

LABOUR FOCUS ON EASTERN EUROPE

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Andropov: WHAT WILL HE BRING?

Interview with Zhores Medvedev

EP Thompson on the Peace Movement and Eastern Europe

JY Potel — 1 Year of Martial Law in Poland

A Letter to the Left from the Solidarity Underground

Janos Kis — East Europe at the End of an Era

The Moscow Socialist Journal 'Left Turn'

Peace Group News from GDR Hungary USSR

News and Analysis from East Germany Czechoslovakia

Hungary Romania Yugoslavia

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Statement of Aims

A growing number of socialists and communists are taking a stand against the suppression of democratic rights in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The labour movement has international responsibilities in this field as well as in the field of solidarity action with those struggling against oppression in Chile or Southern Africa or Northern Ireland.

But up to now socialists have lacked a source of frequent and reliable information about events in Eastern Europe. Coverage in the papers of the Left remains scanty, while reports in the bourgeois press are selective and slanted. The first aim of **Labour Focus on Eastern Europe** is to help fill this gap by providing a more comprehensive and regular source of information about events in that part of the world.

The mass media gave ample space to Tory politicians and to some from the Labour Party who seek to use protests against repression in Eastern Europe as a cover for their own support for social inequality in Britain and for witch-hunts against those who oppose it. At the same time campaigns run by socialists in the labour and trade union movement for many years concerning victims of repression in Eastern Europe are largely ignored by the media. The second aim of this bulletin therefore is to provide comprehensive information about the activities of socialists and labour movement organisations that are taking up this issue.

Labour Focus is a completely independent bulletin whose editorial collective includes various trends of socialist and Marxist opinion. It is not a bulletin for debate on the nature of the East European states, nor is its purpose to recommend a strategy for socialists in Eastern Europe: there are other journals on the left that take up these questions. Our purpose is to provide a comprehensive coverage of these societies with a special emphasis on significant currents campaigning for working class, democratic and national rights.

Whenever possible we will quote the sources of our information. Unless otherwise stated, all material in **Labour Focus** may be reproduced, with acknowledgement. Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of the editorial collective.

In these ways we hope to strengthen campaigns to mobilise the considerable influence that the British labour movement can have in the struggles to end repression in the USSR and Eastern Europe.

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Speakers at EESC meeting at Labour Party Conference: (from left) Andrzej Lodinski, Naomi Hyamson, Reg Race MP, Zbigniew Kowalewski, Eric Heffer MP.

Contents

EDITORIALS

Poland — The Rook and the Bishop.....	1
Free the Russian Socialists!.....	1

Yuri Andropov and his Ways	
— Interview with Zhores Medvedev.....	2
The Peace Movement and Eastern Europe	
— Interview with Edward Thompson.....	7
Disarmament Begins at Home — By Wolf Biermann.....	10
The End of the Post-Stalin Epoch — By Janos Kis.....	12

POLAND

A Year of Martial Law in Poland	
— By Jean-Yves Potel.....	18
Letter to the Left — By Dawid Warszawski.....	23
Open Letter to Western Labour Movement.....	24
Gdansk Answers Solidarity Ban.....	25
2 Letters by Lech Walesa.....	26
Jaruzelski's New Unions — By Peter Green.....	27

USSR

Russian Socialists and Eurocommunists	
Face Trial — By Oliver MacDonald.....	27
A Review of the Journal <i>Left Turn</i>	28
Open Letter by Soviet Peace Groups.....	29
Workers' Opposition in Ukraine — By Vasyli Demchuk.....	30

ROMANIA

Ceausescu Tries CIA Methods on Workers	
— By Andrew Csepel.....	31
An Unofficial Hungarian View of Romania	
— By Kalman Garzo.....	32

HUNGARY

The Hungarian Peace Movement — By Bill Lomax.....	35
Round Table Between EP Thompson, Ferenc Köszegi, András Hegedüs and Miklós Haraszti.....	36
Dignitatis Humanae Committee Formed.....	36
Police Harassment of Samizdat Activists.....	37
'56 Veteran Still Being Victimised.....	37
Solidarity Demonstration in Budapest.....	38
Appeal on Gdansk Agreements Anniversary.....	38

GDR

Hundreds of Women Make Pacifist Protest.....	39
Simone Langrock Released — Interview.....	39

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Czech Voices still raised for Solidarity	
— By Oliver MacDonald.....	41
Charter 77 Statement on Gdansk Anniversary.....	41
Socialists and Illegal Literature	
— Dr Jirina Siklova's Speech in her own Defence.....	42
Jirous and Others Lose Appeal — By Andrew Csepel.....	43
Charter 77 Club formed.....	44

YUGOSLAVIA

Solidarnost with Solidarnosc — By Michele Lee.....	44
--	----

LETTERS.....	45
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Thanks to Colin Smith for the design.

Poland: The Rook and The Bishop

Anyone seriously committed to the cause of socialism and democracy in Poland must be able to remember at least half a dozen occasions during the last two and a half years when they felt, against all past experience and against their own better judgement, that there really might be a chance that the Communist Party leadership would seriously commit itself to some sort of reconciliation with its own working class. Each of these moments of hope was swiftly swept away by some new government-inspired provocation or test of strength. Yet eventually the regime would produce some new, ingenious move from the fertile brain of a Rakowski or Wiatr to tempt us once again to believe something genuinely constructive was contemplated.

So it is now with the release of Lech Walesa and with the government's apparent readiness to let him speak out in public (see his important December letter to Jaruzelski reproduced in this issue of *Labour Focus*). True martial law has only been 'suspended', but we are assured that events are moving smoothly towards its complete abolition.

As for Poland's Roman Catholic Primate, Archbishop Glemp, he has been almost recklessly tripping over the sensibilities of his own followers in his rush to welcome in what he believes to be the new dawn of national reconciliation just over the horizon. After strongly opposing Solidarity's 10 November protest, he suggested that people should adopt a positive view of PRON, the 'Patriotic Movement of National Rebirth' set up to offer people not in the Communist Party a framework for collaborating with the government. He then vigorously attacked the Actors' Union, ZASP, for its protracted and extremely successful boycott of the official media and theatres — over 90% of the 2,000 members are said to have participated. The Archbishop has also been indicating his 'realistic' attitude towards the new unions that are due to start operating in the new year. And there can be little doubt that Glemp is acting with the blessing, albeit tacit, of the Vatican himself: his latest flurry of political activity started the moment he returned from Rome after lengthy consultations with the Pope.

Optimists can also draw encouragement from the undoubted fact that Moscow is not noticeably warm in its attitude towards General Jaruzelski and his group — indeed there is evidence, both from its rather ungenerous attitude towards economic assistance and from grumbings in the Soviet press, as well as from figures like Grabski within the Polish Communist Party known for their close ties with Moscow, that the Soviet Party leadership regards the government's course as distinctly unorthodox.

So should we, the Western Left, not call it a day as far as defending Solidarity is concerned and wait for the new national consensus? Jaruzelski says he wants it, Glemp clearly thinks it's on the cards, and Walesa is at least on the fringes of official public life.

As Walesa himself has said, the precondition for any reconciliation must be the lifting of the 'state of war', the release of all detainees and an amnesty for the thousands of political prisoners. The last point is particularly crucial if there is to be any serious reconciliation with Poland's workers. The great bulk of those serving jail sentences are authoritative and trusted leaders of workers from all over Poland. They have been jailed precisely for that reason. Any new trade union movement built without the involvement of Solidarity's elected leaders will not carry the stamp of authenticity.

Secondly, the guidelines already laid down for the projected new trade unions would have to be altered to enable such unions to be genuinely independent of the state. As the rules stand, local officialdom — the very people that any trade union would have to be able to stand up to — can effectively pick and choose whom they wish to lead the new unions. Once again, Walesa has implicitly raised this point by arguing that there must be pluralism in the trade union movement.

Thirdly, the new unions must be able to manage their

own internal affairs as they see fit. The government claims that it wants 'independent, self-governing' unions but it has offered no guarantees whatever on this score. No one can doubt that this issue is a basic principle for Polish workers.

It was the central demand of the August strikes of 1980, and it was the central experience of Poland's workers during Solidarity's 16 months of open existence. Without self-government within the trade union movement no authentic dialogue and inter-play between officialdom and the working class will be possible.

If these conditions were met then the Western labour movements would have the right — indeed the duty — to recognise the reborn trade union movement in Poland and to campaign in the West on its behalf against the Cold Warriors trying to use the Polish workers as a pawn in the drive to launch an economic war against Eastern Europe and to remilitarise the West.

But whatever Archbishop Glemp may feel about the turn of events in Poland, there is precious little sign that the regime is softening its attitude towards *trade union rights*. What seems much more likely to be in the offing is the replacement of martial law with a new brand of corporatism involving some more or less formal partnership between the Communist Party and the Church hierarchy which would together manage the affairs of the Polish state.

If such an 'historic compromise' between Church and Party is achieved, and perhaps consecrated by the Pope when he visits Poland next summer, it will certainly be a novel development for Eastern Europe, very different from the Husak model, and no doubt far from ideal in Soviet eyes. It may also achieve a measure of political stability in Poland for a while. After all, the Party and Church hierarchies have some important features in common: a preference for autocratic methods of rule within their respective organisations, and a considerable fear of democratic, egalitarian and unmanipulated mass domestic popular movements (One of the great myths of the last years has been that the Church hierarchy was an enthusiastic supporter of Solidarity.) Its attitude was in reality very different from that of the Catholic laity, the Catholic intelligentsia and very many local priests.)

But what such an authoritarian corporatist alliance would not do would be to satisfy the needs of Poland's working people for any length of time. It would be no substitute for independent trade unions and an independent voice of the workers in managing their own affairs. This point should be stated bluntly by all who know the value of independent trade unions.

Wrona, the rook, is what the Polish people call General Jaruzelski's military council. The rook cannot on its own defeat the workers' aspirations for independent organisation. Nor should anyone believe that in the long run Jaruzelski can check-mate the traditions and aspirations of Solidarity with the aid of a Bishop.

The best way for us to influence the course of events is to insist that for 16 months the Polish workers spoke loud and clear on what sort of labour movement they wanted. They have lost it. Justice, and also long-term stability, demand they get it back.

FREE THE RUSSIAN SOCIALISTS!

We Labour Focus readers should do all in our power to gain urgent protests from labour movement bodies and groups of individuals against the arrest of six socialists in Moscow due to face trial for 'Anti-Socialist Agitation and Propaganda' in January. Full information on these outrageous arrests is contained in this issue. Send protests to the Soviet Embassy in London. For leaflets and other information contact: The Eastern Europe Solidarity Campaign, c/o Vladimir Derer, 10 Park Drive, London NW11.

ANDROPOV

AN INTERVIEW WITH ZHOSES MEDVEDEV

Yuri Andropov and his Ways

(Dr. ZHOSES MEDVEDEV, the exiled Russian socialist and scientist, and a prolific writer on Soviet society, was one of the very few people to have predicted, as far back as 1979, that Yuri Andropov was a likely successor to Brezhnev as General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party. Oliver MacDonalld interviewed him on the new Soviet leader, on his background and on some of the changes he may bring. An extract from this interview appeared in Labour Weekly, 19 November.)

The Succession

What made you expect that Andropov was a likely successor to Brezhnev?

I simply analysed the composition of the Politburo — the body from which the new General Secretary was bound to be chosen, in line with the Communist Party's constitutional procedures. If Brezhnev had been able to retire and to pick his own successor, Chernenko would have been the likely choice: he was a man personally close to Brezhnev himself. But since that was not possible, Andropov was the most likely candidate.¹

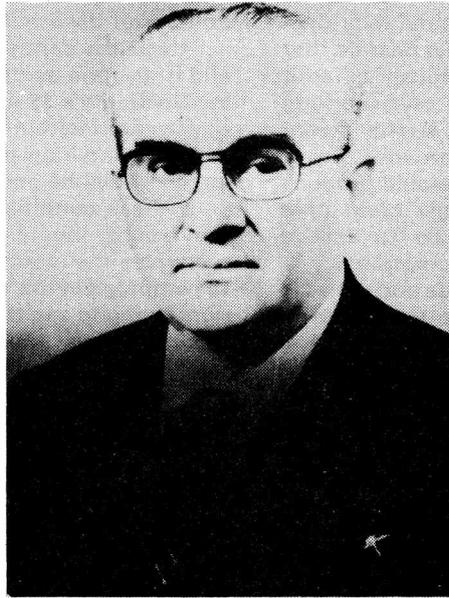
Individual will and ambition are not enough to make an aspiring Politburo member General Secretary. He must attract the support not only of the rest of the Politburo, but also of the Central Committee, which formally elects the leader, and of the wider Party elite.² The successful candidate must satisfy the requirements and aspirations of this elite.

Some observers expected a contemporary caretaker might be appointed, but I never thought this likely. The wider Party bureaucracy desire stability and they therefore want someone who is likely to be durable. For this reason figures like Kirilenko, Chernenko and Ustinov, all in their seventies, were improbable choices.

Chernenko did have the advantage of Brezhnev's personal support — he was a confidant of Brezhnev — but he lacked sufficient independent authority within the Party elite. He never gave the impression of being strong enough to manage affairs. He knew how to use the telephone, but not other means of power. He never made strong, effective speeches, for example.

Others like Grishin, the Moscow Party secretary, or Romanov of Leningrad, were younger and more energetic, but they were not popular because their corrupt and opulent life-styles were quite well known in Moscow and other places. Their image was unsuitable for holding the top post.

(Romanov was the deputy and protege of the very corrupt Tolstikov in Leningrad,



YURI VLADIMIROVICH ANDROPOV

Born 1914, son of a railway worker. From 1930 to 1932 worked in the telegraph, was a sailor on the Volga and an apprentice in cinema mechanics. In 1936 he gained a diploma from the technical institute for water transport, but he did not pursue further courses either at the Karelian State University in Petrozavodsk or at the Party University. From 1938 to 1940 he was head of the Komsomol in the Jaroslavl district and he joined the Communist Party in 1939. From 1940 to 1944 he was in Petrozavodsk as head of the Karelian-Finnish Komsomol and from 1944 to 1947 he was second secretary of the Party committee there. From 1947 to 1951 he was second secretary to the Central Committee at Petrozavodsk and between 1951 and 1953 he became an inspector of the Central Committee, director of a CC department in Moscow, and chief of the Foreign Affairs. Between 1953 and 1954 he was an Embassy counsellor and from then until 1957 he was ambassador in Budapest. From 1957 to 1967 he headed the Foreign Socialist Department of the Central Committee. He became a member of the Central Committee in 1961 and a CC secretary in 1962. In 1967 he left his job in the secretariat to become head of the KGB and an alternate member of the Politburo. In April 1973 he became a full member of the Politburo. In May 1982 he left the KGB and became Central Committee secretary for ideology, following Suslov's death.

until the latter was compromised by being caught in a pleasure yacht in compromising circumstances — border guards seized it crossing outside territorial waters in the Gulf of Finland. As a result, Tolstikov was removed from his post and despatched to the Embassy in Peking at a time when it was under siege during the Cultural Revolution! Romanov took Tolstikov's place but seems to have maintained his personal traditions. Grishin is a similar type. When he became

Moscow Party secretary, the unpleasant but austere Shelepin took his place as head of the trade unions and immediately ordered that the pleasures associated with the job under Grishin be abolished.)

So Andropov was the only person who gave an impression of strength, seemed knowledgeable and was also known to be competent in every way. He led a modest private life — there were no stories of his misusing public funds or acquiring cars, girl-friends etc. And he had built up a sufficiently broad and diverse base of support despite his KGB background to ensure his success.

Did the actual mechanics of the succession have any special features?

The crucial event really took place in May. There should have been a Politburo and a Central Committee meeting in March, but when Brezhnev returned from Tashkent at that time he was ill and the leadership did not meet until May. (This despite the fact that the March meetings had been due to discuss the so-called Food Programme which needed to be approved before the Spring thaw in order to be implemented properly.) The May meeting of the Politburo passed the Food Programme but it also discussed a key leadership issue: who should take over Suslov's post as Central Committee secretary in charge of ideology following Suslov's death at the beginning of the year.

According to my information Brezhnev suggested Chernenko for this job, effectively the number two position in the Party leadership. Whoever held this post would be responsible for convening Politburo meetings in Brezhnev's absence, and so on.

There was apparently quite a heated debate on the Politburo and this was practically the first time when Brezhnev's suggestion for a top appointment was not accepted. Not only Ustinov, but even Kunaev of Kazakhstan, who was a close friend of Brezhnev, was against Chernenko. Such people were loyal to Brezhnev, but this didn't mean that they would transfer their loyalty to any successor he chose. Chernenko was a relative newcomer to the Politburo and the others considered themselves more prominent. So Andropov was elected instead, and his own man, Fedorchuk, was promoted to replace him at the KGB. The Politburo's proposal was accepted by the Central Committee meeting that followed — there was no challenge — and this made him the most likely successor as effective number two. Against this background it is not surprising that at the Politburo meeting that nominated Andropov after Brezhnev's death, it was Chernenko who recommended that he be appointed.

A Liberal?

What do you make of the suggestions in some newspapers that Andropov may

be a 'liberal'? What is the basis for such rumours?

I would not view Andropov as a liberal in our sense of the word at all. He should be seen as a very competent, energetic politician with technocratic links — he is not just a bureaucrat or a 'partocrat' — but this doesn't make him a liberal.

Some people have mentioned the fact that he has patronised the Tagansky Theatre in Moscow, quite a popular theatre, to suggest liberal leanings. But we must remember that there is a family connection there — his daughter is married to an actor at the Tagansky.

Another point remembered by some intellectuals was his supposed support for an important anti-Stalin letter in the 1960s. This was a letter signed by many academicians and scientists sent to the 23rd Party Congress opposing any rehabilitation of Stalin. This letter, signed by Sakharov (at that time not a dissident), Kapitsa and others, was drafted by a man called Rostovsky, (better known as Ernest Henry, known here from when he was working for Soviet security in the Embassy in Britain during the 1930s, when he is supposed to have been in contact with Philby). He was very strongly against Stalin because he had actually been arrested when he returned to Moscow from Britain and spent several years in the camps himself. So when he was circulating the letter amongst the Academicians, he made clear to them that the letter had the approval of the Central Committee department for relations with foreign ruling Communist Parties that Andropov was heading at the time. And indeed that was an important reason why so many prominent intellectuals signed the letter. But of course one doesn't know how far Andropov was personally involved in this. He must be a very careful manipulator.

Against such stories we must set the record of the last few months while he was Central Committee secretary for ideology and while his own nominee, Fedorchuk, has been running the KGB. Responsibility for ideology covers such matters as science, censorship, the whole cultural field, the press and so on. In August, the direct dialing system between the Soviet Union and the West, started in 1979, was ended while Brezhnev was away in the Crimea and Andropov was in charge: this was a great disappointment to intellectuals. Telephone connections with the outside world are now much more difficult. Then from September 1st there was a ban on Soviet books being sent abroad unless they gain a special permit from the Lenin State Library — a time consuming obstacle. There are signs that the censorship of mail has also been increased. There has been a 100% increase in customs duties on all sorts of items. Fedorchuk, the new KGB boss has also been shown to be a very military type of figure. None of these developments squares very easily with the notion that Andropov is launching a new wave of liberalisation.

If we look at the people he has drawn around himself, like Arbatov or Shakhnozarov then at least we can say that they are not drawn from the more reac-

tionary wing of the Party elite, they are more realistic and more technocratic in their outlook. But that is not the same thing as saying they are liberals who might, for example, abolish censorship.

Someone told me that in the late 1960s, Sakharov had been able to phone up Andropov personally and discuss any problems with him — this was cited as an example of Andropov's flexibility, or even liberalism.

No, Sakharov had access to a special telephone network until the very end of 1968, but this had nothing to do with Andropov. There are three telephone systems in the Soviet Union: the ordinary one, through which you could phone the office of any top official but you would reach an office cler, not the person at the top; secondly, there is the so-called Vertushka, a direct line between Central Committee members, Obkom³ secretaries, top government people and so on, cutting out their secretaries and using a special telephone on their desks. Andropov was, of course, on this list, and so was Sakharov because until he lost his clearance, he was one of 6 top Academicians with access to the Vertushka because he was involved in specially secret scientific work. There is a special directory for this network — I saw one on the desk of a high agricultural official once. In 1969 I recall Sakharov had drawn up a memorandum protesting about a particular matter and he went to one of his scientific friends who was on the network in order to use his phone and make an appointment with a top official. The third network, the so called Kremlyovka, links people at the very top with each other — Politburo members, top marshals and so on. This is a videophone, so that when you call you see the face of the person you're speaking to: you can thus check that you're talking to the right person, and you can also see his expression, whether he is serious and so on!

Andropov's Career

How has Andropov risen in the Party hierarchy? What have been the key phases of his career?

He was promoted during the Khrushchev period and was not associated with Brezhnev's close circle of friends. His rise began with what Khrushchev and others regarded as his successful job in Hungary in 1956, where he was Soviet ambassador. In the West he was remembered as the man who suppressed the revolt, but in the Soviet leadership he was seen as the person who found Janos Kádár and made Hungary a reliable ally, stable economically and politically.

As a result of his role in Hungary he was appointed in 1957 as head of the Central Committee's department dealing with relations with Communist Parties in other Socialist countries. Then he was further promoted in 1962, (after the XXII Party Congress) becoming a Central Committee secretary while remaining in charge of this department. This promotion coincided with the second 'destalinisation' campaign and it

indicated that he supported Khrushchev's general policy.

1956 — Andropov and the Soviet invasion

According to General Béla Király, military commander of Budapest during the revolution (writing in *Dissent*, New York, Nov—Dec 1966), shortly after midnight on the night of 3-4 November, as Soviet troops started to break through Budapest's perimeter defences, ambassador Andropov was actually to be found in Imre Nagy's office in the Parliament, seeking up to the very last moment to assure the Hungarian prime minister that the Soviet Union had no aggressive intentions against Hungary.

Andropov carried out his instructions even to the point of putting his own life in danger, at the hands of outraged insurgents on the streets of Budapest. In Király's opinion, this may have been precisely why the Soviets ordered him there just as they opened their offensive. Had the ambassador been seized and put to death, the USSR would have gained a sensational propaganda advantage.

Andropov's period as a Central Committee secretary between 1962 and 1967 was in many ways the most crucial phase in his career, the time when he extended his influence within the leading circles of the Party. The job required considerable intellectual resources because it involved preparing the policies that the leaders of other Communist Parties would follow or consider. It was also a very sensitive political field: he was at the centre of the dispute with Mao, he had to establish relationships with the leaders of the various other Communist Parties and had to play, to some degree, a mediating role between them and the Soviet leadership.

It was at this time that Andropov really started constructing his own team. He became friendly with Arbatov and others whose names are less well-known but who were in charge of sections dealing with particular countries. He also established links with the KGB, which also provides information about other countries. He developed relationships with academic specialists — people who were not simply functionaries but knew foreign languages and were experts in their fields.

The story goes that Andropov was against the invasion of Czechoslovakia. Do you know anything of his role in that crisis?

One only hears rumours, of course. But his opposition was not a matter of principle.

In 1967 Semichastny, a supporter of Shelepin, was suddenly removed from his post as head of the KGB. Shelepin himself was removed to a less sensitive position: he had been overall in charge of state security and Brezhnev wanted rid of him. Andropov was seen as more reliable and trustworthy and was appointed head of the KGB.

At the time of the invasion of Czechoslovakia, Andropov had been at the KGB for less than a year and was busy reorganising its work. An invasion is a complex business, a military occupation is not

ANDROPOV

enough: one has to find, so to speak, a 'fifth column' of people capable of ruling the country. Such a force has to be found by the secret service, and Andropov apparently understood very well that there were no trusted people in Czechoslovakia capable of swiftly replacing Dubcek. So when the invasion plan was presented to the Soviet Central Committee for a decision, Andropov may well have expressed his reservations, realising that the task was impossible and would lead to an embarrassing situation for the Soviet leadership.

And when the army moved into Czechoslovakia, he was proved right: Dubcek and his colleagues were no sooner arrested than they had to be released and put in charge of the country again. It took almost a year before the party apparat and security services were able to remove Dubcek and even then it was simply a lucky accident that they were able to find, in Husak, someone from the top leadership in Czechoslovakia who was ready to collaborate.

So Andropov's position was probably that it was not yet time for an invasion and that they should wait and prepare more thoroughly to avoid failure.

At the KGB

Could you say something about Andropov's tenure as head of the KGB? Did he in any way alter its role within the Soviet state?

Yes he did, to his own advantage, of course. To grasp the changes we must go back to Khrushchev's work of dismantling Stalin's police apparatus.

In Stalin's time, after the assassination of Kirov, the secret police was elevated above the Party so that a local branch of the secret police could, for example, arrest a local Party secretary. Khrushchev put an end to this, placing the KGB under Party control at every level. KGB numbers and informer-networks were drastically reduced, the Gulag system was taken out of KGB hands and transferred to the Ministry of the Interior. Special KGB courts were abolished so that all charges had to go through the normal judicial channels. So-called 'ideological crimes' were taken away from the KGB and instead Khrushchev created a so-called 'Ideological Commission' and a 'Committee of State and Party Control' — two bodies within the Party system which had to deal with all types of ideological deviation as well as with corruption on the part of Party officials.

Andropov gradually altered some of these innovations. He created a department within the KGB concerned with so-called ideological divergencies, dealing with dissent, literature, art and so on with the result that the KGB began to regain some responsibilities for guarding ideological purity. At the same, the Ideological Commission within the Central Committee was practically abolished and the Committee of State and Party Control was reduced to a very minor operation and effectively ceased to function after Shelepin was removed from it. All its functions were transferred to the KGB.

This gave the KGB a political role and made Andropov a very much more powerful figure because he was able to investigate all sorts of ideological problems. The main field here was not so much dissent in the sense of my brother's views, for example — people like my brother are not numerous and are not so very important for the leadership. Much more important was the fact that Andropov was able to investigate, let's say, corruption within the Party apparat and to investigate the activities of provincial party secretaries. Such people were not actually subordinate to the KGB, but they had something to fear from it. Though the KGB could not arrest them — that would require a decision from Brezhnev and the Party leadership — it could pose a threat and this enhanced Andropov's personal influence, of course.



KGB Headquarters, the Lubyanka.

Are there any examples of Andropov using this new power?

Yes, for example in 1969 in Azerbaidzhan corruption within the republican party leadership reached such dimensions and provoked such public dissatisfaction that a thorough enquiry was carried out. The entire leadership of the Azerbaidzhan Central Committee was dismissed, and Aliev, the KGB chief in the republic, was appointed to lead the Party there, after having led the campaign against corruption. This indicated Andropov's influence in the whole affair.

In 1971 there was a similar affair in Georgia, involving the Party leader there, Mshavandze, who was also a member of the Soviet Politburo. The KGB and other sources accumulated large quantities of evidence of his corruption — drug trafficking, expensive gifts for his wife, and so on. There again the top leadership of the Party was removed in 1972.

These are simply two cases. Another that could be mentioned was the affair of Galina Brezhnev, Brezhnev's daughter, earlier this year and the circus scandal. All this was leaked through the KGB system, which prepared all this material and was responsible for the arrests since the affair involved smuggling across frontiers. So most probably Andropov was indirectly manipulating this case, which did damage Brezhnev's reputation, of course.

Could you say something about Andropov's general approach as KGB chief?

The job is a very peculiar one: it is partly international — not just the spy network, which would be handled by professional experts, but also the collection of other sorts of information, economic and

technological, etc. — then it is military because the frontier guards are under the KGB, then it is a network in all republics and oblasts, then it collects all sorts of information about dissent and about the Party apparat as well, and then again it is involved in Eastern Europe and so on.

Now it is impossible to know which of these various fields Andropov was concentrating on at any time and it is thus difficult to detect his own personal stamp on this or that aspect of the KGB's activity.

In the West, the KGB is viewed above all for its activities against dissidents. Obviously Andropov would not have been involved personally in most of this work but on the other hand in the Carter period the handling of dissent became a very important issue in East-West politics, and he must have been quite closely involved then.

Yes. The Americans made the dissidents a big diplomatic issue and this, in fact, increased the internal influence of Andropov. So, for example, the Shcharansky case became a central issue in relations with the Carter administration, involving trade relations and so on. This made Shcharansky's fate a key policy issue and at the same time, in a curious way, it made Brezhnev and his detente policy a hostage of Shcharansky's fate. And Shcharansky's destiny was in turn in the hands of the KGB, which prepared his trial. So in fact Brezhnev was helpless in front of the KGB and the materials it produced for the Shcharansky trial. In other words Andropov became the arbiter in Brezhnev's relations with the Americans. Brezhnev would go to Andropov and say: 'Look, we can't allow the Shcharansky and Orlov cases to influence my entire foreign policy, so what is going on in these cases?' And Andropov could reply, 'Well, I'm afraid these people are criminal, anti-Soviet elements and we have fully adequate proof of their activities.' And Brezhnev would have to retreat: he was not a personal dictator and had to give way.

Indeed, it was over these cases that I became very suspicious of KGB tactics, because they certainly manipulated all these trials to create the maximum outcry internationally while at the same time putting the people on trial into prison. For Brezhnev this was all a disaster for his detente policies, but it was not a disaster for Andropov. Indeed, in Shcharansky's case it was absolutely obvious that the KGB was playing quite an intricate game, investing a great deal of resources to prepare the whole case: to use provocations, planting things, placing agents like Lipavsky who was close to Shcharansky over several years before the arrest — it was a very complex case. So the question arises as to why it was necessary to take so much trouble over so many years over matters which were of very minor importance in domestic Soviet terms. Why did the KGB seem to go out of its way to create a case that was tailor-made to rouse a tremendous campaign from the Jewish lobbies abroad? What could Andropov and the KGB leadership hope to get out of it?

Well, the case certainly strengthened

Andropov's position within the Party apparatus as a whole, which is far from liberal in such matters: you can't expect an obkom secretary to be in favour of Shcharansky's release. They would rather respond to the affair with 'No, no, no!'. So Andropov could quite skilfully gain support from the conservative wing of the apparatus, while using other sorts of manipulation to gain favour with technocrats, liberal and others. All such affairs indicate to me that Andropov coonsciously used his position to achieve the general secretaryship.

And this in turn suggests that Andropov will want to make significant changes in Soviet policy. He can't be just a shadow of Brezhnev, like Chernenko — he wants to make an independent impact on history. And this is why I also don't expect him to be an incompetent leader — he's quite a clever man, energetic and politically sophisticated.

There is one other feature of the job as head of the KGB which is important. This organisation is specifically and almost exclusively geared to collecting negative information — positive information doesn't enter the KGB system. So Andropov has an unrivalled grasp of the negative aspects of the country's apparatus. This means he has a unique background of experience if he wants to tackle the problems of the Soviet state which he must know better than anyone else. So the question is: what is his attitude towards all this negative information? Is he happy to tolerate these negative features, or does he want to solve them? And if so how, by what methods?

Style of Leadership

Do you think that Andropov's succession will mark a sharp break with the style of leadership under Brezhnev?

In the first place, Andropov is in a much stronger position than either Khrushchev or Brezhnev when they assumed office. Brezhnev was made Party leader without having planned it himself and during most of his term he faced serious rivals or challengers: Suslov, who had organised the plot against Khrushchev and had wanted the job for himself; Shelepin, the security chief; the challenge from Shelest in 1972, Kosygin's independent base, the fact that Kirilenko and Podgorny were not part of Brezhnev's own circle. And when Brezhnev did achieve ascendancy, he was weakened by ill-health.

Andropov, on the other hand, actively sought power and won it for himself, with the support of Defence Minister Ustinov, but without depending on Brezhnev's own patronage. He can be expected to remove from the scene those aging figures in the elite who owe their positions to their personal links with Brezhnev, while younger figures like Grishin will have to work hard to prove their loyalty to the new general secretary, in order to maintain their rank.

We are likely to see a much more decisive style of leadership from Andropov. The Soviet Union is run in such a way that it is not possible to delegate important decisions to more junior figures, so that when Brezhnev was ill and his powers were failing



Chernenko, 'just a shadow of Brezhnev'

an immense backlog of problems accumulated both in domestic and in foreign affairs. This is likely to end. And the type of seven year gap that was allowed to occur between the signing of Salt 1 and Salt 2 is unlikely to recur under Andropov.

Another feature of the Brezhnev period was the overriding emphasis on stability both in policy and personnel. Brezhnev sought to give Party officials the maximum security of tenure. And this has led to an extensive growth of official corruption at every level. It has spread so widely and openly by now that it has become a source of open, public dissatisfaction, a feeling sharpened by current food problems and economic difficulties. Andropov is likely to make a drive to stamp out such corruption and mismanagement a top domestic priority and to link this with a renewed drive to achieve economic efficiency.

Personnel Changes

Does the first Central Committee meeting under Andropov and the subsequent meeting of the Supreme Soviet provide any clues to Andropov's future course? Some journalists have, for example, read a great deal of significance into Aliev's elevation to full membership of the Politburo and his appointment as Deputy Premier.

There were no important changes at these meetings for quite obvious reasons. First of all the meetings had already been prepared before Brezhnev's death: the budget, reports on the 1982 plan and discussion on the 1983 plan were already drafted. There was no time to consider and prepare possible changes in the apparat and so on so soon after Brezhnev's death. In the Soviet Union today you cannot dismiss important officials without serious preparation.

Aliev's promotion was also quite normal and even quite modest. His appointment as a deputy Prime Minister was not really a promotion because top officials usually prefer being Party chief in a republic, where they are number one, to working in a government post in Moscow, where Aliev will have the task of improving the transport system. His appointment as a full member of the Politburo was a compensating promotion — he had only been a candidate

member before — but we should remember that there were three Politburo vacancies through the deaths of Suslov and Brezhnev and through Kirilenko's retirement. I had expected that Dolgikh might be made a full member but he became a candidate only in May and that move was considered too quick.

Aliev was also quite an obvious choice since it is traditional that someone from the Caucasus region should be a member of the Politburo. Previously it had been Mshavandze from Georgia who was removed in 1972. Now there was either Aliev or Shevernadze and Aliev had been candidate member for longer, and Azerbajdzhan is economically more important than Georgia. Also Aliev's economic record in Azerbajdzhan has been quite a successful one.



Aliev, a routine promotion

As for the Supreme Soviet meeting, I had not expected that Andropov would be elected Chairman of the Supreme Soviet's Presidium (ie. President of the USSR). In the first place he had not even been a member of the Presidium previously so it would have been rather swift to have made him a member one day and president the next. Secondly the post is not a powerful one. When Brezhnev took the post it simply gave him the opportunity to appear ceremonially everywhere, to be continually in the media, to have the highest protocol status and to give out orders, medals and so on. If Andropov is really a business-like person, he would probably find this a waste of time. And indeed it doesn't necessarily add to one's popularity: it even reduced Brezhnev's, as he was awarded all sorts of new medals, for example two more awards of Hero of the Soviet Union, when everyone knew that he was the person who signed the awards to himself.

As to Andropov's speech at the Central Committee meeting, it was an effective speech, by Russian standards — more business-like than those of, say Brezhnev on the same subject, but there were no significant indicators in it as to any changes he may wish to make. His criticisms of economic performance were normal because everybody knows that there are economic problems and it would have struck a hollow note if he had concentrated on achievements, but his criticisms were fairly



Andropov's grip at the top should be firmer.

guarded, not particularly strong.

You must remember that to make major policy changes you need to prepare legislation, and this takes some time.

I compared this Supreme Soviet session with the equivalent meeting a year ago and it was exactly the same, except that last year speakers referred to the very wise, very important speech of Brezhnev and this year they referred to the very deep, very serious speech by Andropov. Otherwise, there were no differences between the approach of the two meetings.

In December, the Soviet Union will celebrate its 60th Anniversary as a constitutional state and there will be speeches on 60 years of Soviet power and so on. This could be a suitable occasion for Andropov to use to present a more comprehensive view of the country's direction. I expect his speech on this occasion will be worth looking at more closely. He will have to make some assessment of previous periods of Soviet rule and this will provide some key to his attitude: will Khrushchev remain a non-person, for example? How will he treat the Stalin period?

If we can expect that Andropov will tend to remove those who owe their positions to their closeness to Brezhnev, who would that involve?

Well, those in the top leadership most closely associated with Brezhnev over the years would include the following: Prime Minister Tikhonov, who is an old friend of Brezhnev since his student days and worked with him in the same obkom in Dneproderzhinsk in the early 1930s; then Chernenko, who became close to Brezhnev when they were both in the Moldavian Party leadership at the start of the 1950s; Trapeznikov, the chairman of the department of science and technology in the Central Committee, is also from Brezhnev's Moldavian days; Kunaev in the Politburo became a friend of Brezhnev when he was carrying through Khrushchev's Virgin Land's drive in Kazakhstan in the early 1950s. But Kunaev

has been successful in his own right and is less likely to be removed in the near future.

