

# LABOUR FOCUS ON EASTERN EUROPE

A Socialist Defence Bulletin on  
Eastern Europe and the USSR

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Top Row (left to right): Vaclav Havel, Otka Bednarova, Petr Uhl, Jarmila Belikova, Jiri Nemecek.  
Jiri Dienstbier, Dana Nemcova, Vaclav Benda, Vaclav Maly.

Bottom Row (left to right): Ladislav Lis,

**SOCIALISTS AND COMMUNISTS SAY:**

# FREE THE PRAGUE TEN

# Contents

## 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 give 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 the 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.

**SPONSORS:** Tariq Ali, Edmund Baluka, Vladimir Derer, Ivan Hartel, Jan Kavan, Nicholas Krasso, Leonid Plyushch, Hillel Ticktin.

**EDITORS:** Vladimir Derer, Quintin Hoare, Jan Kavan, Oliver MacDonald, Anna Paczuska, Claude Vancour.

**MANAGING EDITOR:** Oliver MacDonald

**EDITORIAL COLLECTIVE:** Barbara Brown, Patrick Camiller, Susannah Fry, Ivan Hartel, Victor Haynes, Alix Holt, Mark Jackson, Helen Jamieson, Pawel Jankowski, Michele Lee, Anca Mihailescu, Günter Minnerup, Laura Strong.

Parts of this issue were prepared by the Committee in Defense of Soviet Political Prisoners, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

## All correspondence to:

**LABOUR FOCUS ON EASTERN EUROPE,**  
29 Poets Road, London N5.

Residents of Canada and the USA interested in more information about Eastern Europe, USSR and solidarity campaigns are urged to write to our North American representatives: Committee in Defense of Soviet Political Prisoners, P.O. Box 6574, Station 'C', Edmonton, Alberta T5B 4M4, Canada.

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# EDITORIAL

## Prague Trial a Watershed

6 of the 10 VONS members held in Prague since 29 May are reported to be going on trial on 22 October. The six are: Vaclav Havel, Jiri Dienstbier, Vaclav Benda, Dana Nemcova, Otka Bednarova and Petr Uhl. All face charges of subversion of both a mild and serious sort and could be sentenced to between 3 and 10 years' imprisonment. The state prosecutors have singled out Petr Uhl as the main defendant. A second trial will reportedly take place involving the other four imprisoned VONS members.

By holding these trials the Czechoslovak regime is seeking to prove to the population of the country that it will not tolerate civil rights activity within its borders. It seeks to show that the Helsinki Agreements and the International Pacts on Civil and Political Rights will offer no protection to citizens who attempt to assert their legal rights. And it seeks to brand those who do not support the regime as being in the camp of Western imperialism.

The effect of this policy on the part of the Husak leadership will be to increase the gulf between the Party machine and the politically aware sections of the population. It will also undoubtedly increase the already strong anti-communist and pro-Western sentiments among the mass of people. And it will strengthen the likelihood that the next political crisis in Czechoslovakia will resemble the bloody events of Hungary in 1956 far more than the reform movement of the Prague Spring.

What the trials will not achieve is an end to the VONS and Charter 77. This, the clear objective of the regime, will require many more arrests, trials and jailings. Those inside the regime attempting to further their careers by championing such a repressive course must be hoping that the Cold War lobbies in the West will grow stronger

and create a suitable climate of military confrontation to facilitate a wholesale round-up of the civil rights activists.

The Czechoslovak Party leadership evidently feels it can ignore the views of the Left in the West and press ahead with its repression regardless. It no doubt feels that it broke out of international isolation once, in the aftermath of the Soviet invasion, and it could do so again. It may also consider that the Western labour movements are in retreat in Western Europe and therefore their voices count for less than they did in the mid-1970s.

This is a very short-sighted policy. Socialists must ensure that the strengthening of the working-class movement in the West is accompanied by an unambiguous solidarity with the movements for civil liberties and democratic rights in Czechoslovakia and in the other East European states. They must ensure that the repressive policies of the Husak regime produce a growing, active policy of mass protests from the ranks of the Western labour movements and that future struggles for democratisation and for the removal of the Husak dictatorship gain swift practical support from the working class of Western Europe.

The main task today in this campaign is to bring the facts about the VONS trials into every branch of the trade unions and working-class political organisations in Britain.

Those able to help the campaign in defence of the Prague 10 in any way should write to:

Charter 77 Defence Committee,  
c/o Ruth Tosek, 14 Elgin Court, 16 Montpelier Rd., London W5  
and  
Eastern Europe Solidarity Campaign,  
c/o Vladimir Derer, 10 Park Drive, London NW11.

# CZECHOSLOVAKIA

## Report from VONS Prisoner

[One of the 10 Charter 77 activists and VONS members arrested on 29 May has been able to send detailed notes from prison on the conditions facing the detainees. The notes, written by Charter 77 spokesperson, Jiri Dienstbier at the end of July, have been made available to Labour Focus by Palach Press.]

Dienstbier first reports on the avalanche of documents shown to the accused with the indictment. '...Twenty-eight volumes of recorded statements by the accused and the witnesses, reports on house searches, graphological and other expert reports ... in all, up to 7000 pages', he estimates. 'They set an incredible pace', writes Dienstbier; 'as early as 29 May [i.e. on the day of the arrests] they questioned witnesses throughout Bohemia and Moravia, in distant towns like Chen, Usti, etc. They got through the whole job in a month ... Apparently the trial is to be held within another month', he reports, as of 24 July, 'so that everything is wrapped



Jiri Dienstbier with another arrested VONS member, Jarmila Belikova.

up during the summer holiday season and the trial takes place without too many people about.'

'The security service', he continues, 'possess detailed information ... down to ludicrous details from our meetings, which only a couple of people, perhaps sitting next to each other, could have noticed and which were not recorded in any of our minutes or other documents ... There must have been a bug at Benda's flat or at Jarmila's [i.e. Jarmila Belikova]. So look out for bugging but, above all, don't let us be deceived. I too', says Dienstbier, 'keep getting hints that such and such of us has been making (incriminating) statements off the record while trying to look 'clean' on the record, and thus deserves to be rewarded by a lighter sentence, etc.'

These methods of trying to make one detainee believe that some of the others have confessed are, of course, universal but in the case of the VONS there are some special features. Thus the interrogators focus their attention on money — which the police

confiscated indiscriminately and unlawfully during the arrests and house searches. 'Both Zuzanna [Dientsbier's wife] and I have been telling the truth about what [money] belongs to whom, and this has countered their attempts to present the money as belonging to VONS, to FOP (Citizens' Assistance Fund), or as being some kind of reward for activities; in other words, don't let any mistrust be created, because that is exactly what they are trying to do.'

Dientsbier then notes that Vaclav Benda and Petr Uhl are in the worst situation of all those detained. 'There is the greatest amount of evidence against them and the greatest number of documents was confiscated from their homes and elsewhere (for example, Uhl's letter and notes about Jarmila's [Belikova] and his views on the need to give VONS a firmer structure). There is also a great deal of evidence that the majority of meetings took place at Benda's. Dana [i.e. Dana Nemcova] explains this by Vasek's [i.e. Vaclav Benda] great hospitality and states that Vasek 'was self-sacrificing and diligent in VONS activity' and also that he frequently 'acted as coordinator of all the activities of individual members of VONS' ... How many years we will receive', writes Dientsbier, 'is difficult to say. I was told by the interrogating officer that I am probably in fourth or fifth place after Uhl, Benda, Havel, probably equal to Bednarova. He said that he hoped that I would understand and co-operate but, as it is, I would probably get eight years. I regard this as exaggeration but at the moment I don't even burden myself with thinking about it.'

Dientsbier observes that the police have been able to document thoroughly almost the entire activity of VONS. 'No one person is to blame for this, everyone made some mistakes in keeping papers ... notes about the agenda of this or that meeting, lists of cases with the names of those who monitored them, and tens of other bits of paper with instructions and messages', which were found during house searches. In addition, there are 200 pages of 'lengthy and well-meaning testimonies'. Not all of the detainees, however, agreed to give evidence. Those who have refused are Petr Uhl, Vaclav Benda, Otka Bednarova, Jarmila Belikova, Vaclav Maly, and Jiri Nemec. Dientsbier himself refused to answer questions for nearly three weeks. Then, he

writes, he changed his mind because 'everything was documented several times over and all that was left was to attempt to counteract misinterpretations. I was in great doubt as to whether I was right but, after reading 28 volumes, I am on the whole happy about my decision — although there was a great struggle for correct records, since statements were always distorted by the investigating officer, I have been able to rectify their interpretation of the case of the Bares brothers (who attempted to hijack a busload of schoolchildren to West Germany), which the authorities wanted to use as proof of VONS support for terrorism. I also countered their attempt to force upon VONS an organisational structure — some sort of editorial or similar non-existent commissions and structures.'

'I made it a principle,' Dientsbier continues, 'not to testify about other people, nor about the venues of the meetings... But I acknowledged authorship of VONS communiques..., attendance at VONS meetings, and I have added my own interpretation of some well-documented discussions within the VONS committee; my statement contains about 15 pages.'

Dientsbier then goes on to characterise some of the statements made by his co-defendants. 'Dana is good in what she says. She does not disown VONS in any way and firmly refuses to consider its actions indictable. So she has not let herself be broken or even bent, and tries to explain everything from the standpoint of her humanitarian attitude towards the world. Moreover, I think that even her statement does not make any difference, because we shall all be tried for the VONS statements, especially for our cheek, and not for someone having met someone else'.

Not all those interrogated have, however, been as firm as Dana Nemcova. Dientsbier remarks that, 'They have broken (name omitted) terribly and she will be lucky if she manages to come out of her own statements unscathed. She says, for example, that at Vasek's request she stole stencils from her office and gave them to him, etc. I feel sorry for the poor girl.' [In Czechoslovakia all stencils and, of course, duplicating machines are numbered and registered with the police and can be used only by approved institutions.]

Dientsbier's account of prison conditions forms an interesting part of the document. 'The food ranges from moderately bearable to distasteful. On 3 July I managed to catch a glimpse of Vasek returning from exercise; he looks fairly well, though unshaven. He saw me. I am sure that I look well too having been given a shave — once a week ... I hear that Dana may be released ... after all, this isn't the 1950s. One last question was put to me: whether I was going to express remorse. I am guilty of never repenting for anything — so they said I was not going home. I do know that Dana has not repented ... Perhaps they will be humane to her for the sake of her children.' [Note: Dana Nemcova has not been released, nor has anyone else.]

'We are being kept here like wild beasts', Dientsbier continues. 'It is usual for the inmates of two cells to be led out for exercise to concrete booths. People from the cells where we [VONS members] are kept have to walk alone so as to reduce the chances of communicating through other prisoners. We sleep nine hours daily, are allowed to sit down during the daytime, though not to lie down; we eat three times a day, are allowed a parcel a month and two canteen purchases a month, if there is any money. We can have exercise in the concrete booths almost every day, twenty minutes to half an hour — in short, "la dolce vita".'

Dientsbier concludes by observing that 'Being inside has so far been more of a bore than a horror; more a waste of time which could be usefully employed or spent chatting to a friend, to relatives, or to one's dear ones, than despair. After all, one meets decent people everywhere. I do not know to what extent this feeling will outlast the verdict and the sentence ... We shall certainly not escape it — unless they are only trying to frighten us, or unless our friends manage to get us out of this mess — and that would take a lot of doing.'

It is clear that however bravely Jiri Dientsbier, Vaclav Havel, Petr Uhl and the rest may be standing up to the rigours of pre-trial detention—expecting more and worse to come—they realise that they depend to a decisive extent on the pressure exerted on their jailors from outside.

## VONS Steps up its Activity Despite Arrests

Despite the continued detention of many of its former leaders, the Committee to Defend Unjustly Prosecuted Persons (VONS) has expanded its activity during August and September.

The 10 VONS members arrested on 29 May continue to face charges of subversion under Article 98 para 2 of the criminal code, carrying a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 10 years in jail. An 11th VONS member, Albert Cerny, arrested in March, will be tried separately in Brno.

The most remarkable sign of contradictory

pressures within the regime was given during the first week of October. On Monday 1 October, Rudolf Battek was arrested on a Prague street. A former member of Parliament, leader of the Independent Socialist current in contact with leaders of the Socialist International, Battek had been the most prominent VONS member still at liberty and his arrest was a major step on the part of the regime. Two days later, he was charged with subversion under Article 98 sub-section 1 carrying between 1 and 5 years' imprisonment. Yet by the weekend, after intervention from Austrian Socialist leader Bruno Kreisky, the regime had

backed down and released Battek.

In a move evidently designed to take the edge off the international protest movement, the Czechoslovak authorities offered the best known person among the arrested, playwright Vaclav Havel, a year's trip to the USA. But Havel courageously rejected the offer saying he would take it up only if all the other VONS members were also released. In another move to weaken the solidarity of the accused, the police spread a rumour that one of the detainees was collaborating with the prosecution. This ploy has been shown to be false,

although as Dientsbier's report from prison shows (see above) one person not arrested has been co-operating.

Contradictory reports have also been leaked about the timing of the trial — one story spread by Czech diplomatic circles says the hearing will be in the second week of October, another that the trial has been postponed indefinitely. Since detainees must repay the costs of their prison board and lodging such postponement already amounts to very substantial fines on the 11 and with every week that passes, the fees of defence lawyers mount up — there is no system of legal aid in Czechoslovakia.

For VONS, the first two months after the arrests were very much taken up with spreading information about the arrests, participating in protests against them, handling problems of the families of the accused and drawing 12 new members into the work of the Committee. The police attempted to prevent this work of rebuilding VONS, by heavy surveillance of some of the members and by various forms of intimidation: the beating up of Charter 77 spokesperson Zdena Tominova just after the arrests, and the warning given to the new VONS activists at the beginning of July that they would also be jailed if they persisted in the work are examples of such intimidation.

But during August and September, VONS has got back into its stride and returned to the types of activities that had proved so useful—and so embarrassing to the regime—before the May crackdown. It is once again breaking through the wall of secrecy which surrounds the major part of judicial repression in Czechoslovakia, namely that part which involves people who are totally unknown except amongst their immediate circle of friends.

One such case involves three young workers in Brno who were jailed last year for their involvement with the cultural underground. The 'crime' of Cibulka, Chloupek and Pospichal had been that they had circulated tapes of unofficial music and organised musical concerts. As a VONS communiqué of 5 October 1978 remarked: 'Numerous cultural and scientific workers, including



Otka Bednarova, left, with Rudolf Batték earlier this year.

some members of our committee, commit crimes such as this in a far more active way than Cibulka and his friends ...' but the latter were singled out because they were unknown. All were sent to jail, with Cibulka receiving 2 years, Chloupek 20 months and Pospichal 11 months.

On 13 August VONS returned to the Cibulka case, sending a letter, that was also signed by the Charter spokespersons, to the Prosecutor General. According to this letter, Cibulka has been attacked repeatedly by other prisoners in Plzen jail, while his requests to be moved to another prison have been ignored by the authorities. In protest he has staged a series of hunger strikes. At the time when the letter was sent, Cibulka was starting a new hunger strike, despite the fact that his weight has been reduced from 76 kg to 49 kg as a result of his previous protest actions.

On 20 August, in its 10th communiqué since the May arrests, VONS takes up the case of three young people aged 19 and 21 who have been jailed for discussing the idea of attempting to escape illegally from Czechoslovakia. The incident apparently took place in 1977. The accused and others were out drinking in a Brno pub and when drunk Ladislav Sevec, aged 17 at the time suggested escaping by hijacking an

aeroplane. He is alleged to have added that he possessed an airpistol and a clothes line. A friend, Tomas Stejskal, was alleged to have agreed to the proposal, and a third friend, Zdenek Vardan was arrested for failing to report the conversation to the police.

Sevec was jailed for 8 years at his trial and the sentence was increased to 9 years on appeal. Stejskal was jailed for 1 year and this was increased to 3 years on appeal. Vardan was jailed for 1 year for failing to report the incident.

Stejskal's conviction hinged on his own confession of support for Sevec's proposal, a confession which he made during pre-trial detention. VONS points out that during the trial Stejskal repudiated his confession, saying that the police had threatened that 'I would never leave the police station alive'. VONS added that Vardan's failure to report the discussion was explained by the fact that he did not take the conversation seriously. The 17-year-old Sevec was considered to be an immature person who 'wanted to be a hero'. VONS concluded by pointing out that the problem of hijacking could be eradicated by allowing Czechoslovak citizens the right to foreign travel.

