Labour Focus on EASTERN EUROPE

No.2 /1990 ● £3.50

Essays by
Daniel Singer and
Tamás Kraus on

MARXISM AFTER STALINISM

THE NEW POLISH RIGHT
Solidarity at the crossroads
THE HUNGARIAN LEFT
The Left in the CPSU
YUGOSLAV CRISIS
Ukrainian independence
ROMANIAN MINERS IN UNIVERSITY SQUARE

Labour Focus on
EASTERN EUROPE

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Subscription rates
(three issues per annum)
U.K. and Europe: £12 (individuals), £25 (institutions).
Overseas (airmail): £18/$35 (individuals), £30/$55 (institutions).

Publisher's address
Berg Publishers Limited
150 Cowley Road
Oxford OX4 1JJ
England
Telephone (0865) 245104

Printed by Short Run Press Ltd., Exeter, England.
ISSN: 0141-7746

No. 2/1990 JULY – OCTOBER

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The German Question resolved?

THE WORLD DID NOT HAVE LONG to wait for tangible evidence of the shifts in international relations brought about by the "Gorbachev revolution". Ten, even five, years ago the brash American gunboat diplomacy in the Gulf would have been unthinkable given the then close alliance between the Soviet Union and Iraq. Indeed, the pretext for this assertion of imperialist hegemony – the Iraqi annexation of Kuwait – would probably not have happened either: such is the measure of Moscow's abdication of its "superpower" role of old, both in terms of its relations with Washington and its relations with former allies and client states.

On the surface, the largest US military adventure since Vietnam appears to suggest the unqualified restoration of Washington's supremacy over the "Free World". However, despite the spectacle of the Marines in the desert sands with the British and French in their tow, such appearances are deceptive. For in the end, the real strength of the US claim to world dominance is not measured in terms of its capacity to wage war in the Third World: this was never seriously in doubt. The litmus test for the American pretensions to world hegemony is not the Arab peninsula, but Europe.

US control over Western Europe has always been anchored in its tutelage over West Germany, which in turn was codified by the Four Powers veto over German reunification. The fact that Chancellor Kohl could go to Russia and settle the terms of German unity without any public reference, let alone deference, to the United States speaks volumes about how much real leverage Washington has lost in Europe. This is not a regional sub-plot of merely peripheral significance to the global relationship of forces. Whatever the formal concessions to Washington's position in the diplomatic settlement of the German Question, Germany will have slipped out of American control. Berlin – the likely capital of a united Germany – will not be Bonn: gone are the days when the third industrial and military power in the world defined its interests as those of a junior partner of Capitol Hill and the Pentagon.The Gulf crisis provides other pointers to the shape of things to come: in the formation of what nearly amounts to a joint European command over the military forces dispatched by the EEC member states in the region – aligned with, but not subordinate to, the US forces – and, above all, the announcement that the Federal Republic would amend its constitution to enable the future deployment of German troops outside the geopolitical framework of NATO. What we are witnessing is nothing less than the emergence of a new power in world politics.

Against this backdrop, recent events inside Germany assume the utmost significance because they will to a large extent determine the nature of its role on the European and world stage. There is no article on the German Democratic Republic in this issue of *Labour Focus* because the situation there is so much in flux that any analysis is likely to be overtaken by developments well before it appears in print, and a detailed account of the death throes of what used to call itself "the first German workers' and peasants' state" will have to wait until the next issue of this journal. By then, of course, the GDR will have formally ceased to exist.

For the time being, it appears that the German Right is firmly in control, and Chancellor Kohl's Christian Democrats are hot favourites to win the first all-German elections since 1933. Only a year ago, the Social Democrats appeared in the ascendancy in both German states, but their utter failure to promote a coherent alternative to Kohl's annexation drive has reduced the SPD to helpless petulance from the opposition benches. The PDS, successor to the East German communist party, may not even be represented in the all-German parliament unless it can benefit from the deepening economic and social gloom in the former GDR and strike some real roots in the West. The largest radical opposition grouping is the newly-formed alliance between the West German Greens and the East German New Forum, but its political and ideological heterogeneity make it seem unlikely that it can be more than an electoral rallying point for various ecological, feminist and pacifist protest movements.

The weakness, disparity and confusion

in the ranks of the opposition have been Kohl's best weapons as he was riding his luck since the collapse of the Honecker regime. Whatever his majority on December 2nd, he will in many respects remain a weak leader heading a government with uncertain long-term prospects and an ill-defined strategy. Given the scale of the social and economic problems and the intricate mesh of industrial and commercial links with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe – the legacy left to the new Germany by the former GDR – as well as a public mood which is overwhelmingly pacifist, sympathetic to the Soviet Union and concerned with ecological issues, the domestic pressures on the government of the new Germany point not towards a revival of Atlanticism, but a further drift eastwards and a new European axis of German-Soviet cooperation.

The division of Germany may have been healed, but the old German Question has not been resolved. It has only assumed a new form.

Günter Minnerup

TAMARA DEUTSCHER 1913–1990

As we were preparing this issue of Labour Focus for the press, it was with great sadness that we learnt of the death of our sponsor, comrade and dear friend Tamara Deutscher.

Tamara was born in 1913, at Lodz in Poland, and grew up under the shadow of fascism abroad and nationalism, anti-semitism and militarism at home – an experience that was to mark her political outlook indelibly. Like her compatriot Rosa Luxemburg, she was to be an internationalist above all else. In 1940, she came as an exile to Britain, where she met the young Isaac Deutscher and chose him as her companion for life. In the course of a marriage and intellectual collaboration cut tragically short in 1967 by Isaac's sudden and early death, Tamara played an indispensable part – as researcher and first critic – in the production of a series of seminal works, of which the crowning achievement was to be the great three-volume biography of Trotsky which has remained such an indispensable book for socialists in every part of the world.

After the terrible shock of Isaac's death, Tamara threw herself into new intellectual and political projects. She worked with E.H. Carr on the later volumes of his History of Soviet Russia. She edited collections of Isaac's essays and journalism. She wrote perceptively in Labour Focus, New Left Review and elsewhere on new cultural and political developments in the Soviet Union. She established the Isaac Deutscher Memorial Prize (now to be renamed the Deutscher Memorial Prize) to encourage new Marxist writing. After Soviet tanks entered Prague in 1968, she helped set up – and played an active role in – the Committee to Defend Czechoslovak Socialists.

Tamara's home in Hampstead, where she lived with her only and much-loved son Martin, became a welcoming haven for socialists and political exiles from many countries, drawn there not just by her prestige as a figure of historic stature on the international left, but above all by her warmth of personality, her integrity and her unfailing interest in political conditions throughout the world.

Tamara was a sponsor of Labour Focus from its inception, and this was no mere lending of her name. She read and commented on the contents of each issue, made valuable suggestions, and even, in 1979, showed in the most eloquent way how seriously she took her commitment by resigning, when she disagreed with what she saw as a mistaken approach to Soviet reality under Brezhnev – fortunately for us, she agreed to renew her sponsorship a few years later. We benefited greatly from Tamara's keen criticism. One of her greatest qualities was her freedom from pat views – indeed she was always only too painfully aware of the contradictions and dilemmas of world politics (the course of Polish events over the past decade provides just one instance).

Although Tamara had been poor in health for several years, she was invigorated – although also frequently anguished – by the evolution of Soviet politics under Gorbachev. She was particularly delighted by the recent translation and publication of the final chapter of the Trotsky trilogy, and by the award of the 1988 Deutscher Prize to a young Soviet Marxist, Boris Kagarlitsky. Only a few days before her death, her face lit up when she held in her hands the first volume of Trotsky to be published in the Soviet Union since the twenties. She retained her keen mind, her vitality and her warmth to the last, and we shall miss her sorely.

Quintin Hoare

Prometheus rebound?

by DANIEL SINGER

"To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
To defy Power which seems omnipotent;
To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates"

Shelley, Prometheus Unbound

"In Russia the problem could only be posed", wrote Rosa Luxemburg referring to the realisation of socialism, "it could not be solved in Russia". I am not quoting Luxemburg because she was the only person treating the Bolshevik revolution as potentially an episode; when she wrote those lines, in the summer of 1918, its hold on power was very uncertain. I mention her because she seemed more than anybody else to view revolution as a world-wide phenomenon and one spread over a historical period, thus involving advances and retreats, victories and defeats. This vision of seizure of power as probably provisional added even more importance to her emphasis on the need to stick to socialist principles in order to show an example, to prepare the ground for future fighters and coming generations. It took clever servants of our establishment a great deal of chutzpah subsequently to present that great woman revolutionary as the scourge of the Bolsheviks. In fact, even in her most critical pamphlet[1], from which these quotations are taken, she hailed them for doing everything that could be done "within the limits of historical possibilities", thus saving "the honour of international socialism". But she also warned Lenin and Trotsky not to make of necessity a virtue and of the limitations dictated by circumstances an example for the movement at large. What in their case was still a minor blemish was turned into a calamity as Stalin forged his system and imposed it on an obedient international movement as the undisputed model. An exorbitant price is still being paid for this confusion of the Stalinist nightmare with socialist dreams.

Such thoughts came to mind watching the dramatic unfolding of events in 1989. The year of the bicentenial of the French Revolution was to be celebrated as marking the burial of all radical breaks. History, as if offended, then quickened pace. Prompted by Gorbachev's perestroika and fed by domestic discontent, a tidal wave swept across Eastern Europe toppling a series of regimes that were communist but in name. In Warsaw and Budapest, in Berlin and Prague. Before the year was out, even Ceausescu, the Romanian Caligula, had left the stage with bullets in his head. We were clearly watching the twilight of a reign, the end of an era, the collapse of regimes that were the result of revolutions not only carried out from above but imported from abroad.

We were also attending the final funeral of Stalinism as a system. In February 1956, in his famous "secret" indictment of Stalin, Nikita Krushchev stunned the faithful by revealing that the corpse of their demigod was stinking. The shock was terrible. Yet it took a third of a century for the system based on this cult to be dismantled throughout the empire.

Behind these certainties lurks a question mark. For the first time it is necessary to ask whether 1917 marks the beginning of an epoch, like 1789, or whether it inaugurates a heroic but tragic experiment, the abortive search for a shortcut, and is, therefore, in historical terms merely a bracket? The problem, whatever the answer, is crucial. When the balance-sheet of this era is finally drawn up, it will not be as one-sided as the assessments improvised today on the spur of the moment. The impact of the Soviet experiment on the outside world illustrates this complexity.

There is no doubt that the identification of communism with the Russian concentration camp or with the Soviet tank contributed to the current discredit of the very idea of socialism both in the West and in Eastern Europe. But it is also true that the pioneering exploit of the Bolsheviks, the seizure of power by the workers, gave hope to millions of downtrodden throughout the world, encouraged them to resist and to rebel. Not all the subsequent revolutions were sponsored from above. Or, to take another instance. It is absurd to suggest that the foreign policy of Stalin and his epigones was driven by the desire to spread revolution and communism throughout the world. On the contrary, the international revolutionary movement was strictly subordinated to the interests of Soviet foreign policy. Yet the very existence of that policy acted as a limit, not always but sometimes, on the expansion of Western, i.e. since the war essentially American, imperialism. (Today the Brezhnev doctrine is fortunately vanishing, but the Monroe Doctrine, in its Bush version, is alas stronger than ever).

There are more immediate reasons why we must face up to this issue. The collapse of the East European regimes is trumpeted by our propaganda machine as final proof that socialism is unworkable. Capital hates frontiers limiting its field of action. It now eyes with growing appetite both Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union as

territory to swallow in order to both expand its rule and extend its survival. This, however, is the potential prize for tomorrow. Meanwhile, there are ideological benefits to be gathered. Mr. Francis Fukuyama, the poor man's Hegel (or more accurately, third rate but very much a rich man's Hegel), describing capitalism as the culmination of history, was only part of a vast chorus singing the vanity of any attempt to get rid of the prevailing system.

However noisy, this propaganda can actually be countered quite easily. To die you must have lived and what we have known so far is really inexisting socialism. Besides, the prophets now announcing the final death of socialism are the very same who only yesterday, with equal conviction, spoke of the immutability of "totalitarian communism", the hell from which there was and there could be no exit. The Fukuyamas can also be reminded that they are saying what the servants of the ruling system have always proclaimed in the past, namely that history did exist but has come to an end with the victory of their masters. Yet before scoring debating points, itself quite a useful exercise, we must ourselves grasp what is really collapsing on the eastern front, ask why it is falling to pieces and guess what is likely to be put in its place.

The "original sin" and its consequences

To seize the tragic dimension of the Soviet revolution it is indispensable to go back to the "original sin", if one may use such a religious terms, of its inception, to the contrast between the Marxist design conceived for the advanced capitalist countries of Western Europe and the backwardness of Mother Russia, to the "proletarian revolution" carried in a land where the working class, shrunk by civil war, was surrounded by a huge peasant sea. Russia was supposed to be only the "weakest link" in the chain and the centre of gravity was to shift to Germany and beyond as the revolution spread westward. But the revolution failed to spread. The Bolsheviks could either surrender[2] or they could cling on to power, hoping their isolation would prove temporary. In that case, in the meantime they had to carry out themselves their country's unaccomplished task, its industrial revolution. Isolated, surrounded by enemies, the Soviet Union had to achieve within a decade, because the danger was immediate, what in the West had taken over a century with the help of colonial plunder and ruthless uprooting of the peasantry. The highly contradictory term, "primitive socialist accumulation", coined by Vladimir Smirnov and elaborated by Yevgenii Preobrazhensky[3], sums up the terrible but also completely unexpected task thrust on the revolution's agenda.

Barbarism, as Lenin put it even more bluntly, had to be uprooted in Russia by barbarian means. Does this mean that only the Georgian tyrant could fulfil this function? Personally I am not convinced that Stalinism, with its concentration camps and its Byzantine cult of the leader, was inevitable in the circumstances. This, however, is not the place for a complex discussion of this subject. For the sake of our argument only two points have to be made. The first is that the system did fulfil its role for a time and in its own fashion. It turned peasants into workers, spread skills and education. The crude economic command from above did function as long as the "planning" was mainly concerned with the coordination of a limited number of huge plants. The industrialisation at breakneck speed provided the Soviet Union with the guns, tanks and planes thanks to which the Red Army was able to resist the German invasion and then liberate Europe from the Nazis.

The counterpoint is that this process of development, hardly the most efficient, had very little to do with socialism. It was not a case of capitalism being superseded because it had reached its full potential. The Soviet peasants did not join collective farms because the private ones had gone beyond the point of highest efficiency; they were driven into the *kolkhozy* by a bloody collectivisation. The Bolsheviks did not inherit a complex industry which required planning for coherent growth; they had to build an industry almost from scratch using methods borrowed from F.W. Taylor's rather than any socialist manual.

Altogether, either in economic or political terms, the ruthless mechanism of command from above had nothing in common with Marx's vision of freely associated producers gaining mastery over their labour and leisure, that is to say over their lives. But this strange product of unexpected circumstances was painted as the workers' paradise and imposed as a compulsory model for the world at large. The more or less necessary evils were hailed as a virtue. Worst of all, friends and foes alike seemed agreed that what was being forged in the Soviet Union was socialism.

However, Stalinism too, if one may so paraphrase, contained the seeds of its own destruction. The political system designed for uprooted and half-illiterate *muzhiks* became increasingly obsolete as the population grew more urban and better educated. An economy more complex and more sophisticated rendered the crude dictation from the from the top and from the centre counter-productive. By mid-century the whole structure was only held together by the conditioned reflexes of an ageing dictator and in 1953 his successors were faced with the need for a complete overhaul. Though their problem was immense, the basic question could be worded rather simply: how do you make people work if you wish to get rid of a mechanism of coercion based fundamentally on the fear of the concentration camp coupled with moral exhortations, and if you do not wish to replace it by the capitalist system of coercion based on the fear of unemployment linked with the dazzling tyranny of the market? It is the problem of incentives, though not only material incentives, in a fast changing society.

A socialist answer to this question required in Russia nothing less than a democratic revolution. Democratic relations were needed on the shop-floor, giving the working people a real say in the organisation of their own work and the general division of labour, if the slogan about "our factories" was to cease to be a hypocritical metaphor. But this was not enough. Democracy had to be spread, or rather invented, at all levels of the country's life so that planning, the need for which would not vanish, could cease to be the dictation of an alien Leviathan and become the

self-management of a society seeking to master its own fate. These major questions, which have not yet been tackled, let alone solved, by Gorbachev's perestroika, could not even be raised by Stalin's epigones.

Nikita Krushchev, half-peasant, half-townsman and as such a symbol of the Soviet Union in transition, did show a striking awareness of the need for radical change. However, he chose a constituency – the party apparatus – utterly unsuited to this task. The apparatchiks saw nothing wrong with the inherited system except Stalin's propensity to purge his own faithful servants (his bloody way to prevent the crystallisation of a ruling class). What they wanted was Stalinism plus security of tenure. Even Krushchev's haphazard half-measures were too much for them and they toppled him when the reforms seemed to threaten their position. The man they picked to replace him, Leonid Brezhnev, made the unwritten pledge never to endanger the interests of the privileged. He kept his word and his job for eighteen years. The political price paid for this unexpected longevity was immobility resulting in what is now known as the age of stagnation. All important reforms were shelved. After a time Brezhnev also reached a truce with the working class: you don't mix in politics and we shall not drive you too fast on assembly lines.

The inevitable happened. The Soviet economy slackened its pace. The returns on investment diminished. Housing and the welfare state were squeezed in this process. But if the economy came almost to a halt, society kept on changing, with peasants moving to town, with less frightened and much better educated generations entering the labour market. They had been promised "gulash socialism" and were getting neither. The potentially explosive mixture of economic stagnation and social discontent could not last. The apparatchiks showed their resistance to change by selecting the decrepit Konstantin Chernenko as a stopgap leader. By 1985 they had to resign themselves to Mikhail Gorbachev and radical reforms. But before we tackle perestroika, we must have a glance at the area where its results were to be most spectacular in 1989, at the empire Stalin acquired, not in any fit of absentmindedness, but in the struggle for survival against the Nazis.

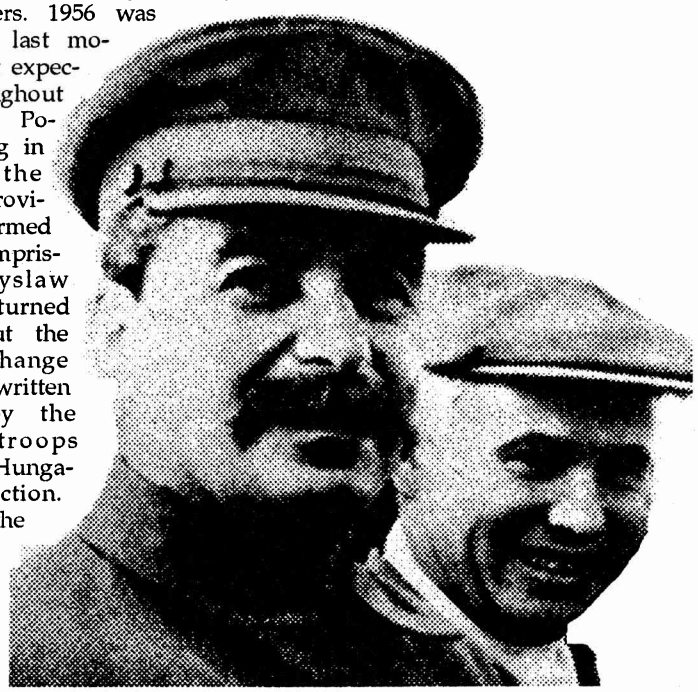
Socialism in a single bloc

By one of those ironies of which History is apparently fond, Joseph Stalin, champion of "socialism in a single country", carried his version of it up to the Elbe at the end of the last war. At first he saw the conquered land as merely a protective glacis (otherwise, punitive reparations against East Germany, a future partner, would not have made sense). He then decided to reshape it in Russia's image. Thus Stalin's armies, like Napoleon's, altered the social order in the countries they crossed. Throughout eastern and central Europe, they eliminated factory owners and uprooted landlords. This was their revolutionary heritage and, whatever may be written today, their progressive function.

Unfortunately it was linked with less progressive features. The revolution was an imported product and, by this very nature, had not been carried by the people but imposed on them from above. Later the split of the world into two blocs, with the ensuing separation from the international division of labour, was a serious drawback, particularly for the more industrialised countries like Czechoslovakia. The third handicap might have been more than compensated by the advantages of an alternative system, if the exported model were not the Stalinist one which, in political terms, meant one-party dictatorship, police repression and Moscow-like trials and, in economic terms, as we just saw, was from the very start of its extension obsolete.

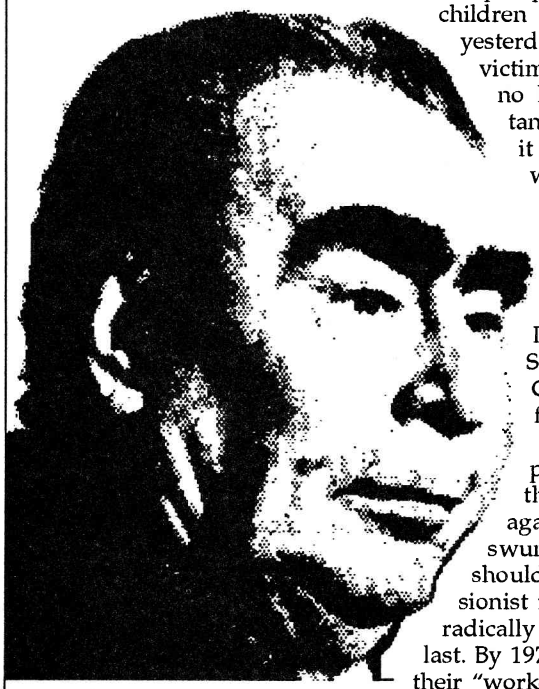
Naturally, things did not look quite as bad at the time as they do now, retrospectively, in the hour of bankruptcy proceedings. Though imported, the regime was not always unwelcome. Pro-Russian feelings were strong in, say, Bulgaria, and Czechoslovakia had deep left-wing traditions (the 38% of the poll captured by the CP there in a free vote in 1946 was a symptom of that mood). Even in Hungary or Poland, where hostility was greater, the memories of the pre-war regimes, of their failures and their injustices, were sufficiently fresh for quite a number of people, particularly among young intellectuals, to greet a new regime promising a radical break with the past (some of these early enthusiasts are today lecturing on the evils of socialism in Western, particularly American, universities). But all over Eastern Europe the story of the last forty-five years has been one of missed opportunities and broken illusions.

The effects of the failure of Stalin's successors to reshape his heritage spread beyond Soviet frontiers. 1956 was probably the last moment of great expectations throughout the area. In Poland's "Spring in October" the hopes were provisionally confirmed as the once imprisoned Wladyslaw Gomulka returned to office. But the limits of change were at once written in blood by the Soviet troops crushing the Hungarian insurrection. Nevertheless the "revisionists", those thinking that the regimes were fundamentally right though in need of radical reform, could still cling to their belief for a time, even if the pleonastic name given to their next project, the Czech "socialism with a human face", showed how much the very idea was now in need of once unnecessary qualification. And, in 1968, the Soviet tanks entering Prague put an end to a whole period. The Polish workers who next climbed on the stage were not talking of reforming the regime but of changing it.



Nikita Krushchev with Stalin, 1938

Indeed, instead of widening, the social base of these regimes kept on shrinking. Stalin, together with the iron fist, provided a myth and at that time there were still many believers. Krushchev replaced the ideology by the promise of a new deal for the consumer. Brezhnev had nothing to offer. The health and education services open to all, the prospect of social advancement for children of workers and peasants, all yesterday's attractions were falling victims of stagnation. "Socialism" no longer meant only the Soviet tank and repression. For millions it also stood for economic backwardness. The pre-war past was now sufficiently distant to be idealised for the new generations and the West sufficiently dazzling to be perceived as cornucopia. Propped only by the fear of Soviet intervention, the ruling Communist parties were ready for history's broom.



Brezhnev – "nothing to offer"

The case of Poland, often a pioneer of change, shows how the movement first turned against the regime and then swung to the right, two trends that should not be confused. The revisionist illusions that Gomulka would radically reform the system did not last. By 1970 Poland's workers won from their "workers' state" in bloody battle the right to veto the government's policy on consumer prices. Six years later, as the Party vainly tried to abolish that veto, a small band of intellectuals came to the rescue of the battered workers. This alliance was re-enacted in that glorious summer of 1980, when the intellectuals offered their services to the workers who were conquering the then unprecedented right to form an independent union. The victorious workers were no lovers of "really existing socialism" but, in very Marxist fashion, they presented their own interests as "the superior interests of society as a whole". And the year after, Solidarity, their union, was talking in terms of self-management both in the factories and the country at large. Indeed, the vague project of a new parliament, with a lower house, in which the Communist Party still had a guaranteed majority, and a senate, representing workers' councils and other forms of autogestion, was probably the last chance of transition through a historic compromise in a non-capitalist direction.

The CP chose otherwise. It was ready to make a deal with the Catholic Church not with the workers. It opted for the military coup which crushed the labour movement. Not enough to impose an economic reform, and this is why it had to resign itself to new talks within a decade, but sufficiently to alter the balance of forces within Solidarity. In 1989, when it came to the new historical compromise and the transfer of power, the intelligentsia was in charge and the proletariat was part of the electoral fodder. And the resulting government had dropped its vision of workers' democracy for the sake of the monetarist model of Milton Friedman.

