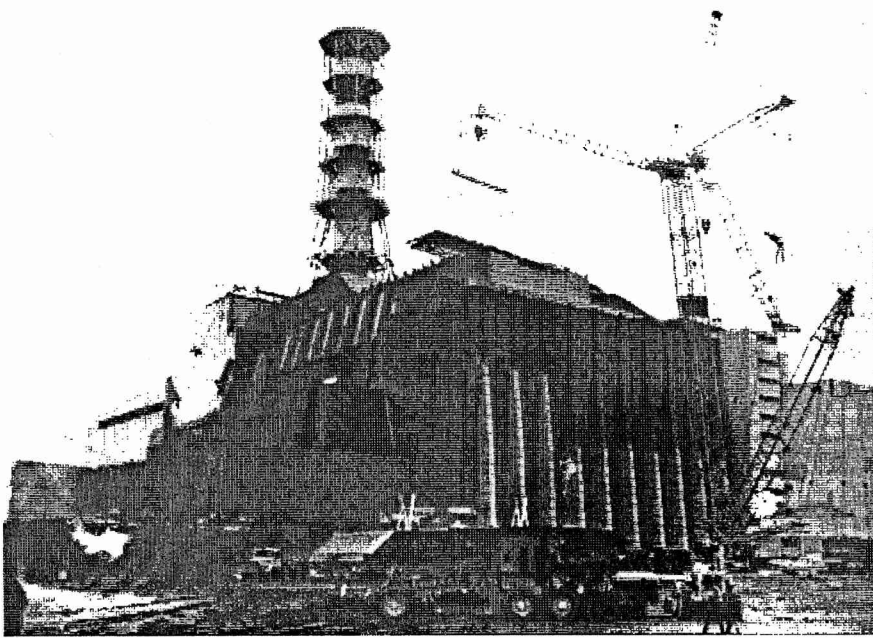
Nor are things improving in trade. I will report, comrades, how things stand in Moscow. Up to now little has changed. And the same bureaucrats from the Ministries conceal the enemy with all their might from the shops. I think not out of considerations of humanity. No, Comrade Chebrikov, unfortunately these are facts. There are many discussions, comrades, but things are not happening.

But behind these discussions there is nothing of any use to the average person. It's time, comrades, to move from words to deeds. It's time to use power, and we have power. It has been entrusted to us by the people and if we don't use it, when stuck in this swamp, to defend true interests from starving cats, there will be no results from perestroika.

And there is one other question, comrades. One other question that we have inherited, and perhaps the most difficult. This is the question of Afghanistan, comrades. About a third of all the letters we receive touch upon this question in one way or another. You all know the results of the survey of Muscovites on this question by a French journalist. And I think, comrades, that there cannot be two opinions about this. This question must be resolved as soon as possible. Our forces must be pulled out. And I think that Comrade Shevardnadze should be concerned completely with this problem and while he is busy with other, in my view, less burning issues, he is out of the country for months.

At the end of my contribution, comrades, I wish to express the profound conviction that the present difficulties are the teething troubles of a transition period which we have to overcome and must necessarily overcome in the shortest possible time.

And I want to assure you, comrades, that the Moscow City organisation, relying on the support of all genuine Communists in the city and all Muscovite patriots, is doing everything to conclude this unhealthy period as quickly as possible with the complete victory of the ideas of perestroika, the ideas of our society.



# DO WE NEED AN ATOMIC POWER STATION?

by the Organising Committee of the "Ascent" Ecological Club of Kazan

In recent years several countries have reviewed their energy programmes: ceasing the construction of new atomic power stations and even dismantling existing ones. In contrast they have put their efforts into the development of energy-conservation technologies and mastery of renewable sources of energy - the sun, wind, the earth's heat, wave-power etc.

What has caused this?

An atomic power station is one of the most dangerous of manufactures. Its threat to the environment is truly on a global scale both in extent and time:

1. The construction of new atomic power stations raises the level of background radiation, the effect of which on humans will only be apparent after generations. Apart from that, radiation reinforces the influence of other harmful factors (chemical pollution etc.)

2. A vast amount of water passes through an atomic power station (one thousand megawatts of power requires five million cubic metres in a twenty-four hour period - seven times greater than Kazan's water consumption). The properties of the processed water are still not completely understood, although the effect of thermal pollution is already well-known: the temperature in reservoirs beside atomic power stations rises by 5-6 degrees which leads to the

disruption of the ecological equilibrium in a whole region.

3. In time radioactive waste accumulates (the power station's spent fuel) requiring expensive storage. Control will have to be exercised over hundreds and even thousands of years while the containers' initial temperature reaches 200 degrees C. There are islands in the Pacific Ocean which have already been turned into radioactive burial grounds and closed off for 25 thousand years (by comparison, the growth of our civilisation from that of Ancient Egypt has taken all of 5-10 thousand years).

4. The extraction of uranium and the transportation, processing and burial of radioactive waste are all very dangerous for the health of workers in production, something which is, at times, beyond the field of vision of the press.

5. At the present time the absolute reliability of an atomic power station is not guaranteed. According to some estimates, a major accident is possible in a reactor on average every two and a half years. The consequences of such catastrophes are well-known through the examples of Three-Mile Island (USA), Chernobyl and others.

Even from an economic point of view the development of atomic energy is becoming all the more unprofitable:

a. The cost of power station construction is growing. The price of uranium is increasing even more quickly (it has risen by 5-6

times in the last ten years). At the same time the cost of one kilowatt hour of electricity produced through solar panels is becoming increasingly cheaper.

b. Dismantling an atomic power station at the end of its operative life (after 25-30 years) is a complex and expensive (200 million dollars) operation.

c. Atomic power stations use fossil fuel, the reserves of which are limited (according to estimates, there are only 30 years of it left). Developing energy resources through this method is a dead-end. The attempt to transfer from uranium to plutonium (utilising reactors with accelerated neutrons) is encountering major technical difficulties. Apart from which, the problem of security is exacerbated as plutonium is highly suitable for illegally manufacturing atomic weapons with the aim of blackmail. It was precisely these dangers which forced the USA to reject the use of plutonium.

All of the foregoing has, in many countries, changed attitudes towards atomic power which, not so very long ago, was considered a long-term prospect. At the present time in the USA a course is being taken towards cutting back atomic energy programmes. In Sweden, Switzerland and Italy the construction of new atomic power stations has been forbidden. In Austria in 1988, an atomic power station, ready for operation 8 years ago but not yet put on stream because of ecological considerations, has begun to be dismantled.

In the USSR the proportion of electricity produced by atomic power stations is around 10 per cent. This is less than could be saved through transferring to energy conservation technology and the rational use of resources: at the moment our goods consume on average 1.5 times more energy than in Common Market countries.

There exist two approaches to resolving the energy problem:

1. Mastery of energy-saving technology. According to some estimates, the efficacy of energy utilisation throughout the economy constitutes only 10 per cent.

2. Mastery of renewable sources of energy (sun, wind, etc.). The sun is a particularly powerful source. Even in comparatively cold Sweden solar energy is profitably employed for the lighting and heating of homes. In the USSR it would be sufficient to locate in Central Asia a solar power plant over an area of 4000 sq. kms. (the size of Rybinsk reservoir) to produce as much energy as is produced by all existing power stations. Wind power also has great potential. Already there are wind power stations of up to three megawatts in power. The wind power resources of the Tatar ASSR are estimated at 34 billion kilowatt hours per year, i.e. 27 times more power than the Nizhnekamsk hydro-electric power station under construction.

It should be noted that the USSR's energy programme was laid down in the Seventies, during the period of stagnation, when a



technocratic approach predominated with regard to the environment (we should recall the project for changing the flow of the northern rivers, the problems of the Aral Sea and Lake Baikal, etc.); it was created in the absence of openness, secretly, by people with an interest in the development of atomic power.

Apart from departmental interests, the decisive role was played by the economy's expenditure mechanism and also planning from the achieved level.

Even after the Chernobyl accident, atomic scientists, hiding behind lofty phrases about technical progress, continue to fight for their narrow departmental interests, accusing the opponents of atomic power plants of leading us back to the plough and to caves. However, more and more people are conscious that technological progress exists not for the sake of technology, but in order to serve mankind and the preservation of nature which atomic power stations do not ensure. At the same time, energy-saving technologies and mastery of renewable energy sources (in which we are behind Western countries) constitute the real long-term and progressive way.

Public opinion in our country is worried about atomic power. It was precisely at its demand that the construction of atomic power stations in Minsk, Odessa (see *Izvestia*, 9th March 1988) and Krasnodar region was halted.

In accordance with the law passed by the USSR Supreme Soviet on national discussions of questions of state importance, we propose the holding of a referendum on the question of atomic power stations.

We demand a review of the energy programme.

In particular, we demand the halting of construction work on the Tatar atomic power station, located in a densely populated region (close to the cities of Naberezhnye Chelni, Nizhnekamsk, Elabuga, Chistopol - in all around one million inhabitants), ecologically vulnerable, at the confluence of three rivers (Vyatka, Kama and Volga), in a region rich in natural energy resources - oil, gas and also with great opportunities for harnessing the energy of sun and wind, in the centre of Tataria, which creates the potential danger of annihilating the entire republic.

## THE DEMOCRATIC UNION (DS)

*From the Democratic Union's "Declaration" (Approved at the Democratic Union's Founding Congress, 9th May 1988)*

**A**t the present time we define the content of our activity as *political opposition* to the existing social system... We declare our support to those forces in the CPSU which not in words but in deeds are striving to implement democratic reforms by utilising their position as members of the ruling party...

*The Programme of Principles*, acknowledgement of which is a necessary condition of membership of the DS.

1. Condemnation of the system of political rule which arose in October 1917, the historical development of which consisted in the consistent formation of totalitarianism.

2. A denial of the ideology of Leninism which constitutes the foundation of totalitarianism.

3. An unequivocal denial of terrorist and violent methods of political struggle as incompatible with the ideals of freedom and democracy.

4. Activity, energetically directed towards the achievement of political, economic and spiritual pluralism. i.e. genuine modern democracy, the bases of which are:

- a multi-party system and parliamentarism;
- a legal, independent free press;
- the free activity of trade unions independent of state power;
- the existence of all sectors of the economy - state, co-operative, individual and private - on an equal footing and free competition between them;
- the division of powers: legislative, executive and judiciary; - the de-ideologisation of the state, i.e. equal rights for all ideologies apart from those appealing to violence or justifying it; - the unconditional guaranteeing of civil liberties: of expression, the press, gatherings, meetings, street processions and demonstrations which do not result in violence; - freedom of religion, religious and atheistic propaganda.

5. The recognition, not in words but in deeds, of the right of nations to self-determination.

6. The demand for the abrogation of the political articles of the Criminal Code, the freeing and rehabilitation (with compensation) of all political prisoners.

7. A declared repudiation of expansion as the cornerstone of foreign policy.



*Soviets anti-nuclear demonstrators*

# Documents from the Polish Socialist Party PPS (RD)

*Translated and introduced by David Holland.*

The reformation of the PPS (Polish Socialist Party) in November 1987 was a welcome revival of an organised socialist current in the Polish working class.

For Western socialists the distressing sight of Margaret Thatcher's rapturous reception in Gdansk will have underlined the urgent need for a coherent and dynamic socialist current in the Polish opposition.

In the course of 1988 the organisation has been undergoing a process of political and programmatic clarification, as is natural in any new organisation, but especially one seeking to recover submerged political traditions in conditions of illegality and to apply them to the present.

Not surprisingly, this has also involved a process of political differentiation. Early in the life of the young Party, a group has split to the right and attempted to found a rival organisation on a less radical orientation. This breakaway group was led by the former President of the PPS, Jan Jozef Lipski. It is particularly unfortunate that after the appearance of political differences and the withdrawal of the Lipski group, it chose to make damaging accusations of police penetration. This was in the worst tradition of settling political scores by attempts to smear political opponents.

It is against this background that the PPS has adopted the qualifying title "Democratic Revolution," which is taken from one of the documents printed below, to distinguish itself from the Lipski Group, which also lays claim to the name of the PPS.

The PPS (RD) is now one of the most combative and vital components of the opposition. It is made up overwhelmingly of young people - perhaps 90% of the membership are aged between 20 and 30. It is active on a national scale with branches in Warsaw, Gdansk, Wroclaw, Lublin, Poznan, Plock and Krakow, to name some of the more important centres.

As some of the documents collected below make clear, they are active participants in the workers' self management councils in work-places and are active supporters of Solidarity structures.

The PPS (RD) publish a number of clandestine periodicals, such as *Robotnik*, distributed nationally from Warsaw, and various papers, published in the provinces, such as *Gazeta Jastrzebska*, *Robotnik Wybrzeza* and *Robotnik Mazowiecki*.

Poland this year was gripped by a new upsurge of struggle with successive waves of strikes in May and August, demanding the legalisation of Solidarity. The PPS

(RD) played a vigorous role, itself organising strike action and demonstrations.

In the aftermath of the May strikes, four leading figures in the PPS (RD), Piniór, Borowczyk, Skiba and Sarata, received suspended sentences of imprisonment of between 6 to 18 months, with heavy fines on trumped up charges of assaulting a minor official.

During the August strike wave, what is now the PPS (RD) organised strikes in the mines in Silesia, whilst in the Szczecin ship-yards, a leading PPS member, Andrzej Kowalski, was a member of the strike committee.

Most recently in the demonstrations that took place in many Polish cities on the seventh anniversary of the proclamation of martial law (on the 13th December) the PPS, together with *Solidarnosc Walczaca*, were often the main organisers. Fifteen thousand people for example, marched through the streets of Wroclaw behind PPS banners.

The clearest indications of the programmatic direction of the organisation are to be found in the two documents "Principles of Activity" and "The Democratic Revolution." They provide clear evidence of a radical and authentically socialist direction. The document from December 1988 explains the Party's response to the latest realignments in the Polish opposition.

*Labour Focus* looks forward to the opportunity of providing further programmatic material from the PPS (RD), following their Congress in January.

The PPS have recently opened a London office, under the auspices of Kensington Labour Party, 92 Ladbroke Grove, London W11, Tel. 01-229 6259. This is open every Thursday evening from 6.00-10.00.

---

The PPS Supreme Council wishes to direct the attention of all PPS structures to the opening of a programmatic discussion in the Party. To this end the Supreme Council submits for discussion amongst members and sympathisers of the PPS the following resolution "Principles of Activity for the PPS in the Period until the Statutory Congress." The Supreme Council appeals for observations, amendments and alternative proposals. Party structures are obliged to conclude this discussion by 31st of March 1988.

## **Principles of Activity for the PPS in the Period until the Statutory Congress.**

1) The PPS was created in order to defend disadvantaged social groups, to carry out the economic and political liberation of the workers and to put an end to the exploitation of labour that has prevailed hitherto. This can only be achieved through the

abolition of the nomenklatura and the seizure by the workers of the fruits of their own labour, together with all the tools and means employed in order to carry out the every-day manufacture of goods. Such an enfranchisement of the workers, together with the creation of institutional and political guarantees of this course of transformation is for the PPS the road to the rebuilding of the Polish economy. To achieve this goal we have created an open and legal Party, at least by the standards of international law, even though these are not applied in the PRL (Polish Peoples Republic). The Party aims to change the Constitution and the legal system of the PRL, and in particular to put an end to the hegemony of the PZPR (Polish United Workers Party), together with the leading role of any Party, since it is contrary to the traditions of democratic socialism.

We are also aware that the realisation of these ends may mean entering into open conflict with the governmental apparatus and the legal system of the PRL. These have been constructed in such a way as to best defend the political interests of the governing elite.

The Communists do not rule Poland with the consent of society, but on the strength of the diktat of a foreign power. Therefore the goal of making it possible for society to exercise a free choice on the system of government best suited to it justifies the employment of tactics of civil disobedience.

2) With regard to the deepening economic crisis and the tendency of the authorities to adopt ever more anti-worker and anti-socialist policies, it is a natural right of workers to defend themselves. The force and violence of protest is in direct proportion to the scale of the assault on the rights and interests of working people. The PPS does not restrict itself to moral support for social protests. The task of the Party is not only to take part in struggles but also to inspire and organise them. In the current dramatic social situation, the place of members of the PPS is among the striking workers, in the founding committees of Solidarity, in the workers' self-management organisations, on the side of the downtrodden and exploited.

3) The PPS considers support for workplace Solidarity organisations particularly important.

Indeed Solidarity is the chief weapon in the struggle for workers' rights. It can be said without fear of exaggeration that the prosperity and welfare of the majority of Poles depend on the strength of this union. For them the basic facts of existence are not benefits or participation in the power structure, but labour. We consider therefore that there would be disastrous consequences if the trade union character of Solidarity were to be weakened by its transformation into a social movement or a political party.

4) The destruction of Communist governments in Poland is only possible through close co-operation between democratic movements in all the countries of the Eastern bloc. The dominance of the Party nomenklatura in the Central and East European states cements co-operation between them through the Warsaw Pact and the CMEA (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance). An effective struggle for freedom, independence, democracy and social justice therefore requires a co-ordinated struggle by the oppressed societies. The PPS will only enter discussions and make alliances with the societies themselves and their independent organizations.

The governing elites in Poland, Romania and Hungary, as well as in other communist countries, are trying to save themselves by using brutal methods of exploitation modelled on an earlier phase of capitalism. They are selling off natural resources dirt cheap. They want to attract foreign capital at any price and they do so by offering cheap labour.

The PPS has been reconstructed in Poland, after many years existence in emigration. The emigre PPS is a member of the Union of Central and East European Socialist Parties (SUCEE). We hope that just as the PPS has been reconstructed, so also can socialist parties in the other countries. The PPS will support such activity with all means at its disposal.