The other important issue at stake now is the personal apparatus that Brezhnev created, quite a numerous group of aides, not only speech writers but all sorts of advisers. They have posts as assistants to the general secretary, so Andropov has inherited them, and some of them have become very influential, joining the Central Committee in their own right. Alexandrov-Agatov is one of these — he wrote Brezhnev's Tashkent and Azerbajdzhan speeches recently, for example. (Many Western journalists seem to think that the articles signed Alexandrov in *Pravda* are pseudonymous pieces reflecting the views of the whole leadership, but in fact the name belongs to this man.) He seems to have been kept on so far by Andropov but a new figure, Sharapov, has also appeared in this role — presumably someone Andropov has brought in. I expect Andropov will want to change the composition of this group bringing his own people into it.

In two or three months we will see more clearly what his intentions are in these fields.

Andropov and Policy

Is there any sign that Andropov has new policies of his own for tackling the agricultural problem, as some Western observers have suggested?

No, I don't think so. He has never been involved in agricultural policy-making and has no special knowledge of the subject. He may well not be happy with certain political appointments in the agricultural field, but there is no record whatever of Andropov making any speech or coming out with any ideas on what should be done to tackle the agricultural problems.

Are there any indications of possible policy changes in Soviet foreign policy?

Nothing can, of course, be said with certainty, but I suspect that he may give top priority to improving relations with China and he

will probably seek to strengthen links with Eastern Europe. He may also seek to limit Soviet commitments in the third world, involvements in Latin America, for example, where direct Soviet interests are not great. He is likely, in other words, to return to a traditional theme of Russian policy, namely that relations with the country's neighbours matter much more than problems in other parts of the world.

What about relations with the United States?

The most pressing international problem for the Soviet leadership is the American plan to install Pershing and Cruise missiles in Western Europe next year. This will bring a very important change in the military balance, not because of the numbers of weapons involved but because they will be a new technological generation of weaponry, shortening the time-scale of delivery and greatly increasing accuracy, while the Soviet Union has no defensive screen against them. Since the countries of Eastern Europe do not possess nuclear weapons and since Cruise and Pershing are not directed at Soviet conventional forces, the new missiles must be seen as a threat against Soviet security.

The Soviet leadership will be making serious efforts to persuade the Western powers, especially West Germany, not to introduce these new weapons. If they fail to do so, then it is inevitable that they will introduce new missiles in Eastern Europe to counter this threat, as well as seeking to develop a new generation of their own missiles.

It is silly to think that Reagan will think of using all these billions of dollars on the new MX missiles just as a bargaining chip to be destroyed later. And the same goes for Pershing and Cruise. Can we seriously believe that Reagan and Thatcher are doing all this with the aim of finding new opportunities for stopping it all? If Andropov is a clever, resourceful man he should be able to undermine the American re-armament drive by, for example, saying the Soviet Union is ready to cut its numbers of SS20 missiles by half, thus destroying the whole rationalisation for the new generation of Western weapons in Europe. But whether he will be able to do this, I don't know. Nor do we know whether he even wants to take such a course.

People on the Left in the West would like to hope for something new from Andropov. Have they a right to?

Well, perhaps one thing could be said. Liberal reforms from above are hardly likely in the midst of economic difficulties. So if Andropov is more competent in making the economy more efficient, that could at least create better conditions for some political reforms.

Footnotes

1. See *New Left Review* No. 117, 1979, 'Russia under Brezhnev'.
2. In the Soviet political system, two separate structures co-exist: the Party leadership and the government leadership, with the former being the key centre of policy decisions.
3. An Obkom is a Soviet provincial Communist Party committee.

AN INTERVIEW WITH EDWARD THOMPSON

The Peace Movement and Eastern Europe

(Conducted by Oliver MacDonald)

It is now some two and a half years since END¹ was launched. How do you assess its progress in that time (indices of support, nuclear free zones, altering the climate of opinion and debate)? What have been the main disappointments of this period, what are the problems facing END today and the main next tasks?

Too many questions in one mouthful. Perhaps the sympathetic observer is better placed to assess END's progress than those of us who eat, drink and sleep it all the time.

There are three different things. A 'peace movement', which extends far beyond Europe, to the USA and the Pacific. A movement for European Nuclear Disarmament, which is unstructured or very loosely-structured — an alliance of many groups and movements. And END itself, which is a British-based office and set of committees (monitoring, making lateral exchanges etc), offering services within and outside Britain, and standing upon a particular strategy, the original 'END Appeal' (sometimes known in Europe as the 'Russell Appeal').

The first and second have made good progress. The third (END) has, with the Russell Foundation, provided some services along the way. We are now trying to make these services more effective, and also more representative of the views of our supporters.

The first and second, however, may not be such stable movements as they seem. The new mood, the rising peace consciousness, has arisen within one country after another, like a benign epidemic. It may still extend further. But it will not stay around for ever. It is important that it should achieve real successes in 1983.

If you were to re-write the original END appeal today, how might you amend or develop its contents, either in the light of experience or as a result of altered conditions since April 1980?

I would amend it very little, if at all. But perhaps, in 1983, a *second* Appeal might be needed, complementary with the first. Maybe this should be written by peace activists over on 'the other side'.

The Appeal arose out of specific conditions, common to most West European nations: in particular, in response to the NATO modernisation decision of December 1979. Hence it arose within the specific problematic imposed by nuclear weapons, and the possible uses of accurate intermediate missiles in a limited nuclear war in the European 'theatre'. The Appeal has little to say about conventional weapons and forces. Yet the presence of these is felt, more



E.P. Thompson in Budapest this autumn. Left to right: Miklós Haraszti, András Hegedűs, Edward Thompson, Ferenc Rozsa, Ference Kőszegi and Andrew White.

palpably, over on the other side. Moreover the Appeal did not raise, frontally, the question of the bloc system itself.

Implicit in the Appeal was a criticism of the bloc system, and a challenge to the division of Europe by security systems and adversary ideologies. This was clearly and carefully placed — centrally — in the Appeal. I ought to know, since I drafted these passages myself:

We must commence to act as if a united, neutral, and pacific Europe already exists. We must learn to be loyal, not to 'East' or 'West', but to each other, and we must disregard the prohibitions and limitations imposed by any national state.

The Appeal was explicitly non-aligned, and offered the perspective of dissolving both great power alliances.

It is important to stress this. I think that some of our friends in East Europe — or, rather, people who ought to have been our friends — either didn't read our Appeal with care, or didn't believe we were serious in this part of it. But we have always been very serious indeed about this part: as serious as about any other part.

If this part has now become even more important, it is not because it wasn't important before, but because there are now the signs of movements on the other side which are working, together with us, in the same perspective. But they start from different experiences. Perhaps they should now write a second Appeal, within the problematic of

conventional armaments and the bloc system.

In your *New Statesman* debate with 'Vaclav Racek' you said of END: 'There are many problems: should our objective be a nuclear-weapons-free zone from Poland to Portugal, or from the Atlantic to the Urals? Should we link conventional to nuclear armaments, and call for the withdrawal of both United States and Soviet conventional forces, under phased, Rapacki-type² agreements?' Could you give your own opinions on these questions, independently of whether you feel END should actively campaign today for the objectives you personally hold on these issues?

In practical terms, phasing would start with the Baltic — the Balkans — Central Europe: then move to the whole continent. Some friends in the East have suggested different disarmament twins: because the Germanies are so sensitive, they've suggested that Poland might twin with Britain, and Hungary with Italy, for purposes of disarmament. This all needs more discussion. I think that the question of the Germanies can't be evaded, and that we should support the perspective of the 'Berlin Appeal'.

END, and you yourself, have always placed the achievement of peace objec-

PEACE MOVEMENTS

tives within a wider strategy involving the re-unification of Europe and sweeping social and political programmes throughout the continent. At the same time, the campaign has insisted that it is purely a peace movement, taking up, for example, issues of civil liberties in Eastern Europe only in so far as this is necessary to defend the movement's own autonomy in those countries.

Yet on a number of occasions you have suggested that the task is to unite movements for peace in Western Europe with movements for freedom in Eastern Europe. Have you considered such an alliance through, for example, pressing for a series of specific liberties to be granted by the governments of Eastern Europe in response to the victories of the peace movements in the West? Or do you consider that such an approach would be impractical or counter-productive?

Two different questions here. First, I don't think that END has advocated 'sweeping social and political programmes'. We've said that the bloc system — the Cold War itself — reduces NATO and WTO states to superpower clency, and acts to depress all 'normal' forces making for social, political change. Get rid of that and nations will resume more autonomy, and forces of change will be released from militarist inhibition. Nations won't all change in the same way, and they may not change in ways which you or I happen always to like. There could even be a revival of certain suppressed conflicts, including national ones: after all, the matter of Transylvania is still 'unsettled'! Please don't present us as being more simplistic than we are.

The second question — peace and liberty — I've gone on about elsewhere. Some of us have spoken of this in terms of 'recognition' of each others' movements — not identity but convergence. We are not diplomats engaged in making treaties or pacts: nor are Western peace activists leaders of disciplined party-type forces: we live in a constant milieu of debate, in which one voice may rise in influence and another fall. If the voices making for the 'recognition' of peace and freedom movements are to be influential then this will only be if it is found that voices of recognition speak from the other side also. Otherwise we can be accused of empty rhetoric. As regards specific liberties, friends in the East — especially in Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union — have asked Western peace movements to found their actions on respect for the Helsinki agreements on human rights. END needs little persuasion to accept that. But do you know how little discussion there has been in Western Left and Labour circles on 'Helsinki'? Lots of people were turned off it because 'Helsinki' was something which American Presidents and British Prime Ministers threw around. It's even difficult to lay one's hand on the text!

END has been ready to engage in dialogue with, and to co-operate with, people from all quarters interested in its efforts. This has included official and 'quasi-official' figures and bodies in

Eastern Europe. What has been your experience in dealing with such bodies or with individuals within them? Are there any significant differences between the official peace movements in Eastern Europe or in the responses that you have had from them? Do you think there is any chance of some important initiative coming from such quarters in the near future, or from any particular East European government — something equivalent to the Rapacki plan, the Austrian state treaty, etc.?

I haven't yet found any official *peace movement* in the East. It's a contradiction in terms. What you have are official *peace offices*. These don't have the spontaneity or autonomy of popular movements. The offices are there for informal diplomatic functions of the State, a bit like Chatham House plus the British Council, with a research annex like the Institute for Strategic Studies. O.K. No need to go blue in the face about this. The functions may be valid, provided that no Western peace activist is silly enough to confuse them with *movements*.

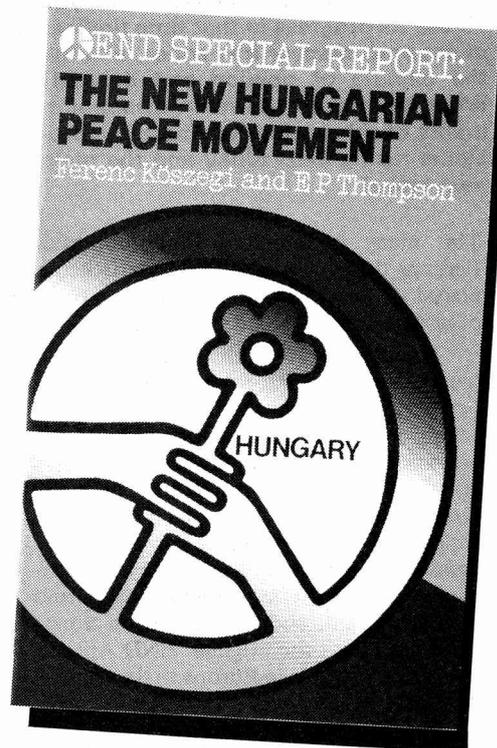
Some — the Hungarian National Peace Council — are flexible. They really do want to further some exchanges, and will discuss with courtesy criticisms of WTO military policies. Some peace researchers in the annexes know their stuff: our peace researchers can talk helpfully with them, just as people can talk at Pugwash meetings. Others are AWFUL. I've never had any official dealings with the Soviet Peace Committee, but from reports it seems to be as awful as any and to stand in the space where a real peace discourse could otherwise arise, blocking the light. Its failure to defend the Moscow Independent Peace Group — in fact, its connivance in blackening the members as 'hooligans' (who had 'beaten up an old lady at a bus stop'!!!) — is a matter of scandal.

It is quite possible that practical peace feelers, of a Rapacki type, might come Westwards through the medium of one of the more flexible Committees. But I think that at heart the real operators behind these offices despise the Western peace movement: they approve of the noise it makes, but don't think it counts in real, heavy politics. So these operators, if they had new proposals, would probably go straight to Western politicians. They might go to politicians identified with the peace cause: not to Alva Myrdal but to Olaf Palme; not to Bruce Kent but to Michael Foot; not to Rudi Bahro but to Erhard Eppler. We wouldn't mind, if the proposal was a good one: we're not proud: Rudi isn't standing as Chancellor.

Unofficial peace groups and movements have begun to appear in some countries of Eastern Europe during the last year, each with its own particular concerns and approach. Could you sketch some of the key features and problems of these movements and assess their future prospects?

END now has two new pamphlets on the road: *The New Hungarian Peace Movement* (90p) and a documentary collection on the

Moscow Independent Peace Group (75p). There is also a really important article, which discusses the whole problem — brilliantly, I think — by Köszegei and Ivañyi in *New Society*, 21 & 28 October (an offprint from END office should be available). Then there will be more material regularly in *END Bulletin*. All these delights from END, 227 Seven Sisters Rd, London N4. We hope to have much more material on the movement in the GDR by January.



The problem common to all of them is that of *space*. To find their own space to exist. Where? They don't want to be cut off from a broad constituency as 'dissidents' or 'opposition' (although they often respect the constructive opposition and remain in dialogue with it). They do very much wish to act as 'free persons' — to argue, write, communicate, travel to the West, receive visitors from Western peace movements. But they have no meeting-halls, no access to the printing-press, they can't even strike their own badges and stickers. So their very first problem is — not what programme, what platform — but how to exist at all? Their very existence is an act for peace, an act of 'dialogue'. The new Hungarian movement has for months been discussing with the official Peace Council the matter of permissions for a Peace Journal and a Peace Centre, with a library and rooms for workshops. It's failed in the first, it might still get the second.

So — space. In the GDR, the space was the Protestant church. In Hungary the school and the university. What other spaces are there? In Poland the trade union and the workplace could have offered the space, but Solidarity never got that place on its agenda.

I will not predict or speculate upon the prospects of these movements. The important thing is to support them. To the degree that they are endorsed and supported by the peace and Labour movements of the West, then their prospects are improved. The sup-

port must not be provocative. They don't need Western grand theorists to rush over and tell them what they should do. They need friends, who extend to them their own hand of 'dialogue'.

On occasions you have expressed some disappointment at the small scope of unofficial peace initiatives in the Soviet Union and perhaps Eastern Europe as well. Could you say what factors you think have played a part in blocking the growth of the sort of mass movements seen in the West, apart from the main obvious factor of the suppression of democratic liberties in these societies?

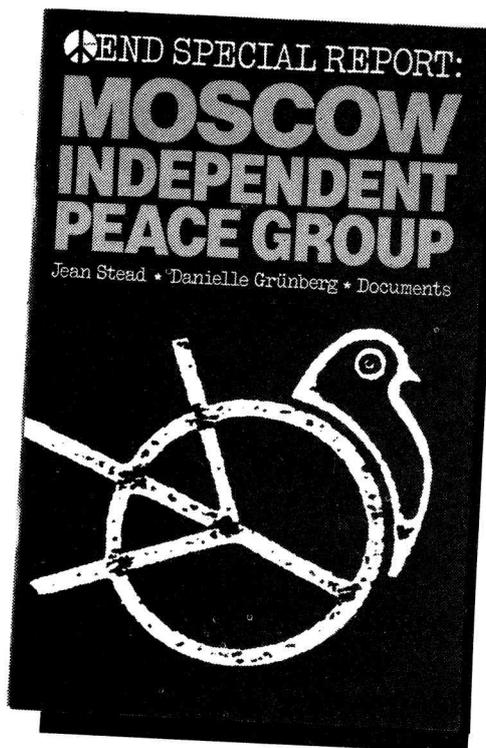
I don't recall expressing disappointment. I have sometimes argued back at some very sharp (pro-Reagan) 'dissidents'. I think they have been wrong, and I think one has a right or a duty or something like that to argue back — even while one supports their courage in standing out for their rights. I may also have chided Soviet citizens once or twice. Because I don't think the Western peace movement will hang around for decades as part of the permanent furnishing of political life. If there is to be a Soviet response, it must come soon — I think Sergei Batovrin's group is a sign that it is coming.

But so far from being disappointed I am absolutely bloody amazed and encouraged beyond my dreams at what is happening in the GDR and Hungary. Think back two years ago. One year ago. Every time END got mentioned in high 'defence' circles (editorials, political know-alls) it was to piss on the absurd idea that any kind of independent peace movement would ever show itself on that side. We had founded some part of our whole political strategy on a gamble which seemed — even to close and not unfriendly observers — to be a fantasy. And it isn't. And it has begun to happen. Now that it is happening, the pundits are changing their tune. People like Laurence Freedman are saying, 'Oh, dear *me!* It's terrible! It's "destabilising"! But the horse has got itself out of the stable of 'deterrence', and it's a wild horse, and there's no use in bolting the stable door. They may be able to shoot it down, but they will never put it tamely back.

You, more than anyone, have powerfully evoked the conception of a new European internationalism, re-uniting East and West, a conception which must undoubtedly evoke a strong response among many in Eastern Europe. But could you spell out your own personal view of the united Europe you would like to see? For example, your attitude towards the division of Germany and how it might be overcome, your attitude towards the idea of a federation of states in Eastern Europe and towards the types of political and social systems that might emerge in Eastern Europe and the USSR?

No, you're asking me to be a Bismarcknik and not a peacenik. I don't really see a 'united Europe' but a peacefully disunited one. I don't very much admire States, I prefer to accept them as necessary nuisances and work to limit their nuisance-power. I

prefer to think of cultural or economic federations, which stop short of constructing unnecessary bureaucratic statist superstructures. In the case of the Germans, as I understand it the majority of peaceful opinion in both halves doesn't want to put the question of a re-united German *state* on the agenda. But it does think that the taboo on discussing cultural and economic agencies of federation should be lifted. (By the way, I think the problem which bugs both the Soviet Union and the United States is that they are both too big, as state units, to be human-sized societies). I speak of the reunification of European political culture, in the sense of fluency of exchange and communication between movements and ideas, not in the sense of some godawful suprapolitical EEC-cum-WTO.



You have had very wide-ranging contact and discussion with people from various East European countries, people with widely differing political views and concerns, many of them probably hostile to END or at best lukewarm. Is it possible for you to generalise about the criticisms that have been levelled at your efforts and outline certain key points on which many, particularly in the democratic movements in Eastern Europe, do not agree with your campaign? And have you had any particularly surprising responses from Eastern Europe, ones that you had not envisaged when END was launched?

Not much new to say on this. One trouble is that East European critics of END (from the democratic movement) often don't know what our policy is. They imagine what it might be, and often in terms of the stereotypes which descend from the World Peace Council campaigns of the 1950s. This isn't usually their fault (though it sometimes is). There are difficulties in getting our

materials, difficulties in translation. They may even be difficulties of people deliberately getting in there, to screw up the dialogue. After all, Western Cold War agencies — some of whom can get through rather too easily to 'dissident' opinion — are exceedingly keen that this misrecognition should continue. When Dorothy and I went to Prague in 1980 *someone* put it around on the grapevine that we were working for the World Peace Council and drumming up support for the WPC event in Sofia. Doors closed. Phones were put down. Recently, in a Frankfurt newspaper (*Allgemeine Zeitung*) a letter appeared signed by someone supposedly speaking for Charter 77 which commenced with a direct misquotation from me, turning my meaning into the *exact opposite*, and in a very damaging way. How did this happen? Was the translation bad? Was the letter spurious? I was quoted as saying that I did not wish even to speak with persons who had supported the Prague Spring!!

People take pains to screw the real dialogue up. Could be either side — KGB or CIA or one of Mrs Thatcher's nice young agents, maybe out of All Souls. In Poland it has been different. What Poland has gone through has screwed it up. As a result, many Poles have taken only one brief look at the Western peace movement, suppose it is 'weakening the West' etc etc, and just don't want to know. A proper dialogue has not yet started, within Poland itself.

It is most important that there should be a real argument — important for both sides. Far too few people are involved in this argument. I wish more people on both sides would take part. I have heard that we can expect important contributions very soon from George Konrad and Zdenek Mlynar. I have a high regard for the Medvedev brothers, but for too long they have been the only Soviet voices willing to enter this dialogue. We need now to hear others.

On many occasions you have referred back to the Rapacki plan as one possible model from the past of a transitional step towards the dismantling of the Cold War divisions in Europe. Do you think that the European Peace Movement could, or should seek to eventually put forward its own modern equivalent of the Rapacki plan, that it could campaign for right across Europe, transcending both its reactions to the moves of the USA and the USSR and its maximum programme of a nuclear free Europe? And even if it is too early for the peace movement to adopt such a platform, what elements might it eventually contain?

Yes and no. Yes: within the transcontinental peace movement these discussions do and must go on: the peace researchers contribute a great deal. Proposals can be fed into the movement, and placed in friendly political hands. No: the European Peace Movement does not have a command centre and a general staff, and every time it moves towards this it becomes racked with dissension. It can offer perspectives but not finished plans. The perspective which a transcon-

PEACE MOVEMENTS

tinental peace movement may be able to offer is one in which nuclear-free zones are constructed, with mutual withdrawals of conventional forces, and the further perspective of the complete withdrawal of Soviet and American forces and bases from Europe. I have advocated this perspective, although in doing so I am going beyond the platform of CND, and perhaps a little beyond that of END also. But the piecemeal stages of this would have to be dealt with as they arise, and more probably by diplomats than by peaceniks.

Roy Medvedev has argued that Russian citizens perceive a very real threat of attack from the USA upon the USSR, and you have underlined the danger to the Soviet Union implied by the installation of Pershing and Cruise missiles (most vividly in your piece, 'The End of the Line' in your book *Zero Option*, where you quote Robert Havemann on the issue). Supposing then, for the sake of argument, that by some piece of bureaucratic mismanagement you received an invitation to speak freely for five minutes to a mass meeting of Russian workers in Togliattigrad on the subject, 'What the USSR should do to ensure its own security', what would you say?

I would ask them to let me speak for longer, and then I would say much the same as I said recently in Budapest.

Your article in *The Times* on 22 December of last year, which produced such an uproar because you courageously blamed Western Cold Warriors for their share of responsibility in the events leading up to the coup of 13 December in Poland, raised a number of fundamental issues concerning the whole experience of Solidarity. You

said that too many of Solidarity's leaders and advisers allowed themselves to be used in the Cold War game: could you be more specific about this and also suggest what alternative courses might have been pursued by these leaders in this field? Secondly, you imply in the article that only major steps to dismantle the Cold War will make possible lasting democratic advance in Poland and the rest of Eastern Europe. Does this mean that you feel any project to democratise the states of Eastern Europe within the present international framework of super-power confrontation is doomed to failure?

To the last point, no, I think the two things are twinned, they would go together: democratisation and the softening of bloc antagonism. The first point can't be answered briefly. And I don't want, at this moment, to labour criticisms of Solidarity's leaders and advisers in their decisions of 1981. My criticisms would be inexpert, and in any case criticism is not the point when many of them are in jail or underground. Nor is it really a case of 'criticism': they did what lay ahead of them to do, in the conditions given to them, and they often did it superbly. I will only repeat that it was a tragedy that Solidarity and the Western peace movement (and, indeed, some parts of the Western Labour and trade-union movement) did not 'recognise' each other more clearly as allies. By the way, I don't think the response of the Western peace movement — for example, to the crisis of December 1980 or to 13 December 1981 — was in any way adequate.

What I will say, however, is that at this particular moment (end October 1982) I have had some deeply depressing reports from Poland. I have been told that martial law and the suppression of Solidarity have nurtured a black apocalyptic mood in some

minds. A nation (which has thought rather little about nuclear war) may be suffering, in its prison-conditions, from nightmares in which it may even seem that a Third World War would somehow 'liberate' the Polish nation — in some unexplained way the United States and the Soviet Union would destroy each other over Poland's heads — and the fall-out would be selective, burning out the security services and the baddies but sparing the good.

I know, as an historian, that such moments of black unreasoning apocalypse can come at times of defeat. (Afterwards comes cynicism, utter corruption.) It could be very sick and very dangerous. It is now quite urgent that the dialogue of peace and freedom should start. It will be the most difficult one in any part of Europe. The Western peace movement will receive hard words, and must meet them — not with moral righteousness — but with plain and honest answers. But where else — unless along this perspective — does any hope for Poland lie?

By the way, when I say 'hope' I don't mean euphoria. The wild horse is out of the stable of 'deterrence', but as I've said before, they may shoot it down. It would be wrong to expect that Europe has any future at all. One can only hope and work for it.

**E.P. THOMPSON
OCTOBER 1982**

Notes.

1. END (European Nuclear Disarmament) is a campaign initiated in Britain in April 1981, calling for a nuclear-free Europe from Portugal to Poland.
2. The Rapacki Plan was a proposal by Poland's foreign minister, Adam Rapacki, in the late 1950s, for a phased withdrawal of military forces from Central Europe through agreements between governments of East and West.

Disarmament Begins at Home

By Wolf Biermann

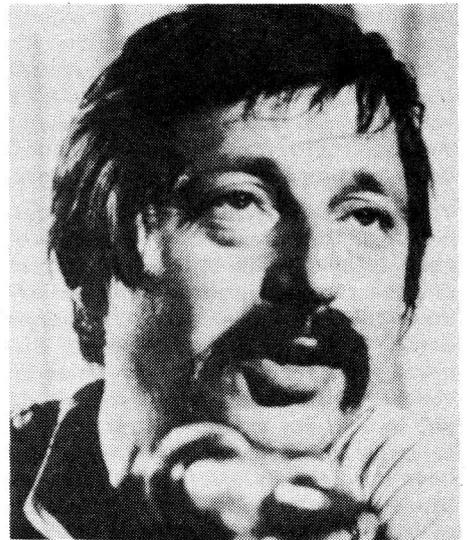
(Wolf Biermann is the dissident communist poet and songwriter who was expelled from East Germany in 1976. The following text first appeared in the West German magazine Stern. The translation is by Paul Edmondson and Günter Minnerup.)

At present the European war is still enjoying its peace. I want to use this time and publicly explain what I think of our chances of death and survival under this H bomb sky.

I have repeatedly come across Egon Bahr's (the West German SPD's disarmament expert — trans.) famous dictum about the American neutron bomb, calling it a 'perversion of thought'. For me it is perverted thoughtlessness if this isolated quote gives the impression that the hydrogen overkill bombs are no, or less of a, perversion of human thought. A weapon

like the neutron bomb, which destroys 'only' people 'and nothing else', is by no means an exclusive perversion because it is precisely this quality that it has in common with all bacteriological and chemical super weapons. And those are so destructive and horrific that they are hardly ever mentioned in either East or West — not even in the propaganda directed against each other.

In the Western system the production of weapons works like the production of any other commodity in this 'throw away society'. In the East, nobody derives a profit from war. But in the Soviet Union the arms race is costing the exhausted peoples not only the meat on their sandwiches, but the bread itself. And the social explosive, once detonated, could turn out to be the small atom bomb triggering off the big hydrogen bomb. I do not think that the capitalist pro-



Wolf Biermann

fit motive is the only force that could drive some rulers into an arms race and wars.

Today, 64 years after the October Revolution, the shops in the Soviet Union are empty and the political prisons full. Today people are travelling 300 kilometres to Moscow to buy a kilo of meat and a kilo of tomatoes there for a worker's weekly wage. And today people are being imprisoned

there because they demonstrated for disarmament in their own country.

During the Khrushchev era a moving little song became popular. Its words were written by Yevgeni Yevtushenko, the poet of the thaw period: Do you believe, do you believe, do you believe that the Russians want war ...

No, the Russians do not want war, they of all people know what war means. And if there were democratic freedoms in the Soviet Union, it would perhaps have the most intense and largest peace movement in the world. It is a truism that the peoples themselves do not want war. Not even the nazified Germans wanted war, despite a few thousand Germans shouting 'Yes!' (in reply to Goebbels' terrible question: 'Do you want a total war?!'). Not even the elected, and not even the unelected, leaders really want war. They don't want it, but they make it. The USA made war on Vietnam. And when the CIA helped the Chilean fascists to overthrow Allende, this too was a war over spheres of influence, sources of raw materials and export markets.

And 'the Russians'? They attacked Poland in 1939 jointly with Stalin's friend and ally from Braunau (the Austrian village where Hitler was born — trans) following an agreed plan. They shared the spoils fraternally and haggled over the rest of the world. And the USSR in 1945 annexed that part of Poland which it had occupied in 1939 in the share-out with Hitler. It gave a damn, and still gives a damn, about that unfortunately so very true dictum by Karl Marx that every war ending in annexation carries in it the seeds of the next war. The Soviet Union attacked and robbed Finland, it swallowed the Baltic countries. And whenever a foreign country is being subjugated with tanks, as happened in 1956 in Hungary and 1968 in Czechoslovakia, I will always be with those who cannot suffer the cheeky and foggy talk of 'fraternal aid' for this armour-plated export of counter-revolution, but insist on calling war war. In the Middle East Arabs and Jews are bleeding upon each other in the smouldering war of the superpowers' proxies. In Asia and Africa the Soviet Union, just like the USA, is supplying the knives with which the starving people's slaughter each other. And just as the USA are shamelessly propping up fascist regimes, the Soviet Union allies itself with the most reactionary feudal lords, with the butchers of many communists such as Gamal Abd el-Nasser. This admirer of Hitler became the Soviet Union's ally after he had physically exterminated the entire Egyptian CP.

And let no one tell me that these were all examples of 'mere' limited sideshows. The line of distinction between these sideshows and the big, the last war is a blurred one! And such fanatical reactionaries like the friend of the USA, Begin, like the friend of the USSR, Gaddafi, also have nuclear bombs — or will shortly have them.

'Do you believe that the Russians want war?' — No! But their leaders are preparing the war against Poland with shameless candour — just as Afghanistan was occupied with shameless candour. And just at this moment they are delighted by a peace campaign in the West. But the kind spirits of

peace which the Soviet Union appeals to have long escaped from its control and its blinkered intentions. And now President Reagan threatens and blackmails and cajoles his NATO allies in Western Europe. And none of the established parties in the Federal Republic of Germany, none of the leading politicians here who are so fond of calling themselves realists, has any realistic idea as to how this East-West vicious circle of mistrust, threats and fear can be broken. I see only one way: Out of NATO! — And out of the Warsaw Pact! And since I am now living in the West, I am saying this one-sided sentence: Out of NATO! West Germany must disarm — and be it unilaterally. Yes, I am telling myself that unilateral disarmament would release such enormous material and moral forces in the Western societies that the peoples of the East would be encouraged to rise against their worst enemy, the one in their own country.

'I am not at your disposal, because I would have to fear, as a soldier of the National Peoples Army, being sent to invade Poland.' This sentence, for which one gets jailed in the GDR, was recently spoken by a young man in Jena (GDR — trans.) when asked to report for military service. And those conscientious objectors here in the Federal Republic of Germany who opt for the civilian service with the handicapped, they perform two good deeds: they help not only humanity, but individuals as well.

But my pleading for disarmament in West Germany does not oblige me to spread the lie or the error that the Soviet Union pursues a policy of peace. That would be short-sighted even on tactical grounds, since the so-called common people — and only they can collectively change our fate for the better — are not that thick. The so-called person in the street is not as stupid as such tacticians pretend to be clever. Brecht wrote: 'Our rulers talk of peace — little man, sign your will!' Reagan, too, always waffles about peace — as from a film script that he doesn't understand. And the bird which Brezhnev is keeping caged up in his brain is thought by himself to be a peace dove, of course. Even Hitler in the overture to World War II was singing the peace aria. And indeed all great war criminals do not, in the depths of their thick heads, want anything but peace. Peace — their sort of peace. And the road to such a peace normally leads through war. With the courage and determination born of justified despair, mankind must break this vicious circle.

The arms race from its very beginning has been accompanied by the sweet sounds of disarmament negotiations. Yet there has not been a single act of real disarmament so far in either the East or the West. The stockpiles of ABC weapons are enough to annihilate mankind a thousand times over. The superpowers are not so much armed to the teeth as crammed up to their brains. To entrust them with the task of saving mankind from self-destruction is really like putting the drugs pusher in charge of the narcotics squad. I can see only one real chance for disarmament: the disobedience of the soldier against his own officers, the maximum mistrust of the peoples against their governments — who are apparently

quite unable to extricate themselves from the headlong rush towards disaster without this pressure from below. And that is why I regard the peace movement in West Germany as a hope.

Yes, unilateral disarmament! In the case of West Germany this also means: American troops and their nuclear weapons off German soil! I do not consider the West German Chancellor (Biermann wrote this before Schmidt's fall — trans.) the sort of man who is willing — and able — to pursue this. In an embarrassing reference to Count Otto von Bismarck, the 'Iron Chancellor', our atomic Chancellor likens himself to the pilot who needs to remain aboard ... well then, dear friends, put on your life jackets! For our pilot is steering, albeit with some occasional reluctance, the American aircraft carrier 'Federal Republic of Germany' on a collision course. And what about his leftist adversaries in the SPD leadership? Willy Brandt, all honest skin and no bones, is trying to slow down the tempt of NATO rearmament by insisting after his occasional trips to Moscow that the USSR is neither as heavily armed nor as warlike as — as it actually is! For the social-democratic peace politicians any destabilisation of NATO or of the Warsaw Pact raises the danger of war. Not for me, not at all.

Brezhnev and comrades do not have the capacity, and Reagan and Weinberger and Haig do not apparently even have the will to disarm. Ronald Reagan and Leonid Brezhnev — their boarded-up heads grace either side of one and the same counterfeit coin with which humanity cannot buy peace.

I see no other road to peace but unilateral and unconditional disarmament. What the workers in Poland are doing now, that, too, is a contribution towards peace in Europe.

On the occasion of the recent Warsaw Pact manoeuvres on Polish territory a stunningly instructive and unconventional form of disarmament was enforced. The Soviet troops, visiting the land of their recalcitrant brothers to prepare for its occupation, used their unwanted presence to immobilise a large number of the Polish Army's combat tanks: they took out of them some vital aggregates. When I first heard this news I was paralysed with indignation. Today I see it in a different light. In the event of an invasion by the pact brothers from the GDR and the USSR the Polish people will in any case defend itself with fundamentally different weapons than tanks. On the other hand, the destruction of modern tanks is a form of real, albeit rather perverse and involuntary, disarmament. Brecht wrote: General, your tank is a strong vehicle. It flattens a forest and crushes a hundred people. But it has one drawback: it needs a driver.

When both the Russian and the American pilot will have become as unreliable as their Polish colleagues already are today, then we will have reason to hope for peace.

My analysis sounds somewhat unrealistic. My proposals appear naive. But we must talk like children if we want to survive. It has always been the wide-eyed who found new ways, not the blind.

EAST EUROPE AFTER POLAND

The End of the Post-Stalin Epoch

By János Kis

(First published in the Hungarian samizdat journal Beszélő, May 1982, under the title 'Thoughts on the Near Future'. Translation by Bill Lomax.)

Following the defeat of the Hungarian revolution in 1956, and again after the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968, the dark years of reaction descended on the whole of Eastern Europe. There was little the scattered remnants of the democratic movement could do. They brooded over the lessons of the defeat, and waited the arrival of better times. Today, as the East European establishment rejoices at the subjugation of the Polish workers' movement, it is inevitable that we should find ourselves wondering whether the same might not be repeated for a third time round.

In this article I should like to convince my friends that the parallel is a misleading one. Whatever fate should befall the opposition groups that became active in the mid-1970s, the present *status quo* is not going to last. And secondly, when the Hungarian opposition will have ridden out the aftermath of 13 December, maybe we should not try to continue doing everything in just the same way as we did before. We in the opposition are not going to see our situation reestablished as it existed before August 1980. Nor will there be any return to the situation of the mid-1970s. Nor to what went before.

THE END OF THE POST-STALIN EPOCH IN EASTERN EUROPE

In 1956 and in 1968 it was enough to restore the one-party dictatorship, and with this everything was sorted out. Though the political crisis certainly had consequences for the economy, assistance from the Soviet Union and other countries of the Eastern bloc was sufficient to ensure a regular supply of goods and to give a new boost to production. The Polish crisis on the other hand is economic in its origin. It will not be possible to solve it by a mere treatment of its symptoms. What is more, it is only a part of the crisis affecting the entire region. So serious are the problems, that they threaten the very economic foundations of the post-Stalin epoch.

After 1953 — under pressure from the Soviets — the East European states took as the fundamental axiom of their economic policy the principle that they should respect the consumer demands of the population. The standard of living must be allowed to rise along with industrial accumulation, even if not at quite as rapid a pace. It was no longer possible to satisfy the demands of investment in periods of accelerating growth at the expense of the provision of goods. Nor should the application of the brakes be followed by a sudden decline in consumption.