When one comes to study carefully the sweep and speed of this metamorphosis, all sorts of factors will have to be taken into account and the circumstance that during its years underground Solidarity was helped by American money (channelled through AFL-CIO) is not to be neglected. But the real reasons are much deeper. Actually, the strong Western emphasis on the immediate conversion to capitalism, as we shall see, came only later. To understand why a Tadeusz Mazowiecki, once a progressive Catholic trying to reconcile Socialism with Christianity, becomes a prime minister who presides over a Thatcherite policy of privatisation or why a Vaclav Havel, who a few years ago described himself vaguely as a socialist, no longer does so today, one must keep in mind the extraordinary change in the ideological climate. The bankruptcy of the command economy has been interpreted as that of democratic planning, the fiasco of neo-Stalinism as the funeral of socialism, and the failure of a Mitterand to build something different as the final proof of the absence of any radical alternative. To talk of "the end of ideology" is as absurd today as it ever was. What we have been witnessing for some years now is the ideological hegemony of the capitalist gospel.

But I am running ahead of the story. Mazowiecki's premiership, Havel's presidency, or the crumbling of the Berlin Wall for that matter, were inconceivable without the crucial shifts in Moscow.

The centre and the periphery

Mikhail Gorbachev was accepted by his peers because the economic stagnation had reached the point of potential political explosion. Though one of them, he belonged to the fraction pleading that a radical reform had become inevitable. He also understood, unlike the Chinese and unlike so many Western advisers now suffering from amnesia, that to reform the economy it is necessary to proceed with a deep political transformation. If he may not have known from the start how far this would take him, he has shown a great capacity to sail forward with each new tide. Thus in its first years the perestroika offered the exhilarating experience of a country awakening from its slumber, recovering its memory and its voice, of a people learning to debate, to choose between various versions and different candidates. As books were published, plays staged, films shown that had no chance of being produced a few years earlier, as newspapers changed their nature and television its coverage, the Soviet Union became an altogether different country. All these freedoms of speech or assembly, it will be objected, are merely the bourgeois revolution come to Russia two centuries late. But freedoms are no less precious because they were originally bourgeois and they change content, raising new issues, in a country where private ownership of the means of production was eliminated.

It is in economics that the perestroika has so far failed to produce results. It was supposed to alter the system entirely, shifting it from a command mechanism to some form of market economy. According to the critics, up to now it has begotten the worst of both systems. The main reason for this failure is that the leadership does

not really know where and how far it wants to go and this brings us back to politics. In Stalin's time all social forces were reduced to obedient silence. Under Brezhnev the assumption was that interests would neither be hurt nor expressed. It is only now that the interests of the various classes and social groups begin to crystallise and seek a political expression.

The most articulate grouping, and a pioneer of perestroika, is the potential *priviligentsia*, the managers, economists, and all sorts of other professionals whose numbers have grown and who want to have more say in the running of the factories and of the country. They want the market, big income differentials, incentives involving different standards of housing, health or education for the successful. Contrary to legend, they are not for introducing privileges into an allegedly egalitarian society. They are for shifting privileges, and power, from the obedient apparatchiks to the dynamic managers, from the nomenklatura to what they would describe as the meritocracy. Are they not perturbed by the prospect of where the logic of the market might lead? The lessons of Eastern Europe have induced them to urge that the process of reform be speeded up and not slowed down or altered.

These developments have also led to a divorce between Gorbachev and some of his original supporters, based on political rather than philosophical grounds. Mikhail Gorbachev has too sure a grasp of Soviet realities to believe that he can win backed simply by a section of the *intelligentsia*. He has always known that to break the resistance of the bureaucracy he needs the support of the workers, whose interests are threatened by the reform; the idea to have managers elected by the staff, which has not got very far, was conceived as a stratagem to gain their sympathy. Above all he realises that in a country affected by shortages the prospect of unemployment, of ostentatious social differences and the current resentment against private speculators barely disguised under the cooperative label may well allow the conservatives to mobilise, pretending not to defend their own interests as the nomenklatura but those of the country's downtrodden.

In the ambiguous controversy over economic reform one voice is still too faint, that of the socialist opposition trying to reconcile the workers with a good part of the *intelligentsia*, admitting the need for incentives yet setting them in an egalitarian perspective, defending planning while attacking the bureaucracy - all this by a movement from below, by spreading democracy well beyond the bounds conceived by Gorbachev and his reformist critics, self-management on the shopfloor leading to self-government on the national scale. Only such an attempt to answer questions facing society since Stalin's death can, in my opinion, provide a solution to Russia's predicament and, possibly, preserve the Soviet Union as an entity.

That the Union should now be threatened is Mr. Gorbachev's heritage not his accomplishment. The perestroika merely released the accumulated tensions and glasnost revealed them to the world. It is not to betray one's belief in democracy to observe that when the lid was finally lifted all the smell that surfaced was not Chanel No. 5. There also came a stench of prejudice, jingoism, anti-semitic hatred, an odour that spread well beyond the allegedly patriotic *Pamyat* society. Old ghosts are being joined by new monsters and this is not surprising, the irrationality of government having reinforced the forces of unreason in society. In particular, the Great Russian chauvinism, encouraged by the Georgian tyrant, stimulated nationalism in the Republics and prevented it from finding a natural outlet. Now the regime is faced not only with the reasonable aspirations towards autonomy but also with atavistic hatreds and medieval passions. The Union will not be kept together without a renewed community of interests cemented by some form of ideological cohesion.

In this short survey I have purposely excluded foreign policy – where Gorbachev has scored serious successes and altered the international equation – except as far as it affects the Soviet bloc in Europe, that is to say tremendously. For years all the protest movements in Eastern Europe knew that there was a Rubicon, crossing which would provoke a Soviet Intervention and all the achievements at the periphery were fragile as long as reform was not consolidated at the centre. Perestroika changed all that. When Mikhail Gorbachev dropped the Brezhnev doctrine or, at least, its provision that members of the Warsaw Pact could not alter the prevailing social order, he signed the death warrant for regimes which by then, as we saw, were only resting on the threat of Soviet intervention. He can thus be described as the stage manager of the revolutionary events of 1989. If he did not necessarily desire the outcome nor set the exact timetable, we now know that he did accept well in advance the Soviet retreat from Eastern Europe[4].

Quite naturally, the countries of imported revolution have gone much further in their restoration than Russia. Here the ghosts from the past seem to have taken over the whole stage. Though the revival of capitalism is for tomorrow, all the pre-war parties are being resurrected without paying much attention to the intervening social changes (such as the reduced role of the peasantry). Actually, the new governments in Budapest, Prague or Warsaw, including Communists in senior or junior positions, act as if they wanted to wipe out half a century and recover their pre-war position in Europe, forgetting that, except for the Czechs, they were then very poor relations. Contrary to some of their expectations, the East Europeans will not be offered the choice between social-democratic Sweden and Thatcherite Britain. Their comparative rank will be closer to that of Mexico or Bolivia. The new rulers are not deterred. Will they be followed? The people of Eastern Europe have shown with their feet and their ballot papers what they do not want. They still have to determine what they wish to put in its place.

Open frontiers and restoration

When regimes tumble every week it is presumptuous, or foolish, to forecast the course of events in the months to come. But one can venture hypotheses about deeper trends. This is the sense in which I want to suggest that all the countries of Eastern Europe, including Russia, will first move in a capitalist direction. This concept,

however, has to be defined. The existence of a market does not mean such a return to capitalism: any transition to socialism will take time and involve a long period with a mixed economy. The search for a proper yardstick or for incentives does not mean it either. What is at stake is the general sense of direction. Is the economy moving towards a system in which production, consumption and investment will be shaped by the conscious will of society or towards one in which they will be determined by the profit-oriented forces of the market? I suggest that Eastern Europe will be moving in the latter if it proceeds with its intention to open its frontiers, accept full convertibility of its currencies and recover its place in the international division of labour.

When the Bolsheviks introduced their monopoly of foreign trade they knew that their departure from the international division would be costly. But this was the price they had to pay, as Preobrazhensky put it[5], to disassociate their "private economy from the world private economy towards which it was tending". The hope was that, the revolution spreading to more advanced capitalist countries, the damage would be limited. Then Stalin invented the theory of "socialism in one country" and coined the slogan: "To catch up with and overtake America". But though he spread his regime up to the Elbe, he did not produce an alternative society and, though Russia began by closing the gap, it still lies far behind. Indeed, the frontiers are being opened at the worst moment, after a period of stagnation. Knowing the tendency of the capitalist market to remove obstacles and the prevailing discrepancy in productivity or technological know-how, the outcome of an open contest is beyond doubt.

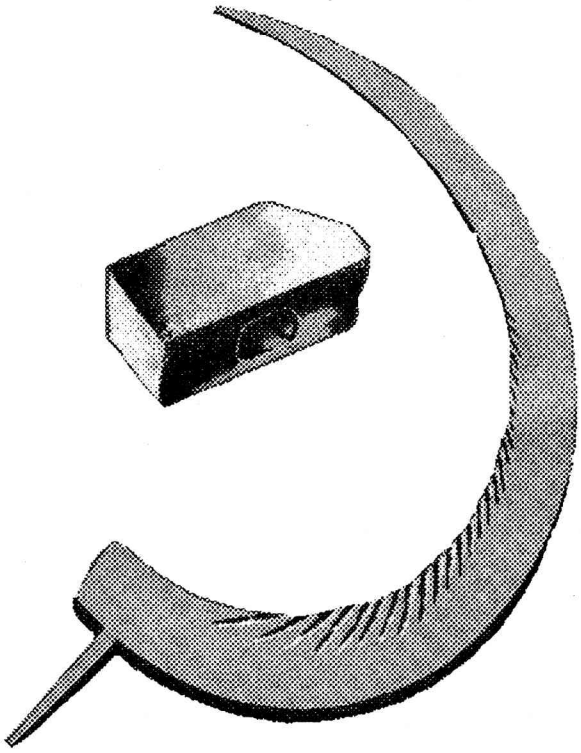
A bridgehead, however, should not be confused with a successful invasion and here one must draw quantitative differences between the various countries of Eastern Europe and a qualitative one between them and the Soviet Union. All these post-revolutionary states, while nowhere forging a socialist society, had nationalised the means of production. They are now faced with the unprecedented task of privatising not a plant or an industry but the bulk of the economy. The Poles have opted for a shortcut to capitalism, on which you can break your political neck. The Czechs, whose crisis is less acute, are proceeding more slowly; even their monetarism is supposed to have a human face. Yet in all these countries where socialism is now perceived as an alien imposition and the leaders of the conversion as yesterday's resisters, capitalism will have to show its seamy side – the unemployment, the yawning gap between rich and poor – for an entirely new Left to emerge. In the Soviet Union the turning point may come at an earlier stage.

Whether the resistance will be successful is another matter. These regimes are more complicated than they are now being described. They preached one thing and practised another. This gap between promise and fulfilment greatly contributed to the political apathy and cynicism. Yet the socialist ideal, in some curious fashion, also managed to sink in. Eastern technocrats who, whether they still hold a party card or not, sound as Harvard Business School graduates having joined the International Monetary Fund, bitterly complain about their worst handicap – the egalitarianism and thirst for social justice of their populations. It remains to be seen whether the quite understandable resentment against "actually existing socialism" will prove stronger and more lasting than this socialist subconscious. All that can be said for the moment is that this is the beginning of a long conflict, that the main confrontation will take place in the centre not at the periphery and that only early in the next millennium will it be possible to answer the crucial question at the heart of this essay: was 1917 the beginning of a heroic yet tragic diversion ending in capitalism, or was the revolution, though premature and then perverted, a positive step on mankind's road towards mastery over its own fate?

The abuses and uses of the Eastern question

Even this bird's eye view of the Eastern scene shows how its dramatic metamorphosis is vital for the Western world, both for our rulers and for parties and people who consider themselves progressive. For the capitalist establishment, Eastern Europe offers a tantalising prize and its members have descended upon it like vultures. Special envoys of the IMF and the World bank, of the European commission and the OECD prepare the ground. Bankers, industrialists, ministers and presidents, the German Chancellor and the Japanese Prime Minister follow with their cheque books and the common query – "what's in it for me?" Liberty and democracy have been quickly translated into freedom to sell and then export profits. Incidentally, "market socialism" has proved a short-lived craze, both sides now apparently only interested in the first term. To those who, in keeping with common East-West fashion, claim that there is no need to mention democracy in the same breath as the market because the former is by definition inseparable from the latter, one is tempted to reply they should preach their sermon in Johannesburg. Actually, because it will be difficult to push the "market economy" down the throat of a surprised population voices are already raised, suggesting "special powers" in Poland and "authoritarian rule" in Russia, on the grounds that the market must come first and democracy will follow after. The invasion has begun. Whether the capitalist conquest will succeed is still uncertain.

The ideological dividends, on the other hand, are already being collected and have been for some time. In the mid-1970s when, a deep economic crisis following student protests, the system felt threatened, the gulag campaign, the discovery by latter-day Christopher Columbuses, the *nouveaux philosophes*, of Soviet concentration camps, came to the rescue. Describing the search for any radical solution as leading inevitably to a totalitarian dead-end, it helped capitalism to survive, to break the resistance of the labour movement and to reassert its ideological domination. The reactionary trends in the two halves of Europe feeding one another, this helped the rightward swing in the East and the tide is now returning having gathered much momentum. The ambition today is to break the Promethean spirit altogether, to destroy the belief in a radical alternative. It is no longer "totalitarian communism", it is capitalism, whether you like it or not, which is being presented as a system from which there can be no exit, since it marks the end of history.



This line of the establishment, carried with Eastern help and mass mobilisation of the media, dictates the strategy of the Left. We no longer need to defend in Eastern Europe the right of expression of people with whom we disagree; many former victims are now in the corridors of power. We can pick and choose our allies, broadly where latter-day Black Hundreds or neo-Nazis are a serious threat, more selectively when we seek partners to struggle together for a socialist resurrection.

It may be objected that, at least to begin with, there will not be many candidates for that struggle in Eastern Europe. Undoubtedly. But we can help to shorten that period in many ways. By reminding, for instance, the East Europeans who look at their pre-war past through rosy spectacles of its real colour, recalling Admiral Horthy for the Hungarians, Marshall Pilsudski for the Poles, reacting against the new Russian myth that the left-wing critics of Stalin were as bad or worse than the dictator. Yet our main task is obvious. It is human and natural for East Europeans, who waste hours standing in line or otherwise chasing scarce goods, to be dazzled by our glittering city lights and our tempting shopping centres; for people who had to deal with a stupid censorship to be thrilled by our freedom of expression at once real and apparent. But we do know the seamy side of our societies.

It is our duty to our eastern friends but also to ourselves, because of the damage wrought here by the huge propaganda machine, to restate some fundamental truths about our system. Our inability to organise society to the best advantage of its population is such that we turn even our technological genius into a handicap: higher productivity leads to bigger unemployment. Shocking discrepancies between the haves and the have-nots are not the only feature of this increasingly two-tier society. Its prosperity rests on the poverty and exploitation of the rest of the world. We are unable to insert our economy into its natural environment and can only deal with pollution ex-post-facto so as to provide room for profit once again. Our alienated and alienating society has made little progress towards the equality of sexes but has shown a peculiar talent for commercialising culture, for turning everything into a merchandise. These are only some of the points which must be expanded to draw a genuine picture of actually existing capitalism.

Only dinosaurs, the post-moderns on both sides of the Elbe will object, can use such antediluvian concepts as capitalism or socialism. If you wish to be up-to-date the operating terms are "rule-of-law", the "law-abiding state", the "Rights of Man", in short, the vocabulary of democracy. So let us take them at their word. Democracy is crucial for a socialist. Though Russia should never have been our model – nor any other place for that matter – it would be foolish to deny the heritage and refuse to learn from bitter experience. Rosa Luxemburg was prophetic when she pleaded for the "active, untrammelled, energetic political life of the broadest masses of the people" and warned that "without general elections, without unrestricted freedom of press and assembly, without a free struggle of opinion, life dies out in every public institution, becomes a mere semblance of life, in which only the bureaucracy remains as the active element." The most important lesson from the Soviet past is that when people are deprived of say over their lives, however temporarily and for however justifiable reasons, they will find it extremely difficult to recover their rights and the price paid for this allegedly temporary exception proves prohibitive. This is an additional reason why democracy must figure at the very heart of any revived socialist project.

But real democracy and not the empty phraseology of our trendsetters. When an American on the minimum wage has to work 79,000 years to earn as much – $550 million – as Mr. Milken did earn in 1987, to say one man-one vote and leave it at that is shockingly superficial. When the Berlusconis, Bertelsmanns and other Murdochs are extending their mediatic stranglehold over the

whole globe, to talk of freedom of expression as if these tycoons were not "more equal" than any Tom, Hans or Giovanni is hypocritical. And to add that the property of the Puerto Rican immigrant is protected in New York as well as that of Donald Trump is to reveal the class nature of this society and of its preachers. Genuine socialists were never against basic freedoms because these were bourgeois. They have always, as the words of Luxemburg testify, "revealed the hard kernel of social inequality and lack of freedom hidden under the sweet shell of formal equality and freedom" not to abolish democracy, but on the contrary to fill it with social content and this is the terrain on which common struggle could soon be resumed in Europe across the fast vanishing divide.

Because the main message from Eastern Europe is not the one frenetically drummed by the media. It is that when institutions do not correspond to the needs, sooner or later they must yield; that people inspired by an idea can bring down walls; in other words, that radical transformation is possible. The philosophers from the State Department, Rand and other corporations know better than they pretend. Their incantation about the end of history is merely designed to gain time for their masters. They know that a system torn by contradictions like capitalism, unless it first blows up the planet or poisons it through pollution, will also collapse in its turn. How soon? Admittedly it is now necessary to ask whether capitalism, universal in its aspiration like socialism, will invade the whole world before it leaves the historical stage. (It is another way of asking whether its gravediggers will come from the West or, after all and despite everything that is happening, from the East).

The time factor, however, is not without influence on our own mood. The thirty-seven years that have elapsed since Stalin's death are for the historian a brief spell, for us they mark the passage from youth to nearly old age. It is in this contrast between historical perspective and man's natural political impatience that lies the reason why, in moments of despondency, when broken illusions, wasted lives, bloody sacrifices are vividly perceived behind a shattered model, one begins to doubt for a while, though only for a while, whether hope will soon create "from its own wreck the thing it contemplates".

Footnotes:

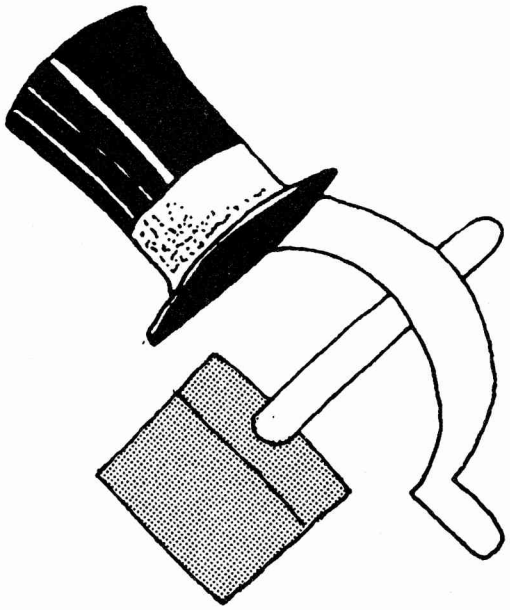
1. R. Luxemburg, *The Russian Revolution and Leninism or Marxism*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor Paperbacks, 1961.
2. Personally I think that for a socialist there are no taboos dealing with the Soviet regime. But his judgement must: assess the event in its historical context; draw a distinction between the early years and the Stalin era; take into account the consequences of possible defeat, of surrender of power not to other left-wing groups but to the forces of reaction.
3. See Yevgenii Preobrazhensky, *The New Economics*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1965; also Alexander Erlich, *The Soviet Industrialisation Debate 1924-28*, Harvard University Press, 1960.
4. Karoly Grosz, leader of the Hungarian Communist party at the time has confirmed that, back in the spring of 1988, Mikhail Gorbachev had agreed in principle to a total withdrawal of Soviet troops (IHT Jan. 23rd, 1990). Hungary, with no NATO frontier, was a simpler case than, say, Czechoslovakia. Yet the only real problem is presented by the German Democratic Republic, where the quickening of the process of reunification could still spoil Gorbachev's East European gamble.
5. op. cit.

Stalinist structures have broken down in Eastern Europe. But there are many obstacles to genuine democratisation – conservative traditions, nationalism, private property. Tamás Kraus, historian, is a leading member of Hungary's Left Alternative. The following article is from issue no. 5 (May 1990) of Eszmelet. *It was translated for* Labour Focus *by Vera Magyar.*

The Conservative Revolutions of Eastern Europe

by TAMAS KRAUS

An era has come to an end in Eastern Europe but it's not clear what kind of era has begun. Perhaps we can try to understand the present process by putting it in a historical perspective. A certain amount of chaos accompanies any change, but this is increased in Eastern Europe by the moral disintegration of intellectual groups and by the absence of any intellectual rebirth. Political interests of the forces commanding this process also tend to camouflage the real interests.



Even the unmasking of the past is subject to manipulation. Historical science is degraded and becomes an apology. Old myths are replaced by even older ones, albeit in changed form. Small-nation messianism reappears, accompanied by ideals that contradict it, for instance the notion that "Eastern Europe" has come to an end and the road to Europe, hitherto blocked by communism, is open once again. But Eastern Europe, as a historical region, has existed for centuries and this has important consequences for us.

Eastern Europe's revolutions, while achieving partial successes, usually got stuck at the political level. Except for Czechoslovakia in 1918, the bourgeois revolutions failed or became distorted. Where these were combined with socialist revolutions, as happened in a number of countries in this region between 1917 and 1923, they were swept away by absolutism or conservative capitalist restoration which blocked the way to the achievements of European culture and civilisation. The democratic efforts of the workers' and peasants' movements fell victim to authoritarian dictatorships. These national states then were ground up (as ally, victim, or both) by German *Lebensraum*.

The Soviet experiment, which started off with such great hopes and which exercised tremendous influence in the whole Western world at the end of the 1920s, was destroyed by Stalinist bureaucratic dictatorship.

With the defeat of fascism, Eastern Europe was rearranged after the Second World War. With the victory of the socialist, "people's democratic" revolutions, it seemed that the demand for national and human rights, a demand of the bourgeois revolution, would be realised everywhere. The power of private property was broken and, for one historical moment, it seemed that the productive classes would be "allowed" to share in political power. Popular organisations appeared all over Eastern Europe; councils were formed in the localities and in the workplaces. But none of those aims, neither bourgeois-democratic nor socialist, were realised. All that remained of the "workers' state" was the alienated bureaucratic authoritarian structure. No social class saw its aims satisfied. The first proof of this was the anti-Stalinist revolts of the 1950s.

The "de-Stalinisation" initiated by the 20th Party Congress brought some achievements in the 1960s. There was an attempt to create an international socialist economy. The aim was to use the market while trying to avoid its negative effects. These efforts did succeed in reducing the distance between Eastern Europe and the Western

Table 1

Changes in National Income 1937-1965

	per capita national income in $		
	1937	1960	1965
Common Market (Belgium, France, Luxemburg, Holland, Italy, W. Germany)	316	782	956
Other developed European capitalist countries (England, Austria, Sweden, Norway etc)	684	1050	1094
Underdeveloped European capitalist countries (Greece, Portugal, Spain)	256	286	389
European capitalist countries together	542	784	940
Eastern European socialist countries (CSSR, Poland, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia)	213	365	467

countries, as can be seen from Table 1 (see following page), which shows the changes in national income between 1937 and 1965.

These favourable economic results in the second half of the 1960s strengthened the hand of the market socialists who then attempted to implement market reforms but failed to deal with reform at the political level. The turning point was 1968, both East and West. Economic reform (the NEM) was introduced in Hungary, but a more democratic reform in Czechoslovakia was defeated. In Hungary, this reform was introduced from above. The millions of workers, whose lives were to be improved by this, have no say whatsoever. Democratisation simply meant liberalisation.

The dramatic slowdown in the Eastern European economies was not caused simply by ineffective centralised bureaucratic planning. The international price revolution at the beginning of the 1970s played an important role. Those who advocated opening up Hungary to the world market were not fully aware of what the consequences of this would be. The reform economists were unable to keep the process under control. To avoid crisis, they led the country into a new trap – international debt. The fundamental reason for the failures was the fact that the creation of a mixed economy was not possible without a reform of property. But this would have conflicted with the power of the bureaucratic party elite.

Table 2

Economic Growth in Eastern Europe 1950–1986 (in %)

Country	1950–60	1960–70	1970–80	1980–86
Soviet Union	8.47	7.1	5.1	3.7
Poland	7.6	6.1	5.7	-0.9
GDR	10.0	4.3	4.8	4.4
Romania	10.3	8.4	9.3	5.0
CSSR	7.5	4.4	4.6	2.0
Hungary	5.0	4.8	4.8	2.1
Bulgaria	10.9	7.7	7.0	4.0

At the beginning of the 1970s, the so-called "dogmatists" and liberals negotiated a new compromise. To preserve their power, both sides gave preference to pragmatic economic solutions. The various tendencies of critical Marxism were marginalised. In their *samizdat* writings of the time, György Bence and János Kis wrote that "even the most extreme neo-liberal apologists for the market cannot hide the fact that the reforms raise the question not only of economic efficiency but also of economic power". Marxist oppositionists stated at the time, in the words of Bence and Kis, that real reform can only flourish if "the working class participated in political power". But the ideas associated with the Marxist revival of that period (Lukács and his pupils in Hungary, the Yugoslav *Praxis* group, Rudolf Bahro in the GDR, Adam Schaff in Poland, and so on) did not serve the logic of preserving power. So all of these groups and individuals were exiled to the margins. The experience of the Prague Spring brought home to those in power that foreign capital was a closer ally than left-wing radicalism.

