

Labour Focus on **EASTERN EUROPE**

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THE NATIONS AWAKE

**NATIONALISM AND
DEMOCRACY IN THE
SOVIET UNION**

**Baltic Republics
Ukraine**

**YUGOSLAVIA
The Albanian Intifada**

**POLAND
Jozef Pinior on
Reform or
Revolution?**



"In a house in Russia lives a bear whose mad appetite has no limits"

BORIS YELTSIN SPEAKS

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Labour Focus on Eastern Europe is a completely independent journal whose editorial collective includes various trends of socialist and Marxist opinion. Our purpose is to provide comprehensive analysis of trends and events in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, documentation of opposition movements in those societies, and a forum for the developing dialogue between radical democratic and socialist forces East and West. We are opposed to the "liberation" of Eastern Europe by Western capitalism and the exploitation of the victims of repression in these societies for the Cold War propaganda of those who prop up racist and fascist dictatorships in other parts of the world. We believe that the division of Europe can only be overcome by a common movement for socialism and democracy. We support the struggles for working-class, democratic and national rights in the USSR and Eastern Europe and

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GORBACHEV AND TIANANMEN SQUARE

When Gorbachev visited Beijing recently, the image both sides were anxious to present to the watching world was that of two reformist Communist giants burying their differences and converging on the road to economic and political modernisation. Only a couple of weeks later, his hosts sent the tanks of the People's Liberation Army into their murderous onslaught on the student democracy movement in Tiananmen Square. Since then, Moscow's embarrassment over the turn of events in China has been evident, seeking to preserve the fruits of diplomatic rapprochement while simultaneously distancing the CPSU from the brutal repression unleashed in Beijing.

But could a similar situation arise in Moscow? Is it conceivable that Red Army tanks could literally crush to death thousands of demonstrators in Red Square? Or is the Soviet Union really so different from China, the CPSU so different from the CPCh, that the Kremlin walls could not conceivably echo to the sounds of the Gate of Heavenly Peace on Sunday, 4 June 1989?

The brutal attack by Red Army units on demonstrators in Tblisi, Georgia, has been a warning, as has the earlier clampdown in Armenia. Violence is never far below the surface of the huge social and political crisis unfolding in the Soviet Union today, and there are many potential Soviet Deng Hsiao-Pings and Li Pengs waiting biding their time.

For now, however, the possibility of dramatic and potentially bloody clashes between the people and the state arises most clearly in the non-Russian republics. The South - Armenia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan - appears particularly volatile, but in terms of a coherent political challenge to the authorities the Baltic republics seem closest to some sort of general showdown. Here a well-organised, confident nationalist leadership has emerged, backed by mass movements embracing the majority of the population, with the local Communist Parties, unable to stem the rising tide, reduced to manoeuvring between the nationalists and Moscow. A false move by either side, or even a conscious provocation by anti-Gorbachev forces channelled through the strong ethnic Russian communities in the Baltics, and the powder keg could explode...

If not the Baltic republics, it could be the Ukraine or Moldavia. But whatever the cause, and wherever the dams might burst, the use of bloody suppression on a scale approaching the Chinese tragedy can clearly not be ruled out with any confidence. The only safeguard against that cannot be the personality of a Mikhail Gorbachev, distasteful as repression may well be to him, but genuine democratisation of the state apparatus and, in particular, those parts of it that would be called upon to train their guns on "counter-revolutionary rioters and hooligans": the police and the army. Such democratisation, however, is

still a long way from being realised in the Soviet Union today.

This, then, is the real link between Tiananmen Square and the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe: the fact that under conditions of continued bureaucratic privilege, corruption and autocracy, partial liberalisation will allow expression to social tensions and political aspirations which sooner or later demand that the authorities either concede genuine democracy or defend their power with all their armed might. There is, in the final analysis, no third way out.

In this issue, we focus on the most explosive single issue facing the CPSU leadership today: the nationalities question. We hope that Oliver Macdonald's contribution will provoke a sorely-needed debate, not only because the national question is traditionally a weak spot of the left, but also because the question of the sort of political framework in which the very different nationalities of the Soviet Union could live together in democracy and socialism also raises the wider issue of relations between sovereign socialist states. Jeremy Lester and Taras Lehkyj survey the scene in the Baltic republics and the Ukraine, two contrasting case studies of the nationalities question under perestroika.

When talking of a frontal confrontation between the mass movement and the government as "an armed body of men" (Engels), it is difficult not to think of Poland where the military putsch of December 1981 drove Solidarity, the largest and best-organised mass movement ever seen in the communist world, underground. Television viewers who saw a single unarmed student halt a column of tanks in Beijing may remember a similar image from December 1981 in Poland when a demonstrator was mercilessly crushed by an armoured car. There may be a lesson for China, with its huge economic problems and unfinished foreign investment projects, in the fact that the Jaruzelski regime has had to relegalise Solidarnosc and introduce democratic reforms in a desperate gamble to conjure up some sort of popular legitimacy for a programme of harsh economic reforms. In this issue, Jozef Pinior of the Polish Socialist Party (Democratic Revolution) gives voice to the large minority current at the base of Solidarnosc which views the manoeuvring between Walesa and Jaruzelski with some suspicion. After all, the armed forces of the Polish state are still as much under the control of the now discredited regime as the People's Liberation Army proved to be under the control of Deng, and the quest for a "national consensus" between Jaruzelski and Walesa could yet turn out to be the prelude to a confrontation with the most militant wing of the Polish workers' movement in order to remove all remaining obstacles to the restoration of Warsaw's creditworthiness.

Günter Minnerup

In the first of a series of contributions to an important debate, Oliver Macdonald takes issue with those on the left who consider the demands of the non-Russian nationalities a distraction from the struggle for socialist democracy in the Soviet Union.

OLIVER MACDONALD

STALINISM, THE NATIONAL QUESTION AND SEPARATISM IN THE USSR

The national question appears likely to become the cardinal issue deciding the future character of Soviet politics. And while there are actually a host of different conflicts involving relations between various Soviet nationalities, two points can hardly be denied: first, the most politically important of these conflicts turn on relations between the All-Union State machine directed from Moscow and various non-Russian nationalities; second, neither the Russian Left, nor the Left in the West has clear and agreed views both on the facts and on the principles that should guide socialists in dealing with the facts. The purpose of this article is to discuss such principles and also to make a few points about the historical facts of the nationalities issue.

Right-wing Nationalists versus Socialists

Let us be brutally frank, to start with, about a couple of points. In the first place, we want the end result of the great upheavals in the USSR to be a great strengthening of the Soviet peoples' commitment to socialism and we want a renewed socialist movement based on overwhelming majority support to be leading the peoples forward, and reinvigorating the entire socialist project throughout the world. Secondly, there are people in the USSR who want no such thing. They want an end to socialism, a victory for the USA on a world scale and the extirpation of Communism. And amongst such people we will find right-wing nationalists in various Non-Russian Republics. There are reactionary nationalists in the Baltic Republics, Ukraine and elsewhere who are or would be very hap-

py to receive funding from the CIA and would put it to the best uses they could find for defeating and crushing all varieties of socialism.

This leads some on the Left to draw the following conclusion: socialists should have no truck with national movements in the non-Russian Republics and indeed should throw their weight behind the efforts of Moscow to place legal and administrative limitations upon them. And even those socialists who would not go that far would often feel an instinctive irritation with the various national movements and would consider them an unfortunate intrusion into an otherwise very positive, unfolding process of democratisation. These gut responses on the part of the Left are, we will argue, mistaken.

Socialism, Democracy and National Rights

For those who see the USSR as an already existing healthy socialist society and polity, the national movements must *a fortiori* be reactionary and the only problem is to devise the cleanest tactics for defeating and crushing them. But there can't be many on the Left who hold this view today. If things were so healthy there would not be national movements of such enormous scope.

For those who accept that a healthy socialist society and political system has still to be built (or perhaps rebuilt), the task is, as Gorbachev says, to democratise the Soviet Union. Virtually the entire Western Left would go along with this: for socialism to revive there must be a great battle for democratisation. Through *leading* the battle for democracy, and not leaving that struggle in the hands of the

anti-socialist right, socialism can be restored as the banner of the overwhelming majority of Soviet peoples.

The question then becomes: what is the relation between democracy and the national question? Some see that relation as purely an external one: democracy is one thing and the national question is something else. Hence the view that the national movements are a diversion from the main path which is democratisation.

But surely Lenin was right to insist that the national question is *part of* the democratic struggle. If democracy, for socialists, is about the self-determination of the mass of people, then it must include their right to assert their national identity and it must mean that they can decide all aspects of their state arrangements, including whether they want a separate national state of their own. This was the classical position of the Bolsheviks and the Soviet Constitution has continued to this day to contain a clause allowing the various non-Russian Republics the right to secede from the Union. Not only that: the Bolsheviks conceived of the USSR as more than a union of nations within a single state. For them it was a *union of national states, a Union of Republics*. The Soviet Union was founded as a new type of sui generis state: not just a federal state, but a federation of states, of republics. In other words, for Lenin, nationhood was not simply a cultural phenomenon (involving linguistic, artistic and customary attributes - the view of the Austro-Marxists); it was above all a movement for political identity and in his view, the bourgeois democratic revolution in the modern world incorporated within itself the struggle for independent nation states. And this development was a necessary part of the entry of the masses into political life. Thus the formation of

nation states was a necessary element in the democratic revolution.

Socialists, of course, are not nationalists and do not consider that it is either necessary or even desirable that every nation in the world should have its own *independent* state. Indeed, from an economic, social, ecological and cultural point of view, the independent nation state has become a break on historical development. On the other hand, in the imaginations of peoples throughout the world national identities remain immensely powerful and unless the imaginations of peoples are able to freely express themselves and stamp their wills on political life, there cannot be any popular democracy. And if socialism suppresses this dimension of the democratic revolution, it will fail as an historical project, for it will entail the repression of democratic aspirations for national self-determination.

But, it may be argued, we are no longer in the age of the bourgeois democratic revolution: today the issue is precisely a battle between socialism and capitalism and currently takes the form of a struggle between post-capitalist states and bourgeois-democratic imperialism. So why this talk about carrying through the democratic revolution in the USSR, and the associated concern with national self-determination?

We must again call in the aid of Mr. Gorbachev to answer this point. The democratic promise of the Union of Soviet Republics was not realised in the USSR of Stalin and Stalinism. The Socialist revolution did not, *in fact*, include and go beyond democracy in its development from the 1920s to the 1980s. And consequently, the main point on the Soviet agenda today is once more democratisation. Those on the left who fail to grasp this have not as yet fully assimilated the experience of Stalinism.

Liberalisation, Democratisation and National Self-Determination

While the Gorbachev leadership proclaims that the task of the day is democratisation, its actions and concrete proposals could better be described by the term 'liberalisation'. In other words, there is an easing of the restrictions on democratic liberties - speech, the press, association, etc - but there is not by any means an unrestricted right for various political movements to express their will. On the contrary, all the political reform proposals are within the context of preserving the overwhelming political dominance, perhaps the exclusive right to governmental power, of the CPSU.

If it were the case that the over-

whelming majority of the Soviet people were Communists, this would not matter and distinctions between liberalisation and democratisation would be little more than hair-splitting. But such is evidently not the case, particularly in some of the non-Russian Republics. A recent opinion poll gives the CPSU a very substantial minority backing - one figure quoted is 40%. This is an impressive showing for any political party, anywhere. But it still leaves a majority outside the pale of official Communism. It does not, of course, mean that the bulk of the remaining 60% are in any sense anti-Soviet. It simply means that they want to participate in Soviet politics under their own, non-Communist banners, with their own non-Communist political identities. Democratisation means quite simply letting - indeed, encouraging - this to happen. Liberalisation means no such thing, indeed it seems to mean trying to squash the 60% into the clothes of the CPSU. This is a very dangerous approach when many millions of people in the non-Russian republics seem very eager to participate in Soviet politics, but wish to do so under non-Communist banners.

This distinction between liberalisation and democratisation is expressed again in the emphasis which Gorbachev himself has placed upon the economic dimension of the national relations: he has embraced the slogan of republican *khozraschet*, in other words economic self-determination for the republics: complete control over economic exchanges between a republic and other parts of the USSR. This is the one aspect of self-determination which by its very nature can only be sorted out at a governmental level: within the government ministries at a republican level. It fits perfectly into a scheme of liberalisation of CPSU central controls. In itself, of course, economic self-determination is a positive goal. Yet it makes sense as a principled position only if it rests upon the more general principle of political self-determination. Outside of that context it can appear to be a justification for a bureaucratic national particularism which insists upon keeping all economic resources for one's own republic and failing to develop two tasks which any socialist should support: the greatest possible development of an international division of labour within the non-capitalist world and an effort to equalise living standards across the non-capitalist world.

There is a good deal of talk, both from the Gorbachev leadership and within the Russian intelligentsia, about developing a democratic political culture within the USSR since none, or very little, allegedly exists. This may be an important point. But what it must mean is that political differences are not settled by violence or administrative repression. If the slogan

about the need for political education is used to mean the need to avoid mass political participation in demonstrations and rallies etc, then this turns democratic political culture on its head. And first reports of what took place in Tbilisi suggests exactly this.

We must not forget that democracy and national self-determination are not only the slogans of the Left. If the Left in the USSR is not willing or able to lead the battle for these goals, then the Right will be quite ready to attempt to take over the leadership.

National Self-Determination, National Movements and Nationalists

The battle for self-determination for the various non-Russian nationalities is sometimes seen on the Left as a nationalist battle. This is quite wrong. It simply means campaigning for the right of various nations to decide for themselves their relationship to the All-Union Soviet state. We may campaign for a referendum to be held in Latvia or Ukraine or wherever on this question without necessarily at all urging people in that referendum to vote for secession. Political nationalists, on the other hand, would by definition want not only a referendum but a vote for secession in it.

But if a referendum majority votes for secession, it is a matter of principle for socialists, and above all Russian socialists, to defend that expression of the democratic will of the nation concerned, against any attempt to crush or overturn that decision. The consequences of failing to take such a principled democratic stand will return again and again to haunt the socialist movement, for 10, 50, 100 years.

At present in many Soviet Republics there are very powerful national movements: most notably in the Baltic Republics, Belorussia, Moldavia, Georgia, Armenia and Ukraine. These great social movements cannot be said to be homogeneous expressions of political nationalism in the sense of being secessionist. Some parts of the movements clearly are secessionist, others are at present simply wishing to assert their right to decide for themselves their relations with Moscow, some are mainly concerned with cultural rights and no doubt some are involved in the national movement simply because it is the only non-Communist framework within which they may raise a whole host of social, economic, ecological or political issues freely.

It is a question of principle for socialists not only to defend the right to national self-determination, but to defend the

rights of these national movements to express themselves in full democratic freedom. Any failure to do so would amount to a purely phoney and hollow commitment to democratisation. Giving such unconditional support to the *rights* of these movements does not in the slightest mean support for nationalism.

Internationalism, State Boundaries and State Organisation

Yet for many socialists in the West, the idea of the break-up of the USSR into a number of different states, is not only undesirable, but well-nigh catastrophic in its imagined consequences.

Since 1917, Marxists have called for and worked for the defence of the Soviet Union against imperialism. But this never for one moment entailed a commitment to the existing boundaries of the Soviet state or a commitment to the territorial integrity of the USSR. To imagine that there was something sacred about those boundaries would be a gross militarist-bureaucratic deviation from socialist principles: if in place of the USSR there were, say 16 or more independent proletarian states with varying taxation, legal and military apparatuses, the result would be a very large *quantitative* decline in the military-bureaucratic strength of those societies by comparison with a single Soviet Union. But so what? This, in itself would be, from an historical point of view, a trivial matter in comparison with the basic question of power: the strength of political solidarity between the working people of these nations.

Similarly, socialists work for the international economic integration of the workers' states, creating the most developed possible international division of labour among them. The existence of a dozen or more separate Soviet states in place of the USSR would quantitatively weaken the trend towards international economic integration. But so what? If the result of the separation into independent states was the laying down of the basis for a *stronger* political unity between the nations of the region the advance towards socialism and greater economic strength would be enormous.

Thus the socialist criterion for tackling problems of relations between nationalities is always a political one as against either a military-bureaucratic or economic yardstick: what policy will strengthen the *political unity* of the international working class? And the answer to this question is always a democratic one: all the nations concerned must have the right to decide for themselves whether they wish to create their own state separate from others, whether they wish to remain part of a multi-national state or

whether they wish to establish some confederal, intermediate solutions.

Those who dismiss talk of the international political unity of the working class movement as vague sentimentalism and who imagine that good, strong, centralised bureaucracies are all that count in modern world politics should ponder some facts of contemporary history. Take, for example, the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. This flouting of the most elementary principles of democracy did not simply contribute to the collapse of the international communist movement as a coherent force in world politics; it also produced a hatred of the Russians amongst millions of Czechs, Slovaks and other nationalities in Eastern Europe and turned millions against socialism. And the entire issue sits like a timebomb under the Gorbachev leadership's efforts to produce a new stable international order in Eastern Europe. In short, that invasion enormously weakened the Soviet state, when we look at it from an historical point of view. Exactly the same point could be made about Chinese policy over Tibet in the 1950s and its consequences for China today.

Another example: the incorporation of the Baltic Republics and Moldavia into the USSR at the time of the Nazi-Soviet Pact was carried through by bureaucratic-military means, without the slightest regard for the democratic will of the mass of people in those nations. These annexations quite simply lacked any democratic legitimacy. Those who say this is of no importance are evidently wrong: witness the enormous national movements in these four republics now.

Whether we like it or not, the overwhelming majority of people in the present phase of world history still think of their histories in terms of national identities and national agents. And they do not forget the fact that a mere forty or fifty years ago the military-bureaucratic machine of the Soviet state treated their national entity in a brutally repressive way.

Socialists and the Slogan of National Independence

Just as socialists do not make the preservation of multi-national states the cornerstone of their political programme, so, unlike nationalists, they do not make the assertion of national independence and the strengthening of a national state the touch-stone of politics. But this doesn't mean that socialists are always *agnostic* on the question of state boundaries. In many of the greatest class struggles of the 20th century, socialists have actively fought for the separation of a nation from its existing state order,

most notably in the great colonial revolution against imperialism. In such circumstances, socialists have fought for national independence, national liberation from the colonial oppressor. We have entered that fight not because we worship the so-called national independence of, say, India or Algeria, but because our historical experience teaches us that this aspiration for independence must be the popular will of the nation: the people had been suffering national oppression and exploitation at the hands of the colonial power and any progress towards self-emancipation lay through national independence.

An example of a Marxist struggle to alter the state boundaries of the USSR arose at the end of the 1930s in the case of Ukraine. At that time, Ukraine was divided and the national question therefore took the form of a struggle for *national unity*. For socialist Ukrainians, of course, the goal was a united socialist Ukraine. But it was purely a matter of tactics rather than principle as to whether that united socialist Ukraine should be incorporated within the USSR. And in the 1930s, with the Western half of the country suffering terrible national oppression at the hands of the Polish state, Eastern Ukraine was bleeding under the barbaric consequences of forced collectivisation, above all the terrible famine. The Ukrainian people's national aspirations could not remotely be satisfied by an effort to integrate the Western Ukraine into the USSR at that time. Only through the struggle for creation of an independent Ukrainian state could Marxists offer any path forward for the self-emancipation of the Ukrainian workers and peasants.

In this case as in all others where socialists struggle for national independence, they are doing so not because independent states are in themselves absolute values of any sort. They do so because historical experience and factual analysis teaches us that this is the will of the working people. Thus, in the case of Ukraine, Trotsky sought in the 1930s to study the thinking of the Ukrainian people in order to elaborate a Ukrainian programme. He regarded it as very significant that the Communist Party of the Western Ukraine, which had been strong among the peasantry of Western Ukraine in the 1920s, had been displaced by petty bourgeois nationalist currents in the 1930s: a sign that the Western Ukrainian masses entirely repudiated any annexation by the USSR: a sign amply born out by the course of the struggle in Ukraine during the 2nd world war. And the consequences of the brutal annexation by Stalin of Western Ukraine were a massive weakening of the defences of the Soviet State in the struggle against Nazism.

We have an analogous experience in Afghanistan in the 1980s. Socialists did

not respond *a priori*, on the basis of some abstract universal principle, to the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan: we sought to draw on our historical experience and on our study of the thinking of the Afghan people in developing our political position on the Soviet invasion. We saw the great popular demonstrations in all the main cities of Afghanistan against the Soviet invasion, and we drew on our experience of previous occasions when invasions have toppled popular governments in order to come to the conclusion that we must call for the unconditional withdrawal of Soviet troops from that country.

Independence and the Restoration of Capitalism

One reason why some socialists may be very alarmed at the prospect of the USSR splitting up lies in the possibility that nations which secede may swing over into the orbit of the most powerful capitalist states and indeed return to capitalism. The pressures from world capitalism on the USSR are undoubtedly enormous and it is no doubt the case that some—perhaps many—nationalists in, for example, the Baltic Republics would like a return to capitalism and would see a better future for their people as small capitalist states, perhaps as financial centres or tax havens. But there is no reason why secession *must* produce this end result. After all, in addition to the USSR there are many other non-capitalist states in Eastern Europe and there is no reason in principle why any of these states should contain majorities either for returning to capitalism or for trying to throw a NATO shield around themselves. (We should not forget, by the way, that both Belorussia and Ukraine have representation at the UN if not directly in Comecon and the Warsaw Pact.)

The real issue here which creates such fears among socialists has been the lamentable failure of the Soviet leadership over 45 years to construct a viable and stable international socialist commonwealth of East European states. If such a commonwealth existed as an 'organic' and stable entity, it would matter little that Estonia or Ukraine related to Moscow through such a body rather than directly through intra-state subordination. Such a commonwealth *must* be built. The main reason why it has not been built has been because of the Soviet leadership's inability over many decades of Stalinism to handle the relations between nations in an open, democratic spirit.

Socialists in, say, the Baltic Republics, should, of course, seek to combat currents working to restore capitalism or to ally with NATO as well as currents

with a chauvinist anti-Russian ideology which treats Russians as barbarians to whom they are supposedly ethnically superior. But all such efforts will come to nothing if they are not fixed within a framework of defence of the democratic rights of the national movements.

The National Question in the USSR Today: Russian Colonialism or Stalinist Oppression?

What then should socialists urge the Estonians or Moldavians or Ukrainians to do in asserting their self-determination? The nationalist answer is clear, by definition: fight for an independent state. For socialists, on the other hand, the answer depends upon our analysis of the facts of national relations, above all relations with the Russians, in the USSR today.

So far in this article we have made no attempt whatever to analyse the actual relations between the nations of the USSR. We have been concerned only with general principles. And in the remainder, we will simply contrast two alternative theses as to what relationship has existed between the All-Union state, centred in Moscow and the main non-Russian nationalities.

From what we have said already, there cannot be the slightest doubt that the non-Russian nationalities of the USSR have been politically oppressed and brutally denied their national political rights for 50 years under the Stalinist regime. The impact of this denial of national *political* rights on the various non-Russian nationalities is no doubt highly differentiated. There is, for example, a qualitative difference between the experience of the Crimean Tartars and the experience of the Georgians. But what is crucial for our understanding of the national question in the USSR is to appreciate how the suppression of elementary democratic liberties *necessarily* involves *national oppression* in a multinational state. A Russian worker in Sverdlovsk has suffered from exactly the same bureaucratic oppressor and from exactly the same controls and restrictions as a Ukrainian worker in Lviv. But the meaning of their oppression is not the same, precisely because the centre of the repression lies in Moscow, the historic capital of Russia. The democratic rights of the Ukrainian worker involve him or her in being able to link up with all fellow Ukrainians and being able to flout whatever is decided by whatever type of regime exists in Moscow. The democratic rights of the Sverdlovsk worker do not at all include the right to flout whatever would be decided by a democratic, socialist regime in Moscow. And this is no matter of acade-

mic hairsplitting: it is a fundamental and obvious truth for a worker in the Western Ukraine. Any (for example, Luxemburgist) tendency to gloss over this issue in the USSR today and thus to ignore the principle of national self-determination will have catastrophic consequences.

And this difference of situation is not a purely cultural matter: the language and customs of Moscow are not those of Ukraine, or Georgia. It is a question of political power. The Georgian worker today, determined to come to grips with the massacre in Tbilisi desires to assert collective democratic control over the political decision-making. It makes obviously *rational* sense to insist that from now on all important decisions on repression and all units of force in Georgia must be *Georgian*, centred in Tbilisi, not Moscow, just as the Russian worker would want such matters decided in Moscow not Tbilisi.

And when the worker from a non-Russian nationality knows, as those of the Baltic Republics or Moldavia for example know, that their nation was forcibly and brutally annexed to the USSR, then their consciousness of national oppression must be enormously strengthened: they know that Moscow's oppressive rule has no shred of democratic historical legitimacy.

This existence of national political oppression has been a reality quite independently of the cultural policies pursued by the Stalinist bureaucracy. But the drive for Russification on the part of the Soviet leadership has enormously intensified the consciousness of national oppression and humiliation on the part of many of the non-Russian nationalities.

These realities of Stalinism in the USSR have led some on the left to characterise Stalinism as a regime of Russian Colonialism. If that was the nature of Stalinism then our experience would lead us towards one conclusion: there is no possibility of the non-Russian nationalities of the USSR re-uniting with the Russian nation in fraternal solidarity until these nationalities have established their own independent states. And we should not flinch from calling for a struggle for national liberation in Ukraine as we have done in Algeria or Angola or India in relation to Western imperialism.