5) A huge technological gap exists between the capitalist world and the communist countries. This is reflected both in economic development and social structure. This means that a series of problems confronting socialist and social-democratic parties in Western Europe are questions for the distant future for the PPS. Our present political and economic problems are more understandable to Third World parties. But the PPS always played a significant part in the work of the international socialist movement. We believe that we can find this role again in the family of world socialist parties. The PPS hopes that it will be in a position to take part in the programmatic discussions amongst European socialist parties, so continuing the contribution of Polish socialists such as M. Niedzialkowski, A. Ciolkosz, F. Gross (the author of a work on the second technical revolution) and of others in the work of the Socialist International.

PPS Supreme Council

Warsaw 14 February 1988

#### Communique

On the 14th of February 1988 a session of the Supreme Council of the PPS took place. On the agenda was the question of the opening of the discussion on the PPS programme. Four members of the leadership: Jan Jozef Lipski, Wladyslaw Goldfinger-Kunicki, Andrzej Malanowski and Marek Nowicki resigned from their positions. The Supreme Council considers this to be an attempt to transform the discussion on programme to the level of personality conflict. The Supreme Council, in accord with the obligations arising from the resolutions of the Founding Conference and the Political Declaration of the PPS, will continue with the process of beginning the inner party discussion on programme, despite the hindrance referred to above.

Supreme Council PPS

Warsaw 14 February 1988

Zbigniew Chedoszko - Szczecin Zuzanna Dabrowska - Wroclaw  
Piotr Ikonowicz - Warsaw Grzegorz Ilka - Warsaw Artur  
Koszykowski Andrzej Kowalski - Wroclaw Agata Michalek -  
Krakow Cezary Mizejewski - Warsaw Jacek Pawlowicz - Plock  
Jozef Piniór - Wroclaw Malgorzata Ponulak - Wroclaw Tadeusz  
Rachowski.

#### Statement of the Supreme Council

The Supreme Council notes with surprise the resignation of four members of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the PPS on the 14th of February 1988. In the statement putting forward the resignations there are vehement assertions about infiltration by the political police. This is a very grave charge. We are particularly surprised by the failure to resort to the procedures laid down in statute for use of the Party Tribunal. (Art. 11,12,13 of the Provisional Statutes of the PPS). This is particularly morally reprehensible, since the charge of co-operation with the Ministry of Internal Affairs is in Polish conditions the occasion of civil death. The function of the Tribunal is precisely to arbitrate when discussion about political differences stops and baseless accusations begin.

The advancement of such serious charges, without resort to the

remedies provided by statute, at a time when the PPS is barely three months old, must raise doubts about the timing and impair the durability of the socialist convictions of these persons. The vacant positions in the Presidium of the PPS will remain vacant until the Programmatic Congress.

### **Position of the National Conference of the Polish Socialist Party on the Question of Rebuilding the Structures of Solidarity**

The PPS recognises that in the present situation of deteriorating workers' living standards, the reconstruction of an independent trade union movement is a task of fundamental importance. That is why we call upon all members and sympathisers of the PPS to undertake the reconstruction of factory units of Solidarity, and in particular to establish Organising Committees of Solidarity, wherever they do not already exist.

The PPS recognises the mistaken character of efforts to restrain factory Solidarity units from activity, until the "round table" talks have concluded. What we gain will be what we can win for ourselves.

Neither the Polish Socialist Party nor any of its members can take part in the "round table" talks. This is because the PPS does not recognise the present constitution of the People's Republic of Poland as the basis for a legitimate post-Stalinist system of government.

First National Conference Polish Socialist Party

Tadeusz Rachowski

President of the PPS Central Executive Committee Warsaw 22 October 1988

## ***The Democratic Revolution***

The crisis of ideology has reflected the impotence of the traditional political options in relation to an irrational and inhuman model of development. Contemporary capitalism has overcome successive barriers to growth and made economic development an end in itself. In the course of continual technological change, man has become an obstacle rather than the subject of the process. Ever larger numbers of young people pay for this with unemployment and poverty. These phenomena, together with the informational and cultural expropriation of societies, lead to alienation, racism and chauvinism.

In the countries of the so-called "Third World" - that is the countries of dependent capitalism - the social costs of the model of development referred to are incomparably higher. The absence of economic independence is the source of political dependence. The alternative then lies between an authoritarian dictatorship or stalinisation.

Genocide, social apathy and economic collapse make up the balance sheet of the communist governments. Post-stalinist totalitarianism is seeking out new forms in order to survive. Free market processes, with the preservation of the nomenklatura authorities, have the effect of strengthening and deepening the mechanisms of exploitation and domination. Conflict is increasing between the governing elite and the rich layers under its tutelage on the one hand and the working majority on the other. The omnipresent state, which mediates all social relations, is trying to keep the initiative in the process of change. Despite the hopes of some opinion forming milieux, reform from above will not alter the social consequences of totalitarianism. Society wants to reform itself and not to be reformed.

Socialists the world over struggle so that work may become liberation from poverty, domination and isolation. The experience of the workers' movement shows that the take-over of the workplace and the creation of representative political bodies for society, lead us to a multi-sectoral economy, with a social security system, resting on the redistribution of national income. In the conditions prevailing in Poland, of a state sector managed by the communist nomenklatura, it is necessary to depoliticise it by severing the PUWP (Polish United Workers Party) from economic policy and personnel appointment. The workplaces should be managed by the workforces and by a management team responsible to them. The systemic alternative that appears in the course of this process opens new horizons for civilisation. It creates new forms of self-management and democracy. It permits society to emancipate itself in the search for cultural and informational sovereignty. It creates the chance for it to free itself from the control of the military-industrial complex, for the restoration of the disturbed equilibrium between man and nature. The present crisis in the socialist movement can be overcome by outlining perspectives for a common system for societies living under diverse systems of dependence and domination. It requires this imagination and political courage.

Polish workers have broken the informational and organisational monopoly of the state. The turning point has been passed. In the period of the occupation strikes a consciousness was born, that the workers were becoming the actual proprietors of their factories. Alongside trade union consciousness, the need for political activity became apparent. The dynamic of this movement ran into the resistance of post-Stalinist totalitarianism. The irreformability of the system means that the only chance for working people is to become an alternative power. Its function is the socialisation of the state. The takeover of economic power in the factories by the workers, together with the creation of a democratic form of representation of society. A commonwealth of producers and citizens.

In August 1980, at Brasow, Karabakh and Jastrzebie, the elements of this same phenomenon were present, carrying forward what we regard as the democratic revolution, the passage from a totalitarian system to a democratic one, the socialisation of the economy, and independence.

The destruction of totalitarianism can take place only from below, by the will of the workers, through the autonomous workers' movement, organised in the workplaces in conscious and purposeful activity. The Polish Socialist Party is taking an active part in the construction of an alternative power, with the aim of emancipating Polish society.

To this end we consider that the essential tasks are as follows:

1. The strengthening and development of Solidarity on a factory, regional and national level.
2. The taking of the initiative in management by the workers' councils and a struggle for new forms of self-management.
3. The creation of vertical and horizontal self-management agreements.
4. The creation of a form of self-management to represent the workers at a national level - the Chamber of Self-Management in the Sejm (Parliament).
5. Undertaking a campaign for democratic electoral rules for the Sejm and the People's Councils.
6. The struggle for the demilitarisation of the country.

The entirety of this process renders society sovereign and will lead to a free and independent Poland.

Tadeusz Rachowski

President of the Central Executive Committee of the Polish Socialist Party

First National Conference of the Polish Socialist Party

Warsaw 22 October 1988

35 activists of the PPS took part in the conference from the following centres: Gdansk, Plock, Warszawa, Lublin, Krakow, Opole, Wroclaw.

### Communique 19.12.88

Recently, various types of documents have been appearing over the name of the Polish Socialist Party. Questions have arisen as to the real position of the PPS amongst attentive observers of the Polish political scene. In this situation we feel obliged to clarify what has happened.

1) On the 14th February 1988 four members withdrew from the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the PPS, refusing to participate in the programmatic discussion.

2) On the 26th of June 1988 they returned to their positions, in practice creating a second party. From that moment, there were two political parties in Poland using the same name - that of the PPS.

3) The PPS that we represent is working for the overthrow of the communist authorities in Poland and for full independence. We wrote about this process in the document "The Democratic Revolution" adopted at the First National Conference of the PPS.

4) For this reason we cannot participate in the "Round Table Talks" or the "Citizens' Committee."

5) In order to resolve this confusion, we have temporarily, until the PPS Congress, adopted the name: "Polish Socialist Party - Democratic Revolution." (PPS-RD).

6) At the same time, despite the adoption of this additional definition, we will stand by all agreements and obligations already entered into. In particular this means agreements with: The Fighting Solidarity Organisation (*Solidarnosc Walczaca*); The Workers' Interfactory Solidarity Committee - Mazovian Region (*MRKS - Region Mazowsze*); and above all with the Polish Socialist Party in Exile.

The resolution adopted by the Supreme Council on the 28.6.88 remains in force. The PPS has already changed its name twice in the past, in 1906 and 1939. This was done in order to maintain the socialist character of the organisation and its commitment to full independence. This was done to preserve its identity. It has however always remained itself.

Warsaw 19.12.88

Supreme Council of the Polish Socialist Party (Democratic Revolution).

### Government and Opposition December 1988

After the August strikes, a process of political change began in Poland, which had been made unavoidable by the workers. The authorities decided to open a dialogue with the opposition. The condition of this dialogue was the recognition by the opposition of the constitutional principles of the PRL (People's Republic of Poland).

Amongst other things, this meant recognition of the leading role of the Party and of Poland's system of international alliances. These conditions were accepted by those opposition activists who were already prepared to take part in the "round table talks."

As a result of this, a gap arose between the activities of such leaders and the feelings of society. The end of the August strikes

and the swift stifling of the strikes called against the closure of the Gdansk shipyards expressed this state of affairs.

These leaders distanced themselves from every manifestation of more radical social feeling. The material situation of workers in Poland has become worse with each passing month. The wage rises won by strike action brought inflation and precipitated price increases.

The model of economic reform put forward by the authorities condemns the majority of working people to impoverishment in order to pay for the enrichment of a small minority - above all members of the Communist nomenclatura. Mass sackings, unemployment and increasing exploitation are the price paid for participation in government by that part of the opposition which is prepared to subscribe to the model of economic reform implied by support for the "anti-crisis pact."

The "Anti-Crisis Pact" is designed to create the possibility that the communist system will survive for a few more years. For the majority of society these would be lost years. The Polish Socialist Party (Democratic Revolution) sees a self-managed economic reform as the only way out of the social and economic crisis. We are struggling for democracy and not "democratisation." We do not want to improve the communist system of government but to abolish it. This is the only road to full democracy and therefore to independence - the road of the Democratic Revolution.

Supreme Council of the Polish Socialist Party (Democratic Revolution)

Cz. Borowczyk, Z. Dabrowska, P. Ikonowicz, G. Ilka, A. Koszykowski, A. Kowalski, C. Mizejewski, J. Pawlowicz, J. Piniór, M. Poulak, T. Rachowski, M. Tyszkiewicz.

19.12.88 Warsaw.

### Communique

On the 13.12.88, in the course of a demonstration on the anniversary of the introduction of martial law, Jan Tomaszewicz, a PPS activist, was detained. The same day he was taken into detention in Rakowiecka St., where he is being held in Investigative Arrest on the charge of evasion of military service.

In 1986, Jan Tomaszewicz responded to the appeal of the Freedom and Peace Movement (WiP) and sent back his military identification documents. A warrant was therefore issued for his arrest. At this time he was a printer and courier for *Robotnik* and subsequently for the PPS. On the 1st of June 1988, he was detained and in the course of his interrogation, it was asserted that these proceedings against him were no longer valid. The present sanctions being taken against him by the Prosecuting Magistrate are a politically motivated act of revenge against one of the most active members of the Warsaw PPS. The Supreme Council of the Polish Socialist Party (Democratic Revolution) appeals to all its members and sympathisers to do everything possible to free Jan Tomaszewicz.

Warsaw 19.12.88

Supreme Council of the Polish Socialist Party (Democratic Revolution).



For British socialists, the spectacle of Prime Minister Thatcher "doing business" with General Jaruzelski one day, and posing for photographs with Lech Walesa outside the Gdansk shipyards the next, during her visit to Poland late last year was an unpleasant sight. Eric Heffer, a Member of Parliament for the Labour Party, made this statement.

ERIC HEFFER

# MRS. THATCHER IS NO FRIEND OF TRADE UNIONS

As someone who has supported Solidarity in Poland since its formation and who has been on delegations to the Polish Embassy in its support, I feel I must speak out in relation to Mrs. Thatcher's visit to Poland and in particular with regard to her declared support for Solidarity. One thing is crystal clear: Mrs. Thatcher has double standards concerning trade unions and freedom.

It is also clear that Lech Walesa and other Solidarity leaders are not fully aware (no doubt because of the fact that they do not have a really free press) of Mrs. Thatcher's hostile attitude to free and independent trade unions in Britain.

Perhaps they are influenced to praise her because she is a Western political leader who has declared support for Solidarity and has visited Poland to say so. Obviously, because of the lack of real political freedom in Poland, a system without proper democratic elections etc., some of the Solidarity leaders believe that we must have real freedom for workers in Britain. Unfortunately, they are wrong, that is no longer the case. Solidarity leaders have either wrong information, or they have not fully understood the nature of the Thatcherite government and regime. It surely cannot be an accident that General Jaruzelski praises the economic policies and methods used by Mrs. Thatcher. That he praises her toughness, a toughness used against the trade unions in this country. The truth is, the arguments advanced by the General against Solidarity, strikers and workers' conditions, are similar to those used by the Thatcher government against British trade unionists.

Mrs. Thatcher, in going to Poland and declaring support for Solidarity, is being thoroughly hypocritical. In Britain, her government has presided over wholesale closures of factories and shipyards. The postponement of the closure of the Sunderland shipyard is surely due to her Polish visit so as not to embarrass her. In Britain, the trade unions have been hamstrung because of the worst anti-trade union legislation in Western Europe. GCHQ workers have been sacked for being in a trade union and workers have been

banned from membership of their unions. This is no doubt part of her policy against the "enemy within". The Thatcherite legislation developed over the years against trade unions and trade unionists destroys rights which have been built up by workers over many decades.

Mrs. Thatcher is no friend of trade unionists and one can only assume that in going to Poland to say what she did she was doing that, not to assist the workers in Solidarity, but because of her hostility to a system that she misguidedly calls, and perhaps believes is, socialist.

Solidarity's programme, agreed at its Conferences, does not accept the private enterprise system, but calls for workers' democracy in industry. That is the last thing Mrs. Thatcher wants.

It would appear as if she now feels she can interfere in the affairs of other states and more or less direct them in what to do.

It is a dangerous game, especially at a time when the hard-won rights and freedoms of the British people are being

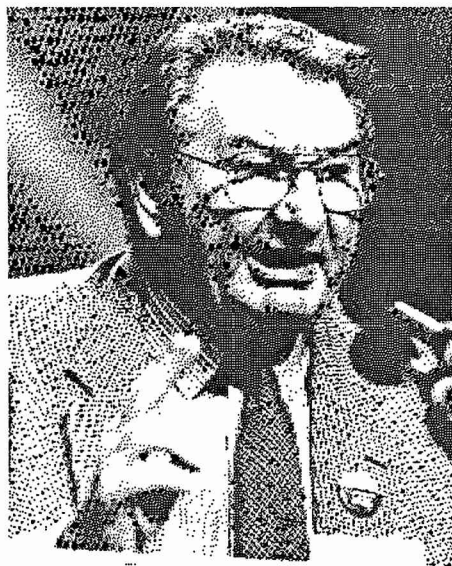
undermined by this government. It is surely no accident that a recent edition of the journal *Index on Censorship* warns about our loss of freedom and human rights, when normally it concentrates on the lack of human rights in Eastern Europe and in dictatorships throughout the world.

Here in Britain, elected Labour Councilors have been disqualified for carrying out their promises to their electors, whilst government ministers are responsible for wholesale waste and financial incompetence and they remain in office with the full backing of Mrs. Thatcher.

This week, the Campaign Group of Labour Members of Parliament sent a telegram to Lech Walesa, explaining what the Thatcher government is doing to British workers and their unions. Clearly, we have to follow that up by other representations and contact.

What is required is the unity and understanding of workers in Britain and Poland, so that they can assist each other in fighting their governments which are both basically anti-union. The Polish workers, because of their opposition to the regime in Poland, as a result of their living in an unfree bureaucratic country, may be swayed to praise for Mrs. Thatcher, but they need to realise that to get rid of Jaruzelski and the bureaucratic system he represents, and to replace it with a type of Thatcherism, would in no way solve their problems. What we need to do together is to fight for real democracy, a genuine socialist democracy and then to assist each other in building a new society East and West, as envisaged by such great socialists as Rosa Luxemburg.

Eric S. Heffer  
M.P. for Walton, Liverpool  
5 November 1988



Eric Heffer

*Eric Heffer is one of the leaders of the left wing of the Labour Party, a former government minister and candidate for the party leadership. He has a long record of public support for the democratic opposition in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and is a sponsor of this journal.*

The German Democratic Republic is often regarded as the most advanced of the post-capitalist industrial societies in Eastern Europe. It was Marx's view that "social progress can be measured exactly by the social standing of women". Are women emancipated in the GDR? In the following article, the first of two parts, Gus Fagan looks at GDR women's literature to find some answers to this question.

G U S F A G A N

# THE AESTHETICS OF RESISTANCE WOMEN'S LITERATURE IN THE GDR

In 1963, in a speech to the GDR parliament, the then party leader, Walter Ulbricht, declared that "the full political and economic equality of women [in the GDR] has been achieved".<sup>1</sup> It has been an important part of the claims of official ideology since then that the 'developed socialism' of GDR society guarantees the genuine equality of men and women. But how could such a claim be tested?

Official statistics concerning the number of women in work, in careers, in public life, the facilities for child-care, maternity leave, the legal measures to promote gender equality, etc. are frequently quoted and are also well documented in English-language publications.<sup>2</sup> Less well known is what GDR women think on these issues, how they respond to the demands and claims made on them and to the possibilities offered by GDR society.