It was not of its own accord, nor from one day to the next, that this principle became a recognised rule. It needed Berlin and Plzen 1953, Poznan and Budapest 1956, Gdansk-Szczecin-Lodz 1970/71 and the rest — many, many warning experiences — before the Communist Leaders learned the lesson, that they would do better not to regard the standard of living as a factor they could reduce at their pleasure. But they have certainly learned it. For the greater part of the epoch, and in the majority of countries in the region — even without any special warning — they have taken care not to ignore the people's consumer wishes.

This was a serious change when compared to the Stalinist epoch. It showed that the leading groups in Eastern Europe were no longer completely indifferent to whether the society reconciled itself to their rule. The recognition of consumer demands went hand in hand with the dismantling of mass terror, and gave rise in turn to a host of further consequences. It was one of the sources of the revisionist movement in the mid-1950s. It provided an impetus to the economic reform experiments of the 1960s. It helped to advance the process of detente, and at the beginning of the 1970s it was a major factor contributing to the Comecon member states' decisions to open up their economies to the offer of goods and credits from the developed Western countries. It also played an indirect part, in several countries in the mid-1970s, in making it possible for smaller or larger groups to step forward and promote the cause of civil rights.

True, these changes were not irreversible ones. Yet as time passed by — and despite every change in the line — consumption was to become an ever more rigid limitation on national economic decisions, and in this way it kept up the pressure on the political leaders of the region. The course of development pushed onwards, at one moment in one place, the next in another, steadily advancing across the swerves and setbacks.

At least this was how things appeared until the beginning of the 1980s, when it suddenly became doubtful whether the East European states would be able to avoid a collapse in their by now accustomed living standards. In Romania and Poland the situation concerning the supply of goods became no less than catastrophic. In Czechoslovakia too serious shortages were generated. Rigorous deflationary measures were introduced in Bulgaria and Hungary, to be followed by similar ones in the first three countries as well. At the beginning of 1982, East Germany is the only country to be more or less holding out.

The most unbearable horrors of the Stalinist epoch have not, after all, returned, but nor has the exceptional dynamism that also characterised it. In those times the restriction of consumption went together with increased industrial accumulation and the acceleration of economic growth. Today, however, it is accompanied by a fall in the rate of accumulation and the slowing down of economic growth. Since 1975 the growth of the entire region has been continuously slowing down, and by 1980 several countries were on the brink of stagnation. There are even instances where there has been an absolute decline year after year.

According to official explanations, the decline is only a temporary aberration — however great may be the difficulties in reversing it. It is the sudden running into debt in the 1970s that is blamed for today's problems. By the end of the decade, the burden of debt servicing became so excessive that export earnings were not sufficient to cover at the same time both the repayments already due, and the costs of imports necessary for continuing development. At the same time, new loans became ever more difficult to obtain. It has thus become necessary to accept the slowing down of growth until the point is reached where the balance of payments deficit will have dropped to a manageable level.

This is how the explanation is most generally presented. But if we pay attention to the details, it becomes immediately clear that the causes of the decline are not just temporary ones. How is the indebtedness explained? On the one hand, by the sudden rise in the cost of imports. This was partly related to the fact that in the mid-1970s Western banks and governments offered as much cheap credit as anyone might need. It was thus a great temptation to the East European states to purchase as much modern industrial equipment and semi-manufactured goods as possible, taking advantage of the loans, and also to meet a part of the increased consumer demand with imported goods paid for on credit. But at the same time they also point out that when, following the price explosion on world markets in 1973/74, the terms of trade of several East European countries seriously deteriorated, the easy credit made it possible to put off the overhaul of the structure of foreign trade. Everything remained as before; it was just that the financial costs of imports grew. Here it was really a case of temporary decision-making faults — their influence would pass away after the debts had been repaid. Save that the official propaganda also hints — albeit somewhat coyly — at a third reason: our friends are no longer able to deliver as much raw materials and energy supplies as we might need. It is the Soviet Union they are alluding to, and the delivery problems are not temporary ones. Up till the mid-1970s one of the driving forces behind the rapid economic growth of the East European region was the virtually unlimited supply of cheap Soviet raw materials and energy. Since then, however, the easily exploitable resources existing in the Soviet Union's European territories have begun to get exhausted. Production has increasingly been transferred to the more difficult and expensive to exploit East-Siberian regions. Prices rise; supply increasingly falls behind demand. One of the reasons for the East

European countries' dollar indebtedness was that they now had to pay in hard currency for a part of their energy supplies that they had previously purchased with rubles. This situation is hardly likely to change in the coming decade.

On the other hand, it is now customary to relate our indebtedness to the insufficient growth in export earnings. A lot is said about the world economic recession: the market demand for almost every product has contracted, and competition between suppliers has intensified. This is certainly a temporary problem, even if we are unable to know just when the depression will come to an end. However, the reasons behind the poor competitiveness of the East European countries lie in lasting and inherent deficiencies of their economies. Our press also admits that the majority of East Europe's industrial products are expensive and obsolete, that our companies often fail to meet delivery dates, they are not capable of ensuring a regular supply of replacement parts, and they are slow to respond to shifts in demand.

These complaints have been heard time without end — ever since the economies of the region were subjected to the Soviet type of rigidly centralised and hierarchic apparatus of management. A thousand and one measures have been taken, and repeated campaigns organised to cure these faults, but all in vain.

It would thus be unfounded optimism to count on our being soon over the difficulties. The holding back of expenditure on investment and on the provision of consumer goods has been going on for years. None the less, even last year East Europe's indebtedness continued to increase. Meanwhile, Poland and Romania's foreign trade business has completely fallen to pieces, while the Czechoslovak leadership — taking fright at the example — has imposed drastic import restrictions that have seriously disrupted internal supplies. No-one counts on any rapid improvement. The Governments too only offer the public the hope that things will not get even worse. Hesitation and bewilderment is to be seen everywhere we look.

For want of anything better, even the idea of economic reform is once again brought forward. Who knows, maybe greater enterprise autonomy, a greater reliance on incentives, and the rest, can help to improve the efficiency of the economy. After the strident hostility to reforms in the 1970s, we could consider this a fortunate development, if a substantial change really were on the cards. For my part however, I am inclined to side with those who hold that we cannot count on any really comprehensive reforms. Firstly, the changes decided on so far are merely palliative ones (I am not thinking here of the projects prepared in Poland before December 1981, while I shall speak later of the Hungarian economic policies). Secondly, the decline in Western imports triggers off everywhere those well-known defensive reflexes that are incompatible with the advance of the reforms — the range of materials and intervention in the home market also becomes more frequent. Thirdly, and this is for me the most important consideration, the political circumstances are not favourable to the introduction of serious reforms.

Any more comprehensive reform presents the leaders of Soviet-type systems with two interconnected political problems. The first is the open, or behind the scene, resistance of the apparatus of economic management. Middle-level bureaucrats in Government departments would seek to evade the implementation of the reforms because they fear their jobs might become unnecessary. The functionaries of the regional party organisations would sabotage them, because they fear the loss of their powers. The managing directors of large state companies, previously living an idle life relying on the sheltered, monopolistic position of their enterprises, would try to circumvent them, lest market competition be the undoing of their comfortable situation.

The second problem arises from the fact that in the reformed system it will be more difficult to keep the movement of prices, wages and employment under control. The freer play of supply and demand could for a time exacerbate the shortages, strengthen the inflationary pressures, and result in unemployment. After the introduction of the reforms there might be an increase in discontent amongst all those social groups excluded from political power.

Large masses of people might come to the belief that the economy is being brought to ruin over their heads, that they should no longer be prepared to stand idly by and leave the country's

leaders to get on with it. This risk would be reduced if the state had at its disposal significant reserves of goods and hard currency that it could mobilise at the time of the changeover in order to satisfy consumer demand, stabilise prices, and give a new boost to production. But if they do not have such reserves at their disposal, and if social discontent should be growing even before the introduction of the reforms — as it is now — then the leadership will be forced to choose. Either it will seek to carry the reforms through to the end and then it will have to make political concessions, but with the mass support won by such concessions it might be able to overcome the resistance of the apparatus. Or it will not undertake political concessions, and then it will have to join forces with the apparatus in order to establish and demonstrate its power over the society.

On 13 December the choice was made for the whole of Eastern Europe. Even before that date, when the Polish leadership had still appeared willing to accept a solution based on compromise, the prospect of political concessions had sent shivers down the spines of the leading circles of the region. When the Polish leaders — panicking at the strength of Solidarity — took refuge on 13 December in the state of emergency, the choice was settled for the other countries as well. They would not yield an inch. They preferred the bayonets.

In the present impasse almost anything could happen. There might be more frequent protest demonstrations or disturbances bordering on riots like those that occurred in South-West Romania last autumn. Underground groups might be organised, like those in Poland since December 1981. The specialists and intellectuals who lead public opinion, might become alienated from the authorities. Leadership crises might ensue. The apparatus itself might get confused. In other countries too power might be entrusted to the armed forces, so long as — and this cannot be ruled out in advance — they have not themselves collapsed into chaos.

Where it will all end is naturally a question that doesn't depend simply on the internal politics of the region, just as it wasn't the Polish ruling circles alone who decided to put an end to the open functioning of Solidarity. The last word lies with the Soviet leaders, whose politics persist in maintaining Eastern Europe as a Soviet sphere of influence, even though they are no longer able to help these countries out of their economic troubles. The only difference is that now the Soviet Union too is struggling with the recession. Its national income is growing ever more slowly, while since the mid-1970s the supply of goods to the population has been getting continuously worse. Its economy is ever less able to bear the burdens of the arms race, and the further costs to the state of the responsibilities of being a world power. The Soviet interpretation of detente has become untenable. The uneven pace of population increase of the nationalities is increasingly undermining the demographic bases of domination by the ethnic Russians. The highest political elite has grown old, and important decisions have been put off for years. The succession appears uncertain.

The present Soviet leadership is no longer concerned about anything else in Eastern Europe than the maintenance of a reasonable degree of law and order. Their successors, however, will have to decide what they are going to do with the bankrupt's estate they have inherited. Their decision will, without a doubt, not be unrelated to the way out which they seek from the Soviet Union's internal crisis, and from its dangerously unstable position as a world power. That is assuming, of course, that they really are going to make a choice, and will not simply be overtaken by the logic of political events — whether favourable or not to their situation.

In my opinion the most serious consequences of the present East European crisis is that the same Governments which are now engineering a drop in the previously accustomed living standards of their people, are placing themselves completely at the mercy of unpredictable changes in Soviet politics. The less they are able to count on the quiet acquiescence of their populations, the more they are driven to rely on the spectre of Big Brother. Jaruzelski is more dependent on the Soviet leadership than Gierek ever was, Ceausescu after 1981 more so than Ceausescu before 1981, and — if such a thing is at all possible — then even Husak's political choices have also become more limited.

Against this background, we are obliged to consider the

EAST EUROPE AFTER POLAND

Hungarian leadership's present accomplishments as exceptionally good, and to regard its room for manoeuvre as unusually wide.

HUNGARY BETWEEN TWO EPOCHS

The Hungarian state too has fallen deeply into debt, but so far it has kept firm control over its balance of payments and its external trade balance. This has made it necessary to introduce strict measures of import control, but the tightening-up has not yet reached the point where it would seriously upset the supply of consumer goods. Prices rise, but fairly large groups of the population are able — by the more intensified self-exploitation of their free time — to increase their money incomes. It gets ever more difficult to make ends meet, but the sort of decline that would only be endured under the threat of bayonets has not occurred. The leadership has not turned against the consumer demands of the population, while the people continue to regard the Government as the best that is possible in East Europe. People frantically devour the news arriving from the neighbouring countries, and with no little air of superiority appreciate how much better things are in Hungary.

But we should recognise the fact that this feeling of superiority is no longer so self-confident as four or five years ago. There is a certain intangible anxiety mingled in with it. Just supposing, if from one day to the next, we too should find the meat disappearing from the shelves, and have to stand in queues for washing powder and toilet paper ... There is no evident sign of the approach of an economic collapse, but all the same anxiety is more and more prevalent, and not without reason.

The Hungarian economic success is a very relative one. Between 1979 and 1981 stagnation set in, and the standard of living began to fall. At this price the increase in the foreign trade deficit was brought to a half, but no considerable surplus was attained even in the best year, i.e. the last one. New loans are continually needed to meet the costs of repaying the old ones. The best the Hungarian economy is at the present moment capable of, assuming a catastrophe doesn't happen, is to hold its dependence on the international money markets at a constant level, and to keep the economic decline at moderate levels, avoiding any spectacular collapse in the standard of living. However in the present unstable situation, problems that the country would under different circumstances be able to ride out quite easily, could now be a cause for considerable concern.

break out of its desperate situation by crude restraint on imports that are of vital importance for consumption, but with reforms aimed at improving the country's export performance. And as it has not yet committed anything of irreparable harm against society, for the time being it has only to worry about the resistance of the apparatus. And even against the apparatus itself it also has an advantage in that today — unlike at the beginning of the 1970s — within the top political circles the opposition to the reforms has no advocates. Since 1979 the entire leadership has stood on the platform of 1968. It is now a generally held opinion that the relative achievements of the Hungarian economy are due to those aspects of the earlier economic reforms that the anti-reform wave at the beginning of the 1970s was unable to reverse, and that the reforms must be continued.

Actually there were a few measures taken aimed at continuing the reforms. It was announced that the granting of special exemptions from the regulations governing enterprise activity would not be allowed, the industrial branch ministries were fused into one single Department of Industry, a large number of trusts and holding companies were broken up, and various types of small enterprises were legalised. These measures did not really have any impact on the principles governing the relationships between the state enterprises and the state that are still in force today. But in a way they did bring some movement into the still waters of traditional relationships. The compulsory nature of the economic regulators would not appear to have worked, although in itself the declaration of the wish to rely on them marked a change from the 1970s when the practice of granting exemptions had been made into a virtue. The fusion of the industrial branch ministries undermined the hierarchic channels of communication between the Government and the enterprises; the breaking up of the industrial trusts reversed an almost twenty-year-old tendency towards concentration and centralisation; the law on small enterprises substantially widened the scope of legally accepted private initiatives. The

apparatus of economic management has had to get accustomed to the fact that the country is undergoing change.

However, the final outcome of all this is quite uncertain. It could still take years to implement any comprehensive reform of the major institutions for controlling enterprise activity. It is highly doubtful that Hungary can succeed in holding out till then. Today Western loans no longer come so easily as before; the collapse of Poland and Romania has given rise to doubts in the Western world of finance concerning the credit worthiness of the entire Comecon bloc. Since the military takeover in Warsaw, Hungary has found it just as difficult as the rest to raise loans. Of course within a couple of months all this could change, but in the country's present financial situation a few months' delay could mean bankruptcy.

Even if we do manage to avoid going bust, we will still have to count with the fact that in pursuing its own foreign trade policies, Hungary is becoming ever more isolated within Comecon. In East Europe's leading circles there is a strengthening mood in favour of Comecon once again shutting itself off from the world economy. Hardly anyone is at all surprised to hear the Romanian and Polish leaders talking like this — there is no way they could hope to bring their countries' trade with the West back from the red. But the Czechoslovak leaders too are praising the advantages of an isolationist Comecon, and this shows that even the states that are still solvent are finding it difficult to put up with being dependent on Western financial markets. If the growing tension should turn into a general trend of severing links with the West, then the Hungarian leadership too could be driven into making an about turn.

However, it is not only external pressure that could be the undoing of the chances of reform. The dangerously increasing deficit in Hungary's balance of payments has also drawn contradictory consequences in its train: while the idea of realising a degree of regulation by market forces has been rehabilitated, the propensity for direct intervention and centralised directives has also been increasing. An ever greater number of Western imports now require statutory authorisation, while campaigns are being promoted to save on materials and energy, and economise with staff. In order to push their exports, one enterprise after another has to be allowed to circumvent the general economic regulations that are currently in force. It is not out of the question that by the time comprehensive reforms of economic management can be accomplished, the range of activities brought back under central control will already be so wide that the market mechanisms will only work on paper.

So Hungary is in need of luck, and of resolute leadership that will not allow the country to be diverted from its foreign trade strategy, nor allow the centralising tendencies to gain the upper hand and render the reforms meaningless. As I mentioned earlier, the Hungarian leadership today stands united on the platform of 1968, and this unity is an advantage because it means there is no-one encouraging the apparatus to resist. Now, however, the time has come to speak of the disadvantages.

1968 was not made possible by the existence of a consensus of the entire Hungarian leadership. There was only a small group of insiders who assumed responsibility for the reforms. Although this group tread with caution and circumspection, it was aware that the reforms could not be carried through without a fight, one which would involve pushing into the background the old Stalinists, those elements compromised in the 1957-60 restoration, and the groups with vested interests in a centralised command economy. In order to achieve victory, this group within the leadership was prepared to encourage the actions and initiatives of expert economists, and of the wider, opinion-leading intelligentsia. They were ready to accept that the aim of the reforms was not merely to make the economy more viable, but to make its command structure more democratic as well, and they did not rule out the view that the economic reforms might be followed by political ones.

Today there is no section within the leadership that would be interested in experimenting with progressive changes that would involve them in internal struggles. They simply want to get through the difficult times. All together, collectively. For this they don't need political allies but troubleshooters. They are prepared to listen to any type of proposal; after all, who knows when they might not need it. They themselves keep the old guard at bay — the ones who, by repeatedly citing the list of ideological taboos, try to

narrow down the Government's freedom of manoeuvre. But the only thing that is really at the centre of their concern is what might serve to improve the balance of payments.

An absurd situation! Ever since 1948 there was never a time when it was possible to speculate so freely on alternatives to the Soviet-type economic system. Economists argue about what sort of bodies should take over from the Government organs the ownership rights in the state enterprises: independent capital-owning organisations, self-management councils of producers, or enterprise boards of management. They argue for the separation of the central bank from the commercial banks, and for the re-introduction of the traditional institutions of the financial market. They would like to restrict the role of the national plan to a few strictly circumscribed macro-economic tasks. They give much thought to how an end could be brought to the tutelage of the party apparatus over enterprise management.

The leadership hears them all out without batting an eyelid — but they don't see any need to proclaim a new epoch, to announce yet another 'new economic mechanism'. In taking their stand on the direction to be followed, they consistently speak of the further improvement of economic efficiency and of the continuation of the reforms. They pledge themselves to the side of change, but they try to underplay their systemic significance. What are they playing at with such tactics? From whom are they trying to hide the fact that great things have to come?

Whatever the aim, what it has certainly achieved is that those in favour of reform have not come together, or formed a reform lobby, and nor are they likely to do so, at least so long as they receive no explicit call. On the other hand, there is nothing to ensure that the faction opposed to reform will remain equally inactive. If the process started in 1979 continues to advance, there will be ever more groups of the economic command apparatus that will get hurt and pushed around. It is in vain for the leadership to try and distract their attention — they are bound to recognise that their interests have suffered. It can also be taken as certain that they will once again find leaders who will know how to exploit the shaky situation of the economy to forge a case against the reforms. It is not so certain that the new antagonists of reform will be the same ones who stood at the head of the anti-reform coalition at the beginning of the 1970s, in other words the functionaries occupying high party and trade union positions. They are just as likely to come from amongst the captains of the economy, from those who assign import licences, those who supervise the enterprises' use of energy, and those who allocate scarce materials. Sooner or later a choice will have to be made. The Hungarian leadership will have to decide whether it is more concerned to avoid economic decisions that will provoke the population, or to avoid the test of force within the apparatus. It is to be feared, however, that by then it may already be too late.

It is not possible to say how durable the relative advantages of Hungary's present economic situation really are, to know whether we will be able to continue to hold ourselves back from the tide of recession in Eastern Europe, or whether we will simply be engulfed by it just a little later than the other countries. It is with these prospects before it that the Hungarian opposition has to develop its ideas about the near future. Let us admit it: we really are not very well equipped to think about our situation within such a broad perspective.

THE OPPOSITION AT THE CROSSROADS

The reasons for our lack of preparation are to be found in the very origins of the Hungarian opposition. It's largely true to say that our movement arose at one and the same time as the other civil rights movements in Eastern Europe. Our political and tactical conceptions derived from the common fund of ideas of these movements. Like everyone else in the mid-1970s, we too started out in the belief that it is not really worthwhile trying to bring about a revolutionary transformation of the system, nor to promote Soviet Union remains the boss of the region, every such experiment ends either in catastrophe or in the withdrawal of the gains initially won. But there is nevertheless a possibility for democratic initiatives, even if we regard the system itself as one that cannot be called into question. The system, after all, is not a closed one: between its rules there lurk crevices, gaps, and contradictions. Thus, on the one hand the criminal laws are used to repress the practice

of human rights, through such charges as incitement, conspiracy, and infringement of the publishing laws. Whatever does not fall within the scope of legal sanctions is dealt with by administrative reprisals. In this way the state gets society to accept that it is only oddballs, misfits, or people who are sick, who expect their rights to be respected. On the other hand, these very same rights are written into the highest statutes of the legal system, and, what is more, their observance is guaranteed by international agreements.

For a long time it seemed self-evident to everyone in their right senses that the civil rights were just decorative elements, and that the real power over society lay with the criminal law and the well-known administrative measures. Around the mid-1970s, however, the mood began to change, encouraged by two series of political events. The first was the flourishing of Soviet samizdat around the turn of the decade, and of the movements that congealed around it. Its example suggested that durable fruits of the post-Stalin evolution had now begun to arrive — that it was already possible to make human and civil rights into a public issue, and that the state was becoming more sensitive to the pressure of public opinion.

The second factor speeding up the change was the process of international detente and the opening up of East Europe to the world economy. As a condition for regular co-operation between the two blocs the West had to reconcile itself to the presence of the Soviet Union east of the Elbe, but the Soviet Union also had to give something in exchange and that was the assurance that the states within the Soviet sphere of influence would begin to respect more seriously the fundamental rights of their citizens. This bargain was secured in the Helsinki Agreement.

A new tactic was thus born — for us to act as though it was not the criminal laws and administrative regulations that were the authentic guidelines, but the abstract legal principles. We should create an uncensored press, establish committees to defend human rights, encourage the formation of free trade unions. However small might be the groups taking the first initiatives, however puny their first endeavours, those sections of the public that would pay attention to them would learn that such things are possible. At the same time the state would learn that it is not profitable to crush the initiatives with brute force because there is already a public opinion in existence that does not consider it natural for everything to be decided by force, while the flagrant violation of the obligations entered into in international agreements will not go down well with Western public opinion either.

This tactical conception was first advanced by the Polish democratic opposition, who, right from the start, set it within the framework of a very daring outlook. In the course of time, argued Kuron and Michnik, more and more sections of society would come to organise themselves on the models of the groups that first took the initiative, and they would be able to compel the Government to come to terms with the newly-emergent organised society, and to recognise some restricted forms of pluralism. But they didn't only count on the fact that a quarter of a century after Stalin's death the state would no longer be able to suppress human rights so cynically as they had in the past. They also saw in the development of the system a process of decay — they counted on the disintegration of state power, and a rapid growth in the militancy of the basic social classes. As far as Poland was concerned, they were not mistaken.

However, at the time when the opposition began to assemble in Hungary, society was fairly stable and calm, and the state was firmly in control. Despite the inspiration and hope we drew from the Poles, we could not really count on much more in the foreseeable future than that small groups might succeed in acquiring a foothold outside the immense structure of the official establishment. In this respect, our situation was similar to that of the Czechs. But we differed from them too, in regard to the background and social status of the groups that initiated the opposition movement. In Prague the founders emerged from the ranks of the victims of the 1969/71 political purges. A well-defined barrier separated them off from almost all the intellectuals and professionals in employment who had secured their jobs by making oaths of allegiance and by betraying others. Between 1963 and 1969 they had all played some political role. Budapest lacked such a hard core of people with past political experience. In Hungary those who started the whole thing were those who in Prague had

EAST EUROPE AFTER POLAND

made up the outer circles — intellectuals marginalised by professional conflicts.

It was without ever having had any political experiences which would have sorted them out, that they increasingly broke away from the integrated intelligentsia, and without ever having come into conflict with its members. So I believe that the divergent characters of the two movements are closely related to their different starting points.

In its founding statement Charter 77 clearly defined its aims; it selected its spokespersons according to well-defined rules, and coordinated the opinions of different groups through well prepared procedures of conciliation. In contrast to this, the Hungarian opposition never reached the point at which it might have brought forward its own programme of action. All we did was to announce through a few symbolic gestures — our letter of January 1977 and our protests of October 1979 — that we too belonged to the community of East European movements committed to the cause of human and civil rights. Apart from this, we simply practiced these rights in order to assert them: we brought into existence the 'second publicity' of the samizdat and the Free University, and later we set up SZETA, an organisation of voluntary social assistance to the poor. But we completely failed to establish any procedures for settling conflicts and differences of opinion arising between the loosely connected circles within the opposition. This is on the side of the losses.

On the side of the gains, however, we can record to our credit that our activity has not been forced back into defending the inward growth of our newly established institutions. We have done things that would have been unimaginable in Prague. In the *Bibo Memorial Volume*, leading writers, critics and social scientists appeared together with well-known oppositionists, while established artists crowded forward to take part in the SZETA art auction, and it became the accepted thing, not just an oppositional practice, to protest in collective petitions against any infringements of rights. At one moment the editorial board of a literary journal, at the next the membership of a professional association, showed by their conduct that, since the opposition had come forward, the boundaries of what was submissively accepted had shifted significantly.

After the event, we can ponder over what would really have been the best way to go about things — to trade a smaller influence (and less protection) for a sharper definition of our political aims and the tighter security of our institutions, or the reverse. Yet, whether we did it well or badly, in the future we are certainly not going to be able to go on in the same way.

The largest and greatest achievements of the Hungarian opposition were attained in the political calm of the second half of the 1970s, when even the last reverberations of the 1960s reforms had subsided, but before society had been struck by the crisis atmosphere of the 1980s. The times of reform and betterment were over. Those who hoped for changes were ever fewer. Those who had not yet achieved what they wanted began to get impatient, while even those who had made it were not able to repeat their routine everyday compromises with the same self-assurance. But the general feeling of security had still not been shaken. If anything it grew, for with the passing of time we got further away from the years of Stalinism and of the repression after 1956. It was within this atmosphere of inertia and disenchantment that had not yet been struck by anxiety, that the opposition stepped defiantly forward into the public arena. One had only to reject the sick and detested models of conduct, to begin to behave in a different way, and almost at once some kind of inconceivable process of crystallisation would begin to start around one.

We cannot expect to count on such processes continuing in the 1980s. Society is now ruled by anxiety; everything has become uncertain; it is possible that in the coming years the fate of the country could be settled for the lifespan of a further generation. What improvement is made on this situation if samizdat now appears in 500 copies rather than in 50? Either the opposition will have something to say on the grand questions of the day, or its significance will decline to a level more proportionate to its actual numbers and organisation. (Though this would not necessarily be such a bad thing.) To speak without censorship, to keep alive a sense of social concern, to help the needy — in all events, these are good things. Those for whom such tasks constitute a sufficient aim will be able to carry on their work in an undisturbed spirit. But

those who joined up with the opposition in the hope that such initiatives would be linked to a more far-reaching strategy, they will have to face up to the fact that the defiant exercise of fundamental rights and freedoms is no longer sufficient to serve as our political tactics.

THE POLITICS OF THE OPPOSITION UNDER THE SHADOW OF POLAND

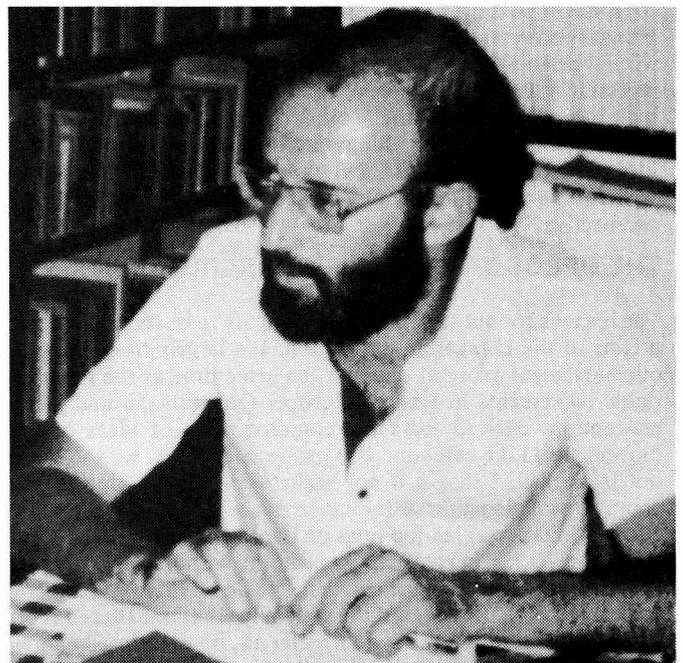
Nowadays, many people are thinking that the opposition has got problems, but this is usually on the basis of experiences and arguments other than those which I have been putting forward so far. Most of my friends refer to the disheartening lessons of the Polish restoration, and argue that whenever a democratic movement is defeated in any one country of Eastern Europe, the whole region falls under the sway of reaction.

For my part, I think it would be appropriate to give deeper thought to the matter. And not just because times of being forced to a standstill are generally suitable ones for reflection. I am convinced that there are practical lessons to be drawn from the Polish experience — lessons that we will not be able to recognise so long as we remain mesmerised by the blow delivered to the Polish democratic movement, and unable to think of anything else than of 13 December and its repercussions.

I am not suggesting we should pretend that we have not suffered another great defeat, or ignore the fact that we are at the beginning of another period of restoration. We have to take account of the fact that the conditions of our activity have become more constrained. It can't be ruled out that in the aftermath of the Polish crisis the equilibrium of the wider political region may also become disturbed. This is a danger that we must take seriously because we can't expect anything good to come from Hungary losing the relative advantages which it acquired in the 1960s and 1970s. Both our moral sense and our political realism tells us that we can only consider desirable those developments that build on existing achievements, not on the country's economic and political decline.

But we must also take seriously the point that I have already tried to draw attention to, namely that the decline could also occur even if everyone behaves themselves properly. The beginning of the 1980s is not just the time of restoration and reaction in Eastern Europe, but also that of spreading economic recession and political crisis. And there is no guarantee that the Hungarian leadership will be able to safely pilot the country over this dangerous section of the journey.

However, the East European recession holds not only dangers, but also great possibilities for us. In the coming years we can expect all sorts of unpredictable events, and ones which the economically and politically weakened East European regimes will find it difficult to master. While these growing problems will



Janos Kis pictured recently in Budapest

engage the attention of the — equally weakened — Soviet Union, Hungary may be able to increase both its external independence and its internal pluralism — at least if it remains economically stable, if it doesn't get torn away from the world market, and if it doesn't put off the necessary reforms. This prospect provides a perspective within which we can perhaps begin to think about real politics.

The traditions of the opposition do contain something which is a clear advantage in today's situation — a situation which in itself could augur either good or bad. As we have already seen, the country's leaders are now willing to regard as alterable even those elements of the economic system that were previously considered inviolable — if they have reason to hope that change can help them to get through the hard times. But they are not interested in any prospects for change that would go beyond simply ensuring survival — they don't want to upset the established order any more than is absolutely necessary. With very few exceptions, the intellectual groups moving within the boundaries of the establishment think in just the same perspective. Naturally there are very many of them whose chosen values, social ideals and political principles go far beyond the Soviet type of socialism. But it is only the 1977/81 opposition that starts out in the belief that it is now already possible to begin to step beyond the limits of the present system — even if only in a small way.

In the 1980s however, we cannot allow ourselves to think in a small way. We must be concerned for the country as a whole. Do we want to respond to this challenge? Will we be able to do so? The most sensible way of answering the first question would be, if we were able to do so, to hold a public debate about our intentions. And it is only in such a public discussion that we could clarify the sort of conditions that would have to be fulfilled before we would be able to give an affirmative answer to the second question. In conclusion to my article I should now like to make three contributions towards a possible answer to this very question.

Firstly, the opposition is in need of ideology. For the Samizdat, SZETA and the Free University it was enough for us to be agreed — implicitly — on a fundamental commitment to the cause of human rights. In all probability, the majority of our supporters accepted other principles of liberal democracy as well, and professed as their own the ideas of national independence and autonomy for national minorities. And I don't believe there could have been many amongst us who would not have identified with at least some elements of the socialist tradition. But all this remained in the background. Now, however, if we want to formulate and evaluate political alternatives, we shall have to make it explicitly clear what our ideals are, we shall have to state our reasons for adhering to them, and explain what sort of institutional solutions we envisage for turning them into reality.

Secondly, we will have to make people aware that the conditions for participation in oppositional activity have changed. At the beginning, the policy was for as many people as possible to participate openly under their own names, so as to demonstrate to the public that what we were doing was a completely natural thing. More recently, however, there has been a growing tendency for initiatives to be undertaken anonymously. Even collective publications have appeared without the name of a single editor or author. We shouldn't condemn this change. It bears evidence to the fact that even people who do not want to submit themselves to the growing administrative sanctions are seeking the possibilities of speaking freely. We should try to encourage such forms of activity and incorporate their work, because we certainly need to expand the pool of ideas we can draw upon.

But above all else, we need to free ourselves from the paralysis brought on by the as yet undigested experience of the Polish defeat. Without reflection there is only one thing we can see: that once again the Soviet Union has not been prepared to give ground. If, however, we get down to the task of deeper analysis, then we shall be forced to realise that internal factors played a part of at least equal importance in the Polish developments as outside Soviet pressure.

I would point to the incompetence, impotence and corruption of the Polish leadership as being the most important factors. Their Government was incapable of initiating institutional changes when they were still firmly in the saddle. They were equally incapable of reconciling themselves to the changes forced upon them when the

initiative had already been seized by the organised working class. As a result the sections of society that started to move felt nothing but contempt and hatred towards these leaders, and as soon as they got the chance, they tried to get rid of them. The Gdansk Agreement could come into being, but from then on there were no partners to see to its observance, and a process of disintegration was set in motion that could only be brought to a conclusion in either a victorious revolution or in a counter-revolution. As the forces of order — the police, the militia and parts of the military — remained intact, it was the counter-revolution that triumphed. It does not, however, follow from this that the Soviet leaders would have undertaken direct military intervention even if it had been the revolution that had gained the upper hand. On more than one occasion they had demonstrated that they were fully aware of the limits to their freedom of action — in September and in December 1980, and again in March-April 1981. If we compare this hesitation in 1981 with their behaviour in 1956, then we have to acknowledge that this time they were much nearer to accepting a compromise settlement with a victorious revolution.

At the same time, it is not only the behaviour of the Soviet leadership that has changed. The leading circles of the East European states are not all composed in the same way either. Today's Hungarian leadership is, from every point of view, better than the Polish — there is more internal understanding, they are less corrupt, and considerably more prepared to accept the necessary changes. The population do not regard them as incapable of governing, nor do they nourish violent passions against them. Once the ice were to be broken, and the first steps taken, there might be by far better chances in Hungary for reaching a compromise settlement between the Government and the people than there were in Poland in 1980-81. We would do well to keep this in mind, even though it is more likely that in the different Hungarian situation there will be far less chance of the first steps being taken at all. This is especially the case at the present moment when the Hungarian people, seeing the terror in Poland and the deteriorating economic situation throughout Eastern Europe, are more likely than ever to be prepared to accept the status quo in exchange for the hope of retaining their relatively advantageous situation.

The spokespersons of the Polish opposition in the middle of the 1970s argued that if the population did not organise itself in a disciplined movement capable of representing them in negotiations with the authorities, then the anger against the regime would break out with an uncontrollable rage. Hungary, however, is not threatened by any outbreak of passions, but rather by excessive self-restraint. While everyone is at pains not to cause difficulties to the Government, we may be slowly but surely sinking down into economic recession and the accompanying political crisis — or at the very least, we may be letting slip a chance of setting right the problems that have remained unsolved for 35 years.

We must break the silence. We must point out the dangers, and call attention to the possibilities that exist. This is something that can only be done by a political grouping that stands outside the establishment, in other words by the democratic opposition. I know that this is a task that is far beyond anything the 1977/81 opposition has so far undertaken, but, as a first step forward, perhaps we should begin to think about it.

János Kis

Budapest, March-April 1982

CHILE SOLIDARITY

Clotario Blest Riffo, Founder, ex-First President and Honorary President of the Chilean Central United Trade Union (Central Unica de Trabajadores de Chile — CUT), addressing domestic and international audiences states the following:

On the second anniversary of both the nationwide strikes organised by the Independent Self-Governing Trade Union Solidarity and the agreements reached between the Polish workers and the government (agreements later violated by the Polish authorities), I use this occasion to express my total support for the Polish workers in their legitimate struggle to build a new social order where the workers will have true control of the means of production and be able to govern themselves.

We, the workers of the world, reject all dictatorships, either civil or military; and we demand the unconditional release of all political prisoners, the official recognition of Solidarity and respect for the workers' right to struggle for an authentic proletarian democracy.