This combination of economic liberalisation with political power in the hands of an authoritarian elite could not last. They had not understood the laws of the world market and the compromise was undermined as living standards fell and there was a general drift into political crisis in the 1980s. Another important factor here was the slowdown in the Soviet economy from the 1970s. Between 1965 and 1982, the share of CMEA countries in world trade fell from 16.5 to 11.3%. Economic growth was now declining irreversibly, as is demonstrated by the figures in Table 2.

During the first half of the 1970s, the capitalist countries redistributed national income on the world market to their own advantage by means of the well-known price revolution. The countries of Eastern Europe now faced a combination of insurmountable obstacles: the wasteful system of bureaucratic state socialism, the reshaping of the world market prices and the unjust, discriminatory measures applied by the advanced capitalist countries (protectionism, proscriptions, etc). Free competition existed only where it was advantageous for the developed capitalist countries. Three quarters of world trade was and is conducted outside the sphere of free competition.

Thus, the developed countries, in order to avoid crisis themselves, did their best to shift the problems to other parts of the world. The Eastern European countries could not avoid crisis, quite independently of whether there was a change of regime or not. Internal economic suffocation combined with world market forces to bring on the collapse.

Thus the fate of Eastern Europe is intertwined with the world economy as a whole. The inner-Eastern European economic relations which have now disintegrated have left a vacuum which, however, is not being filled by Western Europe or America. International capitalist financial groups want to take Eastern Europe out of its isolation in the same way they did Latin America. This familiar recipe will not take Eastern Europe "into Europe". Rather, through the debt trap, capital shortage will become chronic, for what will happen is an export not an import of capital.

Eastern Europe has traditionally been a hunt-

ing ground for international infiltration of capital. Its abundance of cheap labour and "flea-market" capacity make it a profitable region for the Western European, east Asian and American centres (the Soviet victory over fascism took away this hunting ground after the war). But there are risks involved here; hence the need to marginalise the left.

In view of all this, the illusion that there will be "help" from the capitalist countries is paradoxical. The Eastern European bureaucracies based their own privileges on Western prestige consumption, which the masses were unable to follow. The breaking down of the walls doesn't alter this. Nonetheless, the Western European-American myth was an important part of the ideological legitimation of the transition in Eastern Europe in 1989-90. That this is a myth has already been demonstrated by the example of Poland. Here the regime was changed and Solidarity, which had the backing of 9 million people, took over the role of the old state party. The former workers' opposition came to power, the "revolutionaries" took over some of the cushy jobs of the communists and they then carried out the dictates of the IMF better than their communist predecessors had done. But the fate of the working millions became no less bleak.

But even more important than the laws of the world market were the changes taking place in the Soviet Union. The 1985 coming-to-power of Gorbachev accelerated the changing of the guard in Eastern Europe, gave impetus to the struggle between the old power elite and the new technocratic management elite.

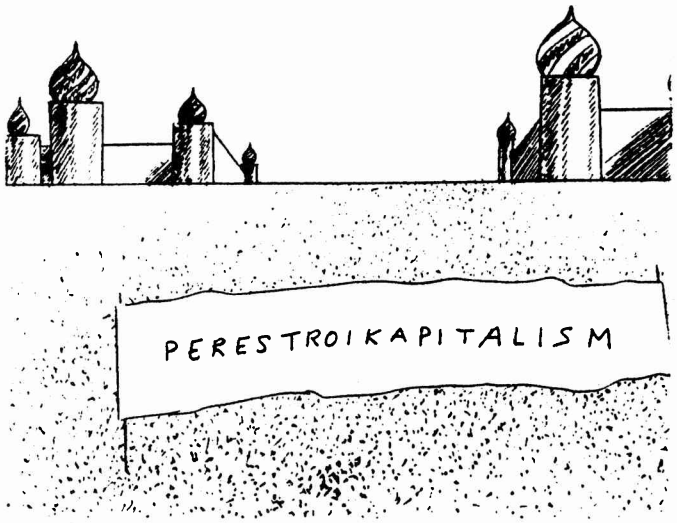
Perestroika

With the collapse of the legitimating power of the old ideology, there emerged within the Soviet Union a host of alternative movements, organisations and ideas, all competing to fill the vacuum. Among these national movements are playing a very important role. Where bourgeois culture and civilisation had put down deeper roots, this nationalism took less aggressive forms. But behind these conflicts one can always detect the work of bureaucratic groups wanting to preserve their power. National bureaucracies, competing with the Russian bureaucracy, are using the national movements to preserve their own local positions of power. Like the Russian bureaucracy, the national bureaucracies were unable to resolve the economic problems and were unable to respond to the demands of the world economy, which they didn't in any case understand. For them, it was a matter of survival and this they hoped to achieve by changing sides, by becoming national spokesmen rather than loyal spokesmen for the centre. This, by the way, is not a specifically Soviet but general Eastern European phenomenon. Hence we cannot expect really democratic developments from these national conflicts, which does not mean, of course, that they contain no democratic potential.

In several areas of the Soviet Union, most spectacularly in this regions where miners' strikes have occurred, one can see perestroika not only destroying old Stalinist structures but initiating social movements. Although, in Eastern Europe and in Russia, the big movements are everywhere unfolding in the name of national character (which means that everywhere these movements are being led by the intellectuals), in Russia, for historical reasons, the social and anti-bureaucratic character of these movements can be expected to grow stronger.

In the Soviet Union there are also fierce struggles around property reform, since the acquisition of property offers one possibility for survival. This struggle, invisible to the masses, between the old and the new elite for the division of state property will become more acute, with the new elite, as in Hungary, trying to become absorbed into the camp of the managerial and financial bureaucracy.

The replacement of this traditional state bureaucracy may be a long process. But the advocates of Gorbachev reform must recognise that unless they themselves are willing to give leadership to the workers' movement, to the workers' strikes, then there is no hope for perestroika to succeed, to develop in a socialist direction. The Soviet workers have not yet, in spite of all their hardships, turned against perestroika. People don't want to return to the old bureaucratic despotism. They know from experience the deep roots of Russian bureaucracy, its traditions, its deep conservatism, its ruthlessness and its cynicism. Russian bureaucracy has a greater resistance to change than does, for instance, the Hungarian bureaucracy and, for reasons of sheer numbers (20 millions), it cannot be got rid of by a single revolutionary action.



Cartoon: *Eszmelet*

However paradoxical it may seem, the experience of the past 70 years has prepared the ground for a democratic solution in the long run. Needless to say, I don't mean by "democracy" something limited by the logic of capital but rather a democratisation of production, with self-governing bodies in the workplace and the community. The bureaucratic obstacles are obvious but let us remember that the socialisation of state property will not be hampered by the burden of private property. Capital was not able to "rescue" Russia in the past few centuries: it is unlikely that it will be able to do so in the next few decades. If this third option does not materialise, then it will become possible for an extreme right-wing movement (Black Hundred or Islamic) to sweep away the conflict between "state socialism" and "market socialism".

This unfavourable alternative exists in almost every one of the Eastern European countries. The rapid swing to the right on the part of the power

elite and the bureaucracy strengthened, at the same time, traditional forms of protest and discontent. Small-nation nationalism, small-nation messianism is reviving and is becoming official policy everywhere. The masses are being mobilised, in particular, by the intransigent anti-communism of the new-old elite about to grab power.

It is characteristic of the transformation in Eastern Europe that nowhere are the general democratic demands linked to social demands. When such phenomena do occur, they appear as anti-communist, even as anti-socialist. This type of anti-communist "communism" manifests itself, first of all, in the forms of self-defence adopted by workers, for instance, the workers' councils in Hungary and similar types of organisations. These organisations have their precedents in tradition: 1918-1919, 1945-1948, 1956. But this national messianism is really a delayed-action minefield since it is a destabilising force which could obstruct economic development. Unemployment is another such minefield since the capital does not exist to finance the structural changes which are a precondition for penetrating the world market.

At the beginning, and "from below", the change of power looked like salvation. Everyone was overwhelmed by freedom. But it soon became clear, especially during the election campaigns, that this freedom was little more than the freedom to talk. Real power had slipped into the hands of the intellectual and bureaucratic elite groups. A new state and financial bureaucracy took the place of the old party bureaucracy. The small opposition groups, mostly breakaways from the communist parties, became born-again bourgeois-democratic militants and are now preparing their own power in order to "serve the people".

The majority of the old conservative bureaucracy, having made their anti-communist U-turn, now declare themselves to be the pillars of the multi-party system. The most deprived in society returned to their lost illusions: they began to demand social security, full employment; they began to set up self-defence organisations. From the GDR to Hungary, from Yugoslavia to the Soviet Union, this process can be observed everywhere. In spite of different national forms, the social content is similar everywhere.

The basic questions everywhere are those of power and property. The exclusion of the producing classes from power now does not cause such a trauma; the previous power elite in Eastern Europe didn't share power, nowhere did it have a "human face". But property is another matter. The question of property is everywhere intertwined with the question of survival. In the "socialist" past social equality established itself strongly as a value in people's minds. Collective amnesia will last only a short time and the new regimes in Eastern Europe will have to take this into account before deciding on the "final solution" to the property question. The greediness of the new elites, in Hungary and Poland, with their ideology of following the Western model, is pushing in the direction of mass impoverishment, debt crisis, unemployment, inflation and nationalism.

Under such conditions, what are the prospects for socialism and Marxism as practical movements in Eastern Europe today? It is difficult to say. As an intellectual trend, Marxism has become marginalised in Eastern Europe. But this marginalisation did not happen just now. This was brought about by neo-Stalinist reaction in the 1970s, when a revived critical left was sacrificed on the altar of liberal economics and when Marxism as a cause was to be found only in small research institutes and fraternal groups. By now, the Marxist of the 1970s have ripened for the soft embrace of liberalism. After an unsuccessful struggle against it, they have embarked on the ship of liberalism and navigated their way to power.

Nonetheless, although the conditions have changed, I believe that the critical stance adopted by Bence and Kis at the time is still valid, when they pointed out that, among the crystallised ideologies, Marxism is the only one to offer a radical socialist critique and that it would continue to have a place, even if a marginal one, in a society beset by social conflicts.

THE POLISH RIGHT

It used to be a commonplace, in the Polish intelligentsia as amongst its North American mentors, that the struggle in Poland during the 1980s was one between a totalitarian monster-state (as barbarous as, if not worse than Hitlerism) and a civil society largely united at least in its goal of freedom and democracy, under the banner of Solidarity. In 1990, this kind of thinking turns out to be oversimplified, not to say a myth.

by OLIVER MACDONALD

THE TOTALITARIAN MONSTER was, in fact, an extremely weak thing that has now all but totally vanished. And in its death, the leftist social collectivism of this regime is revealed in myriad directions: from its stress on social security, through its funding of a host of institutions of civil society from about twice the number of regional opera companies available in the UK, through theatre groups, sports clubs, a vast range of newspapers and magazines and wide support for the liberal arts and academic life; a state also allowing some margin of secular education, rights for women, etc. All this is revealed by the great wave of anti-leftist, right-wing discourse now sweeping through the country under the banners of the Fatherland (and a genuinely strong state), the Church (with an end to abortion rights and a drive against secular education) and a "free" economy.

These ideas are not confined to one part of the political spectrum: no wing of the new political elite would risk frontally challenging them. True, the old proponents of the idea of a struggle by "civil society" against "totalitarianism", like Adam Michnik, still attempt to proclaim that notions of Left and Right are outdated, but they are believed by almost nobody, and Michnik himself couples such thoughts with a call for a new political force of the "centre", thereby presupposing the very political poles between which he seek to balance but whose existence he seeks to deny!

Yet within this general wave of what Western observers would call Rightist thought, there are distinct currents which concentrate these ideas in a particularly intense way, currents which radicalise the ideas of Nationalism, Political Catholicism, the Free Market, xenophobia and anti-semitism to the point where their commitment to liberal democracy must be questioned. This part of the political spectrum is what we may call the New Polish Right in a strict sense.

We will try to consider some features of this New Polish Right: the relation of its leading ideas to liberal democratic thought (whether of a Christian Democratic or National Conservative variety); the varying appeals and dynamics of different currents on this Right; the prospects for unity between them and the factors that may govern the success of these various currents.

The current transitional context

More decisively than almost anywhere else in Eastern Europe, the Communist movement has collapsed. The PZPR (Polish United Workers' Party) suffered an electoral catastrophe in the national elections of June 1989 which were in effect a plebiscite for or against the Party. Its February 1990 Congress winding up PZPR and creating the Social Democratic Party of the Republic of Poland bequeathed the new organisation a mere 35,000 members, as against PZPR's 2.2million. That congress also involved a breakaway by the Social Democratic Union led by the reformist Communist Tadeusz Fiszbach, but apart from a group of parliamentary deputies, the Fiszbach organisation lacks any organisational infrastructure. These newly established legatees of the PZPR have yet to be tested in national elections, but they can be discounted as serious political contenders for the foreseeable future. In the May local elections the Socialist Party gained control only of one council, that of the Mokotow district of Warsaw where many functionaries of the old regime live. Thus, the Polish political map is being drawn anew upon the ashes of communism.

As in all the countries of Eastern Europe except Hungary, the party system in Poland remains at an embryonic stage of development. The political stage is dominated by an organisation without a positive political programme, definite international references or distinctive social constituency: the citizens committee organisation sponsored by the leaders of the old Solidarity who were brought together by Lech Walesa for the round table discussions that led to the June 1989 elections. This organisation and its Parliamentary wing, the OKP, forms the government and controls the upper House of the

Parliament as well as the great bulk of local councils elected in May of this year. But its membership is defined purely negatively: by the fact that they have not been members of the PZPR in at least the recent past, and by the fact that they were prepared to support the slate of candidates put forward by Walesa for the 1989 elections.

Attempts by leaders like Geremek and Michnik to provide a theoretical justification for this form of "non-political" political organisation, by arguing (following Kolakowski) that the old ideological divisions between Left and Right are relics of 19th Century politics, have not stabilised the organisation and a deep and sharp rift that has opened up within the Citizens Committees and the OKP between the Mazowiecki-Geremek–Michnik wing and Walesa. It is impossible to detect any clear ideological or programmatic principles dividing the two groupings – both contain a melange of tendencies – but this lack only intensifies the pressures towards disintegration. Nevertheless, at the time of writing, despite Walesa's creation of a "Centre Alliance" and his rivals' formation of "Democratic Action", a final break has not yet occurred and the organisation has faced no significant challengers in the urban political arena in the national and local electoral tests so far.

Thus the currents on the Right which we will discuss have so far remained extremely weak on the electoral plane in urban Poland and it is extremely difficult to predict which of them will take root and which may fuse to form wider coalitions and movements. We should also point out that there is scarcely a single current on the organised Polish Right which does not find some expression of its ideas within the OKP and the Citizens Committees. Thus the most important regroupments on the Right will almost certainly involve organised groups outside the OKP attempting to regroup with forces within it.

The rural Right

The only political force on the Right with a solid social base is the peasant movement. Indeed, the peasantry are the only social group in the country with a strong, independent political voice of its own, with its own orientation and demands and clearly articulated interests. Poland's peasants are overwhelmingly private owners. They are thus unique in possessing a current set of social interests to defend which are defensible within the new ideology of private property and free markets: they thus have no political inhibitions about acting vigorously on their own behalf.

There are three main peasant political organisations at present: the PSL (*Odrozenie*), the former PZPR satellite party, the PSL Wilanow and the PSL Solidarity. There are no programmatic differences between them, but strong personal rivalries amongst their leaders and also differences of social interests to some extent. It appears that the PSL *Ordozenie*, with some 300,000 members, and now allied to PSL Solidarity, will be the dominant force.

The inter-war peasant movement contained a wide range of currents, including movements of the Left, and in the 1930s there were powerful united battles embracing both the peasantry and the Polish Socialist Party. But so far the new peasant movement is firmly on the ideological Right, strongly influenced by the Catholic Church and perceiving its interests as clashing sharply with the interests of urban consumers. The movement is militantly hostile to the Mazowiecki government's economic policy, for the objective effect of that policy will be to liquidate the small, private peasantry. But the attack on the government is made in the language of anti-communism, with accusations that the government is in some sense leftist.

With the blessing, and probably the encouragement, of the Church hierarchy, the PSL *Odrozenie* made an electoral pact on a national scale with the National Party, a small grouping that claims to continue the tradition of the pre-war *Endecja* (see below).The joint declaration of the two organisations was, however, couched in purely negative terms, against the crypto-Communist enemy, etc., accusing the Mazowiecki government and Balcerowicz of being left wing.

The main trends and divisions within the urban Right

All parts of the political spectrum in contemporary Poland are attempting to establish their links with political traditions of inter-war Poland and this is perhaps especially true of the Right. But this also presents the Right with a serious difficulty: their inter-war traditions were not at all congruent with liberal democracy and they therefore have choices to make between establishing their credentials as the true heirs of their inter-war precursors and claiming legitimacy as liberal-democratic rebuilders of post-communist Poland.

A second way of differentiating the Right is that between parties of a clearly activist, direct action variety, using tactics of illegal violence or seeking to incite violent reactions against their chosen targets, and those currents urging the pursuit, at least for the present, of a path of propaganda and purely legal–peaceful means for accumulating forces, seeking to channel political action in an electoral direction.

A third important fissure in the new Right is that between four core ideas: integral nationalism (Dmowskism, *Endecja*); Greater Polish nationalism (Pilsudskism); clericalist-confessional Populism; and fourthly, the idea of the strong state in a Free Economy. On the ground these ideas are not always distinguished into different political movements: a given movement may combine some of them in different ways. But it is well to separate these ideas out at the start, for they do provide one of the strongest points of differentiation of the right.

We will begin with this last area of core ideas.

The *Endecja* tradition

The National Democracy (*Endecja*) tradition of integral nationalism: the key notion here is that the only real actors in the world are nations conceived of as spiritual entities with distinct personalities. The life of any individual acquires meaning and reality only through that individual's adhesion to and submersion within this spiritual-cultural whole, the nation. At the same time, the

national spirit is embodied within its state, which must be strengthened and unified to the maximum in order that it may wage its struggle against other nations, especially the Germans who are more potent than the Russians. The great problem for National Democracy in the interwar period was the presence of alien national-spiritual forces within the boundaries of the inter-war state, above all the Jews but also the German minority and other ethnic groups. *Endecja* and its leader, Roman Dmowski, therefore took a stridently anti-Semitic line coupled with a virulent xenophobia. Its attitude towards liberal democracy was at best ambivalent, and strong elements of fascism were present within the *Endecja*. At the same time it was very much a pro-capitalist movement. No other tendency was so powerful within the Polish Catholic Church and *endecja* ideas have remained strong within the hierarchy.

We will look at various organisations today that may be described as living within the world of *endecja* ideas.

1. The Fascist Endecja

a) N.O.P. (*Narodowe Odrodzenie Polski*), Polish National Rebirth. In October and November of 1989 this organisation attacked the offices of the PPS(RD) in Warsaw and also in Wroclaw, using skinheads. In February skinheads linked to this organisation attacked a Mandela rally in Wroclaw. The group was formed in 1981 and claimed allegiance to the general tradition of national democracy (*endecja*) whose founding spirit, Roman Dmowski, remains an ikon for a large swathe of organisations of the Right.

NOP seems to subscribe to a brand of corporatism, urging that the Nation should be organised in a hierarchical system of self-government which would operate in parallel with some sort of parliamentary body. This ambivalence over institutional forms mirrors a split within the party between the Warsaw wing, which subscribes to the idea of "democratic capitalism", and the Silesian wing which champions a Third Way and seems close ideologically to the British National Front.

NOP's Warsaw wing is led by Bogdan Byrzykowski and has a newspaper called *Jestem Polakiem* (I am a Pole). This combines pro-capitalist argument with a strong dose of Catholic personalism. The Silesian wing, led by Bogdan Koziel-Salski, publishes a journal called *Szczerbiec* (the Jagged Sword) and it has been seeking to regroup a series of small bands of fascist skinheads across the country.

Amongst the latter we may mention the *Front Narodowo-Radykalny* (The National-Radical Front) in Wroclaw, the *Front Narodowy Polski* (the National Polish Front) in Gdansk, the *Niezalezna Mlodziez Narodowa* (the Independent National Youth) in Krakow and the *Narodowa Unia Mlodziezowa* (National Youth Union) in Warsaw.

In April 1990, the Silesian NOP formed a confederation with these groups called the *Przelom Narodowy* (The National Revolution). And this collaborates with another strand of the extreme Right, the *Polskie Stronnictwo Narodowe* (Polish National Party), PSN.

b) PSN: This organisation is the successor of another called the Polish Union of the National Community which was created by Boleslaw Tejkowski in 1977. He had been involved with paganistic fascist projects since the 1960s but by the 1980s he had moved within the mainstream tradition of *Endecja*. The PSN's distinctive accent is a special stress on xenophobia, racism and anti-semitism and hostility to foreign capital. It is also unusual in rejecting anything that smacks of submissive subordination to the Catholic church.

2. Non-Activist Traditionalist Endecja *Currents*

By "non-activist" we simply mean currents not engaged in, or advocating, street violence and not seeking to recruit and train elements drawn to illegal violence. But in respect of their ideology, the currents we deal with here retain the full vigour of inter-war *Endecja*'s xenophobic authoritarianism and anti-semitism, and indeed pride themselves on the undiluted purity of their efforts to maintain and revive the inter-war legacy.

a) the intellectual *Endecja*: a series of publishing houses propagate the ideas of Dmowski and of the inter-war movement. Best known is "Slowo i Czyn" (Word and Action), whose Chairman, Professor Maciej Giertych, has close links with Cardinal Glemp, the Primate, and is said to have had a hand in Glemp's notorious Auschwitz speech last year with its unmistakeably anti-semitic undertones. He was by no means an opponent of the Jaruzelski government during the 1980s, joining the Consultative Council established by Jaruzelski in December 1986. A biologist by profession, Giertych's father was a prominent inter-war *Endek* leader. Other publishing houses of a similar ilk are *Towarzystwo Odpowiedzialnosc i Czyn* (the Society for Responsibility and Action) and *Stowarzyszenie Narodowe in Romana Dmowskiego* (The National Association of Roman Dmowski). Poznan University is a traditional centre of this strand of thought and all these bodies were able to function openly under the old regime, not least because of the *Endek* preference for Russia as an ally against Germany and their dislike of radical, pro-democratic action from below. Books by and about Dmowski and his movement are now available in any decent bookshop across the country.

b) The National Party (*Stronnictwo Narodowe*), formed in November 1989 and led by Boguslaw Rybicki, the party expresses itself through a small weekly newspaper called *Ojczyzna*, The Fatherland. This contains attacks on cosmopolitanism and on those who aid German ambitions by glib talk about Poland "entering Europe". It also warns of the dangers of Poland being sold out to foreign capital.

A dissident group within the party, or perhaps a separate party claiming the same name, is led by Marian Baranski, with his newspaper *Glos Narodu* (Voice of the People). This group accuses the first of lacking militancy, being too conciliatory to the old regime and being anti-Catholic.

3. Neo-Endecja: Young Poland.

This current emerged in the 1970s among young intellectuals of the Right whose conviction was that Dmowski's thought was of crucial significance for the present but whose aim was to free it from those aspects which were contingent upon the particular circumstances of inter-war Poland. The nation is, for Young Poland, the central source of energy and meaning; culture is

always and only national and the individual is nothing except in and through the nation. The main threats to the nation are no longer the Jews and other alien ethnic groups but leftist collectivism and anarchism. Poland today needs a strong state in a free economy.

The main centres of Young Poland in the 1970s were Gdansk, where Alexander Hall was the main leader; Lublin, where Marcyn Krol was based; and Lodz, where the main leader was Jacek Bartyzel. The movement has not not been involved in anti-semitic attacks of any sort during the last decade and a half. Unlike the traditionalist Endeks, they never said that the KOR people were not authentic Poles and were even ready to co-operate with secular, liberal-democratic pro-capitalist currents.

As a result, Young Poland is the only current of the full-blooded Right which is fully integrated into the new political elite, present in the OKP and within the Mazowiecki government. This is a reflection of the fact that unlike the *Endecja* traditionalists, who did not support Solidarity and were not hostile to the Jaruzelski regime, Young Poland was involved in Solidarity, notably in Gdansk, and was engaged in the underground. And while the great bulk of the Right attacks the Mazowiecki government as Leftist, one of the most prominent leaders of Young Poland, Alexander Hall, is a leading minister in the Mazowiecki cabinet, in charge of relations with political parties. Hall is sometimes touted as a possible leader of a future unified Right, though he is a rather colourless politician, lacking in either charisma or vision. Another Young Poland leader, Krol, in charge of one of the new Poland's main publishing empires, *Respublika*, is also tipped as a possible unifying leader of the Right.

The Pilsudskite right

This is the second major strand of Polish nationalism of the Right. It involves the idea of romantic nationalism in the Mazzinian tradition, along with the cult of the plebiscitary leader. The central idea is that of heroic struggle for the freedom and independence of the Polish state, with a strong emphasis on the value of daring acts by dedicated elites in the struggle against Russian domination. In the inter-war period Pilsudskism also stood for Polish expansion eastwards and for imperialist domination of Ukraine, Belorussia and Lithuania. In the 1930s, the romanticism of the Pilsudskite regime went to the lengths of a strident campaign for Poland, as a great power, to obtain overseas colonies. This strain of nationalism is ready to accept the idea of a plurality of political forces within the state, but at the same time considers all should forces should subordinate their differences to the higher unity of Polish state interests, preferably via loyalty to a single charismatic leader above "politics", in the sense of mere differences between Left and Right.