Christa Wolf, perhaps the best-known of GDR women writers, has said that "art today is the only refuge, the only testing ground for the vision of an integral human being".<sup>3</sup> With respect to the debate on the issue of women's emancipation, this is certainly the case in the GDR. In a society where the state tries to direct and control every activity, where official ideology dominates, where only one legal party-controlled women's organisation is permitted to exist, the limits on the public and free discussion of alternative views on women's emancipation are obvious. In such a situation, literature often provides the main, if not the only, medium for the expression and development of alternative views, alternative strategies and visions.

The past two decades, but especially the

period since the early seventies, has seen a blossoming in the GDR of literature by and about women, women's literature. Within a relatively short period, the point was reached where women made up about a quarter of GDR authors (figure for 1982), most of them younger authors who began writing in the past fifteen years.<sup>4</sup> The question of women's role in society, the issue of women's emancipation, has become a major theme of GDR literature. We find reflected in this literature the concerns, problems and consciousness of GDR women, reflecting on their role in society, probing and rejecting much of the official ideology. The aim of the

equated with legal rights plus women's integration into the production process/career structure of society. From a purely juridical and economic standpoint, these goals have been largely achieved, although the integration of women into the labour force (90% of women are employed, making around 50% of the workforce) has been accompanied by a "feminisation" of many job categories and a correspondingly lower earning potential - 77.7% of women occupy the lower four wage groups, as against 21.2% for men.<sup>5</sup>

At the same time, the reduction of the concept of emancipation to the concept of equal rights was a radical impoverishment of that concept. As Christa Wolf has written, this reduction "played down its importance and misunderstood its meaning; for its revolutionary, radical meaning was, and is, disturbing".<sup>6</sup>

Although there are now a large number of single mothers (I will deal with this later), the nuclear family is enshrined in the official ideology. Engels' formulation that the family is the 'nucleus of society' was repeated in the Family Law of 1965 which guaranteed men and women "equal rights in the family". The same law encourages men to bear their share of the upbringing and care of children, but this remained a rather empty formula.

The emancipation strategy of the regime, then, is based on these twin pillars

of integration into production/career structure and the maintenance of the nuclear family (career couple with children supported by an infra-structure of nurseries, 'baby year', etc). The double burden that this imposes on women as well as the reproduction in the 'private sphere' of traditional gender roles,



present article is to give a brief overview of how the issue of women's emancipation has been dealt with in these writings of GDR women.

The fundamental concept of the official ideology on women's emancipation is 'equal rights' (*Gleichberechtigung*), and this is

with its effects in all other spheres, is not officially recognised and is not a subject of open discussion. In women's literature of recent years this official role-model has been almost universally rejected.

## Traditional Role-Models

What literary role-models for women were available to GDR women who began to write in the sixties? GDR texts often claim the existence of a historical continuity between *Frauenliteratur* (women's literature) of today and socialist literature of the twenties. In the postscript to a GDR collection of stories by women published in 1976, it is said that "respect for the struggle of women for equality and self-realisation has been a firm component of proletarian-revolutionary and socialist literature since the early twenties".<sup>7</sup> Such a claim is indefensible. As far as the representation of women in the socialist literature of the twenties is concerned, the German literary critic Wolfgang Emmerich is correct in his assessment that women were represented in that literature "overwhelmingly in their 'natural' roles as wives, mothers and daughters; very often they are a hindrance to the political work of the men; political emancipation, to the extent that it is at all represented, is reduced to the act of joining the party .... Family structure is not problematised in the proletarian-revolutionary novels."<sup>8</sup> The society envisaged in that literature was 'male communism'.

## Anna Seghers

One writer in particular incorporated that tradition in the GDR - Anna Seghers. Awarded the Kleist Prize in 1928 for her novella *The Revolt of the Fishermen of St. Barbara*, Seghers lived and wrote in the GDR until her death in 1983. She had an undoubted influence on GDR women writers - through her personal friendship with some of them (Christa Wolf, Brigitte Reimann); through her strong defence (in opposition to Lukacs) of the romantic tradition (Kleist, Gunderrode, Hoffmann) and, especially, through her use of phantasy, which made it easier for women to adopt this technique against official opposition from the ideologues of 'socialist realism'.

But, with respect to the role-models for women in her writing, it must be said that she remained very much within the male-socialist traditions of the twenties. In one of her most influential novels, *The Seventh Cross* (1942), women appear only as secondary characters; men make all the decisions and the women are driven by love for their men on whom they are dependent. Those women who are independent (Katherina and the prostitutes) are made to appear unattractive. In a study of Seghers published in 1985, Irene Lorisika describes the women in *The Seventh Cross* as "extensions of their husbands, they live for their husbands and children and in such a way as their husbands wish. And when they have no husbands, or

don't want one, then they are 'punished' by the author - they are made ugly, brutal, inhuman, unhappy and alone".<sup>9</sup>

In fact, all of Seghers' works from that period are dominated by the same revolutionary thematic. In this male-defined arena women find legitimacy and identity only beside the man as his companion in the struggle. Sexuality is not taboo but remains within the intimate sphere of the private. male comradeship is superior to the male-female relation. Socialism is being created by the male and its patriarchal structure is not questioned.

## The Fifties

There were very few women writers in the GDR in the fifties. In a state which felt itself to be lacking in both national and historical legitimacy, both ideologists and writers consciously sought to establish continuity with the 'socialist' tradition of the twenties and thirties. It is not surprising, therefore, to find in the literature of the period a similar tendency in the presentation of women characters. Women were now portrayed as active co-fighters in the struggle to build a socialist society. Emancipation meant adaptation to male norms and took place through entrance into the sphere of production, something much encouraged by the state since labour shortage was a serious problem. A new role-model emerged: the heroines of labour.

A good example of this is Elfriede Brüning's novel, *Regine Haberkorn*. In spite of the doubts and disapproval of her husband, Regine goes to work in a factory. She is successful, becomes involved in her work and, when she recalls her earlier days as a housewife, she "can hardly imagine any more what she did with herself during those long days. How did she bear it, with nothing to do from morning to night but this little bit of housework which she was able to manage now with no bother.... Her life had become more difficult but nothing in the world could persuade her to go back to that earlier existence."<sup>10</sup> The problem, and the central 'crisis' of the novel, is the backwardness of her husband who still persists in his "oldfashioned male views", starts going out with the wrong kind of women (who don't work), and doesn't help her in her effort to combine "work and a harmonious family life". The party secretary comes to her assistance and the novel ends happily (happy endings were prescribed) with the re-establishment of a good socialist family.

The novel is by no means insensitive to the problems of women and novels like this hardly encouraged passivity among women. The role-model they offered, however, was not the creation of women and corresponded more to the needs of 'socialist construction' as these were perceived by a male-dominated social hierarchy.

This aspect comes over most clearly in the female figures in works by male authors, for

instance, Eduard Clausius or Willi Bredel. In Bredel's story, *Petra Harms*. Petra, an office worker, wants to become a mason. Against the opposition of the men, and of her female friends, she succeeds. The 'progressive' male trade unionist, Kuntz, initially opposes Petra but in the end he is won over. He "observed her continually and was amazed by the strong will-power in her small body". The story reaches its triumphal conclusion in the government minister's visit to the building site. Petra is called to the rostrum but is "unable to answer", her vision becomes "blurred", she has a "lump in her throat" and is overcome by "tears of joy".<sup>11</sup> This 'heroine of labour' model in the literature of the fifties was still determined, to a large extent, by the 'male communist' world view familiar from the literature of the twenties.

## The Sixties

The sixties were the period of what is known in the GDR as *Ankunftsliteratur* - literature of arrival. The term was meant to designate the arrival of the GDR as an economic success, as a viable political and social entity. It also pointed to the arrival of a new generation of GDR citizens (and writers). In 1961 the Berlin Wall was built and the party declared that the foundations of a socialist society had been built. A party declaration in that same year, "Women, Peace and Socialism", called for measures to improve the technical and scientific qualifications of women and for women to play a greater role in political and economic life. Government regulations in 1962 introduced such measures as special classes for women in science and maths, paid study leaves from work, etc. The literature of this period reflected this new emphasis, away from the mobilisation for labour towards the question of qualification and training. The characters in women's literature in this period tend to be scientists, artists, journalists and doctors.

Two typical works of the sixties were Brigitte Reimann's *The Siblings* and Christa Wolf's *The Divided Heaven*, both published in 1963. Betsy, the main character in Reimann's novel, is an artist and works (as an artist) with a construction brigade building a power station. (This frequent arrangement was a result of the Bitterfeld Conference of GDR writers in 1959 which encouraged writers/artists to work in the factories and encouraged ordinary workers to write about their experience.) She is an enthusiastic modern woman. The conflict of the novel revolves around the decision of her brother to flee to the West. For Betsy, crossing the boundary to the other Germany is "a step into the past", the East is "our world, my world" and she feels more at home in Prague than in West Berlin.<sup>12</sup> The conflict is resolved (with the help of a party member) when the brother decides to stay. Betsy makes the final step of deciding to join the party.

The plot of *The Divided Heaven* revolves around Rita Seidel, a teacher-in-training who



is working in a railroad car factory. (Christa Wolf herself, in response to the Bitterfeld call, had worked in a railroad car works in Halle from 1959-1962.) Her love affair with Manfred Herrfurth ends abruptly and sadly when he fails to return from a scientific conference in West Berlin. Rita is thrown into a crisis (he expected her to follow him) and experiences a physical and mental breakdown which leads to a suicide attempt on 13 August 1961 (the day the wall was built!). During her recovery in the sanatorium she resolves the conflict in favour of an active acceptance of "socialist GDR".

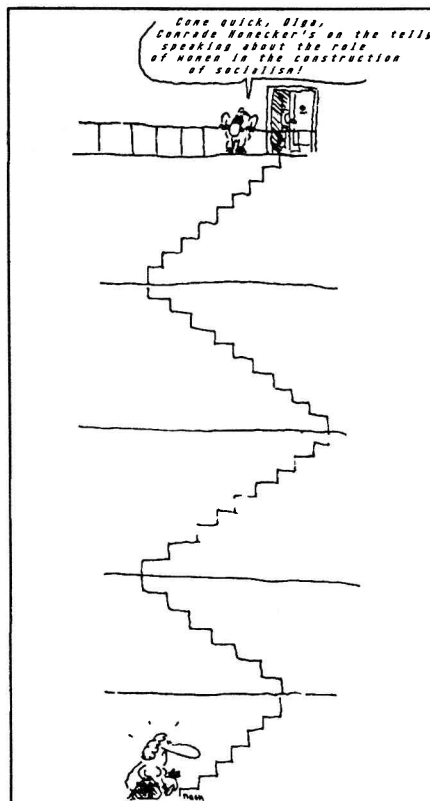
The novel was a great success in the GDR, where it is still a best-seller. It was made into a film the following year (1964) and in 1963 Wolf became a candidate member of the Central Committee of the SED, a post which she kept until 1967.

*The Divided Heaven* was an important advance for GDR literature, both in its use of formal techniques (interior monologue, etc.) and in its contents (more realistic description of problems and contradictions), but on the issue of women's emancipation no decisive break is made with the tradition of the fifties. Self-realisation is still possible through integration into the world of socialist production. Women have now conquered positions previously held by men. Rita's recovery, her acceptance of and adaptation to the society of productive rationality is achieved, however, at some cost to her feelings and spontaneity (symbolised by her love for Manfred). But the novel makes clear that this is the way forward.

In general the female role-models of this period are more differentiated, less stereotyped. We get some insight into the psychological/subjective response of women to the new society, to the "socialist GDR". But these role-models, conceived didactically in the socialist realist tradition, were still created within the constraints of official ideology as this was promoted by the party and understood by the writers who adhered to the party's line. Emancipation through labour, as enunciated by Engels and Bebel, remained the fundamental theme. But the heroines of labour of the previous decade were now replaced by the qualified career "superwomen" who, in the words of a publication of the official women's organisation, the Democratic Women's League of Germany, in 1967, were expected to "participate in the construction of socialism, to acquire high levels of education, to be good wives, sensitive educators, loving mothers who share in the running of our state with a clear mind and a firm hand".<sup>13</sup>

## Breakthrough 1968-1975

The early seventies witnessed a qualitative breakthrough in the literature written by and about women. We may conveniently date this period from the publication in 1968 of Christa Wolf's novel, *The Quest for Christa T*. It reached its high point with the



publication in 1974 of three novels: *The Life and Adventures of Trobadora Beatriz* by Irmtraud Morgner; *Karen W* by Gerti Tetzner and *Franziska Linkerhand* by Brigitte Reimann.<sup>14</sup> This was followed in 1975 with the publication of an anthology of stories specially commissioned to deal with the issue of women's role, *Bolt From the Blue*, edited by Edith Anderson.

Whereas the literature of the fifties and sixties had created a model of the emancipated woman based almost entirely on norms derived from the world of production/career, a model in which self-realisation in the non-productive sphere was not thematised, the literature of the early seventies took up the question of self-realisation in a way which radically questioned the traditional model of emancipation. It developed a far wider range of literary forms and experiments, breaking out of the limits of orthodox socialist realism, and posing a radical critique of existing assumptions about women's needs and women's role in society. Within the space of a decade women's literature became a major component of GDR literature, the importance of which soon received widespread international recognition.

It is difficult to account fully for these changes since there isn't necessarily a direct link between social/political changes and individual literary creation. But, that being said, certain factors obviously played a role.

One of these was the greater cultural freedom after 1971, when Erich Honecker replaced Ulbricht as party leader and made his famous promise that there should be "no taboos in the field of art and literature", a promise never fully honoured.<sup>15</sup>

Another important factor was the increased awareness among East German women of the contradictions between their life situation and the claims of official ideology. Although the regime claimed in 1971 that women's emancipation had been "largely achieved" 16 patriarchal structures obviously continued to exist under 'developed socialism'. For instance, although over 80% of women had been integrated into production, they still did over 80% of the housework. There were no women in the leading Politburo and as late as 1982 only 12% of the Central Committee were women.

A very important insight into the attitudes of GDR women at this time was provided by the collection of interviews with women carried out by Maxi Wander and published in 1978 under the title *Good Morning Beautiful*.<sup>17</sup> In those interviews women spoke of their personal histories, family, work, sexual life, fears and hopes. In his history of GDR literature, Emmerich says of this collection: "No other book says so much about the GDR as does Maxi Wander's collection. No other book is so encouraging because it gives a voice to women, human being, who refuse to simply adapt and who take very seriously the claim to self-determination in their daily lives."<sup>18</sup> I will return to this collection later. Its importance here is that the collection demonstrated a spirit of resistance among GDR women and an awareness of the gulf between reality and the claims of official ideology.

A third factor in the emergence of a women's literature that addressed the central issues of women's emancipation was undoubtedly the feminist movement in the West. Although it is difficult to establish direct links, and some writers (Wolf, Morgner) reject any theoretical influence from Western feminism<sup>19</sup>, there was probably a general cultural influence, especially since West German women writers such as Christa Reinig and Helga Nowak were widely read in the GDR.

## Christa Wolf

*The Quest for Christa T*<sup>20</sup> was first published in 1968, although an earlier version of the novel seems to have been written as early as 1965.<sup>21</sup> At the 11th Plenum of the Central Committee in December 1965 Wolf had criticised certain aspects of cultural policy and had defended another author, Werner Bräuning, who had come under attack from the authorities for his novel *Rummelplatz* which had given a rather unfavourable account of working conditions in a mine. Wolf was later dropped from the Central Committee. The reaction to Wolf's novel was negative at first and it wasn't until

1973 that it was widely distributed in the GDR.

The principal character of the novel, Christa T, was born in 1927, experienced Nazi rule and the defeat, finished her degree in Leipzig in 1954, worked as a teacher, then gave up her job, married a vet and lived in the countryside where she brings up three daughters, begins to build her own home and attempts to write. In 1963 she dies of leukaemia. The narrator in the novel knew Christa T as a child, met her again at university, and after her death reflects on the life of her friend.

The central theme of the novel, if one can express it in a sentence, is the individual (woman's) attempt at self-realisation and the conflict with society that arises from this process. Although officially criticised in the GDR for its 'subjectivism', the novel is in fact a 'novel of society' (Gesellschaftsroman), the basic dynamic of which is the conflict between the individual and the collective. The story of Christa T is the story of individual alienation in the new 'socialist society' of the GDR. It is a questioning of GDR society through the perspective of a woman who is committed to socialism but who cannot adapt to the requirements of her society. It is possible to understand the novel, as many Western critics did, as part of the general questioning of East European Stalinism in the sixties which culminated in the Prague Spring. This is undoubtedly true, but the feminist perspective of the novel adds a dimension which goes beyond purely political protest.

Although initially enthusiastic for the new society and for the "new person" that is being created, "Christa T began, very early on, ... to ask herself what change means. The new words? The new house? Machines, bigger fields? The new man, she heard people say; and she began to look inside herself." (p.56) Her "vision of herself" cannot be reconciled with official expectations. Her doubts, her imagination, her moral concerns and her longing for self-fulfilment militate against the demands for social conformity. In the early summer of 1953 (Berlin workers' uprising June 1953!) her personal crisis leads to depression and illness, diagnosed by the doctor as "deficient capacity to adapt herself to existing circumstances". (p.72)

Christa T lives in a society which inhibits individualism, a society in which the "factual people. Up-and-doing people (*Hopp-Hopp Menschen*)" (p.51) have forgotten that the creation of socialism should be a dialectical process of conflict, individual responsibility, greater possibilities for individual self-realisation. In a world where everything is "we", Christa T experiences "the difficulty of saying 'I'".