Stalinism has not been a Russian colonialist regime, exploiting the non-Russian republics in order to provide material privileges for the Russian nation or for some class within it. Stalinism has been a multi-national phenomenon within the USSR and Eastern Europe, despite the fact that the Russian component of the Stalinist bureaucracy has been *quantitatively* far larger than any other national component. There is no basis whatever for the idea that Ukrainian Stali-

nism is any more simply the colonial administration of a Russian master than, for example, Romanian Stalinism was in the 1950s. The Stalinist bureaucracy must be understood not as a Russian exploiting class but as a regime whose organising principle is the suppression of political democracy and the exclusive exercise of political power by an elite caste of officials. In its drive to maintain its political monopoly, the Stalinist regime has been ready to exploit national antagonisms to the full, to play off one nation against another and by its very nature it has sought to crush all expressions of democratic self-determination including national self-determination. But it has a radically different character and dynamic from Western colonialism.

Some may view such distinctions as academic hair-splitting - what difference does it make to the daily life of a worker in Yerevan or Kishinev? Or they may see the argument as a concealed apologetic for Stalinism - because it's different from Western colonialism, it is implicitly not so bad. But such criticisms miss the point, for what is really at stake is not academic history or ethical judgements, but alternative political programmes and strategies for the winning of democratic, including national, self-determination.

If Stalinism was a form of Russian colonialism, national self-determination would entail a major material loss to the Russians themselves. Their immediate material interests would conflict with self-determination. In consequence, any strategy for self-determination could not have as a major component, an alliance between anti-Stalinist forces amongst the Russians and anti-Stalinist forces in the non-Russian republics. Indeed the strategy would require a strongly coercive orientation towards the Russians employed in the non-Russian republics, because they must presumably be a structural component of the imperialist regime. And at the same time, the ethnically non-Russian elements in state and party leaderships within the non-Russian republics must be struck with political blows along one single axis: their slavish subordination to Moscow, to the Gorbachev leadership, which despite its pretty face cannot change its exploitative and oppressive colonialist essence. Furthermore, the ultimate barrier to self-determination would have to be identified not as the state's bureaucratic-police apparatus but as the Soviet Armed Forces themselves - a presumed instrument of Russian colonialism par excellence. This, along with the obvious 'geo-political' location of the non-Russian nations, should in turn lead sober strategists to seek an external ally of equally formidable military-political capacity, unless it is presumed that a long, guerrilla war of attrition may eventually wear down or split the Russian armed forces, backed as they

would be by substantial colonialist support amongst the Russians. It was not entirely irrational for the Anti-Bolshevik Block of Nations, given their political analysis, to put their trust in the American High Command (although given the latter's nuclear proclivities, the element of irrationality must still be judged pretty high).

But to say that the Stalinist regime has had a multi-national character and has not been an equivalent of Western colonialism should not in any way be taken to imply that Russian chauvinism is an insignificant factor in the political life of Russia. Indeed, the strength of the colonialist thesis lies precisely in the weight it gives to a phenomenon which tends to be grossly underestimated in Western Left analyses of the USSR. For as a centralising, authoritarian oppressor, Stalinism simply took over the centralist, autocratic tradition of the Tsarist state and thereby has allowed a great part of the political culture and ideological baggage of Tsarism to survive and flourish behind the thinnest veil of "Soviet Patriotism". We find strong traditions of pan-slavism, Russian imperialist nationalism, Russian theocratic ultra-conservatism, anti-semitism and Black Hundreds fascism, and Cadet-style crypto-nationalist liberalism surviving strongly not only within the bureaucracy but in the intellectual and cultural life of Russia today. And this constitutes by far the most dangerous nationalist threat to the entire legacy of the October Revolution in the USSR today. The victory of this cocktail of chauvinist filth would have catastrophic consequences for the entire socialist project throughout the world.

Some may think that to get rid of this menace, the best policy is to let sleeping dogs lie. They may see non-Russian national movements as disastrous precisely because they awaken and strengthen Russian chauvinism. This can be seen to be a desperately misguided view once we accept the fact that the non-Russian national movements are part of the democratic revolution, part of the necessary course of democratisation. For the real dynamic will be that every Tbilisi massacre will not make the national movements disappear but will powerfully stimulate the only Russian movement that can justify such massacres: Great Russian chauvinism.

The fact that the Soviet bureaucracy avoided becoming a Russian oppressor caste has been a source of considerable political strength to Stalinism, giving it infinitely greater flexibility than it would otherwise have. The Stalinist regime was always able to play one nationality off against another and face a challenge from one by using points of strength in others. There can be not the shadow of a doubt that by far its largest base has been in the cities of Russia, but it had always been

able to recruit into the apparatus able and energetic cadres from the other nationalities. The collectivisation campaign at the start of the 1930s turned into a murderous onslaught against peasants, very large numbers of whom were non-Russians, especially Ukrainians, but the regime did not transform itself into a force privileging the Russian masses. It showed no less ruthlessness in suppressing popular revolts among the Russians, like that in Novochoerkassk, than its ruthlessness in suppressing other challenges to its rule from non-Russian nationalities. It is easy for Ukrainians to believe that the famine resulting from collectivisation which Stalin allowed to happen in Ukraine in the 1930s would never have been allowed in Russia. Yet there was famine in south Russia at the same time. To grasp the dynamics of Stalinist politics, one has to appreciate facts like the regime's readiness to allow a terrible famine in Kursk (in Russia) at the end of the war (as well as in North Bukovina) at more or less the same time as Stalin was shipping hundreds of thousands of tons of grains to Czechoslovakia as a means of gaining political influence there.

The specificities of Stalinism and the national question create special political problems for the battle for democratic rights, including the right to self-determination within the Soviet Union. Paradoxically, the very fact that the regime has allowed the Baltic Republics to enjoy a much higher standard of living than most parts of European Russia means that the bureaucracy can try to exploit resentments on this score amongst ordinary Russians, while at the same time, the genuinely multi-national character of the bureaucracy enables it to itself play nationalist tunes in the Baltic states and other non-Russian republics. The one political phenomenon which the Soviet leadership has never been able to come to terms with is not nationalist movements per se: it is mass, open, pluralistic political mobilisations and movements, whether amongst the Russians or amongst the non-Russian nationalities.

Nothing demonstrates this more clearly than the events in Nagorno-Karabakh. The reaction of Moscow to the movement there seems to have been dictated very little by hostility to the demand for incorporation into Armenia. What produced furious repression seems more to have been the fact that this demand was backed by the overwhelming majority of the people of the region, fully mobilised in an unequivocal demonstration of popular will. To have acceded would have created a *democratic* precedent as potent for Russians as for other nationalities.

And if the latest press reports about events in Georgia are anything to go by, the cause of the repression there was again panic at the fact that the popular demonstrations against the gerry-

mandering of election candidacies reached huge proportions. Gorbachev is fond of quoting Lenin's remark that politics becomes serious only when it involves the activities of millions. Yet the disturbing suggestion from events in the Caucasus is that really mass, really democratic popular mobilisations bring a panic-stricken repressive reaction from the authorities. In essence, we find exactly the same reaction from the Party leadership to the Yeltsin movement in Moscow: the raw nerve was Yeltsin's signal of support for party pluralism - a guarantee of a genuinely mass, democratic politics throughout the USSR. And the new law replacing the old Article 70 of the Soviet Constitution (on anti-Soviet Agitation and Propaganda) tells the same story, with draconian penalties for insulting or urging the overthrow of the Soviet state: this is a 'liberalisation' armed to the teeth against open, democratic mass politics.

The entire history of Stalinism in Eastern Europe demonstrates how very susceptible these parties are to the embrace of nationalism and chauvinism: Ceausescu in Romania is only the tip of the iceberg. The source of this susceptibility lies in the special character of these ruling parties. They are political parties - organisations whose *raison d'être* is to mobilise the population; but at the same time, they cannot tolerate any political spontaneity or pluralism within the population - something inescapable in any mass movement concerned with genuinely concrete problems or interests. Consequently, they seek to insist upon various non-political identities that embrace the entire population: either a sociological one - the working class - or an ethnic one - the nation. They can then deal with opponents not through open political argument and debate (generating pluralism) but through absolute anathemas: anti-working class, or anti-national. Such political dynamics mean that it is very dangerous in the USSR that all those proclaiming themselves nationalists are by that fact objectively on the side of democratic pluralism. And those who imagine the local communist parties are simply the stooges of 'Russian Colonialism' may be in for a rude surprise.

The Programme of Socialist Renewal and National Self-Determination in the USSR Today

The March election results and other available data on soviet public opinion demonstrate a number of strong currents of political thought among the Soviet people:

(1) there is a tremendously powerful demand for national sovereignty in the

Baltic Republics, and a similarly powerful trend in Western Ukraine and Moldavia and in the Transcaucasian republics. What is important is not the present quantitative intensity of this trend, but the fact that the non-Russian nations are overwhelmingly asserting their right to self-determination. And this means their right to decide for themselves whether or not they wish to secede from the USSR.

(2) in the main cities of Russia, the election results showed no strong impulse to rally around the Russian nationalist right in defence of some supposed anti-colonial threat from the non-Russian nationalities. On the contrary, the populations of Moscow, Leningrad and other main Russian cities showed in the elections that they are running parallel to the non-Russian nations in seeking their own democratic self-determination against the bureaucracy.

(3) opinion surveys amongst the Russians show the Communist Party with roughly 40% support, Green and Social Democratic trends following, and the Nationalist Right with insignificant support.

(4) in parts of the Baltic Republics there is a serious political split along ethnic lines between Russians and the indigenous historic nations.

(5) the overall message of the election results across the entire country is that the politically aware sections of the population are demanding radical, thoroughgoing democratic liberties and this means unfettered political pluralism. This demand is as strong among the Russians of the major cities as among the non-Russian nationalities.

This rough set of indicators points towards one central conclusion: there is the subjective basis at the present time for a genuine political alliance between the Russian socialist democratic left, symbolised by the popular base of Yeltsin and the progressive democratic trend which is the main current in the non-Russian nations, at least in the Western part of the USSR (I exclude because of my own ignorance, consideration of the trends of political opinion in the Caucasus). But for this alliance to be established the Russian left must proclaim and fight for the following platform:

(1) The unequivocal right of the non-Russian republics to national sovereignty. This means that every national republic must have effective autonomy in two key spheres within any state: first, autonomous structures and processes for determining its own popular political will on all political questions; and secondly autonomous control over its own coercive apparatus. In short the USSR must return-advance to the original conception of itself as a union of separate states and not remain a unitary state with federalist trappings. And in such a Union of separa-

te republics, each republican nation must have the right to decide whether or not its people wish to secede from the USSR. In the language of Western constitutionalism, the USSR, in order to reunite in socialist solidarity, must first re-establish itself as a confederation of soviet republics. In this context, the RSFSR should itself have the full, democratic structures and political channels of a democratic, soviet republic.

(2) The right of all the peoples in the USSR including, of course, the Russians, to complete freedom of political organisation, of the press and so on. Such political pluralism is the precondition for being able to establish genuine, lasting political alliances between the peoples of the USSR on an All-Union basis. For socialists such political pluralism should not be based simply upon the purely formal electoral rights of bourgeois democracy, but upon providing the resources for the mass of the people to have direct access to the mass media of political communication

(3) The end to bureaucratic privilege and the bringing of the economic system under effective democratic control, together with a genuinely egalitarian principle of distribution.

On the basis of such a programme, socialists in the non-Russian nations should campaign for the maintenance of the unity of the USSR. But the defeat of such a programme on an all-union level should not hold back its implementation in any national republic and the defence of that republic against any attempt by the Russian wing of the bureaucracy to crush such a democratic republic.

An alliance of the Russian and non-Russian left throughout the USSR on such a programme will unify the working people of the USSR on a firm path towards socialist renewal and will ensure maximum political support for any nation implementing such a programme in advance of the others.

What will *not* unite the working people of the USSR will be two other programmes currently surfacing in Soviet politics: those of the Gorbachev leadership and those of some independentist currents in the non-Russian Republics:

(a) unilateral independentists demanding secession now from the USSR advance a programme that will not be understood and will offer nothing to the Russian people. The Russian people will understand a genuine socialist democratic republic rejecting all measures directed at it by the Soviet military-bureaucratic machine, but will not understand nationalists with no social programme making a fight to separate before everything from the USSR. And without that support within the Russian people, they will at best have to throw themselves upon the NATO powers in the hope of de-

fence (very likely a vain hope).

(b) the Gorbachev leadership is trying to preserve the strength of the Communist Party leaderships in the non-Russian republics through a combination of nationalist rhetoric, petty but infuriating repression and a desperate effort to prevent genuine democratic pluralism. This formula of bureaucratic manoeuvre might possibly work in conditions where the So-

viet economy was booming and peoples' social grievances were not burning. But in the real, existing Soviet Union it is a formula which has led to the Tbilisi tragedy. And it is fostering national antagonisms both directly and indirectly through blocking other forms of democratic and social struggle. Its logic is to drive the USSR down the road of a reactionary, nationalist antagonism be-

tween the Russian people and the non-Russian nations of the USSR, and it could produce terrible consequences for the peoples of the Soviet Union, not to speak of world socialism.

JEREMY LESTER

THE BALTIC CHALLENGE

Viss, ko mes gribam, ir briviba! Mes tik norime laisves!
Koik, mida me tahame, on vabadus! All we want is Freedom!

"[If a nation] is not granted the right by means of free elections, under conditions of complete withdrawal of foreign troops and influence of a foreign power, to decide the forms of national existence, without the slightest coercion, then the joining of its territory to another country is an annexation; namely is a capture and taking over by force." (From Lenin's "Decree on Peace")

"...the negation of the freedom of secession is... theoretical illusion and a practical service to the chauvinists of the oppressing nations..."

(Lenin. Collected Works. 3rd Russian edition, Vol. XIX, p.230)

It is usual for many western commentators to talk of the Baltic region as a complete entity in itself, rather than emphasising the separate identities of the three states concerned. This is perhaps not surprising when one examines the recent history of the area: Formal independence in 1918; Red Army occupation in 1940; German occupation in 1941; and Red Army occupation again in the autumn of 1944. Likewise, it is common to lump the three together when discussing the present day objectives of each of the respective nationalist movements existing in the region. In recent months, all three Republics have achieved the symbolic victories of having their flags of independence restored to them; of having "Days of Independence" officially celebrated as public holidays, and of having their native language legally

endorsed as the official language of state. Meanwhile, the outstanding desire for economic and cultural autonomy; immigration controls; religious and educational freedom; and the power of veto over all measures taken in Moscow as a first phase towards eventual self-determination are all items frequently propagated by the various nationalist groups.

Nevertheless, despite all these similarities, important differences do, in fact, exist and if one is to fully understand the nature of the National Question in this particular part of the country, it is vital to highlight these differences by briefly analysing the situation in each of the Republics.

Lithuania

Of the three, the southernmost Republic of Lithuania is perhaps the most culturally distinctive. During the 15th century, in fact, it was classed as 'a great power', with her sphere of influence under Vytautas the Great (1392-1430) extending from the Baltic to the Black Sea. In the following century, due to the ever increasing dominance of Russia, the country formally united with neighbouring Poland into a new joint commonwealth - an association that was to last until the end of the 18th century, when in 1795 Lithuania became annexed to the Russian Empire.

Political ties aside, the Lithuanians and the Poles have always been closely linked with each other, not least by their common allegiance to the Roman Catholic Church. Indeed, some 85 per cent of believers in present day Lithuania are Catholics and throughout the post-war period of opposition to the Soviet

regime, all opposition forces and dissident activities have been tinged with a strong Catholic identity.

Lithuania is also distinct in having not only maintained, but slightly increased the ethnic preponderance of Lithuanians since the loss of independence in 1940. According to the 1939 census, some 79 per cent of the population were native Lithuanians. In 1979, this had increased to 80 per cent and nothing in the intervening 10 years has suggested any reversal of this trend - a factor that has had important benefits, as we shall see later, in the Republican parliament's official acceptance of Lithuanian as the state language.

As in the other two Republics, the recent upsurge in nationalist activity has coincided with the formation of a Republican 'Popular Front' movement. Established on June 3, 1988 the Lithuanian Restructuring Movement (*Lietuvos Persitvarkymo Sajudis*) - or just simply Sajudis - was the initiative of some 500 prominent intellectuals. Organisationally, it initially elected a 36-member Council to lead it, many of whom were members of the Republican Communist Party. At its first meeting on June 13, six 'initiative groups' were established as the basis for an analysis of ecological, national, social, economic, cultural and legal problems - the main areas where the Movement felt the Communist Party were not doing enough in protecting the local population's interests. Problems discussed within the groups ranged from the inadequate measures taken to combat pollution; the need to defend the living standards of working people; the need for closer collaboration between the cultures of Lithuania and of the diaspora; the desire

for Lithuanian schools outside the boundaries of the Republic; the need for a programme of measures to offset imbalances caused by any future price reform; and the general need for a law-based State in line with Lithuania's democratic traditions.

By the time it came to the inaugural congress of Sajudis in late October, the Movement could claim a membership of almost 200,000 out of a population of about 4 million. In the intervening period, regional associations or 'chapters' had been established in all the major cities and towns throughout the Republic and some six information bulletins were being printed and distributed in the Movement's name - the most significant being *Atgimimas* (Rebirth), which is published on a weekly basis by the philosopher Romualdas Ozolas and which was granted formal recognition by the party authorities last August. In the meantime, a new 220-member Assembly and a 35-member Executive Council under the presidency of Algirdas Landsbergis was elected by the Congress.

At the time of its foundation in June 1988, the basic principles of the new movement, as set out in Article 5 of its inaugural statement, had clearly been designed to avoid any early confrontation with the Communist Party authorities. This was particularly so as regards the acutely difficult issue of any possible future status of independence for the Republic. As events began to unfold, however, it became increasingly obvious that a basic shift in attitudes was on the cards. The major indication of this shift occurred during this year's celebration (by now made official) of the 71st anniversary of Lithuania's Declaration of Independence on February 16. Meeting on the day after the official ceremonies, the National Assembly of Sajudis almost unanimously (by a vote of 204 to 8 with 8 abstentions) voted for a radical declaration expressing "the nation's determination to regain its rights through peaceful means and to live independent of any kind of ultimatum...[with] neutral status in a demilitarised zone in Europe...."

The underlying cause of this gradual radicalisation of Sajudis can be found in the movement's relationship with organisations to the left and to the right of it over the national issue. On the one side (this can either be left or right depending upon one's viewpoint) stands the Lithuanian Communist Party under the current leadership of Algirdas Brazauskas. On the other side stands a number of opposition organisations that have always taken a 'no holds barred' position on Lithuania's independence from Moscow.

Turning to the latter first, the most significant of the ultra-radical groups is

the Lithuanian Freedom League (*Lietuvos Laisves Lyga*). Active in the underground movement since 1978, the Freedom League decided to operate above ground for the first time at the beginning of July 1988 when it issued a statement declaring that it would now act 'legally' in view of the democratisation process underway in Lithuania and elsewhere in the Soviet Union.

Controlled by a National Council of 18 members, the League has stated that the essential future of Lithuania depends on three basic factors. The first is the political consciousness of the Lithuanian nation and its determination to be free.

The second is the pressure of the world's democratic states on the Soviet Union. And the third is the Russian attitude toward the nations of the 'Stalin made empire'. The second prerogative is clearly directed at the American administration and at the numerous Lithuanian and Baltic exile organisations operating within the United States, almost certainly in conjunction with the CIA. To cement these links, one of the members of the National Council immediately moved to the United States in order to act as its permanent representative abroad.

"The re-establishment of genuine national independence in a confederation of free European states" is the stated aim of the League and any organisation not directly submitting to this is frowned upon. Thus the creation of Sajudis was greeted with little enthusiasm in the ranks of the League when the Movement's initial statement of aims was made public. As Vytautas Bogusis of the League's National Council and editor of the League's journal *Vytis* remarked: "While we fully support the Initiative Group (of Sajudis), they are working within the framework of perestroika but we are working beyond. We say Lithuania is an occupied state, and they can't say this yet. We are asking for Lithuania's independence."



Many members of Sajudis openly ridiculed the League's known membership of up to 800 activists both for naivety and for their narrow-minded nationalism. However, the boot was soon on the other foot when in September of last year a demonstration organised by the League to mark the anniversary of one of the secret protocols to the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact attracted upwards of 10,000 people.

At the turn of the year, meanwhile, events took a new direction. On December 30, the League made public an open letter to Sajudis, urging it not to take part in the forthcoming elections to the new Congress of People's Deputies.

"The Lithuanian Freedom League invites Sajudis not to assist the Kremlin in the spreading of refined lies, but to help the nation to orient itself in Lithuania's dramatic political situation. It appears that some members of Sajudis still believe that by participating in the future farce of voting (there were never any elections in Soviet Lithuania) they would be of service to their nation. Let us be realists. The Stalinists have a sufficiently large number of specialists who are experienced in forging election results. How can democratic elections be organised in an annexed territory, where the laws of the imperial metropolis and the notorious Soviet electoral system are valid? We are convinced that by participating in the election, Sajudis is misleading the world public opinion and is risking to become compromised in the eyes of the Lithuanian nation."

As things turned out, of course, the executive Council of Sajudis rejected the "invitation" from the League and did indeed go on to participate in the spring elections. It seems, however, that the increasing support for the Freedom League was enough to persuade the leaders of Sajudis to take a more radical stance and to make it clearer that while they were prepared to work 'within' the current confines of Soviet reformism, some form of outright independence remained the long term objective. The fact that some members of Sajudis left the Movement at the beginning of the year in order to establish a new Lithuanian Democratic Party to campaign for full and immediate independence can only confirm the possibility of Sajudis travelling further down the separatist road in the foreseeable future for fear of losing the nationalist momentum that it itself initiated.

If relations between the two main non-Communist party forces have not always been smooth over recent months, to say the same of relations between Sajudis and the Lithuanian Communist Party would be a gross understatement. Although many of the progressive members of the

party openly belong to Sajudis, and despite the fact that the Republican party leadership has gradually endorsed many of the demands formulated by Sajudis, it has only done so from the basic standpoint of a 'survivalist instinct' rather than from being in the forefront of representing the wishes of its own society. In short, the party has 'tagged along' for the ride, never really knowing whether it should come out firmly on the side of the restructuring radicals or whether it should simply be the mouthpiece of Moscow. The party's lack of initiative and its indecisiveness have encouraged the Sajudis forces to become bolder and bolder. Indeed the party authorities have to take much of the blame for the increasingly separatist stance of Sajudis.

There was a brief honeymoon period immediately following Brazauskas's replacement of Ringaudas Songaila in October of last year (a move engineered, it seems, by Gorbachev himself), but on the whole the party has tended to follow wherever Sajudis has led. Not surprisingly, this lack of any real initiative on the part of the Republican party was its ultimate undoing in the elections this spring. Of the 34 seats decided in the first round of voting held on March 26, 31 went to candidates formally supported by Sajudis. Brazauskas and second party secretary, Vladimir Berezov, were themselves elected with more than 70 per cent of the vote, but this was only achieved through Sajudi candidates stepping down in order to give them a clear run. The Republic's President and Prime Minister, meanwhile (Astrauskas and Sakalauskas, respectively) were both defeated in contests with Sajudi supporters.

Latvia

Unlike Lithuania, Latvia has never gone through a 'great power' phase in her history which it can now look back on as a 'golden age'. Instead, for most of the period since the 14th century the indigenous population has had the status of serfs in their own land. Germans, Poles, Swedes and Russians have all, at some stage or other, had control over this small territory, and only in 1795 did the Russian Empire finally emerge as the undisputed 'landlord'. All the more reason, then, for the native Latvians of today to cling to the memory of those periods in its history when Latvia was, in fact, independent from outside powers. Historical status aside, two other points need to be highlighted to establish the cultural distinctiveness of Latvia in comparison with Lithuania. The first refers to the territory's religious tradition which is predominantly Lutheran rather than Catholic. Secondly, it is now established that native Latvians are no

longer a majority ethnic force within their own territory - a factor that in many ways has given a much greater sense of urgency to the nationalist issue in Latvia.

As in Lithuania, and indeed Estonia, the popular enthusiasm which resulted in the establishment of a pro-nationalist 'Popular Front' came about as a result of the initiative of a large proportion of the Republic's intellectual community.

On June 21, 1988, following a particularly stormy meeting of the Cultural Unions, 17 well known intellectuals "invited the people of Latvia" to join them in the creation of a "People's Front". By October, the founding congress of the "People's Front of Latvia" (*Latvijas Tautas Fronte*) could claim a membership of more than 200,000 out of a population of about 2 million. Dainis Ivans, a young journalist, was elected the organisation's president, and like Sajudis in Lithuania, branches were established throughout the Republic.

As regards the original basic principles, these too were very much in line with Sajudis. Independence was not formally on the agenda and the Movement was essentially committed to implementing the party's more radical ideas of restructuring.

Again like Sajudis, however, the "People's Front" is by no means the sole repose for all democratic nationalist tendencies outside of the Latvian Communist Party. The separatist aspirations of the Lithuanian Freedom League, for example, find their broad equivalent in the Latvian National Independence Movement (*Latvijas Nacionalas Neatkaribas Kustiba*) which is headed by the former Communist Party maverick, Eduards Berklaus. Moreover, following the parliamentary elections, a new pro-independence political party emerged on the scene. Known as the "Rebirth of Latvia", the organisation held its inaugural congress in Riga on April 2. Indeed, to dispel any doubts about its position on the national issue, advertisements were placed in newspapers throughout the Republic clarifying that the new party is firmly opposed to the official Communist Party.