The cult of Pilsudski stretches right across the contemporary Polish political spectrum and quasi-Social Democratic figures in the younger generation of the Polish elite can be found with pictures of the inter-war dictator on their walls. Also the current fad, propounded by such OKP leaders as Geremek and Michnik, for arguing that the traditional categories of Left and Right have lost their relevance, echoes a powerful strand in Pilsudskism: the idea of constructing a bloc of non-party people drawn from the entire political spectrum, in support of a single "centre". Yet another strand of the contemporary political scene with a strong Pilsudskite flavour is the political style of Walesa, with his strong leader cult, his backers placed in a variety of political currents, his "court", and his authoritarian drive for personal power, presenting himself as a kind of *pouvoir neutre*, above all political currents and able to arbitrate between them on behalf of the people.

But there is only one movement which aspires to directly follow in the traditions of Pilsudski. This is the Confederation for an Independent Poland, KPN. Organised around a cult of its leader Moczulski, it seeks to organise every possible political current from socialists on the left to the far right within a single organisation dedicated to struggle for Poland's greatness. It has adopted a stridently anti-Soviet line in the best Pilsudski tradition, but again like Pilsudski (before his degeneration in the 1930s) it has eschewed anti-Semitic appeals, particularly in the recent past.

The KPN was excluded from the ranks of the new elite, as defined by Walesa's selection of his advisory council in 1988, and this fact makes it an outsider grouping with a still strongly radical-oppositional temper. Despite its record of activity throughout the 1980s and its talent for self-advertisement, the KPN has shown no sign as yet of capturing a significant vote and the personality of its leader, no doubt effective for inspiring loyalty amongst small bands of underground activists, is less suited to TV audiences and Western-style political campaigning.

What was perceived as Moczulski's search for respectability and moderation, led to a split in the KPN in 1984 and the creation of the Polish Independent Party, the PPN (*Polska Partia Niepodlegloscowa*) led by Romauald Szeremietiew. This party has advocated a full-scale insurrection against Communism under the banner of both Pilsudski and Dmowski and with the aim of restoring the Polish government in exile in

London. For good measure, it adds Catholicism as an indispensable element on Polishness and thus treats secular liberal-democratic currents as anti-Polish elements to be destroyed.

There are a host of other small groups in this Pilsudskite world, some of them openly demanding the restoration of the so-called Eastern territories of Poland (Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia), plus a chunk of Lithuania including its capital Vilnius.

The clericalists and Christian Nationals

None of the currents we have so far described could be described as overtly anti-Catholic or anti-clerical and indeed apart from some very small Socialist groups there is not a single Polish political tendency ready to make a frontal attack on the Church hierarchy's political role or on the role of Catholicism in Polish culture.

More than this, every single current in Polish politics claiming some link with pre-war traditions, apart from socialist splinter groups, has tended to modify those traditions in a Catholic direction during the 1980s. Indeed, on the Right it is striking that all the various strands of the *Endecja* have tended to lay increasing emphasis on the Christian as well as the national dimension of their ideas and orientation.

Nevertheless, it is very important to register the separate existence of a stream of the Polish Right for whom Catholicism is the governing political concept. The historical roots of this current lie in that powerful current of inter-war political Catholicism known as clerico-fascism, so strong in pre-war Slovakia, Austria and Croatia as well as in Italy. For this school, only Catholics can claim the Right to be Poles and all secularist political movements are illegitimate and deserve no political rights. They demand that the Cross should be placed above the Eagle in the national emblem, a symbolic expression of their battle for Catholicism to dominate all aspects of national life. Another important strand in their thought in authoritarian populism with a strong claim to speak for the poor and for the workers. They also preach a collectivist suspicion of Western liberal capitalism and a loathing of Western social decadence.

The key organisation representing this trend is the Christian National Union, Z.Ch.N. Its leader is a lawyer called Chrzanowski, who was brought in as an adviser to Walesa and the Solidarity leadership in 1980 as a representative of the Church hierarchy. He played an important role in drafting Solidarity's statutes . One of its Vice-Presidents is Antoni Macierewicz, a former KOR founder and leader, who was associated with left-wing Catholicism in the 1970s, but has evolved since then. A third important figure is the Solidarity leader Gregorz Palka. The movement has two MPs in the OKP: Lopuszanski and Jurek, both very noisy and strident. But Chrzanowski, as well as Sila-Nowicki, were excluded from the OKP list before the last elections. The organisation is protected by Glemp and also, it seems, by Macharski of Cracow. It does not support the Mazowiecki government and would not join it. But it does claim to support a "strong" , in other words a confessional, Solidarnosc.

Within Solidarity it has real strength on both sides of the movement, the Walesa and the anti-Walesa sides. Its main centre is in Lodz Solidarity where Slowik, the main leader there, is very close and where Palka and Kropodnicki are both leaders of the Z.Ch.N. It also has a strong following in the Silesian Solidarity organisation (by far the largest regional centre of the trade union). Within the universities it is now growing rapidly. A typical example of its work there was its national campaign surrounding an attempt by professors at Poznan university to confer an honorary degree on Günter Grass for his life-long efforts to promote German-Polish reconciliation. The Union demanded the cancellation of the offer to such an atheistic communist as Grass and threatened the lecturers with the loss of their jobs if they went ahead.

The organisation works through the local churches, with members often handing out leaflets at the end of church services, then setting up local branches. In a Wilanow parish in Warsaw one leafletting produced a branch of 11 members. The organisation claims to have fifty members in the Ursus tractor plant, and is strongly oriented to building up its strength in the Polish working class, claiming to represent the true values of Solidarity.

Solidarity 80, the national rival organisation to Walesa's Solidarity movement, led by Marian Jurczyk, the main Solidarity leader in Szczecin, expresses the same basic ideology as the Christian National Union. It is strongly workerist, seeking to build up real strength on the shop floor, and with a strong dose of anti-semitism and xenophobia. It claims that the Jews and freemasons were responsible for bringing communism to Poland and now they are bringing in capitalism. Jurzcyk has called for Ghetto Square to be remained after the young Poles who fought against Ukrainians in Lvov (the main city of Western Ukraine). And so on.

The Conservative Liberals

One final trend on the Right should be mentioned: the Conservative Liberals. Unlike the other tendencies we have looked at, this current is not, in its intellectual roots, hostile to liberal democracy. But it carries its love of the free market to lengths which, if realised, would take Poland down the path followed by General Pinochet. As with the other trends we have examined, this current is simply an extreme variant of a very widespread tendency in Polish public discourse. A major theme propounded by Poland's new elite is a love of the free market and an admiration of all things American. Thus, amongst the former KOR leaders, still associated in the minds of many in the West with the Left, there is an uncritical admiration for Americanism and all its works, and not least for its free market ideology, which, in the new German-led world of West European Christian Democratic-Social Democratic consensus will sound narrowly provincial. The Conservative Liberals have taken up this strand of thought and radicalised it to the point where it becomes a platform for attacking the Mazowiecki government as Leftist, for failing to push through a genuinely

free market.

For this current, trade unionism is a form of slavery, as in any form of state welfare provision. Carrying the struggle against communism through to a conclusion means sweeping away all such leftism. Another form of communism would be support prices for agriculture as practised by the European Community. And Poland will not be strong again until this leftism is fully extirpated. What is needed is a strong, authoritarian state to drive through this marketisation, and the resulting economic dynamism will then feed back into a more powerful Polish state able to do battle with its capitalist rivals.

A typical, high-profile figure is Korwin-Mikke, the leader of an organisation called the Union for Realpolitik. He may seem a quixotic figure, but he is treated with absolute seriousness by a wide range of journals and newspapers as he proclaims that the USA is 80% good and 20% leftist or as he propounds his view that women should quite literally be confined to the home.

These conservative liberals are not strong in terms of political organisation, but enjoy easy access to the media and have influence within the new economic associations growing up on a regional basis and in the larger cities. They can hope for some support amongst individual figures in the new political establishment. Alexander Paszczynski, the Minister for Construction, and Tadeusz Syryczyk, have a background respectively in the Warsaw and the Cracow Economic Societies, which operated as capitalist lobbies towards the government in the 1980s. Others in the government who would be sympathetic would be Michal Wojtezak and Alexander Hall, a strong free-marketeer in economic matters. On the other hand, people like Leszek Balcerowicz, the Deputy Prime Minister, and Lis, along with the Director-General of the Ministry of Finance, Kowalec, have a technocratic, rather than a political outlook, and it is extremely unlikely that they harbour plans for a Conservative-Liberal Party.

Prospects for the Right

This survey indicates that the new Polish Right is very far from being a homogeneous force. Its most glaring absence is any unity in the field of socio-economic aims. Its capacity to hold conferences embracing a wide range of groupings on the right derives from negative unity: hostility to Communism and to secular liberal-democratic trends and its hostility to the Mazowiecki government.

The only future for the conservative liberals as a political force would be through a regroupment with nascent Christian Democratic currents and with the supporters of Young Poland. Such a regroupment to form a unified Parliamentary Right is precisely the project of people like Hall and it would be greatly strengthened if Hall's idea of employing the British electoral system is introduced in the new constitution: this would produce a powerful incentive for unity on the Conservative and Christian Democratic Right. The consequence of such a regroupment would be to pull those at present in opposition to the new establishment into a coalition with part of the current mainstream.

Our concern here is then to consider whether the other forces we have described, the fascist and traditionalist *Endeks*, the militant Pilsudskites and the Christian Nationals may play an important role in the new political order, challenging liberal democracy from the Right.

There are three serious grounds for believing that this is possible. The first of these derives from the nature of the present government's political project. The new Polish government's political uniqueness in comparison with others in Eastern Europe, derives from two key facts: it derives its authority from its claim to represent the traditions of Solidarnosc, originally a working-class movement; and at the same time it is carrying through a socio-economic programme of unprecedentedly savage scope whose impact will be felt most acutely by factory workers.

The effect of this extraordinary political adventure are to leave Polish workers politically disinherited. In the West, the consequence of such a policy might be to favour the militant left, but all forms of leftist collectivism are illegitimate in contemporary Poland. This therefore creates a strategic opening for authoritarian populist currents on the Right. The Christian Nationals and some of the radical *Endek* currents are able to express the workers' fears of capitalism and anger at the government in a radical language of collectivist chauvinism and anti-semitism, a language rooted in Catholic and nationalist symbols that in no way conflict with the still strong anti-communism of Polish workers.

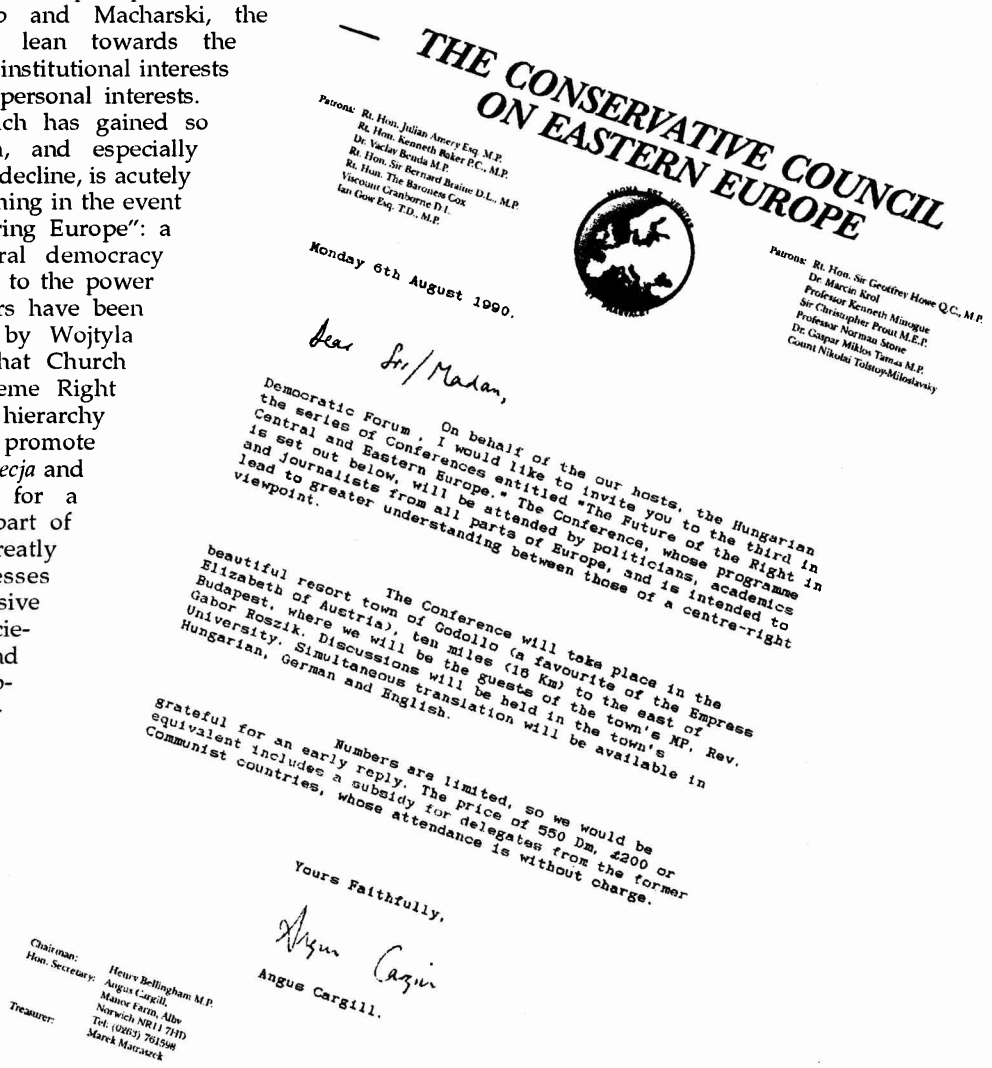
A second ground for the radical right to hope for growth derives from Poland's international position. The slogan of the Mazowiecki government is of Poland "entering Europe". The idea is that the current pain inflicted by the government's austerity programme and privatisation is the price Poles must pay to become quickly part of the prosperous West, joining the EC and so forth. However credible this may have appeared to KOR leaders in the mid-1980s, the attractive power of "entering Europe" seems to be rapidly diminishing in 1990. The West is pouring cold water on any idea of even a medium-term entry of Poland into the EC and has ignored the government's calls for cancelling Poland's huge foreign debt. Furthermore, the new Europe turns out to be not one firmly led by the United States, so fervently supported by so many Poles, but a German-led Europe in which Poland's place seems anything but secure. And while the US is financially impotent with its $700 billion of debt (Poles don't forget Bush's 1989 willingness to offer about one tenth of what Lech Walesa asked for in aid), the rich Bundesrepublik seems set on pumping funds into East Germany and Czechoslovakia rather than Poland. (And Poles are acutely aware of their vanguard role throughout the 1980s in the struggle against communism on behalf of the West, while the GDR and Czechoslovakia acquiesced in hard-line Stalinism.) And to cap it all, the private capital which will move in from the West is widely perceived as having predatory aims: picking up all the profitable ventures for next to nothing and repatriating profits from them while ignoring the well-being of the Poles.

All these themes fit easily into the discourse of radical *Endeks* and can also be taken up by the Catholic Nationals.

The third ground for believing that the radical right has a future lies in the attitude of the Catholic hierarchy. The episcopate and Rome have, of course, no interest whatever in hitching their fortunes to any single political party in Poland. Their ambition is to dominate all sides of the political spectrum in the country and to define the limits of legitimate political life. And while it seems to be the case that the individual preferences of leading figures in the episcopate, including the Primate Glemp and Macharski, the Archbishop of Cracow, lean towards the *Endecja*, they will put the institutional interests of the Church above all personal interests.

But the Church, which has gained so much from communism, and especially from communism in long decline, is acutely aware of the dangers looming in the event of Poland actually "entering Europe": a secular, prosperous liberal democracy would be a mortal threat to the power of the church. These fears have been expressed quite openly by Wojtyla and it in this context that Church policy towards the extreme Right must be understood. The hierarchy has deliberately sought to promote both the traditionalist *Endecja* and the Catholic Nationals, for a strong presence on the part of these currents will greatly strengthen the buttresses against a secular, permissive and genuinely liberal society. They would also extend the range of political options open to the hierarchy and would buttress its own defence of extreme authoritarianism within the Church itself. And however powerful the German Catholic Church may be in the West, Polish Catholicism is well used to doing battle with its German brethren and is very far from accepting the reduced power and status associated with Western-style Christian Democratic culture.

There are, of course, countervailing tendencies working against the authoritarian Right's ability to achieve a political breakthrough: a whole phase of withdrawal from political life, very strong at present (with only a 40% turn-out in the May local elections), is far from over. Secondly, while the split in Solidarity between Walesa and Geremek may weaken the electoral hold of the movement as a whole, opening the door to the new Right, it may equally, following an electoral victory for one side or the other, provide a genuine political opposition from within the world of Solidarity, able to articulate some of the extreme frustrations in important social groups. It is also possible that the most dynamic group of the far Right, the Christian Nationals, will limit the scope of their ambitions (or have them limited by the Church hierarchy) to attempting to gain control of institutions such as Solidarity, the education system, and various social organisations, not making a serious political challenge for power. And finally, despite the ambitions of younger leaders like Lopuszanski of the Christian National Union, the Right remains woefully lacking in effective leaders.



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Monday 6th August 1990.

Dear Sir/Madam,

On behalf of the our hosts, the Hungarian Democratic Forum, I would like to invite you to the third in the series of Conferences entitled "The Future of the Right in Central and Eastern Europe." The Conference, whose programme is set out below, will be attended by politicians, academics and journalists from all parts of Europe, and is intended to lead to greater understanding between those of a centre-right viewpoint.

The Conference will take place in the beautiful resort town of Godollo (a favourite of the Empress Elizabeth of Austria), ten miles (16 Km) to the east of Budapest, where we will be the guests of the town's MP, Rev. Gabor Roszik. Discussions will be held in the town's University. Simultaneous translation will be available in Hungarian, German and English.

Numbers are limited, so we would be grateful for an early reply. The price of 550 Dm, £200 or equivalent includes a subsidy for delegates from the former Communist countries, whose attendance is without charge.

Yours Faithfully,

Angus Cargill.

Chairman: Henry Bellingham M.P.
Hon. Secretary: Angus Cargill, Manor Farm, Alby, Norwich NR11 7HD Tel. (0263) 761598
Treasurer: Marek Matraszek

***Labour Focus* may appear an unlikely recipient of the above invitation, but presumably someone in the Hungarian Democratic Forum used an old dissident's address book when compiling the mailing list... Although tempted by the chance to visit one of Empress Elizabeth's favourite haunts, the opportunity to discuss "The Future of the Right in Central and Eastern Europe" was reluctantly declined.**
An invitation to a conference on "The Future of the Central and East European Left", however, is eagerly awaited!

SOLIDARITY AT THE CROSSROADS

Reflections on the Second General Delegates' Congress in the Region of Lower Silesia

Translated and introduced by David Holland.
The text below, written in March this year, is a fascinating snap-shot of Solidarity in one region, at a crucial moment of transition. The conflicts associated with the emergence from clandestinity; the resistance to the leadership structures imposed from above by the Walesa leadership; the personal conflicts; the prestige of a well known Underground leader like Frasyniuk; and the emergence of right wing demagogic platforms, as the only half way coherent alternative to the Mazowiecki/Balcerowicz programme, are all laid bare. Many of these features were reflected in Solidarity on a national scale and in other regions (Lodz, Szczecin) and emerged once more at the National Congress.

The present divisions between Walesa's "Centre Agreement" and the supporters of "Democratic Action", amongst the Warsaw intelligentsia component of Solidarity's historic leadership (Michnik, Kuron, Geremek etc.), reflect Walesa's attempt, like Wojcik, to exploit the mood described in Grzegorz Francusz's text, to launch his own bid for the Presidency.

This tendency for opposition to the Government's programme to crystallise around fundamentalist positions, which are simultaneously workerist and tainted with national chauvinism and even explicit anti-Semitism, is quite clear on a national scale. Although Walesa is appealing to this mood, by distancing himself from the Mazowiecki Government and calling for purges of Communists, to his credit he has publicly opposed the pathological re-emergence of anti-Semitism, by for example, appealing for a memorial to the victims of the shameful Kielce pogrom of 1946, on the anniversary of this event.

The same cannot be said for all his opponents. The "Solidarity '80" break-away union, based in Szczecin, under the leadership of Marian Jurczyk, has for example published openly fascist political platforms in its nationally distributed weekly, *Solidarnosc Szczecinska.**

New Presidential elections are now likely to be held before the end of the year, or at the very latest early next year. Walesa remains the best placed candidate to win them. Surrounded as he is by a constellation of right wing forces, including able figures, such as the former Director of the Polish Section of Radio Free Europe, Zdzislaw Najder, who is now leading the national Citizens' Committee, the prognosis is for a further lurch rightwards in Polish politics.

The main opposition camp, although touted as including the secular social-democratic wing of Solidarity, is in full support of the rapid reintroduction of capitalism and the associated attacks on working class rights and living standards.

No credible focus for social democratic, still less socialist, mass organisation exists. The successor organisations of the Polish Communist Party (Polish United Workers Party) are hopelessly compromised by their Stalinist past and likely to be the victims of the "jihad" mood of anti-Communism. The Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland, led by Jacek Kwasniewski claims 65,000 members. The Union of Social Democrats, led by Tadeusz Fiszbach claims 3,500. A decline indeed from the millions of members of the old PUWP! The "leftist" Jacek Kuron is Minister for Labour in the Mazowiecki Government and is policing the workers. The small groups attempting to revive the Polish Socialist Party have split into fragments and command no significant support. Small groups like the Trotskyist *Kret* Group in Warsaw and the more openly oriented Socialist Political Centre in Wroclaw, are on the margins of politics. Some hope that Karol Modzelewski, now a Senator for Wroclaw who has organised a group of "Labourist" parliamentarians, could be the focus for an ambitious initiative to build a Workers' Party, but as yet there is no sign of this.

Meanwhile, the Government continues with policies of savage austerity. Unemployment stands at about half a million and is rising. On the Government's own figures real wages have fallen by 34% since the beginning of the year. Privatisation legislation is now in place and is apparently to be sold to the population on the basis of the issue of coupons with which shares can be bought in newly privatised companies. Minor concessions are to be made to the work-forces in the form of preferential terms for limited numbers of these shares.

Western socialists have a heavy obligation to support the small embattled groups, which are defending the ideals of socialism and striving for their rebirth on a mass scale.

* In the 2nd April edition of *Solidarnosc Szczecinska,* is found an article promoting a new political organisation: The Congress of the Polish Nation. The programme of this group hails the downfall of the "Totalitarian Zionist Masonic government in the Soviet Union"; calls for the recovery of full political rights by "Polish citizens of Polish nationality;" proposes "proportional representation of national minorities in public life"; demands the "liquidation, in the course of democratic elections, of the hitherto prevailing domination by the Jewish minority in parliament and government", opposes "the sell off of national property to foreign capital", and calls for opposition to "cosmopolitan tendencies".

by GRZEGORZ FRANCUSZ
Socialist Political Centre in Wroclaw

From the 2nd to the 5th of March, the Second General Delegates' Congress of the Lower Silesian Region took place. 523 people took part, out of 621 entitled to be delegates. Amongst other things, the purpose of the Congress was to take reports and conclude the union's activity over the last nine years, a period in which Solidarity had been compelled to operate underground, had emerged again from conspiracy and undertaken open work and finally, after the conclusion of the Round Table Agreement, had become once more a legal trade union. Moreover, the union had to define a strategy for the next two years, adopt a programme and elect a new leadership. The organisational structure of the union in the region also had to be defined. This would draw to a close almost a decade in which Solidarity had operated on a provisional basis, when decisions were taken on behalf of the whole union by a group of the most active leaders, people who had not always been democratically elected to the union leadership.

What is more, a conflict awaited resolution between two alternative trade union structures in the region: the REC and RSC. This dispute arose from the establishment in 1987 of an openly operating union leadership, the Regional Executive Committee, which wholly supported the line of Lech Walesa and actively participated in the negotiations with the Stalinist bureaucracy in 1988 and 1989. The RSC also organised anew as an open union structure in Lower Silesia. However, the Regional Strike Committee was constituted on the basis of the strikes at the end of 1981. It was rooted in the secret Solidarity factory commissions. The activists concentrated around the RSC rejected open activity in the REC style and accused the Walesa supporter Wladyslaw Frasyniuk of creating a union leadership in an undemocratic way. The RSC took a critical attitude to the tactics of the Round Table and to participation in the elections in June last year. They rejected, too, the monopolisation of the union by a political group concentrated around Lech Walesa.

Apart from this historical reckoning of accounts, the Congress's task was to consolidate the union and to define its programme and work clearly. These goals were not realised. Discussion concentrated on organisational matters and the shuffling of personnel in the union leadership.

The morning of Friday the 2nd of March began with a report on the activity of the union from the 13th of December 1981 to date. The successive leaders of the Regional Strike Committee, after the introduction of martial law, spoke in turn: W. Frasyniuk, J. Pinior, M. Muszynski and P. Bednarz. Jozef Pinior presented an account of the expenditure from the legendary 80m zloty, which he took into safekeeping, just before martial law. Pinior was Treasurer of the union in Wroclaw in 1981 and a few days before the introduction of martial law he withdrew from the union's bank account 80m zloty, thanks to which it was not seized by the Stalinist dictatorship and could be used by Solidarity. After accounting for expenditure, Pinior handed over 50,000 dollars. The delegates applauded.