Santiago, Chile August 1982

A Year of Martial Law in Poland

By Jean-Yves Potel

In the autumn of 1981, after Solidarity's first congress, Poland's independent labour movement was undergoing a real crisis of identity. As the economic crisis provoked growing popular discontent and as the movement's activists lost all hope of voluntary reforms from above, defence of what had been obtained in Gdansk in August 1980 was no longer sufficient. Yet the congress itself produced only broad intentions, while the leadership continued to attempt to follow a pragmatic course. The union became divided in action and began to lose the initiative. A small but significant section of the population yearned for calm and order and could not see where Solidarity was leading them. Other sections were becoming more radical, supporting the call for free elections and preparing for an active strike.

Using the ambiguous prestige of the army, General Jaruzelski took advantage of that moment to deliver a swift, hard blow against the working class. But he had to take account of his own limitations. He may have had, à la Pinochet or Kádár in Hungary in 1956, the technical means to crush the working class, but feared that resistance could be too strong, and he lacked the economic resources to pull the country rapidly out of its crisis. So the December coup was aimed at winning ascendancy and disorganising Solidarnosc, but not much more. Rather than marking a final victory, the coup was the start of a new course on the path to curbing the momentum of society and altering the traditional structure of power.

The banning of Solidarity ten months later marked a new stage in this process. Jaruzelski sought to defy the strong popular hostility to his regime, shown by the demonstrations in May and August and to brush aside the organisation potential of the Solidarity underground. He raised the stakes by pledging that the regime would never allow Solidarity to return.

In this article, I shall first attempt to analyse the main features of Polish life under martial law.

THE ECONOMIC DISASTER

The catastrophic tendencies of the first months of 1982 are confirmed by the most recent statistics. The level of industrial production in July '82 was 4.8% lower than at the same time the previous year. Although coal production had increased by 6.8%, that of industries of transformation had gone down by 5.7%, light industry by 1.3%.¹ Forecasts for the next six months are not much better. Distributed national product is 7.7% lower than the previous year as against official projections of a 6.9% fall. An official commentator has pointed out that this has hampered the carrying through of the regime's social programme. Despite a good corn and fruit harvest the situation in the countryside continues to deteriorate. The most disastrous results are in cattle breeding



The cross of flowers in Victory Square, Warsaw symbolising national resistance, during a visit from the police

— available meat has dropped by 7.2%, poultry by 84.2% and eggs by 33.8%. Only pork production has increased slightly, by 4.3%. Industrial investment follows the same downward curve, 28% lower in the first half of 1982 than it had been in the same period in 1981. Purchasing power has fallen spectacularly: industrial wages rose 44.1% during the year to July while prices have increased by between 200 and 300 per cent.

All these statistics show what has happened to living standards over the year. After the wage increases of August 1980, the population couldn't find the products it wanted to buy, while today it doesn't have the money to buy what it can find. This is particularly true of meat. The official average industrial wage in July was 10,828 zloty a month. The price of a kilo of meat varied from 550 to 700 zl., a kilo of butter was 300 zl., a kilo of sausages was 600 zl., a single egg cost 15.5 zl. in state shops, but were scarcely ever available. It is estimated that ten to fifteen per cent of the rationed meat supply is never bought for lack of money. As a result of falling output, at least 1.5 kilos of the 2.5 kilo monthly ration must now be made up of poor quality meat.

There is a dramatic shortage of shoes, clothes and other light industrial goods. Since October consumers have had to await their appointed month and week in order to buy a new pair of shoes. After-sales service is also continuing to deteriorate, so that 100,000 of the 620,000 tractors available to farmers are out of order, and forty per cent of Warsaw buses cannot run for lack of batteries.² It is not unusual that a bus should stop half-way along its route, like an old horse that drops from exhaustion. The passengers simply get off and wait for another. In Krakow, where there is a chronic shortage of wheels, taxi-drivers have even applied for work in the local wheel-producing factory.³

THE PESSIMISM OF OFFICIAL ECONOMISTS

Even if the drop in output is slowing down, it is not hard to imagine that there will be no short-term improvements. Besides, the pessimism of official economists and the failure of the reform seem to rule out any reversal of present trends. The reform has always had a contradictory character, prescribing greater managerial autonomy at a time when martial law compels managers to follow the letter of central directives. There is absolutely no sign of the social consensus that would be necessary for success. Although a series of 'operational programmes' were supposed to prioritise a dozen areas of production, the state of the footwear market shows that this, too, has been a complete failure.

Forecasts for the next three years have aroused public debate on the three rather gloomy alternatives proposed by the Consultative Economic Council. The most favourable anticipates a mere 12 per cent rise in purchasing power (after a 30 per cent fall in the last year), with a 15 per cent investment cutback. Alternatively, net investment will rise by 13 per cent, while the increase in consumption is held to 6 per cent.⁴ In reality, however, no one really believes these projections, and the chairman of the Consultative Economic Council, Professor Bobrowski, does not conceal his pessimism. 'Today,' he argues, 'we cannot even guarantee calm ... We should expect nothing from outside. The reform mechanisms, and the people involved in them, have not been synchronised. At every level, in government, the administrative apparatus and the press, people were right to hope for big results. But they were wrong to count on them.'⁵

Lack of control over the economic process has led to a drop in industrial capacity, especially in advanced technological sectors,

impoverishment of the population, exhaustion of savings, and a deterioration of services and infrastructure. However, these serious consequences do not necessarily point towards working-class mobilisation. Last year, the deepening of the crisis drew forth a powerful trade-union movement, hunger marches and the development of workers' control. Today, there are numerous signs that suggest an individual withdrawal into problems of everyday life.

SOME ECONOMIC SUCCESSES

Some of the economic successes achieved by the junta rest upon this new dynamic. Last February, for the first time in fifteen years, price rises were introduced without provoking major protests; and there is no longer the same anarchy in the distribution of food products. Although everything is now more expensive, the shops are better supplied and the administration of the economy seems more efficient. The press also vaunts the successes in coal production. Thus, the *Trybuna Ludu* correspondent in Brussels recently rejoiced at Poland's reappearance on the world market, pointing out that EEC imports of Polish coal will be 4.8 million tonnes higher than last year.⁶ However, this is the result of intense repression in the mines (sackings, an apparatus of security guards) and of an ill-considered and safety-blind exploitation of the most accessible veins. The new wages system also fosters divisions, tighter control and greater corruption. A face-worker who does not work Saturdays or Sundays receives an average of some 20,000 zł. a month, while those who do weekends as well can take home 30 to 34,000 zloty. But not everyone can work the extra days. The management and the military authorities operate a process of selection based upon 'dedication to work', with dangerous consequences for both the men and the productive machinery.

'Mining disasters have become more and more common,' writes a Solidarity economist, 'and their number will increase. The yield will decrease as the most accessible veins are exhausted, equipment is used up and new machinery is found wanting.' At least three disasters have claimed several lives in recent months: ten killed at the Dimitrov mine and seven at the Victoria mine in June; and six more died at the Dimitrov mine in October. The authorities have themselves recognised the responsibility of the administration: 'Analysis of the accidents in the Dimitrov and Victoria mines,' writes *Polityka*, 'has shown that they were due to errors committed by the personnel in charge of mining operations and implementation of the rules in force. The Minister of Mining and Energy has relieved the Victoria mine Director of his functions, and the others responsible are the object of a judicial enquiry.'⁷

THE PEASANTS

In the countryside, the peasants are still engaged in passive resistance. The prices structure, which has moved further to the advantage of town over country, is unlikely to improve next year. Indeed, deliveries to the state have fallen so much that there is talk of a return to the compulsory purchas-

ing system suppressed at the beginning of the Gierek era. However, as a Solidarity economist has pointed out, 'the attempts last spring to impose compulsory deliveries on the peasantry in return for state loans have ended in failure. The peasants preferred to burn their stocks rather than deliver wheat on the WRON's terms. All the reports speak of deep hatred and an atmosphere of revolt. The price rises were of no benefit to the peasantry, since they did not alter the price relationship between agricultural and industrial products. In these conditions, the peasants will try to sell their products at a higher price outside the official circuit — which will, of course, prompt retaliatory measures on the part of the authorities.'⁸ It is generally estimated that grain deliveries to the state will be no more than 2.5 million tonnes (instead of the five million required).

The economic balance-sheet of the junta is once again disastrous, and the winter promises to be very difficult. The authorities are counting on the impoverishment and atomisation of society that such a collapse will undoubtedly produce, but the political effects remain harder to foresee. Since explosions of anger are always possible, they will have to keep up their physical and repressive pressure.

A NEW SHIFT

The ruling apparatus has undergone a profound modification in the last nine months, as tendencies already perceptible in summer '81⁹ have been accentuated.

Firstly, at the legislative level, the Sejm has adopted thirty to forty new laws that revoke many of the gains of August 1980. We can already see the outlines of a new system: a labour code, family legislation, an education system, a struggle against parasitism and corruption, a trade-union law, a law on agricultural co-operatives, and so on. All are designed to curb democratic liberties, to establish new offences, and to legitimise harsher regimentation of the population. At the same time, there has been a purge of the main institutions, especially the press, the courts and the educational system, although resistance has sometimes limited its scope in the universities and elsewhere.

The military fraction has also turned on the traditional Party apparatus, that conservative bastion grouped around people like Olszowski and Grabski. This relative subordination of the Party to the civil and military authorities is the main element in a reform of the power system. Whereas the first district or province secretary used to have the last say on anything to do with the Nomenklatura, these powers have passed to the military commissars since 13 December 1981. This shift has had major consequences.

NEW PERSONNEL

The Party bureaucrats have bristled up against Jaruzelski's marginalisation of their chief representatives: Olszowski has been moved from the Politburo to foreign affairs; Kociolek has been sent to Moscow; and Grabski, no longer on the Central Committee, is stagnating in the provinces. Nevertheless, the pressure of the apparatus still

seems to be very strong. Some 20,000 Party cadres, often holding important posts, are said to be linked with the old 'forums' around the paper *Rzeczywiscosc*. The General will not be able to get rid of them all, particularly since the personnel transfers required by the new situation have tended to unite the whole apparatus around ultra-conservative positions. In towns like Gdansk, where the apparatus has traditionally been liberal, all the leading personnel have been changed in a couple of months; while in others like Poznan, the changes have only just begun in recent weeks. There are also cases like Lodz where the existing personnel has itself shifted to highly conservative positions.

Since the new replacements have naturally taken a liking to their responsibilities, any step back would be very difficult. Moreover, they administer the country in alliance with a broad layer of technocrats, without whom the military cannot hope to rule. It is this group which knows the economic organisation of the country and can best balance the level of exploitation of the workers with the indispensable concessions required for higher output. For their part, these technocrats, placed between the central authorities and the working class, are beginning to see the military regime as an alternative to the narrow, arbitrary rule of the Party apparatus. Tired of instability, they seek reforms and greater room for economic manoeuvre. Before December, some hoped to achieve this by means of Solidarity. But now, whether through fear or choice, they seem to have massively regrouped behind the junta.

This alliance seeks to force the Party apparatus to submit to itself. Thus, in official ritual, Jaruzelski is very rarely presented as First Secretary of the PUWP, usually appearing as Prime Minister or head of WRON. The newspapers that set the tone are now *Rzeczpospolita*, a daily founded by Jaruzelski and *Zolnierz Wolnosci*, the organ of the army. *Trybuna Ludu* mainly expresses the international positions.

JARUZELSKI'S PROJECT

Although these changes in the structure of political domination would seem to give the outline of Jaruzelski's project, things are still at a very early stage. The General is forced to compromise with the Party apparatus, which undoubtedly has powerful Soviet backers; and he is still a long way from achieving the necessary minimum of social legitimacy. Not only have the new structures for 'mobilising' the population remained empty shells, but the General has still not sealed the crucial alliances at central level. The 'patriotic committees' (OKONs), initially swamped by unreliable allies in the Party apparatus, were transformed into PRONs or 'councils of the patriotic movement for national rebirth' in which Catholics from the Zablocki group and various 'independent' figures agreed to participate. These councils are supposed to replace the Party in various aspects of local life: the organisation of voluntary work-days, the collection of a million zloty for a creche, and so on. However, there have been many defections and the balance-sheet is not very

impressive. Sokorski, for example, a minister of culture in the Stalin period, refused to take the head of the PRON movement; Jan Szczepanski, a 'non-party' sociologist and member of the Council of State, has maintained his opposition; and the group of *Znak* deputies refused to vote for the trade-union law.

Jaruzelski's shaky course, charted by behind-the-scenes figures like the sociologist Viatr, is also fuelling conflicts within the army and the Party apparatus. General Molszik, head of the Polish Warsaw Pact forces under the Soviet General Kulikov, is said to be exerting impatient pressure for a stronger show of force, with the support of members of the military academy and even of Jaruzelski's personal secretary. At the same time, a number of middle-level Party bureaucrats are now supposed to believe in the regime's future and to be lining up behind the military. However, none of these hypothetical divergences goes beyond the tactical instruments to be used in restoring the system of domination jeopardised by Solidarity. They express the pragmatic character of a regime whose underlying community of interests should not be underestimated.

Although the WRON seems to have reversed the course of events initiated in August 1980, it still has very limited political capacities and economic credibility. In order to subjugate a society still marked by sixteen months of a rising social movement and by a Church eager to retain its links with the population, the regime needs to inflict a decisive political defeat on the independent trade unionists.

A MORAL SHOCK

Society repudiates the new regime — that is beyond doubt. Anyone who goes to Poland will have a very hard time finding someone who supports the junta. It is hated and held in contempt. But of course that is not enough to block Jaruzelski's path: Poland is not the only 'people's democracy' where such hostility is the rule, and we should not abstract such general statements from the gains of two years of struggle or from the defeat of 13 December. We have to grasp the extent to which this peculiar situation works to fuel mobilisations against the regime and the defence of past gains.

First there was the moral and political shock of the coup d'état itself, which made the workers keenly aware of their unpreparedness and explains the weak response and the widespread fear and prostration of the first few weeks. One thinks of the Wujec miners who, believing that the whole of Poland was on strike, declared a pit occupation that ended in submission under the bullets of the ZOMO. Each Solidarity activist I have met still puzzles over that failure, but many criticise the 'lack of foresight' and illusions in dialogue of the union leadership. People often talk of the evolution of a man like Rakowski, who, after passing as one of the most liberal members of the Politburo, became one of the WRON's most zealous champions. How, they ask, could we have believed in his good intentions? For such activists, any new movement is therefore related to examina-

tion of the past and the working out of fresh perspectives. They immediately express their need for a clear plan of action and a precise definition of their objectives. Many argue that Solidarity sinned by its excessively moral approach. When you are dealing with cynics, they say, *realpolitik* is the only effective course.

The same activists think it impossible to give the General a free hand, insisting that the gains must be defended inch by inch. But since the WRON is continually raising the stakes, resistance always poses the problem of an overall movement, a national accord, and so on. Such is the contradiction underlying the disorientation of many militants.



Photo: Argus

THE UNDERGROUND MOVEMENT

After February — March 1982, everyone mobilised to build an underground movement and to revive Solidarity. As fear was surmounted, the movement soon attracted tens of thousands of activists, and the demonstrations in May and August announced the rebirth of the union. Information gathered from reliable sources suggests the following picture.

At the beginning of October, there were only a couple of hundred people living totally underground — essentially those regional and national leaders who managed to elude the December round-up. The police have set a price on their head and are actively seeking them out. Tens or even hundreds of thousands of others are involved in semi-clandestine activity, living at home and continuing to do their regular work. The more responsibility they have, the less they are known. Finally there are several million Poles, about 50-60 per cent of Solidarity's membership, who support the union's activity if only by regular payment of dues. These figures are obviously approximate, since it has not been possible to carry out an accurate count. But they tally with estimates received from various sources. They give some idea of the scale of things.

Solidarity is trying to coordinate its circles and seems to have rebuilt a minimum apparatus.

The Provisional Coordinating Committee (TKK), created in April, comprises five members of the National Commission elected at the October 1981 Congress. Coming from the most active areas, they define the broad framework of union activity and constitute its national authority.

The regional committees (RKW) consist of people elected to regional positions before

13 December. The most solid ones are in Gdansk, Warsaw, Wroclaw and Krakow, the most important of all probably being in the mining area around Wroclaw. In a number of working-class towns built around a major enterprise — e.g., Swidnik, Gorzow, Ursus and Lubin — it has been easier to construct a very strong organisation. The August demonstrations in 66 urban centres demonstrated both the geographic spread and the unevenness of union implantation. Sometimes the underground apparatus was completely submerged by a wave that it did not control, while very little is known about a series of other towns. Still, the absence of demonstrations does not necessarily indicate a weak underground network. In Poznan, for example, where the workers organised few gatherings, the organisation is very solid in the factories and is based upon old traditions. The number of functioning regional committees seems to be quite small.

The workplace commissions, the basic local structure, are generally propelled by new militants who do not appear in public and are unknown to the police. The commissions put out bulletins, which are secretly circulated to individuals. In a few areas, inter-workplace coordinating committees have been set up: the MKS, for example, is the most important of four such committees in the Warsaw region; it publishes a bulletin of its own called *CDN*¹⁰.

A FRAGILE EDIFICE

This edifice, however, is still very fragile. Owing to security problems, various structures are in only infrequent relations with one another, and some could quickly disappear as a result of arrests. They communicate principally through the intermediary of press organs. Several hundred regular bulletins exist (15-20 for Warsaw), each one distributed in several thousand copies. The regional committees have more important press organs, usually printed on big machines.

In addition to these networks, KOS mutual aid groups have sprung up around a circle of friends in a neighbourhood, a town or a block of flats. They circulate bulletins and information, give help to sacked workers and tend to specialise in a particular type of activity. But it is very difficult. Finally, the Church provides a support network that distributes food and medicine. Some parishes specialise in following up the cases of people interned or imprisoned, while others deal with sacked workers or families in need.

In short, a whole fabric of solidarity permanently mobilises hundreds of thousands of people across the country, ranging from underground militants to actors who refuse to go on television. It is a kind of parallel society, independent of official structures, with its own values and reference-points, its own anniversaries and networks of trust, and its own traitors. It also has its symbols: tiny badges, calendars with Walesa's face on them, stamps made in the camps, and so on. People meet at demonstrations, but also in churches, where mass often ends in an ovation to the banned union.

This movement is closely united in defence of the basic democratic freedoms won since August 1980. But it has its weak points: political divisions and an excessive moralism, as well as an uneven geographic implantation. It has also suffered blows from the repression.

THE GROWTH OF POLITICAL DIFFERENCES

The difficulties of the last two years have obviously increased political divergences. These appear clearly in the Warsaw journals (Niepodleglosc, Glos, Wola, Almanach etc) that have returned to the old traditions of the Polish democratic opposition. Relations are not always as friendly as they were during the time when Solidarity openly organised millions of workers; and suspicions arise in the prevailing climate of police repression. In addition, there are a number of different projects for the formation of new political parties.

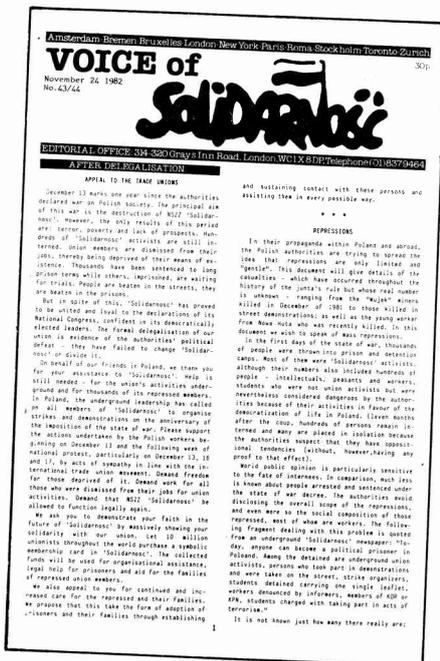
Police activity has perhaps decreased on the streets — people talk of a 'state of war with a human face' — but it has been stepped up against militants. Just before the Sejm voted on the trade union law, they increased the number of preventive arrests in the factories. The Minister of the Interior disposes of a large network of spies and informers. In Warsaw, there is even a special office where denunciations can be tape-recorded in special booths. Apart from the 4000 arrests which followed the events of 31 August, the police have mounted some spectacular operations and dealt very severe blows to the union (the arrest of Zbigniew Romaszewski, of 20 MRKZ activists in Warsaw, and of Wladyslaw Frasyuniuk and Barbara Labuda in Wroclaw).

Finally, Rural Solidarity does not seem to have reorganised itself. Militant peasants, themselves deeply divided, have suffered greatly from the betrayal of their president, Kulaj. Nothing has come of the few attempts to coordinate peasant committees in the south-east of the country and near Gdansk-Bydgoszcz.

SENTIMENTAL OPPOSITION AND ACTION

What links has this underground society established with the rest of the population? Undeniably it receives very strong moral support. Yet we must distinguish between what in Warsaw is called 'sentimental support' and 'support through action'. The difficult conditions of daily life and the lack of short-term perspectives increase the differentiations. The 'silent majority' of pre-December days is gaining ground, and it is not obvious that moral support to an organisation which embodies national dignity and the values of August 1980 is translated into active participation in strikes and demonstrations.

For some time now, the leaders of Solidarity have been worried by such signs as the uneven participation of workers from large enterprises in the demonstrations of 31 August. In Warsaw, it is reliably estimated that about five per cent of the workforce in factories like FSO, Huta-Warsaw and Ursus came to the demonstrations. Some important underground leaders even thought



those days were a failure. Similarly, appeals for regular payment of dues have increased in the workplace bulletins. Various reports from Katowice, Warsaw and Krakow regions indicate as much as a 50 per cent drop in dues, while many workplace militants stress the uneven combativity of workers and the difficulty they have in mobilising for strikes that always end in sackings.

Naturally the same people were wary of drawing definitive conclusions. For them the situation remained unstable and very dynamic. People were tired, some were passive, but this could quite quickly be reversed. No one could, for example, foresee what the spontaneous reaction would be to the banning of the union by the Sejm.

THE BEGINNING OF A SPLIT?

All the same, the differences also referred to deeper phenomena of a socio-political nature, which could feed the beginning of a split between the underground movement and the great mass of the working population. It would be a split between militants of the underground apparatus preoccupied with problems of security and driven to cross swords with the authorities, and worker-activists in the factories confronted by the daily existence of the working class; a split between the often moral and romantic course taken by the former and the more down-to-earth preoccupations of the latter (wages, work organisation, safety, employment, etc.). And whereas the former are being radicalised, the latter are preparing for a more prolonged struggle and are very sensitive to the signs of passivity outlined above.

Moreover they often draw a negative balance-sheet of Solidarity's work before December, especially in the trade-union field.

This differentiation in consciousness is accentuated by the debates taking place in the underground movement — abstract, and more moral than political. Typical in this respect was the debate on the general strike.

The debate ended in stalemate and appeared to many as a sterile exercise. People discussed the means without really taking the ends into consideration. There was very little debate on what should be negotiated, on the basis for refusing to negotiate with the authorities, or even on whether a national 'entente' was a realistic objective, as opposed to other more radical formulae. In fact the tactical differences, most clearly expressed by Bujak and Romaszewski, essentially translated the difficulties analysed above. The positions of Romaszewski appeared to be 'avant-garde': there are people who want to fight and others who are less determined; let us leave the former to engage in struggle, they will set an example and end up rallying the whole of society as in August 1980; for this to happen, the underground movement must endow itself with solid organisations. Bujak, by contrast, was on his guard against cutting himself off from this silent and sentimental majority, whose demands and possibilities of action are more limited. Thus, he argued that one should not issue slogans over and above what each individual could accomplish.

Another differentiation developed in the last couple of weeks on the notion of 'underground society', above all on the initiative of experts close to the Warsaw leadership. In its programmatic declaration of 28 July 1982, the TKK set the union the target of forming an underground society: 'This movement should take charge of different spheres of life and social activity: it should concern all groups and all milieux in both town and country ... We should demonstrate to society the power which resides in itself.'

For the majority of militants and in the texts of the independent press this notion is associated with the idea of total isolation from official political structures. Some people think it is based on a moral orientation aimed at a total boycott. Unless there is a rapid overthrow of the authorities, however, this attitude is considered to be illusory. The state will eventually give a minimal social basis to the new unions, with their self-management committees and social networks. One part of the working class will join them, it is argued, if only to organise their lives and carry out elementary negotiations with the authorities. By refusing, on the basis of a moral principle, to fight within these official structures, the resistance will become more and more isolated from a large part of the population. In fact, supporters of this position do not believe that Solidarity can offer an alternative on the ground of elementary defence.

This problem was already raised last spring in relation to the self-management committees relaunched by the junta. It then became especially topical during the weeks before the banning of Solidarity. Of course, no one proposed to endorse the dissolution order, but such resistance currents were interested in tactical considerations over and above the union's condemnation and response to the junta's action. The majority of underground activists reacted in a very sharp way, refusing to hear of any

'collaboration'. But many think that characteristic approach of underground circles was itself a dangerous sign. 'Instead of acting,' they say, 'we react.'

CONFRONTATION

Despite its widespread support in Polish society, then, the underground movement seemed weakened by its lack of clear perspectives and by the after-effects of the December defeat and the economic crisis among the population. The police activity of September-October served to disorganise it further. In fact, in choosing that time to launch its offensive, the military junta hoped to benefit from the general weariness and to inflict a lasting defeat on the independent unionists. It would then have its hands free to mount a large-scale paternalist operation, setting out to build the new political system of which it dreams. A general and PRON leader even suggested the early organisation of elections on the basis of a more liberal election law. Speaking to the workers in *Zycie Warszawy*, he said: 'Allow a climate to be created in the country such that it will be possible to end the state of war and all its consequences. That will only be the case when you stop protesting in the way you have done so far.'¹¹

In instigating the Sejm vote to ban Solidarity, the military regime hoped that the disorganising effects of ten months of martial law would outweigh the traditions of the previous eighteen months. But the attitude of the Church was also of crucial importance. After initially believing in the possibility of dialogue with at least part of the junta, the Episcopate faced up to reality and hardened its positions. Mgr Glemp's sermon on 26 August, and above all the one given by Mgr Tokarczuk, Bishop of Przemyśl, were clear examples of this new course.¹² The primate further dramatised the situation by postponing his trip to Rome and condemning the Sejm vote. But although the Church temporarily placed itself on the side of Solidarity everyone close to the primate that I was able to meet expressed concern at the lack of short-term solutions. It would be necessary to co-exist with the regime, they argued, and any confrontation would be a disaster. It remains to be seen whether a fresh mediation attempt by the Episcopate and the Vatican will be enough to avert an explosion.

POSTSCRIPT: THE LANDSCAPE AFTER THE BATTLE

The tenth of November will undoubtedly mark a turning-point in the process opened by the strikes of July-August 1980. The failure of the eight-hour general strike called by the underground leadership, together with the release of Lech Walesa, have brought to an end the period of united, independent mass organisation representing a whole people in movement. This does not mean that we are back in the situation before August 1980, nor even that General Jaruzelski has succeeded in 'normalising' the situation. Solidarity continues to live as an extremely powerful myth, and the lifting of the state of war will not solve anything fundamental. The juridical arsenal in-

roduced a year ago legalised special powers that were already in existence. Moreover, the economic crisis is far from over, and there has been no end to the mighty social movement that brought Solidarity into being. It finds different forms of expression. What we now see is not a rallying to the regime, but a political and cultural deepening of the changes in Polish society initiated two and a half years ago.



The cross of flowers in Victory Square

Photo: Argus

On the eve of the banning of Solidarity, the situation seemed blocked in the country. The WRON could not push ahead with its political projects, both because the social resistance was still strong and because the old neo-Stalinist Party apparatus was holding it back. As we have seen, the essence of Jaruzelski's plan was to rationalise the system of domination by the privileged forces of the regime. Such modernisation has nothing in common with liberalisation; indeed, it actually presupposes the demobilisation of society and the destruction of all forms of independent organisation. For its part, the underground Solidarity leadership stood at the head of a powerful opposition movement, strong enough to destabilise the regime but too weak to impose its own solutions.

The junta's only trump card was its capacity to take the initiative — ultimately a result of the fact that it still held power in spite of its isolation. It took the risk of increasing its isolation in order to force Solidarity into a hopeless confrontation. And then, in the new international circumstances that followed Brezhnev's death, it went over the heads of the Party 'hardliners' and ordered the release of Walesa. There were three stages in the battle.

First Stage: the banning of Solidarity. When the Sejm passed a new trade-union law on 8 October, it mounted a frontal attack on all the hopes of national agreement nourished by Solidarity and the Church. It forced them into a national-scale response in keeping with their previous declarations — a response encouraged by Jaruzelski's apparent isolation. Several Sejm deputies and a member of the Council of State condemned the new law, while the Church and the Pope unambiguously denounced the junta's initiative. 'In the future,' stated John Paul II, 'we shall continue to defend the legitimate rights of working people'. The ball was now in the union's court, and everything seemed to support it in its protests. As spontaneous strikes broke out in

Gdansk, the defensive front seemed broader than at any time since the beginning of the 'war'.

Second Stage: selective repression and an opening up. Although Solidarity's immediate call for a strike on 10 November was deemed rather unrealistic, the TKK was undoubtedly under Church pressure to gain more time. 'The unfolding of this protest action,' declared the TKK communique, 'will mark the path of the union's future strategy.' In the event, it was more a trial of strength than a symbolic protest that actually took shape. It became clearer as the days passed that any real confrontation would taken on a very violent character. The junta spokesmen did not lose a single opportunity to point this out in their speeches, simultaneously stepping up their 'liberal' offers of fresh elections, the lifting of the state of war, and the release of the internees. Talks were also reopened with the Episcopate on the Pope's visit to Poland.

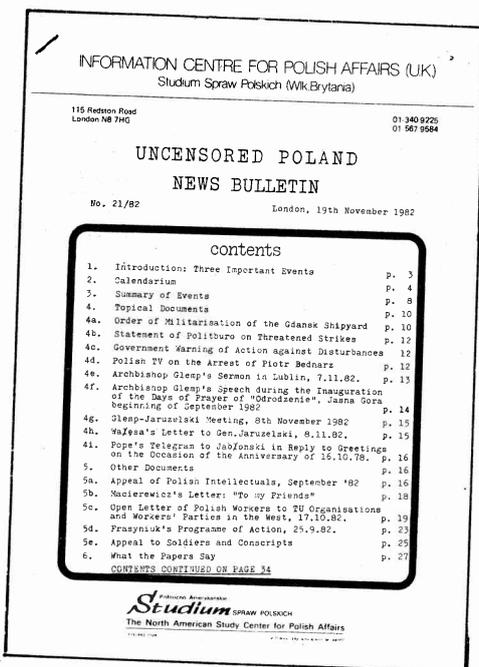
In this situation, the social movement's lack of medium-term perspectives worked against a big mobilisation and undermined the front around Solidarity. The Church was the first to give way, seeking to avoid a catastrophe on the grounds that any strike would only rally a minority. On 30 October Mgr Glemp stated that he was 'firmly' opposed to an initiative 'which could only result in greater repression'. Jaruzelski leapt at the opportunity he had been waiting for. While his secret services organised the 'leak' of a Soviet invasion plan to the German press, and while his police force was redoubling its attacks with fresh arrests in Wroclaw, he set about negotiating a papal visit to Poland. On 8 November, two days before the date set for the strike, the General met the primate and agreed in principle that the visit should take place after 18 June 1983. The communique referred to 'a common concern to safeguard and strengthen peace, social order and work'.

The situation had now been reversed: the underground Solidarity leadership was alone with its strike call, facing a new front for the stabilisation of the regime. After sounding out opinion in the workplaces, it knew that the workers would not follow it. But information we have about its internal discussions suggest that it thought a cancellation of the strike call would be more damaging than a failure. In any case it maintained its previous slogans, even though a number of activists thought it would be better to keep the union's forces in reserve for a more favourable date. In some workplaces — in Torun region, for example — the underground union committees even seemed to have advised alternative forms of action.

Third Stage: failure of the strike and release of Walesa. Knowing that the strike call would not be followed, the junta was not inclined to make any presents and discreetly deployed its repressive apparatus. Its aim was not only to intimidate the workers and prevent any blotches on the day, but also to show the world that it guaranteed order, calm and an opening up of the situation. On 10 November special correspondents of the

Western press recorded the lack of strike action and the near-normal level of police activity. In reality, however, the previous few days had witnessed an increase in the number of preventive arrests, special holidays and assorted threats. In the Lenin shipyard, for instance, each worker was personally warned that the least participation in any 'rebellious action' would involve five to eight years in prison. When the day came, army units were on duty outside the workshops, and no strike took place.

As if to relish his victory, Jaruzelski played the trump card of ordering Walesa's release. This, he thought, would be a good point for international opinion (soon to be followed by the lifting of the state of war) and yet another blow to Solidarity. For once he was freed without commitments on the General's part, 'Corporal' Walesa found himself in a trap. If he had ever considered calling for mobilisations and going underground, the failure of the strike call now barred that path. And even if he kept silent, the freed chairperson of the dissolved union would take some of the legitimacy from the TKK committee that comprised all the national Solidarity leaders operating underground. When the TKK backed its chairperson in calling for 'a cease-fire between the regime and society', the junta



replied by bursting out in laughter. It had won the battle.

With its new advantage, the junta very

quickly moved to free several hundred internees; to sentence the Wroclaw Solidarity leader W. Fraszyniuk to ten years' imprisonment; to promise the restoration of legal status for the Catholic intellectual clubs; to suspend artists who refused to work, and so on. Th regime piled the rigours of war on the most active militants, and demobilised Polish society by making the greatest use of Church benevolence.

Should we conclude that normalisation has been triumphant? In our view, that would be to forget the power of the active contradictions that the recent battle has not resolved. For although Jaruzelski has managed to neutralise the national political weight of the social movement, the gains still rest on shaky foundations.

Notes

1. See *Trybuna Ludu*, 14-15 August 1982.
2. *Przegląd Techniczny*, late September 1982.
3. *Zycie Warszawy*, 5 October 1982.
4. *Trybuna Ludu*, 13 September 1982.
5. *Ibid.*, 10 September 1982.
6. *Ibid.*, 1 October 1982.
7. See *Polityka*, 24 July 1982.
8. *Bulletin d'information de Solidarité en France*, No. 35.
9. See the article by J. Staniskis, 'Poland on the Road to the Coup', *Labour Focus*, Vol. 5 No. 2.
10. See the *CDN* documents published in *L'Alternative*, No. 18.
11. Quoted from *Le Figaro*, 13 October 1982.

Letter to the Left

By Dawid Warszawski

(In the following article, an editor of the underground Warsaw publication Kos speaks frankly about the mutual mistrust between the Solidarity movement and the left. Dawid Warszawski, a pseudonym, urges both sides to drop their respective preconceptions and to begin an East-West dialogue of cooperation on common interests. If this challenge goes unheeded, Warszawski warns, both sides face catastrophe.)

KOS is the Polish acronym for 'Social Resistance Committees', a network of small, conspiratorially-organised cells formed to provide an efficient internal communication system for the resistance movement.

Warszawski's article first appeared in KOS's publication Kos ('blackbird' in Polish) earlier this summer. It was reprinted in the Paris-based Solidarity weekly Biuletyn Informacyjny 22 September 1982 under the title 'The Left and Us'. Translation by Andrzej Tymowski.)

Asked about his politics, the Soviet dissident and Gulag veteran of many years Vladimir Bukovsky replied: 'I am not from the rightist camp nor from the leftist camp. I am from a concentration camp.' This statement raised hackles in the West several years ago, but in the East — that is, on this side of the Elbe — it was immediately clear and comprehensible to every politically aware person.

The categories 'right' and 'left' only make sense as markers in a diversified field of political programmes and social visions. When a particular political system prevents the formulation of such programmes and visions, the essential political conflict cannot be reduced to the concepts 'right' and 'left'. Instead it becomes a struggle to make a right or left possible at all.

Solidarity waged this struggle throughout its existence. Just before the imposition of the state of war, this effort catalysed several diverse political initiatives. Nevertheless, Solidarity as a union remained neither right nor left. For Western observers, especially leftists, this notion is difficult to understand, much less to accept; for it has been the leftist experience that organisations professing such neutrality do so in bad faith in order to mask their true nature, most often right wing. This judgment seemed to be confirmed by Solidarity's battling in the name of, among others,

national and religious ideals, against a political system wrapped in the conceptual slogans of socialism. What's more, whenever Solidarity activists could be persuaded to make an explicit statement on the subject they inevitably declared themselves to be anti-Soviet and often, pro-American.

Nonetheless, Solidarity was undeniably a workers' movement; it went on strike and fought for the economic and political interest of the class that is by definition leftist. More than one political theorist broke teeth while chewing on this nut ...

Internationally, Solidarity received wholehearted support from the really rather reactionary AFL-CIO — which had uncritically accepted, for instance, US policy in Vietnam — and from such figures as Duarte, the leader of the Salvadoran junta. On the principle 'my enemy's friend is my enemy', this was more than enough to qualify Solidarity as right wing. And yet Solidarity fought for the same rights that the persecuted trade unions in Chile are fighting for. In the global perspective of a world in which reactionary forces clash with progressive forces, Solidarity refused to adopt a clearly defined position.

This caused some people to revise the way they made basic political judgments. For the majority, it is sad to say, it was only an irritating nuisance.