As regards relations between the "People's Front" and the leadership of the Latvian Communist Party, these have fared little better than in Lithuania. Initially, hopes were high for a fruitful cooperation between the two organisations. In his speech to the party conference at the end of June last year, for example, the then First Party Secretary, Boriss Pugo, reiterated virtually all of the demands that had been formulated that month by the Cultural Unions. Stressing the need for a restoration of Leninist principles in the relationship between the Republics within the Union, Pugo emphasised that:

"It is necessary to ensure the genuine sovereignty of each fraternal Republic. We have in mind here a substantial increase in the independence of Union Republics and a broadening of the rights of local bodies of Soviet power in the development of the economy, the social sphere and culture. I emphasise that it is a matter not of some kind of isolation but of the realisation of the rights proclaimed in the Soviet constitution and of a decentralisation of government."

As the expectations of the indigenous population increased, however, the party leadership more and more became a respondent rather than a prime initiator and was very much perceived as peripheral to the remarkable events going on around it.

In October 1988, Pugo was 'kicked upstairs' to chair the party's All Union Control Committee. His replacement as Latvian First Secretary was the 58-year-old Janis Vagris; one of a number of new appointees that were designed to reinvigorate communist party control over affairs within the Republic. Aside from the new Republican President, however, (the 46-year-old Anatolij Gorbunovs), the personnel changes have done little to enhance the prestige of the party - a fact all too obviously witnessed in the March elections.

Thus, for example, of the 29 seats decided on the first ballot, 24 went to Front supporters. And as for Janis Vagris: in a contest with Juris Dobelis of the Latvian Independence Movement, the party leader was elected with a mere 51 per cent of the vote, Dobelis picking up 30 per cent; a pyrrhic victory largely attributable to the votes of loyal sailors conveniently stationed at the time in the electoral district. The biggest party loss, meanwhile, was Prime Minister Vilnis Breshis.

Estonia

As in Latvia, Estonian independent nationhood collapsed in the 13th century, when the country was invaded by German military-religious orders from the south and by Danish forces from the north. For the next 400 years, Germans, Danes, Poles and Swedes largely took it in turns to impose their authority on the country, until in 1721 Peter the Great was left to pick up the remains and establish a long reign of Russian supremacy. Occupying a land area approximately the size of its old adversary, Denmark, the ethnic composition of the Republic is roughly 60 per cent Estonian, the large majority of whom adhere to the Lutheran faith.

When it comes to a discussion of the background of the Estonian version of a "Popular Front", numerous similarities are visible with Lithuania and Latvia.

Unofficially established on April 13, 1988, following an initiative by the Republic's Cultural Unions, the founding congress of the Estonian "Popular Front" (*Rahvarinne*) at the beginning of October could already claim a membership of some 300,000 supporters (out of a total population of about 1 million!).

Led by a seven-member collegial body, the movement is organisationally and ideologically very much akin to its fellow movements in the southern parts of the Baltic peninsular. Likewise, on the more radical fringe of the nationalist forces stands a National Independence Party (*Eesti Rahvusliku Solvumatus Partei*). Unofficially founded in January 1988, but meeting more openly since August of the same year, the party professes a membership of approximately 150 and is unquestionably committed to the secession of Estonia from the USSR.

These similarities aside, however, two elements of Estonian distinctiveness need to be emphasised. The first is the extent to which economic and ecological issues have been at the heart of the Popular Front's campaign. A common theme in all Front publications and declarations is the manner in which the Republic has long suffered from a pernicious form of 'socialist colonialism'. That is to say, the Republic is used as an important manufacturing base for the USSR as a whole. Much of the labour force, however, is sent to the Republic from Moscow, thereby eroding the ethnic preponderance of the indigenous population. Housing and wages for the 'foreign' (i.e. Russian) workers tend to be considerably better than for the average Estonian worker; and the products manufactured are exported back for distribution throughout the Union.

If that wasn't enough, this particular economic grievance is compounded by the fact that much of the industrial base created in the Republic on Moscow's orders is extremely damaging from an environmental point of view - a point highlighted by Moscow's decision in the spring of 1987 to mine phosphorite deposits in the agriculturally most fertile part of Estonia, densely populated and the source of several rivers.

Both economic and ecological

concerns are prominent in the Latvian and Lithuanian restructuring movements, but the highly eloquent Estonian espousal of the 'socialist colonialism' concept has had a huge effect on the minds of the public and the party authorities. Indeed, speaking in India in November in response to the constitutional crisis surrounding the Estonian Supreme Soviet's decision to veto measures taken in Moscow and to adopt a decree of sovereignty, Mikhail Gorbachev openly admitted that the Kremlin policy makers had long been at fault here.

The second point of distinction about events in Estonia is the extent to which the local Communist Party leadership has led the campaign for greater autonomy from Moscow from the front. The aforementioned constitutional crisis last November was by far the clearest indication of the extent to which the Estonian party authorities would go in pressing the nationalist issue, but it was not by any means an isolated incidence.

Two figures, in particular, have caught the attention of Western observers. The first is Indrek Toome, previously ideological secretary in the Buro of the ECP, and currently Chairman of the Republican Council of Ministers. And the second is Vaino Valjas, First Party Secretary since June 1988 and the first native Estonian to lead the party since 1944.

Speaking in September 1988 to a plenum of the Republican party organisation, Valjas made it perfectly clear that there was little to distinguish the new-look party from the newly established Popular Front. Too much Russification; too much KGB repression; too much immigration; too much centralised economic planning; and too much distortion of Estonian history formed one half of Valjas's speech. Insufficient language rights; insufficient citizenship rights; insufficient cultural rights; and insufficient sovereignty for Estonia represented the other half.

Meanwhile, demands for future sovereign rights were met by the formal granting of many long-standing, if only symbolically important, demands of the present. Restoration of the blue, black and white tricolour of independent Estonia;

the restoration of memorials to Estonians who died fighting for independence; the building of a monument to independent Estonia's first President, Konstantin Pats, who died in a Soviet prison camp; publication of the secret protocols of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact; the restoration of local rather than Moscow time; the adoption of Estonian as the state language; and the celebration of Christmas as a public, religious holiday being just some of the measures that have been unanimously passed in the Estonian parliament in recent weeks and months.

Not surprisingly, then, during the spring elections, Popular Front candidates and progressive party members swept the board. According to officials of the Popular Front, 26 out of the 30 deputies elected on the first ballot were sympathetic to their cause. First Party Secretary Valjas, Republican President Arnold Rutels and Prime Minister Toome were all comfortably elected. In contrast, the National Independence Party and another radical organisation, the Heritage Society came out in favour of boycotting the elections, for much the same reasons as the Lithuanian Freedom League.

Kremlin tolerance

Before going on to examine the likelihood of a peaceful solution being found to the national question in the Baltic region, two important points need to be raised. The first is the question as to why Moscow has appeared far more tolerant of nationalist aspirations in this particular part of the Union than, say, in Armenia, Kazakhstan, Moldavia, the Ukraine and, most recently, Georgia. True, there have been some extremely harsh words directed at all the participants in the current drama, from the separatists to the local party organisations. "Irresponsible", "illegal", "anti-Soviet", "fascistic" - name any slander you can think of, and some journal or newspaper published in Moscow has used it to describe to its Russian audience what has been cooking up there in that most 'ungrateful' part of the Union.

Nevertheless, up until now, the attacks

Stamps denouncing the 1939 pact between Stalin and Hitler, distributed by Latvian nationalists during election campaign



ISSUED BY THE LATVIAN ORGANISATION DAUGAVAS VANAGI. 1989 DESIGNER MICK SADLER.

have remained at the level of pure verbal abuse and have not portended anything more sinister. Nor is it just critical comments that one can read in the press. Politburo member, Alexander Yakovlev, as well as Gorbachev himself, have been at pains to point out that they regard the calm and peaceful discussion of national grievances as a legitimate process within the parameters of glasnost, perestroika and *demokratizatsiya* and have clearly indicated that a change of policy is indeed required on Moscow's part and will be forthcoming at the eventual session of the Central Committee plenum. So long as the discussions and the demonstrations in the region do remain calm and peaceful, one can therefore hope that Moscow's tolerance will continue.

A second reason, however, must surely lie in the fact that Moscow is fully aware of its glaring legitimacy problem in relation to the takeover of the Baltic Republics back in 1940 and has recognised that the time for brushing this aside is long since over. The secret protocols attached to the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact have all been published throughout the three Republics, and although some historians have continued to cast doubt on the authenticity of the documents, their arguments only attract polite scorn from all quarters of the Baltic population - party members included. Indeed, one historian who does accept the authenticity of the secret protocols is Yuri Afanasyev, the director of Moscow's Institute of Historical Archives. In a typical piece of candour, Afanasyev told a public rally in Tallinn in August of last year that he personally dismissed the official party version of the Baltic States voluntarily joining the USSR in 1940.

"We are speaking of historical injustices that we have no right to be silent about.... In no country has history been falsified to the extent that it has been in the Soviet Union... Every school child in the West knows about them, but we continued to deny their existence."

A third factor in Moscow's tolerance must also lie in the probability that many of the things achieved in the region throughout the course of the past year or two of democratisation and restructuring have clearly pleased the reformers within the Kremlin hierarchy. As Gorbachev himself discovered during his visit to Riga and Tallinn in February 1987 (though, reprehensibly so in the eyes of Lithuanians, not to Vilnius), the campaigns for greater work discipline, higher productivity, new technology and more managerial and worker responsibility were particularly successful in the Baltic Republics. And so too is Baltic support for Gorbachev's other pet schemes, like the Cooperative Movement or the agricultural lease contract. In this



sense, then, it is vital that the Kremlin reformers can point to the Baltic Republics as a positive example of what can be achieved if central controls are relaxed. The very last thing that such reformers want is to have the region identified with an uncontrolled, narrow-minded national fervour directed against Moscow.

A Russian Backlash?

The significance of the fact that events in the Baltic region have so far unfolded in a calm and peaceful manner leads us on to the second issue of importance that must be raised - the development in recent months of "International Movements" in the three Republics designed to unite Russians and other ethnic minorities against the nationalist aspirations of the indigenous population. Such movements have been created in all three of the republics, but due to the fact that the ethnic preponderance of Lithuanians in their own Republic is still very high, the ethnic tensions here have been considerably less than in Latvia and Estonia. Thus, despite the activities of the Russian *Edinstvo* (Unity) Movement, which has called for strike activity, amongst other things, by the Russian population against the legal recognition of Lithuanian as the language of state, all the other ethnic groups of the Republic (Armenians, Jews, Byelorussians, Tatars, Latvians, Ukrainians and Estonians) have declared their support for the recent changes and for Sajudis and the progressive members of the Lithuanian Communist Party.

In Latvia, meanwhile, a very different situation prevails. Here, two groups have been formed to protect the interests of the Russian and Ukrainian population: the "International Front of Working People of the Latvian SSR" (*Interfront*) and *Slavyane* (Slavs), which bears a striking resemblance to the infamous *Pamyat* organisation. Both organisations are

outwardly in favour of the restructuring reforms initiated by Moscow, but both are highly critical of the Republican Communist Party leadership for promoting what they see as narrow-minded nationalist policies which are detrimental to their own and all workers' interests; particularly as regards the recent proposal that would penalise all enterprises which brought in immigrant workers. According to the head of *Interfront*, Anatoly Belaichuk: "We have a no-party system in this Republic now."

In Estonia, the situation is even more troublesome bearing in mind the party's overwhelming approval of the demands of the Popular Front. In July of last year, the "International Movement" (*Interdvizhenie*) was created on behalf of the working class Russian population to oppose the changes making Estonian not only the state language but also making mandatory its use in many professions.

Again, purporting to be in favour of the Moscow reform process, it argues that narrow-minded nationalism is in no one's interest, least of all working class Estonians. To what extent ordinary workers really do form the backbone of the Movement's support is hard to say. Some reports have indicated that as little as 10 per cent of the Russian workers in the Republic support the Movement's aims. In the parliamentary elections of this spring, however, four seats were emphatically won by *Interdvizhenie* candidates or supporters in the predominantly Russian areas of Estonia.

The other group is the "United Council of Production Collectives", which was established last November. Once again, although the group was ostensibly set up to promote workers' rights, the leadership consists of the directors of large Moscow-run industries, who likewise feel threatened by the new language requirements and also by the possibility of some future economic sovereignty for Estonia.

Is there, then, the danger, as some Baltic intellectuals have warned, of a situation arising that might at some stage resemble the kind of strife that exists between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland; or worse still, Christians and Moslems in Lebanon? It seems hard to imagine such an acute situation ever being allowed to develop in this part of the Soviet Union. But neither can the answer be a confident "no".

In the middle of March, for example, it was reported that "tens of thousands" of Russians had taken to the streets of Tallinn to oppose the party organisation and to issue a threat of strike action should the situation get any more out of hand. This followed an even more worrying report by the West German news agency DPA, according to which at a meeting of *Interdvizhenie* on March 5, a resolution was adopted calling for the

possible transfer of the north-eastern part of Estonia to the Russian Federation in the form of an autonomous district of the Leningrad *oblast*. In response, First Secretary Vaino Valjas heavily criticised *Interdvizhenie* on Estonian radio and television and called it an extremist group with whom no cooperation was possible (a statement that very much stands in contradiction to Viktor Chebrikov's endorsement of *Interdvizhenie* during his visit to Estonia, last November).

One of the real problems at the moment is that so many rumours are floating around about ethnic hostility in the Baltic Republics ("Have you heard about the Lithuanian Doctor who failed to treat a sick Polish woman who couldn't speak Lithuanian..." etc etc) - a problem not only making matters worse for the Western observer, but more importantly, making it also extremely difficult for ordinary Russians (and probably the top leadership of the party as well) to assess the problem with any degree of objectivity or accuracy.

But because of the persistence of the rumours, one cannot rule out at this stage the possibility of some Kremlin forces making use of the current situation and forcing through the imposition of martial law throughout the region - a move that could be triggered by any incident involving Balts and Russians. The recent events in Tbilisi surrounding the allegedly 'deliberate' massacre of demonstrators by troops as a means of 'showing Moscow's force' against nationalist tendencies, so blatantly smacked of the conservative opposition that one cannot rule out any tactics on their part to save the Union in its present form.

Moreover, bearing in mind Lenin's remark that if you scratch a Russian Communist, you will surely find a Great Russian chauvinist underneath, it is possible that such a move may well find broad support amongst the masses of the Russian party membership and beyond.

Economic and Political Sovereignty

Leaving aside the ultra-negative solution of martial law being imposed in Estonia and/or Latvia and/or Lithuania, what are the other, more positive ideas currently in vogue that may just provide a new and sounder basis of relations between the Republics and Moscow?

The first possible solution to the current impasse is an Estonian idea of Latvian derivation (dating back to the reform period of the late 1950s) widely supported throughout the region. This is the idea of creating a free enterprise zone similar to certain Chinese regions and the future Chinese-controlled Hong Kong:

- each Republic would have sovereign

rights over its own economy and the specific way in which it should be developed, including exclusive rights to its own natural resources.

- prices would no longer be determined by the State, but by market values.

- trading relations with the rest of the USSR and with foreign countries would be carried out on the basis of an internationally accepted, convertible rouble.

- property rights would be extended and use would be made of private and foreign capital.

- enterprises would be independent, self-financing and self-managing.

- in the All Union Supreme Soviet, each Republic would be treated as a complete entity and plans would be drawn up on the basis of negotiations to decide its contribution to the All Union budget.

According to the proponents of the scheme, benefits would accrue both to an individual Republic operating under the scheme, as well as to the Union as a whole.

Thus, for example, the freeing of initiative and the removal of excessive constraints will increase productivity; goods will have to become competitive in order for them to be sold on the open market, which will lead to an improvement in quality and raise living standards; improving the quality of goods also means improving the skills of the workforce and making full use of new technology; while liberalising property rights will, in turn, dramatically increase initiative, thereby starting the whole spiral moving again.

The country as a whole, meanwhile, will benefit from a more efficient Republican economic unit and it will also benefit, so it is argued, by greater transfers of technology. Finally, economic sovereignty of this kind would act as a first step towards a similar extent of political sovereignty, thereby transforming the Union into a genuine federation of autonomous states.

Another 'strategic plan of action for the Baltic states', similar in nature to the above, though slightly wider in scope, has recently been drawn up by the so-called "Baltic Intergroup" of the European Parliament. Published in late October of last year, the plan (minus the language proposals which have already come into effect) proposes the following:

- the restoration of Baltic sovereignty "within the framework of a confederation with the Soviet Union."

- defence and foreign policy to be left in the hands of the All-Union state organs on the basis of coordination with the Baltic Republics. Soviet international treaty obligations to be assumed by each respective Republic in their own territory.

- each Republic to have economic,

trade, cultural and educational sovereignty, together with the right to establish their own consular and trade representations abroad.

- economic relations with the rest of the Soviet Union to be conducted on the basis of a customs union and a free trade zone.

- the establishment of a Baltic exchange currency.

- the granting of citizenship rights to each Republic.

Advocates of both sets of proposals clearly believe that their ideas are realistically possible in the foreseeable future and would be in tune with the radical wing of the current reform movement. However, if Gorbachev's speech to the Supreme Soviet back in November is anything to go by, it seems unlikely that quite such a degree of economic sovereignty is on the Kremlin agenda at the moment. Even if the willingness were there, one must still recognise the immense practical difficulties associated, for example, with the creation of a convertible currency.

It is also interesting to note that neither set of proposals drew a positive response from the radical wing of the Baltic nationalist movement. For these groups, any talk of even a confederation within the Soviet structure has long since passed and only full and unadulterated independence would satisfy them. Quite how this could be practically attained and in precisely what form a present-day independent Lithuania, Latvia or Estonia would operate domestically and externally is left rather vague; other than drawing heavily upon the region's last independence experiment in the completely different conditions of the inter-war period.

To have a wider forum for their ideas, however, in June of last year representatives from the radical independence wing of the Baltic nationalist movements met fellow representatives from similar organisations in the Ukraine, Armenia and Georgia in order to establish a "Coordinating Committee of the Patriotic Movements of the Nations of the USSR."

The C.C. Plenum on the National Question

What then are the realistic prospects for the Baltic countries at the forthcoming Central Committee plenum on the National Question, now due to meet in June or July this year?

Not good, if a report by Paul Quinn-Judge of the *Christian Science Monitor* of February 28 can be believed. According to Quinn-Judge, a Politburo commission on the Baltic Republics has recently been established under the guidance of Vadim Medvedev, Viktor Chebrikov and Nikolai Slyunkov with the sole purpose of re-

establishing a traditional form of party authority in the region. In the early part of February, while Gorbachev was absent from Moscow - the report goes on - the First Party Secretary of Lithuania, Algirdas Brazauskas, was summoned to a meeting of the Commission in order to receive a good old fashioned 'dressing down', and to explain recent activities in the party such as the choice of electoral slogan "Lithuania without sovereignty - Lithuania without a future."

Whether such a commission does, in fact, exist and precisely what its remit may be, is difficult to say. What is certain, however, is that the plenum will be one of the most severe tests of Gorbachev's leadership of the party and will clearly highlight the extent to which he and his supporters are committed to a radical restructuring of the Union of Soviets.

Meanwhile, on May 25, the new Congress of People's Deputies is scheduled to have its inaugural session, following which it will become much clearer to what extent the newly elected Popular Front candidates from the Baltics and across the Soviet Union will be able to join forces with other elected radical deputies (Sakharov, Medvedev and Yeltsin, amongst them) in a common fight for the further radical restructuring of the Union and its Republican components. All of this takes place in the shadow of this autumn's crucial elections to the Republican Supreme Soviets and an international conference in Riga in August on the National Question, organised under the auspices of the Latvian National Independence Movement.

As yet, few concrete proposals have been published in preparation for the plenum. Those that have been published, while bold in comparison with previous initiatives from the not too distant past, nevertheless seem to lack the creative initiative that is going to be needed to deal with this highly charged issue. Granting Republican control of spheres such as housing, health, environmental protection, culture, local transportation and tourism, as one proposal suggests, while keeping all the other logistics of the centre-periphery relationship intact, clearly falls short of the mark. Neither does Gorbachev's most recent formula of "a strong centre and a strong republic" provide any great source of enthusiasm; at least not until the formula has some flesh on it.

Elsewhere, there is some potential for hope, but an awful lot of 'ifs and buts' remain. In some election speeches, for example, (Gorbachev's and Yakovlev's most notably), it was suggested that if "All Power to the Soviets" can indeed be achieved, this would go a long way in providing ethnic groups with a powerful

forum for resolving their own specific problems; particularly if this is combined with a genuine turn to economic self management and self financing which would provide Republics and localities with an indigenous source of revenue to be used to satisfy indigenous demands. The theory, of course, is highly commendable; the problem has always been achieving it in reality.

Socialist Federalism

Are we perhaps witnessing the first phase of the disintegration of the Soviet Union? This is a question that has been raised many times in the last 70 years or so of Soviet history and was even more frequently asked throughout the much longer history of the old Russian Empire. But alongside this question has sometimes gone a more constructive one: can a truly federal structure ever be created that would serve the interests of large and small nationalities in equal proportion? Decembrists, Populists, Marxists and Leninists (to name but a few) have all come up with possible solutions and yet the Empire, old and new, remains largely intact.

A federal solution would seem to go against the grain of the traditional Leninist emphasis on the need for a large centralised state. Lenin, however, was

writing at a time when the maintenance of power was the major task. Different conditions exist today and one can well conceive of a federation, or indeed confederation of smaller Soviet Republics with genuine sovereign rights giving a boost to the maintenance of socialist power rather than hindering it.

Moreover, whenever Lenin spoke about the need of a large centralised state, he was always adamant that it must be on a voluntary basis. If this condition was not fulfilled then the state would ultimately be sowing its own seeds of destruction. Using the example of Norway's secession from Sweden, Lenin wrote:

"The severance of forcibly imposed links marks the strengthening of the voluntary economic links, the strengthening of mutual respect between the two nations which are in many other ways very near to one another. This community, this nearness between the Swedish and Norwegian nations has actually gained through secession, because secession in their case has meant severance of forcibly imposed relations."

The teachings of Lenin in this particular sphere, then, would surely be a very useful lesson for Gorbachev to learn. "All we want is freedom", proclaim the banners of Baltic demonstrators. "Whoever says freedom, says federation or nothing", should be the current Russian socialist response.

Amendments and Additions To The Law on "Criminal Responsibility For Crimes Against the State". (December 1958).

Paragraph 7:

Calls and public appeals to overthrow or change the Soviet State and Soviet society which conflict with the Constitution of the Soviet Union and which aim to damage the Soviet Union's political and economic system, as well as the preparation and distribution of materials containing the same, are punishable by up to three years imprisonment or a fine of up to two thousand roubles. The same activities which are carried out repeatedly by organised groups or with their technical assistance, producing materials which are suitable for mass distribution, are punishable by up to seven years imprisonment or with a fine of up to five thousand roubles. Similar activities which are carried out on behalf of foreign organisations or their representatives or using materials or technical aid obtained from these organisations, are punishable by imprisonment of three to ten years.

Paragraph 11:

Activities aimed at inciting racial hatred or hatred between nationalities, as well as activities involved in the infringement of civil rights or the granting of privileges based on a citizen's race or nationality, are punishable by up to three years imprisonment or a fine of up to two thousand roubles.

Extracts from Pravda, April 11, 1989.

Of all the non-Russian republics, the Ukraine is by far the most important, second only to Russia itself in size and economic output. It is also one of the principal strongholds of the old Brezhnevite conservative wing of the ruling bureaucracy.

TARAS LEHKYJ

ON THE CURRENT SITUATION IN UKRAINE

A draft programme of the Popular Movement of Ukraine for Restructuring was published on 16 February this year in the Writers' Union newspaper *Literaturna Ukraina*. It was written by an initiative committee composed of Kievan members of the Ukrainian Writers' Union and the Shevchenko Institute of Literature at the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. According to informed sources, the original draft was revised before publication on the insistence of the leadership of the Communist Party of Ukraine: its first clause, for example, "recognises the leading role of the Party". Although the CPU still tried strenuously to prohibit publication of the amended draft, it appeared finally in *Literaturna Ukraina* in a tirage of 100,000, but without an intended accompanying appeal to the Ukrainian people to organise and support the Movement, another compromise with the party hierarchy.

The main Ukrainian government and party dailies then launched a bitter campaign against the very idea of such a Movement, arguing that it was superfluous in view of the Party's allegedly leading role in restructuring, that it was a haven for all sorts of nationalists and extremists, and that it was the embryo of a competing political party. Appropriate letters from "angry toilers" across the republic appeared on the pages of the party and government press. The idea of a competing International Front, along the lines of that in Estonia, was even raised in these letters. *Literaturna Ukraina* responded by publishing letters of support for the programme and proposals for its constructive amendment, some of them signed by hundreds of workers. At the time of writing this article (May 1989) more than 100,000 people have signed petitions calling for the Movement's registration as a legal organisation; its supporters in Ukraine are estimated at around one million and growing steadily.