Marek Muszynski spoke about the RSC's activities in the last few years and announced the dissolution of the RSC that day. This ended the period of two leaderships in the Region. After a short discussion and a report from the Control Commission of the REC, the delegates voted to accept the reports of both committees. This resolution was a success for the RSC, since REC activists had previously refused to recognise them as representatives of the workers' interests within the framework of Solidarity. The resolution indicated that the delegates recognised all the previous union leaders, regardless of their differences. It appeared that a sentiment of unity had triumphed over earlier differences and misunderstandings. However this was not the end of it, as the debate that followed demonstrated. It was dominated by the conflict between the antagonistic wings of the union.

After these discussions and after the report of the Chair of the Regional Electoral Commission, the decision was taken that the programmatic debate would start with the platforms of the candidates for Chair of the Region. The discussion over their programmes would be simultaneously a discussion on the programme of the union as a whole. Seven candidates were nominated for the Chair, five of whom declined nomination. This left the out-going President W. Frasyniuk and T. Wojcik. Both of them had been conducting electoral campaigns.

Tomasz Wojcik was Chair of Solidarity in Wroclaw Polytechnic and supported by the RSC.

He was a member of the anti-Walesa wing of Solidarity and a member of the Campaign for Democratic Elections in Solidarity. This body had been created by activists who did not accept the positions of Walesa and those around him. Members of the Campaign thought that the current leadership of Solidarity had violated democratic principles and betrayed the values of Solidarity from 1980-81. They also had a sceptical attitude to the Round Table Talks. The Campaign is part of the radical wing of Solidarity.

Challenge to Frasyniuk

Wladyslaw Frasyniuk belonged to the tightly knit core of the present leadership of the union. He was an active participant in the Round Table Talks. He completely supported Lech Walesa's line and what went with it — support for the Polish Parliament and the Mazowiecki Government. Frasyniuk led Solidarity in Lower Silesia from 1981. What this means is that he had to sustain an uncompromising and desperate position under martial law. He was perhaps the Solidarity activist to have met with the greatest repression. He has quite simply a legendary status, as symbol of the unbowed struggle of the Polish workers for their dignity and rights. Wojcik and Frasyniuk can be identified as representing two antagonistic currents in Solidarity.

A few weeks before the Regional Congress, the General Delegates Congress of the Wroclaw Provincial Area took place (there are three provinces in Lower Silesia: Wroclaw, Walbrzych and Legnica). At this Congress the Area Chair and Executive were elected. The area Chair then automatically became Vice-Chair of the Region and the Executive members also members of the Regional Executive. T. Wojcik surprised REC supporters by winning the election for the Chair, against Frasyniuk's candidate, the Vice-Chair èof the REC, Wlodzimierz Mekarski. This election result was a shock for the REC activists. Almost all the members of the Executive resigned rather than serve under Wojcik. They expressed their dissatisfaction with the election result openly, accusing the delegates of not knowing what they were doing by voting in this way. W. Frasyniuk asserted that he did not think it was possible to work with the new Chair of the Wroclaw Area and that he saw the result as a vote of no confidence in himself.

Frasyniuk (right) with Mazowiecki (left) and Walesa (centre)

This behaviour did not win from many of the delegates any acceptance of a reprimand for their incorrect voting, it was rather perceived as a symptom of arrogance and lack of respect for them, which could not but find an echo in the Congress of the entire Region.

Both Wojcik and Frasyniuk presented to those gathered at the Congress their vision of the trade union and its programme. T. Wojcik argued for a strong union, which could defend the workers effectively. In his opinion Solidarity ought to be a union which respected the principles of internal democracy, by which various programmatic and political tendencies could come into collision. Solidarity should not be dominated by one political option, which would monopolise the leadership of the union. Wojcik went on to assert that an employer had the right to choose between workers, whilst a worker has a right to a decent wage and proper material and cultural conditions. He stressed repeatedly that trade union activists should be at the service of the members of the union and be subject to them and not be in authority, which would lose them their link with their social base.

Frasyniuk was for a modern, co-managing union, whose activity should not produce conflict with the employer. He asserted that Solidarity must adopt a different attitude to the present Government than to preceding ones. Today, in fact, the Government can be treated as a credible partner, in whom once can have confidence. He stressed the necessity of wide-ranging activity by the union in reforming the country. Union activists, in Frasyniuk's opinion, should be highly qualified experts, thanks to whom the union could act effectively. Frasyniuk presented himself as a representative of the existing union leadership, interested in defending the status quo. He defended his line, from the Round Table, through the parliamentary elections and the appointment of a Solidarity Government up to today. It could be said that, according to Frasyniuk and the REC, the role of the Congress was to wholeheartedly endorse the tactics and activity of the REC and to give recognition to the leadership of the Frasyniuk Group, by confirming it in office through elections.

Democracy and demagogy

These expectations were somewhat shaken by the Provincial Congress referred to above. The Chair, however, was convinced of the effectiveness of previous activity. He was convinced of the correctness of his political choice and concentrated first and foremost on the necessity of strengthening the effectiveness of the union, which he perhaps identified with the efficiency of the union apparatus that had been created.

Wojcik however presented a new political line in the union. He was not interested in strengthening the hitherto existing union bureaucracy. He did not present any kind of worked-out programme, but tried to appeal to the feelings of delegates. More than once he did this in a demagogic manner. Already at the Wroclaw Area Congress the slogan was advanced to appoint a Tribunal for De-communising the country. The idea was that after Communism had been legally defined as criminal, the Tribunal would carry out investigations into Communist Party members and deprive them of civic rights. This aptly calculated slogan of de-communisation fell on favourable ground in the atmosphere of social radicalisation. As a result of the worsening of economic conditions, the rank and file of Solidarity put forward ever more

radical slogans, whilst the Solidarity leadership, both in Government and in the union, were accused of creating a new nomenklatura in the Stalinist style. Wojcik wanted to exploit this climate by basing his programme on demands that the union leadership serve the membership, on the necessity of internal democracy and on de-communisation.

Frasyniuk and the activists connected with him, correctly argued against Wojcik that the demand for de-communisation had nothing to do with union activity and represented merely a demagogic trick to win cheap support from trades unionists, who were frustrated with the every day struggle and who wanted to see the back of the nomenklatura.

Wojcik's programme was indeed a substitute for a programme, calculated to direct the union's activity into a blind alley. The dissatisfaction with the socio-economic situation could be canalised by the slogan of de-communisation, so that society, instead of confronting real problems, would be diverted into a hysterical anti-communism, which is often associated with nationalism and Catholic fundamentalism. Elements of this hysteria can already be discerned. There is a danger that Poland will go in a sense the way of Iran and the de-communisation proposed by Wojcik is a factor assisting this development. This sort of playing upon feelings can awaken spectres slumbering in the psyche of Polish society. We may become witnesses to an explosion of intolerance, national chauvinism and witch-hunting.

The REC people are right to argue that people should be punished only for breaking the law and not for their opinions or party affiliations. If this is not the case, we are threatened with a repetition of the situation in Poland after the last war. On the other hand, once can agree with Wojcik that internal union democracy and the subjection of the leadership to the needs of the members are needed. It is just disturbing that these demands are associated with populist slogans.

Both Wojcik and Frasyniuk asserted that they supported the present Mazowiecki Government, although they reserved their right to criticise and oppose particular positions of the Government, if that was in the workers' interests. On the question of unemployment, Frasyniuk took a clearer position, whilst his rival stressed the necessity of organising public works for the unemployed. It can be said that in spite of his involvement with the burgeoning union bureaucracy, Frasyniuk presented himself as a trade union activist, rooted in the authentic workers' movement. His programmatic option depended on an analysis of concrete problems arising in the work-places. Wojcik appeared more like an ideologue than a trade unionist.

Both candidates were deeply irresolute in their attitudes to the Government. On the one hand, they declared their support for it, while its policies are leading to unemployment and impoverishment for working people. On the other, they spoke about defending the workers from unemployment and pauperisation. They were repeatedly driven into expressing quite contradictory views.

Unfortunately, the starting point of the candidates for Chair of the Region presenting their platforms did not lead to the planned programmatic discussion. The questions addressed to Wojcik and Frasyniuk related to marginal questions, which sometimes related to personal gossip. Frasyniuk won the election decisively, winning 379 votes against Wojcik's 125. The election result, however, does not indicate that the line of the Regional Chair has the definite support of Lower Silesian trades unionists. What was decisive above all was the personal quality of Frasyniuk, his outstanding record as an unbending activist.

Bureaucracy still weak

The results of the elections to the Regional Executive testify to the truth of this observation. The outgoing team on the Regional Executive Committee was decimated. None of Frasyniuk's closest collaborators were elected to the Executive. Almost all the candidates proposed by Frasyniuk for the union leadership experienced difficulty in mustering an adequate number of votes. In a word, the young bureaucracy appeared to be too weak to establish its authority over the rank-and-file — certain errors committed in the election campaign also came home to roost.

Moreover, they were held responsible for all the failures of Solidarity. People connected with the RSC had a much easier situation. They could concentrate on criticising the Frasyniuk team, without presenting any positive programme.

An undoubted success for the REC people was the decision to dissolve the Provincial Area union structures. This decision deprived Wojcik of the privileged position he had won at the Area Congress. The delegates recognised that the union structure must rest upon a strong Regional Executive, whilst local co-ordination would be carried out by the Inter-Workplace Co-ordinating Commissions. These Commissions will be put in place by concrete union structures, active in the work-places. A characteristic feature of the discussion on the programme and finances of Solidarity was that all speakers, regardless of their orientation, saw the strength of the union as resting upon the strength of its governing apparatus and not upon the support of the rank-and-file. It seemed that for all the union meant above all its activists and not its ordinary members.

The Congress concluded with the elections to the Regional leadership, to the Control Commission and of delegates to the National Congress. The programmatic discussion was never arrived at. The profound and burning questions which face the Polish workers' movement were not touched upon. No kind of left-wing alternative was outlined to the line of the Union leadership to date. Nobody presented the kind of cohesive programme which would allow Solidarity to take a deep breath and extricate itself from long standing disputes so as to stand up to the challenges which will be posed by the future.

The Union found itself at a turning point. The near future will show whether it will yield to a wave of populist social feeling, whether its bureaucratic structures will become ossified, or whether in the face of social discontent it will become the tribune of the real interests of the workers. For the time being, nothing can be prejudged.

The Socialist Political Centre can be contacted on Wroclaw 21-37-94.

THE LEFT IN HUNGARY

by GUS FAGAN

IN APRIL 1990, communist rule came to an end in Hungary. The transition to non-communist rule was a peaceful one, involving neither violence nor any significant mass mobilisation. The Hungarian Socialist Party (previously the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party) won only 8.55% of the popular vote. More than two thirds of the popular vote went to the right-of-centre Hungarian Democratic Forum (42.75%) and the liberal Alliance of Free Democrats (23.83%). A righ-of-centre coalition government has been formed, based on the HDF and two smaller parties, the Independent Smallholders' Party (11.14%) and the Christian Democratic Party (5.44%).

Although Hungary now has a stable government, the economic and social problems ahead are immense. The government has drawn up an ambitious plan of privatisation. The goal is 35% privatisation in three years, with 75 to 80% in ten years. To appreciate the scale of this undertaking, we must remember that the British Conservative government privatised only 5% of public assets in ten years.

The European Commission responsible for coordinating aid to Hungary has estimated that, in addition to aid, Hungary will need at least another $20 billion in investment capital. There is no suggestion that the $20 billion debt could be rescheduled, much less written off. The EC Commission's report was understating the situation when it said that the measures required would bring about a "significant increase in unemployment".

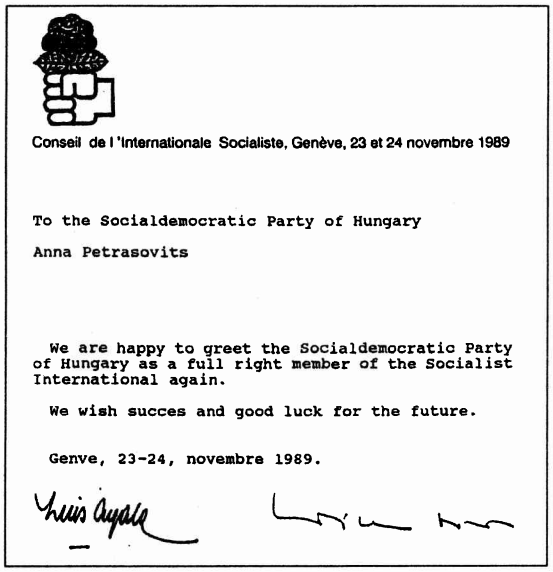
Already the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and the European Confederation of Trade Unions have publicly criticised the EC aid programme for ignoring the social problems that can only increase in Hungary as a result of the new measures. Already this year, an IMF agreement with Hungary was made conditional on the government withdrawing rent subsidies.

The coercive character of this aid and the pressure on the government to push through austerity measures will create tremendous problems for a government whose legitimacy depends on democratic consent. The uncertainties are increased in Hungary by the fact that the working class remained largely passive throughout the transition and by the fact that none of the parties in parliament has any organised base inside the working class.

As Hungary enters what everyone agrees to be troubled waters, what is the situation of the Hungarian left? The election was a major defeat for all of those parties identified in the public mind with traditional socialist or social-democratic values.

The Hungarian Socialist Party was born out of the old Hungarian communist party (the HSWP) at its conference in October 1989, the conference which sealed the final victory of the liberal reform current identified with Imre Poszgay and Rézsö Nyers and represented the transformation of the old communist party into a western-style social democratic party. In its programme for the 1990 election the HSP proposed a market economy extending "not only to products but to the fundamental factors of production", mixed forms of ownership and a constitutional welfare state. At the time of the 1989 conference, the party had 750,000 members, 17% of the total population. At the time of the election, it claimed a membership of 50,000. Its poll of 8.5% showed that it had lost any significant base of support beyond its own membership. The Hungarian Socialist Party has applied to join the Socialist International.

The old communist party re-formed itself as the HSWP in December 1989. But it polled only



Conseil de l'Internationale Socialiste, Genève, 23 et 24 novembre 1989

To the Socialdemocratic Party of Hungary

Anna Petrasovits

We are happy to greet the Socialdemocratic Party of Hungary as a full right member of the Socialist International again.

We wish succes and good luck for the future.

Genve, 23-24, novembre 1989.

Luis Ayala

The telegramme accepting the SDP into the Socialist International, signed by Luis Ayala and Willy Brandt

3.7% in the first round of voting. It describes itself as "a modern Marxist party" and claims to represent the ordinary members of the old party who "bear no responsibility for the mistakes and crimes of the narrow circle of leaders".

One of the interesting features of the Hungarian transition was the small amount of support for social democracy. This was a common feature throughout Eastern Europe and it should provide some food for thought for Western European social democracy that its attractiveness for the workers of Eastern Europe was much less than has always been assumed. The Hungarian Social Democratic Party was founded at the beginning of 1989 and, later that year, was accepted into the Socialist International. It polled just less than the old "unreformed" HSWP, 3.6%. The party was formed rather late and suffered from a lot of internal divisions during its first year. It had no base in the factories and, like the HSP, made no attempt to present itself as a party of the working class. It shared the consensus of all the other parties on the need for a market economy, called for the "liquidation of uneconomic enterprises" and for a "controlled privatisation" which would "transform selected state enterprises into shareholding companies which should be sold to a cash-paying real owner". Its electoral programme, published in January 1990, supported returning the land "to the original owners, and their descendants, of 1947-48" and the president of the HSDP, in an interview just before the election, saw one of the main tasks of the new Hungary as being "the creation of a new, national entrepreneurial class".

What were perceived as the confused, opportunistic and rather right-wing character of some of the party's policies prompted some of the original leaders (among them Andras Révész and György Ruttner) and some few hundred members to establish a new party, the Independent Social Democratic Party, in November 1989. The ISDP stood few candidates in the election but, unlike the "official" HSDP, one of its candidates actually survived to stand again in the second round of voting. The Independents argue for a more consistent social-democratic approach, along the lines of the German Social Democrats' Bad Godesberg programme.

Another small left-wing group was established in September 1988, the Left Alternative. Its core was made up of Marxist intellectuals who were both anti-Stalinist and, at the same time, opposed to the ideological (and practical) drift towards capitalism. Although its membership comes from a variety of groups and parties, most of its leading figures have been members of the Hungarian Socialist Party, in which they were organised as a separate political current known as the People's Democratic Platform. The Left Alternative is politically involved in supporting the Federation of Workers' Councils (see below). Some of its members are part of the editorial board of the theoretical-political bimonthly, *Eszmelet* (Consciousness). Among its leaders are László Tütö, Tamás Kraus and László Thoma.

Independent trade unions have made their appearance but these are very small and, as yet, are organised almost exclusively among the intellectuals. The first was the Democratic Trade Union of Scientific Workers, set up in Budapest in May 1988 with little over 1,000 members, most of them professors and administrators in the various scientific institutes and universities. In December 1988, a federation of these new unions, the Democratic League of Free Trade Unions, was established. At that time, the League had five small affiliates with a membership of around 40,000 (the new members were mainly workers in the media and teachers). At the time of the elections in April 1990, the number of affiliated independent unions had risen to seventeen but the number of members was still below 100,000. The independent unions had made no breakthrough into the organised industrial or manual workers. Although the statutes of the League describe it as "not depending on any party", in practice there is a close relationship between the League and the Association of Free Democrats. A smaller organisation, Workers' Solidarity, affiliated to the League, represented an attempt by the Free democrats to create some kind of base among the workers. One of its principal spokespersons, György Kerenyi, was a candidate for the Young Democrats in the election. So far, the mass of the workers remain organised in the traditional unions.

Anna Petrasovits, leader of the Social Democratic Party

A new form of workers' organisation emerged in 1988-89 with the creation of workers' councils in a number of factories. In many cases, these councils were a response to the threatened redundancies or closures. Both the Free Democrats and the Democratic Forum were involved in some of those councils, seeing in them a way of outflanking the official trade union (SZOT). In December 1989, a national conference of workers' councils was held and in February 1990 a National Federation of Workers' Councils was founded in Budapest. At the time of the election, about forty councils were affiliated to the National Federation with a number of councils organised separately.

The leadership of the Federation is made up of delegates from the various councils. The Left Alternative plays an active role in promoting the workers' council movement and members of LA are involved as independent experts in the Workers' Councils Information Office. Although the left sees the role of the councils as organs of self-management, there is by no means unanimity, either among the councils themselves or among the different political forces involved, about the role the councils should play. The coming to power of the Democratic Forum, which opposes any self-management role for the councils, will obviously affect the outcome of this debate.

In this issue of Labour Focus, *we print the Charter of Left Alternative, published in March 1989, and a general statement from the Workers' Councils Information Office on the role of workers' councils in Hungarian enterprises. These documents were published in the March 1990 issue of the journal* Eszmelet *and are translated for* Labour Focus *by Vera Magyar. In the next issue, we will be printing material from the social democratic parties in Hungary.*

Charter of Left Alternative

THE POSSIBILITIES offered by "state socialism" are used up. Its institutional forms have become obstacles to historical development and to improvement in the living conditions of the population. For this reason, we have taken this initiative as a way of supporting the self-organisation of those forces which reject both neo-Stalinism and bourgeois neo-conservatism. We support all those forces trying to create a society in which there is an efficient economic system and in which the values and aspirations of working people are respected.

1. Left Alternative wants to promote the efforts of those who are fighting against economic, cultural and political privileges and who want to build a society which is more democratic and free, which provides equal opportunities for all and solidarity. Theoretically, we base ourselves on the Marxist-inspired critical theory of society according to which it is possible to create a historically-superior form of society bases on social self-organisation from below, on self-government. We draw inspiration from this social theory, from its orientation and method, and we believe it is valuable in defining a left-wing alternative at the end of the twentieth century. We maintain that Marxism cannot be considered responsible for the Stalinist form of social organisation that has prevailed in Eastern Europe for some decades. This has nothing in common with Marxism.

2. Independent efforts of workers in the past hundred and fifty years demonstrate the need for democracy in production and distribution, for social self-government answering to social needs. Both the state and big business work to prevent this. We believe that the left should commit itself to the formation of a workers' self-government. Only in this way can social unrest be resolved.

3. All the existing political and economic bureaucracies have the same goal: the preservation of the old power structures by means of small-scale reforms. This process would maintain the domination of competing elites and dual exploitation from the state as well as from private capital. For quite some time now the government has demanded sacrifices from the people. A great many families have reached the limits of their ability to survive in this situation of declining living standards and exhaustion. The only way out of this is a collectivisation of economic and political power in which the working people directly own the social resources and production.

4. The most important task for left Alternative is to search, both theoretically and in a concrete way, for the means whereby society, at its current level of science and technology, could organise itself co-operatively in productive and self-governing communities. In the medium term, we think that:

(a) In the present international situation, Hungary should aim for a society in which social ownership is dominant, alongside the state and private capitalist sectors. There should also be space for a directly collective sector, based on the collaboration of producers and consumers organised from below. Experiments in this kind of self-organisation should be aimed for in the near future.

(b) We think it is inevitable, in both the state and private capitalist sector, that democratisation of the economy would lead to decentralisation of the big productive units and a radical extension of the rights of workers' collectives and interest groups to be involved in decision-making.

(c) We want an institutionalised political system which develops in the direction of participatory democracy. Democratisation doesn't simply mean a state based on the rule of law, civil rights and freedoms, parliamentarianism; these alone do not provide guarantees against economic and political inequality. What is also vital is collective control of the bureaucracy and the market. Instead of rule by elites, parties and corporations, we want a system of social movements in which the functions of the various apparatuses are progressively transferred to self-organising social collectives at the workplace, in the community, and so on.

(d) In the context of the current crisis we must avoid political and economic chaos. We are opposed to those measures which increase inequality and attack the living standards of working people. We want to defend the quality of the natural and social environment. With respect to the causes of social unrest (failed social and educational policies, unemployment, inflation), we believe that the solutions are not to be found at the economic level alone. We want, theoretically and in a concrete manner, to assist in the creation of social self-organisation, self-defence and solidarity.

(e) In foreign affairs, we want to ally ourselves with all social and political movements that want to change the current international system, which is based on inequality and injustice, and create a new world order which is more democratic and based on equality among nations.

(f) We want to contribute towards uniting the people of Europe, strengthening their economic and political relations. It is in this spirit that the alliance of the Eastern European countries should be transformed, eliminating all forms of national hatred, especially against minorities.

(g) We want to collaborate with all national and international groups, organisations, movements, etc, who share some or all of our goals.

Budapest, March 1989

How to organise a Workers Council

By the Information Office of the Hungarian Association of Workers Councils

When did the idea of creating workers' councils first occur? In 1945, when the factory owners disappeared and the conduct of the enterprises became uncertain, the workers took their destinies into their own hands. The result, after 1945-47, was known the world over as the "Hungarian miracle". In 1956, the workers' councils had no time to ponder: the political situation demanded political action.

Today we are living in a period of transition. The government, under pressure from the IMF, wants to privatise state property and hand it over to foreign capitalists at any cost. It is understandable that the workers are worried, for up to now they were under the impression that their enterprise was collective property.

The chief aim of the changes initiated by the managers is to secure their own positions. Nothing is done to improve the efficiency of production. The workers, on the other hand, want to do something meaningful and useful. Skilled in their own trades, workers are outraged when managers, simply by virtue of their position, interfere with their work. In the United States, the trade unions say that workers work hard and suffer more from bad management than do the shareholders, managers and investors and that, therefore, they want to participate, along with the owners and managers, in the decision-making process in the enterprise. So, in privately-owned enterprises as well, the workers demand the right to participate. The workers in state-owned enterprises demand more. They know what they would do to improve things if they really owned the enterprise. That's why they demand ownership. This is the main aim in the creation of a workers' council.

The more immediate reason for setting up a workers' council is self-defence. When things go badly, workers demand a workers' council. Naturally, things go badly in a number of ways. For instance, the enterprise is going bankrupt, workers are to be laid off, some of the branches of a large enterprise are to be dissolved, sold off or have their profits transferred to another branch, managers may take large and undeserved bonuses. These are only some examples but in all of them the workers are outraged. They are afraid and they seek to establish solidarity among themselves.

The aims of a workers' council depend on the local conditions in each enterprise. The aims may include: to strengthen the trade union; participation in management of the enterprise; independence of the unit from the larger parent enterprise; to win majority or full ownership of the enterprise and to manage it; to prevent the sale of an enterprise; to ensure that the change of ownership is honest, fair and public; to create sufficient work for all and to avoid redundancies; to pull the enterprise through the crisis.

These aims can only be achieved with the support of the entire collective. The present so-called self-governing body, the official enterprise council, is unsuitable. The 1984 law created this body in a way which ensures that it is dependant on management. This is to be expected, since the enterprise council decides the manager's salary, 50% of the enterprise council members are delegated by the manager who, by virtue of his monopoly of information, easily commands the majority of votes against the workers' delegates. The workers' council, on the other hand, represents the whole workers' collective. The leaders of the workers' councils are delegates who can be recalled by the units that elected them. These leaders can rely on workers' support.

How to start organising a workers' council:

(1) Hold workers' meetings in each unit of the enterprise (if necessary by shifts) where the aims of the workers' council will be decided upon. The decision to create a workers' council should be by secret ballot and decisions should be based on a two-thirds majority. Minutes of the meeting should be recorded and delegates should be elected by the same kind of majority vote. We recommend two rounds of voting. First, a nomination list should be drawn up on the basis of secret nominations and, from this list, again by secret vote, the delegates should be elected.

(2) The delegates should then meet and draw up the statutes of the council.