Someone reading this in Poland well might ask, 'What should we care about any of this? We live in a country of pragmatic Marxists. We have seen Communism up close; other varieties of leftism are hearsay for us. Besides, the intellectual quandaries of safe and well-fed people are the least of our concerns.'

Although I understand why someone might hold this attitude, I believe it wrong for at least two reasons. The first reason, though more immediately compelling, is less significant overall. It comes down to the fact that the bulk of aid sent to Poland from the West comes from a wide spectrum of left organisations, chiefly trade unions. There is a disturbing silence in Poland on this subject. The authorities do not publicise it because it is embarrassing ideologically. The rest of us do not ask where the aid comes from either, because the left has distasteful connotations for us and we do not want to feel indebted to it.

Nonetheless, it is crucial that the left's ideological and

POLAND

dogmatic preoccupations not reduce the flow of aid, which could easily happen if donors conclude from our indifference that Solidarity is not worth the effort. Clearly the same applies to the Committees for Solidarity that have arisen in foreign countries, since their activities depend in large measure on the support of various left organisations.

The second reason is more basic. Few activists on either side of the iron curtain realise this yet, but the destinies of Solidarity and the European left are inextricably woven. An enduring victory for WRON (the Polish acronym for the ruling Military Council of National Salvation — trans.) would politically bury the European left for many years, since the first consequence of that victory would be the utter disgrace of Communism as a political doctrine. This could be cause for rejoicing if it were not for the fact that the ensuing political debacle would sweep aside everything to the left of Franz Josef Strauss. The mass transmigration of voters to the right prompted by the maniacal spectre of WRON as the highest stage of Communism would plow under its wake socialists, social democrats, euro-communists, and whoever else might still be alive on the left.

On the one hand, this scenario would hardly be to Poland's advantage. On the left can be our true ally, because it is only for the left that Polish society, and the Polish working class in particular, exists as an autonomous subject. The right's true interlocutor is Moscow, not Poland, and we are useful only as a means of making life difficult for the Soviets. As Yalta has shown, a Poland subjugated by Moscow is of little interest to the right. Financial and industrial circles, the right's social base, have already begun to support Jaruzelski on their own initiative, hoping that he will be able to squeeze 28 billion dollars out of us.

Solidarity's victory over the regime, on the other hand, would vindicate the power and endurance of the working class. It would revive hopes for international political cooperation of working people in Europe, which is our continent's last chance to re-establish autonomy vis-à-vis the global strategies of the superpowers. In the short run it would breathe some life into the theory and practice of a workers' movement smothered by Moscow's scholasticism, which has lately diverted itself either into a

Open letter from the Polish workers to the western trade unions and workers parties

General Jaruzelski's junta is moving systematically to wipe out every vestige of the gains the workers made in the wake of the August 1980 strike. On 8 October 1982 following the directions of the apparatchiks and the Orgbureau of the Polish United Workers Party (PUWP), the deputies to the Sejm approved a law 'dissolving' the Independent Self-Managed Union Solidarity. By this action, the junta trampled on the August 1980 accords and all the agreements signed with the independent workers' and peasants' organisations in the period from August 1980 to December 1981.

It also dishonoured the pledge made on 16 December 1981, that Solidarity and the other unions would be allowed to resume functioning in accordance with their charters.

Today, through such civilian mouthpieces as Rakowski, the junta is trying to convince a terrorised society and international public opinion that since 13 December Solidarity has not sought any dialogue or mutual understanding and therefore must now be liquidated in the interest of 'socialism' and 'world peace'.

We want you to know that these claims are abject lies. On many occasions, the members of Solidarity and their underground leadership, including our Solidarity Inter-Enterprise Workers Committee in Warsaw, have demonstrated their readiness for discussion and dialogue. The only condition we posed was an elementary one, one as humanitarian as political. We asked for the release of Lech Walesa and the other arrested and interned members of Solidarity. We were prepared to engage in such dialogue even in the circumstances of the state of war, under the



Photo: Argus

Demonstration in support of Solidarity on 31 August.

methodology of struggle for pink washrooms in factories or into a hothouse for maniacs.

What does this mean in practice? For us in Poland, sadly, it means very little. It would be good to translate the specific circumstances of life on the Vistula into language that the European left can understand, but that is a task for our activists abroad. We are left with little more than the realisation that President Reagan is not necessarily the trustworthy ally he seems to be, and that communists in the West are not *ipso facto* scoundrels or dupes.

For the left and their friends in the West, this means that they would do well to recognise the 'to be or not to be' of the progressive movement taking place right here on the banks of the Vistula. These circles lately seem to have grown weary of Poland, choosing campaigns to aid the victims of the Turkish and Salvadoran juntas — who most certainly need help — as politically more attractive than support for a recalcitrant and ambiguous movement like Solidarity.

threat of guns and tanks.

From the end of June to the end of August, we declared a moratorium on strikes and demonstrations throughout the country. At the start of July, in the statement entitled 'Five Times Yes', which was distributed in hundreds of thousands of copies, the underground leadership of Solidarity said that it was ready to engage in discussion and dialogue.

Again, in a leaflet drawn up for the 31 August demonstrations, which were planned to be peaceful but were turned into a bloodbath by the police, the Solidarity leadership appealed to the junta for a compromise and mutual understanding.

Four days before these demonstrations, with the agreement of the underground leadership, five leaders of Solidarity, together with representatives of the Confederation of Autonomous Unions, addressed a joint letter to Jaruzelski, including an urgent appeal for dialogue.

In Poland today, the authorities see the unions more as a police problem than as a means for the political and economic emancipation of the working class. To prevent any misunderstanding, we should point out here that the military junta is not fighting to defend socialism. It is fighting to protect its rule and its privileges.

It is for this reason that it has no interest in dialogue with Solidarity. If there are any who still believe that what is at issue in Poland is defence of 'people's power', of 'collective ownership of the means of production' they are, if we may be permitted to speak plainly, 'hopeless idiots'. The junta in Poland is endeavoring to maintain at any cost a 'socialism for idiots', a socialism based on the whip, terror, corruption, prisons, despotic factory managers, military commissars, police agents, and apparatchiks. The Polish workers have already had quite enough of this kind of 'socialism' and 'people's power'.

The junta thinks it has 'dissolved' Solidarity. So, some of you may be wondering whether there is still any point today in talking about Solidarity and supporting it. You should know that Solidarity cannot be 'dissolved' since the Polish working class can-

not be 'dissolved'. It can be crushed, but that would mean the physical smashing of Polish labour.

This is no exaggeration on our part. You say 'Solidarnosc', we say 'freedom'. You say 'socialism', we say 'justice and self-management'. Ask yourselves: can the workers' aspirations for freedom, justice, a decent life, and control over their workplaces be confined within prison walls? Since they cannot, Solidarity has not been, and cannot be, 'dissolved'. Even driven underground and with many of its leaders and activists jailed, and it itself 'dissolved', Solidarity still strikes fear into generals and the apparatchiks.

Friends, we are hoping for joint statements and mass actions by the unions and workers' parties in the West in defence of the Solidarity leaders persecuted by the junta. We hope that you will call the military 'gorillas' to account before world public opinion on every possible occasion for their record of violence and terror.

We hope that you will focus attention on the fact that the so-called trade-union law passed on 8 October is in violation of the convention of the International Labour Organisation and that it in fact puts recognition of new unions in the hands of the secret

police.

The sort of trade-union movement the junta is projecting for the coming years is nothing but the 'model' followed by Pinochet in Chile. The application of this 'model' involves the transformation of the entire state administration into a kind of 'army of overseers' endowed with special rights and privileges on the model of the old Czarist 'Table of Ranks' (the Nomenklatura).

We are convinced that the unions and the workers parties in the West are prepared to take up a consistent struggle in support of the rights of labour in Poland. We are convinced that in supporting Solidarity you will also find an effective way for defending the fundamental interests and rights of workers in the West.

For today and the days that lie ahead, we are depending on you for help and solidarity. That is what we look for most of all from you. From us, there is one thing you can count on — that we will fight on against the junta.

Solidarnosc Has Not Perished

Signed: Miedzyskladowy Robotniczy Komitet Solidarnosci Warszawa (Solidarity Warsaw Inter-Workplace Workers' Committee)

Gdansk Answers Solidarity Ban

(Immediately following the delegalisation of Solidarity by the Sejm, acts of protest took place in the Gdansk shipyards and other places in Poland.

Below is the text of a series of communiques which were issued by the regional co-ordinating committee (RKK) of Solidarity, Gdansk at the time. They were signed by Bogdan Borusewicz, Aleksandr Hall, Bogdan Lis — also a member of the TKK, the national Temporary Co-ordinating Committee — and Leszek Switek. Although these strikes were relatively well publicised, we believe that the following communiques show how the story unfolded. This was published in the November 10 issue of Voice of Solidarnosc, the publication of the Solidarity Working Group in UK.)

COMMUNIQUE NO. 1

Gdansk, 11 October 1982, 9 p.m.

On 11 October 1982 part of the work enterprises in the Gdansk region — among them the Gdansk Lenin shipyard, the Gdansk repair shipyard, the North shipyard, the Port of Gdansk and the Paris Commune shipyard in Gdynia — participated in protests against the withdrawal of working people's rights for independent union representation.

In these enterprises, the workers refused to work normally, and rallies took place on the spots sanctified by the blood of murdered workers. The Secret Enterprise Committee (TKZ) of the Lenin shipyard in Gdansk called for eight-hour, cyclically repeated strikes without the disclosure of clandestine union structures, and other work enterprises began joining the strike.

The unprecedented form of protest took the rulers by surprise, but when the protest action ended at work enterprises, and workers returning home gathered briefly at the monument to the shipyard workers killed in 1970, ZOMO (riot police) detachments moved in against them.

At the time of this communique's issue, disturbances provoked by the rulers are occurring in Gdansk and Wrzeszcz.

The RKK of NSZZ Solidarity has issued a declaration supporting the spontaneous action of the coastal shipyard workers, and calling on other enterprises to employ new forms of strike wherever possible, without disclosure of the Temporary Enterprise Committee structures. The RKK also declared that a general strike was however, premature, but RKK activists announced a state of readiness of the underground union structures in the Gdansk region.

The RKK will inform society of the situation in the region through serially-numbered, regular communiques and through periodic broadcasts by Radio Solidarity.

RKK NSZZ Solidarity

Gdansk

COMMUNIQUE NO. 2

Gdansk, October 12, 1982, 4 p.m.

At about 5 p.m. yesterday, the MO (civil militia) provoked street clashes by attacking people in Solidarnosc Square. This sparked off street fights, which continued until midnight in different regions of Gdansk. The most intensive clashes occurred in the centre of Wrzeszcz near the vicinity of the Solidarity locale, around Grunwaldzkiej and Kartuskiej Streets in Gdansk.

During the evening and night, ZOMO reinforcements arrived in Gdan-

sk — they included a column of militia patrol vans which drove in at about 7 p.m. from the direction of Slupsk. The strike initiated by shipyard workers from the Gdansk shipyard on 11 October was spreading: the shipyards and the Port of Gdansk are on strike and Trojmiast work enterprises, high schools and middle grade school youth have also joined as a mark of their solidarity.

The RKK issued an appeal for strike action during working hours, without the announcement of an occupational strike or the disclosure of the Solidarity underground structures.

From morning, there was a massive concentration of militia on the terrain of the Gdansk shipyard. The striking workforces did not, however, allow themselves to be provoked, and more serious incidents did not occur. In fact, after militia detachments departed from the area adjoining the shipyard at about 1.30 p.m., the shipyard workers also left at the normal hour, announcing a continuation of the strike on the following day. The atmosphere near gate no. 2 is reminiscent of that memorable August, with national and religious symbols and flowers. New elements, however, have appeared, such as an effigy of Jerzy Urban (government press spokesperson) suspended from the gates.

At about 3 p.m., a peaceful crowd of 5-6000 gathered in Solidarnosc Square. As from today, Radio Solidarity Gdansk will be on the air every day at 10 p.m., and a speech by Bogdan Lis — a member of the TKK and the RKK — will be broadcast on the evening of 12 September.

The RKK remains in contact with other regions and TKZs of Trojmiast work enterprises and will decide on further tactics according to the development of the situation.

RKK NSZZ Solidarity

Gdansk

THE SPEECH OF BOGDAN LIS

Friends!

In the view of General Jaruzelski's team, the bill delegalising the trade unions, which was passed by the Sejm on 8 October, is supposed to mark the termination of the problem of Solidarity. People who believe that the several million strong union — which is for the decided majority of Poles the hope of a better tomorrow for our nation — can be disbanded by a legal bill approved by the Sejm (which still consists of members from the time of Gierek and Babiuch), give further proof of having understood and learnt nothing. It is not the leaders of Solidarity who have shown thoughtlessness and pride, of which we have been accused by Vice-premier Rakowski — it is they — Jaruzelski, Rakowski and their companions — who have given continuous evidence of pride and disregard for political realities. To these realities is added not only the geopolitical position of Poland and the distribution of international power, but also the will of the Polish nation, which will never allow itself to be subjugated by an order reminiscent of the era of blackest Stalinism. We are realists — aware of Poland's location in Europe, we do not intend to break away from our allies, or to disrupt the root organism of the state. However, we will never submit to being turned into slaves. We will fight for our union and civic rights. The battle for our union continues because this is what millions of Poles want.

The TKK has responded to the delegalisation with a call for a total boycott of the new unions and with the announcement of a national day of support for Solidarity on 10 November and the second anniversary of its registration. It has acknowledged that now is not the time for a general strike, although the government's policies make it virtually inevitable in

the future. The spontaneous protest of workers, especially strong in our region, has surpassed our expectations. The Gdansk shipyard and, following in its footsteps, the remaining shipyards and ports of Tri-city¹ undertook a strike on Monday during working hours, but without declaring an occupation.

The RKK has given its full support for this action, and has issued a call to work establishments for solidarity in this form of protest and for participation wherever possible.

The strike continued today and has become more widespread. The community of Gdansk has once more proved its allegiance to the ideals of Solidarity!

It will not allow its victories of August 80 to be wrenched away! Let our determination and our will to fight be the last warning to the authorities.

COMMUNIQUE NO. 3

Gdansk 12 October 1982, 7 p.m.

The TKZ of NSZZ Solidarity in the Nauta shipyard has called upon both its workforce and those of other work enterprises in Gdynia to join the form of strike initiated by the Gdansk shipyard.

We received information today that yesterday (11 October), the following factories also struck: Hydroster (two departments), Unimor (three departments), and Elmor (one department).

There is fighting in Wrzeszcz and in the centre of Gdansk at the present time, which began at about 4 p.m.; details will be given in tomorrow morning's communique.

COMMUNIQUE NO. 5

Gdansk, 13 October 1982, 11 p.m.

After a two-day strike the workers of the Gdansk shipyard, the Gdansk repair shipyard and the North shipyard have called off their protest. The Paris Commune shipyard and the other Tri-city enterprises where some of the departments have struck, called off their strike after one day.

The rulers have applied a wide-scale individual and mass intimidation. From the morning, the Gdansk shipyard was surrounded by a ZOMO cordon, also blocking the entrance. Order No. 1 of the Director-Commandant Zaczek — repeatedly broadcast over the internal communications system, expounded on the militarisation of the enterprise, and the sanctions which would be meted out for disobeyal of orders (from 3 years to the death sentence). A similar speech was also broadcast yesterday by the County Prosecutor. Some depots were locked up, and movement on the shipyard's terrain was restricted. From 11.10 a.m. to 12.20 p.m., at least five workers from the Gdansk shipyard were detained (among them Henryk Lenarcik, Mirosław Blaszkiewicz and Zbigniew Olszak), and dismissals from work began.

On Tuesday night, the street demonstrations in Gdansk died down; several hundred people were detained and several dozen wounded.

In the centre of Gdansk, there was a visible militia presence throughout the day, and some passers-by were subjected to identity checks and searches. In the time-honoured tradition, reinforcements were brought in from the Officers' School in Szczytno, from the military cadets' school in Słupsk, and from the ZOMO in smaller county towns of southern Poland.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, there were 10-minute broadcasts by Radio Solidarity Gdansk; the next programme is scheduled for transmission on 14 October at 10 p.m.

RKK NSZZ Solidarity

Gdansk

DECLARATION

Gdansk, 13 October 1982

Today, the spontaneous act of protest initiated by the Gdansk shipyard workers ended. (...) Despite the support of other work enterprises in the region, and despite two-day spontaneous demonstrations, the strike did not succeed in returning the right of Solidarity to function legally, nor bring about the release of those arrested, interned and sentenced. It did not however, result in defeat, because it was rightly recognised by world opinion as a symbolic act of resistance by Polish society, resistance against tyranny, deceit and the duplicity of the rulers, once again proving the falsehood of their assertions that society supports their politics.

The shipyard workers deserve expressions of deep respect and recognition for their actions. RKK NSZZ Solidarity also thanks the society of the coast and all those who actively supported the shipyard workers' strike. Our special thanks go to the demonstrators of Nowa Huta and Wrocław.

The battle for Solidarity goes on; in it there may be difficult moments, but there will not be a calamity. Our common aim is victory.

RKK NSZZ Solidarity

Gdansk region

Note

1. Tri-city is the collective name for the three coastal towns: Gdansk, Gdynia and Sopot.

2 LETTERS OF LECH WALESA

TO GENERAL JARUZELSKI, 8 November 1982

It seems to me that the time has come to clarify some issues and to work for an agreement. Time was needed for many to understand what can be achieved, and to what extent, on either side. I propose a meeting and a serious discussion of the problems, and I am sure that with goodwill on both sides a solution can be found.

Corporal Lech Walesa

(The following is the text of a letter from Lech Walesa to General Jaruzelski, dated 4 December, printed in the Guardian 13 December.)

Dear General,

The forecasted lifting of martial law has prompted me to address you once again. It is certainly not the time for assessing the events and matters of the past years.

It is, however, a valuable occasion to look to the future and show true hope for a better life. The people are in much need of this hope. The deep and prolonged crisis can be overcome primarily by the efforts of the whole of society. It is also indispensable that we get foreign aid which is now withheld for political reasons.

The efforts of society can be roused and Poland's world position strengthened only through reforging mutual trust between society and government. This goal can be achieved only if the August 1980 Agreements are taken as a basis. Since the introduction of martial law, the Government, and you personally, have stated repeatedly that there will be no return to the pre-August 1980 state of affairs.

Meeting the expectations of the nation is the only way to awaken hope and contribute to social stability.

This will require: general amnesty for those tried during martial law for union activity and protest actions. I assume, of course, that this will be done in accordance with the decrees that were explained to me when I was released (and that) all internees will automatically be released with the lifting of martial law.

Secondly, that those dismissed from work during martial law for either union activity or just for membership in the union will be reinstated in their jobs. This issue has a very wide social impact and arouses many painful feelings.

Thirdly, a breakthrough on the trade union impasse by the return to the principle of pluralism. The fact that the working class has not accepted the solutions implemented by the Government is now clear to all those who do not close their eyes to reality.

Without the acceptance of the Government's position by the working class we will not get far. These steps would open the road to a true social agreement.

I am ready to take part in work leading to this aim. None of us is doing each other a favour and none of us has to ask for agreement on our knees, because agreement is a necessity if you care about the good of the country.

Each one of us who has the good of the country in mind has to be open for agreement.

Lech Walesa

4 December 1982

LABOUR ON POLAND

The following resolution was passed unanimously at the Labour Party Conference in September 1982. It had originally been moved by Eric Heffer MP and seconded by Sam McCuskie from the seamen's union at the International Committee of the NEC.

'This Conference notes the grave deterioration of the political situation in Poland over the last month. We are particularly alarmed at the following facts:

(a) The decision by the Security Forces to open fire on demonstrators in Lubin and other places on 31 August resulting in the deaths of several workers.

(b) The government's more general refusal to allow peaceful marches to take place as called for by Solidarity, to march on the second anniversary of the Gdansk, Szczecin and Jastrzebie agreements never formally repudiated by the Polish authorities.

(c) The authorities' decision to charge seven

former members of the Workers Defence Committee (KOR) with attempting to overthrow the state, a charge that carries a maximum penalty of death and a minimum of five years' imprisonment.

(d) The declaration by government spokespersons that they will never negotiate with Solidarity's elected leadership or allow Solidarity to re-emerge under its officially elected leadership.

These new steps by the Polish martial law government makes nonsense of their earlier claims to be seeking some sort of 'national reconciliation' and indicates their intention of waging war on Poland's independent labour movement.

This Labour Party Conference calls upon Poland's Communist Party leaders to end martial law, release the internees and political prisoners and to honour the Gdansk, Szczecin and Jastrzebie agreements. We call upon

Jaruzelski's New Unions — Independent?

— By Peter Green

'Death to Solidarity, long live Independent, Self-Governing Trade Unions' — this, in a nutshell, is the official line of the Polish government at the present time. To cynics who believe that the second part of this line is aimed simply at re-enforcing the death sentence on Solidarity, by making it less painful, government spokespersons respond by referring them to the new trade union law passed by the Polish Sejm. This proclaims that 'employees have the right to create their own unions' and new unions can be 'self-governing and independent of the bodies of the state and economic administration ...'.

Strenuous efforts are now being made, particularly outside Poland, to convince people that the unions which the government plans to allow from 1 January 1983 will be genuinely effective institutions for representing workers' interests. So it is worth examining the law of 8 October to see what framework it permits.

Each new union would operate on the basis of a statutory charter which must 'conform with the constitution', as well as with other laws'. The charter must 'respect the state ownership of the means of production ... the socialist political system ... Poland's international alliances ... the leading role of the Party ...'.

The unions must be either craft or industrial unions — general unions, like Solidarity, are effectively excluded by law. It says that each union's charter must specify its name 'through indicating the branch (of industrial activity), the type of work (performed by the members), and their occupation.'

The unions must register with a local court which is empowered to reject or accept the application. If the application is accepted, the Warsaw provincial court will have the power to hear cases brought by the authorities alleging that the union is in fact not carrying out its activities in accordance with the law. If it finds the authorities' plea justified, the court may fine individual members of the union, remove the union's leaders and demand new elections of new leaders, or may outlaw the union.

The law lays down that the function of the unions is restricted to looking after the welfare of their members. But at the same time it says that all unions have an obligation to 'participate in the working out and implementation of the tasks related to the social and economic development of the country, and to work for the improvement of the national income...'. It further requires unions to 'conduct educational activity to instil

professional ethics, to ensure conscientious and scrupulous fulfillment of prescribed production tasks, and to inculcate the principles of social behaviour'. All these sweeping requirements are, of course, open to widely differing interpretations and could provide easy pretexts for government action in the Warsaw court to deregister a union.

The law states that 'A strike is the final resort and cannot be declared without first having exhausted all other procedures.' These, says the law, include the following: first, negotiation with the management; second, a 'conciliatory proceeding' between selected representatives of the two sides; and thirdly, arbitration in the courts. In the case of disputes involving more than one workplace, this arbitration will be conducted by a commission attached to Poland's Supreme Court; where only one workplace is involved, arbitration will be in the hands of a local court commission. The Commission will be made up of equal numbers of representatives from both sides, plus a judge appointed by the court. The decisions of the commission will be binding on both sides in the conflict. Thus a strike would be legal only after all this and after the workers' demands had been supported by the court judge, while the management still illegally refused to give way!

Even then, the union must deliver to the illegally stubborn management seven days notice of the strike after a majority of the workers in the plants have expressed approval of the strike and after a higher body of the union has also approved the strike. And the strike must also occur only after the period prescribed by a specific contract for work runs out in cases where the dispute concerns wage demands related to collective wage contracts. Political strikes are strictly forbidden.

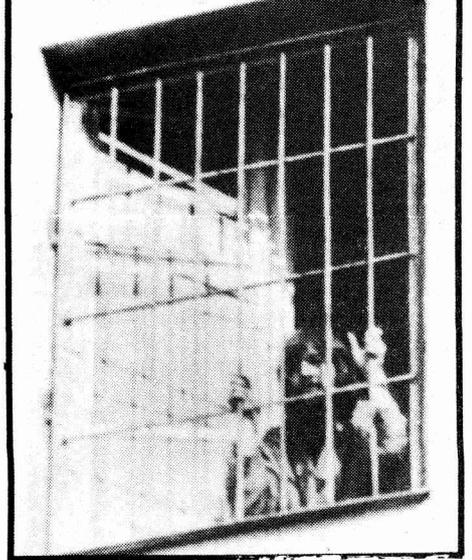
Still, in some way or other, Polish workers have a right to strike; unless, that is, they work in the following fields: hospitals, educational institutions, the state administration, banks, courts, the national airline, all transportation services, all communications services including radio and TV, power stations, prison service, fire service, the oil and gas industries, food production, food distribution and enterprises under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Defence or the Ministry of Internal Affairs — and it should be noted that such jurisdiction can be expanded to a particular enterprise at the stroke of a ministerial pen.

So much for the right to strike.

On 12 October the Council of State issued a decree to ensure the 'correct' implementation of the new law. This decree in fact lays down detailed instructions on the procedures for setting up new unions.

The new unions are to be built from the bottom up, workplace by workplace. No group of workers in one workplace can try to recruit workers in another, in the first phase of union development which will last throughout 1983. Within each workplace a group of workers can form, draw up a proposed Charter of a union, and submit it to the authorities for approval. The decree shows an amusing concern about the names these charters might include: 'Only the words "trade union of the employees" and then the name of a given workplace and occupation' can be included. Though it adds as an afterthought that the name may 'also include the words "self-governing" and "independent"'.

After all this, is it any wonder that Polish workers reverse Jaruzelski's line and say 'Death to Jaruzelski's Self-Governing Independence, Long live Solidarnosc'?



Sergei Batovrin, initiator of the Moscow-based Group to Establish Mutual Trust Between the USSR and the USA, pictured in August of this year while being held against his will in Moscow Psychiatric Hospital No. 14. Batovrin was arrested on 5 August, the day before he planned to hold a public exhibition of his anti-war paintings — he is an artist by profession. The KGB seized 88 of his paintings and placed him in a psychiatric hospital until a storm of protests from the Western peace movement, including CND and END, won his release on 9 September. The group he founded has gained growing support, achieving 900 signatories on its peace appeal by the middle of October — an extraordinarily high figure for an unofficial Soviet initiative. But towards the end of October another member of the group was arrested and charged with anti-Soviet agitation. (See the group's appeal on p. 29 of this issue. This photo is taken from the END pamphlet, 'The Moscow Independent Peace Group'.)

Russian Socialists face Trial Soon

By Oliver MacDonald

Six left-wing Russian intellectuals, reportedly Euro-Communists and socialists, are due to go on trial in the Moscow City Court in January. They were arrested in April and June and they have reportedly been accused of having illegal ties with the Italian Communist Party, and of editing the journals *Socialism and the Future* (called, in its earlier numbers, *Left Turn*) and *Variants*.

Very little information has so far emerged concerning the case, or the journals that the accused are charged with editing. No copies of the journals have reached the West, but an account of the contents and orientation of *Left Turn* produced by a non-socialist oppositionist in Moscow indicates that the samizdat journal had very clear-cut left-wing socialist views on international as well as domestic issues (we publish this account in full below).

The case has been shrouded in an unusual amount of secrecy by the Soviet authorities, but it appears that many of the accused held positions in important Moscow research institutes. Here is a brief description of each of them:

Andrei Fadin, aged 29, an historian specialising in the modern history of Latin America, who was working for the Institute of World Economy and International Relations in Moscow before his arrest. His father had been an expert adviser to the CPSU Central Committee on the Scandinavian countries. On the day of his arrest his flat

General Jaruzelski to drop the charges against Jacek Kuron and other former members of KOR accused of treason. We urge the Polish Communist Party to immediately open negotiations with Solidarity on ways of achieving real social and economic progress for the Polish people.

If the Polish government continues on its present course it will solve none of Poland's basic problems but will instead turn Poland into a potentially explosive source of tension which could affect the whole of Europe.

The actions of the Jaruzelski government have already poisoned the atmosphere in Europe, giving aid to the enemies of peace, detente and social progress everywhere.

This Conference instructs the National Executive Committee to bring home to the Polish authorities the depth of feeling within the British Labour movement over recent events in Poland.

Ron Keating of NUPE speaks to EESC meeting at Labour Party conference



was searched by 4 KGB officers under Major A.T. Gubinsky. A great deal of samizdat material was seized, in particular an appeal to the Polish workers signed 'Soviet dissidents', various documents on Poland, the replies of the editorial board of *Variants* to questions from the Paris journal *L'Alternative*, a text entitled Theses of P. Kudyukhin, and some articles from the review *Poiski*.¹

Pavel Kudyukhin, aged 29, a specialist on the parties of the Left in Spain, working for the Institute of World Economy and International Relations in Moscow before his arrest. The search of his flat was carried out by a team of 5 headed by Colonel Arro. The following material was seized: three copies of the same appeal to the Polish workers as mentioned above, six numbers of the samizdat journal *Socialism and the Future*, an appeal to the Italian Communist Party from this journal, the first number of *Left Turn* and the replies to the *L'Alternative* questionnaire.

Yuri Khavkin, aged 33, a chief engineer specialising in automatic systems. The search of his flat produced the same Polish appeal, five numbers of *Socialism and the Future*, the *L'Alternative* questionnaire, *Poiski* and the bulletin of the Initiative Group for the Defence of the Disabled² — Yuri Khavkin is himself disabled.

Vladimir Chernitsky, aged 32, a scientific worker at the Institute of Chemical Physics of the Academy of Sciences in Moscow. The search of his flat uncovered the same Polish appeal, and two numbers of *Socialism and the Future* as well as other samizdat material.

Boris Kagarlitsky, the son of an internationally famous theatre director, has been

studying the sociology of art at the Institute of Theatrical Studies until he was expelled from the third year of his studies in 1982. Also at one time he's been secretary to Roy Medvedev. He is under suspicion of being the editor of *Left Turn*. In the spring the *Times* published a letter by Peter Brook and others calling for his release.

Mikhail Rivkin, worked at a research institute on gas.

These arrests were accompanied by searches in other cities including Minsk, Petrozavodsk and Dzerzhinski. In the latter place a search was carried out in the flat of the instructor in the Agitation and Propaganda section of the Komsomol City Committee, Piotr Volkov (also a member of the CPSU though he hadn't paid his party dues since 1979).

On 24 April six others were arrested in Kaliningrad.

One report from Moscow indicates that the KGB arrests followed a lead given by a doctor in the Kashchenko hospital in Moscow. One of the patients at the hospital, suffering from 'reactive psychosis', Igor Pimonenko by name, was a former student at the history faculty in Moscow University. While undergoing treatment at the hospital Pimonenko had talked to the doctor about his feelings of discontentment over the existing order in the country and about the fact that 'our' organisation criticises it. In response to the doctor's questioning about the organisation, Pimonenko gave the doctor some names. He was interrogated a number of times by the KGB at the beginning of April, and since then his psychiatric illness has become worse and he has been obliged to undergo treatment.

The KGB has departed from its usual practice in cases involving first political offences. Normally in such first cases the

charge is brought under article 190, section 1 of the Criminal Code, with a maximum of 3 years in a labour camp. But in this case it seems charges are being brought under Article 70 (anti-Soviet propaganda and agitation) with a maximum of 7 years in a labour camp, and even under Article 72 (constructing an anti-Soviet organisation) which carries an even longer sentence. All are being held in Lefortovo prison in Moscow. The KGB has been seeking further information from the wives of those of the accused who are married. After discussions with the KGB S. Kubirova, the wife of P. Kudyukin, declared her intention of divorcing him. But the wives of Yuri Khavkin and Vladimir Chernitsky refused 'discussion' asked for by the investigator.

Both Andrei Fadin and Pavel Kudyukhin were publishing material in official journals in the months before their arrest. Fadin published an article on the political conceptions of Regis Debray in the journal *Latin America* towards the end of 1981, and another piece of his was published in the same journal in the very month of his arrest. Kudyukhin had also published an article in the same journal the month before his arrest.

For a number of reasons this case takes on a very great political significance, not only because it brings to light what must be a left-wing milieu of some scope in Moscow and other cities, but also because those arrested were by no means marginal figures.

Efforts are underway both in France and here through the Eastern Europe Solidarity Campaign to mount a campaign for the immediate release of those arrested and for the dropping of all charges against them. The EESC views the case as an important test of the attitude of the new Soviet Party leader, Yuri Andropov towards both critical socialist voices at home and labour movement opinion in the West.

A Review of the Journal *Left Turn*

(The following review of *Left Turn* was drawn up by an anonymous author for another samizdat journal called *Variants* in April 1982. It was corrected by another anonymous author in early June. Translation from the Russian is by Helen Jamieson for Labour Focus.)

1. The activity of any periodical such as this can only be welcomed, and the seriousness and energy of the editorial board is shown by the fact that it appears fairly regularly and fifteen issues have appeared in three years.

2. The journal is oriented to as broad an audience as possible. If a type-written publication is read only by activists in the democratic movement, this ensures that it can avoid serious unpleasantness from the KGB. If it also reaches certain 'others', that is to say, 'ordinary Soviet people', then the dangers are greater but so too is the potential influence. *Left Turn* — *Socialism and the Future* is attempting, with some success, to link these two audiences.

3. While the editorial board does not rule out any other paths or forms of renewal, first place in its system of priorities is the following basic idea. 'Reforms from above under pressure from below'. This is an irrefutable thesis although frankly it is hardly probable

that it will soon become a social reality. Still, one should certainly not regret the fact that a violent overthrow in our country is even less likely: God forbid yet another Russian uprising.

4. The editorial board professes democratic socialism of a kind that would be economically effective. One does not have to view socialism as the hub of the universe (is it so bad, for example, under Swedish or Finnish capitalism?). And it is hard to object to socialist conceptions of economic collectivism, justice and political equality, or indeed to the theory of the class struggle (not, of course, understood in the squalid way it is used by scholastic Scientific Communism). The practice of 'real, existing socialism' does not flow naturally from such ideas, just as the historical practices of the Church — the religious wars and the butchery of the inquisitions — have not flowed naturally from evangelical teaching. As N. Verdayev wrote, one cannot triumph over the 'lies of communism' without first accepting the 'truth of communism'. This is the first thing that one should say in defence of the socialist orientation of the journal.

Secondly, if in general any sorts of reforms are possible, then in the foreseeable future they are only conceivable within the framework of the Ideology (provided we understand the word not as the spiderweb of total lies and double-think served up as Marxism but as genuine Marxism, a system of positive political and economic conceptions worthy of discussion). In and of itself Marxist collectivism is not necessarily in contradiction either with democracy or economic efficiency — Hungary, for example, may

still have a long way to go to reach democracy, but the efficiency is there.

In the third place, we consider that a programme in socialist colours is the one that has, or could have, the best hope for gaining social sympathy — more chance than any other programme. The most immediate task now is to gain support from the 'silent majority', even if this support is, in the first instance, passive. (Oppositionists in several other East European countries already have this kind of support, but we have still got a long way to go.) Our population is used to thinking in Marxist categories, it understands about a dozen of them and has passively assimilated another 20 or so. A characteristic feature of the world outlook of the Soviet citizen is rejection of capitalism. Anti-socialist propaganda has no perspectives. The first step in the enlightenment of society could realistically be for it to assimilate a set of very simple truths:

- a) the Soviet model of socialism is not socialism.
- b) because of the inactivity of democratic institutions, state property becomes the collective property of the ruling oligarchy, analogous to capitalist property.
- c) the Party bureaucracy (nomenklatura) is an exploiting class which today is not a scandalously brutal one, but is nevertheless a hardened class which deserves the same basic attitude towards it as others.
- d) achieving economic efficiency is unthinkable without restricting the bureaucracy's omnipotence.

5. The socialists from *Left Turn* are justified in insisting upon the need to create an organised base for the movement (independent trade unions, a journal, an underground library). It is doubtful whether the civil rights activists' methods of struggle are suitable for a movement aiming to be a mass movement. It is notable that the journal fought for independent trade unions even before the Polish summer. Poland showed that if anything can triumph, *that* can triumph. Nevertheless, moral opposition to totalitarianism ('do not live according to lies') will never become outdated and it should not be undervalued. Alas, not everyone is able to take a stand like A. D. Sakharov and L. K. Chukhovskaya. Some people are able only to 'read and pass on to another'. Every person does what he or she can.

6. 'Right-wing' dissidents too often take positions on issues of international policies — the 'relaxation of tension', the civil war in El Salvador, etc. — which are good neither from a moral point of view nor from a strategic point of view. A socialist journal must not be criticised on these grounds. But is it worth it, on the other hand, to compete with *Pravda* in an alternative critique of American imperialism? Even without all that, the publication's socialist status frees it from any suspicion that it shares the views of Reagan and Thatcher.

To believe that the capitalists do not support Soviet or Polish workers in their struggle against the bureaucracy because they fear the defeat of our existing socialism (this is another idea in *Left Turn*) is hardly credible. In general, those capitalists don't fear anything except Soviet military power. And they are always ready to help when the opportunity arises, for their own reasons of in-

terest. We share the same enemy, but there are not enough forces, and sometimes not enough intelligence.