The public exchanges surrounding the Movement's draft programme mark a major development in the political life of the republic. The Communist Party of Ukraine has been forced into a debate

with an alternative political organisation that offers the people a programme distinct from that of the Party and one which the Party must itself contest. The Movement offers them an opportunity to enter the political process as an active subject. The present contest between the ruling Party and the Popular Movement represents the first major opportunity for public political differentiation, that is for a real political choice, within Ukrainian society since the triumph of the Stalinist counterrevolution in the 1930's.

The struggle for democracy

After Mikhail Gorbachev became leader of the CPSU, the Party's monopoly in Ukraine was first challenged by political prisoners released from the camps, by university students and members of the Writers' Union. For the former *zeks* "democratisation" meant renewed self-organisation, independent publication and public agitation for change across a whole range of issues, the most important of which were the release of remaining prisoners, national self-determination, democratic rights, and the removal of prominent Stalinists from their positions in the Party, government apparatus and the KGB. The students entered the political process through a myriad of informal clubs. From an early stage - the Chernobyl disaster was the watershed - the Ukrainian Writers' Union provided an ongoing discussion in its newspaper on language, culture, the purges, the Famine of 1932-33 and ecology.

The city of Lviv exhibited the deepest radicalisation and continues to do so today. The Ukrainian Helsinki Union led by Vyacheslav Chornovil, Bohdan and Mykhailo Horyn, has its strongest base in Lviv where it issues the Ukrainian Herald (*Ukrainskiy Visnyk*, first published 1970-72 and reissued from mid-1987) and has built a mass following among students and workers. Throughout 1987 and the first months of 1988 the Lviv party bureaucracy made a concerted effort to pin the labels of "extremists" and "agents

of foreign imperialism" onto the union's members, subjecting them to vicious attacks in the press, harassment, fines and physical assault. This campaign backfired, and mass demonstrations erupted in Lviv on June 13, 16 and 23 and July 7 last year, ranging in size from 5,000 to 50,000 people. The Ukrainian Helsinki Union played an important part in the organisation and conduct of these demonstrations; by the same token its voice to the Lviv population was significantly amplified.

The wave of unrest first focussed upon the selection of those delegates to the 19th Party Congress who were regarded as loyal executioners of Brezhnev's policies in the past and therefore as incapable of leading restructuring in the present. The demonstrations called for the nomination of new delegates. They also demanded the release of remaining political prisoners, political decentralisation of the USSR, the renewal of Ukraine's statehood and republican financial autonomy, the constitutional entrenchment of Ukrainian as the official language of the republic, and legalisation of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. As well, the first attempt to establish a Popular Front for Restructuring emerged from the mass gathering of July 7.

But all these efforts were driven back by legal measures (including the July 26 decree requiring official permission to hold demonstrations) and brute force of the newly created Special Detachment No. 6 of the *militsiia*, which excels in the use of whips and dogs against peaceful gatherings. The radical movement subsided for a time, but not before impressing upon the CPU Politburo the gravity of the situation in Lviv.

The capital awakens

Kiev was comparatively peaceful for the most part of last year, but not without its own important developments. Several organisations were active. *Hromada* at Kiev State University organised a series of public debates, issued its own journal *Dzvin*, and led a campaign against military service by students. Most of its lea-

ding members were expelled from the university. The Ukrainian Culturological Club mounted a demonstration on the second anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster that was dispersed by the police; it attempted another for the release of political prisoners that was prevented by kidnappings and physical assault of its leading members by the KGB. It managed to hold its own series of public debates on historical, cultural, ecological and political issues.

A branch of the Democratic Union in Kiev joined with four other branches in the republic to create an independent Ukrainian Democratic Union (today called the Ukrainian People's Democratic League) - its founding congress was disrupted by arrests in January 1989. Ecological groups, such as Green World, had more success because their concerns appeared less threatening to the authorities. A branch of the Memorial society was established and quickly focussed national and international attention upon the Bykovnia mass grave near Kiev which holds somewhere between 150,000 and 240,000 victims of the NKVD terror of 1937-38. After three Party commissions declared this to be a grave of some 6,000 victims of Nazism, the Ukrainian authorities have now acknowledged who the real executioners were. Memorial in Kiev, however, faces continual harassment from the present successor of the NKVD.

In February, the *Taras Shevchenko* Ukrainian Language Society held its founding congress in Kiev. This organisation spearheads the campaign for the constitutional entrenchment of the language spoken by a majority of the republic's population. It has representatives from Russian, Jewish and other minorities, as well as its central Ukrainian representation.

While Lviv and Kiev were the two most important centres of independent political action during the past year, branches of the organisations active in these cities were formed or attempted to be formed in many other cities and towns. The response of the authorities was similar to that described above. In Vynnytsia, Dnipropetrovsk, Odessa, Donetsk, Rivne, Ternopil, Ivano-Frankivsk, Kharkiv and elsewhere activists of such organisations were harassed, expelled from work or school and assaulted. With the exception of the Society for the Protection of Monuments, no independent organisation was allowed to register. Leaders of the Popular Movement repeatedly tried to register their organisation, but to no avail. KGB minders (the "archangels", as they are called) admitted quite openly to their charges that the state will never allow the registration or unhindered functioning of such groups, that lists of their leaders and supporters are maintained, and that they will be crushed at the first

opportunity.

Gorbachev's visit

The pace quickened in Kiev from November 13 when a rally of 10,000 people in the city centre was called to protest environmental destruction. It was sponsored by both informal and registered organisations, and its platform was shared by prominent members of the Writers' Union and oppositionists like Ivan Makar, who had just been released from three months' imprisonment for his role in the Lviv demonstrations. The rally concluded with speeches announcing the formation of the Popular Movement of Ukraine for Restructuring. The initiative committee went to work immediately to draft its programme.

It would appear that the intense behind-the-scenes conflict between the initiative committee and the CPU leadership, with ideological secretary Leonid Krawchuk as its key emissary, forced Mikhail Gorbachev's to make his impromptu visit to Ukraine in mid-February. The CPU leadership was trying to block publication of the programme and was demanding that CPU members in it, such as Ivan Drach, leave the Party. On February 13 the Kiev organisation of the Writers' Union dispatched a delegation to the CC CPSU in Moscow to seek support for its stand. The programme was published on 16 February and Gorbachev arrived in Kiev three days later.

His arrival was preceded by arrests of leading oppositionists in the capital; the same happened later when he visited Lviv. While Gorbachev was in Kiev on the first leg of his visit there were daily demonstrations of between two and five thousand people calling for the removal of Ukrainian First Secretary Volodymyr Shcherbytsky. These demonstrations were naturally kept well away from Gorbachev's open-air walks with Shcherbytsky.

The speeches Gorbachev delivered during his visit indicate that he came to confirm and support the status quo, and to warn against any toleration of an independent national democratic movement. This he made clear by repeated reference to the dangers of "another Nagorno-Karabakh" breaking out, and in his conclu-

ding speech in Kiev at the Ukraina Theatre where he warned that those who see "national renaissance occurring through separatism and self-isolation...are playing with fire". The CPU leadership felt vindicated by the visit and continued to attack the Popular Movement in the same way as it had before Gorbachev arrived.

First warning to the Party

This was also the campaign period preceding the first round of elections to the Congress of People's Deputies on March 26. The CPU, through its district organisations' control of the electoral commissions, prevented the nominations of all candidates standing for the Popular Movement with the exception of Ivan Drach. Drach was nominated among six other candidates in a Kiev constituency composed largely of the Ukrainian elite's residential ghetto. He did not have the resources he was legally entitled to by the election law, and eventually ran second to the well known surgeon Amosov whose election posters covered practically all the available billboard space in the constituency.

Faced with an election that was neither direct, nor equal, nor general, the Ukrainian Helsinki Union and other independent groups called for a boycott or the crossing out of all Party candidates running unopposed. The cross-out campaign was quite successful, leading to the defeat of Kiev CPU First Secretary K. Masyk and Kiev's mayor V. Zgursky. In Lviv, oblast CPU First Secretary Y. Pohrebniak was overwhelmingly rejected by the electorate (officially he received 42 percent of the vote, but informed sources say the proportion was deliberately inflated to help him save face).

A well-known journalist, A. Yaroshynska, ran as an independent in Zhytomyr and defeated four CPU candidates arraigned against her. Shcherbytsky retreated to a safe rural constituency near Dnipropetrovsk to run unopposed. Approximately 64,000, or a quarter of those who came to the polling booths, crossed Shcherbytsky's name off the list.

Second warning

The campaign period for the second round of elections - in constituencies where unopposed candidates were defeated - saw new mobilisations in Kiev, but particularly in Lviv, for the renomination of Ivan Drach. By the end of April the Popular Movement had 70 organising committees in Kiev, including 30 factory committees. The Arsenal of 1917 fame was among these - two thirds of 400 Arsenal workers who attended a speech



given by Drach voted to support the Movement. The Kiev Komsomol organisation also supported it despite instructions to oppose from the central Komsomol leadership. The capital's daily newspaper *Vechirniy Kyiv* was receiving two letters of support for every one opposed.

It was in Lviv, however, that the campaign to nominate Drach took a most dramatic turn. The organising committee behind the effort in Lviv, launched by members of the Levy (Lions) Society and the Ukrainian Helsinki Union, succeeded in having 37 work collectives propose Drach as a candidate in national territorial constituency No. 50. In a number of factories workers had to go so far as to stage hunger strikes in order to secure the right to hold their own pre-election nomination meetings, rather than allow the local CPU organisation to declare their factory's "choice" of candidate.

Ideological secretary Krawchuk was then sent to Lviv to engineer a nominations meeting that would vote to keep Drach off the ballot. He succeeded in his mission by stacking the meeting with unmandated delegates. On April 19 at one o'clock in the morning, when the decision was announced, 10,000 Drach supporters who had gathered outside the electoral commission's meeting hall marched through the city in protest. At the end of their march they collected 10,000 rubles (one ruble from each person, as requested) to send a delegation to Moscow to lodge a complaint with the Central Electoral Commission. There were further protests in the city centre on the following four days (April 20-23), with 20,000 to 25,000 participants each time.

On April 21 workers in eight factories that had proposed Drach's nomination staged one hour warning strikes. On April 24 5,000 students boycotted classes. More strikes supporting Drach were reported on April 27. The Central Electoral Commission decided finally not to overrule the decision of the local commission, but to appoint an investigating committee made up of Ukrainians - the same Ukrainians who had prevented Drach's nomination in the first place. The decision of his supporters - adopted at a mass meeting of 30,000 people on 3 May - was to boycott the second round of elections not only in Lviv, but also in Chervonohrad and Drohobych where the party bureaucracy had most blatantly manipulated the selection of candidates.

One side must give way

The present standoff cannot last for much longer. A struggle has been underway since November to launch a Popular Movement that is accessible to the broad masses - that is, an organised movement they can join without fear. For if the CPU remains publicly and viriluntly opposed to the Movement's existence, most people who support it will be fearful of actually joining it. But the CPU Politburo has not budged; only individual rank and file members have dared express support for the Movement, while some middle level leaders in Kiev have privately shifted ground because they appreciate its growing mass appeal in the capital. Simply stated, the period since November has come down to an impasse. One side or the other must seek higher ground and force its opponent into retreat.

For the CPU, which exhibits no capacity at all for "new thinking", the high ground can be gained only by more forceful application of the well-known methods of the past. The Popular Movement, on the other hand, has been held aloft by its supporters mainly through protest. It has been denied the prime opportunity of this most recent phase for a positive initiative - to contest the elections.

It is in the context of the Movement's necessity to move forward, to break out of the current impasse, that its draft programme must be examined. What popular aspirations does it address and how does it seek to realise them? How can supporters of the Movement get involved in positive political solutions? What amendments and additions to the draft programme are warranted at the Movement's first constituent congress, which is expected in May (but might be postponed due to official pressure) to sharpen its edge?

For reasons of limited space, this article will deal only with the first three of the five key issues addressed in the programme - democracy, the economy, the national question, social justice and ecology.

With the CPU or against it?

It is widely known in Ukraine that the authors of the draft programme amended it before publication under pressure from the CPU leadership. Their concessions have resulted in a set of internal contradictions that declare, for example, on the one hand that "the Movement is independent of every kind of administrative interference" and on the other that it "recognises the leading role of the Party". Recognition of the CPSU's leading role is

granted in one place and diluted in another which says the Movement is "a new kind of coalition between Communists and non-Party people... (that) co-operates with the CPSU through the Communists in its ranks". The straightest line one could draw between these unaligned statements is the expression of a desire to unite independent groups and individuals with a wing of the Ukrainian section of the CPSU that opposes the present CPU leadership on a range of important policy issues.

There are two problems in this respect. The first is that the Popular Movement is supported by a large number of activists who disagree fundamentally with the leading role of the Party both in theory (as being incapable of implementing democratisation and economic restructuring) and in practice (as their political opponent and oppressor). They have given a great deal of support to the Movement against the Party, but they cannot on principle become fully-fledged members unless the Movement declares unequivocally its own independence from the Party.

Secondly, the formulations above suggest that the authors of the programme anticipate the kind of dynamic that has opened up between the Communist Party and the popular fronts in the Baltic republics. Can this dynamic be replicated, or is the situation in Ukraine quite different? Up till now, few Party members have actually joined the Movement because they are threatened with expulsion from the Party if they do so. This will not change unless one or several high ranking leaders defect and thus "legitimise" dual membership, or if the CPU allows the Movement to register as a legal organisation.

But both would appear to be fairly remote possibilities: the CPU top echelon is most loyal to the central CPSU leadership; it is aligned with its conservatives (Ligachev, Chebrikov, Zaikov) and is least sympathetic to the national aspirations of its own people. It has received no indication from the CPSU leadership that the Movement should even be tolerated (not in public at least, although rumour has it that Gorbachev privately gave the nod to two Popular Movement leaders in March).

Would it not, then, be better for the Movement's first constituent congress to delete the "leading role" clause and to declare its own independence as an organisation, to express its non-confidence in the CPU leadership and to appeal to the CPU rank and file for support? It would thus open its door more widely to independent activists. At the same time it would seek to split the CPU "from below", not mainly by the offer of dual membership within its own ranks, but by encouraging a rank and file move-

ment within the CPU against their own leaders. This, of course, is a much bolder course to take, but it allows the Movement to occupy an unambiguous place on the political terrain and to return to the initiative against Shcherbytsky & Co.

Democratic rights

The draft programme declares its support for the principles contained in the 1948 UN Declaration of Human Rights and the 1975 Final Act of the Helsinki Accords which, it says, "must be fully recognised in daily affairs". It calls for "respect for individual rights and defense of human rights, democratisation and socialist pluralism, the absence of moral or political pressure, of intimidation of dissidents or any other persecution of an individual's system of beliefs". And further: "Repression of any kind - for political, social, racial, national, or religious reasons - is inadmissible".

There is a great deal that the Movement's constituent congress can say concretely about repression and the violation of democratic rights in Ukraine today, particularly the application of the All-Union decree regulating demonstrations, public meetings and processions, the draconian decrees replacing Articles 70 and 190 of the Criminal Code, and the ongoing campaign of harassment, intimidation and slander of independent opposition groups. It is particularly important for the congress to do so in view of the fact that the groups which have organised mass support for the Movement, despite their reservations about its present programme, are precisely the ones who have suffered and may suffer in an even more serious way from these decrees and actions of the police and KGB.

Similarly, the Movement now has a wealth of experience to elaborate its general statement of support for "the people's right to freely propose candidates to the Soviet of People's Deputies in all areas" and "to propose legal and other means of allowing the Soviets of Peoples Deputies to exercise real power". The recent demonstrations in Lviv have called for the abolition of electoral commissions as a concrete step in this direction. The reservation of two thirds of the places in the Congress of Peoples Deputies to the Party and approved "social organisations" has been widely criticised as a violation of the principle of direct, equal and general election of government. The idea of a multi-party system has been greeted by ordinary people with approval and understanding everywhere it has been proposed (mainly at election candidates' meetings). There will be republican, regional and district Soviet elections next spring: if the Movement wishes to field its own candidates, it will have to fight to change the ground rules and the CPU's stance toward itself before then.

The economy

Although it occupies barely 3 per cent of the territory of the USSR, Ukraine is a crucial economic region, rich in resources and a highly skilled working class. With a staggering 56 per cent of the republic's total area under the plough, it produces a quarter of the Soviet Union's foodstuffs. Ukraine accounts for one quarter of all Soviet coal and a fifth of its industrial products; its machine building industry serves the entire union economy. It is the largest producer of steel in Europe. It is at the forefront of the Soviet civilian nuclear power programme, whose electricity is exported both eastward into the Russian federation and westward to the Comecon states.

The principal cause of the mounting economic crisis in the Soviet Union lies in the bureaucratically centralised command structure of the economy, which has proved incapable of moving beyond the historical stage of rapid industrialisation through to the technological and information revolutions that are now being accomplished in the advanced capitalist states. The ruling bureaucracy is unable to secure appreciable gains in labour productivity or conservation of energy and material resources either through technological innovation or by stimulating the initiative of the working class in the labour process.

Gorbachev's much-vaunted perestroika aims to raise productivity by introducing the stimulus of competition between enterprise management teams (whose performance will determine central investment allocations, solvency and bankruptcy of their firms) and a cost-accounting system within individual enterprises that relates wages more closely to output and threatens workers with dismissal and relocation.

Economic perestroika has not so much failed yet; it has been blocked from implementation by the entrenched bureaucratic legions whose privileges, power, and accustomed methods of work depend on the maintenance of the old system. There is some resistance also in the working class: from the labour aristocracy whose material privileges are enmeshed with those of the managers, as well as from workers who have suffered wage cuts where the cost accounting system is already in place. On the whole, however, the old system remains intact, with the heart of the beast - centralised control of investment, production targets and prices - untouched.

The political monopoly of the Communist Party is the source of its control over the economic command structure - the Plan, central government ministries and the corps of enterprise association directors and enterprise managers. From this fundamental link it is

clear that no radical improvement of the economy is possible without breaking the back of the Party's political monopoly, i.e. without a radical democratisation of Soviet society. A viable economic alternative will come only when democratisation envelops the labour process in its full scope, from planning to distribution of labour's products.

The discussion above of the Popular Movement's programme in the realm of democratisation illustrates how far the Movement has advanced conceptually and in practice towards that decisive break of the Party's monopoly in Ukraine.

The historic inertia of this command structure, built up essentially in Stalin's era, results in the continued inability of the state planning agencies to shift investment more decisively from Sector A (production of the means of production) to Sector B (production of consumer goods). This was a declared aim of Kosygin and Brezhnev and is now a central tenet of perestroika for Premier Ryzhkov and First Secretary Gorbachev. But again it is being blocked by the guardians of heavy industry, with Sector B still making do with the leftovers from Sector A. The problem is particularly acute in Ukraine in view of the fact that the republic is well endowed with resources and labour for a sustained diversification drive into light industry and consumer goods. However, agricultural production, which provides most of the raw material used in Sector B, is stagnating; Sector A in Ukraine provides more than 70 per cent of its gross national product while Sector B struggles to achieve 30 per cent. The Twelfth Five Year Plan, the first under Gorbachev, saw Sector B's share fall to 26 per cent.

The draft programme of the Popular Movement "demands a rational restructuring of the national economy and a change of priorities in the distribution of capital investments...from an economy in which mining and energy-intensive branches play an excessively large role to an economy in which there will predominate high precision and complex machine building, ecologically safe and clean facilities, and branches that ensure the growth of prosperity".

With respect to agriculture, the programme condemns Stalin's collectivisation and calls for "a flexible linking of small, medium and large enterprises...the introduction of lend-lease forms" and for "land to be given to peasants for eternal use with their right to pass it on to their successors".

The third cause of the looming economic crisis in Ukraine is the almost complete absence of republican governmental control of economic activity on its territory or trade with other republics and with Comecon states. The republic an-

nually exports 1.5 bn rubles worth more goods to the rest of the USSR than it imports. Moreover, the current prices paid for these exports are 1 bn rubles less than the costs calculated to produce them, of which coal exports are undervalued by 300,000 rubles and agricultural produce by 700,000 rubles (see *Robitnycha hazeta* 18 April 1989).

The republic lacks control of economic activity conducted on its own territory. Its government administers enterprises that account for only 5 per cent of the gross national product; centrally administered enterprises control the rest, and these enterprises deposit into the republican budget a mere 3.5 per cent of their income as payment for infrastructure and labour costs. Such a disproportion explains in part the underdevelopment of Sector B - which delivers directly to the Ukrainian consumer, as well as the disinterest of local Soviets in the end results of economic activity within their districts.

A law on republican cost-accounting and financial autonomy has been drafted and is being discussed in the press. It promises to give republics and local soviets control of a broader range of economic branches, to let them draw more funds from enterprises directly into their budgets, to exercise a measure of environmental control over them, and to charge all enterprises for water, land and labour resources. It is envisaged that the Ukrainian republican government will eventually "control" 42 per cent of its territory's gross national product (all-Union average 36 per cent). This appears to be a step in the right direction, but as in the case of the economic reforms in general, central control of investment policy, production targets, the currency system, prices and tariffs will be retained. The draft law does not in fact grant economic independence to the republics.

The Movement's draft programme devotes considerable attention in its section dealing with the economy to the problems of republican control and inter-republican economic relations. On trade, it comes out for "equal exchange between republics...joint economic programmes on a commodity-fiscal basis...(and) an independent entry (for Ukraine) into world markets". It also calls for the immediate implementation of the recommendation of the 19th All-Union Party Conference on informing the population about the contribution made by each republic or region to the overall union economy....(for) credit relations between republican and union institutions and a direct and understandable interdependence between the work of the people of the Ukrainian SSR and the level of their prosperity. In this way fraternal mutual assistance between the peoples of the USSR would acquire a healthier, more effective and more open

character, which would also give it an incomparably greater internationalist and educational impact than is the case at present.

The programme goes much further than the present draft law on republican cost-accounting when it speaks of "the republic's economic sovereignty": All land, water, air, minerals, energy resources, enterprises, means of transport and communications of the republic are the property of the people and they can be used by the all-Union or republican ministries only with the permission of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR.

The mounting economic crisis is manifestly clear to the workers in the stagnation or outright decline in the volume of available consumer goods and services. The Soviet Ukrainian press speaks plainly of the danger that social discontent may soon take a political form.

The reaction of the party-state apparatus to this danger has been two-fold. First it has been conceding wage increases in factory after factory in an attempt to head off social discontent. The workers' gains, however, are illusory because the volume



of disposable money income in circulation is growing at a faster rate than the volume of available goods and services. In 1988 the income of workers in Ukraine grew by 8 per cent while their expenditures on goods and services grew by only 5 per cent. The gap is even wider than it first appears because unjustified price increases have been applied in an effort to recoup money in circulation and to dampen demand. The second response of the apparatus has been to blame shortages on the policy of perestroika. Even Gorbachev felt obliged to speak publicly about this underhanded campaign during his recent visit to Ukraine.

The Movement's draft programme calls for complete openness and constant reporting on the state of the economy, and the removal of all "bureaucratic-departmental arbitrariness in the management of the economy which has in fact led to pushing the republic's working

people out of participating in decisions of their economic destiny". While in principle these demands are fully supportable, there is a shortage of proposals of the practical means by which Ukraine's workers can decide and control their economic destiny, except for the important means of a democratically elected government.

For example, to combat the economic crisis the workers' right to strike, to form unions independent of state and party control, and to have access to the financial and production accounts of their separate enterprises are essential. Perhaps these rights will be put to the Movement's upcoming constituent congress by its growing number of factory committees.

The national question

The draft programme defines the Movement as "a mass voluntary organisation which rests on the patriotic initiative of citizens of the Ukrainian SSR: Ukrainians, Russians, Jews, Bulgarians, Hungarians, Poles, Moldavians and all other nationalities living on Ukrainian soil". Thus it is not an ethnic movement, but a republican movement that aspires to become "the real spokesman of the vital and social interests of the Ukrainian people and of the other nationalities living in Ukraine" and to seek "a genuine sovereignty of Ukraine...a genuine union of fraternal and sovereign

peoples on the basis of the Leninist programme of federalism".

This set of tasks is concretised in the programme at four levels: elevating the national status of the Ukrainian people (ethnically defined), ensuring the cultural development of all minorities; establishing the economic prerequisites for unfettered cultural development; and attaining equality of the Ukrainian people within the Soviet Union.

The programme argues that as a result of gross violations of Lenin's nationalities policy, which in their most drastic extreme resulted in the physical annihilation of the intelligentsia of the 1920's and 30's, "the sphere of usage of the Ukrainian language was substantially narrowed and the prestige of Ukrainian culture artificially lowered". Radical measures are needed to correct this historic decline, the central one being to make Ukrainian the state language of the republic, to consolidate its everyday use in "party, sta-

te and public life, science and culture, production and record keeping, secondary and higher education and pre-school institutions". Ukrainian language and literature should be compulsory subjects throughout the education system and the language of entrance examinations to higher education. No time limit is set on the implementation of these proposals.

At the same time the national-cultural development of minorities, whether territorially compact or dispersed, is assured by the provision of schools and classes in their own languages (as the languages of instruction) and the establishment of their mass organisations, cultural societies and press.