(3) The delegates should then discuss the statutes with their electors and, after discussions, any changes should be finalised.

(4) In keeping with the law on associations, the workers' council should then be registered officially in the courts as an association.

(5) With this action, the workers' council exists as a legal body, with rights and obligations.

(6) The workers' council, as a legal body, can negotiate with management, with any would-be buyer or with the higher authorities on behalf of the whole collective.

(7) With the help of outside experts, the workers' council should examine the economic and organisational plans of the enterprise and should draw up, as a workers' body, alternative plans.

Workers' Councils Information Office

The Left in the CPSU

Translated and introduced by RICK SIMON

THE LAST ISSUE of *Labour Focus* carried the text of the "Democratic Platform" (DP), the current which emerged as the chief opposition to the continuation of the CPSU in its current form and who are linked to the liberal marketisers in the Inter-regional Group.

During the course of the discussion of the CPSU Central Committees draft platform, various alternatives have appeared, of which the "Marxist Platform" (MP) is the most important.

The "Marxist Platform" was drawn up initially by five Moscow Party clubs and CPSU members unhappy with both the direction of the official Party Platform and that of "Democratic Platform" with its social-democratic orientation to parliamentarism and democracy in the abstract to the detriment of concrete solutions to the social and economic crisis facing the Soviet Union. The "Marxist Platform" was published initially in *Moskovskaya Pravda* at the end of March. *Labour Focus* is publishing a translation of the complete text of the "Marxist Platform" which was published in *Pravda* on April 13.

An amended version was subsequently adopted at a meeting of the Federation of Marxist Party Clubs which was formally established at Bykovo in Moscow province on April 14 and 15. That meeting was attended by more than 300 people from 54 cities in the USSR and 22 in Moscow region. Unfortunately, the amended text has not been available for translation or comment. We will, naturally, carry details and analysis of the development of the various currents inside the CPSU in later issues of *Labour Focus*.

According to Aleksandr Buzgalin, a leading member of MP, "supporters of the 'Marxist Platform' see their task as consolidating the CPSU members who favour the breaking of the Party apparatus's power and the most consistent implementation of all democratic liberties and human rights and, on this basis, movement along the path of the socialist choice" (*Current Digest of the Soviet Press* [CDSP] Vol.XLII, No.19).

It is a measure of how liberal-democratic currents in the West see the contending forces in the Soviet Union that the headline in CDSP over excerpts from the "Marxist Platform" read "Conservatives Offer a Party Platform". It seems that any opposition to the introduction of a market economy or defence of the original ideals of the Communist movement merits being lumped into the same camp as the Ligachevs of this world even though such figures are explicitly attacked in the "Marxist Platform" itself and MP has demanded that those responsible both for the errors of the Brezhnev period and for the present crisis be expelled from the Party.

For the MP, the essence of the crisis is that "the totalitarian-bureaucratic system and its inherent forms and methods of management lead to people's alienation from the means of production and from social structures. The result is a gigantic waste of human, natural and material resources, the stagnation of the economy and a tendency to spiritual degradation. The system undermines people as the prime productive force and herein lies the inevitability of crisis." (*Pravda* 14/6/90)

While MP's programme for reorganisation of the CPSU coincides "in the main" (CDSP, op. cit.) with that of DP, MP is deeply critical of DP's lack of a concrete economic programme. MP sees two outcomes to the current crisis facing the Soviet Union – either forward to democratic socialism or back to capitalism. It's rather more substantial economic programme envisages a devolution of nationalised property to the regions and labour collectives and a transitional period for the elimination of shortages in which a democratic, regulated market would operate. Workers' living standards would be maintained in this period through price controls and a system of social guarantees.

The social forces for overcoming this crisis are "that part of the people of labour, first and foremost the working class, peasantry and intelligentsia, which cannot solve its own material and social problems without an improvement in the life of society as a whole." (*Pravda* 14/6/90)

MP places a major emphasis on self-management at all levels of society. Self-management bodies, which "should manage and decide all questions concerning the social infrastructure of society" (*International Viewpoint* [IV], 18/6/90, p.8) should be established not just in the workplace but also across cities and regions. Secondly, MP advocates the "destruction of the monopolistic structures of the state management – like for example the ministries" (ibid.) and their replacement by "a new model of political organization at the state level and the level of the republics" (ibid.). MP advocates the drawing up of a new Union Treaty but seems ambivalent about the nationalist movements and the rights of the USSR's constituent republics to secede from a recast Union.

Tactically, MP sees itself in a potential alliance with members of the newly-formed Socialist Party and its supporters inside the CPSU, the left of DP who oppose its social-democratic trajectory and, more controversially, with workers at the base of the Workers' United Front, traditionally associated

with more conservative sections of the bureaucracy. MP categorically argues that "the leaders of this current, like Sergeev and Yarin, put forward chauvinistic ideas and we want to have no links with these; but there are activists, young people, in this front, who are democratic in their orientation and in opposition to these leaders." (*IV*, 18/6/90, p.8).

MP acknowledged that they would have few delegates to the 28th Congress and that the election process was conducted undemocratically. Nevertheless, Buzgalin rather naively argued that "the last word' should 'remain with the Party members and with their representatives – the delegates to the 28th CPSU Congress" (CDSP op. cit.).

The outcome of the 28th Congress will be subjected to a more thorough analysis in the next issue of *Labour Focus*. It would seem, however, that a shift occurred during the course of the Congress and that a significant section of the Party apparatus voted with their head rather than their heart. They knew, firstly, that Ligachev's call for Gorbachev to resign was completely out of order as no real alternative currently exists to Gorbachev and that his replacement by an overt conservative would accelerate the CPSU's demise. Secondly, they realised that it is preferable to keep Gorbachev as General Secretary, constrained by Polozkov as head of the powerful Russian CP, rather than giving him a completely free hand in the Presidential Council and the state apparatus.

This support for Gorbachev from both the liberal, marketising wing of the Party and the Party apparatus also meant that the heterogeneous 'Democratic Platform' was totally divided on whether to follow Yeltsin's lead and leave the Party or whether to stay in, given that the conservatives were seemingly marginalised and that Ligachev was both humiliated in the vote for Deputy General Secretary and then voted off the incoming Central Committee.

It is clear, however, that the CPSU enjoys increasingly less support in the population at large. A majority of people interviewed after the Congress considered that the outcome would have little impact on Soviet society – a far cry from both the 27th Party Congress or even the 19th Party Conference. Following the honeymoon period of the First Congress of People's Deputies, Moscow seems to be playing an increasingly smaller role in people's everyday lives. People are now looking increasingly to the centres of power within their own republics or even their own cities.

The emergence of both DP and MP are part of the process of differentiation of political forces around different class programmes taking place in Soviet society as a whole. The liberal intelligentsia has made a choice – it is no longer a question simply of "restructuring" the Soviet economy but of dismantling it and introducing capitalist relations. The forces around MP and the left wing of DP will need to unite with the growing militancy of the workers' movement if the workers' social guarantees are to be preserved and a programme adequate to overcome the crisis is to be elaborated.

THE MARXIST PLATFORM IN THE CPSU

The country is at a crossroads. The objective impossibility of society developing effectively through partial reforms of the previous system leaves open only two ways out of the crisis which grips all aspects of our lives. The first is a more or less consistent reproduction of the centuries taken to establish contemporary capitalism. The other way is the path of democracy and socialism. The struggle for the solution to this question has reached a critical phase.

The crisis of the model of society called socialist has led to the discrediting of the socialist ideal. Marxism has arrived at this moment in an extremely weakened state as a result of years of the propagation of vulgarised conceptions in the name of Marxism and the renagacy of those who considered it more advantageous to join forces with the opponents of Marxism. We stand for a return to classical Marxism, which assumes a critical attitude to the theoretical heritage of its founders and followers and for a continual revolution in the theoretical base of scientific socialism in step with the changing world. It is from such positions that we will strive to give answers to today's challenge.

1. What sort of society do we live in and wherein lie the roots of its crisis?

1.1 For Marxists, socialism has always been the objective result of the development of the laws and tendencies of the preceding society. This development leads to the formation of a system of relations, which inherit the achievements of the capitalist epoch and of the whole history of mankind, while at the same time resolving their inherent contradictions. Socialism thus appears as the product of a mass social movement expressing objective historical necessity, as the initial stage of humanity's movement along the path of communist civilisation which ensures the free and all-rounded development of the individual.

1.2 The October Revolution of 1917 was the historically conditioned consequence of the world social crisis and the growth of social contradictions within the Russian Empire. After the February Revolution, the Provisional Government's policy of half-hearted reforms, the delay in carrying out the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, the collapse of the machinery of power and the growth of anarchy led the state towards national catastrophe. It was precisely this which determined the inevitability of taking the revolutionary process in Russia beyond the framework of the bourgeois-democratic revolution – it was unavoidable that power in the country had to end up either in the hands of a right-wing bourgeois dictatorship or in the hands of the proletariat.

1.3 The attempt to advance towards a socialist society in extremely unfavourable internal and external conditions led to the opposite result.

Global capitalism's front had been breached, the ability of the workers independently to create new social relations was historically demonstrated. But the comparatively low level of the development of capitalism in Russia and the defeat of revolutions in more developed European states made the movement towards socialism extremely complex even if a scientifically-based and carefully considered policy was implemented. However, within the Bolshevik Party, tendencies characteristic of pre- and early proletarian utopian socialism gained significant influence which reflected the pressure on the Party of social strata which were numerically predominant in Russian society. After Lenin's death, the unscientific, dogmatic, utopian approach became dominant within the Party which led to the ignoring of the objective laws of the country's social development – with tragic consequences for the country and the world communist movement, and left a profound imprint on the entire subsequent history of the Soviet state and workers' movement.

1.4 In fact, a society has now been formed, the basis of which is an unstable (in a historical sense) conglomeration of elements of pre-capitalist, state capitalist and socialist social relations. The comparative stability of the social structure was determined by the force of the authoritarian-bureaucratic system holding it together. By retarding the progress of the productive forces and alienating people from the means of production and from society, this system more and more undermined the foundations of its own existence and led to the appearance of contradictions on the surface of society, which had previously been held in check: between the deformed socialist productive relations and modern forces of production, between socialist and non-socialist tendencies in the economic base, political, juridical and ideological superstructures, etc.

2. *The balance of socio-political forces*

The disintegration of an authoritarian-bureaucratic type of society liberates social forces orientated to both the restoration of a capitalist or semi-capitalist mixed economy and to the revival of a genuine socialist perspective.

The peculiarities of the historical path travelled by our society condition the character of the most important socio-political forces and their political tendencies.

2.1 The first trend is expressed by the leaders of the bourgeois-liberal tendency. The social strata with an interest in borrowing market economic structures on capitalist lines are those which, on the strength of their position in the social division of labour, can occupy a privileged position in the market. These include a small section of the technocracy and bureaucracy – those specialists occupying administrative posts in the financial and economic organs and economic units commanding a monopoly position in the national economy. Alongside them is that section of legal and illegal private entrepreneurs who count on the free utilisation of their capital. Finally, analogous interests are displayed by that part of the intelligentsia which, in market conditions, expects to capitalise on its monopoly of high skills or talent.

While attacking the ideology of revolutionism, this current itself proposes a radical break with the social system. The construction of capitalism here is only capable of creating prosperity in the foreseeable future for heaps of the *nouveaux riches* from the top strata of the "free professions", while not ensuring a radical modernisation of the economy.

2.2 The second position is occupied by the so-called **social-democratic** current. While not rejecting socialism in words, social-democracy reduces it to a collection of moral and legal values common to all mankind, while in its practical programme putting its money on the mechanical borrowing of modern socio-economic structures from the most advanced industrial states.

To this tendency belong that part of the workers, and of the intelligentsia in particular, who see in social-democracy a mass democratic movement capable of becoming a real alternative to the bureaucracy. This layer forms the left wing of social-democracy, which is oriented to a socialist choice and the transition to a market economy is conditional upon the creation of a system of social guarantees hindering the complete transition in the direction of private enterprise.

The right wing of social-democracy is more organised and because of this frequently determines the political line of this movement. It is based fundamentally on technocratic circles and occupies essentially liberal positions, considering that the strict conditions of a system of free enterprise are the necessary price for subsequent progress.

In the long-term, the positions of the social-democratic current might be supported by a section of the peasantry, which is oriented to a farm-owning economy.

The social-democratic tendency in the USSR, unlike Western social-democracy which is oriented to the democratisation and humanisation of capitalist society, views capitalism more as a goal and only to the extent that it is achieved as an arena of struggle for a better future.

2.3 The practical realisation of the social-democratic movement's programme will inevitably lead to it choosing one of the poles between which it vacillates – either it will take the side of the right-wing liberal tendency, dismantling both *de facto* and *de jure* the system of social guarantees, or, by developing and reinforcing the social defence of people in society, by enabling the social self-realisation and activity of the individual, it will adopt an essentially socialist character.

2.4 We consider that only a **democratic movement, Marxist in ideology and oriented to the socialist choice**, corresponds to the basic interests of society. The social base of the Marxist movement is engendered by the contradictions of the entire preceding development. On the one hand, the majority of workers cannot resolve its material and social problems without an improvement in the life of society as a whole. On the other hand, the alienation of people from the functions of master of the economy and society, which retard the opportunities for self-realisation in the collective, are preserved.

The possible way out for people caught in the jaws of this contradiction is either through private enterprise (i.e. ultimately at the expense of others) or through creating the conditions for the majority

of people for joint free labour. The realisation of the latter task is the major one for supporters of the Marxist Platform, which does not unite any isolated professional, territorial, sex or age group but those in whom is developed a special social quality – the need for free labour, self-realisation at work and social activity, as distinct from those, who strive for a parasitic existence in an authoritarian-bureaucratic or liberal-capitalist system.

2.5 **Socio-political movements which share illusions in the possibility of reviving the previous model of socialism** through a degree of "humanisation" or democratisation, stand rather to one side. With their base in that section of the workers which is not unjustifiably afraid that the development of the market, the liberalisation of the economy and society strikes at ordinary citizens, these movements attract people declaring their belief in socialism, its principles and ideals, with promises to extend the workers' social guarantees. While acknowledging the abstract correctness of these positions, it should be noted that the facile repetition of even timelessly correct slogans does not solve today's problems. The failure of this movement's leaders to agree with the reform efforts, which encroach on "principles", leads them to bloc with that section of the bureaucracy which sees the necessity of social manoeuvring. By capriciously combining conservative and democratic tendencies in the workers' movement, this heterogeneous current will eventually be compelled to make a choice between the democratic struggle for socialism or defence of a renovated authoritarian-bureaucratic system.

2.6 The **conservative-bureaucratic** current has its base in the bureaucracy, in state employees who look to it, and in conformist, passive and declassed strata in the city and countryside. It does not possess its own openly declared programme or political movement expressing their interests, but it attempts to counteract the restructuring of Soviet society by utilising its position in the state apparatus.

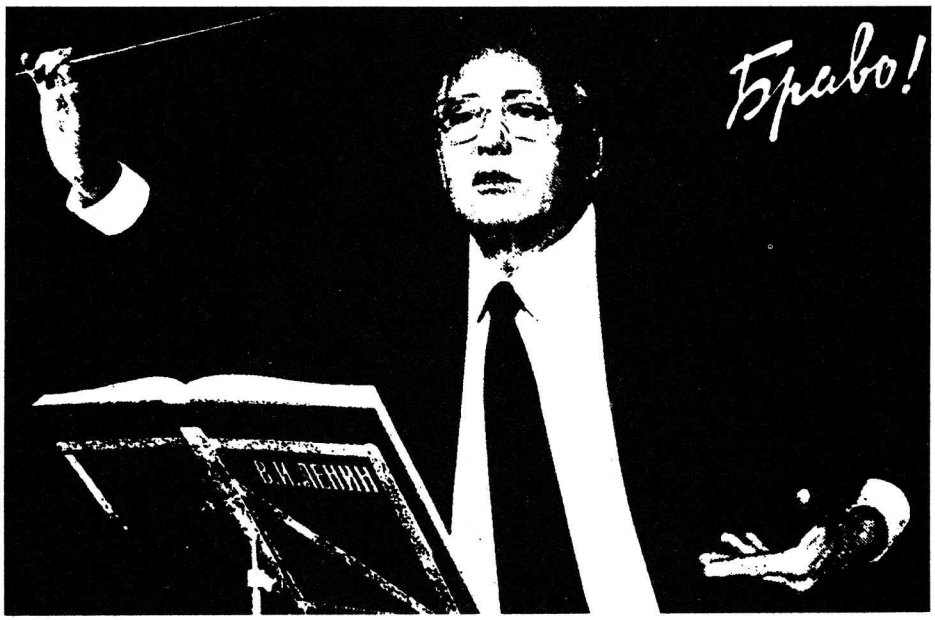
2.7 **National movements**, extremely heterogeneous in their socio-political character, have attained significant influence in the social life of the country. The democratic tendency to restore the legal rights of nations and nationalities in the economic, political and cultural spheres has become one of the currents within it. At the same time, it is precisely in the national movements that the bourgeois-liberal tendency has a strong influence, actively encouraging an identification of its own goals with national ones, portraying its class opponents as enemies of national interests and, in essence, repudiating the concept of nations' equal rights. Such agitation is especially attractive to lumpen elements inclined to seek the roots of their problems everywhere but in their own home. Against this background, the development of extremely nationalistic and chauvinistic political movements is taking place which frequently lean for support on the corrupt bureaucracy, operators from the shadow economy, declassed and directly criminal elements.

Both Russian national movements represented as currents aimed at raising national culture and self-consciousness and chauvinist groups with separatist and great power tendencies have begun to organise politically. These tendencies are the starting-point for a new edition of the totalitarian system with a nationalist streak.

2.8 The leadership of the CPSU and of the Soviet state, ideologically disunited, is currently striving to maintain the formal unity of the Party and society at any price, to avoid political tremors and to ensure the implementation of the policy of reform by manoeuvring between all these social strata and political movements. This will lead to eclectic and inconsistent positions, to the loss of political initiative and to a deepening of the crisis in the country. As events unfold this position will gradually evolve from conservative-bureaucratic to social-democratic.

3. The road to socialism is the way out of the crisis

Political transformations must become the starting-point for getting out of the crisis. In the political sphere, socialism inherits the experience and traditions of democracy produced by mankind, including a system of formal legal guarantees of individual civil rights, but it is not restricted by these traditions. The political system of socialism cannot be reduced to many parties, parliamentary democracy and even to a system of Soviets. It assumes genuine popular power, which guarantees to each person the opportunity to be directly included in the resolution of social problems at every level – from the brigade and



"Bravo!" – Soviet poster showing Gorbachev conducting to Lenin's tune.

home to the region and country as a whole.

For a transition to such a system the following are essential:

a. On the basis of a broad mass movement, ensuring a gradual, peaceful transfer of power from the hands of the bureaucracy to a socialist-oriented bloc of democratic forces with guaranteed constitutional rights for social and political movements of other tendencies, which observe the laws of the USSR and republics, and by observing the Declaration of Human Rights;

b. Turning the primary organisations of self-management created on productive (councils of labour collectives, workers' committees), territorial (committees of social self-management) and functional (consumer societies) principles into the mass base of the Soviets;

c. Ensuring the gradual transfer of all power in running the social infrastructure of the regions to local Soviets and the organs of self-management which constitute their support;

d. Turning the national workers', trade union, consumer and ecological social movements and organisations into the working democratic foundation of the Supreme Soviet by ensuring obligatory participation of these movements in the preparation and consideration of law-making decisions by committees and commissions of the Supreme Soviet.

3.2 The Soviet Union as a socialist state can be only a voluntary association of free and sovereign states on the principles of internationalism.

With the aim of renewing the USSR, it should be proposed to all republics that they conduct referenda on self-determination and the resolution of the question of participation in a new Union Treaty. After the referenda have been held, a new Union Treaty will be concluded on the principles of the sovereignty of the states within it and the equality of their rights and obligations. On this basis, to ensure the unity of all republican movements with a socialist orientation.

3.3 The progress of the scientific-technical revolution and of civilisation as a whole in the Twentieth Century has pushed to the foreground the need to develop economic relations which would ensure the overcoming of workers' alienation from the means of production, the emancipation of their creative initiative and a high level of social and labour activity.

The following are essential for the transition to such an economy:

3.3.1 Change the property relations:

a. the key branches of the economy and natural resources remain exclusively national property with the maximum democratisation of their management and disposal;

b. regional ownership is widely developed at all levels; all powers for managing the social infrastructure of a region are transferred to local Soviets and organs of self-management;

c. collective ownership by workers of their enterprises and co-operative ownership is utilised primarily in the spheres of small and medium production and services; hired labour in these spheres is used only in the transition period;

d. private property in the means of production is permitted only in the transitional period, within a limited framework under strict state control and while maintaining the workers' social security.

3.3.2 Change the system of management, including:

a. the decentralisation of rights, responsibilities and resources at all levels of management and under all forms of property;

b. central and branch agencies will be left the resolution of only strategic questions of the development of branches and the national economy as a whole;

c. the development of the system of self-management in the economy from the bottom to the top: from the councils of labour collectives and workers' committees to their associations at the level of branches, regions and inter-branch complexes;

d. a consistent transition to a market in the means of production as the shortage in their individual types is overcome; economic regulation of this market through an agreement between state agencies, voluntary associations and individual enterprises;

e. resistance to the *diktat* of branches and enterprise-producers on the basis of uniting collectives and citizens as consumers and people who need a clean environment and humane culture; the granting of rights to consumer societies, ecological, creative and analogous unions to control the activity of producers; the participation of organs of self-management and their unions in the control of the formation and activity of state economic agencies.

3.3.3 To ensure the liberation of labour and the emancipation of social creativity through a consistent displacement of the system of extra-economic coercion to work (residence permits, quotas, departmental distribution of benefits); the transition to free labour, when each will choose in which sphere to apply their abilities (the principle of free association) independently and freely as the master (and not as the hireling).

3.3.4 To carry out as a strategic task structural changes in the economy and a profound redistribution of all resources in favour of branches producing consumer goods and spheres safeguarding people's free and all-round development and the harmonisation of their relations with nature.

3.4 We propose the following urgent measures to protect workers' standards of living and to prevent the further growth of inequality in property, without which there cannot be social and political stability:

a. to make known to the entire people the existing system of privileges and to consider a programme for their gradual elimination, beginning with the highest echelons of the party-state structure;

b. to transfer to a system of territorial, guaranteed and fixed distribution of essential goods, carried out according to a single principle, openly, and under the democratic control of the mass social organisations; as this task is resolved to reject other forms of secret distribution of wealth;

c. to elaborate and implement a state programme to combat the shadow economy; to carry out a monetary reform with the aim of creating barriers to the acquirement of illegal income in the present and the future and to ensure that society controls the correlation between the amount of one's labour and consumption (the registration of major civil transactions, tax declarations, etc.); to

create a system of workers' control;

d. to create a system of progressive taxation ensuring a socially justified differentiation of incomes between different social groups, taking into account monetary incomes, resources from social consumption funds and privileges;

e. to remove all restrictions from workers' individual incomes if their growth is related to increasing labour efficiency;

f. to strengthen control over prices, by applying all means at the state's disposal – political, economic and administrative – for their stabilisation; in carrying out a reform of prices, to exclude their general increase, taking into account that the income of the state budget from turnover tax exceeds subsidies on loss-making branches and enterprises producing consumer goods;

g. to establish rapidly a social-state system for the social security of the population, including the right to work, health care, education, and also the right to a sufficient standard of living in accordance with the level of consumption necessary for the normal reproduction and development of the individual.

4. Reform of the CPSU

4.1 The current model of the CPSU as the party of "barracks communism" must be eliminated, but not the Communist Party itself.

A condition for the CPSU to find a way out of its crisis is its urgent transformation from a state-economic agency into a political organisation on a Marxist ideological basis which is for the socialist choice and a communist perspective, an organisation which voluntarily unites members of society who share the party's programmatic objectives and participate in carrying them out on a practical basis.

The Party's fundamental task must become work in the labour collectives, where people live, and in the mass democratic organisations with the aim of uniting the efforts of our country's citizens in order to solve the social problems and implement the socialist choice. The Party must directly repudiate claims to political privileges, seeing the parliamentary struggle as one of the means for resolving its key task: the gaining of the workers' trust by practical work among the masses.

We propose the following as basic steps to transform the CPSU:

a. the freeing of the CPSU from the functions of direct management of the country's economy, which do not belong to it; the complete transfer of power to state and soviet organs;

b. a clarification of the CPSU's ideological base, the ideological differentiation of members of the Party by forming different ideological and political platforms;

c. a cleansing of the Party of people who have discredited it by various forms of abuses and are to blame for the origin of the processes of stagnation and crisis in society;

d. democratisation of the Party.

4.2 **Democratisation of intra-party relations** assumes:

a. the participation of the members of the CPSU, on a regular basis, in the formation of its policy or the taking of fundamental political decisions through the mechanisms of referenda and discussions in the Party at a national or regional level;

b. the election of delegates to Party congresses and conferences from candidates of alternative platforms on the basis of direct, equal and secret ballots;

c. the election of organs of Party control and the editorial boards of the Party press only at congresses, conferences and assemblies and with their responsibility solely to those forums;

d. all elected organs, including the apparatus, to be controlled by and accountable to the members of the CPSU;

e. complete openness in the activity of the Party, including the Central Committee and the bodies elected by it (it preserves accessibility to Party materials and archives and the publication of stenographic reports of the sessions of Party bodies);

f. the maintenance of the powers of delegates to congresses and conferences in between these forums;

g. the right of the minority to defend its point of view and remain in a minority after a decision has been taken by that majority and while it is being implemented;

h. the right of different groups of communists to express a multiplicity of ideological and political views and platforms.