VONS has been extending its international contacts in recent weeks, entering into correspondence both with the National Council for Civil Liberties in Britain, a body which performs an almost identical function here as that of VONS in Czechoslovakia. It has also been in touch with the Fédération Internationale des Droits de l'Homme, an internationally renowned civil liberties body formed in France after the Dreyfus case at the turn of the century.

VONS's continued activity is all the more remarkable given the fact that the 11 arrested members will probably be charged with subversion above all because of the very existence of VONS. If this is indeed the crux of the charge then legal logic would require the arrest of all VONS members still at liberty.



## Rude Pravo: 'The Struggle Continues'

On the left is the front page of Rude Pravo, the Czechoslovak Party daily, on 21 August this year. The editorial on the left has some reflections linked to the anniversary of the Soviet invasion in 1968. The article on the right concerns the harvest, but its headline in heavy bold type just next to the date brought the political police to the Rude Pravo printing works. For it reads: "The Struggle Continues". And after all, the police are not stupid, they know exactly what that means! Quite seriously, the printers were interrogated to discover who was responsible for such a blatant piece of subversive propaganda.

## Kriegel Dangerously Ill

During the last week of September, the veteran Communist leader, Frantisek Kriegel, suffered two severe heart-attacks in Prague. He is gravely, perhaps mortally ill as we go to press.

The conflict between the repressive role of the current regime in Czechoslovakia and the ideals and aspirations of socialism is nowhere more clearly shown than by the life of 71-year-old Dr. Kriegel, a communist and internationalist, human rights activist and Charter 77 signatory. He joined the Communist Party before the War, and served as a doctor in the International Brigades in Spain. After the war he was one of the main leaders of the workers' militia in the February 1948 seizure of power, and served in various posts in the new regime, particularly those concerned with the health service. In the early '60s he went as a health adviser to the new revolutionary regime in Cuba.

Kriegel was an early supporter of the reformist current which developed in the Party in the mid-60s and in 1968 he became Chairman of the National Front under Alexander Dubcek. When the Soviet-led invasion came in August 1968, the Russians kidnapped Kriegel and other Czechoslovak leaders and took them to Moscow where they were put under pressure to sign a document which committed them to

## New Information on Arrested VONS Members

[At the time of their arrest very little was known in the West about three of the eleven detained VONS members — Jarmila Belikova, Vaclav Maly and Albert Cerny. Mark Jackson summarises information about them which has been produced by Charter 77 circles in Prague.]

**Jarmila Belikova:** She was born into a working class family in Brno in 1948 — her mother was a cleaner and her father a shoe-maker. She graduated in psychology at the Philosophy Faculty in Brno in 1971 and worked as a psychiatrist at Zelio in the Moravian hills until she moved to Prague in 1973 where she became a social worker. One of the first signatories of the Charter, Jarmila lost her job in July 1977 and subsequently lived through various unskilled manual jobs. In April 1978 she became a founding member of VONS.

**Vaclav Maly:** He was born in 1950 in Prague. His father, a schoolteacher by profession, lost his job on account of his 'religiousness' and became a craft-worker in a ceramics factory. Vaclav left school in 1969 and became a student at the theological faculty in Litomerice. He completed his studies in June 1976 and was ordained as a clergyman later that year. In 1977 he became a chaplain in Plzen, but in February 1979 he was deprived of the right to preach by the West Bohemian secretary for religious affairs — a decision upheld by the Ministry of Culture a few days later. Maly is a

signatory of Charter 77 and a member of VONS.

**Albert Cerny:** Born in February 1937 in Bratislava, Cerny spent his school years in Krnov and Prague, then studied for one year at the Prague Academy of Music. But he became attracted to amateur theatre during his military service and devoted himself to it after his return. At first a stage-manager in Opava, he went to work as an actor in Cesky Tesin between 1960 and 1967, and then returned to Opava. In 1969 he was accepted as a stage-manager at the Mahen Theatre in Brno, but lost his job in 1970 as a result of his political activity during the Prague Spring. Since then he has worked variously as an electrician, tram-driver and Red Cross driver. In 1968 Cerny became a member of KAN, the Club of Committed Non-Party Members, whose discussion activity drew special fire from the Russians. (Another VONS member and 'independent socialist' Rudolf Battek also took part in KAN.) Having helped in the production of non-conformist literature in 1970, Cerny worked with others to prepare the independent socialist declaration '100 years of Czech socialism' in 1978. In May of that year he was arrested for 48 hours, then became a Charter 77 signatory, VONS member and signatory of the letter to the Socialist International dealing with the arrest of Jaroslav Sabata. He was arrested on 1 April 1979 and is now held in Brno-Bohunice prison.



Frantisek Kriegel, left, shaking hands with Vaclav Havel during the funeral of Havel's father in August. Havel was allowed to leave jail to attend the funeral. This picture was taken by Jiri Bednar, son of imprisoned VONS member Otká Bednarova. For taking this and other pictures at the funeral Bednar was sacked from his job, on grounds of absenteeism.

reversing the 1968 reform process. All the Czech Party leaders signed except Kriegel, who was only allowed to return to Czechoslovakia because his colleagues refused to leave without him.

He became active in the opposition to the Soviet re-imposed regime, writing and signing numerous protest letters and

petitions, until 1977 when he signed the Charter. In the early days of the Charter he was several times interrogated and threatened while the Party daily *Rude Pravo* attacked him as a 'Zionist' (i.e. Jew). He was put under 24-hour house surveillance for several months.

By Mark Jackson

## East European Solidarity with VONS

In July in the widest alliance yet seen between Polish and Russian human rights campaigners, members of various Soviet civil rights organisations joined with the Polish KOR in expressing their solidarity with the 10 arrested VONS members in Prague.

Declaring that the struggle for human rights will bring the Russian, Polish and Czechoslovak peoples closer, the statement adds: 'We know that our friends, detained in Czechoslovakia at the end of May, will regain their freedom only through pressure from the public. We shall do our utmost to reduce the length of their stay in prison. We hope that all people of good will throughout the world will help us in this task.'

The statement is signed by all members of the KOR, 7 members of the Moscow Helsinki Monitoring Group, 2 members of the Moscow-based Working Committee for the Study of the Abuse of Psychiatry, a member of the Group in Defence of the Rights of the Handicapped, a representative of the Moscow-based Assistance Fund for Political Prisoners and by 10 other Soviet citizens including Andrei Sakharov and Grigori Vladimov.

This action followed the sending of a letter by 300 Polish Catholics to the head of the Catholic Church, Archbishop Tomasek, asking him to intervene on behalf of the arrested VONS members.

In August, three well-known Hungarian critical intellectuals, Janos Kenedi, Gyorgy Bence and Janos Kis added their names to the International Appeal published in our last issue.

# Hungarians in Slovakia Protest Oppression

## Introduction — by George Schöpflin

*The Hungarian minority in Slovakia is between 550,000-600,000 strong and lives in compact settlements mostly in areas on the frontier of Slovakia. The social structure of the Hungarians differs significantly from that of the Slovak majority, in that 34.7 per cent of Hungarians are employed in agriculture as against 18.6 per cent of Slovaks; the figures for industry are Hungarians 22.8 per cent against Slovaks 35.2 per cent; there is also a disproportion favouring the Slovaks in the category of 'employees'. The significance of this is that Hungarians tend to remain in the lowest social categories.*

*The Nationalities Law that was enacted in October 1968 as part of the federalisation of Czechoslovakia was supposed to guarantee the status of the Hungarian, as of other national minorities. The Hungarians badly needed some legal definition of this kind, as the minority had been through the traumatic experience of collective persecution in 1945-48 and had not fully regained its confidence 20 years later. After the Second World War, the Hungarians were regarded as collectively guilty of having collaborated — the Hungarian-inhabited areas of southern Slovakia had been reattached to Hungary after Munich — and the minority was exposed to expulsion to Hungary and deportation to the Czech lands. Hungarians were stripped of their citizenship and civil status—no Hungarian institutions operated in the immediate post-war years, eg. schools—and these were not reinstated until after 1948.*

*In 1968, the minority made its bid for an improved status in society and, inter alia, demanded a university and other high level intellectual institutions. These demands ran into the rising tide of Slovak nationalism, which is still one of the sources of power of the Husak system, and not very much was conceded. After 1970, the implementation of the Nationalities Law was effectively sabotaged and all the indications are that the minority has become the victim of an expansionary Slovak nationalism, which finds it intolerable that a sizeable national minority—about one-eighth of the total population of Slovakia—should be harboured within the Slovak state.*

*The two documents translated here reflect the Hungarians' response to this nationalist current. The first is the letter sent by an unofficial body, the Committee for the Legal Protection of the Hungarian Nationality in Czechoslovakia, to the spokespeople of Charter 77. The second document, which is anonymous, concentrates on the problem of education and the status of the minority. The documents show the efforts made by the Slovak authorities, who in such areas enjoy considerable autonomy from Prague, to downgrade and dismantle Hungarian cultural institutions. The letter to the Charter was published in Irodalmi Újság (Paris) and the other in Új Látóhatár (Munich).*

## Letter to Charter 77

Dear friends,

We would like to bring to your notice the memorandum of the Committee, which is its third such document.

The Committee was set up at the beginning of 1978 in order to protect the essential interests and rights of the Hungarian minority. It was at that point that we learned of the intentions of the Slovak state and Party leaders, namely to liquidate Hungarian schools, and as a first step, to end all Hungarian-language education from the fifth year of primary schooling onwards.

To preserve these basic institutions, we organised a campaign of protest among the Hungarian population. We also drew the attention of international opinion to this via the press. In this way, we were successful in halting the attacks on Hungarian schools for a while. A few months later, the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Socialist Republic, with the support of the ideological secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia, put forward new proposals which were virtually identical with the previous ones. This led the Committee to issue a second protest document in January 1979, which was sent to every high-ranking Slovak state and Party leader. We know from reliable sources, that—independently of ourselves—the embassies of some foreign countries in Czechoslovakia were also informed of its contents. The result of

the protest was that the campaign against Hungarian schools was again stopped.

Since then, we have ascertained that the Slovak leadership has not abandoned its dream of assimilating the Hungarian minority, but is only looking for other ways of achieving this. By using political and psychological pressure, they are trying to invalidate the minimal rights enjoyed by the Hungarian minority by virtue of the constitution.

We are publishing our memorandum with the aim of pointing to the fundamental shortcomings in the situation of the minorities and to call the attention of the leaders of the state, as well as our fellow citizens, to the necessity for expanding constitutional rights.

We regard the oppression of nationalities as a violation of fundamental human rights and, indeed, in our case, as a violation of the civil rights enshrined in the constitution.

We hope that the appended document can form the basis for establishing contact between Charter 77 and the Committee. We ask for your reply by letter or by any other means chosen by you.

Greetings,

**The Committee for the Legal Protection of the Hungarian Nationality in Czechoslovakia**

## Liquidating Hungarian-language Schools in Slovakia

After World War II, between 1946 and 1948, not one Hungarian school functioned in Czechoslovakia. Nor could any Hungarian teach unless he rejected his nationality and opted to become a Slovak ('re-Slovakised'). Hungarian schools were re-established in 1949.

One year after the publication of Charter 77, the authorities drafted a document preparing further violations of the rights of Czechoslovak citizens. Czechoslovakia is a socialist country and under socialism, it is stated, every citizen is equal and has the right to think and speak in his mother tongue. But this is interpreted in a particular way: 'It is necessary ... to extend the teaching of vocational subjects in the Slovak language whereb' even more favourable conditions can be created for the fulfilme

in society of citizens belonging to the nationalities' (CTK reporting the 19th session of the Slovak National Council, Új Szó.) [Translator's note: Új Szó is the Hungarian-language daily published in Bratislava. In practice this has the aim of winding up Hungarian-language schools, a move which has its antecedents.]

### The antecedents

1. The basic principle in creating the Hungarian schooling system was to avoid or delay the establishment of secondary schools on the periphery of the nationality area. Thus in Bratislava, the Hungarian gymnasium was only set up in 1958. In Levice one was set up in the same year but with only one class each year, parallel with Slovak classes. No Hungarian secondary school was set up

in Lucenec, although 600 parents requested it in 1953 and in 1954.

2. After 1945 the Hungarian population was subjected to large-scale compulsory resettlement; Hungarian teacher training was stopped; the average age of Hungarian teachers rose and their number fell to a minimum. Accelerated six-week courses were used to train teachers for the newly established Hungarian schools. Understandably the level of teaching fell.

Table I

Hungarian Primary Schools in Slovakia

School year	1963-64	1968-69	1970-71	1972-73	1976-77	1977-78
The Hungarian population of Slovakia	530 000	545 000	554 000	565 000	575 000	577 000
Number of school age Hungarian children in Slovakia (1)	90 000	86 000	84 000	82 000	77 000	76 000
The number of pupils in Hungarian language schools	79 128 <sup>(2)</sup>	72 928 <sup>(3)</sup>	71 605 <sup>(4)</sup>	65 000 <sup>(5)</sup>	57 903 <sup>(6)</sup>	55 005 <sup>(7)</sup>
The number of Hungarian pupils not taught in their mother tongue	11 000	13 000	12 400	17 000	19 000	20 000
Hungarian pupils not in Hungarian schools as a percentage of all Hungarian children of school age	12	15.5	14.8	21	24.8	26.6

Summary: The Hungarian minority in Slovakia increased by 32 000 between 1960 and 1978, whilst the number of Hungarian primary school children fell by 17 123 or 23.6 percent. This fact is glossed over in official declarations, but in reality a fatal erosion began in the years 1968-1978 and it will lead to a complete collapse of the Hungarian schooling system by the end of the century.

Notes

- 1 Estimates based on Statistical Yearbooks (1960-1977) and the figures in Jan Sindelka, *Národnostní politika v ČSSR*, (1975), p.130.
- 2 Juraj Zvara in *Magyarok Csehszlovákiában*, (Bratislava, 1969), p.239.
- 3 Informačný bulletin ore národnosti, 1969/1
- 4 Ferenc Mózsai, *Nemzetiségi iskola* (Bratislava, 1973), p.19.
- 5 Sindelka, loc.cit.
- 6 *Új Szó*, 16 May 1977.
- 7 *Magyar Nemzet*, (Budapest), 5 February 1978.

3. Hungarian schools were merged step-by-step and administered jointly with Slovak ones, or else bilingual schools were created. The result was to cut the number of Hungarian classes. For example, at Fil'akovo the Slovak gymnasium was merged with the Hungarian one, because the Slovak school was threatened with closure as a result of shortage of pupils. Until that time, the Hungarian gymnasium had three parallel classes for each year, but in the 1978-79 school year, only one first year class was allowed to open. At the bilingual school in Levice, the Hungarian parallel class did not accept first year pupils in 1975. The ostensible reason was not enough applicants. In reality, applications were not accepted, with the argument that the class would not open anyway. It later emerged that in that year 18 Hungarian pupils were forced to commute 50 km daily to Zelizovce (15 applicants are sufficient for the opening of a class).

4. Schools are established in regional centres, while numerous local schools are closed, thus forcing Hungarian school children to travel considerable distances, because no provision is made for boarding. For this reason, many have opted for nearby Slovak schools.

5. The amount of time spent on teaching the Slovak language has been steadily increased, so that it is now taught for more hours per week than the Hungarian mother tongue. From 1971, Slovak was introduced into Hungarian nurseries for 5-year-olds and Slovak language lessons were also introduced in the first year of primary schooling, although previously it was only compulsory from the third year of primary. In addition, civics and physical education are taught in Slovak.

6. Restrictions have been placed on Hungarian teacher training. In 1958 the Hungarian Teacher Training College was transferred from Bratislava to Nitra, whereby it lost its hinterland as it had no schools for practical work. Over the last four years, the number of students has been gradually cut. The four years had a

total of 360 students, but only 15 were accepted for entry in 1978-79. At the same time, the study of general secondary school subjects has been stopped (Hungarian language and literary and civics are the exception).

7. In both primary and secondary schools, the summary of certain subjects in Slovak is standard practice and although it is not obligatory, it is accepted in many schools.