Of course, one cannot ignore the fact that the Russian minority is a privileged minority in Ukraine. There is a historic antagonism between it and the Ukrainian majority (with other minorities traditionally forced to choose sides) because Russian has been reimposed since the 1930's as the language of state affairs, the economy and civic life throughout most parts of the republic and in much of the education system. The CPU leadership would dearly love to reduce this antagonism to an ethnic conflict - thus it argues that demands to make Ukrainian a state language and a compulsory language in education are chauvinistic and injurious to the rights of Russians as an ethnic minority; it threatens the Popular Movement with a competing *Interfront* along lines similar to that organisation in Estonia.

But the ethno-linguistic tension between Ukrainians and Russians is merely the phenomenal form of a deeper social and political conflict between the majority of workers and peasants asserting their identity and political voice and a Russian-speaking ruling class that assimilates all other peoples into its culture as they rise up the social ladder. The antagonism between ethnic attributes and social mobility (whereby Ukrainians and all minorities except Russians must forsake the first to acquire the second) or, let us say, the correlation between national inequality and social injustice, makes the national question an integral issue of the class struggle and of the struggle for political power. The assertion of the workers and peasants in the affairs of state goes hand in hand with the assertion of their languages and cultures: they cannot but assert themselves in their own languages and cultural forms.

Cultural activity in whatever form depends essentially upon the material surplus and free time available to society after the requirements of elementary societal reproduction are satisfied. The organisation of the labour process and distribution of its surplus in the kind of "post-capitalist" society we see in the Soviet Union lie in the hands of the state power. Therefore the implementation of the Popular Movement's aims in the field of language and cultural development require that the Ukrainian republic first enjoy economic sovereignty:

The republic's economic sovereignty creates and supports the conditions for free development of the Ukrainian ethnoses for the native population, for which the republic is the sole territory of its national existence and historical continuity. Economic sovereignty of the republic guarantees the well being and self-realisation of all nationalities that live in Ukraine. For this reason the government of the Ukrainian SSR must be granted the right to subordinate economic decisions to social and national-cultural tasks.

In calling for Ukraine's sovereignty, both political and economic, within the Soviet state the Popular Movement has placed its hopes in a far-reaching reform of the existing state structure. It has put the onus on the CPU leadership in Kiev to seek in Moscow a radically new federal arrangement. It is most unlikely, however, that Shcherbytsky will ever be prepared to go to Moscow with such good tidings. But even if the CPU gains new leaders who are more sympathetic than Shcherbytsky's cohort to the national democratic movement, it is unlikely that the CPSU will be prepared to concede very much. The recent events in Georgia and the new decrees on defamation and undermining of the Soviet state point to a definite hardening of the Politburo's resolve to hold tight against all the centrifugal nationalist forces that have broken loose in different parts of the country. They will double their resolve to hold onto Ukraine, the second most populous and economically most important republic of the Union, the jewel in their crown.

In the months ahead, the Popular Movement of Ukraine will have to decide how and where to apply its own accumulating force so that it breaks out of the current impasse with the CPU and moves decisively into a new stage of struggle for its programmatic demands.

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Drawing by G. BASYROV

MEETING BORIS YELTSIN:

"We need to be saved from indifference
and fear!"

Introduction by Jeremy Lester

Love him or loathe him, it is hard to keep Boris Nikolaevich Yeltsin out of the public limelight on either side of the East-West divide. "Demagogue", "Bonapartist", "Opportunist", "Adventurer", "political khamikaze", "true democratic socialist" or even, rather bemusingly, "fledgling fascist" (according to an *Observer* profile), this most unusual apparatchik of the Soviet Communist Party really does arouse fiery passions.

Whatever else he is, however, it is hard to agree with the now officially publicised statement of Mikhail Gorbachev that his former colleague and loyal supporter is "politically illiterate" - a charge made at the infamous October 1987 Central Committee plenum, the proceedings of which have recently been published in the new flagship of glasnost, *Izvestiya TsK KPSS* (see this edition of Labour Focus for more details). Indeed, only the most astute of political brains could have achieved what Yeltsin has achieved in the past few months.

To what, then, does he owe his success? For one, few can deny that he really is "a man of the ordinary people", who has the capacity to put into simple, but eloquent words, precisely what the people are thinking and feeling - their grievances, their hopes, their expectations. For another, he has shrewdly used the media opportunities now more and more available in Gorbachev's USSR to ensure that whatever else may have happened to him after his initial downfall, he would not be forgotten. Nothing short of a long stay in Siberian exile could have kept this man quiet, and Yeltsin was well aware that Gorbachev had no such Stalinist or Tsarist tendencies within him.

At first, the opportunities mainly arose from foreign sources eager to pursue the potentials of a Politburo split, and although it was taking a risk to use the foreign spotlight in the way that he did as regards possible disciplinary action by the party authorities, it was in some ways an even bigger risk as regards the possible alienation of his own potential supporters. For all the fact that many Soviet citizens avidly listen to the B.B.C., Voice of America, Radio Liberty *et al* to hear about what's going on in their own back yard, it clearly grieves them to have to do this. Hence, to hear foreign broadcasts of interviews with Yeltsin or read snippets of foreign newspaper interviews with him was in some ways a very big irritation. For his most ardent supporters in Moscow or his home base of Sverdlovsk, this was an action that could be defended on tactical grounds; after all, he was essentially saying nothing that he hadn't already told them during 'meetings with the people' during his stints as First Party Secretary. For others outside of these two strongholds, however, Yeltsin was still very much "an enigma wrapped in a mystery", and there was always the possibility that they would draw a different conclusion from the fact that he was

more willing to speak to foreigners than finding a way to speak directly to his own compatriots.

The transformation came, of course, with Yeltsin's short but powerful address to the delegates at last summer's Party Conference. And once confirmed as a candidate in the election campaign, then the opportunities literally fell on him. Meetings in packed halls, demonstrations on the street, press interviews at home now as well as abroad, and, of course, the very important prime time television debate on Sunday March 12 with his electoral opponent. The only doubt in the end about his election success was the margin of victory.

Like all good politicians (and again, whatever else he is, Yeltsin is certainly that; negative connotations included!) his campaign to become a new style Soviet MP began long before it was ever formally announced that he would be throwing his hat in the ring. The breakthrough, as indicated above, came in his appearance at the rostrum of the 19th Party Conference and some media reports of what he said. Now, the opportunity was provided of really making use, not only of his ministerial status, but more importantly, of his status as a conference delegate to spread his message much further afield in his own country. In some ways, the attempt reminds one of Michael Heseltine's recent effort to try and popularise his appeal within the rank and file of the Tory party by his nationwide tours to speak at a whole host of party gatherings and affairs. Anyway, Yeltsin in his own way also tried to extend his own particular brand of radical reform and straight talking.

As part and parcel of this effort, in November of last year he was invited to take part in a meeting with students, teachers and workers attached to the Main Komsomol School of the Central Committee in Moscow - a meeting organised as part of a series of discussions with delegates from that summer's Party Conference. With hindsight, it can be argued that this was Yeltsin's first real bid for a parliamentary seat.

Attending the meeting was a young journalist, who worked for a regional youth newspaper in the southern Urals Autonomous Republic of Bashkiria. The journalist, not surprisingly, made copious notes of Yeltsin's meeting and in particular of the question and answer session at the end. After more than a month of what clearly must have been 'very serious discussions', the editors of the newspaper finally decided to publish the journalist's account of Yeltsin's replies to nearly 40 out of a total of 320 questions received.

As a rejoinder, then, to those that argue that Yeltsin is nothing more than "a very astute demagogue", the following is a translation of what appeared in the *Leninets* newspaper on December 22, last year. The account was subsequently picked up by a few other regional youth newspapers, but as far as is known, was never reprinted in any form by the So-

viet national press. Not surprisingly, perhaps, for those people in the regions who were given more of an insight into the ideas of Yeltsin, the estimation of the former Moscow party boss increased dramatically.

With his recent election success behind him, Yeltsin is now reported as saying that he would eventually like to challenge Gorbachev for the Presidency. Few imagine that he would win, but there can be no denying that wherever he speaks or whoever reads his speeches and interviews, few come away without being impressed. A Gorbachev-Yeltsin contest by popular suffrage would surely prove to be a dramatic one - should it ever be allowed, that is!

Boris Nikolaevich, can you tell us a little something please about yourself and your family?

I come from the Sverdlovsk region. Born to a peasant family in 1931. After the famine years, 1933-35, my father was recruited on to a construction project and we had to leave the village. I was a worker. On finishing the Urals Polytechnical Institute I went through all the stages from a master at production to a Director of a large Combine. Afterwards, I then switched to party work. I was head of a department in the *Obkom* party, *Obkom* Secretary and First Secretary of the *Obkom* party for 10 years. Later, I went to Moscow to the Central Committee. I worked there as a head of a department and then as a Secretary. Well, I was then First Party Secretary in the Moscow *Gorkom* for 2 years but was released from all my duties (including as candidate member of the Politburo). Moreover, my departure was not all that simple but involved quite a bit of scandal. It was suggested that I work in the Ministry of Construction. Now I am a Minister, an apparatchik. About my family. I have a wife, two daughters, two granddaughters and one grandson - Boris Yeltsin.

In the past year your work has been with the Ministry of Construction. Are you satisfied with your work there?

I am used to working with people - a lively, dynamic form of work. I am now a pen-pusher in an office. As regards paper work I have proved to be unsuited, although I haven't lost my professional skills.

At the 19th Party Conference many problems relating to Soviet youth were touched upon. How do you consider the present relationship between the party and the Komsomol?

The Komsomol organisation has become much too bu-

reaucratic and is too enveloped in the hands of the party organisation. It needs to be much more independent and needs to have a greater overall strategy for dealing with the specific problems facing the youth of the country today.

Is it the time to revise these principles of party leadership in the Komsomol? After all, Lenin spoke of the spiritual, principled connection between the party and the Youth Organisation.

He didn't quite say that. He spoke about the fact that the political party should lead the Komsomol, but the form of this leadership should be one of spiritual brotherhood, cooperation and most of all on the basis of ideals.

What are the responsibilities of a member of the Central Committee?

The bureaucratisation of the Komsomol, which I have already alluded to, is also going on in the party. Practically everything has been decided and is decided by the apparat. The prerogative of a member of the Central Committee is to vote [and that's all]. The recent creation of special commissions under the leadership of Central Committee secretaries shows the need for members of the Central Committee to more actively take part in the preparations of plenums and generally play a greater role in the life of the party.

What are your activities as a Deputy of the Supreme Soviet?

As regards the carrying out of the session - nothing. Apart from voting. In the provinces, of course, I am given a mandate by the electors and I hold meetings with the electors. In general, everything depends on how conscientious the deputy is and on what resources he has. After all, the deputies of workers and the deputies of Ministries are unfortunately very different. And the deputies of the Supreme Soviet, arriving at the session in Moscow find themselves in a very difficult situation. 24 hours is not long enough for them, they run to Ministries, throwing out questions given to them by electors. At the moment in the draft Law there are several amendments, but not all of them here are proceeding smoothly and far from all of them are being considered.

In the Party Programme it is said that the country entered the period of developed socialism. It is considered that such a formulation is there to please 'the clerks of stagnation'. What is your opinion?

In reality, it has proved to be the case that the formulation ap-



Boris Yeltsin on the campaign trail

pears to please the regular leaders of the party. At one time it was 'constructed socialism'. Then 'constructed' was 'final and irrevocable'. Then we began to build a developed form. Then it appears in the Programme that socialism is indeed developed. Then we began to think up new phrases for the next stage of socialism on the basis that communism was not yet in sight, de-

If you analyse the classical development of socialism, I would say that the Soviet Union has only reached the first stage. We have collectivised property. And that is all.

spite the fact that we should have had communism by the 1980's. At the moment, we are finding it difficult to formulate what kind of socialism we are building. If you remember the history of the Revolution it turns out that the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks in 1917 took place when the productive strength of Russia was at an extremely low level. But Lenin said that if we democratise this backward society and party, then on the basis of this democratisation we can progress to that level about which Marx wrote and spoke of when he characterised socialism and communism. In 1929, however, Stalin lopped off the process of democratisation. And from then, socialism has been turned into a state-authoritarian, state-bureaucratic system. If you analyse the classical development of socialism, then I would say that the Soviet Union has only reached the first stage. We have collectivised property. And that is all. And the remaining conditions of socialism? We either don't have them or we are still in the process of constructing them. When it's said in the press that we are currently in the process of the renewal of socialism, this is not accurate. If socialist conditions have never been there, what exactly are we renewing?! I consider that we are now simply in the process of still constructing socialism.

Is it possible to construct socialism, not only in theory, but reflecting the real conditions of our society, a society of the West, a socialism for the 80's and 90's, realistically analysing the strengths which can help its construction? Where do you see the solution in this contradiction?

If you comply with dogma then it appears to be the case that we have achieved about five points of the Leninist programme - this means that socialism has already been constructed. But after all, we are not living in some kind of shell or jacket. We need to take into account the objective processes taking place in the world. So, in the West, at the moment, the neo-conservative forces have been considerably strengthened. Ah, you know, this is a very dangerous thing which we haven't yet fully investigated and understood. So, what will happen now? What is going to happen to the Workers Movement, to the Communist Movement? How is this going to affect our world outlook, our model of a new socialism which we want to construct, taking into account the situation in the world and taking into account the experiences which we have gained? It is impossible to discard the experiences of the past 70 years. Much has been done by the people, by the party and by the Komsomol and it is impossible to brush this aside. But we now need to work much more on the basis of taking into account experiences of the classical canons of our theory and taking into account the realistic conditions of today, both in our own country and

throughout the world.

What is the process now taking place in our society - democratisation or liberalisation?

Of course, we are experiencing the process of democratisation - and this has activated many people in our society into creating many new and various social organisations, formal and informal etc. This is an objective exponent of the democratisation process. Glasnost is also part of the process of democratisation. But are we not hurrying some of the processes of the change to the rails of democratisation without there being sleepers? In my opinion, yes we are hurrying. Unfortunately, it is not only my opinion but even some scientific studies highlight the fact that our political structure is not ready. There is no legal state... we only do things as if there was one. How much time is going by? Therefore, it is impossible to say that the ending of the period of the command-administrative methods of leadership was the beginning of democratisation. There and then there is the reality and the possibility of manifestations of liberalisation. Granted, for example, that enterprises were immediately given their independence, they appeared not to be ready for this and as a result discipline fell.... If we are to reap the fruits of our slogans then we have to have the democratisation of tomorrow. Here, then, elements of liberalisation peep through. We need to gradually transfer to a process of democratisation with prepared measures and, primarily, prepared people, together with the means of production and the right conditions of work.

At the 19th Party Conference, Mikhail Sergeevich, apropos your report to the October 1987 Central Committee plenum said: "We needed to inform and tell everything... and then the process would not have unfolded in the way that it did." But we, as before (and as usual in these cases) have no idea what you said at the plenum?

I find myself in a difficult situation. There is democratic centralism in the party; there is order. If there is a decision not to publish a document, this means it is hush-hush. On the other hand, I don't agree with this classification. Without doubt, my speech needed to be published - then there wouldn't have been this hullabaloo surrounding the Yeltsin family.... The majority of the ideas in my speech were reiterated at the 19th Party Conference. The majority, but not all. Think - "not all" and determine why my speech has not been published since. I suggested the following: Let's distribute to the delegates of the conference the shorthand report. Take down this question...

You said at the Party Conference that your mistake was that it was the incorrect time for the speech. But surely, the 70th year of the Revolution - an obstacle to criticism?

Of course, not an obstacle. But there was at the October plenum a mood of celebration. We love celebrations.... Therefore, it seems to me that perhaps it wasn't worth spoiling the occasion... In letters which I received, particularly after the Party Conference (100-120 per day) the majority of my correspondents considered that it was not such a mistake. What I am against is the view that my speech is considered a 'political mistake'. After all, when such questions were expressed at the Conference they were not regarded as politically mistaken. True, I was not rehabilitated at the Party Conference, nor was this issue even put to the vote. It turns out, then, that we haven't

reached the stage of having a genuine party democracy.

Do you not think that the leader of such a post, for which you are serving...

- served...

should have found the strength to fight for the victory of perestroika within the ranks of the Politburo of the CPSU? And not leave in resignation. You didn't have sufficient political courage, so it is said, or simply not enough human strength? Do you believe in perestroika?

It is rare that I receive such a reproach. I have analysed this for a long time and once again I'll try. To fight is possible only at times when you sense the possibility that at some stage you can win. In sporting competitions various forms of handicapping systems are used. And when two people of different handicaps confront each other, then clearly the winner has already been pre-determined. It is impossible, of course, to discard the questions of political courage and human strength, though bear in mind, I am used to working in the Urals where everything is open and everything is simpler. Perhaps, and it is said thus, that two years of work as First Party Secretary in Moscow, working 18-19 hours every day was physically overburdening for me. In short, this question is not synonymous. I am not, of course, trying to vindicate myself, but I do not like my departure from the Politburo being called some kind of cowardice or escape, because at this very moment I am not running away from political work. Has someone or other compelled me then to meet with Komsomol activists and students of the High School here, to give interviews with Soviet and foreign correspondents? It is possible, you know, to choose another path: to sit peacefully and restfully in the Ministry of Construction and to be healthy.... Reflecting on the fact that my mother is 90 years old....

Would you comment please about the claim that in the preparations for the theses of the Central Committee of the CPSU for the 19th Party Conference, the members of the Central Committee themselves played no part?

It is my opinion that the majority of Central Committee members did not play a part in the preparations of the Theses... We feel, at the moment, that there are a lot of minuses in the Theses, a lot of reticence. This was shown at the Party Conference itself. Therefore, I say again - I am convinced that we have been approaching the concept of perestroika without properly worked out conceptions and ideas on all fronts and without knowing our ultimate goals. This belief of mine, I cannot change. At the moment, we are reaping fruits that have not been thought through.... It is interesting that after the Conference, there are now decisions being taken about food provisions, consumer provisions and the service sphere. This means that it has tacitly been admitted that a tactical mistake has been committed as regards the concept of perestroika. Can you conceive the idea that if people could have really felt the reality of all these measures of perestroika in the first three years, what the return on other fronts would now be! If not double, then half as much again - exactly! Where we have noticeably advanced in a sufficient way is in the question of glasnost. The organs of information have quickly and gladly picked up this process. Openness here should not come to a halt.

What is your attitude to the changes in the Constitution of the USSR and on the proposed Law of Electing Deputies?

I cannot for the life of me understand the kind of haste concerning the discussion on these drafts; after all, it is considering the question about the further life of society, the overall justice of perestroika and democratisation. We need to extend the process of discussion by about 3-4 months. I am convinced that a deputy, even if he has sent his suggestions to the commission, has not been advised by and discussed things with his voters. After all, it was necessary to work out suggestions and amendments to the draft laws at meetings of voters and officially submit them from electoral districts. Our "all peoples discussion" I would not call a genuine opinion of society. At the Party Conference there were still no speeches about the draft laws, though I frequently suggested at the Conference to bring forth the principal questions by means of a referendum. A referendum is the will of the whole people.

What is the essence of your difference with Comrade Ligachev? Do you have any common attitudes to the problems of perestroika?

The other day someone wrote to me: "Is it the case that the construction of socialism is possible in one individual region?" [A reference to a jibe by Ligachev - Transl.] In the strategic direction of perestroika we have no differences. But as regards tactics, we diverge on many questions. Even on the question of the struggle against alcoholism. How many times we have 'fought' because of it!....At the moment, we recognise where we have slightly sorted ourselves out in this struggle. But I then said that it is impossible to apply only prohibitive measures. This threatens negative occurrences. Much better to have had an educational approach to this problem.

Will you turn to the future delegates of the 28th Party Congress with the request for your political rehabilitation?

For a start I would like to say how the elections of the delegates to the Conference proceeded. The process was a long way from being democratic, although the elections were held ac-

In the West, at the moment, the neo-conservative forces have been considerably strengthened. This is a very dangerous thing which we haven't yet fully investigated and understood.

ording to approved instructions. My candidature was put forward by a Moscow collective - but it didn't go through. Then by a Sverdlovsk collective - it didn't go through. The Buro of the Sverdlovsk *Obkom* party organisation supported the initiative of 15,000 communists at the *Uralmesh* factory and decided to put me forward. All the same, my candidature was declined. At the very last moment, when nothing more was expected, I was selected in Karelia, where I was well received and elected amongst 13 delegates. Remembering the bitter experiences of the past years, I would say that bureaucratic apparatchiks went to a lot of trouble to ensure that my adoption as candidate was extremely difficult. This was the experience of the elections to the Party

Conference, when out of all the nominations of candidates, the apparat outlined more than a narrow circle of those that were voted for at plenums. If this turns out to be the process of nominating delegates to the 28th Party Congress, then it makes no difference to turn to the Congress in writing. If nothing happens over the next 2 years, that is. Yes, frankly, for me to fight my way to the tribune at the Conference was a considerable effort. It wasn't a case of asking, but demanding. Well, what then happened - you know.

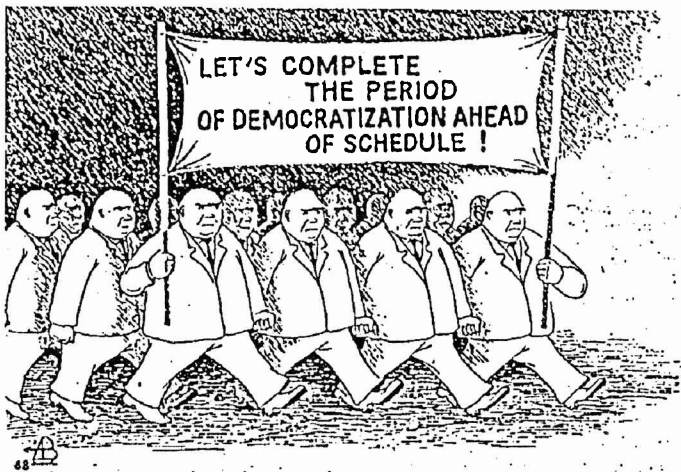
Why, at the plenum of the Moscow gorkom party organisation, did you agree with all the reprimands expressed against you by the members of the gorkom?

Does this mean that you were really in agreement or was there an incomplete publication of your address?

Firstly, the report of my speech was somewhat distorted. Secondly, I have to tell you that I was very ill and was confined to bed. I was fetched about half an hour before the plenum. Whether the doctor administered me with something, I don't know to this day. But, speaking openly, I was simply 'dead', otherwise I surely wouldn't have tolerated such lies and slanders in every address. I would, of course, have spontaneously swept on to the attack, not even waiting for the end of the plenum. But as the doctors said, this would have finished me off. At the moment, my health is practically back to normal. I am again doing some exercise. Nevertheless, I can already celebrate the first anniversary of my sacking - 11th November, last year [1987].

Do you feel a spiritual discomfort inside you by what you have experienced? Are there comrades in the party whom you still have confidence in?

Discomfort - this is a very delicate thing.... Thanks to a hardened character and a healthy condition I have been able to survive such immense moral shocks. Not too great a moral discomfort? No, categorically no! Am I once more, then, taking the easy path...? Revolutionaries were killed, the Decembrists



were packed off to Siberia - and do we really only lose this moral quality, a self-sacrifice of some kind? I think that bearing up to three years, working from eight in the morning until midnight every day is something that everyone needs to do in the period of perestroika. Then we can set things in motion and really give some kind of stimulus to perestroika. I understand that the appraisal of work is not confined to specific times, so that if you are a leader and you end work at 8 o'clock in the evening then you should go to the factory, check the conditions of work

for the second shift and see how the canteen is operating. I suppose we could consider these minutes as some kind of self-sacrifice. In relation to support from people, I would say that first of all my student friends have remained by me. And here, you know that Volkov, the Secretary of the Party Buro of the Kalinin factory came forward from the Sverdlovsk organisation in my defence....

Do you think that the Komsomol organisation should have full independence proper to its programme? Is it possible for the leader of the Komsomol to express his own opinions, different from the opinions of the General Secretary?

I am convinced of this. If the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet isn't successfully to be chosen by a direct poll, then the First Secretary of the Komsomol needs, without doubt, to be elected like that. Elections for the leader of the Komsomol need to be direct from bottom to top. And from a minimum of two candidates.

At the session of the Supreme Soviet a decision was taken about the holding of more than one office by one person. Do you agree with this? Why wasn't this question put forward in the Theses of the Party Conference and immediately sounded out so as to call forth a varied reaction?

For all these suggestions there was an air of suddenness and unexpectedness about them. It is my opinion that [with things as they stand at the moment]... there is logically a need for a functionary who is both General Secretary and President. But below this, at the *oblast* level, I think that it is a terrible mistake. How much strength will this give to one person, combining all functions in him alone?... This issue won't subside. But we have a party discipline in existence. Prior to the taking of a decision you can be against, but after the decision has been reached, you must comply with it.

Are you going to join the leadership of the "Memorial" group? Is it true that Solzhenitsyn has joined?

Well, firstly, the talent of Solzhenitsyn is undisputed. Secondly, he is not a member of the social council of "Memorial". After all, how was "Memorial" founded? There were questionnaires and everyone wrote on them the names of candidates who were considered worthy and necessary. For the time being there is only the social council of "Memorial" who are creating a monument to the victims of repression. This is not yet a society. All opinions were considered and the Council was supposed to consist of the ten people chosen by discussion: Sakharov, Solzhenitsyn, Korotich, Adamovich, Yeltsin... Solzhenitsyn was sent a telegram and he replied that his book *Gulag Archipelago* contributes a sufficient mite in the struggle against Stalinism. And he declined to be a member of the council.