4.3 **The democratisation of the Party's organisational structure** assumes:

a. the right of members of the CPSU to form primary party organisations on productive, territorial, functional or any other principle;

b. freedom of permanent and temporary associations of CPSU members (Party clubs, councils of the secretaries of primary and other Party organisations, etc.), which ensure alternative approaches in the elaboration of decisions;

c. the right of primary Party organisations and associations of communists to select members of the CPSU in the workplace, giving priority to Party work in the labour collectives.

4.4 **Democratisation of intra-party life presupposes self-management and autonomy of primary Party organisations** within the framework of the powers granted them by the rules of the CPSU. In supporting the numerous proposals of primary Party organisations, we consider that their powers must include, in particular, the right to:

a. the final say in admittance into the Party;

b. determine the structure and composition of their apparatus and the wages of its workers;

c. determine their own programmes and forms of activity within the framework of the CPSU Programme;

d. utilise a significant part of members' dues for their own purposes;

With the aim of increasing the role of primary Party organisations it is essential to reinforce the rule according to which decisions taken by them within the framework of the powers granted by the CPSU Rules cannot be overturned by other Party organisations.

Ukraine declares independence

Introduction and translation by Marko Bojcun

The Ukrainian Supreme Council (parliament) adopted the following declaration of sovereignty on 16 July 1990 by a vote of 355 to 4, with 26 abstentions. The declaration embodies a compromise between the Democratic Bloc's desire to assert Ukraine's unconditional right to self-determination and national independence on the one hand and the Communist Party of Ukraine's strenuous efforts to keep Ukraine within the Soviet Union on the other. The latter course can be seen in the very last clause of the declaration which calls for a new Treaty of Union, originally negotiated in 1922 when the Soviet Union was formed.

In recent months *Rukh*, the principal group within the Democratic Bloc, has expressed a growing lack of faith in a renegotiated Treaty as the basis for a "renewed federation" as it observed Moscow's handling of national movements in the Baltic and Transcaucasian regions. However, the solid majority in support of the declaration clearly shows that even *Rukh* deputies consider it a step forward in terms of their own programme.

Much of the population is deeply mistrustful of any project in the Supreme Council supported by the Communist Party. Some local *Rukh* activists fear the declaration is merely an exercise to shift a measure of power from the central CPSU apparatus to the Ukrainian party apparatus, without democratising the political system in which Ukraine's political parties must operate. The important issue, then, is the declaration's practical implementation, which will test the commitment of the various political currents in the Supreme Council to sovereignty, both popular and national.

Supreme Council of the Ukrainian SSR
Declaration of the State Sovereignty of Ukraine
City of Kiev – 1990

The Supreme Council of the Ukrainian SSR, expressing the will of the people of Ukraine, striving to form a democratic society proceeding from the need for a comprehensive guarantee of human rights and freedoms, respecting the national rights of all peoples, caring for the fullest political, economic, social and spiritual development of the people of Ukraine, recognising the absolute necessity to build a law-based state, and having as its goal the affirmation of the sovereignty and self-rule of the people of Ukraine,

DECLARES
the state sovereignty of Ukraine as the supremacy, independence, plenitude and indivisibility of the Republic's rule within the confines of its territory, and its independence and equality of rights in foreign relations.

I. SELF-DETERMINATION OF THE UKRAINIAN NATION
The Ukrainian SSR, as a sovereign national state, develops within its existing boundaries on the basis of the Ukrainian nation realising its inalienable right to self-determination. The Ukrainian SSR defends and protects the national statehood of the Ukrainian people. Any forceful actions whatsoever against the national statehood of Ukraine by political parties, community organisations, other groups or individuals will be prosecuted according to law.

II. RULE BY THE PEOPLE
Citizens of the Republic of all nationalities constitute the people of Ukraine. The people of Ukraine is the sole source of state power in the Republic. Rule by the people of Ukraine takes place on the basis of the Republic's Constitution, both directly and through people's deputies elected to the Supreme Council and the local Councils of the Ukrainian SSR. Only the Supreme Council of the Ukrainian SSR may speak in the name of the whole people. No political party, citizens organisation, other group or individual may speak in the name of the whole people of Ukraine.

III. STATE POWER
The Ukrainian SSR decides independently all questions of its state life. The Ukrainian SSR guarantees the supremacy of the Constitution and laws of the Republic on its territory. State power in the Republic is applied on the basis of the principle of its division into legislative, executive and judicial parts. Ultimate supervision of the accurate and identical application of laws rests with General Procurator of the Ukrainian SSR, who is appointed by the Supreme Council of the Ukrainian SSR, to which s/he is accountable and to which alone s/he reports.

IV. CITIZENSHIP OF THE UKRAINIAN SSR
The Ukrainian SSR has its own citizenship and assures each citizen the right to retain citizenship of the USSR. The bases for acquisition and loss of citizenship of the Ukrainian SSR are defined by the Law of the Ukrainian SSR on citizenship. All citizens of the Ukrainian SSR are guaranteed rights and freedoms foreseen by the Constitution of the Ukrainian SSR and the norms of international law recognised by the Ukrainian SSR. The Ukrainian SSR guarantees equality before the law of all citizens of the Republic regardless of their origin, social status or wealth, racial or national affiliation, sex, education, language, political views, religious convictions, occupation, place or residence or other circumstances. The Ukrainian SSR regulates processes of immigration. The Ukrainian SSR demonstrates its concern and takes measures to protect and defend the interests of the citizens of the Ukrainian SSR who are beyond the borders

of the Republic.

V. TERRITORIAL SUPREMACY

The Ukrainian SSR is supreme over its entire territory. The territory of the Ukrainian SSR within its existing borders is inviolable, and cannot be changed or used without its agreement. The Ukrainian SSR independently determines the administrative-territorial order of the Republic and the procedure for creating national-administrative units.

VI. ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE

The Ukrainian SSR independently determines its economic status and strengthens it in law. The people of Ukraine have exclusive right to control, use and dispose of the national wealth of Ukraine. Land, underground resources, the atmosphere, water and other natural resources found within the territory of the Ukrainian SSR, the natural resources of its continental shelf and its exclusive (maritime) zone, all the economic and scientific-technical potential created on the territory of Ukraine are the property of its people, the material basis of the Republic's sovereignty, and are used with the aim of meeting the material and spiritual needs of its citizens. The Ukrainian SSR has a right to its part of all-Union wealth, in particular the part of diamond, hard currency and gold reserves that were created by the efforts of the people of the Republic. The resolution of questions concerning all-Union property (the common property of all republics) takes place on a basis agreed by the republics – the subjects of this property. Enterprises, institutions, organisations and objects of other states and their citizens, and international organisations may locate on the territory of the Ukrainian SSR and take advantage of Ukraine's natural resources according to the law of the Ukrainian SSR. The Ukrainian SSR independently creates a banking (inclusive of a foreign economic bank), pricing, financial, customs and taxation system, forms its state budget, and if need be introduces its own currency. The higher credit institution of the Ukrainian SSR is the national Bank of Ukraine, which reports to the Supreme Council of the Ukrainian SSR. Enterprises, institutions, organisations and producing individuals located on the territory of the Ukrainian SSR pay for the use of land and other natural and labour resources, deductions from hard currency earnings, as well as taxes for local government budgets. The Ukrainian SSR protects all forms of ownership.

VII. ECOLOGICAL SAFETY

The Ukrainian SSR independently establishes the order of organisations for the defence of nature on the territory of the Republic and the order for using its natural resources. The Ukrainian SSR has its own national commission of radiological protection of the population. The Ukrainian SSR has the right to prohibit construction and to halt operation of any enterprise, institution, organisation or other objects which constitute a threat to ecological safety. The Ukrainian SSR cares for the ecological safety of its citizens, the gene pool of the people and its youth generation. The Ukrainian SSR has the right to compensation for the damage caused to Ukraine's ecology by the actions of all-Union organisations.

VIII. CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

The Ukrainian SSR independently decides questions of science, education, cultural and spiritual development of the Ukrainian nation, guaranteeing all nationalities that live on the territory of the Republic their right to free national-cultural development. The Ukrainian SSR secures the national-cultural rebirth of the Ukrainian people, its historical consciousness and traditions, its national-ethnographic individuality and the functioning of the Ukrainian language in all spheres of social life. The Ukrainian SSR concerns itself with the satisfaction of the national-cultural, spiritual and linguistic needs of Ukrainians who live outside the Republic. National, cultural and historical treasures on the territory of the Ukrainian SSR are the exclusive property of the people of the Republic. The Ukrainian SSR has the right to return to the people of Ukraine their national, cultural and historical treasures that are found beyond the borders of the Ukrainian SSR.

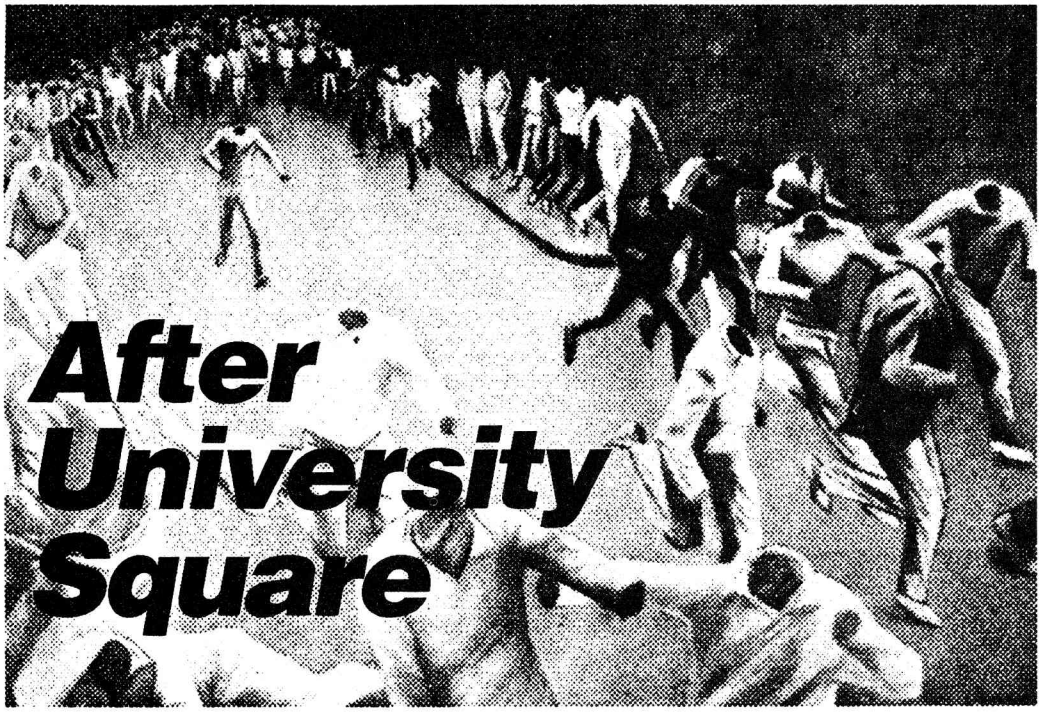
IX. FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC SECURITY

The Ukrainian SSR has a right to its own Armed Forces. The Ukrainian SSR has its own domestic armies and organs of state security that are subordinate to the Supreme Council of the Ukrainian SSR. The Ukrainian SSR determines the procedure of fulfilment of military service by citizens of the Republic. Citizens of the Ukrainian SSR carry out real military service, as a rule, on the territory of the Republic and cannot be used in military objectives beyond its borders without the agreement of the Supreme Council of the Ukrainian SSR. The Ukrainian SSR solemnly declares its intention to become in the future a permanently neutral state which takes no part in military blocs and conforms to three non-nuclear principles: not to accept, or produce, or acquire nuclear arms.

X. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The Ukrainian SSR, as a subject of international law, maintains direct relations with other states, concludes agreements with them, exchanges diplomatic, consular and trade representatives, takes part in the activity of international organisations to the extent necessary for the effective protection of the republic's national interests in political, economic, ecological, informational, scientific, technical, cultural and sporting matters. The Ukrainian SSR acts as an equal-in-rights participant of international relations, actively supporting the strengthening of general peace and international security, assuming a direct role in the pan-European process and in European structures. The Ukrainian SSR recognises universal human values above class values, and the priority of universally recognised norms of international law over norms of domestic state law. (...)

The relations of the Ukrainian SSR with other Soviet republics are built on agreements based in principles of equality in rights, mutual respect and non-interference in internal affairs. This Declaration is the foundation for a new Constitution, the laws of Ukraine, and expresses the positions of the Republic in concluding international accords. The Principles of the Declaration about Ukraine's sovereignty are used to establish the Treaty of Union.



After University Square

by PATRICK CAMILLER

THE EVENTS OF 13, 14 AND 15 JUNE in central Bucharest brought forth a stream of glib and often contradictory formulas from the Western media that reflected the deep hostility of their respective governments to the new regime in Romania. From "Securitate Back in Control" through "Ceausescu Smiling in His Grave" to "Mob Rule in Bucharest", any pretence of providing a coherent account was lost in the din of a propaganda barrage that avoided any mention of most of the elementary facts. As the dust settles, however, we need to recall a few of these facts, in their actual sequence, in order to gain some sense of where Romania is going.

The preparation of elections

Towards the end of March the Provisional Council of National Unity, grouping together members of the FSN or National Salvation Front (which at that time included many independents) and all other registered parties, engaged in an open four-day debate on the organisation of elections. The resulting law, passed by 289 votes to 1 on the 30th of March, set out a detailed procedure for presidential and proportional parliamentary elections to be held on the 20th of May. The law specifically excluded from standing anyone "who has committed abuses in their political, judicial or administrative functions, who has violated basic human rights, or who has organised or been an instrument of repression on the part of the security organs."

In the course of April it became clear from polls and from rallies around the country that Iliescu and the FSN enjoyed massive popular support. However distasteful this may have been to the opposition and the Western media, no one at that time ever compared these evidently spontaneous displays of support to the stony puppet-shows put on by Ceausescu. Instead, the two main anti-FSN dailies – *Romania Libera* and *Dreptatea* – launched a strident campaign to cancel the electoral law. Their main demand now was that no one who had ever been an activist in the Communist Party should be allowed to stand in the next three elections (i.e., the next twelve years), regardless of their actual record. First to step down, of course, would be the FSN's presidential candidate, Iliescu himself, who had remained a Party member and minor state official despite having fallen foul of Ceausescu in 1971 at the first real sign of his tyrannical ambitions. This anti-democratic demand, without parallel elsewhere in Eastern Europe, was widely seen as a crude and desperate manoeuvre to revive the fortunes of the two "historic" right-wing parties – the National Peasants and the National Liberals – which in their heyday in the thirties had vied with each other in electoral fraud and manipulation.

On the 22nd of April, just as the election campaign was getting under way, several hundred protesters occupied University Square, paralysing Bucharest's main crossroads. For the next month the presence in the square – mainly students and anti-FSN activists, but with a distinct minority of uprooted urban youth – probably averaged around a thousand, rising to a maximum of ten thousand for the feverish evening rallies that echoed the call for the blackballing of all former Communists. The anti-FSN parties and papers lent varying degrees of support, and the so-called Group for Social Dialogue – which has rapidly evolved into a coterie of intellectuals united by violent hostility to the FSN – generously offered to mediate while its own banner stood prominently alongside the "official" proclamation of the square as a "no-go area for neo-communism".

The room for mediation was small indeed. While the self-appointed elite of right-wing

intellectuals could not believe that the Romanian people was unwilling to place itself under their tutelage, the "historic" parties simply could not accept that the country did not want a return to the political pattern of the thirties, with a multi-millionaire shipping and property magnate, Ion Ratiu, flying in to pose as leader of the peasants. For its part, the FSN leadership could doubtless have been more subtle and outgoing, particularly in response to the student ferment. But it is to their credit that, for two months, they disregarded the destabilising provocation on University Square. In the week after the occupation began, the Provisional Council of National Unity – not a secret conclave of policemen or cabinet ministers – debated the situation for three hours on prime-time television. There were several calls for the square to be cleared "without violence", but when the Bucharest police chief, summoned to the rostrum, pointed out the obvious difficulties, it was decided to leave things as they were.

Conciliation and insurrection

The election results on the 20th of May removed any doubt about the overwhelming support for the FSN among the working class and peasantry. On a high turnout of 86.2 per cent of the electorate, the Front's presidential candidate, Iliescu, won 85 per cent, while the FSN gained exactly two-thirds of the vote for the Assembly of Deputies. Over the next three weeks, both the government and some of the protesters showed signs of seeking a compromise: the former by offering to discuss arrangements for a new television channel, the latter by "limiting" their University Square rallies to one a week. But an intransigent core remained in the square, demanding the government's immediate resignation and a "second revolution". On Monday, 11 June, a crowd of several hundred was reported to have attacked the police-army cordon around the government building where discussions were taking place.

Finally, on Wednesday morning, following a decision by the Prosecutor's office, a squad of riot police cleared the square without, it seems, an excessive use of force. Evidently Iliescu and the government expected that to be the end of the affair. But then, in the afternoon, a crowd of a few thousand drove the police out of the square, and arson attacks were launched against police headquarters and the interior ministry during which a number of firearms were taken away. Most alarming, however, was the Molotov-cocktail assault by a crowd of some five thousand on Romanian Television – a key installation and centre of the December revolution.

To understand what happened next it is not necessary to believe that there was a fully-fledged coup attempt – although it is possible that Iliescu genuinely did believe this. The violence of the arson attacks, which caused more material damage in Bucharest than the battles of December, stunned the population so soon after the elections. The police had demonstrated its incapacity for sustained operations; the soldiers deployed in defensive positions were untrained and likely either to melt away or to engage in undisciplined gunfire; the loyalties of sections of the officer corps were in serious doubt; Western governments had made it clear that they were not reconciled to the Front's election victory. In these circumstances, Iliescu turned to the organised working class to restore the elected government's authority in the capital. Workers from the giant IMGB complex in southern Bucharest helped to recapture the television station, and early the next day miners from the Jiu Valley and elsewhere began to arrive. This display of working-class strength was enough for the insurrection to scatter with the morning mist. What could have been more normal – or more desirable? But unfortunately the miners did not stop there. Determined to leave a lasting mark on the streets of their capital, some of them engaged in indiscriminate acts of violence and repression that actually weakened their moral and political position. But was that really so surprising? Could it not have happened anywhere in the world, let alone in a country where any kind of public life and communication was frozen for some twenty years?

Who were these miners, anyway? The British "quality" papers, on this occasion competing with the Murdoch gutter, were in no doubt. The miners were scarcely human: "dirty-faced runts" (*Observer*), an "army of warrior ants" (*The Independent*) – in short, rather like the British miners as seen through capitalist eyes. But the truth, as usual, is rather more prosaic. The Romanian miners, like the great mass of the working class and peasantry, regard the present government as in some sense their own, as the only protection they have against an arrogant, anti-popular drive to make the world of labour subservient to the world of bourgeois elites, both national and international. In 1977 the Jiu Valley miners were the first to engage in open struggle with the Ceausescu dictatorship for a series of material demands. Although little was achieved at the time, and the mines were a particular focus of attention for the Securitate in subsequent years, the mining communities have remained as cohesive and disciplined centres of working-class organisation – all the more self-confident in that the extractive industries are one of the few sectors that will survive intact any rectification of Ceausescu's disastrous economic legacy. Already in February of this year, when the provisional government buildings were occupied by small but violent crowds and the deputy prime-minister was manhandled and temporarily detained, three thousand miners had come from the Jiu Valley to ward off any *coup de force*. And in the weeks after the occupation of University Square began, miners' leaders had to be restrained by the government from clearing it in their own way. No one in their right mind can take pleasure in what eventually happened in mid-June. But nor should it be forgotten that the miners' violence, with its almost inevitable excesses, was a response to the savage actions of a tiny minority. So long as a democratic regime is not firmly in place in Romania, the miners and other sections of the working class will doubtless feel impelled and justified to assist the government in situations of last resort.

Much remains obscure about the June events in Bucharest, not least the composition of the crowds that attacked public buildings on the night of the 13th--14th. Students' claims to have had no part in the violence are borne out by the fact that none of their number was among those arrested

– although the precise role of the student leader Marian Munteanu, who was arrested later after being severely beaten, is still being investigated. According to an interim report by the Prosecutor's office, a total of 177 persons were arrested on University Square on the 13th: of these, 72 were without an occupation, and 54 had a criminal record.[1] The rallies on the square had always mingled together students and political activists with what can only be described as classical lumpenproletarians, an extreme product of the wider social desperation whose volatility and drop-out ideologies make them ideal material for manipulation and assorted adventures.[2] It would seem likely that these formed the bulk of the crowd that rampaged through central Bucharest. But whether there was a directing intelligence behind their actions – as the government has repeatedly claimed – is much less clear: the results of an official inquiry now under way will at least make it possible to reopen debate on the question.

The aftermath

Some of the forces involved in the occupation of University Square, believing that the FSN was a "neo-Bolshevik" party of dictatorship, fully expected – and probably hoped – that their action would provoke the government to "drop its mask" of democracy. But despite the direst predictions, the mid-June events did not mark a return to an authoritarian-Stalinist regime, even if authoritarian, Stalinist elements within Romanian officialdom might briefly have felt their hand to be strengthened. The opposition press immediately began to reappear, without any further restrictions. The opposition parties, though riven by internal feuding, expulsions and secessions, seem to have accepted for the time being their role as a minority force in the country and parliament, and the National Liberals in particular have made a number of constructive statements to this effect. The government has opened a dialogue with the student organisations, and there is some hope of healing the catastrophic rift that opened up in the spring between the FSN and the university world. If the civil rights groups associated with the Timisoara Declaration give up their wild aim of banishing all ex-communists from public life, it is possible that they too will eventually make a positive contribution to the establishment of a democratic regime in Romania.

None of this is to say that the problems are over – far from it. Political life retains a provisional character that will last at least until a new Constitution is adopted within 18–24 months and fresh elections are held. One of the crucial tasks of this Constitution will be to define the rights of the Hungarian and other national minorities within Romania, but more urgent action is required if the ethnic tensions building up in Transylvania are not to explode again with unpredictable consequences. More generally, as in the Soviet Union, a powerful layer of bureaucrats remains entrenched within the economic and other apparatuses, determined to resist any kind of reform. The fate of Romania, and certainly of the FSN, will largely hinge on the success of measures to revive and restructure the economy over the next two years, in which the government's recent outlining of a marketisation programme, necessary in itself, can only be the first word. The West's criminal withdrawal of aid after University Square seems designed to punish the Romanian people for having elected a government which still seems responsive to its own needs as much as to those of international bankers and corporations.

Footnotes

1. By mid-July 34 of these had been tried on criminal charges, of whom 29 were fined or sentenced to 1–6 months in jail.
2. It was to these elements, and not to the University Square crowds as a whole, that Iliescu was referring when he used the term "golani" – somewhere between the English "ruffians" and "layabouts".

Yugoslavia goes into a penalty shoot-out

by MICHELE LEE

THE DEMISE OF COMMUNIST RULE in Yugoslavia has opened the possibility of the country's disappearance as a single state. As the contradictions of the new politics unfold, it is clear that – far from solving any problems – such an outcome would be a disaster for all its nations and citizens. Not only would Yugoslavia's break-up make national issues still harder to resolve, it would also put an end to the newly emerging system of parliamentary democracy.

The March-April 1990 elections in Slovenia and Croatia have brought to power right-of-centre nationalist governments. (It should be borne in mind that the Federal government itself is committed to introduction of fully fledged capitalism.) In Slovenia, the old ruling party – the League of Communists of Slovenia: Party of Democratic Renewal – opted for a proportional system and direct election of the republican president. DEMOS – a coalition comprising National Alliance, Peasant Alliance, Social Democrats, Christian Democrats and Greens – won 55% of the votes (126 seats out of 240); the Communists 17% (38 seats); Liberals (former Socialist Youth Alliance) 14% (38 seats). 16 seats went to the Socialists (former Socialist Alliance of Working People), two each to the Italian and Hungarian national minorities, and the rest to independent candidates. The Communist party leader, Milan Kucan, was elected president of the republic with a relative majority (44%) of the vote, thus sealing the new national compact.

Socialist insignia have been removed from the state's name, emblem and flag. Anti-communist hysteria (as opposed to rhetoric) has been kept in check, but all key government posts have gone to DEMOS, a purge of the media and key economic and cultural institutions is proceeding, and philosophy students wishing to study Hegel, Marx or Freud are being tacitly encouraged to think again. The ruling coalition has declared itself the guardian of national interests (its motto being "Who is not with us is against the nation!") and has suspended secret voting in parliament itself. While refusing to sanction salaries for deputies (allegedly to save money), the ruling coalition has been busy employing its own MPs in the state apparatus, thus transforming people's representatives into servants of the state executive.

The proportional system, nevertheless, has led to an equitable distribution of parliamentary seats, and Kucan's election to a degree of power-sharing. The expected weakness of a coalition government has been mitigated by several factors. A "fair" distribution of the spoils of office, made more attractive by the new entrepreneurial climate, has helped to keep the different parties together. Externally, the coalition has been aided by a consensus on economic priorities and a common fear of Serbia under Milosevic. These two concerns led to the June declaration of Slovenia's full sovereignty within Yugoslavia (not secession), signed by all parliamentary parties and groups. The transition to a post-communist order has been facilitated also by the disarray of the Communists, consequent upon the loss of forty years of state power: financial problems, a vertiginous drop in membership, and an as yet unsuccessful search for a new political identity. Judging by their behaviour in the Slovene parliament, Communists, Socialists and Liberals have de facto united to form a viable, if limited, opposition (one recent success was to stop a ban, advocated by a government minister, on Serbo-Croat being spoken in the republic's parliament).