8. In numerous vocational secondary schools and colleges, there is hardly any Hungarian language teaching apart from language and literature. Instances are the economic specialisation school at Surany and the nursery-school specialisation school at Lucenec. Other Hungarian-language vocational schooling has ceased. Thus the agriculture specialisation school at Sahy, the cellulose and paper specialisation school at Sturovo etc. no longer teach in Hungarian.

9. From the school year 1978-79, natural science and vocational subjects are taught in Slovak at primary and secondary vocational schools and colleges.

**Likely consequences**

- (a) The Hungarian mother tongue will be steadily downgraded.
- (b) Many Hungarian teachers will be dismissed — the authorities call this 'material dislocation'.
- (c) Seeing that the bulk of Hungarian teachers have no experience of teaching in a foreign language [ie. Slovak], the quality will decline, that in turn will sap the confidence of parents and thus furnish new reasons for closing schools. Further, because of the lower quality of education, pupils from Hungarian-language schools will fall behind Slovak ones, which will prejudice their chances of employment and promotion.

Table II

A projection of the rate at which the Hungarian language primary school system in Slovakia will be dismantled

Year	1980	1985	1995	2000
Hungarians in Slovakia	580 000	590 000	570 000	560 000
Population of Slovakia	5 232 000 <sup>1</sup>	5 492 000 <sup>2</sup>	6 000 000	6 250 000
Proportion of Hungarians in Slovakia	11	10.7	9.5	9.0
Hungarian school age children in Slovakia	72 000	66 000	57 000	55 000
Hungarian school age children taught in their mother tongue	50 000	40 000	32 000	26 000
Hungarian school age children not taught in their mother tongue as a percentage of the total	30.5	40.4	44	52

Notes

- 1 & 2 Estimates from *Demografie*, 1971, p.534.

The causes of the destruction of the Hungarian schooling system are these:  
 (1) Shortcomings in socialist legality in nationalities policy; the Nationalities Law (1968) has remained a matter of declarations on paper or not even that.  
 (2) The absence of socialist democracy in nationalities policy, because the question of nationality schools - the alpha and the omega of national existence - may not be discussed in any way, whether orally or in writing.

(d) Finally the Hungarian-language school system will be completely demoralised and will be transformed into Slovak schools teaching Hungarian language and literature.

(e) With the dismantling of primary and secondary schools, the Hungarians of Czechoslovakia will no longer be able to reinforce their intelligentsia.

(f) As the Hungarian intelligentsia with secondary and university education dies out, the language will become debased and with it will go the principal attribute of the nationality.

(g) With the loss of the language, the nationality will cease to exist.

This process is one of forced assimilation and is tantamount to genocide, which—after physical extermination and torture—is the most brutal violation of human rights.

# POLAND

## Charter of Workers' Rights Launched

[There can be little doubt that the following document is one of the most significant developments to have taken place in Poland since the workers' successful strike movement against price increases in June 1976.

The Charter has been signed now by over 100 working-class activists, spanning the entire country. It also represents a fusion around a common platform of activists from a variety of different political currents in the opposition.

The Charter also appears to indicate a new initiative in the organisation of the unofficial workers' movement. While clearly stating that its objective is the formation of independent trade unions which can act as effective defensive organisations for the Polish working class, it suggests that earlier attempts to found such unions were premature. The Charter proposes to use the legality of the official organisations in the factories to raise the demands of

Whereas:

- citizens are being deprived of the right to take part in decision-making on matters that concern them;
- restrictions are being imposed on the fundamental rights of the employee such as the right to safe and pensionable work, to a just wage, and to rest
- social inequalities and injustices are becoming more profound;
- there exist no institutions to protect the employee — the official Polish Trade Unions are not institutions of this kind;
- workers are denied their fundamental right of defence, which is the right to strike;
- society has to shoulder the cost of every mistake of the authorities, including the cost of the current crisis;

we have entered upon a course of action whose long-term aim is the creation of a self-defence system for employees, first and foremost, independent Trade Unions.

We wish to begin with the problems which seem to us to be capable of solution, at least in part, at the present time.

### 1. WAGES

- pay should rise at least in step with the cost of living; a **cost of living** supplement is essential;
- everyone should be ensured a **minimum living wage**; teams of specialists should work out this minimum and amend it in proportion to rising prices; families living below this line should be paid appropriate supplements;
- efforts must be made to eliminate glaring and unfounded differences in pay;
- stoppages of work, changes of quota, etc., must not be allowed to entail a drop in wages;
- workers doing the same job under the same conditions should receive remuneration in accordance with standardised scales of rates which are independent of the branch in which the said workers are employed.

### 2. WORKING HOURS

- it is inadmissible that overtime, additional and community work should be compulsory; miners must have Sundays and holidays free;
- the **free Saturdays** of the current system must be legally guaranteed to everyone;
- efforts must be made to implement a **40-hour working week** without reduction of wages.

### 3. OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY

- safety standards and regulations must be observed **without exception**; there should be special commissions to monitor this, having wide powers including the right to shut down a plant; commissions monitoring occupational health and safety, accident

the mass of workers.

The Charter is in large measure the fruit of the work carried out around the fortnightly paper Robotnik (*The Worker*) which has been appearing regularly since the autumn of 1977. Robotnik drew together a number of the working-class activists who had been victimised after the June 1976 strikes and provided an invaluable source of information and means of communication between activists in different factories and parts of the country. Now, after many months of discussion, these activists have worked out a framework of demands to guide their activities in the future. By calling this platform 'Document No.1', the signatories indicate that this is just the start of what should be a continuing political collaboration.

The document is made available by the Appeal for the Polish Workers.]

- commissions and also factory doctors must be institutionally independent of the factory management;
- no one who suffers loss of health due to harmful working conditions can be left without the pay or income to which he is entitled;
- it is essential to update the current list of industrial diseases;
- **night work for women** must be eliminated; it should not be allowed that women do heavy physical work.

### 4. GRANTING OF PRIVILEGES

- the remuneration of an employee and his promotion should not depend on his party allegiance, political opinions nor outlook;
- benefits such as bonus payments, housing or vacations must be allotted in an open manner; the means of allotting these goods and the names of the beneficiaries must be openly announced;
- there must be an end to the granting of privileges to groups connected with the government (police, party functionaries): special allowances of goods greatly in demand, such as housing, plots of land, building materials, cars, special medical care, luxury holiday homes, special pension rights, etc.

### 5. COMPULSION TO ACT AGAINST ONE'S CONSCIENCE

- no one should be forced to immoral acts, to inform for the Party or the security service, to take part in attacks on undesirable persons;
- people should not be compelled to produce shoddy goods, to carry out work which threatens their safety and that of others, to hush up accidents, make false reports, etc.

### LABOUR CODE

The Labour Code in force since 1975 must be radically changed. It established regulations which are disadvantageous to the workers. Its articles are equivocal, and hence in any given situation can be and frequently are interpreted to the benefit of the management. In particular:

- Article 52 must be changed. It is used as an anti-strike law (the numerous sackings after June 1976 were based on it); the right to strike must be **guaranteed by law**;
- if someone is dismissed, the management must explain in writing the reason for the dismissal; the worker should continue in his job so long as his case is going through the successive legal instances; throughout the whole process he should have the right to the assistance of a lawyer;
- union officials elected by the work force must be legally protected against dismissal for a certain time after laying down office also.

We consider that the realisation of these postulates depends on our own stance. Evidence that workers can force the authorities and management to make concessions is provided by the great showdowns of 1956, 1970 and 1976, and by individual strikes.

For several months now, we have felt the effects of the crisis on our own skin. Deliveries and transport get worse and worse, wages are going down, prices are going up, in big plants the working hours are getting longer and are taking up the 'free Saturdays', there are more and more stoppages. If we ourselves do not now make a start at defending our own interests, our situation will go from bad to worse.

However, in order to win, we must rid ourselves of any feeling of impotence, stop passively putting up with restrictions on our rights and the deterioration of the conditions of life, and must look for the most effective form of action. There exist a great number of possibilities.

A. Undoubtedly the most effective form of action is to strike, even if the strikes are not on a large scale. Generally however, it is only effective in the short run. In order not to waste the achievements of a strike, the participants must elect representatives to monitor the realisation of their demands. If the workers know how to act in solidarity and are not afraid, they can force management to concessions by the very threat of a strike, by presenting petitions, or sending delegations.

B. A very great deal can be achieved simply by the dissemination of information. It is necessary to speak up loudly and to protest when someone is wronged, when we see injustice; it is necessary to publicise the actions of cliques and the granting of privileges, shortcomings, and wastage, breaches of the regulations on occupational health and safety and the hushing-up of accidents. It is necessary to speak about this to colleagues and at meetings. To demand that the authorities take a stand on this. To tell the independent social institutions and the independent press.

C. There are many problems in labour relations which can be solved by using the official trade unions. It would certainly be better for us if these were not so dead as in fact they are at present. We must demand that the factory councils defend the interests of the workers, we must use union meetings for discussions and put forward demands to them, and must elect to factory councils people who will realise the demands.

D. A condition for our actions to be something more than ad hoc and haphazard is the existence of a group of workers in a state of constant alertness. This group, even if implicitly at first, can draw up a programme of activity, organise a series of actions, form public opinion, and, in time, come out into the open as independent workers' committees.

E. Wherever there exist strong organised communities of workers who are able to defend their representatives against dismissal from work and imprisonment, free trade union committees should be set up. The experience of employees in the Western democracies shows that this is the most effective way of defending the workers' interests.

Only independent trade unions, having support among the workers whom they represent, have any chance of opposing the authorities. Only they will represent a force with which the authorities must reckon and with which they can deal on equal terms.

We, the undersigned, pledge ourselves to work towards the postulates contained in the Charter of Workers' Rights.

We are also setting up an Aid Fund and pledge constant contributions to it. The resources collected in the Fund will be used to assist persons dismissed from work for taking part in independent union activity.

## APPENDIX

Our activities are in accordance with the law. In ratifying the International Labour Pacts and the Conventions of the International Labour Organisation, the government of the Polish People's Republic acknowledged:

### I. The right of workers to form associations.

Article 2 from Convention 87 of the International Labour Organisation (Dziennik Ustaw, No.29, 1958, 125):

'Workers and employers, without any discrimination, have the right, without seeking prior permission, to form organisations at their own discretion, and also to join such organisations, subject only to adhering to their statutes.

Article 8, point 1a of the International Pact on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Appendix of Dziennik Ustaw, No. 38, 1977, 169):

'The states party to the present pact pledge themselves to ensure the right to everyone to form and join trade unions at their own choice, in order to support and defend their own economic and social interests, subject only to the condition of observing the statutory regulations of the said organisation. Availing oneself of this right must not be subject to any restrictions other than those provided for in the laws and ordinances of a democratic society in the interests of state security or public order or to protect the rights and freedoms of others.'

### II. The right to strike

Article 8 point 1d of the International Pact on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights:

'The states party to the present pact pledge themselves to ensure the right to strike provided that the strike be carried out in accordance with the constitution of the said country.'

**Gdansk:** Bogdan Borusewicz (editor of **Robotnik**), Andrzej Bulc, Joanna Duda-Gwiaźda, Andrzej Gwoźda, Andrzej Kolodziej, Zenon Moskal, Alina Pienkowska, Andrzej Skowron, Bernard Wachowicz, Anna Walentyńowicz, Lech Wales, Błażej Wyszowski, Krzysztof Wyszowski, Jan Zapolnik.

**Gizycko:** Henryk Wiurgo, Sławomir Karolik, Leszek Lechowicz, Mieczysław Malitka.

**Gliwice:** Andrzej Gordzewski, Andrzej Spyra (editor of **Robotnik**).

**Grudziadz:** Maksymilian Mozdrzynski, Edmund Zadrozynski (editor of **Robotnik**)

**Katowice:** Kazimierz Switon, Jan Switoną

**Krakow:** Franciszek Grabczyk, (editor of **Robotnik**), Zygmunt Kaleta.

**Lazy:** Jerzy Grzebieluch.

**Lodz:** Jadwiga Szczesna, Stanisław Szarodzki, Józef Sreniowski (editor of **robotnik**), Leszek Witkowski.

**Myszkow:** Jan Lasek, Ireneusz Maligłowka.

**Nowa Ruda:** Stefan Kowalczyk

**Pabianice:** Marek Chwalewski

**Przemysl:** Stanisław Frydlewicz

**Radom:** Anna Ostrowska, Ewa Sobol.

**Ruda Śląska:** Mieczysław Kubiczek

**Skawina:** Mieczysław Majdok

**Szczecin:** Danuta Grajek, Andrzej Jakubcewicz, Tadeusz Kocielowicz, Stefan Kozłowski (editor **Robotnik**), Zdzisław Podolski, Jan Witkowski, Mirosław Witkowski.

**Tarnow:** Waclaw Mojek, Zbigniew Stanuch.

**Torun:** Mirosława Sedzikowska, Stanisław Smigiel.

**Walbrzych:** Jacek Pilichowski (editor of **Robotnik**)

**Włodzisław Śląski:** Bolesław Cygan

**Warsaw:** Henryk Bak, Teodor Klincewicz, Mieczysław Ksiezczak, Dariusz Kupiecki (editor of **Robotnik**), Jan Lityński (editor of **Robotnik**), Witold Luczywo (editor of **Robotnik**), Wojciech Onyżkiewicz, (editor of **Robotnik**), Henryk Wujec (editor of **Robotnik**)

**Wroclaw:** Krzysztof Grzelczyk, Jacek Malec, Ludwik Werle

**Zabrze:** Jacek Wiewiorski

## Unofficial Workers' Movement in Grudziadz

### 1. Workers' leader Arrested

Is an independent workers' movement on the agenda in Poland? Ever since the workers' strikes of June 1976, the Polish government has been working hard to ensure a negative answer to this question.

But in the industrial town of Grudziadz, the authorities appear to have been fighting a losing battle and have now resorted to arresting the leader of the unofficial workers' movement there. Edmund

Zadrozynski.

Grudziadz is an industrial centre situated between Warsaw and the Baltic port of Gdansk. Not previously known as one of the

most combative centres of the Polish working class, the existence of a powerful opposition movement in the town was suddenly revealed last December, when 292 Grudziadz citizens signed a protest letter. This would be a very large number for a **nation-wide** protest in most East European countries, but equally significant was the content of the letter. Not concerned with local issues at all, it took up the harassment of working-class activists involved with the unofficial journal **Robotnik** (the Worker) and with the independent trade union committees in other parts of Poland. The letter mentioned specifically the repressive measures taken against Kazimierz Switon in Katowice, and repression against workers in Gliwice, Lublin and Grojec.

In January 1979, another protest letter signed by 242 people denounced the harassment of activists in Grudziadz itself. We publish this letter in this issue (see

below). Also in January, 341 people protested to the Council of State about the authorities' refusal to respond to the demands and requests of 43 workers in Grudziadz who were victimised following the June 1976 strike movement. This letter explicitly solidarised with the KOR and called on the government to meet its demands.

The crisis of June 1976 seems to have been the key event in the emergence of the unofficial workers' movement in Grudziadz. But the origins of the movement go right back to the mid-50s, for the leader of the movement, Edmund Zadrozynski, first became well-known in the town as a working-class activist at that time. And for some time before June 1976, Zadrozynski and others had participated in an unofficial workers' club which became a focal point for workers with specific grievances. When KOR was established it made contact with

Zadrozynski and his comrades and he subsequently became one of the editors of **Robotnik**.

This year, the movement in Grudziadz has been growing rapidly, as is shown by a letter to the Polish Parliament in April signed by no less than 876 people. This is a formidable protest for a town of only 50,000 people and it has pushed the authorities to take drastic action — not to tackle the grievances, but to crush the movement, by arresting its leader, Edmund Zadrozynski in August.

Zadrozynski's arrest is now the focus of defence activity in Poland. As the campaign in Poland and abroad for Kazimierz Switon earlier this year shows, it is possible to make the authorities draw back from jailing working-class militants. This is now the task in the case of Edmund Zadrozynski.

By Peter Green

## 2. Documents: Appeal for Release of Zadrozyński

To the World Federation of Free Trade Unions!  
To trade union organisations!  
To Amnesty International!

We appeal for your help in securing release from prison of Edmund Zadrozyński of Grudziadz, an editor of the independent newspaper for workers 'Robotnik'.