How do you react to the fact that there are articles appearing in the press which criticise Lenin and take the liberty to attack him personally?

On the one hand, perhaps, it is warranted - we have for much too long idealised and deified Lenin. Although he also made mistakes and changed decisions according to the situation. It is impossible to live by quotations alone. I tried to analyse the attitude of Lenin to a mass party membership. In Se-

September 1917 in his work *State and Revolution* he writes about the representation of the party in the Soviets. In October, power was seized by the Bolsheviks. Later, after the October Revolution he is somewhat deaf now in his attitude to a mass party membership. At the moment, our press remains silent on this issue, although at the grass roots this process is hotting up - it is on the move. In order to evade the cult of personality we had discussions and arguments about the need for two parties. We had arguments "against" - it is said, for example, there is criticism and self-criticism within the party. Well, we all know what this is. Therefore, there is a need to find some other form of answer. And in relation to the Komsomol - there is a need to give a greater freedom to formal and informal organisations. There are those who bring pressure to bear on them and lash out at them - for nothing.... There is a need for there to be a general youth platform and one strategy, but there also needs to be varying programmes of action.

What is your attitude to the processes currently taking place in the Baltic States?

The processes under way there are, of course, complex. People's Fronts have been established there. Personally, I am in favour. If these Fronts are really fighting for perestroika. At the same time, however, there are also nationalist tints there. Figures are often mentioned in this connection. How many in the People's Front of Estonia are Estonians? 91 per cent. And how many Russians are there in the Republic? 40 per cent. Decisions have been taken making Estonian the state language. But what do those people do who don't know Estonian? For long we have said that there are no nationality problems in the USSR. As a result, we embrace Rashidov and others. But the underestimation of this...question has led to the fact that we have lost a sense of equilibrium.

You were not very exact in the information concerning the position of Solzhenitsyn. He declared that he was not only against Stalin but also Leninism. I would like to hear more from you about this most precise answer of his.

We have for much too long idealised and deified Lenin... It is impossible to live by quotations alone.

Although I read a note of Solzhenitsyn, I don't remember it word for word. The essence, about which I've already talked about, remains. I consider it the main thing. He also wrote that he is used to working abroad. The point you mentioned in your question was the third reason for his refusal.

What mistakes did you make in the post of First Secretary in the Moscow party leadership?

I underestimated the influence of the organised Mafia in Moscow in all spheres.... As soon as we started going after trade, public catering, the militia, the KGB, it swung into action. You fish out one link in the chain and the other links join up again.... This, if you like, was the main mistake. At that time, in the sphere of commerce alone 2,000 people were arrested. In

the Militia the chief administration was replaced.... The leadership of the KGB was replaced. On the appointment of a Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Moscow Soviet, four candidates were suggested to me. I had no confidence in any of them. As a result I embarked upon a risky course and appointed to this post the General Director of the ZIL association, who had no connections with this system. And he, in fact, wrestled honestly and still wrestles with all of this. It is very difficult for him in so far as the Moscow Soviet is one of the most bureaucratic organisations in Moscow and in the country. Another mistake concerned the fact that I didn't completely utilise the help which could have been rendered by the General Secretary and the Politburo. Ligachev, Dolgikh and others completely utilised this power. But I didn't. As regards the ties to the masses - there I cannot reproach myself. In two years I went to 200 industrial enterprises, not counting trade and transport establishments etc. Probably this played a role as regards my personal esteem. I couldn't break the habit of things like this. Being 'skilled' functionaries, the First Secretaries of Raikoms couldn't break the habit of working in their old way. My demands were interpreted like some form of brutality.... Being in the districts of the capital I invited people to meetings and we began to have conversations about things. And then, in everyone's presence, I gave my opinions about the apparatus of the *raikoms*, including the First Secretary. You must understand that this didn't go down too well. I said: "Cut the weeds who are sitting amongst you - it will work..."

Once a month we gathered at the gorkom Buro in order to clear up questions that the members of the Buro had of each other. For a long time people accustomed themselves to expressing opinions as voiced in the address of the First Secretary, and this proved to be most difficult to change. Then things began gradually to become undone and the process began to develop.

What do you think as regards the practicality of the programme guaranteeing every Soviet family their own flat or house by the year 2000?

This is a difficult question. As often happens with us we began to advance a slogan and then we had to look for the possibility of it being put into practice in real life. When we proclaimed that we would provide a dwelling for every family by the year 2000, we calculated upon constructing 700 million square meters of dwellings in the 13th Five Year Plan and 800 million in the 14th. But when it came to considering it more solidly, to the horror of the builders it proved to be the case that we would need to build not 700 million, but 1,000 million square meters in the 13th Five Year Plan. And an additional amount on top of this in the 14th Five Year Plan. The basis for this simply wasn't there. When we began in Khrushchev's time the boom of housing construction, the capacity for large panelled house building meant that we constructed 60 million square meters in 15 years. Now there is a need to build at a rate of 250 million....Otherwise the programme will not be fulfilled...[A] colossal strength is therefore demanded...[though] I myself haven't got the right not to believe in it because I am directly involved in the realisation of the programme....

Do you have an opinion about the economic reforms and in particular about construction?

I have thought about this for almost a year and for my own purposes I committed some ideas to paper for a way out from this deadlocked situation in the economy. What then are we fa-

ced with? A steady excess of demand over supply is giving rise to an unrestrained growth in prices, inflation, a lowering of activity as regards removing the forces of stagnation in productive strength and the apathy of society. On the other hand, in times of an excess in supply over demand the commodity-money relationship leads to an activation in the business life of society, competition, emulation and the stabilisation of prices....

I underestimated the influence of the organised mafia in Moscow in all spheres...

And the problem is not in our ignoring economic laws but in the practical activities of the Government. But for such a protracted length of time we have gone and are going now along the first path. The sphere of construction is no exception. I can tell you the following figures: only taking the government's decisions about construction projects in the 13th Five Year Plan, there is accumulated the sum of 1.1 trillion roubles. If you add 300 thousand million for housing construction, you come out with 1.4 trillion roubles that is completely exhausting two Five Year Plans. Thus, the deficit in our budget is planned in advance....

The transfer from a state-administrative condition to one of economic self-regulation can only be realised by the second model of commodity-money relations when supply outstrips demand. We need to resolve the formulation of the question about monetary means. What then needs to be done? A long period of growth, both internally and externally. We need to cut down by 40 per cent the state capital investment in industrial construction, the more so as today we have 1 trillion roubles either in projects begun or designated in resolutions. And then this money ought not to be pumped across into other branches, but withdrawn from the budget. With this we could then create a situation of supply outstripping demand. I have in mind not only commerce, but also the entire means of production. This would take not one, but probably two years. But if we proceed like this and refuse to take up the new resolutions, we will immediately improve the health of the economy and we will have resources at hand. The freeing of material resources needs to be realised only across the sphere of wholesale trade or by direct ties between enterprises with the goal of stimulating and involving the resources of enterprises and the population for the development of the social sphere. We need to permit enterprises the freedom to release themselves from the tutelage of the ministries and to exist independently. A landmark would be a sharp reduction in the number of ministries and in the subsequent transfer of their apparatus to self administration and financing, which would result in much self-liquidation.... This is complex, but we need to think, to analyse....

How do you spend your free time?

I get up at 5 o'clock in the morning and I am free until 7 o'clock, during which time I read. At 7.30 I am at work. I work until 8 or 9 o'clock in the evening. (Though when I was Moscow First Party Secretary, I worked until midnight.) With my job now I have time to read and I sometimes go to the theatre.

A youth paper in Latvia published an interview with you

and many other youth newspapers decided to reprint it and subsequently ran into a lot of difficulty. Why is there such a fear of you - after all, there was nothing seditious in this interview?

Yesterday I received a letter from a correspondent from Yurmala. He wrote that my interview had been reprinted in 40 regional youth newspapers and asked me for another interview. But since I am not at the moment a guest of Yurmala, I don't see the necessity of this. As regards this thing of what makes them frightened? I am simply astonished. The article was harmless. I cannot think that such an order was given from above. Someone turned to me from Irkutsk: please give an interview to our department because the reprint was prohibited. I agreed. In general, it is correct that the newspaper submitted not to the apparat but the organisation. We need to function more boldly and more independently.

What is your attitude to Nina Andreeva?

As regards the article she wrote - negative.

You launched several endeavours as regards the investigation of the illegal activities of Grishin...

There, everyone is a detective.... All the documents relating to Grishin in the safe were not found; they had all disappeared.... We didn't even find the documents about his joining the party. Hence, the bringing forward of a charge wasn't successful.

Perhaps Mikhail Sergeevich is in need of people who hold the same views and is not in need of an opposition?

I was never in a position of opposition to him or to the party. He is a respected leader. But why we are not together - you already know.

You are constantly stressing that you are healthy. Are you worried that there is appearing in newspapers the report "in connection with a state of health...?"

Putting it simply, there are many letters and phone calls as regards my health. Consequently, I emphasise it, although at any moment I can prove to be "not healthy" or find myself in Ethiopia.

Do you have an ideal?

If, as regards women - then my wife. If as regards an ideal of a political leader, I cannot imagine a higher ideal than Lenin.

What is your attitude to a multi-party system?

Go ahead and create one, if only as a beginning in the Komsomol sphere and then we'll see. But with anything to do with traditions, it is not all that easy.

What's going on: televisions disappearing, washing powder...?

The other day my daughter joyfully came home with a bar of soap for 27 kopecks - given out at the factory.... Evidently, this is not an exception and deficits of 'actions' are traded elsewhere.... We constantly have something or other that is not available.

What is this - intrigues of the enemies of perestroika?

I also haven't ruled this out.

Will there be a burial transfer at the Kremlin wall?

I, you understand, do not possess information. Logic suggests such an idea; with every individual case there needs to be a seeking of advice from the people.

At the end of the meeting Boris Yeltsin said:

Concluding this meeting, I want to share some painful ideas with you. What then has taken place over the past 71 years of Soviet power in certain spheres? The peasants, all these years, have been called upon to perfect the agricultural system. But they have been deprived of the possibility of selling their surpluses on the open market. They have had their land and personal livestock taken away and have been driven from a familiar place into the most remote corners....

The working class, in the course of 70 years, have been raised to increase productive labour, but its wage rate has been reduced and the remaining wages are now at an immutable depth....

People have been told to believe that everything in our humanistic country is being done solely for their own good, but if someone receives a suitable compensation for work done, bureaucrats have immediately retorted: "You are growing rich!". As a result, people have for a long time ceased to listen to slogans, to strive for heroic deeds and they ignore reprimands of

What is your attitude to a multi-party system?

Go ahead and create one...

any kind. Here is why, when it was suggested that they accompany the present reform... many people brushed aside the request out of habit. And only after three years have they begun to realise that the essence of perestroika is not to undermine at all the initiative of one Comrade Gorbachev. The people have been given a chance to win a victory in the fight for some distant dignity. We need to be rid of our indifference, our fear which still oppresses us. We need to be rid of an innate fear of waging a political struggle. We need this so that this kind of struggle becomes the norm in an active society, in a period of reconstruction especially.

Today, citizens all the more persistently put their constitutional rights into practice and devote themselves to political affairs, actively taking part in election campaigns, supporting or not accepting candidates. And what's more, purposefully and energetically they are taking part in various informal and formal associations, openly coming out against bureaucrats. We must have a belief in perestroika, despite all the difficulties. Otherwise we will not accomplish it. In this respect I think of the great role of the Komsomol, of the youth of today, of the Komsomol High School which needs to prepare cadres of the highest intellect and of a genuine political fighting ability. I wish you success in your active struggle for perestroika, for the renewal of our society.

Translated by Jeremy Lester

мент, в, что в условия. — тогда Кремль... а я та- ния, во- се так Юше не я под- сламя- тором в недели упления м. боль- т и се- до снх дельные амму —... ин, что забрано тие Ок... име все реим на встречн ми пре- Позво- нит пер- анен до встрим собанно в день. жу, что не, что- ки выжи- ин вые- или по- в парти- не ста- лат, что мой де-... бы, что влетела... борется око ЦК в качи- роекта- рите ли... что аме- мжно и иногда установка... руда бо- поддан- обилию, нунаст- я, при- и, где в, сна- им сен- в были юче го- жидни и не на- тостан, бому ат- вает на...

а требовать. Ну, а что было дальше — ам зна- ете.



Борис ЕЛЬЦИН:
„НУЖНО
ИЗБАВИТЬСЯ
ОТ РАВНОДУШИЯ
И СТРАХА“

— Почему на пленуме Минусовской горкома КПСС Вы согласились со всеми замечаниями, которые Вам высказали члены горкома? Означает ли это, что Вы принципиально согласились, либо были огульнокована неправых стенограммы Вашего выступления? — Во-первых, стенограмма была несколько искажена. Второе Я должен вам сказать, что был очень тяжело болел и прикован к постели. Мне было приказано через полтора часа быть на пленуме. Что в меня вливали врачи, я не...

инна, мнели? Нельзи прена партии Юсуд ствяти ЭКВВВ? в оти нкв-то этого воотки луским лужно «прден Но чи лужно комсои форма что на где то но на ну стр разном — К... ции — П создано Если в строи душем. но в Н цент, а центов, судоро, делате, король ом на с Раш тончан терали... С. Сожде мском четсе — Ж дослов свезан, Кце в иници- мном — К... кого с — Я Фил в эляиси — все цепь в лун, тт две тл цин ги сменили ность и предло: все вы ный ш ральног стемон: бороло: но, пос кратиче Мое...

BORIS KAGARLITSKII ON THE ELECTIONS AND YELTSIN

What role does electoral reform play in Gorbachev's project?

The problem is whether we can use the term 'Gorbachev's project' at all because one of the most important criticisms of the reforms is that Gorbachev has nothing that can be called a project. It is a kind of set of political and economic improvisations. The electoral reform is an improvisation because it was announced during the Party Conference and it was not even discussed before the Conference, it was not in the documents proposed for discussion at the Conference. A lot of elements of the reform remain contradictory and the electoral law is still contradictory. Official lawyers are confused and interpreting it in different ways. Another problem is to understand why the law is being implemented. Leading up to the Conference there was a growing conflict in the primary party organisations between the rank and file and the functionaries so one of the ways to ease the tension in the party structure was to switch the attention to the soviets and turn that potential for discontent from the Party to elections. On the other hand, those people who were preparing the ground for the electoral law weren't quite sure it would be possible to control the electoral process.

Now it seems the process is getting beyond control and is becoming dangerous for the liberal wing of the ruling group as well as the conservatives. Paradoxically, that makes it an important element of a really revolutionary change. While it is escaping the control of the apparatus, including the liberal wing, the electoral process is producing a lot of impulses for deeper social and political change and is becoming an element of a revolutionary process.

The western media placed a lot of emphasis on Boris Yeltsin's success. What is your assessment of what he represents?

First of all, Yeltsin is constantly breaking the rules of bureaucracy. On the one hand he is from the establishment which means that he is an official connected with the system and, on the other hand, he is constantly breaking the rules of the system and that makes him much more interesting and popular in the country. So he represents both radicalism and continuity and that's one of the reasons for his success.

The second point is that I think Yeltsin is becoming a kind of real popular hero and although he sometimes makes what I think are political mistakes and is not able to take advantage of all the

Boris Kagarlitskii,
sociologist and leading
member of the Moscow
Popular Front and the
Federation of Socialist
Clubs, spoke to RICK
SIMON on 4 April 1989

possibilities in the developing political situation, he anyway gets round him a very broad social base while his slogans are very general, very democratic, very progressive, very much reflecting left-wing thinking and also popular concerns - very close to the mentality of broad layers of the people, but at the same time he tries not to be too concrete so that he leaves his hands free. The real problem with Yeltsin is not his programme or slogans but how those slogans will be interpreted and although there is a real Yeltsin movement growing and sometimes becoming organised, Yeltsin's movement lacks a detailed and well-developed political and economic programme and also lacks real political organisation with its structures, rank and file, experts in comparison with a real political movement. In that sense Yeltsin's movement is sometimes really weak and that is why the movement sometimes depends very much on the support of the Moscow Popular Front which has less people but is a permanently functioning political machine.

One point about Yeltsin's ideology. Some people ask whether Yeltsin is in some kind of opposition to the Party. My point of view is that he is probably considered to be in opposition to the apparatus but he is very much in the framework of the communist tradition and in some senses he is much more communist than most of the official reformers who are interested in the West and everything capitalist - everything connected with profit-making, technocratic efficiency and so on. Yeltsin is a moralist and his moralism is deeply rooted in the communist tradition rather than the Marxist tradition. He is egalitarian and stresses social virtues and moral values and that makes him extremely popular and is a very interesting sign that not just socialist but communist traditions are alive in this country.

Yeltsin has been described in the 'Economist' as a working-class conservative. Do you agree with this?

Yeltsin is not a conservative. He is neither a conservative nor a reformist, he is simply a populist and a moralist. In the sense that the working class and the great majority of the population are not able and are not ready to accept technocratic reform based on capitalist mentality and capitalist social and economic organisation. That's quite clear and that's the power represented by Yeltsin's movement. I am also sure there is nothing conservative in it. On the contrary, it is quite progressive - that rejection of capitalist economic mentality is connected with very concretely formulated interests in getting more democracy and he is for more political democracy for the people. He is very closely tied to the rejection of capitalist methods of modernisation and that is not accidental but quite logical because, on the other hand, those who support capitalist methods of modernisation are already now very much interested in authoritarian methods of regulating the political crisis while they see they cannot get those projects implemented democratically because the majority of the people are against them so they see the necessity of an authoritarian solution.

What role did the Popular Front play in the Election Campaign?

In Moscow the Popular Front is growing very rapidly thanks to the Yeltsin factor. While there was a lot of popular excitement and the Popular Front was the only organised force able to influence that movement and also we were the only real political organisation capable of controlling the crowds and preventing any excesses. This is also very important as people understood that the Popular Front is needed not just to propose slogans and to agitate but also to prevent it from becoming counterproductive. It represented an element of reason in all that and we consider that to be an important success for the Left. We are no longer marginal. When the Popular Front leadership was on the platform of a rally of 35,000 people organised by the Popular Front that represented an historic moment although it was understood quite well that those people were brought to the square by the name of Yeltsin not by the name of the Popular Front.



JOZEF PINIOR

REFORM OR REVOLUTION?

**Discussion document for the Polish Socialist Party
(Democratic Revolution)**

Translated and introduced by David Holland

Jozef Pinior is one of the best known leaders of the radical wing of Solidarity. He is well known for having anticipated martial law in 1981 by withdrawing 80 million zloties of union funds for Lower Silesia from the bank and concealing it from seizure by the authorities, thus saving it for underground work. He was a member of the TKK, the central underground leadership of Solidarity under martial law and served three years in prison 1983–86 for his union activities.

He is now a leading member of the Polish Socialist Party (Democratic Revolution), documents from which were published in the last issue of Labour Focus. The PPS (RD), together with the Fighting Solidarity Organisation, are leading the opposition to the deal struck with the authorities by the Walesa team at the Round Table negotiations. They have created a bloc of sympathetic Solidarity activists around the "Congress of the Opposition Against the System," which was established at a conference in Jastrzebie in February.

The Congress asserted in its founding declaration that attempts to restrain workers from struggling to defend their living standards could not be justified in the present conditions of immiseration of the working population in Poland. It went on to demand a democratic congress of Solidarity to decide upon the union's policy in a democratic manner. The negotiations with the Polish authorities were carried on by an unelected and unaccountable team hand picked by Walesa from the ranks of the "Citizen's Committee," — also created by him.

The PPS (RD) and Fighting Solidarity have both announced that they will boycott the forthcoming elections to the Sejm and the new Senate. They argue that the elections to the Sejm, which will be conducted on a united list, conceding 35% of seats to the opposition, are thoroughly undemocratic. The Senate,

they suggest, will have only decorative powers. It's veto can be overturned by the built in two thirds Party majority in the Lower House. Moreover, the Walesa team is carving up the representation in the Senate in a fashion all too reminiscent of the traditional official electoral proceedings in Poland. Meanwhile the strong executive Presidency is reserved for General Jaruzelski.

Jozef Pinior and his colleagues feel that the priority must be to rebuild Solidarity in the workplaces. They actively support the workers' self management structures and counterpose a demand for a Chamber of Workers' Self Management to the new Senate.

For this dissident viewpoint they have to pay a price in repression, for the new liberalisation, it seems, only applies to those who agree with the government. Pinior is frequently arrested for 48 hour periods of "investigative detention." In April the PPS (RD) press spokesperson, Jerzy Kolezowski, was attacked and hospitalised by unknown assailants on the street in Warsaw — after they had demanded to see his identity papers.

Jozef Pinior had intended to visit Western Europe this summer, to open discussions with the international labour movement. He was invited as a guest speaker to the Conference on Gorbachev and the Left in Oxford in June, sponsored by the Socialist Conference. Unfortunately, the Polish authorities have refused him a passport (incidentally on the same day Walesa received a passport to travel to Italy and see the Pope).

The pretext for this clearly politically motivated discrimination was that Pinior had a suspended term of imprisonment imposed on him last October, for activities in connection with the mass strike in Poland in May 1988. He was convicted of assault upon a state functionary. What actually happened was that he and three friends, two of whom were women, were



Rakovsky scratches his head...

set upon and beaten by a group of about twenty factory guards and security police in the vicinity of the Dolmel plant in Wroclaw.

The PPS (RD) is calling for the widest possible protests against this infringement of the basic democratic right of foreign travel to a prominent Polish socialist. Messages of protest should be sent to the appropriate Polish embassy and also to the Minister of the Interior in Poland:

Gen. Czeslaw Kiszczak,
Ministerstwo Spraw
Wewnetrznych,
ul. Rakowiecka,
Warsaw,
Poland.

Solidarity messages should also be sent to Jozef Piniór in Poland at:
ul. Piastowska 37 m.8,
Wroclaw,
Poland

Copies of any such correspondence should be sent to the International Office of the PPS (RD) at:

The Basement,
92 Ladbroke Grove,
London W11.

Labour Focus on Eastern Europe urges all its readers to support the PPS (RD) appeal.

The post-Stalinist system has been waiting for Gorbachev for thirty years. The main achievement of Krushchev's reform from above was the removal of day to day horror from bureaucratic communism, together with a significant degree of liberalisation, the extent of which was difficult to measure.

It is probably the case that the lifting of mass repression against society resulted above all from confidence on the part of the authorities derived from Stalinism. This is despite the fact that Stalin's purges were also directed against the bureaucracy. However Stalinism finally confirmed the monopoly of Party-State authority over society.

Although de-Stalinisation brought with it a humanisation of the entire system, the nomenklatura never hesitated to use ruthless force, when it considered that the limits of the system had been transgressed. The massacre of workers in Novocherkassk in 1962 testifies eloquently to the evolution permitted by Krushchev.

In the states of Central Europe the period of de-Stalinisation was one of disillusionment with the possibilities of reformist local national bureaucracies.

The reformists in local Communist Parties wanted to go further than Krushchev. In Hungary this led to the overthrow of totalitarianism, to the work-

ers' uprising in Budapest, to an alternative of self government. The response of the Soviet bureaucracy was swift and bloody.

In Czechoslovakia the Communist Party attempted, with social support, to promote a far-reaching evolution in bureaucratic communism. The Soviet intervention in August 1968, which put an end to the Prague Spring, finally dispelled all illusions in the reality of the reform of post-Stalinism by the Central European bureaucracies.

The Polish Communist Party gave up of its own accord. Perhaps one reason for this was the subconscious fear of Soviet intervention. Another factor may have been the pronounced weakness of its support, in comparison with Yugoslavia or Czechoslovakia. The Polish population remained under the strong influence of the Catholic Church and of anti-Russian attitudes. There can be no doubt that the struggle for power in March 1968, inside the Party, finally broke its back. Chauvinist and antisemitic propaganda and methods were employed, which recalled the tradition of the Black Hundreds. Gomułka, who in 1956 had embodied the hopes of millions, by 1970 had become a universally unpopular dictator, responsible for the shooting of the coastal workers.

In the Seventies, the local bureaucracies could only duplicate a sclerotic system of rule, acting as an intermediary for society in geopolitical, consumer and technocratic matters.

The heated debates on Marxism and Socialism, which characterised the Sixties, were replaced by national-populist ideologies, which on the one hand served to cover up the privileges and demoralisation of the ruling caste and on the other the exploitation and enslavement of the majority of society.

Moreover the Central European nomenklaturas did not possess any serious roots in the societies of their own countries. They progressively lost the ability in reality to organise the masses.

In 1980 the general strike of the Polish workers and the demand for authentic trade unions appears to have been a turning point for the entire Soviet bloc. This was a turning point in the process of the self-emancipation of the workers' movement and of the whole of society in relation to the post-Stalinist structures of Party and State.

The Poles broke the monopoly of the Party on information and organisation. What was more important, they succeeded in maintaining their independence on a mass scale, even after martial law, in the years of General Jaruzelski's "normalisation".

The nomenklatura did not win greater influence over society. It relied on geopolitical *raison d'état*, the army, the police and a narrow social layer connected with

the authorities through economic interests.

It was at this moment that Gorbachev appeared on the scene. He lent the reforms imperial sanction: modernisation, liberalisation or democratisation became the slogans of the enlightened bureaucracy. Local governing apparatuses had willy nilly to join the ranks of the supporters of perestroika and glasnost.