What is it about Christa T that leads to this "deficient capacity to adapt"? It is the gulf which she experiences between thinking and feeling, the need, as Wolf described it in her essay "Reading and Writing", to "feel rationally and think with feeling".<sup>22</sup> In her

longing for connectedness, for community (which she didn't find under Nazism, and was looking for in marriage having failed to find it in the new society), Christa T manifests a set of values which are sharply at odds with those of her (patriarchal) environment which emphasised equality, achievement (*Leistung*) and conformity. Christa T's morality, one of individual responsibility and caring, seemed to have no place in the world of technological rationality.

The subject matter of the novel, as of almost all of Wolf's writings since then, is the specificity of female experience and consciousness in a 'socialist society'. The radically new way in which self-realisation is posed in this novel sets it off from what had gone before. With its critique of GDR society and of the traditional and official role-model which that society attempted to impose on women, *Christa T* was to exert a great influence on the growing number of women who began to write in the seventies. This influence resulted not only from the feminist perspective of the novel but also from its formal innovations<sup>23</sup> and from the radical shift of emphasis in the way in which the question of women's emancipation was posed.

### Irmtraud Morgner

By far the most radical and most comprehensive attempt to confront the role of women in GDR society came with the publication in 1974 of Irmtraud Morgner's *The Life and Adventures of Trobadora Beatriz as Chronicled by Her Minstrel Laura*,<sup>24</sup> a novel which one critic has described as "a *Doctor Faustus* for feminists".<sup>25</sup>

Irmtraud Morgner, born 1933, studied German literature at Leipzig (as did Christa Wolf), then worked as literary critic until 1958, since which time she has lived as a full-time writer in Berlin. When her novel *Trobadora Beatriz* was published in 1974 Morgner had already been writing for quite some time. (Her first short story was published in 1959.)

It is impossible to summarise this complex novel of some 700 pages. The narrative revolves around three women. Beatriz is a troubadour of 12th century France who awakes from an 800-year sleep, experiences the May revolt in France, then goes to the GDR because she has been told that women there have been emancipated. In the GDR she meets Laura, who shows her that patriarchal relations still exist in the new society. After an initial period in which she develops utopian, phantastical and magical strategies for freeing women, Beatriz becomes disillusioned. Laura, however, inspired by Beatriz, becomes more radical. The third woman, Valeska, is a scientist who turns herself into a man while retaining her female personality.

This fantastic story of the confrontation between the Trobadora (a woman from

history) and the reality of women's lives in the GDR is told through the medium of a 'montage novel', loosely held together by the story of the three women and made up of short stories, extracts from diverse sources such as newspapers, the memoirs of Krupskaya, academic works on medieval literature, poems and parts of a previous novel of Morgner herself. Laura, in the novel, defends this literary form as particularly appropriate for women: "Apart from temperament, short prose corresponds to the socially rather than the biologically determined life-rhythm of an average woman, whose life is constantly being broken up by the demands of housekeeping." (p.261)

The sheer richness of the novel, constructed like a medieval tapestry, with its many layers of social criticism, experiment, utopian writing, magic, history, debates on feminist strategy, etc. made it difficult for GDR critics to come to terms with it. Central to the novel is the claim that women in the GDR are not emancipated, and in no other novel of the period is the continued existence of patriarchal social relations so mercilessly or so imaginatively exposed.

Morgner herself accepts theoretically many of the basic tenants of official policy. In an interview given shortly after the novel was published, she stated her view that "the humanisation (*Menschwerdung*) of women, as social change, can only really begin after the socialist revolution, but not automatically". Also, "emancipation of women is unachievable without the emancipation of men, and vice versa. *Trobadora Beatriz* was written by a communist woman." However, "the GDR is today, of course, a male state (*Männerstaat*) - leading positions in the state, economy and culture are overwhelmingly in the hands of men."<sup>26</sup> When Beatriz arrives at the GDR border and informs the customs official that she wants to settle in paradise, his reply is that "the GDR is no paradise, it is a socialist state". (p.139)

"You complain about the lack of solidarity among women?" says Beatriz to Laura. "It is only natural among creatures that have been kept down for thousands of years.... I have stepped out of history because I want to enter into history. I want to appropriate nature, first of all my own nature." (p.174) The novel's historical perspective (the three women representing the past, present and future), its use of myth and legend, is a way of awakening in women a sense of their own history. Women in the GDR perform two thirds of all socially necessary labour (house and job) in what is still a *Männerstaat* because they lack the courage and strength to fight this oppression. One of the reasons for this is the fact that they "enter life without an awareness of their own history.... The great culture of the Greeks was based on the domination of slaves. The great cultural, scientific and technical achievements of our present culture are based on the domination of women.... Women need an awareness of their own history to enable them to resist."<sup>27</sup>



Männerstaat GDR

Another area where Morgner's novel broke with the taboos of GDR literature was in its treatment of sexuality. Not only is there a more positive and direct treatment of the erotic/sexual, this area of women's experience is also integrated into the overall critique of oppression. Chapter 32 of the novel is an extract from an academic work which states that "the woman - the average woman in the population and not every woman - experiences orgasm less often than the man...in the ratio of 1:10." (p.617) But what most other female characters in the literature of the period would experience as personal shortcoming, *Trobadora Beatriz* confronts as just another aspect of overall female oppression: "The erotic" says Laura, "is the last domain of men. In all other areas the law of the country gives women equality." It is a domain which men "stubbornly defend". (p.173) The novel says that women have to "learn to make sovereign use of the productive power of sexuality".

We also find in the novel, for the first time, the suggestion of an alternative to the nuclear family (or, increasingly, the single mother). Valeska, the woman of the future, after a difficult marriage and divorce, lives communally with other women who, like her, have children. Housework and childcare are socialised, it is a "sisterly life" which brings with it a "wondrous freedom". (p.356) This theme, however, is not developed.

*Trobadora Beatriz* was quite a popular novel in the GDR. In its portrayal of GDR society as a "male state" in which women suffered not only from the "double burden" of housework and career but also had their history and their sexuality "expropriated", the novel struck a chord among GDR women. Its imaginative and 'fantastic' character, the

richness of its alternative life-styles, role-models and emancipation strategies which it offers, made it a landmark in GDR women's literature. A sequel, *Amanda*, the second in a planned trilogy, was published in 1983.

### Reimann and Tetzner

That same year saw the publication of two other novels that also addressed issues of women's emancipation: Brigitte Reimann's *Franziska Linkerhand* and Gerti Tetzner's *Karen W.*<sup>28</sup> Both writers were in their thirties and it was Tetzner's first novel. Brigitte Reimann died in 1973 at the age of 39 before the (unfinished) novel was published.

Both novels address what is a key issue for women in the GDR - the sometimes impossible demands placed on women who try to combine their career with their traditional female role in the house and family. In official ideology, in the propaganda of the official women's organisation and in the literary role-models of the sixties women were expected to be highly educated career women as well as good wives and loving mothers. In the officially promoted image, the career superwoman had replaced the worker heroine. "Any man who thinks anything of himself", says Morgner, "will have a career wife as a matter of course. That's already something like a question of honour. Housewives, although they may have certain advantages, are not highly regarded by men."<sup>29</sup>

According to a recent West German publication, the average woman in the GDR spends 37 hours per week on housework (compared with an average of 6 hours for men).<sup>30</sup> Since over 90% of women also work outside the home (1987 figure) this must create an intolerable burden for women. The

problem is, however, not just the question of hours worked, but the general social expectations and the quality of life for women which results from the contradictory demands of career and family. Margot, one of the women interviewed in Maxi Wander's book, says: "Career-wise I am a man's equal. I am accustomed to the fact that my career gives me a certain independence and security. But the fact that this is not enough for me is another matter."<sup>31</sup>

Karen and Franziska, the two central characters, are career women (law and town planning). Both novels are reflections on their personal histories, which mirror the history of the GDR itself, and both novels contain large elements of autobiography. Both women experience a trajectory of high ideals, enthusiasm, frustration and alienation. Both, in the end, reject the role model of career woman/wife/mother.

Karen rejects above all the alienation of work in a technologically oriented, rationalistic, hierarchical male world driven by the need to achieve. Strongly motivated by a need for humane inter-relationships, she believed that in her career (dealing with cases "from behind a desk" in a law firm) she could do something "against coldness and indifference. But, in its own way, [the career] simply makes one colder." (p.213) She gives up her career and becomes a housewife because she has "inwardly broken from the view that a woman who, as a human being, shuffles back and forth between the wash-bucket and the cooker, does not work because, as only wife and mother, her life, as seen externally, had no economic or measurable value". (p.29)

Her life as wife/mother opens up new possibilities of happiness, relaxation and

warmth but, in the end, she finds the life cramped and unfulfilling, a life in which "every day becomes just a preparation for Peters' (her husband's) evening homecoming". (p.100) She leaves her husband and goes, with her daughter, to live and work in an agricultural collective in her home village, hoping to find there the kind of more humane personal relationships that she desires.

Franziska also experiences the disadvantages for women working in a male-oriented career world (in her case, the world of architecture and town planning). Initially enthusiastic about building a better and more humane environment, she "worked six or seven years only with men, adapted to male norms, learned to speak their rough language. She had been accepted but not, and this she knew well, as a natural part of that other world." (p.188) Only later she learns that "in this society, in which women receive equal pay for equal work, there are other unwritten rules, rules which have been made in a male-dominated world, rules that follow a person silently and stubbornly, like a yoke around our necks, and which are nothing other than that damn old 'one shouldn't do that' of my parents". (p.189)

Franziska, however, unlike Karen, opts to

stay in her career world and continue the fight. Marriage and family is not an option: "she doesn't want to learn patience, selflessness, the old-fashioned virtues imposed like handcuffs on women". She was not prepared "to make any sacrifices to any husband, to any children". (p.178)

The novels, of course, do not resolve the problem. There is no 'happy ending', no resolution of the contradiction. This aspect of women's lives in the GDR - the survival of the traditional female role in the family, the alienating quality of work in the career world and the intolerable situation that arises from the attempt to combine both - is now a very familiar theme in GDR women's literature. It was these two novels of Reimann and Tetzner which broke what Christa Wolf described as "the long silence of women"<sup>32</sup> on this issue.

### "Why can't a woman... .....be like a man?"

*Franziska Linkerhand* and *Karen W* raise, but do not develop, a theme which was explicitly developed in an anthology published in 1975 with the title *Bolt From the Blue*.<sup>33</sup> The publishers had commissioned this anthology

of seven short stories and one essay devoted to the theme of gender roles. One of the stories in this collection was "Self-Experiment" by Christa Wolf.<sup>34</sup> The theme addressed by this story is: "Is it the goal of emancipation, can it ever be worth striving for, that women become like men... when, in fact, men are greatly in need of being emancipated themselves?"<sup>35</sup>

The character in the story (the time is 1992) is a 33-year old single female scientist, leader of the Sex Change Department in the Institute for the Study of Human Hormones. Taking the emancipatory strategy of official ideology to its logical conclusion, she "had to prove my worth as a woman by consenting to become a man". (p.118) The drug works but after thirty days as a man she/he decides to become a woman again. The story (first person narrative) takes the form of a protocol of the experiment.

The story is much more than a protocol, however. It becomes a strong polemic addressed to the (male) head of the Institute, the 'Professor'. It is an exposure of the 'secrets' of the male world, of the different ways in which men and women live in and perceive the world. The first tests carried out after the sex-change register different responses: "I didn't say 'love' in response to 'red', as I always had before, but 'rage'. Not 'man' in response to 'woman' but 'beautiful'....Well, well, well, said my friend Rüdiger, now we're getting somewhere old buddy." (p.119) As a man she/he "started having difficulty using any form of the personal pronoun 'I'." (p.121)

Even the physical environment was perceived differently: "I remembered what 'city' meant for her: an abundance of constantly disappointed hope constantly renewing itself. For him - that is, for me, Anders - it was a tight cluster of inexhaustible opportunities." (p.122) The exposure culminates in the discovery that men "cannot love, and know it". (p.130) The emancipation strategy of society is, in fact, a threat, one which women have to resist: "the activities you immerse yourselves in cannot bring you happiness and we have a right to resist when you try to drag us into them". (p.128)

The story doesn't end, however, with the simple affirmation of the specific character of female awareness but with a pointer to the future in which the male-world itself might be changed: "Now my experiment lies ahead: the attempt to love. Which, incidentally, can lead to fantastic inventions - to the creation of the person one can love." (p.131)

Much has been written about Christa Wolf's work from the point of view of her theory or strategy for women's emancipation.<sup>36</sup> This is an aspect which cannot adequately be dealt with in this brief survey.

The title of the anthology was taken from the story by Sarah Kirsch. This was also a story of 'sex-change' in which Katherina, after a three-day sleep, awakes to find that she is a man. When Albert, Katherina's lover



Christa Wolf

with whom she has lived for three years, returns home and finds 'Max', things actually work out quite well, in fact, better than before. The new relationship (between the two men) is characterised by respect, solidarity and willingness to help. The friendship among equals, however, is achieved at the cost of their (previous) sexual relationship. As a critique of the relationships between men and women in GDR society the story was very effective.

The stories by Wolf and Kirsch brought together the major themes of women's literature in the GDR as they had been developed up to that point. Emancipation through integration into production/career structure is no longer a dominant theme. Women's entry into the career world is already taken for granted and the problem of emancipation is posed at a higher level. In GDR society women are discriminated against by male norms which attempt to impose on them an alien model of emancipation. A strategy of emancipation which is based on the concept of 'equal rights' with men is rejected. An alternative concept of self-realisation is taking shape which emphasises the values of individuality, personal happiness, caring and openness. Male behaviour and consciousness is confronted. There is a radical critique of GDR society and the stories are not uniformly optimistic. Socialist realism as literary form is totally rejected and new, more experimental, more open literary forms are developed which confront the linguistic, logical and rational norms of the traditionally male-dominated sphere of literary production.

The publication of *Bolt From the Blue* in 1975 is a convenient point at which to end the first part of this survey. By 1975 women's silence on the issue of their own oppression had ended, certainly at the level of literature. Christa Wolf's story, "Self-Experiment" demonstrated the absurd if not the threatening logic of the GDR's official strategy for women's emancipation. A number of collections of interviews with GDR women published around this time confirm

that the problems, concerns, consciousness and hopes expressed in the works of women writers like Wolf, Reimann, Morgner, Tetzner and Kirsch reflected a real state of affairs among GDR women.<sup>37</sup>

At the same time as giving expression to these concerns and this resistance, women's literature was also important in providing the language, concepts and imaginative dimension within which a larger number of women could begin to express and discuss these issues. The decade after 1975 saw a tremendous increase in the number of women who began to write, to the point where they are today about a quarter of GDR writers.

I will end with a quotation from Maxi Wander's preface to her collection *Good Morning Beautiful*: "The dissatisfaction of many women with what has been achieved is something I consider very optimistic. If some of this is depressing, we must remember that people generally don't feel the need to talk about happiness. Happiness is something one lives. We give expression to that which oppresses us, in order to understand it and in order to liberate ourselves from it."

#### Footnotes

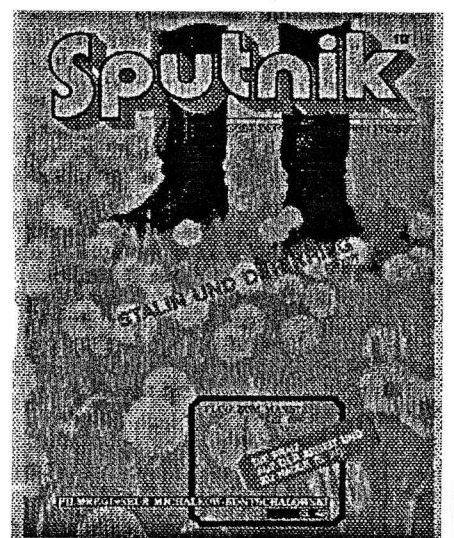
1. Speech reprinted in *Neues Deutschland*, 1 August 1963.
2. For instance, G. E. Edwards, *GDR Society and Social Institutions* (1985); H. Shaffer, *Women in the Two Germanies* (1981).
3. Christa Wolf, *Die Dimension des Authors*, vol.1 (1986), 76.
4. The figure is from Dunja Welke, "Soziologisches Dokument eines Frauenschicksals", *Neue Deutsche Literatur* 30, No. 1 (1982): 155.
5. The figure is from M. Dennis, *German Democratic Republic* (1988), 57.
6. Christa Wolf, *Cassandra*, (London 1984), 298.
7. *Frauen in der DDR*, (1983), 251.
8. W. Emmerich, "Identität und Geschlechtertausch", *Basis* 8, (1978):131.
9. I. Lorisika, *Frauenarstellungen bei Imtraud Keun und Anna Seghers*, (1985), 76.
10. Quoted in Patricia Hemminghaus, "Wunschbild, Vorbild oder Porträt", in P. Hemminghaus & P. Hohendahl, *Literatur und Literaturtheorie der DDR*, (1976), 293.
11. Emmerich, 134.
12. Brigitte Reimann, "Die Geschwister", in *Drei Erzählungen*, (Berlin 1985), 224.
13. *Die Frau in der DDR*, (Dresden 1967), 38.