The action of the authorities against Edmund Zadrozyński is one further proof of their struggle with the democratic opposition.

Edmund Zadrozyński, a worker, formerly employed by the Pomeranian Casting and Enamel Factory, was arrested on the false charge of participating in a robbery, and is at present under arrest in Toruń.

E. Zadrozyński is one of those most active in the workers movement. He was a shop steward in his branch of the factory, and at present lives on accident pay. Since 1977 he has acted with the Committee for Defence of Workers (KSS-KOR). He was a

co-organiser of many petitions: to defend worker activists who had previously been arrested, Kazimierz Switon and Tomasz Michalak; to protest against poor working-conditions and against disastrous shortages in food supplies. The petitions were signed by more than one thousand citizens of Grudziadz. So far, more than eight hundred people from Grudziadz have signed an appeal in his defence.

Thanks to the help of public opinion, there were released from prison: members of 'KOR' and their co-workers, arrested in May 1977, Kazimierz Switon, arrested in November 1978, and Tomasz Michalak, arrested in May 1979.

We appeal for your intervention in defence of Edmund Zadrozyński!

The Editors of 'Robotnik'

(Document and translation made available by Appeal for the Polish Workers.)

## Letter to the Polish Parliament

[Translated for Labour Focus by Patrick Camiller from the very useful new booklet *Rebirth of the Workers' Movement in Poland produced by the Comité International Contre la Répression, BP 221 - 75564, Paris Cedex 12, France.*]

To the President of the Sejm.

As citizens and workers of Grudziadz, we feel more and more acutely the deterioration in the supply of coal, foodstuffs and industrial goods. That is the economy created by the Red Star men.

At the workplaces, people are again being threatened that warnings will be entered in their personal dossier and that they will be sacked forthwith. Edward Golota, resident at 48, ul. Kochanowski, has been victim of this procedure for the second time: on 1 December 1978 he was sacked without any good reason, simply because he had been honest and spoken the truth to his superiors. What is more, an investigation was conducted at the place where he lives, and a very bad report given about him.

In our town, the authorities are returning to the same practices as in June 1976; they have even forbidden pensioners to go to the factory gates. Thus, on 6 December 1978 Edmund Zadrozynski, an editor of **Robotnik** drawing a pension because of a work accident, showed up at the POIE State Smelting and Enamel Works in Grudziadz. Upon his arrival a veritable alarm was sounded at POIE; and the next day, 7 December 1978, the POIE

factory declared a state of emergency, calling a meeting at which all the foremen and workers were informed that anyone having contact with Edmund Zadrozynski would be sacked on the spot, as in June 1976. Present at the meeting was Henryk Oleszynski, resident at 5, ul. Fornalska, apt. 27, Grudziadz, who keeps an eye on the POIE works on behalf of the SB [the political police]. The works council itself burrows away like a mole in order to set the workers against one another.

We know that it was Blank and Sejm Deputy Kazimierz Raszkowski who were the first to sound the alarm. They both work on the works council. The POIE authorities demanded that watchman Maliszewski should be given a warning and that this should be entered in his personal dossier; that he be immediately dismissed, that he should forfeit all the benefits acquired during years of labour, and that his one-month wage bonus should be withheld. All this because he had allowed entry to a man who suffered a work-accident at the same factory. This is a blatant act of injustice with regard to a former POIE employee.

Mention is very often made of model workers. On 8 December 1978, a meeting took place at the Grudziadz Theatre to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the paper **Pomerania News**. But there was not a single worker present at this gathering. The only ones there were Party cadres, the model workers having been kept back by

production. During this solemn meeting, a gift of a transistor-radio was presented to one of those men in red ties. That is how the Party cadres encourage us to work. We are ashamed to have such an idle deputy in Grudziadz.

Down with such a regime in POIE, and down with the deputy! We don't want that kind of regime, which threatens the workers with dismissal and cuts their starvation wages. The Grudziadz deputy would have done better to take an interest in other things and open people's eyes about them. For example, he could have got involved in improving the supply of foodstuffs and basic necessities. Down with the power of the Red Star!

We want a free, sovereign and independent Poland!

We inhabitants and workers of Grudziadz express our full confidence in Edmund Zadrozynski; we shall certainly keep up contact with him. We know perfectly well that he is a man who defends workers' rights, and we have been convinced of this for a

## Grudziadz Workers Detail Economic Problems

This year marks 35 years of People's Poland. The authorities are preparing for festive celebrations. We, the undersigned inhabitants of Grudziadz, demand that instead of organising such celebrations the authorities should take adequate care of supplies to our town. For many months now there has been a shortage of the following articles: food stuffs — there is no buckwheat or pearl barley on the market, no Wroclaw flour or baking-flour, peas or beans, pickled or canned cucumbers, herrings, gelatine, prunes, ground pepper, cherry juice or cocoa. Besides, there are shortages of butter (usually not to be found after 7.30 a.m.), fresh fish, chocolate products, castor sugar, jellies, flavouring baking extracts, not to mention meat, for which people queue ten hours or longer. Other goods: there is no white paint, linoleum, crimplene, leather products such as coats (found only occasionally in foreign currency shops), siphon bottles, wall tiles, sheet metal and tin plate, building materials such as lime, cement, plaster, brick (available only at the request of the People's Town Council), sewage and water-supply pipes (only specially allocated). Firewood disappeared from the market many years ago.

There are also shortage of children's underwear (5-11 years), men's underwear (pants and vests), footwear for the young, tea-cups, glasses, bowls, serving dishes, dressing materials, candles, shoe polish, daily newspapers.

We ask: what is deputy Kazimierz Raszkowski from Grudziadz—who sits on the supplies committee—doing about it? We cannot see any results of his activity. We ask: why are many goods only available in foreign currency shops? In Grudziadz for dollar coupons in those shops they sell Polish products, such as materials from Lodz and Polish fishing equipment. But we receive our wages and pensions in zlotys and that is why we

## New Party Formed:

[A public demonstration of several thousand people in Warsaw at the beginning of August to mark the fortieth anniversary of the German invasion of Poland was used as the occasion for announcing the creation of an opposition political party.

The organisation, called the Confederation for an Independent Poland (KPN), issued a manifesto and an 'Act of Confederation', both of which we publish here. Its main spokesman, Leszek Moczulski, also explained the party's outlook in an interview with the French Trotskyist paper Rouge and we reproduce that interview in full below.

Although some members of the KPN have been drawn from the Movement for Civil and Human Rights (ROPCIO), the latter did not create or sponsor the new Party. Most of the signatories of the Act of Confederation come from groups which have not been

number of years. This is the kind of citizen that our real Poland needs.

We ask that any reply concerning our collective signatures should be sent to the man in whom we trust: Edmund Zadrozynski, 17, ul. Swierczewski, apt.5, Grudziadz. And we warn that if the slightest thing happens to Edmund Zadrozynski at the hands of the MO or SB, we shall continue to come out in support of him.

We are addressing this letter to the President of the Sejm, of the People's Republic of Poland, because such methods and plots may at any moment be used against us by the men from that well-known ministry.

We ask for this letter to be published in the paper **Robotnik** and made known to the whole country.

Letter signed by 242 persons

January 1979

Copies to: The Primate of Poland and KSS-KOR

demand that all goods be available in our currency.

We ask: who is responsible for the fact that on the site of the old town stadium, between the Warszawska and Czarneckiego streets, the construction of a complex of technical schools has been abandoned? There was to be an 11-storey high boarding school for 650 pupils with lecture halls, a gym hall, a swimming pool and a building for workshops. The abandoned construction has been going to ruin for the past two years. We ask: who is paying for all this?

On the Strzemiescin housing estate, which is nearly 10 years old and houses 13,000 people, there is only one grocer's shop and not a single public convenience. Transport is quite insufficient for people to go back and forth to work.

A day-and-night grocer's shop is needed in Grudziadz. There is no such shop in this town of 50,000, nor anywhere near it. We demand that these deficiencies be remedied soon and our questions answered. Please send in replies to Mr. Edmund Zadrozynski, editor of the independent periodical **Robotnik**, Grudziadz, ul. Swierczewskiego 17 m.5, tel. 27097.

We are circulating this letter among the inhabitants of Grudziadz, and ask them to inform the above-mentioned Edmund Zadrozynski about all shortages and negligence. A copy of this letter will be sent to the Primate of Poland and the Social Self-Defence Committee (KOR).

(By 20 May the above letter had been signed by 876 people in Grudziadz.)

(Document and translation made available by **The Appeal for the Polish Workers.**)

## 1. Introduction

operating publicly, or are at least not generally known in opposition circles. Moczulski himself was a moving spirit behind the creation of ROPCIO in the spring of 1977, though his influence within that movement was reduced after its national conference in the summer of 1978. A one-time journalist on a newspaper controlled by the Moczarite faction within the Communist Party in the 1960s, Moczulski is a very controversial figure within the opposition and is known as a vigorous critic of the views of Jacek Kuron and others in the KOR whom he considers too conciliatory towards the regime. He is the editor of a journal called Droga (The Way).

The KPN seems to be defined primarily by its overriding emphasis on the struggle for independence, by its conviction that this struggle involves the liquidation of the Communist Party and by its belief that all political currents which can agree on these points

should unite regardless of other differences. Such unity should, as the KPN's name indicates, take the form of a confederation of political autonomous groups.

The formation of an open, public organisation declaring itself to be a political party in opposition to the ruling party is an event almost without precedent in the history of Eastern Europe since the late 1940s. Following the KPN's creation some of its members,

including Moczulski himself, were detained by the police for 48 hours, but they all appear to have been released subsequently.

The KPN documents published here were made available by Na Lewo, a Polish Revolutionary Marxist journal in Paris. Translation for Labour Focus is by Pawel Jankowski.]

## 2. Interview with Party leader

Interview with KPN spokesperson Leszek Moczulski: part of a long telephone conversation with C. Smulga.

### Why have you proclaimed a new party?

We must reconstitute a political life in Poland, if we want it to play any role at all. Hence the need for open political parties: the only way in which such political life can be institutionalised. If it remains atomised, as it has been in Poland for several decades, society is powerless in the face of a well-organised power structure. The regime will always be able to destroy, deceive and silence it. The role of a political party is to prevent that happening.

**But the Committee of Social Self-Defence (KSSKOR) and the Movement for the Defence of Human and Civil Rights (ROPCIO) were already, in effect, playing the role of parties even if they did not formally proclaim themselves to be 'political parties'. So in what respect is your initiative new?**

Of course, both KSS-KOR and ROPCIO play the role of political forces. But at the same time, they wish to stress that they are 'apolitical' in character, that their goals are above all humanitarian: struggle against repression, for human rights, for application of laws recognised by the regime itself. Both have declared, again quite recently in the case of KSS-KOR, that their aim is not the seizure of power. A political party is something very different: it must seek to come to power in order to transform reality in accordance with its programme. If we want to build a third Republic, then we obviously have to change the regime in this country!

There is a final difference which we consider to be very important. Although there is no lack of militants in either organisation who are 'for independence', the organisations are not themselves fighting for independence. Between 'being for' and acting, there is all the difference between thought and action.

### What are the aims of the Confederation for an Independent Poland (KPN)?

They are set forth in a ten-point ideological declaration. The most important point states: 'The opportunity should not be wasted of creating a new, independent and democratic third Polish Republic. The only road which leads to this goal is to end Soviet domination by liquidating the power of the Polish United Workers Party

(PUWP).' In other words we want to build, in place of the People's Republic of Poland, a political system in which it will not be possible for any single party to exercise power, or for any external force to exert hegemony.

**A party's position on ownership of the means of production has always been considered essential in judging its character. What is your programme in this respect?**

Our party is a heterogeneous force, hence the name 'confederation'. Point One of our statutes declares: 'The KPN is a party which embraces groups both politically and ideologically autonomous, including those which will decide in the course of their development to become independent political parties.' Thus, each current may hold its own point of view on specific problems relating to the form of independent Poland. Some groups belonging to the Confederation — above all, the Joint Movement of Polish Socialists, rooted mainly in the workers of Nowa Huta, Katowice, Lublin and more recently, Lodz — believe that it is necessary to build a true socialist system involving very advanced socialisation of the means of production, but also a system of workers' self-management, or rather control by the associated producers over the means of production. Other groups, holding that statization of the economy leads straight to totalitarianism, envisage a broad field for private initiative. Personally, I start out from the facts: the Polish economy is today under state ownership, if we leave aside agriculture. Even if someone wanted to reprivatise it, there are no owners to whom it could be given back. But even if it were decided to reintroduce a private economy, this could not be followed through in practice. In Poland, there are no social forces and no capital that could create a capitalist sector of any significance alongside that huge state sector whose reprivatisation would certainly not be sought.

### Your party seems to have a certain structure. How did you go about things?

We began to set up the KPN early this year. In January a 'current activities directorate' was appointed to co-ordinate all action aimed at building the party. We also had to develop a programme, as well as laying the ground for a technical infrastructure. Most importantly, we had to establish a structure capable of integrating the new members whom we thought we would recruit as soon

as we became public. Then we held a congress, which, after analysing the political situation, decided on the time at which we should go public.

### Do you think the current situation augurs well for your initiative?

It is not impossible that we shall see disturbances in Poland in the coming months, perhaps even a change in the ruling team. The new team will go in for a certain liberalisation: that is, it will be forced to give ground, while deciding itself where to give ground. Our aim is that it should be forced to recognise our *de facto* existence.

### What has been the response to your initiative?

The authorities wanted to stop us proclaiming our party: over forty people were arrested, including those who were to announce its existence. But we had other groups in reserve, and we were able to carry through the operation in five towns. The brutality of the repression is a sign of its impotence: during the search of an old lady's house in Warsaw—she had already spent over five years in Siberia—the police became particularly violent when they did not find a stock of material for which they were looking. In Lublin they roughed up a sixteen-year-old boy.

We are not afraid of such repression: far from weakening us, it strengthens our members' will to struggle. At the same time, the authorities are trying to unleash a campaign of insinuations about our activity. Pax issues rumours to the effect that we are provocateurs seeking to provide a pretext for Soviet intervention.<sup>1</sup> That's a good one. But in Poland those who are frightened often seek excuses for their inaction. A second example, more serious because it originates in oppositional circles of which we have a high opinion, is the idea that we are trying to take over other people's actions. That's absurd. We readily admit the contribution made by other movements — all we want is to be able to carry out our own activity. Still too often the opposition wastes its energy on useless quarrels. Polemic about political questions, about programme, by all means: indeed, we hope that other programmes will be opposed to our own. But not about corridor gossip!

### 3. Founding Declaration of KPN

We are the next in the long march of the generations. Throughout the 200 years since the time of the Bar Confederation, the 1000-year-old society of the Polish republic has pursued the struggle for its independent statehood. 40 years have passed since, under the blows of Hitlerite Germany and Communist Russia, the Polish state fell. The 35th anniversary of the infamous Yalta accords approaches, where the Western powers, despite their slogans of international justice and democracy, sanctioned the agreement for the final dismemberment of the republic, and the subordination of Poland to Soviet hegemony. The Polish People's Republic, ruled in a totalitarian manner by the Polish United Workers' Party, constitutes the contemporary form of institutionalised Russian rule over Poland.

Today the Polish nation again awakens and raises its head, kept down by slavery. We are entering a new phase in our history. On us falls the burden of the era when the Polish nation will gain its independence and its ability to determine its own destiny. The historical tradition of the republic contains the fact that at moments of national need, its citizens formed confederations in defence of their own rights and in defence of the Fatherland. The formation of a Confederation for an Independent Poland (KPN), is the answer to the call of the times to the Poles not to miss the opportunity to create an independent and democratic Third Republic. The only road leading to this aim is the removal of Soviet domination through the liquidation of the PUWP.

The KPN unites the activities and the efforts leading towards independence. It assembles various groupings with different outlooks on various ideological, social and political questions, yet is faithful to the overriding aim of independence. It forms the focus for the crystallisation of contemporary acts of independence. It seeks to unite all those who are linked together by the belief that:

1) An independent republic is the only form which in the contemporary world guarantees a sufficient existence, capability of growth and the fruition of the individual and national aspirations of the Poles;

2) A republic can be achieved only through realising the principles of the self-determination of nations and is dependent above all on the will and activity of the Poles. The self-determination of the nation depends on the free expression of the social will as to the international sovereignty of the state, the social and state structure and the authority directing the state.