The more compromised the local nomenklatura is, the more difficult it finds it to introduce appropriate changes. To carry out reforms, a certain minimum credibility is required, at least in countries where the masses have not been completely expropriated in the areas of information and organisation. In these conditions national post-Stalinist bureaucracies can present themselves in various ways to the people over whom they rule.

Jaruzelski, Rakowski and Kiszczak, the chief protagonists of Polish perestroika are for the most part people who are politically responsible for the destruction of the reform process seven years ago, for martial law and for the tragedy of a whole generation. They are not reformers or liberals of a Eurocommunist cut. Rather they are cynical technocrats. They drove Solidarity underground, but they did not go to the length of a bloody encounter with the population of their subject territory. These "patriots" appeal either to geopolitical *raison d'état* or a national mission. They rescued totalitarianism in Poland, saved the regime and led the country to economic ruin, ecological catastrophe and the impoverishment of the population.

For them Gorbachev represents an enlarged field of manoeuvre, as if the clock had been turned back to 1980. Their problem is that they do not have at their disposal any kind of significant mediator with society. Political good sense requires them to seek mediators in the Church and the Opposition.

As a strategic plan it is transparent: the evolution of totalitarianism in the direction of an authoritarian and anti-working class economic reform.

A presidency with unlimited powers, 35% democracy, total control over the military, the police and the media of mass communication, all indicate an authoritarian system which will guarantee the survival of the present authorities.

The agreement of the opposition to the process of transforming the nomenklatura into a bourgeoisie proper, to the provision of cheap labour power, to the impoverishment of the younger generation and the majority of the workers, is intended to revitalise economic life.

This is the basis on which the round table talks were constituted. The opposition has gained a kind of legalisation: a trade union with drawn teeth, the possibility of publishing opposition periodicals, free elections to the senate, a consultative

body for the General, who likes to assert that it is down to his imposition of martial law that Solidarity was saved. The "Magdalenka" opposition (1) treats all this as an important evolution in post-Stalinism. No alternative is seen to national agreement. The political horizons of the round table do not go beyond generals and discussion clubs. Sometime underground leaders labour under the illusion that they can lend credibility once only to the cabaret style parliamentary elections - like a woman resorting to prostitution "just this once".

In the structure of historical processes such choices have a determining influence. An authoritarian system, once legitimised, takes on its own logic. A scenario co-written at the outset, will increasingly impose an authoritarian production on the actors. This was exactly how German history developed from 1848.

There is no way of avoiding the conclusion that there was a chain of causal connection between the meeting of Lassalle and Bismarck; the support of the Social Democrats for war credits at the beginning of the First World War and the defencelessness of the German workers' movement in the face of the wave of national chauvinism of the 1920's and 30's. Politics has an ethic of responsibility. The Magdalenka oppositionists have flooded the country with injunctions for a responsible and sensible attitude by the nation. Do they realise the consequences of encouraging Polish people to give legitimacy to a regime made up of people who introduced martial law, smashed Solidarity and were responsible for so much human tragedy? We are not talking here about settling accounts. It is simply that public life, which is the foundation of political freedom, makes sense if the people participating in it are responsible for what they say and do. A kind of lesson in nihilism is given if one lends credibility to people by participating in television broadcasts with them, when they have quite literally in the course of a few weeks so radically changed their public statements. Those television presenters who were yesterday trading in political pornography, appear today with their mouths stuffed with liberalism and human rights. What will they be exhorting us about tomorrow - democracy or Albanianisation? What direction will society go in, when in June it

votes for its leaders, whilst actually voting for Jaruzelski? Can the exit from totalitarianism in Poland begin with voting for the pluralist dictatorship of the General?

The Workers Movement at a Turning Point

There are not many respects in which the 1989 compromise recalls the one made eight years ago. Even the scenario differs. Then the hosts were the workers. The discussions took place in the workplaces. Today the Chief of the political police is the host. Overalls have been replaced by suits and factories in the provinces have been exchanged for metropolitan conference halls. Then the agreement was the crown-

ing achievement of a national general strike. A general catharsis took place. Independent trade unions were legalised, which represented a revolutionary achievement in the gaining of self-consciousness, and self-organisation of the workers' movement in the system of bureaucratic communism. This time the most important matters are dealt with in inaccessible offices. The legendary leader of the Polish workers travels the country appealing against

strike action. He appears on the hated television news and freely ridicules those members of the opposition who do not agree with him. The leaders of the Solidarity factory committees are divided between loyalty to the reformist leadership and the desperate work-forces. People who have less and less in their larders are told that Solidarity is sensible and responsible for the state, that restraint in economic compensation or voting for Jaruzelski, must be the price for the legalisation of the union. From day to day we are witnesses to the transformation of a movement to which the oppressed linked all their hopes, into a freak of perestroika. Certainly this is an abuse of leadership in relation to the workers' movement and sooner or later it will be brought to an end by a revolt of the base of Solidarity.

Unfortunately, by then it will probably be too late to prevent the smashing of the union. The unity of Solidarity in a situation of economic catastrophe, with a universal and continuous impoverishment of

society, does not seem very likely, if its leaders are appealing for moderation and against the use of strikes, something which can only be obtained at the price of a complete separation of the union from the living actions of the workers. Either the representatives of the round table talks will return to the head of the workers' movement and will take responsibility for the conditions of the Polish labour, or in the course of the first important wave of strikes an alternative leadership will be thrown up by the insurgent workers. This will not give up Solidarity, but it will without regret abandon any interest in the fate of the leaders of Gorbachev style perestroika.

The Caucasian Chalk Circle

Is an agreement between the nomenclatura and a society in the course of emancipating itself possible? The supporters of agreement quote the compromise after the Second World War between the bourgeoisie and the workers' movement. The partner in these agreements was the bourgeoisie. The chief advantage was the stimulation economic life, the development of productive forces and the flexibility of technology. This produced a situation in which the majority of society had an interest in the maintenance of the status quo. It was paid for by the minorities - the unemployed, black people, foreign workers, youth. The Third World paid for it. The workers' movement paid for it, with political disintegration and ideological expropriation. What is more, this compromise only applied to Western Europe. Not much of it reached Latin America. Another question is the historical durability of such a system. The seven million strong general strike in Spain at the end of last year was an interesting supplementary note to the pact concluded after the death of Franco. We are dealing here with the post-Stalinist bureaucracy, which after carrying out a process of industrialisation has shown itself to be unable to significantly develop the forces of production. In Poland, after about 1974 it could not cope with the stagnation of the economy and the decline in the level of development of the country.

The supporters of the compromise are a group, who have as an end in itself power over society and parasitism on it. They are distinguished by the lack of any kind of economic creativity and the thoughtless consumption of the technological achievements and credits available from the capitalist environment. The basic condition of success of the round table is the stimulation of economic life and the improvement of the material con-



ditions of life of the population. The changes in style effected by Minister Wilczek, such as the offer of a cheap labour force to the West and the embourgeoisification of the nomenklatura, meaning enrichment for a few, spit in the faces of the majority of the workers and only hasten the explosion of social anger. The nomenklatura does not possess any programme for the real development of the productive forces, a development which would ensure the satisfaction of social needs. It is an imbecility to think that the workers will peacefully stand by, while the elite of the authorities appropriates the means of production in a capitalist manner. Apart from incompetent management arising from a specific system, Polish economic life displays two features: a colonial dependence on the USSR and foreign debt. In the final analysis, both elements dictate the structure of the national economy. The first is basic to the establishment of the People's Republic of Poland. The Polish economy appears to be structurally pervaded with dependence on the USSR. This dependence is probably expressed first and foremost in the far reaching obligations to the imperial arms industry. The second factor became important in the history of People's Poland in the '70's, in association with Edward Gierek's attempts at modernisation and have become an ever more important constitutive factor in the Polish economy. The local nomenklatura looks to further Western credits and loans a chance for economic development and as a possible way out from catastrophe. Everything points to the fact that indebtedness will become an ever more significant influence on Polish reality. The example of Latin America, even of the recent hunger protests in Venezuela provide some notions as to the kind of effects the deepening of indebtedness and of regular repayments will have on the Polish situation. These two factors defining the economy are taboo subjects in Polish political life. The Round Table gave them no consideration at all. However the basic problems remain. Is Polish economic reform possible without alteration of the dependent relation on the USSR? Do Polish people have to pay off the debts incurred without any kind of social control, by the nomenklatura?

This is a question of the conscious goals of the workers' movement: to overthrow dogmas. This means the rejection of the imperialist dependence on the Soviet Union and a refusal to repay the debt. Today these demand are treated as mad fantasies. Tomorrow everyone will regard them as commonplaces.

The horizons of the workers movement diverge fundamentally from those of the Round Table. The current compromise aims to conserve the existing system by reform. For the workers' move-

ment this will mean locating it in the framework of the state, but escape from bureaucratic communism is a struggle that must be carried out above all from below in a process of social emancipation.

The alternative is for the conscious self-organisation of the workers' movement to destroy all limitations and myths. This will break open the enchanted circle of Central European "impossibilities" and create a consistent antitotalitarian force.

The Destruction of the State

The Polish people have lost hope. Martial law and seven years of mortification and repression have produced a frustration and disbelief in the real possibility of departure from the system of Party-State monopoly of power over society. The wounds inflicted in recent years are, it seems, still too fresh. The universal political enthusiasm of 1980-81 has been replaced by dreams on the level of a limited stabilisation: one's own little shop, the survival of Gorbachev and fear of insurrection. The national tendency to "cultivate one's own garden" has reappeared.

There is a complete indifference to the problems of other societies; an incomprehensible disappearance in public life of values such as tolerance, interest in the world, intellectual courage or an ability to laugh at oneself. Has poverty in every day life given birth to a poverty of political philosophy?

The Round Table is the local version of Gorbachevism. It has no effect on the nature of the system. However - and this is certainly the most important thing about it - it is stimulating the Polish situation, in the sense that it is approaching the limits of bureaucratic communism. The Gorbachev reform from above encounters the revolution of social self-emancipation from below.

The fundamental problem of communism, the emancipation of social labour, does not appear to be resolved by the reformist course. An authentic reform of the system must also be a revolution. It must consist in the destruction of the Party-State authority over society. Up until this time we are dealing with an evolution of the system in a liberalising direction, respect for human rights and also a widening of the base of the bureaucracy's rule over society - called by some democratisation.

Certainly, the significance of all this must not be minimised. All the more so when one compares the form of the system today to how it was in the years of Stalinist terror, or to the situation in Albania or North Korea, of unchanged stalinist structures. At the same time, this evolutionary improvement has been associated with a collapse of civilization and worsening material conditions of life for

the majority of society. From Gorbachev down, everyone knows that the insurgent Polish workers put a term on the epoch of Stalinism.

The questions for our times are as follows. Can the ruling bureaucracy succeed in modernising the system, which will still mean the intensification of exploitation and domination? Or will the process of the democratic revolution create a real possibility of the social emancipation of labour? It would bring with it a new rationality, offering to the exploited and enslaved the chance that social conditions for a human existence might prevail.

The Poles are condemned to whining or revolution. Freedom in Central European conditions must involve a search for a new alternative. The problems of post-Stalinism will not be resolved by enabling the bureaucracy to perfect its mechanisms of control. Seeking liberalisation instead will not alter the prevailing human desperation and hopelessness. All that can be done is to hasten the next wave of social revolt: a revolt in which the factory and area strike committees break through the limits of bureaucratic communism and create an alternative self-managing power from below. This will begin a process of social self-emancipation, eroding the Party-State structure of rule over society.

In spite of all the bitter experiences of the Twentieth Century, personally I do not see any other subject apart from the conscious and self-organised workers' movement, which has the potential to realise a revolutionary self-understanding of our situation.

Footnote

1. So named after the village near Warsaw, where members of the "constructive opposition" met government representatives for secret negotiations. [transl.]

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

MILOSEVIC CRUSHES ALBANIAN INTIFADA

Documents, translated and introduced by Michèle Lee

Introduction

As we reported in the last issue of *Labour Focus*, mass demonstrations by the Albanian population in the Yugoslav province of Kosovo in November 1988 were intended as a warning to both the republican (Serbian) and all-Yugoslav leaderships that the proposed changes to the Serbian constitution reducing Kosovo's autonomy and with it Albanian national rights would be resisted. The Serbian leadership, headed by Slobodan Milosevic, responded by introducing an additional clause depriving the Kosovo assembly of its power of veto over any future alteration of the province's status within Serbia. Although the autonomy of Serbia's two provinces is still formally guaranteed by the all-Yugoslav constitution, the readiness of the Yugoslav state and party leadership to accept Serbia's diktat clearly minimizes the value of this ultimate safety net. A general strike was accordingly declared in Kosovo in February 1989. The mass character of the action, in which for the first time in Kosovo history women played a vital and indispensable role, gave it the character of an Albanian *intifada*.

The vanguard role in the strike was played by miners, in particular those from the lead and zinc mining and processing complex of Trepca, an old centre of working-class resistance. Over 1,000 miners remained underground for eight days, demanding the resignation of three provincial officials imposed by the Serbian party. The miners stated their determination to perish if their demands were not met. We publish below a Zagreb journalist's account of their situation at the high point of their action. By the end of the month, it seemed certain that Yugoslavia was facing a major tragedy, with unimaginable consequences. We publish next a vivid and moving description by Shkelzen Maliqi, a leading Albanian intellectual and editor of the Albanian-language philosophy journal *Thema*, of the atmosphere in Kosovo at this time. Maliqi joined 214 other Albanian intellectuals in addressing an open letter to the Serbian assembly and the Yugoslav public, protesting against the undemocratic character of the planned constitutional changes and warning of the consequences. The Yugoslav authorities answered this appeal by troops reinforce-

ment, including federal paramilitary police (the 'specials') to Kosovo: a measure of dubious constitutional validity.

Support for the miners came from Slovenia and Croatia, but above all from the former. Under pressure from Slovene miners - who threatened a general strike of their own in solidarity with the Albanian miners - and intellectuals, a public meeting amounting to a national convention was held in Ljubljana on 28 February. We publish below the Declaration adopted by the meeting. In Zagreb, meanwhile, the newly formed Yugoslav Association for a Democratic Initiative issued a statement (see below) demanding a referendum in Kosovo on the province's future status in the Federation. And in Moscow, two members of the Moscow People's Front - Boris Kagarlitskii, one of its coordinators and author of *The Thinking Reed* (winner of the Isaac Deutscher Memorial Prize for 1988) and Sergei Stankevich, a successful candidate for People's Deputy of the USSR in the recent elections - signed an appeal for a 'peaceful and just resolution of the issues at stake in Kosovo'.

At this point, the central authorities seemingly caved in and accepted the demanded resignations, allowing the - by now very sick miners - to resurface. It soon turned out, however, that this was a mere ruse, designed to avoid having to storm the pits. On the evening of the same day, mass Serb nationalist demonstrations took place in Belgrade, insisting on tough action against Kosovo. Milosevic spoke to the crowd and promised arrests. A day later, several leading Kosovo politicians - most notably Azem Vllasi, a former chief of the provincial party - were arrested. As the miners headed for home or to hospitals for treatment, Federal paramilitary police moved in and the province was placed under a state of emergency. In the Yugoslav Assembly, Lazar Mojsov, a member of the Federal state presidency, spoke in lurid terms of a plot hatched by Albania and foreign intelligence networks against the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia!

The Federal 'specials' used teargas and automatic weapons to quell demonstrations that now erupted throughout Kosovo. According to official figures, 'only' 24 deaths ensued! However, *Mladina* journalists reported more than 180 in Prishtina alone. They also reported that

special death squads may have been formed to deal with recalcitrant individuals. Eyewitness accounts of on-the-spot executions - like one published by the Italian communist party daily *l'Unita* - suggest that this may well be true. It was under these conditions of military occupation and mass terror (each individual assembly member was interviewed by the state security police before the vote) that the Kosovo assembly finally gave its consent to the constitutional changes, voting itself into a *de facto* oblivion. This allowed Serbian on the following day to proclaim the new republican constitution. As the carnage in Kosovo progressed, Belgrade celebrated the event with street music, theatre, funfairs and free refreshments. Ante Markovic - Yugoslavia's new prime minister - and other Federal dignitaries could be seen on television smilingly congratulating Milosevic and Co. - a grotesque spectacle of bureaucratic unity amidst bloodshed. No public funerals or mourning for the Kosovo dead were allowed (an exception being made only for those of two policemen). Their names have not been published. Slovene press reported that many bodies were released to families only in return for a written statement acknowledging that death was due to natural causes. In contrast to what happened in Georgia, there will be no resignations of officials responsible nor any public investigation of the shootings. Under its current leadership, Yugoslavia is fast becoming a lawless and barbaric country.

As we go to press, Kosovo is still under martial law. Most of its workers are back at work - on pain of arrest or dismissal. Thousands of people have been imprisoned or face incarceration. The party, enterprises and educational institutions of the province are undergoing massive purges and showtrials are being planned. A substantial proportion of the 215 intellectuals who signed the open letter have either been arrested outright or placed under house arrest. A similar fate threatens the rest, including Shkelzen Maliqi. Despite the bloody repression, the Albanian struggle for national and democratic rights will continue in Yugoslavia. It is increasingly acting as a catalyst for anti-bureaucratic resistance throughout the country.

JELENA LOVRIC

TREPCA ON STRIKE

Yugoslavia, February 1988. Albanian miners from the Trepca zinc and lead mine in the Yugoslav province of Kosovo are striking underground - if necessary to death - in defence of their national and political rights.

'In the narrow corridors, the miners sit so closely packed that it is difficult to pass. Damp and draught. Darkness of the earth. Lead dust, so dangerous to human health, fills the air. Oxygen is scarce. The men are pale and exhausted, they lack sleep. Some are on hunger strike. Even the gravely ill are nevertheless refusing to surface, so long as they have a minimum of strength. Medical attention is offered in impossible circumstances. Their endurance sorely tried, the men's mood changes from reasoned argument to nervous passion. Thanks to the Yugoslav leadership's obduracy, the miners are clocking up a world record for staying underground.'

'We descend to the fifth level (out of twelve). The men tell us excitedly why they were moved to take this step. We sit on narrow planks and look into the face of an old miner, who has spent decades working in the pit. He begins to cry, bowing his head.'

'At the eighth level, the space is even more cramped. There is no place to sit down. We all stand. The miners ask what an Albanian has to do, in addition to hailing Yugoslavia and Tito, in order to be trusted. The younger men are well informed. Our conversation is interrupted by the loudspeaker saying that Raif Dizdarevic [president of Yugoslavia] wants to meet a miners' delegation. They protest loudly. "Let him come down!" The voice says his health is not good - a remark that is out of place among men in such a state. Later Aziz Abrashi, the mine manager, tells us that one miner's wife died two days ago, but the man refused to leave the strike to attend her funeral. Another man lost his eight-month old baby. He also refused to leave his comrades.'

'We are at the ninth level. The temperature is now about 50 degrees centigrade. We step through mud and water. The miners have just heard that Rahman Morina [Kosovo party leader, whose resignation they are demanding] has just announced he has no intention of resigning. They are upset. They are at the end of their endurance. There are

more of them here, and the space is even less. They beg us to leave them, saying that in their psychological state they are unable to talk. Finally they agree. A young man talks excitedly about self-immolation. His brother stands next to him, hugging him. The brother says he will follow him to death. Death seems to be all around us. Many of the miners seem to have resigned themselves to it. "One can only die once", says one.

Uncontrolled weeping follows, of a hundred, two hundred men. Trepca is gripped by a strange epidemic of tears.'

'The miners say they are not nationalists, beg us to write only the truth about them, say that Tito used to come down to speak to them, so why not his heirs? They beg us also to leave them - they cannot go on, they want to spare us the collapse of their self-control. We leave them to the narrow space, the darkness, the overcrowding. They are trapped. They cannot give up. Their dignity has been

trampled by the unbelievable indifference of a leadership with which socialist government has finally lost the last remnant of its already badly dented class legitimacy. We fear for them: pride is strong among the miners, it will overpower reason. Now they are left to themselves. Many are holding hands. They say there is no greater comradeship than the one forged in the darkness and dangers of the earth.'



Danas, Zagreb, 28.2.1989

THE ALBANIAN INTIFADA

Over the past week, Kosovo Albanians have experienced the cathartic release of long-suppressed discontent. The circumstances have been - and still are - visibly dramatic.

On Monday 20 February, 1350 miners of Albanian nationality went on strike in the galleries and levels of the *Stari Trg* (Trepca) mine, 600-800 metres below the ground. The following day they were joined by Albanian miners in all the other Kosovo mines, so that by now several thousand men are occupying their pits. Since the atmosphere in the pits is highly deleterious to the human organism, causing a whole variety of ailments, a strike of this kind is like a self-inflicted injury. Given that the strike is now in its seventh day (I am writing on Monday 27 February) and that the Trepca miners have been underground for the past 167 hours, the danger is increasing daily, hourly, indeed by the minute. The miners are fast approaching the limit of their bodily and mental endurance. In Trepca alone, 300 miners have already needed medical help. Thirty of them have had to be hospitalized because they were in a critical condition. The miners are refusing to surface until their demands are met. Their determination is investing the national catharsis with an emotional charge, with a sense of fatality. It has acquired a superhuman, a metaphysical meaning.

Kosovo has risen

The whole of Kosovo has risen - desperate, frightened and angry. During the last two days, its Albanian population has practically been on general strike, since only installations supporting vital systems have been working. All life has been paralysed - a kind of Albanian *intifada* has begun. Thousands of solidarity meetings are taking place, supporting and expanding the miners' demands. Schools throughout the province are not working, while in Prishtina students have entered their sixth day of peaceful demonstration in the '25 May' sports centre. Writers are holding daily protest meetings. All socio-political organizations are in permanent session. The strike is exclusively political and national.

The demands and positions formulated by the Trepca miners have thus spread throughout Kosovo. On Thursday 23 February, they came up with a list of ten points:

1. No retreat from the fundamental principles of the 1974 constitution: any change in the constitutions of Serbia or Kosovo must be such as to allow further development of brotherhood and equality.

2. Those who proposed the law prematurely retiring teachers failing the notorious 'test of political and moral suitability' must be called to account.

3. Rahman Morina [provincial party chief], Husamedin Azemi [head of the Prishtina party] and Ali Shukria [member of the Federal party central committee] must submit irrevocable resignations: if they wish to know why, then they must come down the pits where the miners will tell them face to face.

4. Stipe Suvar [head of the Federal party], Slobodan Milosevic [head of the Serbian party] and a representative from each of the central committees of the socialist republics and the socialist province of Vojvodina, must come to talk to the miners.

5. The list must be published of those who organized last year's mass meetings.

6. An explanation must be given for the resignations of Azem Vllasi, Kacusha Jashari and Svetislav Dolasevic.

7. The Kosovo leadership must be elected by the Kosovo base and not by the bureaucracy of other republics.

8. The United Nations must examine the state of Kosovo Albanians;

9. The discriminatory policies of Slobodan Milosevic must be condemned, since they deviate from the correct path traced by Tito.

10. The miners inform the provincial, republican and Federal leaderships, as well as the public at large, that they will not leave the *Stari Trg* pit until their demands are satisfied.

For the first three days the strike was seen as a minor local issue and - until the miners' issued their warning that they would remain underground as long as was necessary, even to the point of death - was not taken seriously. None of the invited individuals visited the mine. Only on the fourth day did Raif Dizdarevic, the Federal state president, and Petar Gracnin, the Serbian state president, arrive. Dizdarevic's talk with the miners was fruitless. On the fifth day Stipe Suvar and Slobodan Milosevic finally came to Kosovo, but only the former visited the mine. His mission, however, was unsuccessful since he had did not come to meet the miners' demands but only to ask them to come out - something which they firmly declined.

The miners subsequently made their emergence from the pits conditioned

upon the irrevocable resignations of the three 'honest' and 'Yugoslav-orientated' Albanians: Morina, Azemi and Shukria. Morina, they argued, had not been elected with the agreement of Albanian communists, had deeply offended the miners, and had not met demands formulated at a meeting in Trepca earlier in the month. Azemi had equally affronted the miners by describing their November march as nationalist in character. Shukria, finally, had betrayed not only his communist base but also his own revolutionary past - associated precisely with Titova Mitrovica and Trepca - by completely aligning himself with Milosevic's anti-Albanian policies.

Resistance to Milosevic

The miners' agony is now in its seventh day. Those whose resignations they are demanding are refusing to resign. Albanian anger and dissatisfaction have reached unimaginable levels. As a result, Morina and Azemi are today hated even by party activists and bodies who up to now have been quite compliant. Whatever the outcome of the strike, their political fate has been sealed. It will be extremely difficult in the future for Milosevic to find 'honest' Albanians ready to follow his *diktat* and act as obedient instruments of Serb politics. This plebiscitary declaration shows that Milosevic will have great difficulties with Albanians. The open resistance to Milosevic's policy is expressed in the miners' ninth demand, and party organizations in Kosovo are now demanding that the central committees of Serbia and Yugoslavia should insist on Milosevic's own resignation, since he is clearly responsible for the worsening of the situation in Kosovo and in Yugoslavia. Albanian communists say that the situation in Kosovo was improving until Milosevic's arrival at the head of the Serbian party, and that a radical worsening of the situation began on 26 April when, at a meeting in Kosovo Polje, he offered his full support even to the most extreme nationalists - those who, through the activities of the Kosovo Polje Committee, set fire to Kosovo, Vojvodina and Montenegro and are now threatening Bosnia and Herzegovina too. In a recent interview given to the Split weekly *Nedjeljna Dalmacija*, Miroslav Solevic, a member of the Committee, has stated: 'Revolution [as he calls it] in Bosnia and Herzegovina is inevitable: this is a sure thing, and will be implemented by the spring. The same

thing will then happen to you in Croatia and Slovenia.'