14. References will be to the following editions: Imtraud Morgner, *Leben und Abenteuer der Trobadora Beatriz*, (Berlin 1985); Brigitte Reimann, *Franziska Linkerhand*, (Munich 1977); Gerti Tetzner, *Karen W* (Darmstadt 1979).
15. Speech to the SED Central Committee, 17 Dec. 1971, in Erich Honecker, *Die Kulturpolitik unserer Partei*, (Berlin 1982), 44.
16. Protocol of SED Congress 1971, quoted in Dorothee Schmitz, *Weibliche Selbstentwürfe und männliche Bilder*, (Frankfurt 1983), 231.
17. Maxi Wander, *Guten Morgen du Schöne*, (Darmstadt 1978). Maxi Wander, bom in Vienna in 1933, lived in the GDR from 1958 to her death in 1977.
18. W. Emmerich, *Kleine Literaturgeschichte der DDR*, (Darmstadt 1985), 200.
19. See, for instance, Christa Wolf, "Berührung" (her introduction to Maxi Wander's *Guten Morgen*) and Imtraud Morgner's interview with Karin Huffzky, "Produktivkraft Sexualität souverän nutzen", in J. Menschik, ed., *Grundlagen zur Emanzipation der Frau*, (Cologne 1976).
20. References are to the Virago edition, London 1982.
21. According to Sonja Hilzinger, *Christa Wolf*, (Stuttgart 1986), 32.
22. Christa Wolf, *Lesen und Schreiben*, (Darmstadt 1980), 55.
23. It is the view of Anna Kuhn (*Christa Wolf's Utopian Vision*, (Cambridge 1988), 52) that "the truly revolutionary potential of Christa T lies in its form, a fact overlooked by political, theme-oriented critics."
24. A short extract from this novel is translated in *New German Critique*, No. 15 (1978): 121-146.
25. Patricia Hemminghaus, "Die Frau und das Phantastische in der neueren DDR-Literatur", in Paulsen, ed. *Die Frau als Heldin und Autorin*, (Bern 1979), 248.
26. Imtraud Morgner, Interview with Karin Huffzky, op.cit., 327.
27. Imtraud Morgner, speech delivered to the 7th Writers Congress in 1974, quoted in Sonja Hilzinger, *Als ganzer Mensch zu Leben*, (Frankfurt 1985), 129.
28. The title Karen W points to some affinity with Christa T. In fact, Tetzner sought the assistance of Wolf in her preparations for this novel. Their correspondence is published in *Was zählt ist die Wahrheit. Briefe von Schriftstellern der DDR*, (Halle 1975).
29. Morgner, Interview with Karin Huffzky, op.cit. 330.
30. *Frauen in der DDR*, (Bonn 1987), 49.
31. Maxi Wander, *Guten Morgen du Schöne*, 122.
32. *ibid.* 13.
33. E. Anderson, ed., *Blitz aus heiterem Himmel*, (Berlin 1975).
34. An English translation of this story is in *New German Critique*, No. 13 (1978). References are to this translation.
35. "Gespräch mit Christa Wolf", in *Weimarer Beiträge* 6 (1974):108.
36. By, for instance, Sarah Lennox, Helen Fehervary and Anna Kuhn.
37. In addition to Maxi Wander's collection there was the collection by Sarah Kirsch, *Die Pantherfrau*, (Munich 1975). See also the account of GDR women's attitudes in Dorothee Schmitz, op.cit., 235-242.

## EAST GERMANY BANS GERMAN EDITION OF SOVIET NEWS MAGAZINE

For many years *Sputnik*, a German-language digest of the Soviet press, had been compulsory reading material for party activists in the German Democratic Republic and widely available in schools and libraries. As from 19 November 1988, however, the magazine has been struck off the list of publications available through the East German Post Office's subscriptions service and simultaneously disappeared from public display. The reason, according to the ruling SED party's central organ *Neues Deutschland*: the publication by *Sputnik* of a letter from Soviet journalist Ernst Henri to poet Ilya Ehrenburg, dated 1965, in which Henri accuses Stalin of having aided and abetted Hitler's rise to power by dividing the German labour movement and of having weakened the defences of the USSR on the eve of the "Great Patriotic War" with his purges of the Red Army officer corps and the signing of the infamous Hitler-Stalin Pact of 1939.

Soon after the ban it became known that top-level East German historians are themselves working on a critical reappraisal of the communist role in the struggle against fascism. Thus it seems reasonable to assume that the banning of *Sputnik* has little to do with the incriminated item but everything to do with attempts to keep *glasnost* out of the GDR.



# YUGOSLAVIA

The escalating Yugoslav crisis has further reinforced the ever-present tendency of the republican and provincial parties to entrench themselves in their local national constituencies. The outcome has varied considerably, given the wide economic disparities and differing national traditions.

MICHELE LEE

## WILL THE CENTRE HOLD?

### The Slovenes Reach for Democracy

The Committee for Defence of Human Rights, established to defend four intellectuals arrested in May 1988 and sentenced for allegedly handling a secret military document, is today fast acquiring the character of a Slovene peoples' front<sup>1</sup>. It has remained in dialogue with the party, maintaining a political consensus on all the main issues affecting democracy and Slovene national sovereignty. Yet the progress of Slovene democratisation has by no means been a simple progress. At recent elections to a post on the republican (state) Presidency, Igor Bavcar, a leading member of the Committee, was firmly 'filtered out' of the electoral procedure, despite the fact that he had won majority support at the base. The pretext given was that Bavcar had called for 'civil disobedience' to prevent execution of the sentence pronounced by the military court on Janez Jansa, Franci Zavrl, David Tasic and Ivan Borstner (in fact, Bavcar's proposal had been heavily qualified: he had proposed direct action only to allow the Slovene republican assembly's special commission, set up to investigate the circumstances of the original arrests, to conclude its work). In protest against this undemocratic practice, some fifty of the best young party intellectuals resigned from the party.

It was in this context that Janez Jansa, one of the Slovene Four, wrote an open letter to the Slovene party leader Milan Kucan. In an astonishing indication of the democratic climate prevailing in Slovenia, this was published in the main Ljubljana daily *Delo* (5 November 1988), with a reply by Kucan. In his letter, Jansa criticised a speech Kucan had given at Poljce to trade-union activists just before the candidate list was to be approved, in which he had criticised Bavcar for calling for civil disobedience. Jansa argued that this speech had opened the door to attacks on the Committee and also to Bavcar's disqualification. Yet the original arrests, and the trial of the Four, had been 'an aspect of policy conducted by certain forces within Yugoslavia hostile to the liberalisation in Slovenia'.

He also criticised Kucan for changing his position on the language. Initially, Kucan had argued that Slovenes could not feel

loyalty to a state which did not respect their mother tongue. However, when the Federal authorities - the Federal state presidency and the Supreme Military court - pronounced the use of the Serbo-Croat language during the trial of the Four to be perfectly constitutional, he did nothing. Jansa accused Kucan of 'naivete at best and political opportunism at worst', arguing that unprincipled politics could only end in disaster. Slovenes lived with the fear that Kucan and Janez Stanovnik, the republic's state president, might be removed, since this would mark the end of liberalisation in Slovenia. However, if the two were ready to give up their principles, then this amounted to the same. Kucan used to be described as 'progressive', Jansa went on, but this description was now beginning to pale. 'One cannot assess how progressive ideas are solely in terms of the "relationship of forces"; it is a question of the vision they contain, which determines the aim. Without an aim, there is neither will nor way.' Without an aim that can inspire the people, it would be impossible to get out of the current crisis. But the electoral manoeuvre suggested that the party's proclaimed reform would be only of a cosmetic nature.

Kucan began his reply by stressing that democratisation in Slovenia was worthy of the name only if it provided space for people like Jansa to state their views. While he refused to enter into a polemic, he nevertheless wished to touch on three important points raised by Jansa.

1) 'I recognise the Yugoslav Federal state - as defined by the 1974 constitution - as my own. The key question today, however, is what kind of Yugoslavia?' Kucan argued that very wide differences existed in this regard, as was indicated by the trial. In his view, 'a Yugoslavia that was not socialist and democratic would not be possible.' But there were strong proponents of different options, and the battle over the character of the Federation would continue. The question of the language had to be seen in this context. This was not to say that one should give up the struggle: Slovene language and sovereignty depend, above all, on 'unity and determination in Slovenia'.

2) 'I do not share the opinion of those who say that Yugoslavia is not a legal state.' For Kucan, what was at stake was a strengthening of its democratic content. This involved the elimination of arbitrariness and

voluntarism on the part of the party, which had turned the state into an alienated power over citizens rather than something belonging to them all. 'This must be the meaning of the reform of the political system.' This was why the Slovene Assembly had set up a commission to study all the circumstances of the trial, and why in July the Slovene party had given its support to the Committee for Protection of Human Rights. In the meantime, he was against calls 'to stop the execution of the legal sentence passed by the military court.'

3) 'Regarding my speech at Poljce, it would be unfair to suggest that the candidate commission was involved in manipulation. We in the League of Communists of Slovenia have the same visions and aims, and differ only about the means.' Just as in his speech he had not talked about the Committee's activity in general, it would be equally wrong to declare oneself for or against the Slovene party in general. He saw the call for civil disobedience as something that could 'stop the process of democratisation and weaken the Slovene internal consensus, hence also Slovenia's influence on the formulation of an all-Yugoslav orientation.' A polarisation in Slovenia - particularly on an issue such as respect for the law - could have 'tragic consequences'.

### Nationalism Triumphs in Serbia

It was in Serbia that the turn to the nation took the sharpest form: the primacy of class politics was formally abandoned in favour of national consolidation with the accession of Slobodan Milosevic to unchallenged power in the League of Communists of Serbia, at the end of 1987, on a programme of re-centralisation of Serbia.

The 1974 Federal constitution had given considerably enhanced autonomy to Kosovo and Vojvodina, the two provinces within the republic of Serbia, making them constituent parts of the Yugoslav Federation. The Serbian leadership co-responsible for this arrangement had favoured it on the grounds that the policing of Kosovo exacted a heavy toll on Serbia's own internal democracy, while no economic progress in Kosovo could be envisaged without Albanisation of the

province's party and state cadre<sup>2</sup>. The purge of this leadership in 1972 - as part of a country-wide assault on 'liberalism' - opened a power struggle within the Serbian party, which remained largely unresolved until the arrival of Milosevic, although a working consensus was established by 1984 to seek the republic's re-centralisation.

The enhanced autonomy of the two provinces had weakened Belgrade's importance, and there was a new determination to return to the *status quo ante*. The decentralisation of the Federal state, which the 1974 constitution expressed, and especially devolution of powers to the provinces, was singled out by successive Serbian leaderships as the root cause of the economic and political troubles of Serbia.

The Serbian party, however, was faced with a seemingly insuperable barrier, in that constitutional changes must be sanctioned by all three assemblies - those of the two provinces as well as of that of the republic as a whole - but approval from Vojvodina and Kosovo was not forthcoming. The provinces' stand was supported by the Federal party leadership, which was concerned about the implied reduction in the rights of the Albanian population. More importantly, it did not wish to see any alteration of the national balance within the Federation, since the consequences of this would be incalculable.

The Serbian leadership now split on the issue of how to proceed. Two currents emerged by 1987: the first, associated with the then Serbian state president Ivan Stambolic, preferred to solve the problem through an all-Yugoslav consensus. The second, gathered around party leader Milosevic, opted for independent action by Serbia, which could only mean a Serb national mobilisation. Since the 1981 demonstrations Serb nationalists had been complaining that Kosovo was becoming a purely Albanian province; the 'cradle of the Serb nation' was being alienated from it. A powerful coalition comprising right-wing nationalists among the traditional intelligentsia (some of them members of the Serbian Academy), 'disillusioned' leftists (in particular, the *ex-Praxis* group), the Orthodox Church, and a section of retired and active party and state bureaucrats, emerged in the late 1980s. The coalition entered public life with a now notorious petition - in which the then party-state leadership was accused of high treason. This was followed by a 'Memorandum' drafted by the academicians, which accused the CPY and the Comintern of an historic 'anti-Serb' conspiracy. This document subsequently became the ideological platform for the Serbian party's 'new course'. The Kosovo party was duly accused of encouraging Serb and Montenegrin emigration from the province, and the Albanian nation held to be guilty of ethnic 'genocide'.

The Serbian leadership now argued that changes to the republic's constitution were necessary, if only to give it direct control

over the province's police and judiciary in order to put an end to 'genocide' and 'counterrevolution'. In the spring of 1987, Slobodan Milosevic appeared in Kosovo Polje - the organising centre of Serb and Montenegrin nationalists - to deliver a fiery speech in which he offered Serbian party support for the nationalists' committee. By arriving in the province without first informing the Kosovo party, Milosevic not only broke party protocol but also signalled his bid for uncontested power in the Serbian party. At the 8th session of the latter's CC in December 1987, Ivan Stambolic and Belgrade party chief Dragisa Pavlovic were purged<sup>4</sup>.

The sudden purge, the brutal manner in which it was conducted, and the nationalist overtones of the debate (which was televised) shocked the country. That the victory did not come easily, however, was proved by the viciousness of the subsequent campaign conducted against the defeated party faction, and the scale of the purge of key party and state organs. Particular attention was paid to the media. In a typically Stalinist manner, all real and potential critics were characterised as 'anti-people' and 'anti-Serb'. At the same time, a prompt expression of total loyalty to the new leadership - including the obligatory attack on its opponents - was made a condition of political survival and/or continued employment. Milosevic was elevated to the position of an infallible party leader. After the 'normalisation' in Serbia, Milosevic's critics inevitably came from the other republics, and this was used as further proof of the existence of an anti-Serb coalition.

Serbia, which only a few years earlier had been a lively centre of activity and debate, suddenly succumbed to a numbing 'unity'. The capital of Yugoslavia became the headquarters of an embattled Serb nation. The media was used, as in wartime, to attack the enemy, punish traitors, report on the



Slobodan Milosevic

ly all other republics<sup>5</sup> and the two provinces), raise the national spirit, recall past victories, commemorate the wounded and dead in past battles going back to the 14th century. The message was that of a heroic nation, surrounded by perfidious enemies. The military prowess of the defunct bourgeoisie was honoured by erecting statues of its generals. Serbian peasant dress, especially hats, became a sudden fashion. This orgy of national self-pity and exhilaration was - and is - at times interrupted only by reports of marching workers, coming from Serbia and outside of it to Belgrade to protest against low wages or the real or threatened bankruptcy of their enterprises and to demand the resignation of managers and functionaries.

An extremely important role in this orchestrated process of national homogenisation has been played by mass rallies in solidarity with Serbs and Montenegrins in Kosovo. Ostensibly spontaneous, they were carefully organized and financed by the party-state machine. Over the past six months, such rallies - tens of thousands strong - have taken place in practically every major city or village in Serbia, including Vojvodina and Kosovo, and spilt over into Montenegro, against the wish of the local leadership<sup>6</sup>. At these - as well as at party plenums, republican assembly sessions, trade-union conferences and meetings of the party base; in universities, factories and schools; at suitable state occasions - one message was constantly hammered home: that the Serb nation is fragmented because its state is divided into three pieces. Milosevic spoke of the historic hour: 'Serbia will be united or it will not exist'. The Belgrade press wrote about 'the third Serbian uprising'.

The disinclination of the Serbian party to submit itself to the Federal party's authority simultaneously grew. National mobilisation in Serbia and the aggressive tone of its press resulted in rising tensions throughout the country. In the summer of 1988 the Federal party Presidency demanded of Belgrade that nationalist demonstrations be stopped. The republican leadership refused. Its representatives simply declined to attend meetings of the Presidency until its demands were met. The frequency of the rallies if anything increased throughout the autumn, their mood growing more militant. Slogans demanding arms and the criminal prosecution of other Yugoslav leaders (in the case of Albanian leaders also their execution) became frequent. No party or state leader - be they from another republic or province or from the Federation, and irrespective of his or her status - who appeared not to harbour 100% support for the 'new course' in Serbia was exempt from the hate campaign<sup>7</sup>. These rallies were by now seriously destabilising the country, opening the possibility that the army might have to take over. In October, Yugoslav state President Raif Dizdarevic warned - without mentioning the culprit by name - that the country might have to be placed under a state of emergency. (The

debate between Kasapovic and Golubovic which we reproduce below should be seen in this context).

The readiness of the Serbian party to use the threat of civil war to settle inner-party differences (what the Bolshevik party's left wing described as 'Bonapartism' during its struggle with Stalin) startled the country in early October, when the party leadership of the province of Vojvodina was overthrown by a carefully planned and orchestrated mass action. What is important to emphasise is that well before the Vojvodina putsch the Federal party had already agreed to accept Serbia's constitutional demands, presumably feeling that it had little choice. In doing so, it had opened the door to a peaceful resolution of the problem. Yet this option was rejected by the Serbian party in favour of a show of force, thereby informing the Federation that the internal affairs of the republic of Serbia were its *exclusive* prerogative. Judging by the Federal party's response - its refusal to send, as is customary, its representative to the meeting of the Vojvodina provincial committee at which the provincial party presidency submitted its collective resignation; its acceptance of the Serbian leadership's demand for unconditional resignation of prominent Albanian leaders in Kosovo - this was accepted and thus *de facto* legitimised, breaking with the whole tradition of Yugoslav communism according to which the Federal party held supreme authority over its republican branches.

The televised 17th Plenum of the CC LCY - held on 17-20 October - opened the split in the ruling party to the gaze of the whole country. In an unprecedented move, the Federal party presidency - having itself become the butt of Belgrade attacks - asked the assembled CC for a vote of confidence: when the vote was counted, Dusan Ckrebic, a close collaborator of Milosevic, alone had been voted down<sup>8</sup>. In conformity with Belgrade's secessionist mood, Milosevic refused to accept the vote, publicly rejecting the CC's authority. *The Belgrade press now denounced the all-Yugoslav Central Committee as an 'unprincipled alliance' directed against Serbia!* A month after the plenum, the Serbian leadership organised a 350,000 strong public meeting in Belgrade, at which the 'fighting' spirit of the Serb nation was once again hailed, other Yugoslav leaders were attacked, and a 'united' (as opposed to federal) Yugoslavia proclaimed. 'No force can now stop Serbia's unification' screamed the headlines<sup>9</sup>.

By now, of course, the concept of 'Serbia's unification' had subsumed a threat of expansionism and a re-composition - if not outright dissolution - of the country's federal structure. This is why the Federal party came so quickly to the defence of the beleaguered Montenegrin leadership, when it faced - on 8 October - an unprecedented explosion of working-class anger. The Montenegrin workers' demonstration (described below) provided a backdrop for a determined attempt to

replace the local leadership with Milosevic's men. The Montenegrin events, it seems, were a substitute for something else: the overthrow of the Kosovo leadership, planned as a pendant to the successful putsch in Vojvodina. Belgrade was warned, however, that any such attempt in Kosovo would provoke mass resistance, which is why the organisers' accumulated energy was then turned in the direction of Montenegro. Indeed, as subsequent events in Kosovo (on which we report below) show, the Serbian leadership's national and state plans have come up against a popular determination there that will be impossible to break without a long-term state of emergency in the province.