3) National self-determination depends on the free expression of the will of society, in respect of:

- the international sovereignty of the state;
- the social and state system;
- and any kind of authority in the state.

4) The bases of a universally democratic society are the inalienable rights of man and the citizen together with tolerance and respect for the rights of others. A universally democratic society expresses itself in the formation of a state authority based

exclusively on a mandate of confidence, as well as in the action of these authorities in not overstepping the boundaries of the mandate they have been granted, and in as much as they possess the trust of society.

5) The need to insure social justice and the real equality of all citizens demands the full participation of those who work in the administration of the national economy, and the joint control of social property, through the recognition of the interventionist and coordinating role of the state.

6) A condition for the proper functioning of the republic and the prosperity of society and its individual citizens, is the granting of equal rights and responsibilities for all, in relation to themselves, in relation to other people, in relation to society and the nation, in relation to our brother nations with whom history has joined us in common existence on this earth, and in relation to humanity. This sense of responsibility expresses itself in an ideal of service, in the lofty ideals of the Fatherland, while this attitude encourages liberality and the willingness to sacrifice.

7) The historically formed national unity, linking together past and future generations of Poles, increases the strength of the social framework within which the aspirations of individual people can be fulfilled in their entirety. The Polish national consciousness has formed itself in its more than 1000 year process of social and state development which has been accompanied in good and bad days by the existence of the Catholic Church. Irreplaceable in this consciousness is the feeling that the state is the joint possession of the people, of all the citizens, the understanding of the need for national sacrifice in the name of higher goals common to all and ties to the world of values created by Catholicism and to the moral fundamentals of Christianity.

8) From our past and our national traditions we draw a sense of joint responsibility for the freedom and prosperity of brother nations with whom history has united us and which have their own right to self-determination.

9) The nation and the republic form the joint value and the joint responsibility of all citizens.

10) The republic, constituting the joint property and need of all the citizens can belong only to them. We stand witness to her interests in the name of humanity.

The activities of the KPN, and of all its constituent confederated groups as well as all the members of the KPN, are based on the above principles. The confederation is open to all those who agree to recognise these principles. Each confederated group emphasises within its own programme questions of detail.

In forming the KPN, we call on all Poles within the country and in exile, to join in common activities with the aim of freedom and independence.

### 4. Statutes of KPN

The undersigned activists and representatives of various independent, democratic, popular, socialist and nationalist groupings, together with individual activists are united with a common will to regain independence and the right to national self-determination.

— sustained solely by the belief that only through our own endeavours can the Polish nation regain its due rights and realise its own aspirations;

— convinced that the united endeavours of the whole society, based on the maximum of joint responsibility, of tolerance, of mutual respect, and also universal democracy, is the indispensable precondition for the building of an independent republic;

— conscious of national necessity and of the opportunities and consequent responsibilities which history has granted us, we unite in this act of confederation in order to concert our strength and endeavours with the aim of regaining an independent Polish statehood, whose society, authority and character will be determined purely by all citizens.

An integral part of this act of Confederation is the ideological declaration of the Confederation for an Independent Poland together with the temporary statutes which will be binding until the calling of the first democratically convened conference.

This act was written in Warsaw on 1 September 1979 and is signed by the following:

Jozef Bal - worker, Free Trade Unions, Katowice; Krzysztof Bzdyl - economist, Entente Movement of Polish Socialists, Krakow; Wanda Chylicka - authoress, Warsaw; Stanislaw Franczak - agricultural worker, Lublin People's Group; Ryszard Fryga - engineer, Szczecin; Stefan Droiowski - linguist, Krakow; Krzysztof Gasiorowski - social activist, Entente Movement of Polish Socialists, Krakow; Zdzislaw Jamrozek - worker, ROPCIO, Lublin; Stanislaw Janik-Palczewski, Entente Movement of Polish Socialists, Krakow; Tadeusz Janiszak - National Union of Catholics, Wroclaw; Romana Kahl-Stachniewicz - economist, Entente Movement of Polish Socialists and Movement in Defence of Polish Women, Krakow; Roman Kraszewski - scientist, National People's Group of Siedlecko-Podlaska, Siedlice; Stefan Kucharzewski - student, Lublin; Adam Macedonski - artist, Christian Union of Working People, member of the Catholic Institute, Krakow; Nina Bronislaw Milewska - historian, Polish Publishing House, Gdansk; Zygmunt Marowski - National People's

Group of Siedlecko-Podlaska, Siedlice; Antoni Mlynarski - agricultural worker, Lower Silesian Peoples' Group; Leszek Moczulski - editor of **Drogi**, Warsaw; Michal Muzyczka - lawyer, Krakow; Roman Ksciuzek - worker, Free Trade Unions, Katowice; Ryszard Nowak - student, Young Poland Movement, Szczecin; Zdzislaw Paluszynski - worker, Swidnik; Maciej Pstrag-Bielenski - ethnographer, National Union of Catholics, Poznan; Stanislaw Sikora - Lublin; Krzysztof Ostaniec - economist, Warsaw; Tadeusz Stachnik - economist, Warsaw; Tadeusz Stanski - lawyer, Warsaw; Janusz Stolarski, engineer, Wroclaw; Romuald Seremetiev - lawyer, National Union of Catholics, member of the Institute for the National Memory, J. Pilsudski, Leszno; Wojciech Szostak - Lodz; Stanislaw Tor - scientist, Entente Movement of Polish Socialists, member of Free Trade Union, Katowice; Zygmunt Urban - scientist, Legnica; Apolinary Wilk - economist, Warsaw; Ryszard Jan Zywiecki - historian, member of the Institute for the National Memory, J. Pilsudski, Krakow.

# EAST GERMANY

## Bahro Released Under Amnesty

Under an amnesty to mark the 30th anniversary of the founding of the German Democratic Republic, the Marxist theoretician Rudolf Bahro has reportedly been released from prison in East Berlin.

Bahro was arrested in August 1977 immediately after his book **The Alternative in Eastern Europe** was brought out by the West German trade union publishing house. A life-long member of the SED (The East German Communist Party) Bahro had started work on a book in response to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. He aimed to work out the theoretical basis for an alternative to Stalinism.

For this he was sentenced to 8 years' imprisonment on a charge of espionage in June 1978, an act of repression that created an uproar in the international working class movement.



Rudolf Bahro pictured shortly before his arrest in August 1977.

## Steel-worker held

The West German SPD militant Annette Bahner, who was arrested in early summer in East Germany and seemed in danger of facing espionage charges, has now been released as a result of an international labour movement campaign. In Britain, Labour MP Reg Race led a delegation to the East Germany Embassy and was eventually allowed to express his protest to an embassy official only after the delegation had refused to leave the building. Five steelworkers from

Five steelworkers from Karl-Marx-Stadt were arrested at the same time as Bahner and accused of having contacts with her; but despite her release, Bernt Dietz, alleged to be the leader of the five, is still being held by the police and threatened with a political trial. The International Campaign Against Repression, which organised the struggle to free Bahner, is now turning its efforts to building a major campaign in support of Dietz.

## Havemann Appeal on Eve of 30th Anniversary of GDR

[The following statement was issued by the veteran German Marxist Robert Havemann on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the German Democratic Republic. A pre-war communist and leader of the anti-Nazi resistance during the war, Havemann has been constantly harassed since his expulsion from the Communist Party in 1966. The statement was translated for Labour Focus from Frankfurter Rundschau by Ed Murphy.]

1. In the 30 years since its foundation, the GDR has overcome many of the material and political consequences of the Second World War. Through the construction of an efficient, modern industry and significant improvements in the field of agriculture, the material conditions were created for the gradual development of a free socialist social order. In contrast to the Federal Republic, there has been no restoration of the old class rule in the GDR. This rule was ended here following the defeat of the Hitler dictatorship by the allies in 1945, and this with the support of the overwhelming majority of the population at that time. The abolition of private ownership of the means of production removed the material basis for capitalism and created the decisive foundation for the development of socialist relations of production.

2. The reconstruction of the war-devastated country demanded heavy sacrifices from the workers and farmers. It was made more difficult and hindered by the West German and international

corporations, which still hope to liberate the GDR in their sense of the word. They used every possible economic and political means. However, the striving of nations for security and peaceful co-operation has proved stronger. The international recognition of the GDR, the acceptance of both German states in the UN, and the Helsinki Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE)—the result of which was a programme for universal peace and a guarantee of human rights—were an important step on this road.

3. However, the economic and political development of the GDR was not only impeded from outside by the West German and international enemies of socialism. Until 1956 Stalinism—a customary but misleading word to describe the dictatorship of the Party apparatus—was in full bloom in the Soviet Union and hence in those countries occupied by Soviet troops. Certainly, at the 20th Congress of the CPSU accounts were settled with the worst crimes of this tragic period. Nevertheless, the dictatorship of the central Party apparatus, accountable to no democratic control, survives to this day.

4. As late as 1968—i.e., 19 years after the founding of the GDR—important basic rights guaranteed by the first constitution disappeared from the new one. These included the right to strike, and the right of citizens to an independent court of appeal against the decisions of state organs. Also appearing for the first time is a passage that describes the Party as a leading force and basis of the

state. Article One affirms: The German Democratic Republic is a socialist workers' and farmers' state. It is the political organisation of the working people of town and country, led by the working class and its Marxist-Leninist party.

With this the Party is also constitutionally defined as the decisive political organ of the state.

True, the full text of Article 27 of the old constitution—the article guaranteeing freedom of expression—has been incorporated in the new one.<sup>1</sup> It reads: '1. In keeping with the basic values of the constitution, every citizen of the GDR has the right to express his or her opinion freely and publicly. This right cannot be restricted by any service or work contract. 2. Freedom of the press, radio and television is guaranteed.' In the Criminal Code, however, which was further tightened up last June, paragraph 106 on 'anti-state agitation' effectively cancels out Article 27. Any 'discrimination' against the social order can be punished by up to 10 years' imprisonment. And court decisions show that 'discrimination' includes virtually any criticism of Party and government policies — i.e., what is generally understood as freedom of opinion. Rosa Luxemburg expressed it thus: 'Freedom is freedom for those who think differently.' Finally, this year's '3rd Revision of the Criminal Law' contains a large number of regulations that threaten severe punishment in all those cases where it has so far been possible to express a different opinion.

5. It is hard to estimate the number of those in the GDR who yearn for the restoration of the old class order, preferring the capitalist system of the Federal Republic to actually existing socialism. The suppression of any criticism independent of the Party and state, the reprimanding of critical writers, the lack of any opposition in the People's Chamber or of a single critical and independent newspaper, the conditions under which candidates are nominated and elected to the people's representative bodies, the practical ban on travel to the West for all but pensioners and a limited number of privileged people and officials — all these features create the impression that the GDR Party and state leadership sees its opponents as both numerous and dangerous. The 'Wall' is still closed. And there is a great fear that its removal could lead to a mass exodus, as in 1961.

6. It is obvious that all these repressive measures lead to the opposite of what they are intended to achieve. They are supposed to aid the security of the state: but in fact, they are the main reason for its growing insecurity. Under such conditions, any remaining trust between citizens and the state is bound to disappear. 'If you do not trust people, you will receive no trust' — so said the Chinese sage Lao Tse, who lived two-and-a-half thousand years ago. The state's most important political asset is the trust of its citizens. On that depends not only its internal but also its external security — without which no state can survive in the long run. For the trust of its citizens is the precondition for the trust of allied and friendly states.

7. The political system of the GDR and some other East European states is described as 'actually existing socialism'. It is thereby claimed that an 'ideal socialism' exists only in the heads of utopian sectarians; that anyone who indulges in such dreams, thus expressing their dissatisfaction with actually existing socialism, helps only the enemies of socialism. Yet it is precisely in their scorn and suspicion of the dreams of ideal socialism that the opponents and enemies of socialism are at one with the ideologists of actual socialism. They laugh at the simpletons who believe that socialism is possible without suppressing people who think differently, without a police state and the wall. Either freedom or socialism, they say, but never both. And their proof is actual socialism itself.

8. The Communist parties of Western Europe, which have developed a new political orientation known as Eurocommunism, find themselves in a difficult situation as a result of the sharpening tensions in the countries of actual socialism. This has been the case especially since the crushing of the 'Prague Spring' in 1968. On the one hand, they must make credible the view that socialism will uphold, indeed finally secure, all existing freedoms: freedom of expression; freedom of the press; neutrality of the state in questions of ideology and belief; the right of assembly and association; the right of free movement and free choice of one's place of work, including the right to emigrate; the right to strike; equality of all citizens before the law; and the abolition of all forms

of privilege. In suggesting this model of free socialism, they adopt precisely those positions which the ideologists of actual socialism scorn as left-sectarian, petty-bourgeois, utopian and illusionary dreaming; indeed, they are suspected of either consciously or unconsciously serving the interests of the class enemy. As well as being subjected to these accusations and insinuations, they are every day accused by the reactionary bourgeois press and mass media of inventing this free socialism in order to deceive the masses. In this way, therefore, the Eurocommunists are forced to distance themselves from the politics of actual socialism.

On the other hand, they have to identify and solidarise with their 'real socialism' comrades, since they recognise that the abolition of private ownership of the means of production represents an important step on the road to socialism. Also, they have to point to other major achievements: security of employment, price stability, the great increase in educational and cultural levels, the model organisation of the health service, and those other things which have been possible only because the interests of private property have been finally removed from the economy.

The German Democratic Republic is much further advanced on the road to the future, to socialism, than are the German Federal Republic and the other West European industrial states. If we in the GDR were finally to begin the construction of the socialism of which our Eurocommunist comrades dream, so that they would no longer be forced to distance themselves from our actual socialism, then the GDR together with the other socialist countries could become the pace-maker of the great socialist turn in Europe. We have only to take the long-overdue second step: the step towards democratisation through abolition of the party apparatus's uncontrolled power. For some time to come we will certainly need the Party and state apparatuses with all their inescapable weaknesses and contradictions. For the withering away of the state is a protracted process. But it can take place only if every form of arbitrary power is bridled and nipped in the bud by a broad democratic control. Under present conditions the state is not withering away. On the contrary, it is growing and taking possession of everything: it is everywhere, sees everything, and registers it in secret electronic data banks. It conjures up in our minds the ghostly world that Orwell described in 1984.

10. Capitalism has entered its final phase. Soon there will be no more peaceful solutions to its problems. On the one hand, there is inflation, monetary chaos, mass unemployment, an energy and raw materials crisis, pollution and a wasteful, throwaway society; on the other hand, there is hunger and misery for hundreds and millions in the poorer countries. And all this in a world which every day shows itself incapable of mastering its problems, but makes up for this only in its perfect readiness for self-destruction through nuclear war. It is frightening how we waste the short time left us to prevent the great disaster. In this situation socialism is our last remaining hope. But this means that we cannot afford to wait any longer. We must begin, here and now, to realise the great dream of socialism — true to Bebel's watchword 'without democracy no socialism, without socialism no democracy'. (2)

On the occasion of the GDR's thirtieth anniversary, here are a few suggestions for the first steps on this road.

1. All restrictions on freedom of expression should be lifted through appropriate changes in the criminal code — and, in particular, through annulment of the unconstitutional paragraphs 106 (anti-state agitation), 219 (illegal association) and 220 (public defamation).
2. Release and rehabilitation of all those sentenced under these paragraphs.
3. Abolition of all censorship and dissolution of the Copyright Office.
4. Establishment of an independent newspaper.
5. Lowering of the minimum age limit for travel to the West.
6. Publication of these theses in Neues Deutschland.

Berlin • 1 September 1979

Robert Havemann

Notes

1. Havemann is here referring to the new constitution adopted in 1976.
2. August Bebel (1840-1913) was one of the founders of German Social Democracy.

# SOVIET UNION

## The Struggle for Trade Union Rights Continues — By Helen Jamieson

Although the Free Trade Union Association formed by Vladimir Klebanov and his comrades in January 1978 was quickly destroyed by the KGB, the same fate has not befallen the Free Inter-Professional Trade Union Association (SMOT) a second trade union group that was launched in October 1978.

The KGB's initial reaction was to try to crush SMOT through arrests. On 1 November, Mark Morozov, owner of the flat in Moscow where SMOT's founding press conference took place, was arrested and held in Lefortovo prison for 'anti-Soviet agitation'. 5 of the 8 members of SMOT's executive council were also arrested, although some were quickly released.