7. As for 'left-wingers' in the West, Mitterand is Mitterand, Berlinguer is Berlinguer, but we should not forget that Western 'left-wing forces' have their own destiny and we have ours. They have their own problems and enemies, and they are on occasions not averse to blocking with our own bureaucracy against them. And they would be stupid not to do so. This is exactly why we cannot rely upon them for any serious help. Their perspectives provoke excessive and hardly warranted enthusiasm in the pages of the journal.

But obviously once Berlinguer starts an argument with Brezhnev, even if it's only a brief episode, we can draw many useful paragraphs from what he says.

8. The information devoted to Poland is the most interesting and useful in the journal.

9. The articles on the Soviet economy and on the government's economic measures are usually good, combining a clear exposition and a professional approach to the subject.

10. It would be better if there was less of the sectarian phraseology, such as 'we leftists', 'all progressive forces' and so on. (The same approach comes from *Kontinent*, which uses all the anti-Communist clichés and even attacks the liberals, never mind the socialists.) So people who should be natural allies for the next thirty years fall out, while Babrak (Karmal, leader in Afghanistan, LF ed.) becomes a 'progressive force' and Kirill Aleksandrovsky in the February 1981 issue advises the 'left' partisans to link up with him.

The articles are full of 'leftist' rhetoric, especially the editorial pieces. The political line of the journal would be just as clear without it: 'Opportunism', 'idealisation', 'absolutisation', some sentimental sighs over the past unity between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks ... There are strange warnings about the 'danger of splits', for which 'the socialist movement has paid too dearly'. If behind all this are serious, though hidden disagreements within the editorial board, then the majority of readers are left in the dark about them. Such allusions, unclarified, produce nothing but incomprehension.

As for the opponent who is aware of what is going on, will he or she be convinced by a purely rhetorical dogmatic formula, 'In unity lies strength!'?

11. The present title of the journal, *Socialism and the Future*, is colourless. *Left Turn* was better. Is it so very necessary to provide a title which corresponds to the content? And to place on the cover some sort of elementary set of interjections — a quote from Kozma Prutkov or from Lenin or some other abstruse nonsense — is that necessary?

And if it is necessary to have a respectable head-dress for a future court appearance, it would be more suitable to call it 'Problems of Socialist Renewal', 'Socialist Renewal' or 'Socialist Herald'!

Open Letter from Soviet Peace Groups to Independent Peace Organisations in Europe and America

(The following letter has been translated from the Russian for Labour Focus by Helen Jamieson.)

As the Madrid conference is about to reconvene and while the 37th session of the UN General Assembly takes place, we are turning to you to propose that we united to reinforce the capacity of the public to eliminate the threat of war. A necessary condition for this must be developing co-operation on the part of different national cultures in the field of rapprochement and mutual understanding.

The growing international specialisation of labour and the increased mutual dependence among states that results from it lead to a situation where any regional conflict affects the whole international economic system. An awareness of the spiritual community uniting peoples of different countries clearly lags behind this economic integration. In our opinion, the most important task of the peace movement is to help bring about an awareness of this spiritual community.

Technical progress perpetually creates new types of arms. Even technical progress in peaceful fields — nuclear energy, large-scale

SOVIET UNION

chemical industries, the use of water resources and many others — could become an additional factor of mass destruction in the event of a military conflict, even without the use of nuclear weapons. This does not, of course, mean that technical progress is, in itself, harmful. Attempts to halt technical progress will not reduce the likelihood of war. The only way to prevent a catastrophe is through the broad mass of people in all the opposing countries recognising the impermissibility of war.

Declarations of readiness to reject the arms race, to refuse to apply force in international relations, to repudiate terrorist acts and diversions seem very important contributions to the easing of international tensions and to establishing an atmosphere of trust among the governments and peoples of opposing countries. But it is also true that, even to the smallest degree, varied personal contacts, the creating of an atmosphere of fellowship and mutual understanding among the ordinary citizens of opposing countries will ease the paths of governments towards achieving mutual understanding and will favour a political and, in the long run, military detente.

Co-existence between states in conditions of isolation, estrangement, mistrust and involving a cold 'calculation of the balance' cannot be stable.

The task of putting forward demands linked to the achieve-

ment of one form of strategic balance or another is complex and depends upon the competence of specialists in the field of armaments. Here we believe mass peace movements could bring greater benefits not in that specialised and complex field but on the path to creating an atmosphere of fellowship and mutual understanding among the ordinary citizens of the opposing states. This does not, of course, involve excluding general demands for an end to the arms race and for eventual full disarmament by all opposing countries on a balanced basis of secure, equal safety. These demands are more important now than ever before.

Pacifists throughout the entire world are faced with a rewarding and urgent task — to unite their forces in the struggle for trust, for improving the international situation and for stopping the arms race.

With the aim of uniting our forces we propose to call a conference of representatives of all independent peace organisations throughout the world in Moscow in the autumn of 1983. We call upon you to address the Soviet government jointly with this proposal. We are ready to discuss all issues linked to the organisation of the conference with all interested people.

Signed:

**Four groups: Moscow, Leningrad, Odessa, Novosibirsk
8 October 1982**

Workers' Opposition in Ukraine

By Vasyl Demchuk

Whilst attention has been focussed on the Solidarity movement in Poland over the last two years, the situation of the working classes in the Soviet Union has to a large extent been forgotten. Yet throughout the eighteen months of Solidarity's existence the fear of contagion of the 'Polish disease', especially in the non-Russian borderlands, was uppermost in the minds of Brezhnev and the ruling gerontocracy. At the 26th Party Congress held in February 1981 Brezhnev said, 'events in Poland once again convincingly demonstrate how important it is for the Party, for the strengthening of its leading role, to listen attentively to the voice of the masses'.¹ Many, if not more, of the same factors that precipitated the emergence of Solidarity are in evidence in the USSR — food shortages, corruption and the ineffectiveness of official trade unions.

In an article written 8 years ago one author concluded that strikes in the USSR tended to occur in the periphery, where they also turned out to be more violent.² This is especially true of Ukraine, a factor compounded by its bordering on Poland. Worker opposition in this republic is complicated by the fact that a large proportion of its workforce is non-Ukrainian, amounting to nearly 50% of the urban population in the Donbas. Ukrainian peasants in search of work in the towns compete with the more skilled Russian workers, already urban based. It is therefore no wonder that this national and socio-economic discrimination results in many joining the ranks of the opposition. A substantial majority of the Ukrainian dissident movement are first generation migrants from the countryside.³

In Poland it was not until the workers and intelligentsia (including students) joined ranks after 1976 that they were able to successfully challenge the regime. This requirement has also been recognised in Ukraine and in April 1980 a new dissident movement calling itself the Ukrainian Patriotic Movement issued an appeal calling on Ukrainian workers to set up 'free trade unions' because 'only trade unions of this kind can defend your interests as workers ... It is your sacred right to struggle against the merciless exploitation of your labour by the state'. The defection of Boris Holubenko to Yugoslavia in 1980 has brought to light the existence of an independent trade union known as 'Unity' in the Ukrainian city of Vinnitsa.⁴ In November 1980 Mykola Pohyba, a Ukrainian worker from Kiev serving a sentence for campaigning for workers' rights, wrote in a letter 'that the situation in the Soviet Union is ripe for the founding of independent labour unions' and that, 'the recent events in Poland have shown that the working class is capable of leading the struggle for its rights and freedoms'.⁵

In November 1977 Vladimir Klebanov announced the formation of the Association of Free Trade Unions, which had a substantial proportion of members from the Donbas region of south-eastern Ukraine. The social deprivation and low living standards of miners in this region has been commented upon elsewhere.⁶ When miners in this region were asked about their attitudes to Solidarity they replied: 'We all know about Poland ... But what can we do about it?' Later the miners indicated, 'that all the conditions which led to worker unrest in Poland exist in more extreme forms in the Soviet Union'.⁷

After the arrest of many of the AFTU activists another organisation was formed called Free Inter-Professional Association of Workers (SMOT). SMOT also has many members in Ukraine and in its *Information Bulletins* published pro-Solidarity statements (eg. nos 12 and 13). Number 15 of the *Bulletin* (dated April-May 1981) published the 21 demands of the Gdansk Inter-factory Strike Committee. Number 19

(dated August-September 1981) published Solidarity's message to the workers of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union issued at its first congress in September 1981. Through unofficial publications like these, Ukrainian and other workers learnt of the true nature of Solidarity.

Fears of contagion prompted the chairperson of the Ukrainian Council of Trade Unions, Vitaly Solohub, at the Ukrainian Party Congress in early February 1981 to criticise those who would 'shatter the socialist system from within by speculating on the demagogic slogans of free trade unions'.⁸ In April 1981 the First Secretary of the Donetsk Regional Party Committee revealed in an interview that the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Party had 'recently formulated measures for further improving Party leadership of the trade unions and strengthening their cadres'. The Donetsk Party organisation was looking into ways 'to increase the role of trade union organisations in resolving social problems as one of the most important tasks in implementing Party policies ... to satisfy more fully the material and spiritual needs of the workers'.⁹ This relatively new concern for the workers was also taken up by the First Secretary of the Ukrainian Party, Shcherbitsky, in July 1981 when he revealed that the Central Committee has 'approved measures for further improving the work of primary party organisations and strengthening their influence on the life and activity of workers' collectives'.¹⁰ These decrees, including that for the Donetsk, were adopted in October 1980 — only three months after the formation of Solidarity.

In his speech to the 26th Party Congress, Brezhnev began the campaign against the threat of independent trade unions by criticising official trade unions for lacking initiative and failing to exercise their rights. The Ukrainian Party followed suit in June 1981 after meetings between the Ukrainian politburo and the Republic's Council of Trade Unions.¹¹ The Central Committee also raised the question of 'stepping up admission into the Party of advanced workers

...¹² The failure of official trade unions to protect workers is not a phenomenon that only Brezhnev has recognised, and Solidarity has prompted, but the AFTU in a document dated February 1978 wrote, 'In our country, there is no organ which objectively defends the workers' interests. Soviet trade unions do not defend our rights and do not have the necessary authority.'¹³

In 'company towns' like Donetsk the management, backed by the Party authorities, control all working and living conditions. Consequently, there is no one to whom the worker has recourse in dealing with management abuses. The sole concern of the Party and management is to ensure that the trade unions encourage fulfilment of the plan. Trade unions are merely conduits for the transmission of Party directives to the workers. Any possibility of collective opposition by the workforce is discouraged by the atomisation of workers. For every job in the Donetsk mines, there is a model brigade made up of 'udarniki' ('achievers'), chosen for their loyalty to management and rewarded in turn. Therefore, up to 25% of the labour force can be counted upon in any dispute to back management. The miners are paid higher than the average wages in the USSR to attempt to ward off criticism of the poor safety record, poor housing and amenities. In September 1981 it was reported that Soviet coal miners were to receive a 27% pay increase, which only became operative in the Donetsk region in 1982. Other areas of the USSR have to wait until 1983.¹⁴ Those workers not in the model brigades also compete with each other on the piece-rate system, estimated to cover 50% of all Soviet industrial workers. In-

creases in piece-rates and work norms are one of the most frequent causes of worker unrest.

STRIKES

During the course of 1981 a relatively large number of strikes were reported in the Ukrainian republic. In the early part of 1981 dissident sources reported mass disturbances in Ivano-Frankivsk, where calls were made for 'independence and bread' — an example of the combining of national and socio-economic issues. (Western Ukrainian industrial workers tend to be ethnically Ukrainian.) In March and April three separate strikes were reported in Kiev, Ukraine's capital city. Two were at a research Institute for Livestock-Breeding Machinery, and the third at a plant producing reinforced concrete. In two of the cases the arbitrary increase by management of work norms, whilst leaving wage levels the same, led to strikes lasting two days. The third strike, also lasting two days, was in protest at the unavailability of water in the area that the research institute is located. In all three cases workers won, and management/party authorities backed down.

In May and June strikes were again precipitated by management reduction of wage rates in two plants in Kiev. In September *Radyanska Ukraina* (the government daily paper) reported in a roundabout way that workers in the Bilshovyk plant in Kiev refused to operate new machinery because of increased work norms that would be initiated. In August meanwhile, at the motorcycle plant in Kiev, a two-day strike was held to protest at cuts in piece-work rates and bonuses, and food shortages.

Again wage rates previously in force were reinstated.

The success of Solidarity, before the imposition of martial law, had tremendous support among Soviet workers, especially in the non-Russian regions bordering on Poland. It is obvious though, that years of oppression have cowed many workers into submission, although when their living standards are directly threatened, they are prepared to turn to illegal protests. This short study has also shown how the Soviet rulers were sufficiently afraid of a Solidarity within their midst to allow some internal criticism, whilst at the same time continuing an external barrage of abuse. On the Ukrainian front it would seem obvious that national and socio-economic discontent has to be united into one movement in order to be able to successfully challenge the regime.

Footnotes.

1. *Pravda*, 24 February 1981.
2. Holubenko, M., 'The Soviet Working Class: Discontent and Opposition', *Critique*, 1975, no.4.
3. Isajiw, W., 'Urban Migration and Social Change in Contemporary Soviet Ukraine', *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, 1980, 22(1).
4. *The Observer*, 22 March 1981.
5. *The Observer*, 16 August 1981.
6. David Satter, *Financial Times*, 9 January 1981.
7. *Ibid.* See also Roman Solchanyk, 'Poland's Impact Inside the USSR', *Soviet Analyst*, 9 September 1981.
8. *Radyanska Ukraina*, 12 February 1981.
9. 'Partiinaya zabota o lyudyakh truda', *Trud*, 14 April 1981.
10. *Radyanska Ukraina*, 24 July 1981.
11. *Radyanska Ukraina* and *Robitnycha Hazeta*, 4 June 1981.
12. *Radyanska Ukraina* 25 July 1981.
13. Viktor Haynes and Olga Semyonova, ed., *Workers Against the Gulag*, Pluto Press.
14. Michael Binyon, *The Times*, 14 September 1981.

ROMANIA

Ceausescu Tries CIA Methods on Workers

By Andrew Csepel

(The film 'Missing' made a wide audience aware of the CIA's methods of repression in Latin America, in particular the expedient of making socialist and civil rights campaigners simply disappear. This has been happening to tens of thousands of people in such countries as Chile, Uruguay and Argentina during the 1970s and 80s. The people involved are simply kidnapped and slaughtered by the local police, trained at the CIA police school in Panama. This technique has now been adopted, on a significant scale, in Romania, as the following article shows. People simply disappear overnight. Whether they are liquidated or placed in labour camps is impossible to discover.)

In 1976 a worker, Brancu, from the Red Star Factory in Brasov, was picked up and interrogated by the Securitate in connection with some graffiti which had appeared in his factory. Neither his family nor colleagues have seen or heard of him since, and they assume

he has been murdered. This incident took place before the major disturbances which erupted in different parts of Romania in 1977, 1979 and 1981. It turned out to be an ominous sign of the uncompromising way in which the Romanian authorities were to treat those responsible for and involved in the impressive manifestations of working-class opposition which began with the miners' strike in the Jiu Valley in August 1977.

It is generally estimated that about 35,000 workers took part in these strikes. Of those 3,000 are known to have been abducted after the strikes were over. It has been impossible to monitor the fate of the majority of those who have gone missing, as in most cases not even their names are known in the West. The persistent enquiries made of the Romanian government about the whereabouts of the strikers have met with a wall of silence.

The Securitate moved even more swiftly after the formation of SLOMR in 1979. Of the two thousand members of Romania's Free Trade Union only a few hundred were known in the West. Every one has disappeared without trace. It seems that the ma-

jority vanished on the same day in a massive police operation. The Romanian authorities are now trying to pretend that they never existed. Neighbours can no longer recall the activists. Families and friends who try and discover exactly what has happened are hindered by a legal system totally subservient to the demands of the state. They are also discouraged from pursuing their investigations by the less gentle persuasion of the Securitate. Vasile Paraschiv was one of the original members of SLOMR in Sigishoara. He had good contacts in the West, who were always informed about his activities. Several reports are circulating concerning his whereabouts, but those which suggest that he is free and working elsewhere in Romania are unlikely to be true, because Paraschiv would have informed his Western friends.

Even less is known about the disturbances in the Motru region of the Banat which took place in the spring of 1981 and resulted in the area being almost completely sealed off from the rest of the country. The subsequent repression has been brutal by all accounts. In this case it is rumoured that two strike leaders have been abducted and

murdered, but no names are known.

Those who go missing are either placed in labour camps; interned in psychiatric institutions or guarded hospital wings (like Pavillion 32 of the Gataia Hospital in the Timis region, where according to one source Paraschiv is being held); or simply liquidated, like the two Jiu Valley strike leaders, Jurca and Dobre, who were mysteriously killed in an accident shortly after the strikes. The authorities did not consider it fit to hold an enquiry into their deaths.

Although in France, where the 'Council for the Defence of Human Rights in Romania' is based, these gross infringements of rights are well-publicised, elsewhere in Western Europe they do not arouse much attention. This is a great en-

couragement to Ceausescu who seems to become more arrogant and ruthless every year, when dealing with domestic opposition.

REPRESSION IN TRANSYLVANIA

Another sign that no amount of repression can break the determination of Romanian citizens to express themselves has emerged this year with the regular publication of a samizdat magazine, *Ellenpontok* (Counterpoint). This is published in Transylvania by dissidents among the Hungarian minority there. Its declared aim is to disseminate information on the abuse of human rights all over east central Europe, but it pays particular attention to the Hungarian minority in Romania, which suffers tremendous discrimination — political and economic — at the hands of the authorities in Bucharest.

At the beginning of November the Securitate arrested 10 Transylvanian Hungarian intellectuals and accused them of producing *Ellenpontok*. House searches were carried out and during police interrogation at least two of the arrested were beaten up. One of those being held has not been charged but is still being kept in jail.

In Budapest news of the arrests led to the swift organisation of a petition against both this incident and the general oppression being suffered by the Transylvanian-Hungarian minority in Romania. There are growing indications of widespread ferment in student and intellectual circles in Budapest over the repression in Transylvania and over the failure of the Hungarian government to expose Ceausescu's crimes and publicly protest against them.

An Unofficial Hungarian View of Romania

By Kalman Garzo

(First published in *Beszélő*, May 1982, under the title 'Hunger and Terror in Romania'. Translation by Anca Mihailescu.)

'About equality — it is as if it was to my detriment to give others the same chances and rights that I have; as if it were not an indispensable part of my rights, that others have them too.'

Walt Whitman, *Meditations*

Beneath the Romanian soil there is oil, uranium ore and bauxite; the Banat, Bihor and Baragan have arable land of incomparable richness; the hydro-electric power stations pour out electrical energy; the country has an opening to the sea. Yet Romania's population is hard-up and undernourished, its energy is drained by chronic shortages of goods and queues that continue to wait into the night; babies do not receive the quantities of protein required for their mental development indispensable for growth; long forgotten diseases like scurvy and pellagra produced by deprivation are starting to reappear, there are shortages of meat, dairy products, cooking-fat, oil, salad-stuffs, fruit, flour, sugar, rice, fish, soap, cold-meat, coffee, tea, pasta, wine, beer, cigarettes, hygienic requirements (for years toilet paper has been almost unobtainable) and one cannot get spare-parts for household machinery. The artisan repair-cooperatives have disappeared, there is practically no lighting in the streets, public transport and inter-city transport — according to reliable evaluations — cannot supply even half the necessary capacity. The authorities consider that central heating is healthy at 18° for private places and 15° for institutions, so they switch off the electricity for 4 hours a day at varying times of the day, internal tourism is declining, the use of private cars has been restricted. Despite repeated promises, the length of the working day has not been reduced but indeed increased in some places, yet social facilities are swiftly cut — for example all weekly rail tickets and long-distance bus passes; prices rise rapidly, though this is not a major issue since the supply of goods is permanently falling.

Alsatian dogs and army-cum-police patrols have been on the beat for 7 years now, in the towns plunged in darkness. The population is systematically cut off from all foreign contact and from any sources of objective information (concerning either the past or the present); censorship has destroyed any cultural activity with even the slightest connection with politics in the broader sense — curiously enough, the literature of the German and Hungarian minorities enjoys slightly more freedom, except of course in the field of research on the national question — the education system has drastically deteriorated. The regime is becoming daily less flexible: criticism is inconceivable, to express the fact that one is in a bad mood is forbidden, every citizen has to give almost daily proof of his or her loyalty — first with patriotic phrases in the field of ideological education which he must be involved in, secondly in their

activities in the paramilitary organisations that every adult must belong to, thirdly, in the unpaid Sunday work-shift and other similar activities. Abortion is illegal, contraception doesn't exist. The state security service — the well-known Securitate — encompasses everything, and informing, or rather the hysterically exaggerated fear of informers, is a general phenomenon. The role of the army is growing, military preparations are increasing, enormous fortifications, bunkers and military roads are being built. The official whispering campaign of propaganda tries to present all this as precautionary measures against the threat of a Soviet invasion, but the real function of the army becomes clear from practices such as making whole armies march through the streets of cities at night-time singing! The mass media spread the incredible personality cult of the dictator, shrieking with nationalist frenzy. Official contemporary political doctrine has been replaced by the theory of the continuity of the late ancient Daco-Roman civilisation. For comrade Ceausescu, obviously, the ideal nation should be made up of cohorts of dilettante archeologists and amateur linguistic historians. The millions of people unable to offer any further resistance are drawn into the bellowing choirs, like 'We sing to you, Romania!' (the 'like' having hardly anything to do with reality, that can be heard being unremittently pronounced in chauvinist, Stalinist self-satisfaction at a national festival).

Politically, though not economically, two countries are equally important to the Romanian despots: China and Israel. With these flirtations, Romania won the anger of the Soviet Union and the sympathy of the Americans, and both these friends seem to play along with Ceausescu's primitively cunning policy of opportunism without endangering the influence of the West, which is important to him.

The most striking feature of the rule of the Ceausescu clan and the Ceausescu clique — the two are not completely identical — is the deadly boredom. It is produced by such things as the shouting of 'Ceausescu — CPR' (Communist Party of Romania, ed.) and 'Ceausescu and the People', the 15-minute long rhythmical clapping at the innumerable meetings, the painting of Cde Ceausescu and Cde Mrs Ceausescu in oil, tempera and water-colours, the sculptures in copper, steel, wood, linoleum, bronze, granite, marble, stainless steel, the exhibitions swarming with his portraits. Cde Ceausescu's speeches flood the curriculum in middle and high schools. He is also present in the cinema. A few years ago they numbed the people with cheap American Westerns, but their place has been taken today by North Korean, Albania, Vietnamese, Cuban and Chinese partisan movies and by East German imitations of red-Indian Westerns — more, there are now patriotic Romanian Westerns (one or two specimens can be seen in Hungary). On television, patriotic choirs sing in tail-coats, in national costume, work-overalls, uniform, historical-aristocratic costume and in the Roman toga — non-stop. This is accompanied by every variety of kitsch of the American serialised soap-opera variety.

The national minorities are equally affected, living in a hostile atmosphere artificially instigated by continual vituperation in the official propaganda. They face growing cultural oppression, the confiscation of their schools, the deliberate restrictions on their vertical mobility — a numerus clausus is used in higher education* — in short, what a Transylvanian has called 'intellectual and spiritual genocide'.

The misery exclusively affects the national minorities in a particular way, because their proportion within the strata of the least well-paid is increasing, on account of the obstinately consistent measures of the policies of settlement, regional industrial development, promotions and education. The natural disadvantages caused by language difficulties do not even play a very important role any longer in maintaining their backward situation. This otherwise slow process is hardly noticeable at least amongst the unprecedentedly politically backward Romanian public opinion. We may say with a degree of malice that hunger and misery are in reality *the only* efficient elements in the heavily propagated policy of national unity, since in the present abysmal state of economic collapse it is practically impossible to discriminate against anybody. The Party's own special shop system is also battling against the shortage of goods, the diplomats' shop is empty — where this is possible, diplomats are looked after by their own states.

The country's isolation is also growing relentlessly. The Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc are watching this faithless vassal's difficult struggle to pull through its problems with malicious joy. The West has grown weary of the Romanian state's inability to pay its debts and the American and West German governments will grant it no more financial support, especially since US Secretary of State Haig was unable to persuade the Bucharest government to condemn Jaruzelski's military coup. (On this point we must confess a degree of understanding: the RCP can hardly condemn the Warsaw junta and express solidarity with Solidarity when it does itself use the army to break up wild-cat strikes and when it trembles in fear of the workers, whose anger it is only too familiar with.)

We must still examine four questions:

- 1) What are the causes of the economic collapse?
- 2) Why is the dictator able to maintain his stranglehold over the country?
- 3) To what extent are Romanian developments similar to those in other Comecon countries?
- 4) Is the Hungarian public accurately informed about the Romanian situation, and does Hungarian public opinion judge events there correctly?

1. CAUSES OF THE ECONOMIC COLLAPSE

Romania's economic problems are those of a conventional Stalinist structure, differing in no way from that tradition, except for the fact that Romanian Stalinism has been ravaging the country since 1947 and that latterly has been supplemented with a few fascistoid elements — the leader cult, the pseudo-mass movement, the permanent incitement of political hysteria, chauvinism, the ideology of encirclement, the primacy of the propaganda machinery on the cultural level, the practically unconcealed acceptance of extreme right-wing traditions. The Romanian personality cult is not of the Stalinist type, but rather a Mussolini or Petain version.

The regime has been making enormous capital investments for the last 35 years, especially in the field of infrastructure and heavy industry (first in the energy and metallurgical industry and then to a lesser extent in the oil-machinery industry and chemicals). For reasons of prestige it has invested enormous amounts in building monumental public buildings and, a positive feature, constructing blocks of flats on a large scale. While all this has been going on, light industry and the food industry have been stagnating; services are ancient and small private businesses are being closed down completely.

The agricultural co-operatives are no different from those of the Rakosi period*; as a result of the Party's anti-peasant policy millions of peasants have been leaving the villages. Those who remain live under the pressure of senseless legislation reminding one of a civil war atmosphere. In the villages the prices of oil and sugar are higher, the peasants' own piece of land surrounding his house is continually reduced, the tax-in-kind is brutally increased, sub-

sidary enterprises are banned from developing. With the aid of all sorts of idiotic campaigns to increase production of wheat and maize, they have destroyed the grass-land and the pastures. They use police methods to try to spread the cultivation of artificial plants. Compulsory procurement has never been halted. To maximise the use of arable land they are trying to issue passes in the towns for planting vegetables.

All this is aggravated by the prevailing confusion, lack of organisation and the petty tyranny of local community leaders. It is also exacerbated by natural calamities: embankments are not being built, hundreds die in floods, the relief parcels sent by the West are divided up among Party functionaries or sold for a lot of money in the better shops in regions untouched by the flooding. The extent of soil erosion is enormous, thanks to short-term, wasteful management forests die away, waterways become unusable, the canals built at the time of the monarchy behave like wild, capricious mountain rivers, transport is hindered by deranged regulations: for example, no co-operative lorries or any state vehicles or trucks are allowed to cross country boundaries! And county-boundary check-ups are regular: as in the middle ages, they confiscate even a bag of potatoes or other such things from private individuals!

They planned and built one of Europe's biggest steel-plants, in Galatii, with the Krivoi Rog iron-ore in the Soviet Union in mind, at the very time when they were planning the break with the USSR. The Greek merchant fleet transports Indian iron-ore and British coal to Romania in enormous vessels sailing at half, or even quarter capacity at a time when even American steel is not able to sell its semi-finished products.

The economic policy of the Romanian ruling clique is characterised by staggering muddle, bureaucratic procrastination, a dilatoriness inherited from the times of the Ottoman Empire, punitive measures and demotions shared out at random, trendy economic initiatives of the Hubele-Balasz type, conceitedness and a diseased lack of realism — all on a scale (I am saying too much!) that even beats the Soviet Union. The system of leadership is of the most orthodox Stalinist-militarist type, plans extend to the smallest details (they are mostly the tireless cde Ceausescu's personal instructions; the stereotype, varying according to circumstance, is his 'precious directive' — the writer of this article read this exact phrase together with the President's signature on an instruction in the case of three cleaners in a nursery whose quota was falling in real terms). The permanently worsening living conditions do not, of course, have a positive effect upon the productivity of labour, nor does the regime's endless nagging; the masters of the state seem possessed by an evil demon which never ceases to prompt them to think up new vexations and harassments. Though I know this sounds unscientific, the only possible cause for this must be a morbid hatred of the people. Why should firms that are renowned for always making losses, and going for weeks without supplies of basic materials, increase their deficits even more by introducing Sunday working? God only knows.

The sort of integration achieved within Comecon does of course primarily favour the Soviet Union and is often damaging to countries with relatively exigent technological norms, like Czechoslovakia, the GDR and Hungary. Romania could have had some benefit from it, it could have sold tools on the market. In 1964 it broke with Comecon, but it continued to take part in its activities! Also when it could it voted 'no' in the Committee meetings, thus somehow saving Hungary from diplomatic opprobrium and from its 'naughty boy' image. Yet Romania itself gained little benefit from all this. (As a matter of fact, it is thanks to Romania's heated opposition that there is no majority voting in Comecon.) The Soviet Union, sulking implacably, sabotages the Romanian economy whenever it gets the chance, and its faithful allies do not abstain from this sabotage either. Romanian products are not competitive on Western or even Third World markets. Therefore it turns to autarchy, escaping into 'reliance on its own resources'. Despite all this, in the past Romania would have been able to pay its debts, but today its economy produces practically nothing, but squanders elegant cars by selling them ridiculously cheap, below the costs of production.

Travelling to Peking recently to complain has not helped Ceausescu — the Chinese wouldn't give him any money even if they had some. If he did receive offers of charity he would

welcome them (let General Yepishev, Admiral Gorskov and Marshal Kulikov have bad dreams!), but they wouldn't help him much. In a country where there is not enough to eat, oppression is pitiless, there is an atmosphere of dictatorship in workplaces, there is no more entertainment, fashion, light music, weekend cottages and foreign travel, even to neighbouring countries — in such a country nobody thinks that *these* things could be solved by some clever ideas. From many sources we hear that the bureaucrats are afraid for their jobs and open their mouths only to cheer. True, this is little help, because they will lose their jobs sooner or later anyway.

Militarisation also eats up a great deal of money, even though the Soviet Union would be mad to overthrow the Ceausescu regime, which carries out its obligations dutifully — oppressing and exploiting the people, forgetting how to speak to the people in human language, making the population depressed and powerless. And on the other hand, Romania is useful as an advertisement — this is what happens to those who break out of the strangling embrace of big brother. There is only one snag: the Soviet economy is visibly following in the footsteps of the Romanian economy.

2. WHY THE DICTATOR CAN MAINTAIN HIS HOLD

The dictator has only one weapon for keeping the country under his heel, but that is an overwhelming one: nationalism. He managed to persuade the people that the fraternal Soviet regime would give Transylvania back to the Hungarians. He even succeeded in persuading the population to believe the premise for this impossibility: that they have only two camps to choose between: that of Ceausescu and that of the Soviet leadership. The feelings of the Romanian people towards Ceausescu are ambivalent: he is surrounded by hatred and love. He is the object of both adoration and rude jokes. The third possibility — an independent foreign policy and a more democratic society — is not even posed. Opposition is demonstrated only by the most desperately oppressed charismatic sects. Housewives in the middle of queuing beat up a policeman now and again. Dissatisfied miners threateningly surround a Party building. Most of the revolts against hunger take place under the banner of an ideology of the 'good king'. After sowing its seeds, state despotism has ripened its crops — everybody now expects everything from the state. It is possible that one sunny day the state will be smashed up in a revolt but people fear that it would involve the left-overs of the Iron Guard* and Orthodox Christian fundamentalists and that the minorities would come a cropper in the general confusion; the end result could hardly be anything other than a military dictatorship, a neo-Stalinist dictatorship friendly to the Soviet Union, or an extreme right-wing dictatorship that the Soviets would smash. It does not seem possible that a spontaneous rising of the Romanian working class, expressing their thirst for justice and revenge, might do away with the national communist regime. A well-fed xenophobia, especially the hatred of the Hungarians, would have its role. In the past, the Hungarian minority maintained the illusion — why shouldn't we admit it? — that the growing Soviet influence might improve its circumstances. But this illusion has been weakened by one observation and another thought: anyone interested could observe that since the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia, the lot of the Hungarian population in Slovakia has considerably worsened. Anyone who can count up to three, can reckon that a Quisling regime friendly to the Soviets can prove its patriotic credentials in only one way if it wants to pacify nationalists shaking with fear for Transylvania: by oppressing the Hungarians *even more*. Thus not much can be expected from the Russians except at the most some play with a 'divide and rule' tactic, but even this would hardly be serious.

As for the Romanian regime itself, the status quo in Transylvania suits its own defence and security, which is tantamount to a complete lack of freedom. It ensures that there is nothing to strive for and no comfort save the thought that you cannot fall any lower. Otherwise, the regime does to some extent satisfy people's baser instincts — no others are catered for. The Romanian intelligentsia is integrated or apolitical, though, of course, heroic exceptions can be found — all honour to them! Instinctively everybody knows that it is possible to wallop a few secret policemen or Party functionaries. But leaving aside the fact that this is not morally correct, it does not offer much hope even for the hot-tempered or the apolitical. So there is no way out, and the con-

sequent neurosis born out of apathy is easily turned into a mobilising ideology by Ceausescu's guards, who are unrivalled in this field.

3. ROMANIA IN COMPARISON WITH THE REST OF COMECON

Everything in the Comecon countries that is Stalinist, bureaucratic-centralist, that is left over from the 1950s, resembles the situation in Romania; everything that is the result of the Soviet Union's monopolistic dictat over the price of raw materials — although Romania itself was crushed in this field by its own revolt rather than by Moscow. The more liberal an East European country, the less it resembles Romania; thus Hungary resembles it least of all. However much the way that the Western press praises the Kádár regime to the skies may offend us, we who are critical of that regime cannot remain blind: the difference between Romania and Hungary is greater than the difference between Hungary and Austria or Finland. I would even dare to go further: this is true in every respect. But the comparison is unjust, because Romania's true comparison is with Albania or North Korea and here we must note that Kim Il Sung has bigger statues while Enver Hoxha allows himself the little pleasure now and again of assassinating somebody in his immediate political circle. But all three regimes are sustained by their own imaginary enemy: North Korea by South Korea, Albania by Yugoslavia, Romania by Hungary (the Soviet Union is only our pseudonym — others think only this much about our national independence). Let us just consider how disquieting it would be if Hungary's guarantee of stability lay in a simple comparison between ourselves and other Communist countries. This would be the first step towards ourselves resembling Romania. 'Look how badly the neighbours are doing' — this often heard, conceited and unpleasant phrase is no better than the envious phrases of our neighbours. If the centre of gravity of our political life were to lie *outside* itself — and in point of fact the endless boasting and the condescending allusions point exactly in this direction — it could easily tip over. To be more precise, tip over towards the right — in the wrong direction. If Hungary improves in comparison with itself — which I pray will be the case — then it will be good, but if an arrogant dictatorship becomes the yardstick (a negative one to boot) then we will certainly start resembling that dictatorship ourselves.

4. INFORMATION ON ROMANIA

The Hungarian mass media say too much and too little about Romania. Too much because they are using Romania as a form of negative advertising for Hungary — look where an independent foreign policy can lead you. It is true that Romania — or even fascist Argentina too for that matter — does have an independent foreign policy: it has just bought, despite American disapproval, uranium ore-concentrate from the Soviet Union — it is obviously going to have its own atom bomb! — but Switzerland, Sweden and France also have an independent foreign policy. It is not thanks to the Soviet Union that we are leading somewhat more civilised lives than the rest of our economy which differ from that of the Soviet Union, not to mention the degree of confusion that exists in Czechoslovakia or the GDR.

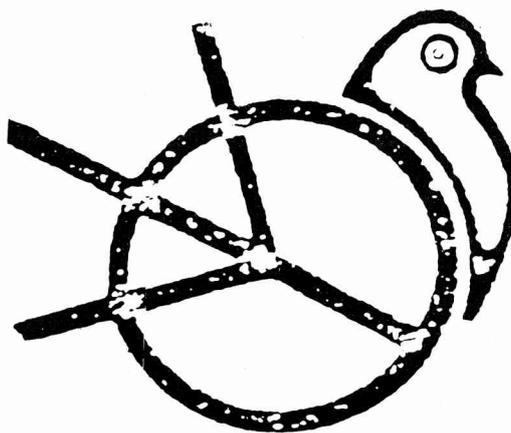
Expressions of opinion in the Hungarian media concerning Romania are, in comparison with other East European countries relatively rare. There are cautious, ironic remarks about the hunger there (such good taste!), there are hints about the state of Transylvanian Hungarian literature, but the country's misery and the oppression of the Hungarians there are not mentioned. Considering the present state of censorship — it is only occasionally exercised — this could be done more boldly.

Still, the most important thing never appears — namely sympathy, involvement, anger. Because of existing circumstances, Romania's tourist travel has declined. People may not take a piece of bacon into starving Romania, except at the risk of contravening the regulations. This selfish lack of humanity is all of a piece with the hostility to the Poles, the 'ranting Poles'.