In Croatia, the Communists – in the mistaken belief that this would return them to power – opted instead for a first-past-the-post electoral system and election of the president by the national assembly. In the event, a single party - the Croatian Democratic Union (CDU) - won 41.5% of votes (69% of seats). The Coalition of National Agreement (a mixed bag of Liberals, Christian Democrats, and ex-Communists – some of whom had occupied leading positions in 1968-1971) gained 15% of votes (4% of seats); the League of Communists of Croatia: Party of Democratic Change (including a number of candidates shared with the Socialists) won 28% of votes (21% of seats); while the Socialists (ex-Socialist Alliance) on their own gained 6.5% of votes (2.5% of seats). The rest was divided between Serb Democrats and independents, including a Green (elected with Communist support). The system, in other words, gave a two-thirds parliamentary majority to a party that had gained just over 41% of the popular vote. Such a parliament naturally elected Franjo Tudjman, president of the CDU, as the republic's head of state. The CDU has since made conciliatory gestures towards Croatia's Serbs, including offering one of the five vice-presidential posts to Jovan Raskovic, leader of the Serb Democrats; but such overtures have been rejected, on advice coming from Belgrade.

The Croatian Communists, too, are in disarray,

for very much the reasons as those operating in Slovenia. Their predicament, however, has been made worse by several additional factors. First, they won a majority of Serb votes (Serbs form just under 12% of the total population in Croatia), but now these supporters have either become disillusioned or are switching to the Serb Democratic party. Secondly, the inner-party struggle between reformers and conservatives was never decisively won by the former, and this is impeding the party's efforts to acquire a new political profile. Furthermore, since conservatives tend to be Serb and reformers Croat (for reasons that go back to the extensive purge of 1971), the party faces further splits along national lines. The Croat majority, moreover, has responded – like its Slovene counterpart – to the threat emanating from Serbia by closing ranks with the CDU in defence of national sovereignty. This process has been facilitated by the support Belgrade has extended to open, organised Serb rebellion against the new government – including calls for armed struggle – in parts of Croatia. Finally, the CDU's political hegemony is encouraging defections from the Communist ranks, the most spectacular being that of Bernard Jurlina, former head of the Croatian Trade Unions and a member of the party's central committee, who was rewarded by a vice-presidential post (a new term – "jurlinism" – has entered the Croatian vocabulary to denote this novel kind of opportunism).

The voting system has had a negative effect on Croatia's new-fangled democracy. CDU control of parliament – combined with the Communists' collapse – has strengthened the party's authoritarian tendencies, already visible in the election campaign. Pretending that its victory was "plebiscitary", the CDU – like its counterpart in Slovenia – has been busy purging the media, and cultural and educational institutions. The new government has been paying particular attention to "purification" of the official language, removing all "foreign" (i.e. Serb) "imports", frequently with comic results – a measure designed to intimidate in particular its Croat opponents. The CDU party flag (of Croatia) has become the official flag and, as in Slovenia, all socialist insignia have been removed from the name of the state.

Nevertheless, the CDU is not so much a party as a coalition of moderate and extreme nationalists and anti-communists. Tudjman, occupying a centre position, has been trying to keep his "hawks" in check, mainly by letting them loose in the cultural sphere; but this has been a difficult task in the face of the extreme "hawkishness" of official Serbia and the Serbian opposition alike. The CDU, moreover, faces a specific problem: a lack of intelligentsia. Unlike in Slovenia, where DEMOS emerged out of the traditional intelligentsia, the Croat intelligentsia voted almost en bloc for non-CDU parties. Without intellectuals, the transition to post-communism will be difficult (who, for example, among the CDU veterans is capable of writing the new constitution?), and the CDU's need for their cooperation will work to moderate this resurgent national fundamentalism.

Multi-party elections are due to take place before the end of the year also in Bosnia-Herzegovina (where the newly formed Party of Democratic Action, based on the Moslem population, is likely to emerge the winner), in Montenegro (whose political life remains split between pro-Milosevic factions, which include the ruling Communist party, and various Montenegrin nationalist and democratic groupings), and in Macedonia (where no obvious winner has come to the fore, although the nationalist VMRO – Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – is emerging as a likely leader). Yugoslavia's disintegration threatens the survival of these three republics and the national existence of the population inhabiting them. Macedonia, in particular, is vulnerable because its immediate neighbours Bulgaria and Greece (as well as extreme Serb nationalists in Yugoslavia), do not recognise the existence of the Macedonian nation. In August 1990, also, Prime Minister Ante Markovic announced the formation of a government party – Alliance of Forces of Reform – which could do well in the ethnically mixed areas.

In Serbia, elections have been postponed till December – or, equally likely, to the Greek calends, given the regime's determination to rule Kosovo against the will of its population. The opposition parties – predominantly nationalist, chauvinist and anti-communist – share with the ruling party the desire to "save" Kosovo for Serbia, even at the risk of a generalised civil war. This unity of purpose has provided the League of Communists of Serbia with sufficient breathing space to carry through unification with the Socialist Alliance (thus strengthening its grip on the infrastructure of state power) and to conduct a referendum in early July stripping the two provinces – Kosovo and Vojvodina – of the last vestiges of their autonomy. The referendum, moreover, has conferred advance approval upon a new constitution which will severely limit the prerogatives of the republican legislature in favour of the executive. Yet elections must come - as the West never tires of reminding communists in power.

Following the referendum, Serbia has indeed entered into a de facto pre-election campaign, which is likely further to destabilise Yugoslavia, given that strident nationalism will provide the exclusive terrain for political infighting. Wholesale expulsion of the Albanian population from Yugoslavia might only too easily become a popular election slogan. The ruling party, moreover, is these days seeking a pretext for a massive show of force in Kosovo as a card with which to trump its "patriotic" opposition. This could easily lead to a civil war in Serbia, which is likely to spread to the rest of Yugoslavia.

The only check on Serbia's ruling mafia and its equally unpalatable opposition has so far come from the two provinces. The Kosovo government and parliament, with the support of the local opposition, announced on 2 July (the day of the referendum) Kosovo's effective independence from Serbia. The declaration proclaimed the equality of Kosovo with other federal units; the equality of all citizens and nationalities in Kosovo; the status of Albanians as a fully-fledged nation within Yugoslavia; and respect henceforth only for the Federal (rather than the Serbian) constitution. This amounts to Kosovo becoming a constituent republic of Yugoslavia or, as the declaration states, "an equal and independent unit within the Yugoslav federation or confederation."

The Serbian regime has responded by sus-

pending all government bodies in the province and dissolving the Kosovo parliament – in defiance of the Federal constitution, which denies even the all-Yugoslav assembly the right to dissolve national assemblies in the individual federal units. The province has become an occupied territory. Its Albanian population has turned to civil disobedience. Serbia has been playing a zero-sum game with Kosovo, constantly raising the stakes. According to the current constitution of Serbia, forced upon Kosovo and Vojvodina last year, provincial assemblies have the right to seek postponement of all constitutional changes for six months. If they continue to withhold agreement, then the changes must be submitted to an all-Serbian referendum. By dissolving the provincial assembly just before the referendum, Serbia has not only acted illegally but has also made sure that a new constitution – denying the provinces all say in constitutional matters – will be adopted by the end of the year. (Regrettably, Mihajlo Markovic, once a member of the *Praxis* group of intellectuals but now a close adviser of Milosevic, played a prominent role in these anti-democratic moves.)

The Yugoslav Presidency has given cover to Serbia's anti-Albanian measures, although the Slovenian and Croatian representatives voted against it. Slovenia was alone in publicly condemning the dissolution of the Kosovo parliament and the use of force to resolve differences between Yugoslav nationalities. In doing so it proved that it understands the essence of the Yugoslav state community far better than the latter's constitutional guardians. For the first time since the Second World War, the Albanian population is being forced to choose between staying in Yugoslavia – with the loss of all political rights – and unification with Albania. Given the extraordinary commitment of the Albanian people to the preservation of their national and civil liberties, and the presence of a highly articulate and politically capable Albanian intelligentsia, Serbia will find it difficult to crush Kosovo. In the province the parties of the opposition, locked-out state officials and parliamentarians, academic bodies, dismissed enterprise managers, purged journalists and teachers, etc. have now formed a united Democratic Forum, commanding the seemingly total support of the population. An even more telling sign of the strength of this Albanian national accord has been the ending of all blood feuds, thus closing a thousand-year-old chapter in Albanian history. Kosovo's eventual location will be decided, of course, also by the post-communist evolution of Albania itself.

Milosevic is raising the stakes not only in regard to Kosovo but also in regard to Yugoslavia as a whole. The latest threat is that, if the other republics do not accept Serbia's vision of Yugoslavia, then Serbia will seek annexation of territories belonging to other republics and indeed in some cases whole republics. This used to be a demand of the extreme wing of the Serb nationalist movement; its adoption by Milosevic testifies to the continued right-wing slide of the Serbian ex-Communists.

Vojvodina, with its 53% Serb majority, is unlikely to follow Kosovo on its collision course with Belgrade. To be sure, its Hungarian, Croat, Romanian and Ruthenian minorities are busy these days organising national parties, in reaction to the severe reduction of their cultural rights and their elimination from the provincial parliament and government. Growing nationalism in their motherlands has made its own contribution to this resurgence of national agitation. And Serbia also faces problems in its dealings with Serb and Montenegrin national groups in Vojvodina. The cadres appointed by Belgrade after the overthrow of the old leadership in 1988 have proved to be incompetent and corrupt. Deletion of provincial autonomy has also led to an economic pillage of the province, and a grave decline in the living standards of the population in what used to be Yugoslavia's second-richest federal unit. A sign of the new times is also Belgrade's intention to close down the provincial Academy. Thus, although Vojvodina is not going to declare its independence from Serbia, it will fight to restore its autonomy in cultural and economic – hence also political – life. Unlike in Serbia proper, its opposition parties – most notably the League of Social Democrats – called for an outright boycott of the referendum.

THE POWER OF MYTH

Stav, the journal of the now defunct Socialist Youth Organization of Vojvodina, rates today as one of the most serious independent publications in Yugoslavia. We reproduce here from its June issue extracts from an interview with Lazar Stojanovic, a prominent Belgrade film director, and one of the few Serb intellectuals who have spoken courageously against nationalism.

In 1973, Stojanovic was sentenced to three years in prison for making *Plastic Jesus*. This short film, part of his diploma work, the prosecutor had alleged was guilty of a "malevolent and untrue representation of socio-political conditions" in the country. Following his release, Stojanovic remained *persona non grata* for the following fifteen years and has only recently been able to speak out. A long-standing opponent of the Communist Party's political monopoly, Stojanovic is also a sharp critic of Slobodan Milosevic and his politics. The questions asked in the interview are of a general character, but one deals with a very important recent incident that illustrates the *Kulturkampf* atmosphere now raging in Serbia and which needs to be described in advance.

The patron saint of the Serbian Orthodox Church is Saint Sava, a man who – back in the 14th century – played an important role in the establishment of the first Serbian state. A young and patriotic Serbian writer, Sinisa Kovacevic, recently wrote a play about Saint Sava, in which the life of the Serbian court at the time was used as a device to address some of the problems that in his view face present-day Serbia. Kovacevic's *Saint Sava* is an essentially modern and secular play, which a few years ago would have caught attention more for its theme than for its icono-

clasm. Nevertheless, the first performance of this play in Belgrade (June 1990) was first interrupted and than stopped after the physical intervention of a group of national and religious zealots (including Vojislav Seselj, one time dissident and now leader of the Chetnik Party). They denounced the play, the author and the actors, for committing a national and religious sacrilege. The writer was attacked for presenting Saint Sava as a secular rather than a holy personality and the Serbian ruling family as an "illiterate, dirty and promiscuous" lot. More generally, the author was accused of "misrepresenting true history".

At the time, the police offered no protection to the actors, the playwright or the theatre staff threatened with physical violence. The Serbian Minister of Culture has since maintained a studied silence. The official press has provided generous space for readers to denounce the play and its author, despite the fact that many readily admit that they have neither read or seen the play. The Orthodox Church has solidarised with the cultural storm-troopers. The result: the play has been taken off the repertoire and effectively banned in Serbia. The actor portraying Saint Sava, threatened with assassination of himself and members of his family, has gone into hiding.

A few brave voices have been raised in protest against this form of censorship from below, but the opposition parties, including the otherwise liberally-inclined Democratic Party, have either supported the proscription or made non-committal noises.

M.L.

Stav: You were charged with making no distinction in your film between fascism and communism. Today, however, despite greater freedoms, Yugoslavia appears to be nearing a national-chauvinist totalitarianism. Does the transition from *Plastic Jesus* to *Saint Sava* confirm the thesis that communist rule is being replaced by a national-chauvinist one?

Stojanovic: When making the film, I was frequently told that communist dictatorship was based on the concept of the hegemony of the proletariat, whereas the national dictatorship was based on the concept of domination of one nation over another, and that the two were wholly different things. Yet, over the past decade we have seen throughout Eastern Europe communist leaderships regularly manipulating national feelings, in order to find in national movements a new basis for continuation of their power. In the recent free elections in Slovenia and Croatia, this process has brought to power representatives of national programmes. Something similar is bound to happen also in other parts of the country. Yet it would be wrong to describe as fascist the political groups that have come to power in Slovenia and Croatia, unless they do in fact prove to be such. They have been elected in democratic elections and can be replaced democratically. The ruling elite here [in Serbia], on the other hand, was elected by nobody, nor can they be replaced democratically. It is not surprising, moreover, that repressed national emotions should need to put democracy to the test, to see whether anyone is going to set a limit upon this sensitive domain of free expression. I do not see any danger in this, provided there is public control of government, a free press and a clearly defined opposition. Such a system would prevent any monopoly over power, in a single federal unit or in Yugoslavia as a whole.

Stav: How about the incident with *Saint Sava*?

Stojanovic: Many liberal intellectuals were shocked to see that a mob can stop a play because they disagree with what it says. The shock was in part due to our lack of experience of spontaneous mass action. We were more inured to interventions by the state, which took politer forms. Yet these too were brutal: plays were banned, books destroyed. [...] In Belgrade, however, it was a mob rather than the state which prevented the play from being performed. What happened to *Saint Sava* was more reminiscent of the East than of the West: of countries in which the state is fused with the church, as is the case in Iran, for example. In Belgrade too a mob attacked a work, but luckily did not take the next step of demanding the author's head.

Stav: The Communist myth has been destroyed, without being replaced by new values. Do you think that the return of old values, and their transformation into cults, means that the society is regressing?

Stojanovic: This is the central question. Myths, of which *Saint Sava* is only one example, have an expressly [national] clan nature. Throughout Yugoslavia today, they are being used to define the origins of the people. The various clans have different myths, and taboos and totems deriving from them. For example, the exceptionally influential factor of the aggressive Serb attitude to Kosovo, and to the Albanian demand for at least such autonomy as is guaranteed by the existing Federal constitution, is largely based on a mythical and totemic attitude to the Battle of Kosovo [at which the Serbian state was destroyed in 1389] and to the ensuing Serb migrations from Kosovo. This attitude prevents people from asking whence derives their right to claim certain territories – a certain part of Yugoslavia. Instead of a serious examination of why should they be drawn into conflicts over certain territories, or the territorial demands raised by certain parties, the whole thing is explained by myths. Everything that happens in regard to Kosovo is explained in the simple formula: Our soul is there. The myth thus becomes the main argument. An informational blockade has long been imposed on all the main Serbian media with respect to events in the southern province, and instead the people is presented with this myth. By controlling the truth, it can be maintained that popular mood alone is proof of someone's right to protect by force something against which the majority of the Kosovo population is arrayed. Our Serb truth, it is argued, begins with a capital letter and this justifies all the actions of the authorities there.

Such a way of establishing the truth, which characterises not only Serbs but, I am afraid, the entire Balkans, provides a bad foundation for democracy. Against this, one can fight only by using and widening the freedom of the press. In this way, perhaps, the population will realize what their real interests are and stop living in myths. Real, living categories will then become our reality.

In Serbia, it seems to me, this mythological life

is most intense. Myth, of course, is becoming reality also in other parts of Yugoslavia, but I suppose those who live there would know this better. I am particularly affected by this Serb, Kosovo, myth because I am Serb by birth, and because its unfortunate consequence is a constant threat of civil war, a war that already exists in the Province, where a civilised and peaceful demand by its citizens for autonomy – an autonomy which indeed belongs to them – is becoming more and more explicit. This is the basis of my opposition to the Serb authorities, which in regard to Kosovo are behaving in an adventurist manner, to say the least.

I have realised that, whenever the regime is faced with a crisis, it seeks to make the situation in Kosovo exceptional, thus strengthening its arbitrary power. Here, it seems, they are ready to provoke wars, if they think this necessary. However, they have succeeded only in creating a critical situation in Kosovo and other areas where Serbs live. The regime is using the Serb diaspora as a kind of destabilising mechanism, so that the resulting instability, like a kind of permanent state of emergency, will favour and strengthen its power. Such behaviour may have its own political logic, but it is so dangerous and irresponsible that it is condemned by all the civilised world. A large number of political observers in Belgrade have likewise seen through it, correctly judging that the Communist authorities are resolving to all manner of tricks, and have condemned it as a basic danger to democracy in Yugoslavia and the Balkans, as well as to any chances of Balkan integration into Europe.

Serbs, unfortunately, are not being told any of this. They read the main daily, *Politika*, which is *de facto* the organ of the party, and watch Belgrade television, which censors information and serves up only a regulated number of "affairs". If I myself were reduced to reading nothing but *Politika* for a week, I would probably become a passionate Serb, take up my gun and go off to fight in some "hot spot" or other for the prestige of my nation. The sources of information have become a propaganda machine, and this in itself is a most serious problem.

Stav: How do you explain the fact that most Serb intellectuals, even those who twenty or thirty years ago proved the liberal nature of the Serb intelligentsia by standing up against totalitarianism, are silent on the issue of Kosovo?

Stojanovic: Given the dominance of aggressive attitudes to Kosovo, on the part of regime and opposition alike, many intellectuals holding different opinions are avoiding stating these in public. This is because, in our society, loyalty is rewarded, while disloyalty – even when it is not punished – brings threats and career problems. This can easily be proved by reference to the large number of individuals who are suddenly doing extremely well, simply because they have started to support the regime's positions on this issue. In contrast, there are other people – usually non-Serb – who are now faring far less well in Belgrade and other Serbian towns. This process, which is called homogenisation, is beginning to act as a kind of Serb monopoly over culture. I think this is highly negative. It is preventing an opening towards Europe.

Stav: And towards Yugoslavia?

Stojanovic: Naturally, towards Yugoslavia as well. Although it is not useful today to argue who started first to pull down bridges, it does seem that Serbia bears considerable responsibility for the fact that so many voters in Croatia have opted for a national programme. Every Yugoslav community today is concentrating on strengthening its national identity. This is due not just to some delayed need, but also to insecurity, and to uncertainty regarding the future forms of the Yugoslav state. Yugoslav unity has been the object of considerable manipulation, not just since the [Second World] War, but also since 1918, when it was achieved, created or perhaps imposed. I have the feeling that we do not know enough about the circumstances in which Yugoslavia was created. It is indeed strange, this formation in which all find themselves enslaved. Yet I believe there are sufficient grounds, at the level of individual citizens, to seek a new basis for continued union.

As for Serbia, its position in relation to Yugoslavia is that of somebody who is rocking the boat. Serbia is seeking to recreate the federation on the old [centralist] principles, but I do not see why those who have now achieved full statehood should wish suddenly to give it up. The alternative offer coming from Serbia is that, if the other federal republics do not wish such a Yugoslav state, then the internal borders should be redrawn. Two possible sets of frontiers are on offer: those established by AVNOJ [the 1943 Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation of Yugoslavia], or new ones, as advocated by the Serbian opposition. I think these demands are too sharply posed. If Serbia continues with this policy, then it will be the biggest culprit for the break-up of Yugoslavia. I hope this will not happen.

Serbs must understand that one cannot go into a union with hegemonistic intentions. Their numerical weight and their history are evidence enough that, in the past, they sought union not just for sentimental, but for quite other reasons. Therefore, they must persuade the others of their good intentions, and not always demand that such good intentions be shown only to them. Also, people here must understand that there are republics that are economically much more advanced, that they have much more rational economic programmes that we have over here, where economic programmes have not gone beyond raising a public loan.

REVIEWS

L.A. Gordon and
E.V. Klopov
What was it? Thoughts on the Preconditions and Results of What happened to us in the Thirties and Forties
Politizdat, Moscow 1989.

IT IS A MEASURE of how far things have changed in the Soviet Union and the expectations that have been raised that I was ultimately disappointed by this book. Gordon is a sociologist well-known for his studies of the Soviet working class whereas Klopov is a historian about whom I know nothing. Gordon and Klopov have not sought to bring to light any startling new revelations about the Stalin period; their task is nonetheless the very important one of analysing the origins and impact of the Stalin period and Stalinism on Soviet development and the very lives of Soviet people. To this end they have kept their references entirely to sources already published in the Soviet Union and they have not attempted to delve into closed archives or material published in the West.

They readily admit that their work is just a start to the task they have set themselves. This self-imposed restriction immediately places barriers to a rounded analysis of these questions. The writings of the major protagonists (other than Stalin) are only just beginning to be published in the Soviet Union and although the authors indicate an acquaintance with some of the ideas of the various oppositions, they are unable to engage in a thorough discussion which could aid their overall argument. What we are left with, therefore, is something approaching a synthesis of Gorbachevite thinking on the Stalin era, the causes of the subsequent "stagnation" and the consequent need for Perestroika to put things right.

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to dismiss a book which for the first time in the Soviet Union presents a coherent picture of the Stalin era in terms of the scale of the destruction wrought in the countryside as a result of forced collectivisation and industrialisation and the Great Purges. Here the authors' training proves invaluable as they attempt to piece together from published statistics the real extent of the likely deaths from "unnatural" causes. They estimate that between 4 and 5 million perished in the first half of the Thirties and a further 4 million in the terror of the late Thirties. This is not a history book, however, as much as an analytical account of the period, which draws out various themes of economic and political development. Much of the information therefore appears in a fairly dry form accompanied by statistics.

The work indicates the new ground broken by social scientists under Gorbachev. The very notion of "Stalinism", the previous existence of which had been vigorously denied as an invention of bourgeois ideology or malicious Trotskyite propaganda, is accepted and a distinction scrupulously drawn between the Stalin period as a moment in Soviet history and Stalinism as a mode of operation, elements of which continued (and continue) to influence the course of Soviet development. The merits of forced collectivisation and industrialisation are subjected to a fierce critique. For the first time the notion that Bukharin represented a coherent and viable alternative to Stalin is given a wide airing but the very lack of published material on Bukharin's programme prevents a detailed discussion of what that alternative would have meant in practice. Nevertheless, the idea that Stalinist industrialisation provided a vital platform for repelling and then defeating the Nazi invasion in 1941 is treated sceptically and the authors believe that a lower, but more consistent rate of growth without the disastrous effects on agriculture could have produced the same results.

The book suffers from seeing the causes of Stalinism as purely the consequences of processes internal to the Soviet Union. The whole prelude to Stalinism is virtually ignored and, although references are made to the changing character of the party in the 1920s, the outcome of the Stalin/Trotsky struggle is taken for granted. Trotsky merits just two lines in a footnote. Although one reason for the Stalin counter-revolution is given as a perceived threat to Soviet security and a concomitant need to develop Soviet heavy and defence industries, there is no analysis of the balance of forces on an international level and not a word is devoted to Stalin's foreign policy. Even in a book which focuses on the effects on the Soviet people, this is surely a major lacuna as those effects were influenced by events particularly in Europe e.g. the coming to power of Hitler and the defeat of the Spanish Republic, both to a great extent consequences of the policies of the Stalinised Comintern. Similarly, there is not a word about the transplantation of Stalinist regimes into Eastern Europe after World War Two, or of the Chinese revolution which freed the Soviet Union from its isolation.

The book's strongest feature is its analysis of the results of Stalinism: the contradictory character of many of the "achievements" of industrialisation – full employment at the cost of severe restrictions on the movement of labour; rising wages and declining living standards, etc.

Its weakest feature is its handling of the causes of Stalinism. While the authors try desperately to identify the objective processes which propelled the historical actors to make or not to make the choices they did, one is left with a feeling that it was the psychological make-up of the Stalins and Bukharins which was the ultimate determinant of forced collectivisation and industrialisation. This would not be so bad if the book contained rounded portraits of the main protagonists, but the authors are so concerned to avoid concentrating on individuals that Stalin makes only fleeting appearances. Nevertheless, there is a quite interesting discussion of the Stalinism affected the mass psychology of the Soviet people. Real analysis of the modus operandi of Stalin's political regime and economy is also absent; they are simply referred to as "despotic" and "command-authoritarian".

Inevitably, the authors also find it difficult to make up their minds about the nature of the bureaucracy. They deny that a distinct social layer came into existence, but acknowledge that the apparatus was privileged compared to the rest of Soviet society and afflicted by bureaucratism. To go beyond this would mean questioning Gorbachev's strategy and ability to carry it out.

All in all, therefore, the book is very much a mixed bag from the standpoint of a Western reviewer. But, although this book attempts to provide a historical justification for the present course in the USSR, it is still the best analysis of the Stalin period to have appeared in the Soviet Union and as such will hopefully prove just the starting-point for more detailed research.

Rick Simon

Labour Focus on **EASTERN EUROPE**