Since then trials of two members, Lev Volokhonsky and Vladimir Skvirsky have taken place, their sentences being 2 years' labour camp and five years' internal exile respectively. Other members were detained either in prison or psychiatric hospitals and then released. More recently, Vladimir Borisov and Albina Yakoreva, were detained from 6 - 21 August; and Yuri Grimm, a member both of SMOT and of *Poiski* (Searches, a new samizdat journal — see Vol.3 No.3 of *Labour Focus* for information), was also detained for 15 days. Nikolai Nikitin is still awaiting trial charged under Article 190 (slandering the state), as well as Mark Morozov.

From the documents that have reached the West, eg. Information Bulletin No.1 of the SMOT Working Commission in defence of economic, social, religious and political rights of workers in the USSR (dated December 1978) one gets some picture of the kind of people involved in SMOT and the kind of contacts they have.

In contrast to Klebanov's trade union group which tended to be victimised workers with little or no previous record of directly political involvement, many SMOT activists have experience in the democratic movement, some dating back to the 1960s. Moreover, some are still directly involved in the intellectual opposition, eg. Yuri Grimm is a member of SMOT and of *Poiski*. When his house was searched in January 1979 as part of a general raid on *Poiski* members, the KGB confiscated 67 objects: books and materials — among them were the archives of Pyotr Grigorenko (14 folders and a book of his writings on the war and on theory). Another member of both SMOT and *Poiski* is Mikhail Zotov in Togliattigrad whose house has been repeatedly searched in relation to both activities.

Some members, like Vladimir Borisov and Valeria Novodvorskaya had already spent years in psychiatric hospitals for their

dissident activity. (For information on V. Borisov see *Labour Focus* Vol.1 No.1.) Valeria Novodvorskaya was interned from 1969-72 in Kazan for publicly distributing her poems. Her activity in SMOT consisted of giving a series of lectures to 40 workers on literature, philosophy and Russian history. For her activities in SMOT she spent 10 weeks in a Moscow psychiatric hospital.

The activities of the Klebanov group and of SMOT seem to have influenced to some extent the activities of the Moscow Helsinki Monitoring Group: the communiques of the Group take up the defence of victimised workers and it has also produced a lengthy document on the social and economic conditions in the USSR. Viktor Nekipelov from the Moscow Group has attended workers' trials.

The SMOT Information Bulletin and other samizdat documents reveal that in the past period a number of trials of workers have taken place in provincial towns out of sight of foreign journalists. One such example is the case of Edward Kuleshov (see article in this issue). Another is the case of Mikhail Kukobaka, a factory loader, who was tried in the Byelorussian town of Mogilev on 21 June 1979 and sentenced to 3 years of labour camp. Kukobaka had a long history of dissident activity: in August 1968 a day after the invasion of Czechoslovakia, he went to the Czech consulate in Kiev to express his sorrow. From that time on he broke with 'norms': he refused to participate in elections, left the official trade union and wouldn't work on compulsory Saturdays. He was arrested in April 1970 and spent the next six years in prison and psychiatric hospitals for having 'slandering' discussions with workers and for defending Anatoli Kuznetsov (author of the novel *Babi Yar*).

Kukobaka joined the Klebanov group in the spring of 1978 and was arrested again in October 1978. From February to April 1979 he was diagnosed at the Serbsky Institute and was finally declared sane. He defended himself at the trial in June, because his defence lawyer wasn't given enough notice to be able to attend and the judge refused to postpone the trial. He was charged under Article 190 (slandering the state) for the following reasons: his willingness to be a defence witness for Alexander Podrabinek (author of *Punitive Medicine*, now serving a sentence of 5 years' internal exile); his defence of the free trade union groups, and his defence of a worker friend, E. Buzzynikov. (Buzzynikov was arrested in May 1978 and sentenced in the city of Svetlogor for listening to foreign radio broadcasts and for collecting old books, eg. writings of Zinoviev and Trotsky; he was also a friend of Edward Kuleshov's.)

From the transcript of the trial one gets a



Photo: Peter Reddaway

Lev Volokhonsky, 34-year-old wood engraver, member of executive council of SMOT, arrested 19 March 1979 and sentenced on 12 June to 2 years' labour camp for 'slandering the state'.

general picture of Kukobaka's political positions: right to free emigration; multi-party system; right of propaganda for secession of republics from the Soviet state; freedom of speech; no censorship and free flow of information; all citizens equal in political and civil rights; full religious rights; free and full discussion on the general line of the party and leadership in the mass media; the right to pacifism and to criticism of the Warsaw Pact; the right to discuss foreign policy.

Evgeniy Nikolaev, dissident and member both of the Klebanov group and of SMOT, in a document entitled 'The subtle forms of political repression in the USSR' singles out two cases of ordinary workers who suffered repression for joining the free trade union association. Yuri Valov from the Moscow oblast heard about the creation of the Free Trade Union on the foreign radio broadcasts in 1978, left the official trade union and expressed his desire to join the unofficial one. He was kicked out of work and placed in a psychiatric hospital. Vadim Konovalykhyn, a radio expert in Kaliningrad oblast, also heard about the Free Trade Union on the radio, quit the official trade union and expressed a desire to join the unofficial one. He refused at work to give money to the official 'Peace Fund' saying he'd rather give it to the Solzhenitsyn Assistance Fund for political prisoners. He lost his job, was put in a psychiatric hospital, and later sentenced under Article 190 to five years' internal exile in the Kom ASSR.

## Headaches for the Prosecution · By Susannah Fry

The trial last June of a driller at a combine-harvester factory in the Donbas indicates a number of characteristic features of political repression in the USSR today.

The accused person, Edward Kuleshov, is a 44-year-old worker with 2 years' secondary education from Taganrog in one of the Soviet Union's industrial heartlands, the Eastern Ukraine. He was arrested for an activity that has been very widespread over the last few years: taping extracts from the **Gulag Archipelago** read over Radio Liberty and playing tapes to his friends during his birthday party. He was also accused of telling his mates at work that the USSR didn't publish enough books and retarded educational levels, and of saying that the working class was no longer the leading force in the state as was shown by the fact that workers' children can't go to university. The prosecution also charged that he had said the masses were not politically active, there is no freedom of the press and no proper justice.

Such activities and conversations are common enough in the USSR today: for many workers, Kuleshov's statements would have been truisms. So why was he singled out for the arrest? Probably for two reasons: he had a previous political record from activities when he was in his early 20s during the mid-1950s, and this may have made him more forthright than others in expressing his opinions; and secondly because he had written a letter in November 1978 protesting about the imprisonment of a friend of his called Buzinnikov, a letter which eventually found its way to Moscow and then to the West. Though the letter did not figure prominently in the trial, it was almost certainly responsible for attracting

the attention of the KGB.

In line with the Brezhnevite policy of keeping repression as much as possible within the framework of the letter of Soviet law, the KGB assembled the charges which we referred to above, accusing Kuleshov of 'slandering the Soviet state' and assembled a group of witnesses to make the appropriate points at the trial. The key witness was Kuleshov's friend, Slinkov. For good measure, the KGB produced two non-political detainees who were in cells with Kuleshov before his trial: they would report further anti-Soviet slanders made during his detention.

But when the trial opened in Rostov last June, the KGB plan fell apart. Slinkov declared under questioning from Kuleshov's defence lawyer that his pre-trial testimony was false and had been given to the KGB out of cowardice. He also said that he had not been allowed to read and sign his own testimony. Even more remarkable, Kuleshov's two cell-mates repudiated their pre-trial testimony. One, Byespalov, said he had been threatened with a murder charge if he refused to act as a prosecution witness; and the other, Panchenko, said he had been beaten up after his arrest, and had supplied false testimony for fear of being beaten up again. Kuleshov himself declared that he had been beaten up with cudgels during his detention in front of 80 other prisoners without any pretext.

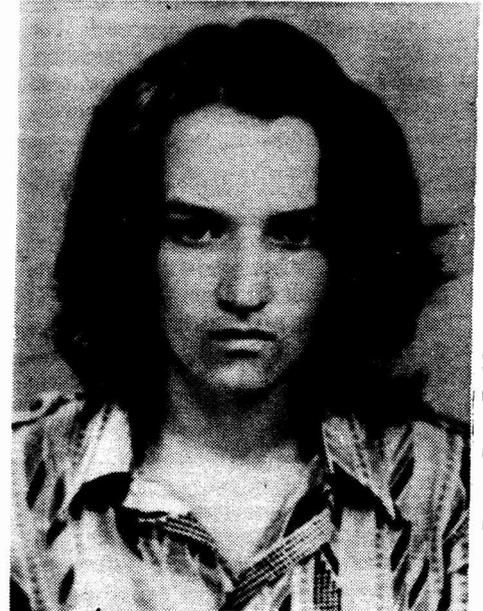
The trial judge refused to accept Slinkov's rejection of his testimony, saying it was a blatant attempt to shift blame from the accused, and he sent Kuleshov to a strict regime labour camp for 3 years.

Such court fiascos are becoming quite

frequent in political trials in Eastern Europe. In Czechoslovakia a number of cases have been exposed by the civil rights movement. One important ingredient in such trials is the tenacity and courage of the defence lawyers — the documents from Kuleshov's trial and subsequent appeal suggest that he had an outstanding lawyer.

One result of affairs like this is to push the judges into the front line in the drive against political protest. Brezhnev's stress on following the letter of the law has the paradoxical result of forcing judges to trample all over the legal code.

### Left Oppositionist



Irina Federova, member of the left opposition youth group, which was active in 1978, and whose leaders are now in prison or psychiatric hospitals.

Photo: Peter Reddaway

## Togliattigrad Workers Explain Need for a Trade Union

*[The following document gives a rare insight into the life of workers at a factory and their powerlessness to affect management decisions. It is taken from Arkhiv Samizdat and translated for Labour Focus by Helen Jamieson.]*

### Appeal to Nowhere ...

We invite anyone who doubts the truth of our letter to visit our city of Togliattigrad; to come to the entrance of our combine and speak with any worker. If you are accepted as a worker, you can count on the frankness of local workers, and any one of them can confirm and even add to what we state below.

We request that the facts we give be verified, because this appeal bears no public signatures. We, a group of workers at the milk combine, live in conditions where every form of honest speech is ruthlessly crushed, where anyone who attempts to openly defend justice, is quickly subjected to persecution. At the same time our eternal silence is probably due to the fact that the authorities take silence as the 'norm', regarding any deviation as some kind of crime.

It is known that there is unemployment in other countries. That is very bad and unfortunate. But there is something else which is many times worse and sadder. And that is the situation in which we, workers, are gradually turned into mute, depersonalised beings: living appendages to machines and equipment; robots who have no need of personal opinions.

Far away—in the West we do not know—there are trade unions which seem to be, or at least could be, the spokesmen of their workers. Once workers have such a union they are no longer robots! They have an organ which can defend them and even oppose the will of the boss. But here?

Here is just one example of life in our combine. A few years ago at a so-called 'trade union electoral-report meeting', the chairwoman of the factory committee, N.K.Maksimova, gave up her responsibilities. In her place Svetlana Salganiuk was 'elected'. But everyone knows that the combine director appointed her to that post, and all that was needed from us was to put our hands up in approval. And we, accustomed as we are to our robot-like conditions, unanimously did this.

Some time went by. The director pilfered and swindled; and finally, a well-known organ took an interest in him. They say there was a trial, but this is just a rumour. The authorities do not like to make known the punishment of any kind of leader. Anyway, our director was simply transferred to another enterprise ... Svetlana Salganiuk remained, and the combine's head engineer, L.I.Gorelova, took the position of director. After some time the rumour spread that the chairperson of the factory committee was trading in factory flats (1) and places in kindergartens and nurseries. Disregarding the waiting-list, she would take bribes in exchange for carpets and carpet strips of which there is a shortage.

The rumour stated that all these machinations were being organised by Svetlana Salganiuk, together with the director and the Party organiser at the factory. Having 'elected' her, we have no right to demand a report on her activities in the trade-union post. We only have the right to be silent ... True, you could ask, why don't we turn to the newspaper? We swear to you, we have no newspapers! They do not belong to the people, but to the authorities. Here's a fact. Last autumn, our combine management allocated the bonuses very unfairly. A group of workers from Factory No.1 (the combine consists of two factories) first appealed to the factory committee. The chairperson, who is obedient to the director's will, refused to support the workers. Only then did the workers send a letter to the local paper **For Communism**. 21 people signed it. The letter was not printed, the workers gained nothing. That is also one of the methods used to train us in massive silence.

How long can one be silent?! It's not just that we have a bad chairperson on the factory committee and no right to demand a report. The real point is that **any** chairperson of the local committee will be chosen by the director and the Party bureau. Even the director is appointed by the Party city committee. The same goes for the Party organiser at the factory. As a result anyone invested with power is an appointee of the city committee. But usually the aims of a city committee are different from those of the workers.

Our propaganda brazenly (there's no other word for it) declares that we, the workers of the USSR, have our own workers' organ in the trade union. Lies!

Here's another fact which bears this out. In February 1978 it became known that the chairperson of our factory trade-union committee was being investigated by the Procurator's Office. But again this was only a rumour. No one gave us a report or informed us about it. In March there was a new rumour: it seemed that S. Salganiuk was no longer the chairperson (of the factory committee); that she had been transferred to the post of manager

of the Technological Section; and that Halina Novikova had been appointed in her place.

The administration and the Party committee didn't even consider it necessary to play out the farce of trade-union elections. Everything was decided behind our backs, in a narrow circle. This was how the director wanted it. He appoints, he removes. But what if the leader of the factory trade union was a workers' representative? Then we alone could decide his or her fate. The whole combine was filled with indignation. We discussed what had happened, rebelled against it, and were silent. Where does one complain?

They say that Svetlana Salganiuk was tried and that she even got a suspended sentence. But in reality she is working, as before, as the manager of the technological section, while her accusers are quietly called to the director's office and proposals are made to get rid of certain people from the combine (Nikolai Masyagin, Raissa Panferova). Afterwards others are afraid even to mention some grievance or other. Any complaint to a higher department is referred back to the object of the complaint. In the case of S. Salganiuk, it only reached the courts because the instigator of the exposure, N. Masyagin, had 'his man' on the relevant bodies.

Very soon we will have trade-union elections in our combine again. But the name of the new trade-union chairperson is already known — L.I. Stepanova. No one doubts that the director's new appointee will be 'approved' at the 'elections', and that she will unquestioningly carry out his wishes. And we will remain as we were — lambs, mutes, robots.

**A group of workers  
Togliattigrad milk combine**

**April 1978**

#### **Footnote**

1. In the USSR the industrial enterprises often control housing and other non-industrial facilities for their workers.

## **Petro Vins Gives new information on Ukrainian Helsinki Group**

New information about the Ukrainian Helsinki Monitoring Group has been given by Petro Vins, son of the unofficial Soviet Baptist leader Gyorgy Vins who was released in April of this year along with Aleksandr Ginzburg, Valentyn Moroz and others, and sent to the West. Petro Vins, aged 23, was a member of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group and spent one year in a labour camp, before coming to the West.

Vins stated that despite the harsh repression against the Group (seven members have been imprisoned) new members have joined. One example is Vladimir Malenkovich, a Kiev physician and radiologist, who was drafted into the Soviet Army in 1968 as a doctor. When Malenkovich's unit was sent to Czechoslovakia, he refused to go: he was

then arrested, but his case was hushed up and he was discharged from the army following a trial by his fellow officers. Other new members are Petro Sichko and his son Vasyl, both of whom were arrested on 5 July 1979 in Lviv. According to Information Bulletin No.18 of the unofficial Moscow Commission to Investigate Psychiatric Abuses, Petro Sichko has been kept in solitary confinement in a KGB detention prison, while Vasyl was forcibly interned in a psychiatric hospital in Lviv. Vasyl Sichko had studied journalism at the Kiev University but was expelled in 1973 because of his father's activity; after numerous failures at appealing the decision, he renounced his Soviet citizenship and requested to emigrate in order to be able to study. In January 1978 he was interned in a

psychiatric hospital in Ivano-Frankivsk.