Let those who wish, boast about liberalising and developing Hungary. I prefer to think of the worn-out housewives who whisper softly in the long Romanian night where, for aesthetic reasons, they are forced to queue up at the *back* entrance of the shops. There are still some hours till dawn.

The Hungarian Peace Movement

By Bill Lomax



The past twelve months have seen the emergence and growth within Hungary of a new, independent peace movement, drawing its support largely from young people in schools and colleges relatively fresh to political involvement. Separate and distinct from existing dissident and opposition groups, the new peace movement is also seeking to establish itself independently of the officially sponsored state peace organisations, while at the same time working to build contacts and links with the peace movement in the West.

RESPONSES TO THE WESTERN PEACE MOVEMENT

When the END Appeal was launched in April 1980 calling for all-European nuclear disarmament and the creation of a European nuclear-free zone including both West and East Europe, the response from many members of the Hungarian opposition was, to say the least, lukewarm. Many felt that the Western peace movement put the realisation of human rights, democracy and national independence for the countries of East Europe secondary to the achievement of an all-European settlement, and that consequently Western nuclear disarmers failed to attack the Kremlin's nuclear arsenal and its military occupation of East Europe with the same vigour as they condemned American imperialism and NATO armaments. Those dissidents who recognised a common identity with members of the Western peace movement, and favoured opening a dialogue with them — such as György Konrád and Miklós Haraszti — remained a small, if significant minority.

A more sympathetic response to the growing Western peace movement, when it eventually came, arose from amongst a new and younger generation — a generation that in many ways had more in common with the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament of the late '50s and early '60s that arose in protest against 'the bomb' and nuclear tests, than with the more politicised generation of a decade later activated by opposition to America's war in Vietnam. And while the majority of dissidents and activists of the Hungarian democratic movement are no longer even university students, most of the supporters of the new peace movement are teenagers, many still at secondary school.

INDEPENDENT INITIATIVES

The first initiative towards independent action was taken in September 1981 when a group of students in the Arts Faculty of Budapest University discussed proposals to organise an independent student peace march that would oppose both American and Soviet nuclear weapons. The idea was publicly raised at the Student Parliament in October, and an ad-hoc 10-member preparatory committee actually negotiated with the official Peace Council to arrange authorisation for a march they planned for 17 December that would have proceeded from the Heroes Square beside the city park to the Hungarian Parliament, along a route taking them past both the Soviet and American embassies.

Authorisation was finally withheld, and the action upstaged by the Communist Youth League, KISZ, who convened a mass meeting on peace and disarmament in the University on 12 December. Then, following the Polish military coup on 13 December, any thought of going ahead with an unauthorised action was, for the time being, dropped.

The idea of an independent march was taken up again, however, in Spring 1982, this time by secondary school students who formed an *Anti-Nuclear Campaign — Hungary* and proposed a march against all nuclear weapons for 9 May. Once again the Communist Youth League, KISZ, moved in, eventually taking over the organisation and turning the planned protest march into an officially-staged parade. Nevertheless, members of the ANC took part as a separate group, with their own banners, placards and slogans, and two days later the Communist Party daily *Népszabadság* even carried a picture of them with their banners calling 'Get Rid of All Weapons'.

THE NEW PEACE MOVEMENT

Despite these initial setbacks, the new movement has continued to develop spontaneously, on the independent initiative of different groups in schools and colleges. In March a number of young artists and painters got together and formed a group called *Indigo* to design and produce peace emblems, badges and placards. Members of ANC have distributed leaflets and flowers in

city streets and parks. Within the University, largely on the initiative of a 25-year-old student of Hungarian literature, Ferenc Köszegi, students began to press for the establishment of an independent peace centre, with its own meeting place, library, and the right to publish an independent journal.

These initiatives have also met with the sympathy and support of an already existing radical pacifist movement within the Hungarian Catholic Church. Many rank-and-file Catholics belonging to "base groups" of believers follow the teachings of the Piarist priest György Bulányi who advocates a return to the values of humility and non-violence practiced by the early Christians. Refusing military service on conscientious grounds, many of these Catholics have already suffered imprisonment for their beliefs.

Supporters of Father Bulányi have set up a *Committee for Human Dignity*, in the name of which they issued a declaration in January 1982 expressing their support for the growing peace movements in the West, and their opposition to the stationing of nuclear armaments, bombs and rockets, in both West and East Europe.

The traditional opposition, meanwhile, continued to maintain their distance from the new peace movement, remaining sceptical and unenthusiastic towards it. The peace activists, too, representing a less committed, less directly political generation, at times viewed the opposition with almost as much suspicion as they did the regime. But the attempt to resist being cast in an oppositional mould, to eschew what might be interpreted as illegal activities, to find a 'third way' and establish a movement that could be at the same time both autonomous and yet officially authorised, greatly restricted their possibilities for organisation and communication.

When the Soviet-sponsored *Peace March 82* passed through Budapest at the beginning of August, members of the new peace movement chose to simply ignore it. It was left to two of the more adventurous dissidents, Miklós Haraszti and László Rajk, to seize the opportunity and hand out leaflets — both to the marchers and to the public — criticising the Hungarian Government's military policies, and the presence of Soviet troops and rockets on Hungarian soil.

At the same time, Haraszti and Rajk were themselves thinking of launching a peace journal, and as a first step in this direction had prepared a translation of E.P. Thompson's *Beyond the Cold War* for publication in a new samizdat series entitled *Peace Notebooks*.

E.P. THOMPSON IN BUDAPEST

At the end of September 1982 E.P. Thompson visited Budapest to bring the greetings of the Western peace movement to the new movement in Hungary, and to meet with representatives of its different constituent groups. Although it had at first appeared that he might be allowed to give a lecture at the University, this possibility was refused at the last moment, but Thompson was still able to give his talk before a hundred-strong

audience of predominantly young people in the flat of the writer György Konrád. His main message concerned the need for the peace movement to reach out and find support in the countries of East Europe, to become an all-European movement, and to do so by building links not at the level of states but at that of ordinary people.

The following day E.P. Thompson took part in a round-table discussion on the perspectives and possibilities for the new Hungarian peace movement. Also present were Ferenc Kőszegi and other members of the newly-formed *Peace Group for Dialogue*, as well as the former Prime Minister (and founder-signatory of the War-

saw Pact) András Hegedűs, and the dissident writer Miklós Haraszti. (Representatives of the state Peace Council had declined an invitation to participate.)

While András Hegedűs argued for caution and moderation and advanced the case for working with and within official organisations like the state Peace Council, Ferenc Kőszegi outlined his views on the need and the possibility for building a movement that would be neither official nor oppositional, that could at the same time be both authorised by but be independent of the regime. For his part, Miklós Haraszti stressed the importance for both the democratic movement and the peace move-

ment to actively support each other's efforts and aims.

The text of the lecture delivered by E.P. Thompson in Budapest, entitled *The Normalisation of Europe?*, together with two articles by Ferenc Kőszegi on *The Making of the New Peace Movement in Hungary* and the *'Peace Group for Dialogue' in Hungary* has just been published by END as a pamphlet with the title *The New Hungarian Peace Movement*, available from either END, 227 Seven Sisters Road, London N4 or from *Merlin Press* 3 Manchester Road, London E14, price 90p.

PROBLEMS OF PUBLICITY AND SELF-ORGANISATION

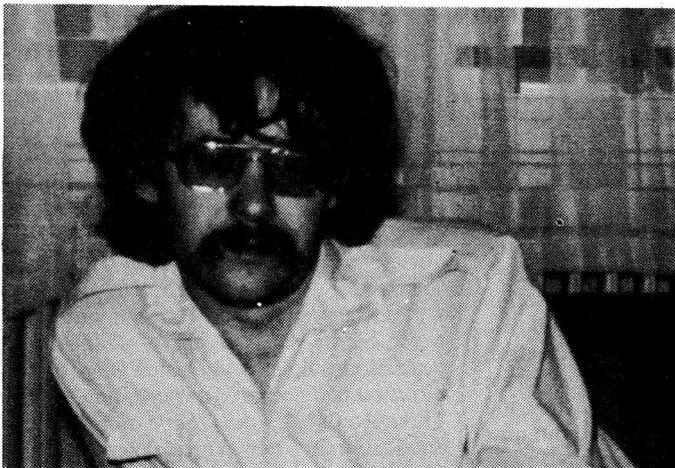
HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ROUND-TABLE DISCUSSION IN BUDAPEST

E.P. THOMPSON

It is in East Germany and in Hungary that we can speak of an independent peace movement with real support, particularly among the young people...

In general, Western peace movements have plenty of space for self-organisation and for their own publication. The authorities in some countries may be a little repressive, but their opportunities for repression are limited. They can exclude opinion from the major media but there's always a minority media, and in Britain or America — and in Germany — this is a very large minority media which the peace movement has access to.

Whereas in East Germany and in Hungary you are negotiating for a place and a space, and your activities are for that reason even more grass-roots — even more — than the Western movement, because they depend entirely on the initiatives of small groups of people with their own morale.



FERENC KŐSZEGI

I certainly think it is possible that the Hungarian independent peace groups will be able to find their own forms of publicity and their own means of communication, both between themselves and with Western and other East European independent peace movements.

This will not necessarily have to coincide with either the official publicity or the publicity achieved by the movement for democratic rights (the samizdat), for I feel they will be able to develop possibilities of their own, their own means of communication, journals, clubs etc.

ANDRÁS HEGEDŰS

In Hungary there is an official sphere of publicity where only official viewpoints are heard, and there is a second culture, a second possibility of publicity, the samizdat. But there also exists a third possibility, a third way — one tolerated, accepted and legalised — and it is precisely this that I think the independent peace movement could take advantage of.

In my opinion, the independent peace movement can win for itself the right to a special, legalised system of communication.

MIKLÓS HARASZTI

The peace movement is obliged to recognise that its final aims can only be realised in a democratic society, and that even its very existence depends on the existence of a democratic public opinion. Without the rights and practices of free speech, freedom of association and independent organisation there cannot even be a hope that the public can influence the military establishment, whether in the East or the West.

It is a question of life and death for the East European independent peace movement that it should link up the cause of peace with that of freedom. It has to bear witness to the fact that on the one hand freedom in the full meaning of the word is necessary for its very survival, while on the other hand the defeat of militarism will itself lead to an increase in freedom.

Budapest

24 September 1982.

Dignitatis Humanae Committee

(Followers of the Piarist priest Father György Bulányi and members of the Catholic 'base communities' have set up a Committee for Human Dignity to represent the viewpoint of progressive Catholic opinion in Hungary.)

In January 1982 the Committee issued a Statement in which it took up positions not only in relation to the growing internal problems within the Catholic Church, but also in response to the Western peace movement and to the previous year's events in Poland.)

THE PEACE MOVEMENT

We extend our greetings to all the growing peace movements in Western Europe that are in favour of military disarmament in both West and East Europe. We protest against the planned stationing of American neutron weapons in West Europe, and we demand the removal of the medium-range rockets already positioned in East Europe. We also call upon both sides to work for the realisation of complete military disarmament.

POLAND

With regard to the events in Poland — and together with Pope John Paul II, with the Polish people and the Polish church, with Western governments and significant sections of public opinion — we demand: the granting of freedom to the Polish people, the ending of the State of Emergency, the immediate release of all those sentenced and interned, and continuing dialogue between the different social forces as the only possibility for finding a way out of the present crisis.

We express our appreciation and respect for all those individuals and groups who help and support the Polish people in this dramatic period of their history through the Polish organisations of humanitarian support.

Budapest

January 1982.

Police Harassment of Samizdat Activists

By Bill Lomax

In the last issue of *Labour Focus* we noted that there had been certain signs that the Hungarian authorities were beginning to take a more restrictive attitude towards the growth of independent publishing and oppositional activities in Hungary. Since then a number of reports have appeared in the Western bourgeois press, both in England and on the Continent, that have been in some cases distorted and inaccurate. Here we present an accurate, factual account of the events that occurred over the course of the Summer and resulted in certain, limited setbacks to the dissident movement.

POLICE RAIDS

Hungarian samizdat and independent publishing, since its advance from typewritten and carbon copies to duplicated and printed format in 1981, has not only utilised "home-made" manual techniques of duplicating and silk-screen printing, but has also taken advantage of the resources offered by the flourishing "parallel economy" or "black market" in Hungary, which provided possibilities for xeroxing and offset-printing. In this way, in the course of 1981-2 not only a series of duplicated journals and pamphlets were produced, but also entire books in neatly printed and finely bound editions, amongst them literary works refused by official publishers such as György Petri's volume of poetry *Eternal Monday* and György Konrád's latest novel *The Accomplice*.

For some six months the authorities seemed to be turning a blind eye to these activities, but they soon became a subject for discussion at high political levels, and shortly after Easter 1982 a decision appears to have been taken to act against the growing movement of independent publishing. In May and June a number of police raids were carried out on small printing shops where samizdat material had been being printed on the side. Artwork, manuscripts and any completed print runs



Balint Nagy, a *Beszélő* editor

were confiscated and the printworkers threatened with the loss of their jobs should they undertake such work again.

SAMIZDAT CONFISCATED

On the early afternoon of Friday 4 June a car being driven by Gábor Demszky, the editor of the independent publishing house 'AB', was stopped by a police car in front of the Rudas Public Baths in Budapest, on the pretext that a minor traffic offence had been committed. Searching the car, the police found a large collection of Hungarian samizdat manuscripts, unofficial publications from Poland and Romania, and several books and journals published in the West — all of which they confiscated. Demszky was detained and taken to the main police station of the 5th district of Budapest, where he was held and questioned for three hours. Although this was not an official interrogation a record was taken of the questioning, but Demszky was then released without any charges being brought against him. From then on, however, he was kept under close surveillance for several days.

SURVEILLANCE — LATIN AMERICAN STYLE

Demszky's detention in face coincided with the commencement at the beginning of June of a strange series of almost latin-

american style incidents on the streets of Budapest, and in front of the homes and workplaces of several individuals active in the unofficial production and publication of independent books and journals. Already on the morning of 4 June some 10-12 well-dressed men in civilian clothes had arrived in three luxury saloon cars bearing official state registration plates — two of the latest model BMWs and one Opel Senator — in front of Demszky's Eszék street home in Buda. For the following three days this group of individuals kept Demszky under close and rigorous surveillance for 24 hours a day, following his every movement in an aggressive and threatening manner. Whenever he left his flat a group of at least five of them would closely encircle and follow him everywhere he went — right to the doors of homes of friends, where they would wait until he came out again. At regular intervals throughout the day, a minibus would bring replacements to relieve the outgoing shift of self-appointed "bodyguards".

From 7 to 9 June, the group's attentions were transferred to Jenő Nagy, Demszky's partner at the 'AB' independent publishing house, and from 9 to 12 June came the turn of Ferenc Kőszegi, a member of the editorial board of the independent journal *Beszélő* and who had recently compiled a literary anthology prepared in support of the voluntary social organisation *SZETA*, the Foundation to Assist the Poor. They too were similarly harassed, threatened and insulted — even followed to the entrances of their places of work, and into the waiting rooms and playgrounds of their children's nurseries.

"IF YOU DARE TO RUN AGAIN, WE'LL BREAK YOUR LEGS!"

In the week following 12 June the first three victims of this peculiar form of intimidation continued to be kept under surveillance in turns, for longer or shorter periods of time. If they tried to run to catch a bus or a tram, their pursuers threatened them: "If you dare to run again, we'll smash your ankles to pieces!" If they entered restaurants or cafes, their constant companions sat around them at the same table; all the time, in loud voices, making crude, obscene and often anti-semitic remarks. Even throughout the night, their followers sat outside their homes in their cars, frequently revving their engines and blaring their horns.

This unusual behaviour not surprisingly drew the attention and indignation of friends and workmates, neighbours and passers-by, who were also inconvenienced and disturbed by the harassment. But if they dared to protest, they too were equally rudely treated by the "bodyguards" who showed them their Ministry of Interior identity cards and told them to mind their own business.

On 18 June András Nagy, one of the founder members of *Szeta*, found himself placed under similar surveillance and harassment, then from 19 June the same occurred to János Kis, another of the editors of the journal *Beszélő*. On one occasion

'56 Veteran Still Being Victimised

In 1982, for the first time in many years, passports have been granted to some of the Hungarian regime's most critical opponents — intellectual dissidents like György Bence, János Kis and János Kenedi. But civil rights in Kádár's Hungary are not so easily accessible to ordinary workers.

In October 1956 Sándor Lichtenstein was a young engineer active in the Hungarian Revolution as a member of the Revolutionary Committee in Budapest's working class district of Ujpest. He was arrested on 13 November when the Ujpest Committee took the initiative to convene the founding meeting of the Central Workers Council of Greater Budapest.

In 1959 seven members of the Ujpest Revolutionary Committee were sentenced to death and executed. The remaining 26 defendants in the trial received a total of over 300 years imprisonment. Sándor Lichtenstein received a death sentence, subsequently commuted to life imprisonment. He was released in the 1963 amnesty.

In 1965 Sándor Lichtenstein married Ibolya Mikó, and in 1979 his wife and two children left

Hungary to settle in Canada, where they sought permission for him to join them. But though the Canadian authorities had granted permission for him to live in Canada, the Hungarian government refused his application for a passport to leave Hungary alleging that this would be 'against the public interest'. Repeated appeals by Sándor Lichtenstein against this decision have been consistently turned aside with the explanation that his case 'is now closed'. The latest refusal was in October 1982 — 26 years after the events for which he was imprisoned; 19 years after he was amnestied.

In November 1956 the new Hungarian leader János Kádár declared that his government 'will not tolerate the persecution of workers under any pretext, for having taken part in the recent events'. In 1975 the Hungarian government was a signatory to the Helsinki Agreements which, amongst others, professed support for the rights of families to be united.

It would appear that Kádár's 'liberalisation' for which his regime claims credit is clearly for intellectuals and writers — not workers.

HUNGARY

János Kis was accompanying his 73-year-old and ill mother to the nearby bus stop when they were both closely surrounded and aggressively harassed, and on his return his pursuers even threatened to run a car at him.

PROTESTS

The purpose of this series of harassments was far from clear. Was it simply a form of intimidation, or an attempt at provocation? Was it taken on the independent initiative of a section within the secret police, or was it carried out on instructions from higher up? Whatever the explanation, it occasioned consternation and alarm not only within the ranks of those involved in the independent "second publicity", but also within wider circles of Hungarian public life.

On 23 June the five individuals who had been subject to this harassment, along with ten other prominent opposition spokespersons, sent a letter of protest to the Minister of the Interior, calling for an end to these unlawful acts of intimidation and for action to be taken against those responsible for instigating them. Some also filed individual complaints to the Budapest police authorities. Finally, on 29 June, twenty of the most celebrated figures of Hungarian culture protested in a letter to the Procurator General at what they saw as the apparent re-emergence in Hungary in 1982 of unlawful measures of harassment and intimidation generally associated with the activities of the extreme right of a previous historical period, and they called upon him to ensure that such infringements of the principles of the Hungarian Constitution should not be allowed to continue.

Whether it was as a result of these protests, or on account of the impending state visit of the French President Francois Mitterand, remains unclear, but by the end of June the surveillance and harassment came to an end and has not since been repeated. Indeed, in the course of July those individuals who had been the victims of these actions were asked to report to the Ministry of the Interior and the Budapest Police Headquarters where statements were taken from them about the events. But although the authorities now acted as though they recognised that a breach of the law had been committed, there has so far been no indication of any procedures being instigated against those responsible.

4,000 FORINT FINE

As a final sequel to these events — and resulting from his detention on 4 June — on

3 August 1982 the administration division of the local council of the 11th district of Budapest imposed a fine of 4,000 forints (roughly equivalent to a month's average earnings) on Gábor Demszky for having contravened commercial regulations by operating as a book publisher without having obtained the requisite authorisation. If the fine is not paid within 30 days the council has the powers to obtain the money either by compulsory deduction from income or by seizure of personal belongings, or failing that, as a last resort the fine may be con-

means a return to simpler, more primitive, but also more laborious and time-consuming methods of duplicating. The publishers have also suffered not inconsiderable material and financial blows with the seizure and confiscation of sizeable amounts of prepared artwork and completed print-runs. By their actions of harassment and intimidation, the security forces have also demonstrated the powers and resources constantly available to them. The democratic opposition as a whole must be increasingly aware that it is acting on a

Solidarity demonstration in Budapest

On 30 August 1982 in response to Solidarity's appeal for public demonstrations of support on the second anniversary of the Gdansk Agreements, almost one hundred Hungarians gathered to lay flowers around the statue of General Jozef Bem in the centre of Budapest to demonstrate their opposition to the Polish military dictatorship and their support for the outlawed trade union Solidarity.

The place chosen for their protest was not merely fortuitous. General Jozef Bem was a hero of the Polish revolution of 1830 who had also fought with the Hungarians in 1848 in their freedom struggle against the Hapsburgs. In October 1956 it was to lay a wreath before his statue as a sign of solidarity with the Poles that sparked off the 1956 revolution. In August 1982 a hundred Hungarians gathered here again to reaffirm their historical bonds of friendship with the Polish people, to express their sense of shame at their own government's support for the Polish

military dictatorship, and to call upon the Hungarian Government to take an independent initiative in the search for a peaceful solution to the Polish crisis.

Besides the demonstrators, almost as many plain clothes and uniformed police turned up at the scene — sealing off the streets leading to the square in an attempt to prevent people gathering there. The four initiators of the action — Gábor Demszky, Miklós Haraszti, Bálint Nagy, and László Rajk — were detained by the police, held in custody and questioned for some three hours, but then released without any charges being brought against them. Meanwhile the remaining demonstrators quietly dispersed, after having taken part in the first independent and orderly public demonstration in Hungary for over a quarter of a century, and having demonstrated to the Polish people that they were not without friends and supporters in the other countries of Eastern Europe.

verted into a 20 day prison sentence.

It would, however, be inappropriate to see this action against Demszky as marking a radical break from the Hungarian authorities' previous restrained and tolerant attitude towards the growth of independent publishing. It certainly does not mark the opening of a new period of arrests and trials, or imprisonment of dissident writers — actions which the Hungarian regime remains just as determined to avoid as it has been ever since the fiasco of the Haraszti trial in 1973. In effect, the penalty imposed on Demszky is the least the authorities could have given, without appearing to condone his unofficial publishing activities.

The movement of independent publishing has, nevertheless, suffered certain if limited setbacks. The ending of possibilities for printing on the black market

licence that could at any moment be withdrawn.

There is, however, another side to the picture. So long as the authorities feel restrained from openly repressing the independent publishing, there is little they can do to prevent it gaining an ever wider influence throughout society. The opposition journal *Beszélő*, though produced in over a thousand copies, sells out so rapidly that within a few days of publication it is virtually unobtainable in Budapest. Groups of young people meet to discuss samizdat writings not only in the capital but also in provincial towns. The boundaries of the forbidden are being undermined, and a new generation is growing up that is coming to accept as a matter of course rights that their parents would never have dreamed possible within the confines of a one-party state.

Invitation to Gather

On Monday evening 30th August at 6.00pm. we are going to lay a wreath of flowers at the statue of General Bem on the second anniversary of the Gdansk Agreements, as our response to the appeal of Solidarity for public commemorations, and to remind the Hungarian people that it is their affair too.

We call on you to come — bringing flowers if you can — to the statue at exactly 6 o' clock, neither earlier nor later. We would prefer it if the news doesn't reach the ears of those for whom it is not intended before the event. For this reason we ask you not to talk about it in company, just privately, individually; and if you call others, don't do so by telephone, and ask them to be circumspect.

Gábor Demszky, Miklós Haraszti, Bálint Nagy, László Rajk.

Appeal on the Second Anniversary of the Gdansk Agreements

Delivered at the Bem Statue in Budapest on 30 August 1982

With feelings of friendship towards the many people in Poland who in these days are answering the appeal of Solidarity and celebrating the day when the trade union was born, we are also publicly commemorating the

anniversary.

Two years ago in Gdansk a social contract was entered into between the representatives of the workers on strike and the Polish Government. The hope was born that a peaceful way could be found to carry through the democratic transformation in Eastern Europe that has been the common aspiration of the people living here for a century and a half. But since December 1981 martial law and internment camps have been employed in the attempt to take away from the Polish people their rights to strike, to free speech and to freedom of association.

In this place, before the statue of the Polish general of the first Hungarian democratic revolution, the scene of the demonstration of solidarity with the Polish people in 1956, we call to memory that many times the Hungarians and the Polish people have been able to rely upon each other's support in the course of their struggles for human rights and freedoms. In April of this year the General of the Dictatorship also layed a wreath before the statue of the General of the Revolution, but by this action he was not able to efface the memory that he had struck a blow not only against the Polish people's hopes for democracy but against those of the Hungarians too. It is a shameful moment in our history, when our Government supports the Polish military dictatorship.

Little more than a month ago the Hungarian police, in collaboration

with the Polish authorities, even went so far as to prevent Hungarian families from receiving as their guests poor Polish children from deprived social backgrounds — at a time when far more effective expressions of solidarity were needed. We cannot forget how much the Polish people supported the Hungarians in 1956 — with their blood, with their money, and in every way they could.

Military rule has only served to make the Polish economic situation even more serious, and destroyed all prospects of political development. It would be a dangerous illusion for us to believe that Hungary can go forward on the road of economic advance and democratic development, while in Poland these very same efforts are being crudely stifled.

We would like to see our Government accept its responsibilities and insist upon the Solidarity trade union being once again allowed to function, demand an amnesty for the imprisoned, and the creation of conditions that would make possible a democratic settlement. It would serve the interests of the Hungarian people, and their self-respect too, if our Government would undertake a peace mission in the spirit of the Helsinki Agreements for the resolution of the Polish crisis.

Freedom for Wales!

Hands off Solidarity!

Hungarian-Polish Solidarity!

EAST GERMANY

Hundreds of Women Make Pacifist Protest

(Early in December, the left-wing West Berlin daily, Tagezeitung, published a letter signed by 'several hundred' women in the GDR protesting to Erich Honecker against a new law allowing the military conscription of women in the event of war. Two of the letter's signatories are reported to have been questioned by the police. We reprint the full text of the letter below, translated from the German by Günter Minnerup for Labour Focus.)

Dear Chairman of the State Council,

In this letter we would like to present some of our thoughts about the conscription of women, as provided for in the new military service law, passed on 25 March 1982. We are women with and without children, Catholic, Protestant or of no religious denomination. Some of us have lived through war, others have been spared the terrible experience. But what we all have in common is that we are not indifferent, and do not want to give our silent approval, to a law imposing entirely new obligations on women which we cannot reconcile with our consciences.

We women want to break the circle of violence and refuse our participation in all forms of violent as a means of solving conflicts. We women consider army service for women not as an expression of equality, but in contradiction to our being female. For us, equality with men does not mean standing alongside men who take up arms, but to be with those who have realised like us that abstractions such as 'enemy' and 'opponent' really mean the extermination of human life, which we reject.

We women see the readiness to serve in the armed forces as a threatening posture in conflict with the striving for moral and military disarmament, drowning the voice of human reason in military discipline.

We women feel especially called upon to protect life, to support the old, the sick and the weak. Working against war and for peace is only possible in the social and educational field if we do not want to fail our responsibility towards future generations.

We women are opposed to joining the ranks of the national People's Army when they one day in order to defend the country which will be uninhabitable even after a conventional war which, in Europe, in all probability will end in a nuclear catastrophe.

We women believe that humanity is today standing on the edge of a precipice and that the continued accumulation of further weapons only leads to mass catastrophe. This terrible outcome could perhaps be prevented if all the questions arising from this fact were to be publicly debated. According to article 65, clause 3, of the Constitution of the GDR, all bills of fundamental importance have, before their adoption, to be submitted to the population for discussion so that the results of popular debate can be taken into account in their final drafting. In our opinion, this is a

law of fundamental importance, because of its contents and not least because it *directly* affects half of the population.

We women declare our refusal to be included in military conscription and demand a legal right to conscientious objection. The right to conscientious objection is essential because the adoption of this law imposing on women an obligation to serve in the armed forces is tantamount to a restriction on our freedom of conscience. Since no public discussions of this law have been possible, some of us have asked for such discussions by means of a legal petition, while others hoped to be able to participate in such discussions. Regrettably, these hopes have been disappointed because nobody appeared to be prepared to begin a dialogue about these questions that are weighing so heavily on our minds. The speech given in Moscow at the Peace Congress of World Churches by Academician Professor Arbatov encourages us to once again turn towards you with our questions. We request that those responsible for this new conscription law show themselves prepared to conduct an open dialogue. We are sure that you know this speech, but nevertheless would like to quote a few sentences from it. Professor Arbatov addresses himself, among other things, to the psychological and moral allies of the arms race, and refers in this context to the myth that the accumulation of weapons and armed forces would contribute to security. 'All these myths promote the arms race. There are today attempts to present them in the form of complicated opinions and puzzles by using a terminology incomprehensible to the lay-person. I do not rule out that this is done especially to distance one's self from the "uninitiated", the "person in the street"'. It is even sometimes said that this person should not be allowed near questions of nuclear arms, problems of war and peace, as he/she would get everything mixed up and do damage. But in my view this is the greatest, most dangerous and most harmful myth! ... This problem must be solved with the active participation of all ... if they want to serve the people and not the arms ...'

We could not find a better plea for the necessity of our petition. We ask you to give us the opportunity for an open dialogue.

Simone Langrock Released from East German Prison

Interview

The following interview was conducted with Simone Langrock shortly after her release from an East German prison in September this year. She describes some of the activities of the opposition group she was involved in, her trial and imprisonment, and her attitude to the independent Polish workers' movement. Simone comes from a family with three generations' experience of political persecution: her father, Rolf Mainz, and his brother, Klaus, were both serving long prison sentences im-

EAST GERMANY

posed on them in 1976 before eventually being released to West Germany. Klaus, formerly an East German athletics champion, had applied for an exit visa, and his brother, then a journalist at the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* and member of the ruling SED, had supported his application and published an article in a West Germany newspaper denouncing the existence of a politically-motivated *Berufsverbot* in the GDR. Their father, Simone's grandfather, had spent four years in Nazi jails for his illegal anti-fascist activities.

Simone also wishes, through the columns of *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe* to thank the many British socialists and trade unionists who contributed to winning her eventual release by sending letters of protest against her imprisonment to the East German authorities. This is not the first example that shows how our solidarity can have some effect, and she has also asked us to draw the attention of *Labour Focus* readers to the case of *Gisela Putzke* who she met while in Hoheneck prison and who needs urgent help. Gisela, now 26 years old, was sentenced to 9 years' imprisonment in 1976 for attempting to leave the GDR "illegally" (there are, of course, no legal ways for most East Germans) and is in bad health. She had hoped to be allowed to join her sister in West Berlin, but since her sister's death in December 1981 has been told that no application for an exit visa would be entertained. Her mother is too ill to visit her in prison, and she has not received any visitors for years. We are asking readers to send letters requesting *Gisela Putzke's* release to: Herr Erich Honecker, Vorsitzender des Staatsrats der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, c/o Embassy of the German Democratic Republic, 34 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8QB.

The interview was conducted and translated by Günter Minnerup.

Can you tell us something about the activities that led to your arrest and the charges levelled against you?

The first charge concerned the distribution of hand-written leaflets on Human Rights Day in November 1976. This was in direct reaction to my father's arrest and the intensified repression against progressively-minded people. The resistance was largely made up of intellectual circles, students, writers and artists, and unfortunately never had the same massive impact as the events in Poland. I was then acting rather emotionally and — together with my bother, who was only 16 in 1976 — on my own.

A year later I met the former philosophy lecturer Heinrich Saar, who had been the director of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism at the Humboldt University in East Berlin in the 1950s. His proposals for reforming the teaching methods and his demand for critical conclusions to be drawn from the revelations of the XXth Party Congress of the CPSU had brought him an eight-year prison sentence. He was released after three years and worked as a labourer in

book-binding when I met him. Together with others we jointly organised a philosophy discussion circle which concerned itself with general philosophical and contemporary political problems. The charge of "forming an illegal group" was based on these meetings. In this group we came to the conclusion that we had to spread the truth beyond the confines of our own circle. In September 1978, on the first day of the Autumn Trade Fair in Leipzig, we displayed in public places the slogan "Freedom for Rudolf Bahro", who had been sentenced to eight years' imprisonment in August that year. At the same time we sent copies of his six lectures summarising the contents of his banned book *The Alternative* to about forty persons.

Despite considerable difficulties we had also managed to obtain duplicating equipment. A month later we started printing one thousand leaflets, the contents of which we agreed upon after reading Bahro's *Alternative*.

Another charge was the dissemination of 'anti-state' texts and books, such as the 'Spiegel Manifesto' of January 1978, books unmasking the practices of the State Security by Jürgen Fuchs, etc. Merely passing on one of these to just one person is a criminal offence in the GDR.

What about the actual trial? And what were the prison conditions like?

My trial took place on 12 May 1980, three weeks after my arrest, three weeks after I had been separated from my then 7-month-old child. Investigations had been pursued since September 1979, and all my friends were already behind prison walls. I was only arrested eight months later because I gave birth to my child in September and was protected by legal rules from immediate arrest afterwards. It was only a stay of execution and the precise time of my arrest was carefully chosen by the State Security. So I was facing trial on 12 May, unable to gather a clear thought. My last hopes for a joint trial together with all my friends had been dashed. The sense of total isolation when confronted with a seemingly perfect state machine was in no way affected by the presence of the defence lawyer. Since I knew how these trials were conducted, I had not applied for defence counsel in advance of the trial. In accordance with the legal requirements I was allotted an official defence lawyer who defended me as a person, but not my activities. Any other lawyer would have made similar pleas in a case involving 'anti-state agitation', as the outcome is always clear from the start. This is borne out by the complete identity of tactics and opinions between judges, jurors and prosecutor, their common doctrinal standpoint, their dependence on one and the same system. Having delivered themselves to this state, and having turned themselves into its tools, they consider any attack on this state as an attack on themselves. The outcome of a trial in which judge and prosecutor face the accused as one and the same cannot possibly be influenced by defence counsel.

So three days later I was sentenced to five years' imprisonment, "in the name of

the people". This "people" did not know anything of the trial since it was conducted *in camera* from beginning to end.

The judgement included, among other things, this very telling sentence: 'The leaflets were of an anti-state nature, because they *accused* the GDR of inhumanity in its prosecution practices.'

'Withdrawal of liberty' (the phrase used as an official euphemism for 'imprisonment — trans.) — the sarcasm in this phrase could not be bettered. How easily one reads it, but how much psychological torture, what amounts of despair, disappointment, even hate it implies for the victim. In my memory 'withdrawal of freedom' means not only: crowds of people with the most diverse habits, mentalities, problems and perspectives locked up together in a minimum of space, but also the curtailment of the most elementary needs beyond the minimum of physical survival.

How did you learn of the events in Poland, and how do you assess their significance for the GDR?

I learnt of the Polish events in Hoheneck prison through the heavily censored Party newspaper *Neues Deutschland*. Despite the paucity of available information I tried to piece together as objectively as possible a picture. This mass movement in open opposition to the leadership of party and state made such a strong impression on me inside the prison that I even reconsidered my decision to go to West Germany. But I realised that mere sympathy was not enough to go back into the GDR. The State Security's surveillance methods would have made any kind of activity impossible and I would only have become a risk factor for people whose activities have not as yet been detected.

Despite the peculiarities of the Polish independence movement, which are rooted in national traditions, the enemy of the Polish people is also the enemy of the working people of the GDR and all countries occupied by Stalinism. The struggle in Poland gives expression to what many citizens of the GDR are thinking and, in a circle of friends or in their families, even saying. I have often asked myself how strong the pressures from each individual's discontent and the pressure from the state in the GDR have to become in order to create a similar situation. Many probably deceive themselves about the true conditions by sitting in front of their televisions in the evenings and feeling like West Germans (a reference to the habit of most East Germans of watching Western rather than 'their own' television — trans.). Splitting one's opinions into public and private ones is widespread, and I myself recall such conflicts from my schooldays and apprenticeship.

Precautions will, of course, have been made against a possible spreading of the Polish movement to the GDR, as always not by eliminating the causes, but by demonstrating the state's superiority. But from conversations I know that the situation regarding basic supplies has deteriorated to the point of an emergency — a factor giving rise to hopes despite everything.



Photo: Jiri Bednar

Czech-Polish Solidarity in an earlier era, 1978 in the Tatras: Charter 77 activists Marta Kubisova and Vaclav Havel (left) with KOR activists (left to right) Adam Michnik, Antoni Macierewicz, Jacek Kuron. All save Kubisova in jail this year, until Macierewicz escaped at the end of November.

Czech Opposition Continues to Support Solidarity

Despite strong harassment and lack of interest on the part of the Western media, Charter 77 and other oppositional movements continue to work in Czechoslovakia, and express their opinions on important domestic and international issues. The News Agency, *Palach Press*, has supplied us with the following information:

* At the end of August Charter 77 issued a statement in defence of Solidarity in Poland, to mark the second anniversary of the Gdansk Agreements. (We publish an English translation of the full text below.) This was followed by a letter on 9 November from Charter 77's three spokespersons, also signed by Jiri Dienstbier (the former spokesperson recently released after 3 years in jail) sent to the Polish Embassy in Prague and to the World Federation of Trade Unions, on the second anniversary of the legalisation of Solidarity. The letter condemned the law passed in October dissolving Solidarity and pointed out that Solidarity was welcomed 'not only by trade unions

of all political colours but also by a number of Western Communist Parties'.