Finally, the Serbian leadership, in response to criticism addressed to it from other parts of Yugoslavia that it is governed not by class but rather by purely national considerations, put considerable efforts at the beginning of October into presenting itself as a friend to the workers<sup>10</sup>. This image will be difficult to sustain, since it is firmly committed to economic liberalism. At the meeting of the Serbian CC of 22 November 1988, convened to discuss the economic reform, Milosevic gave the key speech, in which he said: 'A contemporary, efficient and self-managing socialist, and above all democratic, society can only be built on the basis of commodity production and modern market economy. The market is today the only democratic mechanism which valorises business ideas and the activity of economic subjects. Without commodity production, self-management can only be an abstract political relationship.' As the interview with Pero Jurkovic published below shows, it is doubtful whether Yugoslav self-management will survive in any recognisable form.

## Serbian Right-wing Radicalism

In a paper presented to the Zagreb meeting, Mirjana Kasapovic, a Zagreb political scientist, made a rare attempt to theorise certain aspects of recent developments in Serbia. This, and the meeting's generally critical stance towards the latter - in particular to the orchestrated mass rallies - provoked an angry response from Zagorka Golubovic, an ex-editor of *Praxis* from Belgrade. What follows is an abridged account of their interesting and as yet unfinished debate.

In her paper, Kasapovic argues that contemporary Serb nationalism is not a unified phenomenon but contains different currents, including a 'right-wing radical one'. She defines this as 'an anti-democratic political ideology and practice which, in the name of a higher right - the allegedly endangered survival of the Serb nation in Kosovo - rejects the established democratic system and democratic methods for changing it.' One component of this current's ideology

is its exclusive approach to the Albanian population as an enemy. It consequently seeks a reconstruction of the Serb national state as the decisive instrument for a *violent* solution of the Albanian 'problem' in Kosovo, ranging from changing the ethnic structure of the province to placing it under a different legal system.

This 'right-wing radical' current is convinced that a precondition of its success is the introduction of a state of emergency in Yugoslavia. It argues, namely, that existing Yugoslav institutions have been constituted by a 'permanent and pragmatic anti-Serb coalition', in a manner designed to block perpetually the desired re-creation of the Serb state. The 'permanent' part of the coalition is formed by Slovenia and Croatia, and sublimates the historic conflict between the European West and East. The pragmatic part is made up of the provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo, which favour a 'totally de-subjected and decomposed Serbia'. The coalition, therefore, must be destroyed, and this can be achieved only by an all-Serb mobilisation. Hence the invitation extended to Serbs living outside Serbia proper to refuse loyalty to the individual political communities in which they live, in the name of the supreme Serb national interest. 'They see all relations in Yugoslavia as fundamentally derived from, and reducible to, the national dimension. One's own nation is seen as the determinant not only of its own national politics, but also of all others.'

This is essentially a totalitarian political ideology, in that it views the nation as monolithic, while all other relations within the state are viewed exclusively along the lines of an enemy-ally relationship. 'The ally, of course, is the national establishment: the national party, its leadership and Leader. The enemies are as a rule to be found in the other nations. Such a structuring of the political field is a remnant of the Stalinist type of rule and a contribution to its revival: the nation turns not to the institutions of the state, but to the Party; not to the Assembly, but to the CC; not to the government, but to the party leadership.' Like Stalinism, it is also engaged 'in a terrifying reduction of all social complexity: all social relations are seen as highly transparent and society appears as a chess board upon which every move of any individual is predicted, followed and immediately judged as a move by a collectivity to which the individual belongs.'

This right-wing radical nationalism could, therefore, open the door to 'a totalitarian movement based on the lower layers of the upper social class, whose aim would be to neo-stalinise Yugoslavia.'

Golubovic's response was set in the context of a more general critique of the Zagreb meeting, whose mood, she felt, Kasapovic expressed 'with particular precision'. What the Zagreb meeting confirmed, in her view, was the 'unexpected turnabout in the thinking of certain intellec-



tuals over the past few months'. Golubovic wrote that many intellectuals who, in the first half of the 1980s, 'were very critical towards the existing system of government, arguing that since it was not freely elected and since the people did not have any institutionalised possibility of expressing their will, it was of questionable legitimacy', were now taking up positions quite close to official ones, defending the system and its 'legal institutions, while criticising the mass meetings in Serbia as illegitimate.

'There is an attempt to ascribe a national background to the protest meetings. For my part, I am not interested in the nationality of those who use what M. Kasapovic terms "instruments of state of exception" - whether they are Serbs, Slovenes or even Poles. Could one describe the *Solidarity* movement in Poland 1980-1 - a non-institutional action *par excellence* - as likewise an instrument of "right radicalism"? I am interested in the principle involved.' In her own view, the mass rallies in Serbia expressed 'an elementary right of all citizens of a country which has declaratively adopted socialism and self-management' - the more so as they demanded 'that irresponsible leaderships and individual functionaries account to the people for the current crisis of Yugoslav society.'

Golubovic therefore asked: 'What prevents those who most probably sincerely desire the democratisation of Yugoslav society from recognising, and extending their support to, these tendencies which, in one way or another, *are opening* the possibility for a deepening of the democratic process?'

The mass rallies held in Serbia were 'undoubtedly an instrument of corrosion' of this hardened bureaucratic system, which

could be used to speed up democratic processes ... a seed from which a development of democratic aspirations and processes could sprout forth.'

She, Golubovic, would agreed that the struggle against a 'decades-long bureaucratic system' cannot be waged on an exclusively national basis. However, can one criticise the search for support exclusively in the nation in some cases while endorsing it in others?

'It is here that I see the greatest inconsistency of Slovene intellectuals, and even of Slovene democratic and progressive politicians, whose efforts towards democratisation of our society I otherwise support.'

If one accepts, Golubovic went on, that the democratisation of Yugoslavia will be a long-term struggle, then one should accept also that 'every effort designed to break through what has up to now been an impenetrable system can be a useful contribution to the creation of a space for the democratic process. In the conditions of 'real socialism', this space has been widened precisely through extra-institutional forms of action: this was true as much in Poland as in Hungary, in Slovenia as in Serbia.' And she concluded by saying that 'the defence of non-democratic institutional forms by some intellectuals today constitutes an apologia for the existing system' and represents 'a departure from the critical stance upheld by the majority of intellectuals in the first half of this decade.'

In her reply, Kasapovic pointed out that she had been dealing with only one strand of contemporary Serb nationalism, the one which works hard to create a

conviction that 'justified' national interests cannot be achieved through the existing institutional channels. 'My critics do in fact exactly what they accuse me of doing, by recognizing in my analytical category of right-wing radicalism the totality of what is happening in the Socialist Republic of Serbia. This is a necessary consequence of their refusal to acknowledge the existence of different ideological positions present within "the national movement".' This refusal was politically motivated, since it allowed them to write off the right-wing radical current as so many unimportant 'excesses'.

Kasapovic rejected Golubovic's assertion that she equated all forms of extra-institutional protest with right-wing radicalism: 'Extra-institutional forms of mass political activity need not be right-wing: mass actions - for example, the mass strike - are fundamental forms of political activity also of left-wing radicalism.' To reduce all mass activity to right-radical forms of political activity would indeed be wrong in Yugoslavia today. 'Rather, it is a question of understanding concrete mass meetings and concrete attempts to use them for specific political aims. It is a question, also, whether concrete political activity could have political effects that need not correspond to the subjective intentions of the majority of participants. In Poland, the objective consequence of the mass extra-institutional movement was not the overthrow of an (illegal) order, but the introduction of an institutionalised state of exception.'

Finally, there was the question of the national background of the Serbian protest meetings, which Golubovic, in Kasapovic's view, dismissed too lightly. On the contrary, they could not be understood without it. 'Before she excludes the national background from the discussion, the author should answer first some purely prosaic questions. How is one to explain the fact that the Polish extra-institutional movement was aimed at the (non)legitimate Polish system of government, the Hungarian at the Hungarian one, the Slovene at the Slovene (and Yugoslav) one, whereas the one thing that the Serb mass rallies do not question is the legitimacy of the republic's system of government or of its leadership? How is it that in the struggle against "bureaucratic counter-revolution", the question of the "national bureaucracy" itself is not being posed? How is it that the only ally of "the people" in the struggle is its national party-state leadership? Why is it that the (unreformed) national communist party, and the type of government it is creating, are not targets of the extra-institutional rebellion against the (illegitimate) order? I am not clear why, for example, the targets of this "extra-institutional movement" can be Vrhovec [a Croat] and Stanovnik [a Slovene] Stanovnik, but not also Ckrebic [a Serb]?'<sup>12</sup>

In Kasapovic's view, mass action as an instrument of struggle against bureaucratic autocracy will only serve to strengthen



Nationalist demonstrators in the Serbian town of Smederevo

bureaucratic reaction, unless it is a struggle for democracy with clear aims, such as 'free elections of representatives and the right spontaneously to reject those representatives' decisions.' Kasapovic concluded by rejecting the suggestion that her orientation had changed. All her intervention had done was to reject 'theoretically and politically the challenge to the existing order's legitimacy from the position of right-wing radicalism, and forms of political activity consonant with this.'

**K**asapovic's questions are very pertinent. They point to the fact that the reason why the mass rallies did not criticise the Serbian bureaucracy was because that bureaucracy had in fact itself organised them, in order to put pressure on the Federal party. Far from being spontaneous, the recent mass rallies in Serbia were in fact little more than an instrument of inner-party struggle. Moreover, their strongly nationalist and anti-democratic charge is shown by the slogans popular on these occasions: 'Give us arms!'; 'Death to Albanians!'; 'We shall kill Vllasi!'; 'Hang Vllasi!', 'Vllasi and [Fadil] Hoxha behind bars!' 'Slobodan Milosevic,

don't let Serbdom down!'; 'Slobodan, we will march with you to Kosovo!'; 'Kosovo is ours - don't let Enver [Hoxha] take it away!'; 'Serbia asks: when will Slobodan replace Tito?'; 'Slobodan, we are all yours - only traitors are against you!'; 'We are all Serbs!'; 'Only Unity Can Save the Serb!'; 'Montenegro is a jewel in Serbia's crown!'; 'Montenegro is a Serb land!'; 'Long live King Peter!'; 'Try F.Hoxha; K. Shiroke; D. Markovic; M. Bakalli; S. Kreigher; Dj. Stojacic; Dz. Nimani; J. Vrhovec; A. Vlasi; K. Jashari; S. Dolasevic; B. Krunic; P. Matic; Dj. Radosavljevic; Z. Pupavci; D. Jashanci; V.Krstic; V. Marelj!'; etc. etc. Photographs show youths wearing royalist insignia on their peasant hats or bearded and dressed in black in the Chetnik style. As Kasapovic indicated, the individuals whom the mass meetings denounced, and for whom trial, imprisonment, and/or death was demanded - a list of names that grew throughout the summer and autumn, and that came to include all prominent Yugoslav leaders, including Stipe Suvar, current head of the Federal party - all came from outside Serbia proper, with the exception of Dragoslav Markovic, a retired Serbian politician who had had the courage to be openly critical of the present republican

leaders' nationalist course.

## Class Anger Explodes in Montenegro

**I**n 1987 Montenegro, together with Macedonia and Kosovo, declared itself bankrupt. One third of its enterprises are operating at a loss. 40,000 workers, in a republic whose total population is only 600,000, are living and supporting their families on the minimum wage of 230,000 dinars (£25) per month. In the last two years, 6,000 workers have lost their jobs and thousands of young people are seeking non-existent work. The social peace ended about a year ago, when the Montenegrin leadership decided to close down 'unviable' enterprises in order to save the 'healthy' sectors, but without offering any programme for dealing with the social effects of this policy. As a result, on 8 October 1988 the hungry workers staged the republic's largest postwar demonstration in the capital Titograd. The demonstration was initiated by the workers of 'Radoje Dakic', the construction machinery enterprise, and by steelworkers from the 'Boris Kidric' enterprise in Niksic.

'Radoje Dakic' occupies third place on the list of the republic's loss-makers. There is no market for its products, since the construction industry is heavily depressed. For a while the enterprise kept going by doing work in Iraq; but when the Iraq-Iran war began, the Yugoslav government was forced to accept a postponement in Iraqi payments, which led to a 13 billion dinar loss for 'Radoje Dakic'. The 1987 law on loss-making enterprises made 'Radoje Dakic' a prime target for closure, throwing its 3,000 workers into a state of complete insecurity.

The Niksic steelworks, for its part, accounted for 40% of the republic's deficit in the first half of 1988, though some of this is being blamed on high electricity prices. These losses are subsidised by the combined efforts of the republic and the Federation. Closure of the steelworks, which is being proposed, would lead to a loss of 7,000 jobs.

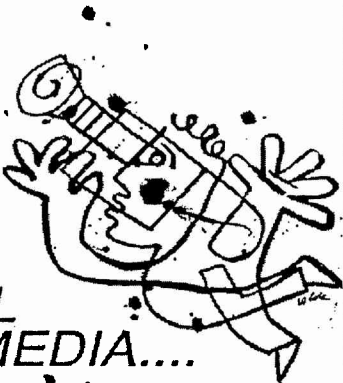
There is also the case of the wood-pulp enterprise at Ivograd, arguably one of the republic's greatest mis-investments. Calculations show that the factory has since its inception produced not a single unit of real value. It was closed in the summer of 1987, shedding 1,800 jobs. There are those who argue that the future of the factory lies in the production of fine newsprint, for which there is a great demand in the country, but the republic's current economic reconstruction plan does not refer to this possibility.

The textile industry too is in dire straits and only a few days before the 8 October demonstration, the 'Teteks' workers were on strike and planning a march to the republican Assembly in Titograd. Meanwhile, Montene-

Advertisement

INDEPENDENT

# Media



CHALLENGES  
CONVENTIONAL  
USES OF THE MEDIA....

WITH —

- Reports on new uses of film, video, radio, photography, print
- Regular up-dates on production, distribution and exhibition, including a special section on media education
- The latest news and debates; events listings; reviews of books, tapes, films and exhibitions; plus many job opportunities

FOR AN ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION OF —

- £7.50 for individuals
- £15.00 for institutions (2 copies a month!)
- £15.00 for overseas mailing

FREE SAMPLE ISSUE!

Name: _____	Organisation: _____
Address: _____	
Post-code: _____	Telephone: _____

I wish to subscribe at the Individual / Institutional / Overseas rate.  
I enclose a cheque (made payable to Independent Media) for \_\_\_\_\_

I would like a free sample copy     Please invoice me

Independent Media, 16 Fernhill Road, Cove, Farnborough, Hampshire GU14 9RX.

gro's traditional sheep farming has been destroyed, as a result of the industrial push of the 1960s. And although much is being talked about the possibilities of tourist-based development, the sad truth is that the republic's rivers are polluted, its canyons filled, the remains of its Roman past buried, the tourist infrastructure dirty and inefficient.

So on 8 October 'Radoje Dakic' workers began their march in Titograd. They were joined by other workers, university and secondary school children, and by citizens from Titograd and other Montenegrin towns, including Ivangrad. Groups came from Kosovo and there was an announcement that others from Serbia and Macedonia would also be arriving. (Steelworkers, coming from Niksic, were stopped half-way by police using batons and tear gas; turning back, the steelworkers with colleagues from other enterprises staged a mass demonstration in Niksic.)

The Montenegrin leadership tried to address the crowd gathered in front of the state and party official buildings, but with little result. The demonstrators instead demanded their resignations. There were slogans such as: 'We want to work and earn our living!'; 'We demand bread!'; 'We have had enough of waiting!'; 'Long live the LCY!'. By the evening, however, nationalist slogans became more frequent, which included: 'Long live the Serbian leadership!'; 'You have betrayed Slobodan Milosevic - you have betrayed Serbdom!'; 'Who says, who lies, that Serbia is small?!'; 'Slobodan, we are your soldiers - we shall kill or we shall die!'; 'Slobodan, you Serb son, when will you come to Cetinje?!' At around 6 a.m the following morning, the police, aided by 'specials', charged the remnants of the crowd, again using batons and tear gas, and dispersed it. By now support for the Montenegrin leadership had arrived from the Slovenian and Croatian party as well as from Bosnia-Herzegovina, since it seemed that the tiny republic was about to be absorbed into Serbia. A condemnation of the demonstrators finally came from the Federal party leadership, which also condoned the use of force against the workers - an unprecedented event in post-war Yugoslavia! There were 23 arrests. The hospitals reported, however, only two cases of light injuries. An attempt by 'Teteks' workers to stage another demonstration that morning was prevented by the police. For a few days Montenegro was placed under a *de facto* state of emergency.

The events opened up a deep division in the Montenegrin leadership: the republic's government submitted its resignation, as did the leadership of the Titograd party. Simultaneously, an urgent meeting of the steelworkers' Workers' Council condemned the use of force, and issued a set of demands: immediate acceptance of all constitutional amendments (some of which were being resisted by Slovenia, in particular); energetic suppression of 'counter-revolution' in Kosovo;

vo; speedy reform of the economy; an end to price rises and the fall in living standards; reduction of taxation on industry; the resignation of the Montenegrin leadership responsible for the crisis.

The unrest of October 1988 has brought into prominence the Socialist Youth Alliance 'alternative', supported by the current Serbian leadership. The youth organisation has given its unreserved support to the workers, and has demanded a collective resignation of the Montenegrin leadership. Its president Ljubisa Stankovic gave an interview to the Zagreb weekly *Danas* (22.11.1988), in which he argued that it was purely accidental that the demonstrations had started with 'Radoje Dakic' - worker dissatisfaction was bound to erupt sooner or later. But he also confirmed that the current unrest was initiated by the recent mass rallies in support of Serbs and Montenegrins in Kosovo, organised by the Kosovo Committee. The Montenegrin leadership had distanced itself from these 'solidarity' meetings, leaving, according to Stankovic, 'a deep gap opened up between the people and the leadership'.