Vins reported that the Ukrainian Helsinki Group has been able to draw on a wide circle of sympathisers or 'corresponding members' in collecting information about human rights abuses in the Ukraine. It has now published a total of 18 memoranda and 4 information bulletins concerning violations of the Helsinki Accords: the last to have reached the West is dated March 1979. He also stressed that in the recent period greater co-operation and understanding has developed between the national and civil rights movement, and the religious, in particular Baptist, movement.

## **Deportation of Crimean Tatars**

Since October of last year, the long campaign on the part of the Crimean Tatars to return to their homeland has been facing harsher repression from the authorities.

Hundreds of thousands of Tatars were deported to Central Asia by Stalin and despite Khrushchev's formal recognition of their right to return to the Crimea, the

authorities have gone to great lengths to prevent resettlement. At present there are between one and a half and two thousand registered Tatar families in the Crimea and another six or seven hundred returned families without official registration.

As a result of a decision last October, about 100 of these unregistered families were again

deported during the following six months and those who remain have had water and electricity cut off and have been denied jobs.

In recent years Tatars had been allowed to settle in oblasts bordering on the Crimea — there are 30,000 now in Krasnodarsk, for example. But this policy has now been reversed: they are no longer allowed to buy

homes or register there either. Since the Spring the police have also renewed their drive to break the powerful Tatar protest movement that has been organising mass campaigns for Tatar rights since the 1960s. On 4 May veteran Tatar leader, Elbar Shabanov, was given 3 years in a strict regime labour camp on a trumped-up charge of hooliganism. Another Tatar leader, Mameda Chobanov, who had played

a leading part in the defence campaign for Mustafa Dzhemilev in the mid-1970s, has been held in Simferopol prison since 3 April on a charge of slandering the Soviet state. Another leader, Enver Ametov, had his Crimean home destroyed by the police on 29 March.

On 4 April, the Tatar leader Reshat Dzhemilev was arrested and charged in

Tashkent for passing information about the movement to Western correspondents. In June his wife was illegally prevented from travelling to Moscow to arrange for a defence lawyer for her husband. The most famous of the Tatar leaders, Mustafa Dzhemilev, sentenced to 4 years' internal exile in the spring, has been in Kolyma, notorious for its prison camp in Stalin's day, since June.

# ROMANIA

## All Trade Unionists All the Time? By Patrick Camiller

There have been times when various East European regimes have tried to fool all Western trade unions all the time. And some Western trade unionists are no doubt still prepared to be permanently taken for a ride. So far the Romanian regime, perhaps closest in style to Stalin's Russia, has seemed to believe that it could carry on regardless of the changing mood in the international labour movement. But now there are signs that, despite Ceausescu's massive public relations drive, abetted by at least one prominent Labour MP, even Bucharest is finding it increasingly difficult to cover up its repressive operations.

Between 14 and 19 May of this year, a high-level NALGO delegation made a visit to Romania at the invitation of the USIASCP-Uniunea Sindicatelor, a union with a range of membership roughly similar to that of NALGO. The official report of the trip, presented to the July meeting of the International Relations Committee, reproduces the various social and economic statistics which were made available, and goes on to describe the visits to a hospital and technical college. Although the delegation registers the undoubted progress made in post-war Romania, it indicates at certain points that it was aware of the 'show-piece' character of the institutions it visited. Certainly the ultra-modern Bucharest teaching hospital, with its three-bed wards and superb equipment, has little in common with the notoriously under-equipped mass health service.

However, as the NALGO delegation state, 'undoubtedly the most important meeting of the visit was that with Mme. Filipas', Secretary of the Central Council of the General Trade Union Federation of Romania. Used to a style of meeting that has become traditional in East-West trade-union contacts, Mrs Cornelia Filipas and her colleagues 'had undoubtedly thought that this would be an occasion for the exchange of social pleasantries, with charming compliments to each other's countries'. But the NALGO delegation took an extremely important step in breaking with this tradition, when they decided to concern themselves with the 1977 Jiu Valley miners' strike and the formation earlier this year of the Free Trade Union of the Working People of Romania (SLOMR in its Romanian initials). Although the NALGO representatives do not seem to have felt able

or well enough informed to argue the points through, their report gives a good flavour of that mixture of inconsistency, deceit and bluster with which Romanian officialdom reacts to any suggestion of 'dissidence'. The extracts printed below start at the point where the delegation has just raised the question of the strike and the free trade union with Mrs Filipas.

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"Some members of the Romanian party looked more than a little disconcerted when these questions were put and it was significant that immediately Mme. Filipas sent for a political interpreter rather than entrusting the interpreting to the person attached to our party since arrival. She delivered a lengthy answer, at times somewhat heavily, with frequent gesticulations ...

The subject of the Jiu Valley, she said, was not a new one. Many times the TUC and the miners' union representatives had asked about the 'alleged strike' ...

There had been no strike, said Mme Filipas, there had been no repression of it (despite the allegation in the West of the use of troops). Miners with some grievances had had the opportunity of airing them with the Party/President and efforts were now being made to attend to their problems ...

These grievances had led to the Jiu Valley miners holding a 'working meeting' with the General Secretary of the Romanian Communist Party/President of the Socialist Republic of Romania, Nicolae Ceausescu and they had debated all these problems with him. This was not a 'one off' meeting for he had had similar meetings in other parts of the country. The workers were educated to use these meetings to raise problems. The mining authorities had been called upon to answer why they had not implemented all the mechanisation which was one of the miners' chief concerns ... (1)

At the time of this so-called strike fifteen British miners were visiting the Jiu Valley. (This contrasted strongly with the information which the delegation had received from a British source, namely, that Joe Gormley had been in Romania at this time but instead of being shown the Jiu Valley as was customary he was taken to another mining area. The NUM have no knowledge of any Headquarters delegation of fifteen miners to Romania at that time, though it was always possible that a regional

group might have been there) ...

On free trade unions, Mr Len Murray had written to Romania raising this subject. There were no so-called free trade unions. However, there were people who said they had organised free trade unions. The trade union law adopted in 1945 and approved by King Mikhail the First laid down in one of its articles that any group of fifteen persons being of the same profession at the same place of work could organise themselves into a trade union. (This was most unusual for the present regime to refer to the former King in this way.)

Who are those, demanded Mme Filipas, who say they belong to free trade unions? One was a priest. He was a professor of a theological seminar in Bucharest and received his first 'condemnation' when he was fifteen years old during the war (1941). This occurred just before the fascist groups arrived in Romania. After the end of the war, he was arrested several times but the regime had allowed him to follow faculty courses and he had graduated. He was encouraged as a professor at the theological seminar. At this point Mme Filipas emphasised that priests did not belong to trade unions. It was pointed out by way of a statement of fact that NALGO had, indeed, among its members those priests who work in hospitals. This caused some surprise to the Romanians as they had never heard of those representatives of the Church militant here on earth, namely, the hospital and prison chaplains! Because of the indiscipline in his profession the leadership of the Metropolitan Church had decided to remove him from the University to a church in Bucharest. Another person involved was a sixty-six year old professor who had retired at age sixty and who called himself a Baptist prophet!

Propaganda had been carried out against Romania by different circles who were enemies of the State. She contended that Radio Free Europe had referred to names and people who did not exist but those who were interested were free to come to speak to anyone and visit any factory.

Mme Filipas wanted to stress again that not everyone was satisfied with the regime or the progress made, but if they spared less for development, they could not achieve what they wanted. Thirty-four years had been a short time and those who have been in Romania thirty-four, twenty, fifteen years

ago — even if they were against the system — had to recognise progress. Development meant that sacrifices must be demanded of the Romanian people.

Mme Filipas attacked the press abroad which she contended did not pay attention to the achievements of the six million members of the trade unions but preoccupied itself with the (literally) few who represented nothing. The constitution of the so-called free trade unions had been, she alleged, worked out in Paris. There were no dissidents in Romania yet an article had been published in Italy on so-called dissidents. Goma, a Romanian writer in Paris, was supposed to be a famous author but was unknown in Romania. (It was Paul Goma who announced the formation of a

Romanian free trade union at a press conference in Paris early this year) ...

The above represents the State 'line' on the Jiu Valley incidents and the attempt to form free trade unions i.e. that there never was a strike and there are no so-called free trade unions. Those said to be attempting to form them were denigrated. Continued discussion would not change that official position. Mme Filipas and our hosts clearly were jolted by our questions and we have made a small contribution to the attempt to bring home to Romania that the world outside its boundaries does care and is concerned with these problems. USIASCP wants now to visit us and if a delegation is received, we should take yet another opportunity of pressing home these points "

#### Note

1. According to an account of the strike signed by 22 Jiu Valley miners and printed in **Labour Focus** Vol.1 No.5, it was only after the miners had 'arrested' Party leaders Ilie Verdetz and Gheorghe Pana and persistently called for a meeting with Ceausescu that the President finally agreed to speak to the 35,000 striking miners. The letter also speaks of the harsh repression and massive introduction of 'party cops' that followed Ceausescu's visit and the end of the strike. Much time was needed to complete this work of 'pacification', mixed with judicious material concessions, before the Jiu Valley once again became open for ceremonial conducted tours by visiting western trade unionists.

## Labour Party, CP, Lawyers Protest Czech Arrests

Both the Labour Party NEC and the leadership of the British Communist Party have supported the International Appeal for the release of the 10 VONS members facing trial for subversion in Czechoslovakia. 50 Constituency Labour Parties have also signed the appeal, and it has also been endorsed by members of the European Assembly from the Socialist and Labour Parties in Germany, Italy, France, Belgium, Britain and Ireland.

The Labour Party NEC meeting of 25 July 1979 unanimously passed the following resolution proposed by the Eastern Europe Solidarity Campaign Hon. Chairman Eric Heffer MP:

'The arrest of 10 prominent Charter 77 signatories at the end of May on charges of subversion is the most serious act of repression seen in Czechoslovakia since the 1950s.

All ten face prison sentences of between 3 and 10 years. They include two of the Charter 77 spokespeople and the editor of the Charter 77 Information Bulletin.

When Charter 77 was created, the Labour Party along with other socialist and Communist parties in Western Europe urged the Czechoslovak authorities to respect the right of the movement to operate freely. The Labour Party NEC has viewed with alarm the repeated evidence that the Czechoslovak authorities have been harassing and imprisoning supporters of Charter 77. The NEC protested most recently at the imprisonment of the respected communist spokesperson for the movement, Jaroslav Sabata, at the beginning of this year.

These latest arrests indicate that the Czechoslovak authorities are prepared to flout the views of the overwhelming majority of socialists and trade unionists throughout Western Europe. They seem set on a policy of wholesale repression against civil rights campaigners in their country.

1. The NEC reaffirms its call for the release of all imprisoned Charter 77 supporters, including those arrested at the end of May.

2. It supports the International Appeal already signed by more than 77 Labour Members of Parliament and agrees to send a member of the NEC to present the Appeal to the Czechoslovak Embassy.

3. It welcomes the creation of the Charter 77 Defence Fund to provide assistance to the families of the Charter 77 supporters in prison and encourages Labour Party members to support the Fund.

4. It welcomes the decision to send Peter Archer MP, representative of the All-Party Parliamentary Human Rights Committee to observe the trial of the 10 Chartists in Prague and welcomes any steps taken by the Society of Labour Lawyers to permanently monitor the legal problems of the arrested Charter 77 supporters in the CSSR.

5. It encourages the formation of a group of Labour Members of Parliament to monitor conditions in Czechoslovakia in the field of civil rights to keep the NEC informed on these matters.

6. The representative who presents the Appeal at the Embassy should communicate these NEC decisions to the Ambassador, expressing the Party's great concern at the course which the Czechoslovak authorities appear to have embarked upon.'

Acting on this resolution the NEC of the Labour Party approached the Czechoslovak Embassy with the intention of arranging an interview. Tony Benn, Alex Kitson and Joan Lester were chosen to make the representations on behalf of the NEC. Their request to see the Czechoslovak ambassador first met with evasion. The ambassador was said to be unavailable and out of London. Then the Embassy was forced to come out into the open and directly refused to see the NEC delegation, stating that it constituted an act of gross interference in the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia. The Labour Party NEC then protested at the attitude of the Embassy, and Joan Lester, chairperson of the Labour Party's International Committee, said that the party would continue to pursue the matter.

At the same time the Communist Party's Political Committee decided to indicate its support for the demand that the 10 Chartists be released by asking the party's Assistant General Secretary, Reuben Falber, to sign the International Appeal in his official capacity.

In response to a call from the Eastern Europe Solidarity Campaign, the following CLPs also endorsed the Appeal and protested to the Czechoslovak Embassy:

Abingdon, Ashford, Batley and Morley, Berwick and E. Lothian, Bournemouth West, Bradford North, Buckingham, Cambridgeshire, Chingford, Crewe, Croydon South, Eastleigh, Edinburgh North, Edinburgh Pentlands, Faversham, Guildford, Halesowen and Stourbridge, Hamilton, Hendon South, Hitchin, Holborn and St. Pancras South, Isle of Wight, Kelvingrove, Kidderminster, Leicester South, Lincoln, Maidstone, Manchester Ardwick, New Forest, Newham North East, North Fylde, Northwich, Penistone, Pontefract, Pontypool, Rutland, St. Pancras South, Sheffield Halham, Sheffieldind Park, Sidcup, South Norfolk, Tiverton, Wallasey, West Bromwich West, West Edinburgh, West Salford, Windsor and Maidenhead, Worthing, Yeovil.

In response to the Labour Party NEC resolution's proposal, a committee of very distinguished socialist lawyers was launched at a press conference in London on 14 August and prominently reported in the **Morning Star** and **Tribune**. The well-known civil liberties lawyer, Rock Tansey explained that the Lawyers' Committee to Defend the Rights of Political Defendants in Czechoslovakia had the following aims:

- 1) To establish links with the Committee to Defend Those Unjustly Prosecuted in Czechoslovakia;
- 2) To assist defendants in the trials in Czechoslovakia, British barristers being able and willing to assist the defendants if requested;
- 3) To study the Czechoslovak criminal code and constitution, to analyse the charges and evidence against the Chartists, and to consider the verdicts and sentences imposed, if any;
- 4) To defend the rights of defence lawyers to defend vigorously and resourcefully and courageously without fear of reprisals or state harassment;
- 5) To provide information to, and to develop awareness among, lawyers and legal and civil liberties associations in the West, and to encourage them to establish links with the Committee to Defend Those Unjustly Prosecuted in Czechoslovakia.

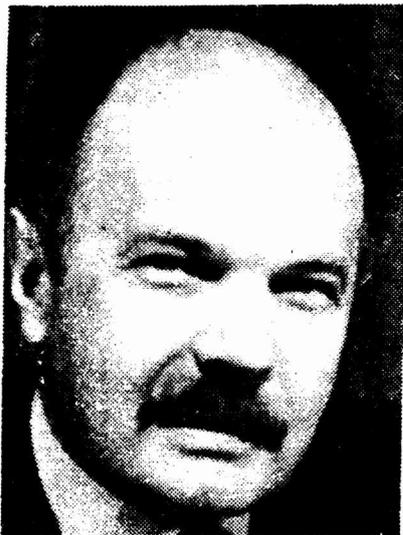
Among the Committee's members are: John Platts-Mills, QC, President of the Haldane Society; Bruce Douglas-Mann, Chairman of the Society of Labour Lawyers; and Peter Archer, QC, MP, Solicitor-General in the last Labour administration.

## The Campaign in Canada — by Taras Lehkyj

The Canadian campaign in defence of the arrested Chartists has received widespread support in the labour movement and socialist public. Representatives of the Toronto and Edmonton Committees in Defence of Soviet Political Prisoners (CDSPP) delivered the International Appeal with 160 signatures to the Czechoslovak Embassy in Ottawa on 4 July. Original signatories included: members of the National Executive of the militant Canadian Union of Postal Workers; President Andy Stewart and other executive members of the 150,000-strong Public Service Alliance; officers of the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL); provincial and federal parliamentarians of the New Democratic Party (the third largest Canadian party, roughly equivalent to the British Labour Party); rank-and file unionists, radical intellectuals and community organisers from across the country.

Antonin Simicek, Chargé d'Affaires at the Embassy, accepted the petition on behalf of the Czechoslovak authorities and was quick to assert that due process of law would be observed in the detention and possible trial of these Chartists. When pressed further by CDSPP representatives, Simicek stated that any trials would be open to the public.