* Another letter, this time from the 'Preparatory Committee for Free Trade Unions, Prague and Pilsen' was sent to Solidarity on 7 November, sending greetings 'at the time of your preparation for a one day strike and demonstration against the unlawful dissolution of your trade union'. The letter declares, 'We are sure that you will succeed, at the very least, in keeping alive the idea of a free trade union movement despite the enormous obstacles, pressures and sacrifices that accompany your activities.' It ends by saying: 'Let us unite in the struggle for a free and independent Poland and Czechoslovakia. Let all freedom-loving Poles, Czechs and Slovaks bring nearer the time of their renaissance not only through words, but most importantly through action.'

* A statement on 14 November from the same 'Preparatory Committee for Free Trade Unions' explains more about this lit-

tle known and anonymous organisation, which first issued a public statement a year ago. The statement says that there is no possibility of a mass movement of the Polish type developing in Czechoslovakia in present conditions and the task is one of preparatory work. This will involve efforts to make the official unions more healthy, especially in their local branches. They state: 'We know that today there are in many factories and in some organisations many informal spontaneously created groups which critically monitor the work of the unions and which concern themselves with the problems of wage stagnation and differentials, with safety at work, with serious production deficiencies etc.' They seek to encourage all such groups and to help create informal links between them in order to assist in the renaissance of the trade union movement in Czechoslovakia. At the same time they do not rule out that in the future a new trade union movement, counterposed to the official unions may be necessary.

* On 25 October, the Charter 77 spokespersons, together with Dr Jiri Hajek, a former Czechoslovak Foreign Minister, published an open letter to the Czech government about the re-opening of the Helsinki conference in Madrid. The letter calls on the Czech government to recognise that tensions between governments can be eased if sources of conflict between those in power and the powerless are removed. They say that the government's declared support for the Helsinki agreements would be more credible if it were to do three things: release all those arrested and jailed for demanding that the government fulfils its Helsinki obligations (they attach a list of about 50 people either in prison or awaiting trial; re-examine its own laws in the light of Helsinki and the International Covenant on Human Rights, and thirdly fully implement the terms of the Helsinki Final Act.

By Oliver MacDonald

Charter 77 Statement on the Second Anniversary of the Gdansk Agreements

On 31 August the Polish people commemorate the most important event of their recent history — the Gdansk Agreements. As a result of dialogue at that time between the state authorities and the working class, an agreement was reached concerning the main lines and principles for overcoming the social crisis in which the country found itself at the end of the seventies. The process of social renewal, which thus received a great boost, aroused the great hopes and enthusiastic support of the overwhelming majority of Polish society. It was also sincerely welcomed by broad sections of international public opinion and by all true friends of the Polish people. Numbering itself among the latter, Charter 77, speaking on behalf of its own participants but also of many, many sections of Czech and Slovak society, expressed, on several occasions, its feelings of fraternal sympathy and solidarity with those in Poland who had promoted and set in motion the process of social renewal and its underlying ideas. It also criticised the action of the authorities last December which brought this process to a halt without, to this day, any of the serious problems weighing on the present development of Polish society having been solved. The fact that such moves from above, whether from within or without, whether in the past, present or even the future, are incapable of

solving crises, and on the contrary, merely aggravate them, is something we are all too aware of from our own recent history.

All the more sincere, therefore, is our interest in events in the country of our northern neighbours and all the warmer are our feelings of friendship and our community of views with all those in Poland who continue to work for genuine democratic human reconciliation among all patriotic sections of Polish society without any interference from outside. We share the view of the Polish people that the only path towards overcoming their country's enormous difficulties is just such a policy of reconciliation which would bring to an end authoritarian measures against peaceful expressions of the people's will and reject any limitation of democratic efforts to achieve a better economic and social climate and living conditions, locally and nationally, leading to the release of internees and all political prisoners in general. Such a policy would also promote peaceful coexistence and cooperation among the nations of our continent.

Dr Radim Palous, Ann Marvanova, Ladislav Lis
Charter 77 spokespeople **30 August 1982**

Socialists and Illegal Literature

— By Jirina Siklova



Photo: Palach Press

Jirina Siklova before being charged in the spring of 1981 with distributing literature to and from the West.

(Jirina Siklova wrote this text as the draft of her concluding words in her own defence as she awaited trial in Ruzyně prison, Prague in July 1981. She was released without being brought to trial earlier this year, but the charges against her have not been withdrawn. This translation was made available by Palach Press.)

Sirs, I do not like emotional outpourings in public, so I shall sum up my defence in a few points:

1. I should like to ask those present not to allow the books which were confiscated from the garage in Stara Boleslava to be destroyed. They include not only the works of a number of writers of this country but also a lot of human endeavour, evidence of their self-sacrifice and that must be of value. Please, deposit these books in some vault, lock them up as 'libri prohibiti', in the Monument to Literature perhaps, but do not permit them to be destroyed. I beg you! This country has had some bad and sad experiences of the destruction and burning of books and the literary historians of the future will seek these 'books/non-books'. They will in addition value the foresight of whichever judge brings about their conservation. All books of this kind cannot be destroyed not even by the most productive 'memory-hole', to use a phrase of George Orwell's.

2. I should like to thank both the French people, Thon and Anis, for their truly international help. I do not know these two people, I have never seen them, but on our account they spent a month in Ruzyně prison and so for my own part at least, I should like to say 'thank you'.

In defence of my own activities I should like to say that in those activities — acquiring books in unofficial editions and assisting in sending them abroad — I saw nothing so terrible or harmful to socialism. I only wanted to help preserve for the future the literary products of those people in this country who may not publish officially and at least preserve across the border in the hands of a Czech historian the values which here are jeopardised by repeated house searches. The direct motivation for my activities was the Czechoslovak television programme which was shown on 12 March 1980. It showed how confiscated books of this kind are pulped at the mill. The voice of the television commentator said that this was the way in which measures would be taken against this

and similar literature. This seemed to me to be desperately lacking in culture, downright barbaric, and to fall short of the principles of socialism. It has a particularly negative impact on our nation, which considers the struggle of its people against the counter-reformation and the Jesuits a celebrated part of its history, which draws its tradition from the Enlightenment. Every child here, even within the framework of compulsory reading at school, reads Jirásek's *The Darkness* and learns to condemn the destruction of books and equally the action of the officials who in the time of F.L. Vek searched old Zalman's house and took away the hoard of books he had hidden in the rafters of his cottage. The similarity with the acts of that time, including searches in the attics of cottages, is 'paradoxically coincidental'. The majority of the nation is simply proud of the work of its people.

In my defence, I can say that the whole of my official education presented me only with arguments which support my doing what I have done. In our country, in our sad history, people who did not subordinate themselves, who despite personal danger wrote, translated, hid things, transcribed and passed on books and ideas to later generations were always regarded as 'correct'. In every case — according to chapters from history books — they were persecuted in their time, but subsequently their actions were considered correct. I know of no exception. The first examples of those who saved books were the Bohemian Brethren who carried them in baskets under straw at night, then there were the bottomless pockets of the famous 'havelocks' or — as in the case of Stasek's Matous the Cobbler — they were carried under his shirt next to his skin.

When I was older, at the Philosophy Faculty, I was required to read the famous article by Karl Marx 'Against the Prussian Censorship', and in lectures on Marxism-Leninism learned how Karl Marx sent his manuscripts abroad so they could be published at all. Thus, if there were no-one prepared to take risks and transport them, we should be poorer in much of our knowledge. Finally, Lenin did precisely the same. The first number of *Iskra* was printed abroad and then several hundred copies were taken to Petrograd in secret.

I learned that to aid the spread of opinions and ideas is a characteristic of progressive man and that those who fear changes in thinking are followers of 'the powers of darkness' and were always 'swept away' by history. As you see, I remember exactly the phraseology of this interpretation.

The history of the nation to which I belong, the culture which was presented to me as a model, and the history of the struggles of the working class, are full of examples of people who defended their opinions even when these were contrary to the officially accepted concept of that particular moment.

For as long as children are brought up in this culture at school and with these generally humane, progressive opinions, then many of them will in adulthood act as I acted, that is, they will consider it the duty and the basic right to express one's own opinion, conviction or ideal in defending the interests of the whole. If, however, we bring children up to think that it is correct to remain silent, not to have or defend an opinion of one's own and only to look after number one, then it is true that we shall have no political opponents, but we shall on the other hand have still more thieves of socialist property.

It will then be difficult to call education socialist. The thoughts of man, and therefore mine too, are according to Marxist philosophy the reflection of social existence, cultural environment, traditions and education, and so, in what I did I saw nothing bad or anti-socialist. In this respect I do not feel guilty. I recognise that it did not correspond to the laws obtaining currently in this state, but at the same time you and I know very well that in another state — even perhaps a socialist one and even perhaps in this state in six months' or in two years' time — all books of this kind could be distributed quite routinely. I myself have already experienced internal changes of this kind in the political course of this socialist state six times and shall probably experience them again, as probably will you. How many of our writers were damned in the last thirty years and how many rehabilitated? I can recall Karel Capek, Vladimír Holan, Karel Teige and others. When I worked as assistant lecturer in the Philosophy Faculty of Charles University even the books of J.P. Sartre were taken by the censor from Professor Ludvík Svoboda. Not six months later, the same people were deeply ashamed, apologised and our state, through the mouthpiece of members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia criticised its own recent cultural (or rather 'uncultural') policies. And this re-evaluation was carried out as early as 1962-64, not in 1968! What a greater disgrace it would have been if no-one had then been found who had preserved these books and cultural values. At that time, of course, they did not carry out house searches and raids as they do today, and so it sufficed to hide the books in flats. And the same applies to the historical documents which I allegedly arranged to have sent away.

The view of history and the assessment of historical events also changes and one and the same document is interpreted in various ways. A number of my former historian colleagues worked on the 'Barnabitsky commission' on the revision of the trial of Slánský and his conspiratorial centre. The first rehabilitation of those executed took place as early as five years after the execution, complete rehabilitation ten years from the time when the prosecutor Urválek — in this building — appealed to the senate to pass the highest, so-called rightful sentence on the 'traitors to socialism and the working class', the 'hirelings of American imperialism'. In almost the same words editor Jirí Hečko wrote about it in *Rudé Právo* (as moles devouring Judas' soup) in July of this year. He obviously hasn't learnt any new journalism in 50 years. How pleased president G. Husák must surely have been that the documents from which it emerged that he had been illegally condemned were kept. Even for this reason it is good that someone somewhere preserves documents about a certain period.

According to article 98 (on subversion of the republic) under which you are judging us, it must be demonstrated that the act which was committed was motivated by hostility to socialism. Through the whole of my life up to now I have certainly shown by my work that I have always tried to assert the reasonable, positive and humane values of socialism. If we understand socialism as the worldwide movement of the proletariat — and such it is — then my activities did certainly not damage socialism, for the confrontation of ideas, criteria, criticism, preservation and exchange of cultural values only contribute to the development of socialism, which does evolve. We cannot understand socialism only as the utilitarianly interpreted variant of this ideology here in Czechoslovakia today. Socialism is certainly not harmed if a few hundred people become acquainted with different socialist opinions. And I have done nothing other than aid the exchange of thoughts between people.

What I have done has always been done in this country, with but one difference — that earlier they transported books which were banned here in hay-waggons, maybe from Zitava, covered with hay, and today they are transported in a Peugeot from Paris or London. That is only a matter of technological progress. The essence of the activity always remains the same. Unfortunately, the same reasons also remain for books to have to be transported secretly into the country and secretly exported. And that is sad. In that, too, there ought to be progress.

In my defence I should like to introduce one final argument. By profession I am a sociologist and know that according to Gauss' curve there are definite phenomena in society, distributed in a fixed way, that there exists a constant number of people of a certain type. In every society there is a certain percentage of imbeciles, geniuses, criminal elements, prostitutes, but also people who do not agree, who protest, who thus are, to use the modern expression, dissidents. In every sociological text-book we learn that if a certain group is missing somewhere, then that testifies either to some deformation in the system, to normal conditions not existing in the country, e.g. a totalitarian regime or poor statistics, a lack of evidence or incompetent police force, or to the fact that in that state someone has an interest in distorting reality to the public.

In so far as people in Czechoslovakia do not emerge who are critical of the political regime, producing a system of cultural values which differs to some extent, this could signify either that there is such a severe totalitarian regime and such strict police surveillance here that all the people are afraid and do not even allow themselves to demonstrate it, or that the people of this nation are not completely normal and that everyone 'only agrees'. To date, there has never existed a social system with which all its people merely agreed and which they only praised. Such a regime, according to the Marxist conception of history, would be condemned to stagnation and extinction, for it would lack contradiction 'as a principle of change and development'.

The activities for which I am now being judged were, therefore, my contribution to the good reputation of the Czechoslovak state, for through them I have indirectly shown that here

1. there is not a totalitarian political regime in which no one dares to make him/herself heard,
2. That the security services are competent and sometimes discover something,
3. the political leadership is so strong that it is able to admit it
4. the Czech nation consists of normal people who differ in their opinions.

So I have in fact shown by my actions that neither Czechoslovakia nor our nation can be considered a pathological society. And that should be imputed to my good.

Jirous, Stárek, Hýbek and Fric Lose Appeal

By Andrew
Csepel

On 9 July Ivan Jirous, František Stárek, Milan Hýbek and Milan Fric were sentenced by a regional court in Chomutov. Jirous, the 38-year-old former artistic director of The Plastic People of the Universe, was sentenced to three and a half years in the Czech penal system's notoriously harsh third category. Stárek received two and a half years in category II, while Hýbek and Fric must serve out 18 and 15 months respectively in the first category.

All of the convicted appealed and on 27 September their sentences were confirmed. They had been accused of helping to edit an underground cultural magazine *Vokno* (Window). In addition to this Hýbek and Jirous were convicted of possessing marijuana. This last charge was almost certainly the result of a frame-up. Not only is Jirous known to have spoken out against the use of drugs, but also in court the police were unable to substantiate their claim that the confiscated plants were identifiable as marijuana. A third charge of being in unlawful possession of a firearm (an air gun which had not been fired in years) was also brought

against Hýbek.

Jirous maintains that the articles of his in *Vokno* were published without his permission. This is Jirous' fourth prison sentence in close succession, and it is feared that he may not be able to survive the third category. He is entitled to only one visit a year from a single family member, thus he will be denied all access to his young children during the three and a half years. He will be in almost total solitary confinement during his sentence.

The case of the four men has aroused attention and indignation in the West. On 23 September, Jirous' birthday, demonstrations were held in front of the Czechoslovak embassies in Paris, Vienna, Toronto, Cologne and London. Petitions, calling for the release of the four, were signed in Stockholm and Copenhagen.

Klub Charty 77 Charter 77 Club

Charter 77 Club was founded in London on 27 September 1982. Its membership was opened to all Charter 77 signatories living in the West. Its main purpose is to support the endeavours of Charter 77 to defend human and civil rights in Czechoslovakia, to give consistent publicity to the aims and work of Charter 77 in the West and to help through all means the human rights movement, in particular those individuals who are imprisoned or prosecuted and those who, under adverse conditions, attempt to keep the culture and the morale of the nation alive.

Charter 77 Club intends to:

- become an information centre about all actions in the West in support of Charter 77.
- help spread unofficial Czechoslovak culture both in Czechoslovakia and in the West.
- draw the attention of Western institutions and important individuals to the cases of people unjustly prosecuted or persecuted in Czechoslovakia.
- organise coordinated protest actions in the West.
- help the opposition movement in Czechoslovakia.
- encourage, help and commission alternative solutions to be sought to the problems of present day Czechoslovak society in close cooperation with Western social scientists.
- launch a fund to finance independent civil rights activities in Czechoslovakia.
- raise funds to finance the sending of books and presents to Czechoslovakia.
- cooperate with other East European emigre groups.
- secure the mutual exchange of information, organise meetings and seminars.

The provisional coordinating committee of Charter 77 Club is based in London. The Chairperson is Dr Zdenek Vasicek, currently at the University of Bochum Germany, the secretary is Zina Freundová, former member of the Group of Charter 77 spokespeople and a member of VONS, and the treasurer is Jiri Bednár, former member of the Group of Charter 77 spokespeople. It is assumed that in countries where there are many Charter 77 signatories the Charter 77 Club will soon have independent branches.

Charter 77 Club
PO Box 222,
London WC2H 9QS, England.

Solidarnost with Solidarnosc

By Michele Lee

The Yugoslav daily *Borba* (the official organ of the Socialist Alliance) reported on 16 July 1982 that eight people: Pavlusko Imirovic, Gordan Jovanovic, Dragomir Olujić, Jovica Mihajlovic, Veselinka Zastavnikovic, Branislava Katic, Radmila Krajovic and Bojadin Vizintin had been sentenced to between twenty-five and fifty days in prison.

What happened and why is best described in a letter sent to the Belgrade weekly *NIN* (18.7.1982) by Dusan Bogavac, a journalist with *Komunist*, the official paper of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia. He writes of an 'unpleasant and unfortunately unreported incident' which took place during a demonstration organised quite spontaneously by various Belgrade youth clubs and organisations in support of the Palestinian national struggle at the height of Israel's attacks on Beirut last July.

'I must explain, in view of what I am about to say, that I was not sent to do a story, but was simply drawn by the compulsive enthusiasm of the young people. Coming from all directions towards Marx-Engels Square, they created an atmosphere well known and dear to us older people. Who says that our youth is apolitical? ... I was feeling rather pleased that I had come, when an unexpected drama developed involving six participants. This took place at the centre of the crowd and at a high point of the meeting, when a PLO representative was about to speak ... What crime did these two girls and four boys commit that the SUP (police) boys should want to remove them in such a brutal manner ... and keep them isolated in a nearby building before driving them away in handcuffs once the demonstration had dispersed? Four of them did nothing more than hold banners with the name of the Polish independent trade-union Solidarity. To be precise, the word Solidarity on their banners was written as it should be in Polish: *Solidarnosc*. As for the other two, all they did was to take photographs of the public meeting.

To continue an account of the facts, ten or so plainclothes policemen masterminded the snatching of the youths from the crowd in front of the speakers' platform and temporarily placed them .. where else but in the *Komunist* Readers' Club (!). They executed all this quickly and efficiently, swooping in twos and threes on individual men or women and dragging them across the Square, the street and the pavement into the building.

Although this is meant to be a limited statement by a witness, I cannot but ask

some questions. Why should such an ugly event be allowed to take place during a demonstration dedicated to freedom, in the middle of our capital city, and before the eyes of a thousand shocked onlookers? Who had the idea of arresting our young people because they peacefully expressed solidarity with the Polish comrades of the trade union Solidarity? Why and how was this decision reached? Which laws did they break, which official political positions did they violate, which national and working-class feelings did they insult?'

A few days after this incident, during the student radio programme Index 202, the organisers of the demonstration in Marx-Engels Square expressed their indignation at these arrests. Ljubomir Kljakic, director of the Belgrade Student Centre, felt 'a moral and material responsibility to speak out against this incident, which is totally unacceptable and politically damaging in every way'. His colleague, Milorad Vucelic, added that 'the sentences cannot be defended and those responsible for them should be named'.

When a *NIN* reporter interviewed Bora Pantelic, the chief Belgrade magistrate, he was told that the sentences were 'much too light' and there were hints of further arrests and trials. In Pantelic's opinion, the six should not have been tried by a magistrate's court at all since it was a question of a 'criminal act'. And he complained of the fashion apparently spreading through Belgrade according to which 'everybody and anybody feels entitled to question court decisions'. The legal article under which the six were tried refers to those who 'insult and denigrate the socialist and national feelings of Yugoslav citizens or Yugoslavia's socio-political form'.

Concluding his report, the *NIN* journalist Jovanovic writes: 'This was not the only attempt during the demonstration (to change its aim and character). At one moment someone lit a straw man on whose back was written *Juden*. This confusion of anti-semitism and anti-zionism must surely also insult the socialist, patriotic and national feelings of our citizens. Particularly since only a few metres away from the burning straw dozens of young Jews were giving their blood for the Palestinian fighters.'

Following on this incident, widely reported in the Yugoslav press, several more people were arrested for holding a silent vigil for their imprisoned comrades on the very spot where the six had been grabbed by the 'SUP boys'. They were condemned to one month in prison and only released after spending a week on hunger strike.

Meanwhile, in another capital, Ljubljana, the publishing house *Komunist* had released a book written by six well-known Slovenian intellectuals, most if not all members of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia. This book, called *Crisis under a Steel Cover*, is an account of the Polish martial-law regime in which cool realism mingles with warm sympathy for the Polish nation and working class. Once again Yugoslavia appears to speak with (at least) two tongues.

The National Organisation of Labour Students and Poland

Dear Comrade

With reference to your article on British student solidarity with Solidarity. You correctly point out that at the NOLS conference, a motion urging the breaking of links with the SZSP was narrowly lost by 3 votes.

It is worth noting that the fraternal address from a representative of the NZS was timetabled *after* the debate on Poland, and this clearly had an effect on the vote (the result of which reflected the views of the National Committee). In his speech the comrade from the NZS condemned the passing of the motion which called for the maintaining of links with SZSP, likening it to 'a union run by Maggie Thatcher' for which he received a standing ovation from many delegates.

Consequently a motion for the vote on the Poland debate to be retaken was passed by 93 votes to 71 but did not receive the 2/3 majority necessary.

NOLS policy therefore now stands for the retention of links with both the NZS and the SZSP — and this after the military coup of December 1981!

It becomes even more difficult to understand when one considers the fact that the NOLS-dominated NUGS executive, quite correctly refuses to recognise the Czech official 'student union', the CSUV, because it is a puppet organisation, while continuing to recognise the Polish official 'student union', the SZSP.

Evidently, the 'clause 4' leadership of NOLS sees some Stalinist dictatorships as being better than others.

No such confusion exists on the Welsh Labour Students Regional Committee. We support the right of students and workers to organise freely and independently, both east and west. To this end we have launched a campaign on the issue which includes a statement and petition warning the NOLS National Committee that support for the SZSP 'plays into the hands of the Tories and the SDP who seek to link the ideas of socialism with the bureaucratic stalinist regimes of Eastern Europe' and calling on the NOLS NC to 'break all links with the SZSP and instead support the struggle of workers worldwide to organise freely'.

The campaign has already received enthusiastic support from Welsh Labour Students, with a number of Labour Clubs passing motions of support.

The latest to do so was University College Cardiff Labour Club at a meeting on October 29 which was attended by Lesley Gillingham, a 'Clause 4' supporter, in her capacity as NOLS national women's officer. The motion was passed unanimously, without a word of protest from Lesley. However, when I asked her to sign the petition, she declined on the grounds that we must retain links with the SZSP 'so that we know what's going on'!!

The same argument is often used by Tories in relation to South Africa, Chile etc. While NZS members are being arrested and shot on the streets of Polish cities the NOLS NC appear to be more interested in scoring points in squalid internal wrangles rather than uphold their internationalist duties as socialists.

I enclose a copy of the Welsh Labour Students petition for your information.

Your fraternally,
Steve Davies
(Chairperson, Welsh Labour Students Regional Committee)

PETITION

We, the undersigned Labour Students, support the right of Polish workers to organise freely in their own independent trade unions. We believe that the Polish 'Communist' Party and the official state 'unions' represent no-one but the privileged Stalinist bureaucracy that rules Poland. They have nothing in common with the real ideas of genuine socialism, of democratic workers control of industry and society.

We therefore oppose the policy of the National Organisation of Labour Students to support the official stooge state student 'union', the SZSP. We believe that this policy plays in the hands of the Tories and the SDP who seek to link the ideas of socialism with the bureaucratic Stalinist regimes of Eastern Europe.

We therefore call on the NOLS National Committee to break all links with the SZSP and instead support the struggle of workers worldwide to organise freely. We call on NOLS to use their position in NUS to commit NUS to the same policy.

Labour Focus Fills me with Greyness

Dear Bill Lomax, Labour Focus-makers, and readers,

I got physically sick while reading Bill Lomax's very false account of the Hungarian 'opposition' ('The Rise of the Democratic Opposition', *Labour Focus*, Summer 1982). Such accounts don't contribute to any kind of liberation, except to 'liberating' the conscience of the 'Labour-Focus'-kind of leftist male conformist.

I have been getting *Labour Focus* for years, but I have never been able to read through any article until now — the politics, the spirit, the atmosphere of the articles, the feeling of the whole newspaper fills me with *greyness*. It never fills me with hope that it could contribute to a 'World' (or towards changing this political/social/cultural/-individual reality in the direction of that 'World') in which I want to live, which I want to take part in creating.

I forced myself to read through this article by Bill Lomax on the Hungarian 'opposition' because until four years ago when I moved to London I used to belong to that very 'opposition'. Almost all the names mentioned there I knew personally; I lived in, breathed inside, learned from and got paralysed by those people. I also know Bill a little bit, so I wanted to see what the meeting of my past environment, Bill and *Labour Focus* looks like.

And I got sick! What a false picture! What a bloody comfortable picture for the 'Labour Focus'-makers, for Bill, and probably even for some of the 'heroes' mentioned and pictured in the article and on the front cover!

At times, while reading Bill's definition of Hungarian reality, I totally lost my own critical perspective and felt a sense of nostalgia: how I wished I was there, what exciting things are going on nowadays! But a minute later, I reminded myself of what all my friends from Hungary state

with determination in their letters: nothing essential has changed since I left, the whole scene (the little world of the political and cultural 'opposition') has just got worse. They say it is intolerably bad, they can't breathe, they are suffocating in that country; and every second friend emigrates, dies or is locked away in a mental 'hospital'. Why did Bill not mention the tragic number of suicides — not just generally in Hungary, but inside the 'opposition' as well? The atmosphere can't possibly be anything similar to what Bill is suggesting in his ever-so-rosy picture.

To be sure, the names, the groups, the actions mentioned by Bill really do exist: they are facts, not the result of Bill's imagination. But the *meaning* or spirit of them, which the article suggests, is the result of Bill's imagination, Bill's political interpretation. Or rather, it is the result of Bill's and the 'Labour Focus'-kind of lefty's identity. This identity, which in turn determines their politics and their whole life, is projected onto the Hungarians in the article, through Bill *pretending*, that the Hungarians are just like the English male lefty. This identity was the very thing I physically experienced in my stomach, as a suffocating, sickening greyness. This trap is also the essence of *Labour Focus* in general.

Yes, dear English leftist male, you 'Labour-Focus'-makers, you want to image that your boring petty-bourgeois life is OK, just because other people in other countries are also OK, even semi-heroes, who perform the same superficial 'fight'. So you picture them in your own image, then glorify them, because in your glorifying image of them you can see *yourselves* as glorified.

Bill, I guess you want to be a good boy not just for the English male left, but for your Hungarian friends too. You do a favour for both partners. You make your Hungarian friends famous, or more famous, put their faces on the cover of a

'Western' magazine — what a good position it gives them inside the snob-Western Hungarian culture! (Though some of them on the cover and inside the article would reject such fame, others would die for it.)

The real meaning of the world of the Hungarian 'opposition' can and should be found in what Bill *does not say*, intentionally does not say, I guess dares not say. And what the article does not say are the very factors, the very reasons why I and a lot of others left Hungary. Because the Hungarian 'opposition' represents a sick, self-destroying little society or sub-culture, with a very de-mobilising hierarchy, with a male-star-cult, with a very limited understanding and focus, and *without* the willingness to admit or change anything 'inside'. It is only prepared to 'fight' and analyse objects 'outside'.

One of the very false images you present: these oppositional activities are supposed to be growing like mushrooms, so that pretty soon the whole of Hungary will have no official culture left, only these mushrooms! You give this image by never mentioning the absolutely fundamental *gap* between the rest of the society and this very very marginal intellectual opposition. You could have also made it clear, when writing about SZETA ('Foundation to Assist the Poor'), whether poor people generally *know* about the existence of SZETA, whether they can *go to* SZETA for help, or whether SZETA goes to those few poor people whom SZETA activists and friends happen to know personally?

There are lots of different kinds of 'opposition', challenges to the status quo in Hungary. The intellectual opposition's well-known leading figures are articulate, well-educated, well-informed, well-defended people with good contacts and great confidence, who are not as scared as the others because *they have not got as many*

LETTERS

reasons to be totally scared. When they attack the system's principles, they *know* when, where, in front of whom, in which way to articulate their theories and opinions to gain the attention of readers and listeners and to win support from famous people inside and outside the country. But there are other people, attacking the status quo in other ways — for example, by being disobedient, in their work-place or schools — and the result is heavy punishment and total isolation — in a 'children's home', mental 'hospitals' or prison.

Very interestingly, Bill never mentions the existence of any other kind of 'opposition'. He doesn't mention the Hungarian punks. He does not talk about the crucially important role of the cultural opposition (flat-theatres, experimental and punk music, films etc), nor show that the products and spirit of that small 'counter-culture' actually make it possible for lots of people to resist the pressures to conform, to resist 'serving the system'. Nor does he mention the masses of people whose opposition is on the level of so-called 'life-style'. As we know, the 'personal' is 'political', and at least on an intuitive level they know this truth, they try to *live* it.

I believe this is not accidental. Bill, you are suggesting that the way to overcome the status quo is the leftish way, and other sorts of opposition, precisely those which would require more than an intellectual commitment, are not worth mentioning, let's pretend they don't exist. Why? I think the answer lies in the following quotation: '... the "talking-head syndrome" is both a feature of everyday life and a hallmark of most male revolutionary analysis. Most revolutionary analyses are 'structural' ones. They see oppression as lying outside of and beyond their responsibility. Such analysis suggests that 'the revolution', if it ever comes, will come from outside the activities of ordinary people ... To think otherwise, it states, is a bourgeois individualist trip. When the revolution occurs then everything will be changed. We didn't have to change our lives — that has nothing to do with the revolution.'¹

The essence of what I am going to say is based on a commonplace knowledge for most Hungarians, but unfortunately it was not used to examine ourselves. Every grouping (party, friends, subcultures, etc) creates a miniature society. The *structure* of this miniature society, and not the declared aims of the group, is one of the most important factors in determining the effects the group has on the present and future. This knowledge at least prevents the Hungarian 'opposition' from making bigger mistakes: they fortunately reject the idea of building parties and other *openly* hierarchical and undynamic forms of organising.

I am glad this Hungarian intellectual 'opposition' exists. But I desperately object to *how* it exists. It does have positive functions, positive knowledge and it does mean a challenge to the system, though not as thoroughly as I would like it. Its visible existence makes it possible for other people to come out and oppose whatever they want to, even if the intellectual 'oppositionists' would not agree with it. For instance, a spontaneous anti-nuclear peace movement has recently been started by mainly young people — some of the intellectual 'oppositionists' welcome it, other famous intellectual 'oppositionists' object to it.²

If I object to *how* this intellectual 'opposition' exists, it is on the basis of my past negative experience. There was a strong and *denied* hierarchy in both the intellectual 'opposition' and the cultural 'opposition' (which was often called 'avant garde'). The two 'oppositions' had very different kinds of leading figures, but most of the *audience* of the counter-cultural products and the *readers and listeners* of the critical intellectual-social-political writings and seminars were the

same people. I usually found this audience of unknown reader-listeners the most openminded individuals, much freer personalities than the well-known figures and the rest of the country. I used to belong to this audience and reader-listener level. I never dared to open my mouth or create anything while I was inside this circle — because of my place in the hierarchy. I was at the bottom of it, so I felt — and others felt it too — that I had not got the *right* to do anything politically or culturally, it would be so ridiculous if I dared to try, and anyhow it would not have any value at all. Being at the bottom of the hierarchy was 'justified' by claiming 'no ability'. It looked like the hierarchy was simply the natural expression of abilities and lack-of-abilities, with male-geniuses at the top and idiots like myself at the bottom. At the same time the existence of the hierarchy was completely denied. I remember several occasions when bottom-level-individuals, in all cases women, complained about the hierarchy to top-people, who first pretended they did not understand a word, then said it was not important and they had more important things to think about, and finally punished the 'rebel' by humiliation.

There was a myth that you have to be born with supernatural qualities in order to write, think or do anything against the shit-reality. So almost no one was supposed to be able to do anything else than be depressed or fed up and wait for a miracle, admiring the few thought gifted enough to act or write. The common opinion and *self*-opinion about the *majority* of 'oppositionists' (though no one would have put it into words because no one wanted to admit it) was that they were *nobodies* born without the qualities necessary for analysing and theorising about Hungarian society. This lack of qualities was supposedly proven by not being able to read social-scientific books for 14 hours a day; or by the inability to create films and plays. These nobodies were not considered good for anything on their own; nothing good would ever come out of them, it seemed. So logically they (we) should help, listen to, admire and fall in love with those who are rightly stars, due to their ability to create, think, and change the world.

So this is some background to explain how these Samizdats were written (and typed by 'not-gifted' people), and how the flat-seminars, or rather lectures, were given for the 'ignorant' ones.

The perception of the rest of society also somehow came from the genius-cult. This cut out any possibility of co-operation on a democratic level: it made understanding 'academic', instead of a process of communal thinking. And they can call themselves a 'democratic' opposition, to blind both themselves and others.

I distrust the level of understanding represented by the writing and lecturing members of the intellectual 'opposition'. I think they have not understood the connection between their often very conservative 'private' life, their very limited, scared, petty-bourgeois personalities, and their 'struggle' and thinking. They define 'politics' and 'social problems' on a much too narrow basis, leaving out spheres which would require either personal change or the sensitivity of (good) artists. Reducing the perception of reality to text-books spheres, *they limit life itself*.

One final question, Bill: how did you manage to make women completely invisible? Or is it the Hungarian 'opposition' which makes women invisible — if so, how is it possible you did not report this strange phenomenon? 'Over the last dozen years in Britain and in other countries of the world, the women's movement has been at pains to show that the invisibility of women in history is not due to the inactivity of women in making history. No one is able any longer in the 1980s to assume that people who are not seen are

not active.'³

Bill, have you not noticed in Budapest the sexual and labouring exploitation of women, the deeply sexist qualities of your beloved 'opposition'? Have you not noticed the myth of the male revolutionist (a la Che Guevara), deeply connected with the never-challenged penis-cult? I think the cult of the male-revolutionist is just one special type of the cult of the penis. In Hungary this connection is clear in the strong sexual hierarchy. Women are encouraged to aim for the penises of the most 'revolutionary' men and other 'stars', e.g. the 'avant garde' male artists. Obviously not every woman and not every man like or take part in this set-up. But it often has self-paralysing, self-hating effects on the self-perceptions even of those who don't accept its 'values', rules and roles.

One of the main functions of the 'oppositionist' woman is to hold up a mirror to the men in which they can see themselves twice as big as in reality. 'Oppositionist' women are generally and often individually discouraged by their male friends, especially by their 'lovers' and 'husbands' to act, think and live independently. At the same time, they are looked down on for not acting and thinking independently, and their alleged 'lack of abilities' and 'female dependence' is used as a 'justification' for exploiting and ruling them. (There are exceptions of course. Some men really do respect women and 'let' them be independent.) There is no general understanding about women being oppressed, and the subject is laughed at. There are hardly any samizdat-books in the samizdat-butik written by women, and extremely few women are involved in the decision-making leadership of the intellectual 'opposition'.

Why did Bill never mention those women, who, despite the discouragement, hostility and disbelief of male heroes and almost everyone else, often having to bring up children without help and with little money, as well as having a job and often sharing a room with two or three other people, are still able to do significant political, social or cultural 'oppositional' activities or generate an 'oppositional' spirit and give 'moral' support for others? Bill published the photograph of Otilia Solt. Why did he not mention her longstanding involvement in supporting the gypsies against the official racist policy?

Bill, I guess you like the Hungarian 'oppositionists' partly because they encourage you *not to believe in the romantic revolutionary image*. But you share with some of them, and with me, a deep desire for romantic revolution. I think you are trying to cheat yourself and make a *nostalgic* picture of what is happening in Budapest in order to believe you are part of (or strongly connected to) a romantic fight, a romantic opposition. But you know, as well as I, that this fight is not romantic, if it is a 'fight' at all. To a degree, some (not all!) Hungarians will cheat themselves too, and will bathe in the nostalgic image you give them of themselves. But the same people will *despise* you for it: they don't respect self-cheating people; they just use them, even if they try to live up to the enlarged image of themselves you are providing. I promise you, they will respect and like you more honestly, if you draw the most *complex* picture of them, instead of the most simplistic and idealising one.

Autumn 1982, London

Piri Márkus

Notes

1. Liz Stanley, 'Male Needs': Problems of Working with Gay Men', in *On the Problem of Men* (1982, The Women's Press).
2. You can find more information about the new Hungarian peace movement in the pamphlet recently published by END. It is written by a Hungarian member of the movement and by EP Thompson after visiting Hungary.
3. From 'The Invisibility of Black Housewives', written by women from the 'Housewives in Dialogue' group.