Up to now, the Montenegrin youth organisation, unlike its Slovene counterpart, had appeared faceless and passive - and hostile to the kind of initiatives coming from Ljubljana. Asked if, in the light of the October events, it would change its policy and support such initiatives as the dropping of Article 133 (defining so-called 'crimes of opinion') from the Penal Code, Stankovic answered that he was not sure. In his view, what was important was the economic reform, i.e. creation of a proper market economy - and the change of leadership.

## Albanians March for Democracy

**O**n 17 November 1988, a meeting of the Provincial Committee of the League of Communists of Kosovo was to be convened in the provincial capital Pristina, to discuss the planned resignations of Kaqusha Jashari and Azem Vllasi, respectively the current party President and her immediate predecessor. Their resignations had been arranged as part of a deal on the constitution reached earlier between the Federal and Serbian leaderships. After years of wrangling, the Federal party leaders had under duress finally given their agreement to Serbia's recentralisation, and thereby also to a significant reduction in the hard-won rights of the two-million-strong Albanian nation, thus turning the Yugoslav clock back by two decades. The Pristina meeting was supposed to legitimise this. The resignations were part of a pledge that the provincial party, which had not condoned the deal, would nevertheless not resist the constitutional changes designed to increase Serbia's control over Kosovo.

That morning, miners from the 'Stari Trg'

mine near Titova Mitrovica, the industrial centre of Kosovo, after completing the night shift, emerged from the 38 degree Celsius of their pit into the freezing dawn (the first snows of winter had just fallen on Kosovo), joined forces with the day shift and began the 70-kilometre march to Pristina. They were the vanguard of what turned out to be the largest Albanian demonstration since the war: half a million participants over the next five days.

Journalists met them half-way. 'They were wearing their shabby miners' outfits and looked quite exhausted. The front row carried a picture of Tito, two miners' flags, the party flag, Yugoslav, Albanian and Turkish flags. Their slogans: "Tito-Party!"; "Jashari-Vllasi!"; "Tito-Kardelj!"<sup>13</sup>; "We will not surrender our cadres!"

Unemployment in Kosovo is over 50%. Social product per employed person is 30% of the Yugoslav average. The average wage in the mining-industrial complex of 'Trepca' (of which 'Stari Trg' is a part) - based on one of the largest, though now practically exhausted, lead and zinc mines in Europe - is about \$55 per month. This can barely keep a miner's family from starvation. A correspondent from the daily *Borba* (Struggle), one of the rare journalists able to speak the Albanian language (only 3 out of 30 Yugoslav journalists accredited to Pristina are in possession of this essential element of their trade!) asked one of them if they were going to Pristina to complain about their wages. 'Everybody gathered around to listen. The miner answered that this was a day for politics, not for tears. The journalist said that politics was a dangerous business - the "specials" were ahead and there might be trouble. The grim-faced man responded angrily: "Journalist, have you ever seen a wedding without meat?"<sup>14</sup>

Once in Pristina, the miners were joined by other workers, then by students and youth, followed by secondary and primary school children - 80% of the participants were below the age of 20 - and soon also by the older generation, coming from all parts of Kosovo (as well as western Macedonia) in a five-day-long demonstration of national determination. During the bitterly-cold nights, they camped outside the Provincial Committee headquarters, lopping the branches from the young trees planted in its forecourt to warm themselves up. Their protest had two aims: to express their rejection of the proposed changes in the constitution of the Republic of Serbia; to prevent, in that context, the enforced resignation of the two provincial leaders. Although the Provincial Committee acknowledged the resignations (no vote was taken, the outcome having been determined elsewhere) and the miners thus failed to achieve their formal aims, the fact that the police did not charge - at the express order of the provincial government - suggests that they had won the battle honours, and perhaps a more lasting victory. The Kosovo working class and the local

party and state leadership still have many differences to be settled. But a display of unity was inevitable in the face of the anti-Albanian hysteria flowing from Belgrade: only a week earlier, a member of the Serbian Trade Union Alliance had argued publicly that 'counter-revolution' was deeply embedded in the Kosovo party and state organs and at Pristina University, but above all in the Albanian working class - angering the Trepca miners and providing a stimulus for their march. After the demonstration, the Serbian party described the Pristina events as the latest example of an escalating 'counter-revolution'. The Federal party came very close to agreeing with them<sup>15</sup>. The Kosovo leadership, however, argued that they were 'in line with the 17th party plenum'<sup>16</sup>.

This cacophony, of course, only illustrates how deeply the League of Communists of Yugoslavia is split, and how unprincipled is the politics that tries to pretend otherwise. What is clear, however, is that the dialectic of class and national liberation has in Kosovo once again proved its potent force. Even the normally hostile Belgrade reporters were impressed by the demonstrators' firmness and self-discipline. The Albanian miners had celebrated the 45th anniversary of the revolution in the best possible manner: by defending one of its fundamental achievements<sup>17</sup>.

The force behind the Kosovo demonstration may have been a defence of national rights; but this defence was phrased in terms not of nationalism but of democracy. In interviews freely given, the miners made it clear that if the province's status was to be changed, if its Albanian leadership was to be purged, then this must be done in an open, democratic debate and not imposed by force. The workers said what the Federal party should have said - but did not. In those freezing November days and nights, the marching workers, students and children acted as a true socialist vanguard.

## The End of Self-Management?

[What follows is an edited extract from a recent article in the Zagreb journal *Start*, based on an interview with Pero Jurkovic, professor of economics at the University of Zagreb, taking up the fate of self-management under the projected economic reform.]

'An interesting and characteristic dialogue took place at a recent meeting of economists in Zagreb, convened to discuss the forthcoming (19th) session of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, at which the terms of the economic reform were to be established. One of the participants concluded his speech by saying that the reform needed an active social policy to ease its negative effects. This term "negative effects" has become a ritual part of all discussion about the reform. There are many

differences in regard to its meaning, but there is a common understanding that the reform has its price and somebody will have to pay this, including with the loss of their jobs. Since the professor seemed to understand what he was talking about, a member of the Yugoslav central committee present at the meeting asked him hopefully if he could explain what such a policy should consist of. The professor answered with full honesty: "I don't know. That isn't my speciality."

Whose speciality is it? Mikulic's commission for the economic reform has engaged 160 specialists to provide documentation, but the projected group for social policy never materialised. The Committee for Work and Social Policy played a game of ping-pong with the trade unions, explains Pero Jurkovic, but in the end both refused the responsibility. As a result there is nobody actively engaged in drafting social policy. Why? The professor says that this is because nobody wants to bite into the sour apple of the class character of the reform. In the meantime, a devious game is being played between the Federation, the Republics and the Communes over who should be responsible for social policy, i.e. who should pay for it. The problem has been reduced to one of money: who will pay for the narcotic to be applied to the patient about to be subjected to a long and painful operation.

Jurkovic: "No answer is being given to the question of how the reform is going to affect self-management. Instead, we hear the victorious cry *Alea iacta est!*, which means that the concepts of self-management and associated labour have been suspended. This Caesarist attitude is based in part on certain documents which in truth do not offer self-management but co-management, workers' participation. The chances are that those who think that self-management should be abolished will win. And I ask myself: Why are the party and the trade unions doing nothing about this? If there was somebody who supported the working class in this country, they would ask the question: How is it possible that workers' wages can be allowed to fall to the level of social charity? Where are the documents on housing, on tax reform, on the effects of the planned redistribution of income? If we understand socialism as a system that reduces the difference between rich and poor, then the situation in our country is no different from the one prevailing under capitalism. In Yugoslavia, the lowest, poorest 20% of households command only 6.6% of total household income. In Britain it is 7%, in Belgium 7.9%, in Japan 8%, in Sweden 7.4%, in the USA 5.3%. The upper 20% of households disposes of 39% of national income, while in the countries mentioned the range is 36-40%. Finally, the richest 10% of households in Yugoslavia dispose of 23% of national income; in Britain the figure is 23.4%, in Japan 22.4%, in Sweden 28%, in the USA 20%. But in contrast to the capitalist countries, we have no taxation

adequate to the character of our system, not even the social-democratic tax policy practised in some countries."

Jurkovic belongs to those economists who are in favour of a complete market, i.e. a market not just in goods but also in capital and labour. He believes that the attempt to build social relations only on labour and not on capital was historically premature. But since he is also a socialist, he does not like to see the crisis as an excuse to suspend self-management, which will mean that the workers will find themselves in a position that could be worse than that envisaged in the programmes of Western Social-Democracy.

*Start*: 'Is the system of self-managed labour not a utopian project?'

Jurkovic: 'You ask if the system of self-management is utopian. No, it is not, if one takes into account the real situation, the dialectical relationship between the development of material forces and relations of production, the state of consciousness in society. Today, however, *alea iacta est!* Laws are being introduced whose aim is clearly to do away with associated labour. History does not forgive failure. But today, when the society of labour is being suspended, it is much more difficult to find the real measure of compromise with capital. What rights will capital have over the workers? No document is addressing this question. In fact, the rights of workers are being largely disregarded. The new rules do not differentiate between the rights of the owners of the means of production and the rights of workers who do not own anything.'

*Start*: "You say that for socialism to survive, social property must remain dominant. Is this not contrary to some current reform positions?"

Jurkovic: "You are referring to those who argue that social property has no chance of survival, that it must be privatised. I do not agree with this. I am against the notion that individual, private ownership should become the only and absolute form of ownership. We are dealing with proposals that the whole of social ownership should be transformed into individual ownership; that workers should become shareholders in their enterprises. We must, however, protect the dominant form of social ownership, in order to protect the socialist character of society. Some will say that this will lead to inefficiency, but I disagree. That would mean that socialism as a system was impossible."

### Footnotes

1. See interview with Miha Kovac in *New Left Review*, London, No. 171, and M. Lee, *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*, Vol. 10, No. 2.
2. Latinka Perovic, then head of the Serbian party, after her expulsion from the party earned a doctoral degree with a thesis entitled "From Centralism to Federalism", in which she traces the rationale of Yugoslavia's decentralisation to Lenin's policy on the

national question. A fine piece of analysis, it has been treated with deafening silence thanks to the author's political "disgrace".

3. See *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*, Vol. 9, No. 2, where the text of the petition is reproduced.

4. See *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*, Vol. 9, No. 3. The Belgrade party organisation is naturally the country's largest and most important. Pavlovic has since published an account of his downfall in *Olako obecana brzina* (The Speed Too Easily Promised), Zagreb 1988. [The title refers to his complaint, just prior to the purge, that Slobodan Milosevic was promising an impossibly speedy resolution to the Kosovo problem].

5. With the exception of Macedonia: the Macedonian party's anti-Albanian policy has made them the Serbian leadership's natural ally, despite the fact that Serb nationalism also has an anti-Macedonian edge (Macedonia was once included in the mediaeval Serbian empire and Macedonians were classified as "South Slavs" in pre-war Yugoslavia).

6. Attempts to mobilise the Serb population in other republics (Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina) failed thanks to the firm resistance of the local leaderships. Montenegro proved to be a partial exception, due to the historic ties between Serbs and Montenegrins.

7. In a recent interview Dusan Dragosavac, a former partisan and member of the political leadership in Croatia, who had been targeted in this way, summed up the situation as follows: "This is nothing but an anti-communist strategy, the creation of hatred among the nationalities, the creation of discord in the League of Communists. It is a permanent witch-hunt, anti-statutory and

lawless." *Danas* 13.12.1988. Dragosavac's "crime" lies in his open hostility to nationalism - compounded by the fact that he is ethnically a Serb.

8. This was for many a surprising result, indicating that a considerable number of Serbian members must have voted against him in the secret ballot. An editorial in the Sarajevo daily, *Oslobodjenje* written after the 17th Plenum, spelt out the worries of the CC LCY: "Confronted with the frightening possibility that after each session of the CC its members would be publicly attacked and condemned for what they said at the session, the decision was taken to resist. For the final outcome of such a practice would be that an individual, or a narrow group, would decide the membership of the CC LCY, and vet each intervention in advance. The CC members were united in their rejection of such a 'unity'".

9. Front-page headline in *Politika*, Belgrade, 20.11.1988. It must be stressed that the Serbian meetings and demonstrations, despite their openly aggressive tone, never in fact resulted in violent action.

10. Just prior to the 17th Plenum, Stipe Suvar, the head of the Federal party, accused the Serbian leadership of an uncritical attitude towards anti-communist trends bubbling up in the Serbian Academy. At the same time Belgrade workers - particularly those of the industrial Rakovica belt of Belgrade - were threatening to go on strike. This also contributed to the Serbian leadership's sudden discovery of the working-class constituency.

11. For Mirjana Kasapovic's paper, see *Start*, Zagreb 19.10.1988. Zagorka Golubovic's letter is in *Danas*, 15.11.1988. Kasapovic's

reply is in *Danas*, 22.11.1988.

12. Josip Vrhovec represents Croatia in the federal state presidency. Janez Stanovnik is the state president of Slovenia. Both were attacked at the mass rallies in Serbia for being critical of that republic's party and state leadership. Dusan Ckrebic is a Serbian representative on the Federal party executive, who failed a vote of confidence at the 17th plenary session of the party's Central Committee in October 1988. Slobodan Milosevic, in an unprecedented move, refused to accept the verdict, and the Serbian press subsequently denounced the federal CC as an "unprincipled alliance directed against Serbia".

13. The late Edvard Kardelj, one of Tito's closest collaborators, was the chief architect of the 1974 constitution giving wide autonomy to the provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina, in recognition of the equality of Yugoslavia's non-Slav national minorities with the Slav nations.

14. *NIN*, Belgrade, 10.11.1988.

15. The Presidency in fact took this position without consultation with the CC, breaking the party statutes in an unprecedented manner.

16. Remzi Kolgeci, current joint head of both the party and state organs, said in a recent interview: "As long as I live I shall have before my eyes the picture of those wet and frozen children - what made them march? - and the determination of those who walked to Pristina in such hostile weather." *Danas*, Zagreb, 20.12.1988.

17. It is universally known that the Albanian population of Yugoslavia would like to see Kosovo given republican status. Yet this slogan (deemed counter-revolutionary by the officialdom) was not raised: the demonstration contained no nationalist charge.

#### YUGOSLAVIA'S SECURITY DILEMMAS

##### Armed Forces, National Defence and Foreign Policy

Edited by Marko Mllivojević, John B. Alcock and Pierre Maurer

In this collection of original papers major aspects of Yugoslavia's defence and foreign policy are discussed, such as its strategic significance in the context of Nato and the Warsaw Pact, the crisis of the military, the growing influence of the Yugoslav People's Army and the implications of military technological developments.

1988 324pp. bibliog., index, tables, maps  
ISBN 0 85496 107 6 cloth £25.00

#### CRISIS AND TRANSITION

##### Polish Society in the 1980s

Edited by Jadwiga Koralewicz, Ireneusz Bialecki and Margaret Watson  
With an Introduction by John Rex

Written by a group of leading Polish sociologists of the younger generation, this book covers problems such as the Solidarity movement and its psycho-social impact, the links between economic reformism and politics, the legitimisation of the existing order

and the formation of a new class consciousness among workers.

1987 208pp. ISBN 0 85496 525 4 £25.00

#### EQUALITY AND INEQUALITY IN EASTERN EUROPE

Pierre Kende and Zdenek Strmlaka

'An excellent book, full of relevant statistics and interesting ideas... A most valuable volume, this.'

Alan Nove, *Soviet Studies*

1987 432pp. tables, figures ISBN 0 85496 502 5 £20.00

#### THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION Historical Problems and Perspectives

Dietrich Geyer

This short and updated introduction by one of Europe's leading specialists in Russian and Soviet history presents a broad survey combined with a penetrating analysis of the key issues of the Russian Revolution.

1987 172pp. ISBN 0 85496 513 0 £15.00 (h)  
0 85496 518 1 £8.95 (pb)

#### ROSA LUXEMBURG

Richard Abraham

A concise introduction to the life and achievements of Rosa Luxemburg, one of the truly remarkable women of this century. This

volume offers a synthesis of the findings of recent major monographs and an examination of the material currently available in German, Polish, Russian, French and other European languages. Written in a lively manner and offering up-to-date information, this is an ideal first guide to Rosa Luxemburg's life and work.

March 1989 ca.144pp. illustr., bibliog., chronol., index  
ISBN 0 85496 182 8 ca.£12.95

#### FOUR CONTEMPORARY RUSSIAN WRITERS

Robert Porter

This book examines the work of Rasputin, Aitmatov, Voinovich and Vladimov - four major writers who represent many aspects of recent political and cultural developments in the USSR and demonstrate the diversity and richness of contemporary Russian writing. A full introductory chapter considers the most important trends in Russian literature today and places the four writers firmly in the context of the most recent developments, including glasnost.

February 1988 ca.220pp. bibliog., index  
ISBN 0 85496 246 8 ca.£14.95

#### FROM BREZHNEV TO GORBACHEV Domestic Affairs and Soviet Foreign Policy

Edited by Hans-Joachim Veen

A timely collection of essays by a number of leading American and German Sovietologists who try to assess the impact of recent domestic developments in the USSR - political, economic, military and social - on Soviet foreign policy in the 1980s.

1987 376pp. ISBN 0 85496 501 7 £27.00

#### THE ECONOMY OF DETENTE

##### The Soviet Union and Western Capital

Georges Sokoloff

Why does the Soviet Union trade with the capitalist bloc? On the basis of a vast array of Soviet primary and secondary sources, the author concludes that it is the overall economic development of the Soviet Union that constitutes the main concern of Soviet politics, although this should not lead the West to believe that she is dependent on Western trade. Forcefully argued and packed with information, this study is clearly presented with numerous graphs, tables, diagrams and appendices.