A Charter 77 Defence Committee was formed immediately after this visit to Ottawa, made up of prominent signatories to the Appeal living in Toronto: Jan Duksza, NDP Member of the Ontario Legislature, Terry Meagher, Secretary Treasurer of the Ontario Federation of Labour, Louis Lenkinski of the OFL, Barbara Adams,



Jan Duksza of the Canadian Charter 77 Defence Committee

NDP alderwoman, Rev. Clarke MacDonald representing the Canadian Council of Churches, Gregory Baum, philosopher and theologian at the University of Toronto and members of the Toronto CDSPP. This committee of socialists and trade-unionists approached James Lockyer, a well-known civil rights lawyer and NDP parliamentary candidate, to represent it as an observer at the upcoming trials in Prague.

Lockyer and Gordon Wright, a civil liberties lawyer from Edmonton, have applied for visas at the Czechoslovak Embassy, requesting to be seated at an open trial. (James Lockyer was the observer for Amnesty International at the extradition hearing of Leonard Peltier, a Native Peoples militant which took place in Vancouver in 1977.)

National newspapers and radio have given significant coverage to the arrests of the Chartists and the ongoing defence campaign in Europe and North America. Articles and broadcasts about the Canadian observers to the trials attracted new members to the Charter 77 Defence Committee in August. The International Appeal continues to be circulated, signed and delivered to the Embassy in Ottawa. These and other activities have provided defence activists with important new opportunities to make the fate of the Chartists known within the labour movement, and to increase pressure upon the Czechoslovak authorities to release the arrested civil rights campaigners.

A rally in defence of Charter 77 took place in Toronto on 21 September attended by several hundred people. There were speakers from the trade unions and the NDP, and first-hand accounts were given of the civil rights movement in Czechoslovakia. Money will be raised to cover the costs of sending the observers to Prague and for the movement in Czechoslovakia itself.

By Taras Lehkyj

## Safran International — By Oliver MacDonald

Unnoticed by the *Financial Times* or the *Wall Street Journal*, a new multi-national has been launched during the last year. Like all such animals, Safran (in English Saffron) does in fact have a single national directing centre. But uniquely, Safran is banned from doing business in its own home base. Equally unusual, its operations, which span two continents and six countries, are backed by virtually no capital. Safran runs on an unusual mixture of musical and political commitment. It is the business side of the Czech musical underground.

In little more than a year, Safran has expertly produced no less than five LPs devoted exclusively to the music of the Czech underground. Anyone wishing to grasp the temperament and outlook of the young people who have fuelled the activities of Charter 77 during the last 3 years must acquire these records. But the work of the Czech musicians will also stand in its own right as an important new strand in the musical experience of alienated youth in Europe's great soulless industrial labyrinths.



Cover of a Safran record of Vlasta Tresnak's music.

The first recording of Czech underground music to be produced in the West was work by the Plastic People of the Universe which came out last year together with a very valuable pamphlet on the experience of that group. Edited by our own Ivan Hartel and French socialists around the Paris paper *Libération*, it makes available the music of

the avant-garde musicians in Czechoslovakia whose work is not easily understandable to a mass audience.

The records produced by Safran have so far concentrated on the more lyrical strand of Czech underground music, associated with the names of singers like Jaroslav Hutka, Vlasta Tresnak and Svatopluk Karasek. Safran's first record also contained songs by Czechoslovakia's leading singer of the 1960s, Marta Kubisova, until this year one of the spokespersons of Charter 77. During the 1970s the work of people like Hutka had a following of many thousands of young people — his last concert before going into exile in 1978 drew an audience of 6,000.

During a tour of Canada this summer, Jaroslav Hutka spoke to two of *Labour Focus's* collaborators about his own life and about the origins and development of Safran.

Hutka began singing at the age of 18 in 1966. At that time, he says, 'a large number of young people were gathering together in a loose cultural movement and at the end of 1966 the police launched an offensive against it. They forcibly cut off boys' long

hair and arrested many young people, sending them to prison or mental institutions. I was ordered to join the army, but because I didn't want to I was sent to a mental institution for 1½ months. They must have diagnosed me as really crazy because after my release I wasn't called up! At that time young people with long hair couldn't go on public transport, couldn't go into pubs, theatres or cinemas. I considered such discrimination a disgrace both to the regime and to the population — at that time the adult population didn't lift a finger to support us. At that time and during 1968 we played on the streets. It was really a great experience, with crowds of people gathering to listen to us.'

Hutka says that in 1968, the cultural movement of which he was part did not have directly political concerns. Indeed, he says that 'the population was trying to create their own atmosphere for living without being surrounded by political factors'. After the invasion the cultural movement continued to flourish through 1969, and Hutka himself became very well known through many public performances. In 1970 the crackdown hit cultural circles strongly and demoralisation set in.

Hutka then explains the origins of Safran:

*'I was writing and singing philosophical songs and I wanted to go my own way acting according to moral and humanistic values rather than playing the government's political games. I decided to become a wandering singer and to create another, a second world.*

*'In 1970-71 I gathered together several people and we formed Safran. Merta, Tresnak and about 8 other people were involved. Jiri Pallas was our technical*

*manager. We tried to communicate with the people throughout the country. We became a very popular group and continued to operate until I was arrested and put on trial in 1977. When it became impossible for Safran to work inside the country, we exported our efforts and set up a record company, also called Safran. Jiri Pallas, who left the country at the end of 1977, heads the company from his new home in Sweden. Our aim is to produce records by singers and musicians no longer allowed to perform or record in Czechoslovakia. We*



Cover of a Safran record of Jaroslav Hutka's music.

*hope that as many as possible of these records will find their way back into Czechoslovakia. When Safran was working as a group inside Czechoslovakia, we asked people from the West not to write anything specific about us because it could have jeopardised our activity. But now, of course, we would like our efforts to be widely known.'*

The Safran group supported Charter 77, Hutka himself was pushed into exile; other singers whose work is now available through

Safran recordings remain in Czechoslovakia: Svatopluk Karasek was arrested and imprisoned along with members of the Plastic People in 1976; Vlasta Tresnak faces severe police harassment — he was arrested and interrogated in Prague this summer.

Jiri Pallas, the driving force behind Safran's production, works from his sitting room in Uppsala during his spare time. He has been given great assistance by a left-wing Swedish cultural movement around a journal called *Bild i Folket*. Co-operation has also come from exiles in other countries: the Tresnak record was produced jointly with the Czech revolutionary socialist journal *Informacni Materialy* in Berlin; and the latest record, of Karasek's music, has been co-produced by 'The Wheels of God', another company of the musical underground run by Paul Wilson in Toronto, Canada. Wilson lived in Czechoslovakia for ten years, became a singer with the Plastic People and was deeply involved in the underground until the police forced him into 'exile' in his country of origin last year. *Palach Press* in this country, managed by Jan Kavan, is helping with distribution.

This does not end the list of potential helpers by any means: any reader of *Labour Focus* can join Safran as an international rep. if they wish. All they need to do is buy the records and either take them themselves into Czechoslovakia as presents to people they meet on holiday, or get their friends to do so. If a holiday in Czechoslovakia is too expensive, they can become a 'shareholder' in this expanding multinational by sending a small donation to Safran, c/o Jiri Pallas, Aug. Sodermans Väg 61, 75249 Uppsala, Sweden. Records can also be obtained from the British distributor, *Palach Press*, 19 Earlam House, 35 Mercer St., London WC1.

## The Case of Nikolai Bukharin

**The Case of Nikolai Bukharin, by Ken Coates (Spokesman, Nottingham, 1978, 104 pages, £1.25.)**

One of the most difficult tasks facing the new generation of socialist dissidents in Eastern Europe—and especially the Soviet Union—is the reconstruction of the true history of the October Revolution which set into motion the chain of events leading to the establishment of the oppressive totalitarian system they are faced with today. How was it possible for the great promise of a socialist future to turn into the dark nightmare of Stalinism? But the archives remain closed for all but a small minority, and the findings of the *samizdat* writings of Roy Medvedev and other non-conformist historians remain suppressed. The only clue to the possible existence of an alternative history of the Bolshevik movement to that of the official hagiographies available to the general Soviet and East European reader are the dark and hostile references to former leaders like Bukharin, Zinoviev, Trotsky, Kamenev and Radek in these texts.

Nikolai Ivanovich Bukharin, whom Lenin in his *Testament* referred to as 'the rightful favourite of the whole Party', was one of the most brilliant of a generation of Bolshevik leaders so rich in outstanding individuals. One of the chief economic theoreticians of the Party, co-author (with Preobrazhensky) of the famous *ABC of Communism*, he reached the height of his career in the years between Lenin's death and 1929, as head of the Communist International (since 1926) and editor of *Pravda*. On 15 March 1938 Bukharin was executed by Stalin following an eleven-day trial for, in the words of the official indictment, 'having on the instructions of the intelligence services of foreign states hostile to the Soviet Union formed a conspiratorial group named the "bloc of the Rights and Trotskyites" with the object of espionage ... wrecking, diversionist and terrorist activities, undermining the military power of the USSR, provoking a military attack on the USSR, dismembering the USSR and severing it from the Ukraine, Byelorussia, the Central Asiatic Republics,

Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and the Maritime Region of the Far East for the benefit of the aforementioned states and lastly, with the object of overthrowing the Socialist social and state system existing in the USSR and of restoring capitalism, of restoring the power of the bourgeoisie.'

Ken Coates devotes over a third of his booklet on the Bukharin case to painstakingly refuting once again this indictment, however obvious its trumped-up nature may be today even to those who retain a good deal of faith in the 'essentially progressive' nature of the Soviet regime. For the campaign to rehabilitate Bukharin, initiated by Bukharin's son Yuri Larin himself and spearheaded in the West by the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, is aimed primarily at the judicial rehabilitation that should, were it not for political obstacles, be an automatic consequence of the already completed judicial rehabilitation of many of Bukharin's co-defendants in the 1938 trial, and at winning support for such a move from the official communist

movement in both East and West. There are indeed indications that Khrushchev himself was contemplating Bukharin's rehabilitation but was vetoed by Western CP leaders like Thorez and Pollitt who feared the likely repercussions within their own parties.

And this is the crux of the problem, the supreme justification for the campaign conducted on behalf of a long-dead former Bolshevik as well as the supreme obstacle in the way of a small formality of a judicial act: the public rehabilitation of just one individual of N.I. Bukharin's standing would open a Pandora's Box of further demands for the rehabilitation of others —

as the Italian communists Spriano and Tortorella put it: 'If today we are fighting for Bukharin, tomorrow we shall fight for Trotsky' — that could not but eventually lead to the complete collapse of the monstrous edifice of lies constructed by Stalin and so desperately shored up by his successors.

Coates' pamphlet is a useful weapon in this campaign and a lot of research has obviously gone into it. One criticism, however, should be made: that despite all the abundant detail about the accusations and the trial, about Khrushchev's intentions and how they were left

unrealised, about the international support for the campaign and the commendable guide to further reading, the real Bukharin—his career, theoretical work, and the politics he stood for in the crucial period following Lenin's death—remains somewhat obscure. There is no need to obscure the controversies surrounding Bukharin while fighting for his rehabilitation, on the contrary: the importance of this revolutionary leader, and the need for the cloak of vilification to be lifted off his true role in Soviet history, would stand out even clearer.

Günter Minnerup

## Protest — Public or Private?

*[We print below a letter by V. Bakhmin, a Soviet psychiatrist who was a co-founder in January 1977 of the unofficial Moscow group on psychiatric abuses. Since then the group has issued about 1000 pages of documents consisting mostly of bulky Information Bulletins (18 issues to date). The letter was translated by Peter Reddaway for Psychiatric News, but we believe that it will also be of interest to readers of Labour Focus.]*

I have had the opportunity (rare in our circumstance) to read a series of letters in *Psychiatric News* which debate the most effective methods of combating abuses of psychiatry in the Soviet Union. As a member of the Working Commission to Investigate the Use of Psychiatry for Political Purposes, I would like, if with some delay, to express some views on this debate, views that are broadly shared by my colleagues in the commission.

In a letter with which I agree on many points, M.H.Nelson, M.D., noted quite correctly that any attempt to act is better than complete inaction [*Psychiatric News*, 20 October 1978].

On the other hand, to those who favour 'quiet diplomacy' and private professional contacts I must say that in my view this approach calls for many caveats. First, it is not effective unless there is already a broad and vigorous public campaign. The authorities—who are accustomed to lying and hypocrisy and who try to spread their influence all over the world—are very sensitive to world opinion, even if they do not appear so on the surface. Only under pressure from broad campaigns of protest or out of the desire to prevent their development do the authorities make concessions to 'quiet diplomacy'. (Not surprisingly, this method usually works to rescue only well-known people.)

The method of private contacts should not be overestimated. Sometimes, it does indeed give positive results, but only in specific cases. The abuse as a whole remains unaffected. Moreover, an illusion is created that the situation has improved, while hundreds of completely unknown people continue to suffer in psychiatric prisons and millions of ordinary people remain in ignorance of the shameful practice of psychiatric terror.

Not surprisingly, some Western psychiatrists are later upset and assert that they were misunderstood and their statements were distorted. As M.H.Nelson correctly writes, 'Private efforts are very often used as publicity to legitimise unethical practice. I would say that the authorities never let such chances pass.'

The experience of our commission shows that punitive psychiatry in the Soviet Union fears publicity above all. And especially publicity reaching psychiatric colleagues, who cannot so easily be diverted by references to their lack of medical qualifications. Precisely for this reason, the leaders of Soviet psychiatry reacted with such morbid defensiveness to the decisions of the World Psychiatric Association congress in Honolulu. For the same reason, steps were taken so remarkably quickly to try to discredit the psychiatric reports of our consultant psychiatrist, Dr. A. Voloshanovich.

Fearing exposure of their activities, these psychiatric politicians speak in the name of all Soviet psychiatrists and try to appeal to the feelings of professional solidarity of psychiatrists in other countries and in this way turn them into their collaborators.

What methods, then, are most acceptable for honest psychiatrists in the West who appreciate the danger for humanity of psychiatric abuse and want to help the victims of 'punitive medicine'?

It seems to me that quiet diplomacy is also in some ways ethically unacceptable. It should be left to politicians. It belongs to the sphere of trade-offs and secret negotiations. Such an approach is often dominated by professional and group interests, not by humanitarianism and the desire to resist evil. For some reason, it is always forgotten that private negotiations and contacts of this sort are usually unequal, resembling a game in which one of the players is a cheat. On the one side, there are psychiatrists concerned about the prestige of their profession, speaking frankly about their problems and doubts. On the other are psychiatric politicians who do and who will always do what they are ordered to and who will happily distort facts and deceive while simultaneously considering themselves patriots.

The methods can be varied. But one should not keep quiet and pretend the problem doesn't exist.

In our opinion, one of the most effective methods is for psychiatrists to send various sorts of official and private inquiries, letters, and petitions, professionally composed and relating to each specific known case. These letters and petitions are best sent to those particular organisations and individuals who are directly responsible for the abuses. At the same time, it is essential to inform psychiatrists and the public about both the letters and replies to them. In this way the publicity generated excludes the possibility of outright mendacity by officials (of the sort used in the Klebanov case).

The absence of replies to professionally composed inquiries of this sort is also in itself indicative.

Vyacheslav Bakhmin,  
Baikalskaya ul., d.46, Korp.2, kv.52,  
107529 Moscow.

## Inaccuracy!

Dear Editor:

The 'Chronology of Political and Intellectual Opposition Under the Kádár Regime: 1956-1978' by Bill Lomax, published in your last number, is a fine contribution to the reconstruction of history of post-war Hungary, made so boring by the Orwellian historiography of silence. There are, of course, some inevitable inaccuracies of minor importance in it, as Dr. Lomax himself supposes in his preface.

I would like to correct just one point: '1962: Expulsion from Communist Party and Government posts of certain persons responsible for repression after 1956.' This was not the case. The authorities did not go so far as to denounce even in that moderate manner their own police, responsible for 2000 victims according to careful estimates. While 'errors' of the pre-1956 period have been opened to a kind of public criticism, no word is allowed to touch the terror after '56 and those responsible. Dr. Lomax's information about the events of the year 1962 will be correct, if instead of 'after 1956' he had put 'before'.  
Friendly yours,  
Miklós Haraszti