1987 256pp. ISBN 0 85496 62 1 £25.00

For further information write to our office in Oxford.

77 Morrell Avenue,  
Oxford OX4 1NQ  
Tel: (0865) 245104  
Fax: (0865) 797165



# BERG PUBLISHERS

# CZECHOSLOVAKIA

## DEFENCE CAMPAIGN FOR CZECHOSLOVAK PEACE GROUP ACTIVISTS

While protesting its allegiance to the reformist new course of the Soviet leadership, the Czechoslovak regime continues the repressive "normalisation" policies pursued ever since the Warsaw Pact intervention against the Prague Spring of 1968. *Prestavba*, the Czech word for *perestroika*, may litter the pages of the party organ *Rude Pravo*, but remains strictly limited to economics in contents and for *glasnost* no translation has been made yet at all. But the illusion of "normality" is ever harder to maintain: since last summer, there have been repeated mass demonstrations in Prague on occasions such as the twentieth anniversary of the Soviet invasion and, more recently, the anniversary of Jan Palach's self-sacrifice. Around the country, the activities of unofficial groups and campaigns have gained momentum, and while the authorities have reacted with their familiar recourse to arrests and intimidation it appears but a question of

time until the rising tide of discontent and reform expectations breaches the dams so desperately shored up by Husak's successors.

International solidarity with the Czech and Slovak opposition movements is of crucial importance at this time. British Foreign Secretary Geoffrey Howe has already denounced the Prague authorities for violating the Vienna human right accords the day after they put their signatures to them, but the Left has tended to overlook the continuing repression in Czechoslovakia in its excitement over the Soviet reforms and the developments in Poland. Below, we document the steps taken by a number of Labour Members of Parliament and sections of the British peace movement and left - coordinated by European Nuclear Disarmament (END) and supported by *Labour Focus* - in defence of nine Czechoslovak peace and human rights activists facing trial on serious "incitement" charges.

### LABOUR MPs WRITE TO GORBACHEV

Dear Mikhail Sergeyevich

In October 1988 a number of Czechoslovak citizens (Ivan Martin Jirous, Jiri Stencl, Jiri Tichy, Dusan Skala and Petr Cibulka) were imprisoned in connection with the writing, reproduction and distribution of a letter, signed by 271 people, and addressed to the Czechoslovak authorities. This letter called for reform of the criminal law, improvement in prison conditions and the release of political prisoners.

We believe that the imprisonment of these people who, after all, had merely expressed their opinions in an open letter, was a very harsh and unjustified measure. Actions like this merely give support and succour to those in the West who oppose better relations between East and West and who would like to maintain the old policies of hostility and confrontation.

We realise, of course, that you or your government would not want to interfere in the internal affairs of a friendly ally. However, in view of the friendly relations

which you and your government have with the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic we hope that you will be willing to convey our concern to the Czechoslovak authorities about the events that we have brought to your attention.

We follow with interest and sympathy your initiatives in the Soviet Union and would like to use this opportunity to express our good wishes for your success.

Yours sincerely,

Eric Heffer MP James Callaghan MP  
Bob Cryer MP Alice Mahon MP  
Bernie Grant MP Mildred Gordon MP  
Dennis Skinner MP Dennis Canavan MP  
Ken Livingstone MP Jeremy Corbyn MP  
Alan Roberts MP John Hughes MP  
Ann Clwyd MP Roland Boyes  
Lawrence Cunliffe Ken Eastham MP  
Bob Litherland MP

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

*Tomas Dvorak* and *Lubos Vydra*, editors of the bulletin published by the Independent Peace Association NMS (*Nezavisle Mirove Sdruzeni*), were arrested on 21 and 22 October 1988 for producing the leaflets calling for a demonstration in Wenceslas Square, Prague, to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the foundation of the Czechoslovak Republic. They face up to three years in prison.

*Hana Marvanova*, also an editor of NMS Bulletin, was arrested on 28 October 1988 for articles in the Bulletin calling for the legalisation of conscientious objection and for disarmament. She also faces up to three years' imprisonment.

*Tomas Tvaroch* was arrested on 26 November as he tried to solicit signatures for a petition calling for the release of Dvorak, Marvanova and Vydra. If charged with "incitement", he could also face three years' imprisonment.

The following five men have been arrested and charged in connection with a petition to the authorities, signed by 271 people, which accuses the authorities of responsibility for the death in prison of Pavel Wonka in 1988, demands the release of all political prisoners, reform of the criminal law, and improvements in prison conditions.

*Jiri Stencl* is 17, a labourer, and a member of NMS. He faces up to five years in prison.

*Petr Cibulka*, a signatory of the Prague Appeal and of *Charta 77* and a Jazz Section activist. He is also a member of the Initiative for Social Defence (ISD), established in October 1988 to defend citizens discriminated against in housing, access to education, health care etc. He faces up to ten years' jail.

*Ivan Martin Jirous*, former manager of the 1970s rock group *Plastic People of the Universe* and *Charter 77* signatory, who has already served four prison sentences. He could be sentenced to another three years.

*Dusan Skala*, 34, *Charter 77* signatory and publisher of the *samizdat* cultural journal *Host*. He faces up to five years in prison.

*Jiri Tichy* faces up to three years imprisonment.

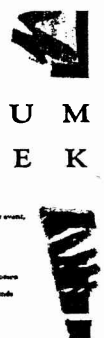
**Forum Polek**  
**Polish Women's Forum**  
 Published by the Forum Publication Group. Orders to:  
 Turnaround Distribution  
 27 Horsell Road  
 London N5 1XL  
 £5.95

The corner of South Wales where I grew up had been transformed by an influx of Poles. This gave us access to better delicatessen than was usual in Wales at that period. Polish and Welsh children alike grew up accustomed to clots of consonants in each other's names. But the sense remained that the Poles were different. Being Polish gave them a seriousness, a history, that we lacked.

This book explores that difference. It's large, heavy and handsome - a legacy from the late, lamented GLC - designed with a grace that makes it a joy to handle. It's also a sturdy book. Which leads me to an obvious comparison with its contents: they are also elegant and tough, a wonderful combination. Bits are also very, very funny.

It's a very coherent collection, to a degree that's unusual in an anthology, and to single out contributions would be as irrelevant as pulling currants from a fruit cake. The coherence doesn't imply any easy nostalgia - the poem "On seeing the Pope on TV" deflates sentimentality. One of the book's strengths is that it recognises that there are many ways of being a female Polish inhabitant of the twentieth century.

There are moving memories of war and resistance shared between mothers and daughters, together with the smaller wars and truces between the generations. The contents move from the particular to the universal without losing that freshness and



**FORUM  
POLEK**

*Polish Women's Forum*

This unique book arose out of a one-day event, the Polish Women's Forum, held in March 1988 in London.

It celebrates the experiences of Polish women from different generations and backgrounds in Poland and in Britain.

Published by the Forum Publication Group

ISBN 0 905 111 11 1

humour which come from a close attention to the details of daily life.

My review copy has been sitting on my desk for a few weeks now, and in that time has been picked up by many people (none of them Polish and only some of them female). All of them have read something, several of them have wandered off absent-mindedly clutching it until rebuked. I don't know that many kleptomaniacs. It's a beautiful and covetable book.

Lin James

Tariq Ali  
**Revolution From Above.**  
**Where is the Soviet Union Going?**  
 Hutchinson 1988, £12.95

For many years, the discourse on the Western Left concerning the Soviet Union closely mirrored that on the Cold War Right in its preoccupation with essentially static models: while the gurus of NATO academia worshipped at the temple of totalitarianism, the Left debated the "class nature" of the USSR. As a contest in scholastic hairsplitting it was just about a draw.

Common to both was the notion that change could only come about by means of some cataclysmic act of liberation, be it a popular uprising for bourgeois liberty and civilisation or the revolutionary overthrow of the bureaucracy/ruling class by the proletariat. In most such scenarios, the Communist Party was little more than the bureaucratic instrument of power: devoid and incapable of real political life, destined for destruction when Liberation would finally arrive.

Perhaps such abstractions had a degree of justification for as long as the Soviet Union really did appear a static monolith. Krushchev's de-Stalinisation briefly rattled the model merchants until Brezhnevism provided the reassurance that nothing could change under the existing system. Now, however, that the sweeping effects of *perestroika* and *glasnost* are there for all to see, abstract definition mongering as a substitute for analysis is quite excusable. Yet much of the Left continues to discuss Gorbachevism in terms of "confidence tricks from above" versus "revolution from below".

Tariq Ali's timely book declares war on such sterile phrase-mongering. The title, of course, is a provocation in itself but it also expresses the author's central argument that "Gorbachev represents a progressive, reformist current within the Soviet elite, whose programme, if

successful, would represent an enormous gain for socialists and democrats on a world scale". Gorbachev is compared to Abraham Lincoln whose second revolution abolishing slavery laid the foundations for the survival and emergence as a world power of the United States of America.

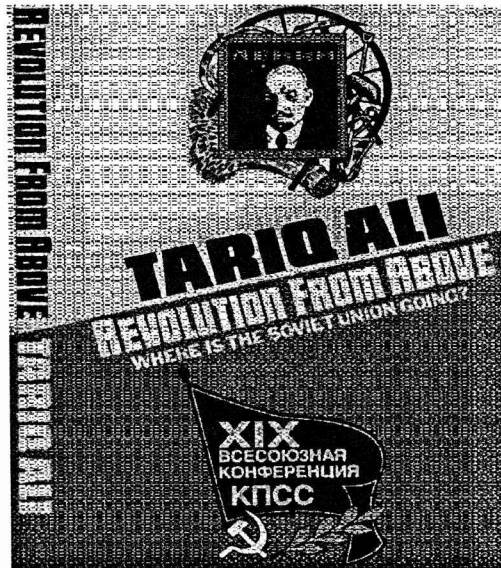
It is not necessary, however, to fully agree with Ali's thesis and historical analogy to appreciate the refreshing unorthodoxy of his approach. The Gorbachev reforms are not shoe-horned into some preconceived notion of their inevitable outcome. Instead their proclaimed intentions are described, their achievements registered, their shortcomings, limitations and ambiguities noted, their origins in the protracted social and economic crisis of the "years of stagnation" analysed. As *Revolution From Above* is based on the experience of short visits to the Soviet Union as a guest of the Writers' Union, and was written in an obvious hurry by an author who cannot read or speak Russian and has no extensive background in Soviet Studies, there is plenty to pick on in a detailed critique: rather sweeping generalisations, factual inaccuracies, stylistic lapses and annoying spelling errors abound. But then this book was written for neither the professional Sovietologist nor the bibliophile collector of literary classics. It is a rushed book because of the urgency of the political debate and the speed of developments in the Soviet Union, and it is a polemical, book because the author wants to make a political statement.

This political statement is as simple as it is necessary. In essence, it insists that the Western Left need not, and must not, remain passive bystanders in the upheavals shaking the Soviet Union. The real problem with theoretical abstractions is not

that they are abstract or theoretical, but that they can affect the will to bring about practical change because of the desire to see one's models confirmed in reality. Tariq Ali never even comes close to writing as an uncritical apologist of Gorbachev, on the contrary, he takes the side of the most radical reformers (Yeltsin) against the cautious centrists, of the unofficial movements (the independent socialist clubs) against even the most radical of bureaucratic reformers, and of the Soviet workers against the most "liberal" intellectuals. But above all, he acknowledges the fact that the new openings in the Soviet Union today for all kinds of new politics were created not by rebellion from below, but initiatives from above. Whatever its critique of the limitations and ambiguities of Gorbachev's programme, it has a responsibility to do its utmost to ensure that the process initiated by Gorbachev is deepened and accelerated rather than stifled. This, as Tariq Ali constantly stresses, means both engaging in a dialogue with the new political forces now emerging in the Soviet Union and fighting here, on our own terrain, to lift the Cold War seige which has for so long inhibited political change on the other side of the "Iron Curtain".

*Revolution From Above* is not, I think, primarily a book about the Soviet Union at all. It is about the interdependence of the project of socialist democracy in East and West, a passionate reminder that, in the final analysis, the democratisation of the Soviet Union is inseparable from the advance of socialism in the capitalist world, especially in Western Europe.

Günter Minnerup



# GORBACHEV AND THE EUROPEAN LEFT

The fate of the Germans", said Gorbachev, in an interview in Der Spiegel (24 Oct 88) during Chancellor Kohl's visit, "is inseparably linked to the fate of the whole of Europe... and that means, to the perspective of creating a European Home". This concept of a "European Home" has been heard a lot in Moscow recently. A strategy for Europe, East and West, is a key question for the new Soviet leadership. Within the space of a year Gorbachev will have met most of Western Europe's leaders. Although the immediate issues of these meetings may have been disarmament and trade matters, the framework is increasingly one of fundamental and historic changes to the post-war structure of Europe.

Although the public recognition of the need for fundamental changes to post-Yalta Europe is the result of profound social processes - intense competition between Western Europe, America and Japan; explosive social movements and unrest in Eastern Europe; the growing mood and movement for disarmament in Western Europe - it has been given impetus and immediacy by the new leadership in Moscow.

What has been the response of the left to this challenge? The British Labour leadership, caught up in the need to prove its allegiance to NATO, has been almost oblivious to the challenge. But the Labour Left also appears to offer little more than a "left" version of an essentially neo-Gaullist strategy.

The West German SPD has been in the forefront on this issue, one of the results being its historic agreement with the East German SED in 1988. The German and Italian Green Parties have also addressed it as a serious issue, as have the Polish, Czech and Hungarian democratic movements. But there is clearly nothing approaching a common European socialist approach to this issue.

A socialist strategy for Europe has never been more necessary. Similarly, the conditions for its development have seldom been more favourable. Anti-Sovietism, one of the political pillars of capitalist politics since the 2nd. World War, appealing to the workers' genuine abhorrence of Stalinism, has been decisively undermined in Western Europe, especially in West Germany.

The beginnings of self-activity of the Soviet workers has brought about a fundamental change in the world situation. The irreversibility of the democratic reforms in the Soviet Union and the impossibility of Soviet intervention in Eastern Europe are already major gains. Although the developments in the Soviet Union have removed a

major obstacle to socialist politics in Europe, they present socialists with a major challenge on three fronts: their model of a democratic socialist society, their conception of how a socialist economy would work and their answer to the question: what kind of Europe do we want.

The Gorbachev programme, in spite of its rhetoric, is not one of radical socialist democracy, but of something approaching a liberal constitutional state. This would involve more power to the soviets, a more genuine election of executives, greater independence for judicial and constitutional bodies, more possibilities for open and organized political conflict, with the party playing a different role from what it played under Stalin or Brezhnev.

Advocates of radical socialist democracy are a minority in the Soviet Union today, but they do exist, as they do in the rest of Eastern Europe. Of course, the question of which of those programmes would find favour with a self-active and self-determining working class is another matter. Confronted with Gorbachev, on the one hand, and the emerging embryonic (West) European state on the other, the left throughout Europe needs to formulate its conception of what a democratic socialist state would look like. This is a matter of intense interest to the emerging Soviet left and is one where an exchange and cross-fertilization of ideas would be of immense benefit to the left in the whole of Europe.

On the issue of the economy, the absence of a clear socialist model has been highlighted even more by the exposure of the bankruptcy of the East European models, including the self-management model in Yugoslavia. As Western Europe moves towards the single free market, with deregulation triumphant and social programmes under threat, the regimes in the East extol the virtues of market and competition. Their allies in the intelligentsia would go even

further. While the Labour right may draw some ideological sustenance from this (Hattersley: "If the market is good enough for Gorbachev, it's good enough for us"), what alternative conception does the European left have to offer?

And, finally, the pretence has once and for all been knocked on the head that Europe could ever mean "Western Europe". This raises a number of major questions, not the least of which is the division of Germany. A socialist strategy for Europe which ended at the Elb was always wrong, but in the 1990s it will be an irrelevancy. Any socialist strategy for Europe has to immediately confront the issue of the nature of the regimes in the countries of East Central Europe.

This raises even now a number of practical questions. Should West European socialists, for instance in the European parliament, actively assist moves to integrate countries like Hungary into the structures of the EEC, as they do, while making no demands or conditions concerning the issue of political liberties in those countries? The left in Western Europe has not raised its voice in the defence of Armenia's national rights. Too many socialists in Western Europe since the war have implicitly accepted the division of Europe into "spheres of interests", in many cases even seeing the official regimes in those countries as allies. But even the exposures of the Gorbachev supporters themselves, the open recognition of the means used to achieve Communist Party control in Poland, Czechoslovakia, etc., have undermined the legitimacy of this approach. Gorbachev's notion of a "European Home" may not be the answer, but it does force the left to take the question seriously.

These are some of the issues that will be discussed at a major conference in April/May around the theme "Gorbachev and the European Left", with speakers representing various currents of thought from both Eastern and Western Europe. It is hoped that this conference will be the beginning of a process of discussion and clarification for the European Left, enabling it to move towards a socialist strategy for Europe in the 1990s and into the next century.

Gus Fagan

## CONFERENCE

### Gorbachev and the European Left 8/9 April 1989, University of London, Malet Street

Sponsored by The Socialist Conference (Chesterfield), Campaign Group of Labour MPs, European Nuclear Disarmament (END), Jake Eccleston (Deputy General Secretary, National Union of Journalists), Włodzimierz Brus, Michael Hindley (Member of European Parliament), Ken Livingstone MP, Sheila Rowbotham, Eric Heffer MP, Kathy Porter, Mary Kaldor, Labour Focus on Eastern Europe, Conference of Socialist Economists (CSE), Hilary Wainwright, John Palmer, Critique, Tamara Deutscher, Fred Halliday, Teodor Shanin, Stan Newens MP and others.

#### Contact

Conference Organising Committee  
c/o Gus Fagan, 30 Bridge Street, Oxford OX2 0BA, Tel. (0865) 723207