On Sunday 26 February, the presidency of the provincial party finally issued a statement saying that Morina and Azemi had submitted resignations, which would be considered in due time and according to the procedure. This, naturally, did not induce the miners to leave the pits. They have asked for unconditional resignations, since they are afraid they will be cheated. The problem, however, does not lie in these individuals, who are already politically dead and can remain in power only if a totalitarian state of exception (perhaps the postponement of the resignations involves precisely such considerations?) is imposed. The problem lies in the fact that the miners' demands, and those of the Albanian people as a whole, represent the hard core of a broad front of resistance to Milosevic's politics, not just in Kosovo. The Federal leadership, it seems, is not prepared to consider this option. This can be seen from Morina's statement - made to journalists the previous Saturday afternoon - according to which all provincial, republican and Federal leaderships are against his resignation (from the post of provincial party leader, which he has occupied for the past month), since this would lead to an even greater destabilization of the situation not only in Kosovo but in Yugoslavia as a whole. Yet the anti-Milosevic spirit has been released from its bottle and it will be difficult to drive it back again. The destabilization of Yugoslavia is already a fact, as it is a fact that Milosevic could in the end get his way only by imposing an ultimatum. But playing the card of ignoring and demeaning the Albanians was bound eventually to produce a powerful resistance.

Serbian agitation

The only question is whether the Albanian revolt was planned or not. If it was, then the whole affair is so much grist to the mill of Serb agitation, aiding Milosevic in the risky game at which he has so far been a consistent winner. But if it was not, then Milosevic has fallen for the old delusion of Great Serb politics, which since the second half of the 19th century has always refused to see Albanians as a relevant political factor, even when they were direct rivals.

Until the advent of new Yugoslavia, Albanians were seen only as agents of a foreign power - Turkey, Austria-Hungary, Italy. Today, Great Serb politics views Albanians of Albania proper - as well as Croats and Slovenes - as it had once viewed foreign powers: as people who are

pitting Kosovo Albanians against Serbs so as to definitively weaken Serbia within the Federation. In 1913 the Serb politician Vladan Djordjevic described Albanians as semi-civilized beings, who did not know what salt was and thought that sugar was snow; who did not possess a national consciousness or know what a fatherland was. Today too we find a similar belittling and demeaning of Albanians. Current Serbian politics does not recognize Albanians as political subjects, but sees them as a mass manipulated by some hostile anti-Serb force.

Because Albanians have remained silent over the past eight years, showing no desire to become directly involved in all-Yugoslav politics, they have encouraged the belief that they are a despairing and



defeated people. As a result, the conviction has grown that the only barrier to the reconstitution of a unitary Serbia is Kosovo bureaucrats and autonomists. Hence, the November 1988 demonstrations astonished and surprised Serb politicians, not so much because they took place as because they had a fully formed and well-defined political profile, that in the end prevented the use of force. Had disorderly incidents happened, as in 1981, they would have led to the use of police and maybe also the army, which would have prevented any normal expression of the Albanian population's political will by imposition of a repressive order. Instead, that November, the Albanians - responding to the enforced replacement of Kosovo cadres under unprecedented pressure from Serbia - expressed fully their political will with regard to Yugoslavia, without any recourse to criminal acts. The Serb politicians were therefore forced to seek a criminalization of this will, presenting it as hostile towards Serbia and Yugoslavia.

This assessment, which they forced upon the Central Committee of the LCY and the Provincial Committee of the LCK, provoked great anger among the miners, the working class and the citizens of Kosovo. This was all the more the case in that they could not understand the political hypocrisy that was operating. According to this assessment, the invoca-

tion by the demonstrators of Tito, Kardelj and Yugoslavia was declared to be a hostile act. Meanwhile, a whole number of rallies of Serbs and Montenegrins had taken place just before, at which slogans and symbols were carried that had nothing to do with Tito's Yugoslavia, and which were nevertheless proclaimed as patriotic, as meetings of brotherhood and unity, etc. This description of white as black and black as white angered the working class of Kosovo, and especially the Trepcja miners. But nobody heeded their protests or their demands to speak to the party and state leaders who had called them such and similar names. The Trepcja miners, who have traditionally regarded themselves as a kind of Kosovo working-class vanguard, realized last November and December - especially after the unfruitful encounter with Rahman Morina, Milosevic's newly appointed protege - that the authorities felt no respect for them. That - simply because they were Albanians - their views were treated as worthless and their collective power underestimated. Having first established a Serb national movement in Kosovo and elsewhere, Milosevic was thus in the end also to face the shock troops of an Albanian national movement in Kosovo: the Trepcja miners.

Many, however, are asking the question: Why not go for a normal strike with political demands, rather than opt for a suicidal strike and maximum self-inflicted violence? The Serb press claims that the miners are being manipulated; that their strike is not a genuine expression of their will; that they have been driven underground by the same 'enemies', 'nationalists' and 'separatists' who 'forced' them to march to Prishtina last November. In the meantime, the men are dying. On Sunday we were told that they would carry on into the eighth day of their underground strike, since their demands had not been met. But Belgrade refuses to admit the truth. It knows it only too well, but when it suits it it prefers lies, inventions and fabrications, being simultaneously blind and merciless towards everything that stands in its way. Precisely because the Belgrade chauvinist press had called them liars and manipulated men, whose demonstration was a charade and who carried the icon of Tito's portrait only to hide the fact that they did not believe in that sacred God, the miners wished to show by way of personal sacrifice for the political cause they have embraced that nobody is directing them; that they had organized themselves; that their programme is Tito's programme.

Milosevic's extreme Serb nationalism made them react not only as workers, but as Albanians, since they were being threatened and denounced as Albanians. They consequently resorted to the ancient ethos of resistance against an enemy that

was attacking their national, workers' and human integrity. And the thing that gave them power, that integrated their internal strength, was their solemn vow to defend the truth. There awoke among them that supreme expression of the traditional Albanian moral code - the oath, the *besa*. For no one could take from them that which for Albanians is holy above all: the word of promise, the *besa*. By virtue of this particular *besa*, the truth will arrive on the day when they all perish in those accursed pits in which, with their hands and in the sweat of their brows, they dig for lead, zinc, silver and gold. It is necessary to unmask the lies that are being generated in such profusion by the Serb press and Serb politics. The kind which Franc Setinc - an experienced [Slovene] politician, who had endured many lies and compromises regarding Kosovo - was alluding to some months ago when he said: Thank you very much, I do not wish any longer to take part in such great lies! For he recognized that the lies about Kosovo and Albanians have gone beyond all measure, have become unbearable.

Hollow facade

During the last few years in Kosovo, Yugoslav socialist ideology has been descending into twilight. Of an erstwhile proud structure, which until recently was hailed as an achievement of world-historic significance (the first self-managing state), not a single stone has been left today. The system has destroyed itself, leaving behind just the hollow facades of socialism, self-management, League of Communists. If Setinc - a neutral politician of Federal rank - could be subjected to a real witch-hunt and an avalanche of denunciation only because he dared to express something positive regarding the situation in Kosovo - something that departed from the official insistence that a terror and genocide was being conducted there against Serbs - then one can imagine the conditions of those who have to live daily with such lies; who in the last instance are the final target of such lies, forced to live as objects of police and other persecution; and who - when their crimes cannot be established in either a moral or a literal sense - are simply treated with contempt.

The longer the strike goes on, the more the authorities are unrelenting, the greater the miners' anger grows at the politicians who refuse to understand the point of their protest, the more uncertain is the outcome. We hear from well-informed sources that the Federal presidency has already prepared an order for the introduction of a state of emergency or military rule, to be implemented on Sunday evening - provided that the miners have left their pits. This is what the presidency expects to happen, given that

conditional resignations by Morina and Azemi have been secured. The strikers, however, are demanding unconditional resignations and have refused to leave the pits until these are forthcoming.

What is tying the hands of the Federal and provincial authorities? Evidently it is Milosevic's hard stand. Milosevic will not give in, even at the price of a real tragedy occurring in the mines. The question is: what kind of ultimatum is Milosevic using, in order to prevent the resignations of Morina and Azemi? It is now quite clear that an agreement was reached between oligarchies at the 20th party plenum of the CC LCY - an agreement that is now being endangered by the miners' action - to surrender Kosovo to Serbia: to allow its constitutional annexation. Milosevic needed the powerful support of the CC LCY in order to make the constitutional changes in Serbia irreversible. He now needs people like Morina and Azemi in Kosovo in order to push through such changes, in a province which not only rejected the Serb amendments during the constitutional debate but also rose as one against them last November.

During their short visit to Kosovo, both Suvar and Milosevic demonstrated this agreement and their desire to safeguard it. Milosevic did not dare to go among the miners, appearing only at a meeting of the Kosovo political *aktiv* and the party organization in *Elektrokosovo*. There he made no concessions, but insisted that it was Serbs and not Albanians who were endangered in Kosovo; that terror was being conducted not against Albanians but against Serbs. A little more to the point, although equally unconvincingly, he argued that under the new constitution - which, according to him, had already been adopted, although the provincial assembly has not as yet given its agreement - Albanians would not lose anything, since Kosovo would not lose any of its autonomy. According to him, the essence of the changes is to win back for Serbia those state prerogatives that it lost with the 1974 republican constitution, which allowed a separation of the provinces from the mother republic.

This argument was repeated by Suvar, who referred to the CC LCY decision to support Serbia's recentralization. This in turn poses the following question: Is it the LCY rather than the citizens of Yugoslavia who are sovereign? Is the LCY's sovereignty a constitutional category? Or is it not rather the case that constitutional changes can be legitimated only by a declaration of citizens, that is, those who delegate representatives to the legislative bodies? The LCY may legitimately have its own views and approach, but it does not have the right to decide alone. It is not for the CC LCY, Suvar or Milosevic to decide constitutional changes, but for citizens gathered in their assemblies and

elsewhere. Any other procedure is illegitimate. The existing laws prescribe that the constitution of Serbia cannot be changed - in areas pertaining to the republic as a whole - without the agreement of the provincial assemblies. The declaration of the majority of the Albanian population against the proposed amendments to the Serbian constitution, and in favour of the existing autonomy of the provinces, is a fact. This may be against the position of the LCY, but is neither illegal nor anti-constitutional. Finally, since not all Albanians are members of the LCY, its programme is not binding for them nor should it prevent them from voting against something which, in their opinion, endangers their vital interests.

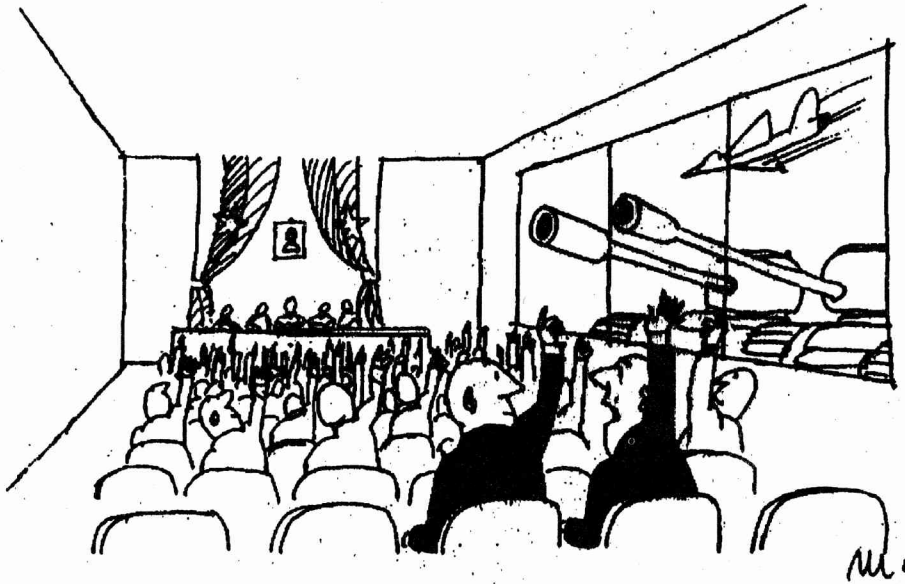
Milosevic - and also Suvar - are supporting an anti-constitutional method of changing the Serbian constitution, on the basis of decisions taken at this or that meeting of the LCY. Milosevic has recently shown how little he cares for legality, with his declaration that all Yugoslavia's problems will be solved by a policy which has been endorsed by the majority of citizens of this state, within and outside the existing institutions, within and outside of existing statutes, in the streets and at home, by populist and elitist methods, with and without argument'. In other words, it is not necessary to respect the existing constitution.

Mean clerk

This is how we are to judge Milosevic. Suvar, for his part, pretended before the miners of Treпча to be a man dedicated to legality and principles, to an extent that was at once comic and miserable - and also, given the true situation of those miners, many of whom were fainting from exhaustion at the time, completely cynical. To men who had entered into a state of yearning for the Word, Suvar offered empty phrases. He looked small and lost, like the meanest clerk from a novel by Gogol or Chekov, who - entrusted with a little bit of power, the wielding of which gives him the greatest of pleasures - likes to lord it over the unfortunate and the powerless, 'suppliants' and people in general who bother him unnecessarily. His legalistic *plaidoyer* was as convincing as that of a doctor refusing to treat a victim of an accident on the grounds that his health card has not been properly stamped!

The comparison could be seen as unnecessarily cruel had not Dr Suvar kept entangling himself precisely on the question of principles until the very end of his visit. Asked why he had bent his neck before Milosevic and seemed unwilling to resist him - given that the former is beginning to cut up and re-

KOSOVSKO OPREDELJEVANJE



- Mislim, da so argumenti tako prepričljivi, da bi človek dvignil kar obe roki.

Karikatura: Milan Maver

Joting in Kosovo:

"The arguments are so persuasive that one is inclined to raise both hands!"

organize Yugoslavia as he likes, holding to the principle that everything is allowed - Suvar found it necessary to deliver a lecture to the miners on the LCY's legal procedures for replacing or removing individuals. He spoke in this manner although he very well knew how 'legal' the procedure was by which the former provincial leaders were replaced; and, equally, how 'legal' the procedure was that brought to power those whose resignations the miners were at that point demanding. He spoke of legality, knowing full well how irrelevant were the feelings of the party base compared to the will of the almighty Milosevic.

The twilight of the Kosovo party, which settled in at the last session of the provincial committee, now threatens it with complete disintegration and collapse. In those days, the party experienced its final and irreversible historical demise. Many local branches are today leaving the party collectively, because of Morina's and Azemi's refusal to resign unconditionally. Before them, Serbs and Montenegrins were also collectively leaving or 'suspending' their membership. The Serbian party, on the other hand, has become a Serb national party, which cannot without conflict spread into Kosovo, since Albanians find both the party at its programme unacceptable. The Kosovo party, equally, cannot survive without excluding either the Serbs or the Albanians or both. This is what is happening, and it seems that a similar fate awaits the LCY as a whole.

The key issue is not so much the political stupidity (which is likely to last) but

he moral evolution of the LCY leadership. Everybody carries in their mind's eye the picture of exhausted miners looking questioningly into the cameras and demanding of everybody to declare themselves one way or the other on the question of whether the truth will prevail or not and whether they will have to pay with their lives for the truth. We all, therefore, suffer from nightmares and lack of sleep, experience attacks of trembling and shivers, wring our hands in desperation. And many of us - including myself: while I write this text I wonder that I can remain sane - are discovering that we have become sleepwalkers. It seems to us that we ourselves are locked in the dark and dank underground pits, engulfed in an agony, as the 200th hour of the miners' underground ordeal approaches. It is the agony of people who have proclaimed themselves to be the torchbearers of truth in a total ideological darkness, ready to die in order to defend their own and our human dignity against the masters of that darkness.

Albanian legend

I see before me many such sleepwalkers, who have turned themselves into eyes and ears, who are fixed to the radio and television day after day and night after night, and who search for some little nook where they can weep from misery and impotence or scream at the sky to awaken gods in whom we do not necessarily believe to respond to our prayers and release the despairing men from the pits,

those thousand and more souls who have walled themselves alive into the prison of truth. These prayers are so intense, not only because of the miners and the preciousness of their lives, nor only because of the suffering of their families who wait at the entrance to the pits, but because we who pray suffer the intolerable burden of being mere witnesses to the fact that it was possible at precisely this time, among us and before our eyes and with our full awareness - indeed, what is worse, with our participation - for something like this to happen; that truth has become a tomb for so many people. Herein lies the most difficult ordeal for the witnesses of this human self-sacrifice on the altar of truth! It is a terrible thought that it is necessary to accept the self-sacrifice of these men committed to defend their people! Yesterday my ears almost burst when I heard somebody say: "Thanks to the miners, we have never been so united!". Is it because I myself and so many others have not been ready to pay the necessary price that so many people have had to entomb themselves - as in ancient Balkan legends?

The most terrible thing is the possibility that somebody may already be dead, and that what is now only a figment of my imagination may tomorrow become a reality and that many of the miners will be dead. With this form of resistance the miners have raised themselves to a divine level, repeating the classical path of the Redeemer once followed by Jesus. Those who were the most despised, those from the bottom of the social scale, those who were most tortured and exhausted and in their appearance most undistinguished, were given to realize the most profound and powerful vocation: to become the Redeemer.

Naturally, this parallel is not quite appropriate. The striking miners will not be studied in religious classes, nor will they establish new religions. Although truly heroic, their act in fact removes them from the world of mythology and places them in the modern political world. For the Trepca miners may (and indeed will) enter into Albanian legend; but in reality they represent the break that establishes the Yugoslav Albanians as independent political subjects. Strictly speaking, their retreat underground cannot be called a strike, but a national rebellion that is only taking the form of a strike. And with this rebellion - whether this is recognized today or not - Albanians have made it clear to everybody in Yugoslavia that it is impossible to make decisions without them. That they are an inescapable subject of the Yugoslav political community.

The first part of this article (LFEE No. 1/89) traced the development of women's literature in the German Democratic Republic up to the mid-seventies. In this second and concluding part Gus Fagan looks at the period after 1975, a period in which a new generation of GDR women have begun to write, in which women's literature has remained vibrant and critical, while new concerns emerge and some of the earlier optimism has been lost.

GUS FAGAN

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

Part 2.

The novels of Christa Wolf, Irmtraud Morgner, Brigitte Reimann and Gerti Tetzner in the early seventies, culminating in the anthology *Blitz aus Heiterem Himmel* in 1975, a collection devoted explicitly to the theme of gender roles in society, firmly established women's literature as an important genre in the GDR. In an atmosphere which was generally optimistic and engaged, these novels made a fundamental critique of GDR society, raised basic questions about the state's official strategy for women's emancipation, confronted male behaviour and consciousness and attempted to develop alternative conceptions of self-realization.

The decade after 1975 saw a rapid increase in the number of women writers and in the number of works that dealt explicitly with the problem of women's role in society. A new generation of women writers now emerged who had grown up in the GDR. Among them were Brigitte Martin (b. 1939), Beate Morgenstern (b. 1946), Doris Paschiller (b. 1953), Angela Stachowa (b. 1948), Maria Seidemann (b. 1944), Daniela Dahn (b. 1949), Christine Wolter (b. 1939), Monika Helmecke (b. 1943), Helga Schubert (b. 1940), Helga Königsdorf (b. 1938), Rosemarie Zeplin (b. 1937) and Monika Maron (b. 1941). One particular study mentions 17 new titles during the years 1975-1980 that were both written by women and dealt explicitly with the problem of women's emancipation.¹

A number of anthologies of GDR women writers have been published in both East and West Germany. A recent GDR anthology of writings about women contained works by 21 established women writers.² It is impossible, of course, in a

brief article to provide an adequate survey of this period. What I hope to do is to indicate some of the concerns expressed in this recent literature and, in particular, some of the changes (new concerns, changes in emphasis, etc.) that have taken place since the mid-seventies. I believe that GDR women's literature can give us some insight into the real life situation of women in the GDR, that it presents us, in general, with a realistic picture of GDR society.

This belief is supported by statements of women writers and critics³, by the available sociological literature⁴ and, above all, by the various interviews and anthologies of interviews with GDR women that have been published.

The most important of these was Maxi Wander's *Guten Morgen Du Schöne*, published in 1978. A similar collection of interviews, with both men and women, *So sehe ich die Sache* by Gabrielle Eckhart, was banned in the GDR but was published in West Germany in 1984.⁵

In her study of GDR women writers of the seventies, published in 1983, Dorothee Schmitz listed a number of important changes that had occurred in the second half of the seventies.

Changes After 1975

Most noticeable is the predominance of the short story. The all-embracing novels of the type of *Franziska Linkerhand* or *Karen W* have been replaced to a large extent by short stories and collections of short stories. This shift in form mirrors a

shift in content, a narrowing or restricting of thematic interest to particular problems, to the concerns of daily life, to those issues which have traditionally been the concern or 'expertise' of women: children, housework, partnerships



Bärbel Bohley

etc.

"The belligerent unconditionality, the ideals and models that characterized *Franziska Linkerhand* and *Trobadora Beatriz* are missing in the short stories. The female character has become more everyday, more realistic, and at the same time more resigned, sadder, unhappier."⁶

The world of career and work, with some exceptions, is no longer of central concern. One exception here, among

others, is Monika Maron's novel, *Flight of Ashes*, in which a career woman deals with the problems of pollution and bureaucracy in a modern industrial environment. In general, however, the world of free time and leisure have become the principal sphere of self-realization and creativity. The marginalization of career/world of work and the concentration on the concerns of everyday life (the *Alltag*) mean greater prominence given to housework, child-care, loneliness, aggravation, the hectic nature of daily life and mental breakdown.

In these stories, unlike in the novels of Wolf and Morgner, the overall social dimension is seldom addressed. The characters seek individual, private solutions. In keeping with this general direction, there is a greater concentration on the inner life of women: the problems of loneliness, the need for care, trust, friendship and social recognition.

The world of fantasy, of dreams and wishes, of utopias, has become more important, a good example of which is Monika Maron's recent novel *The Defector*.⁸ Describing a character in Christine Wolter's story *Keine Geschichte*, the critic Sarah Lennox writes that "her life, like the life of so many women of her time, consisted of a mixture of the everyday routine with inexplicable wishes and longings. This is, in fact, the theme and constructive principle of a great part of recent women's literature in the GDR."⁹

Marriage has become a greater problem (more divorces, lack of communication, survival of male/female social role-models) but it is generally not a central problem of the stories, providing rather a background to them.

Christa Wolf's hope, at the end of her 1975 story *Self-Experiment*, that men might be changed, appears to have been overly optimistic. The male character, as such, is no longer a main concern as it was in the collection *Blitz aus Heiterem Himmel* (1975). Happy and lasting partnerships with men occur seldom in women's literature of the past fifteen years.

Relationships between women, on the other hand, are more positively presented. For many women characters friendship with other women presents the only possibility of an equal relationship. Erotic and sexual relationships between women have been thematized to a limited extent (especially through the medium of dreams and fantasies) by, for instance, Helga Königsdorf, Monika Helmecke and Christine Wolter.

Political activity and the presentation of political views are seldom an important element in recent literature, as they were, for instance, in the writings of Irmtraud Morgner in the seventies. There is seldom an attempt to make an all-round criticism of women's role in society, of official ideology, of the GDR's so-

cial and political trajectory. The preference for the short story reflects this shift away from any kind of generalized political critique.

At the end of the seventies, then, certain new trends had become apparent. The predominance of the short literary form; the shift of perspective away from the larger social conflicts, away from the world of career and politics, towards the more particular concerns of everyday life; the increased importance of inner life, subjectivity, of leisure and free time as the only or main sphere of self-realization; the backgrounding of what earlier had been seen as some of the central problems (male behaviour, marriage, social norms) and the increased importance attached to female friendships - these were some of the shifts in emphasis that characterized women's literature as it expanded and developed after the initial breakthrough of the early and mid-seventies.

This doesn't mean that the critical role of the literature had in any sense diminished. In fact, the criticism, by virtue of its greater detail, had grown sharper and more intense. I will now look in somewhat greater detail at some of the major concerns expressed in recent GDR women's literature, in particular, the problems of everyday life, the special difficulties experienced by single women and single mothers, as well as changing attitudes towards child-care and abortion.

These are only some of the issues, of course, but they deserve attention not only because of their importance in the literature but also because they shed light on the special difficulties experienced by women in the kind of social formation that exists in the societies of Eastern Europe. They also reveal fundamental flaws in the ideology and strategy for emancipation which has been the ruling orthodoxy in those countries under Communist Party control.

An article by Marilyn Rueschemeyer and Szonja Szelenyi in a recently published collection compares the situation of women in the GDR and Hungary and demonstrates that, in spite of major differences in historical background before 1945, these two societies, with similar ideologies and similar socio-political structures, have developed along remarkable similar lines with respect to the social role of women.¹⁰

Problems of Everyday Life

In an interesting article on the presentation of women in GDR films, Harry Blunk describes how, in the early years after the war, films were created around a complex concept of women's emancipation, as a many-sided economic and socio-political problem the ultimate solution of which was bound up with the

liberation from capitalist exploitation. In the sixties and early seventies "the image of women was completely in accordance with the role-model of the 'socialist personality', the woman who (a) took part in socialist production, (b) had high career qualifications and (c) had a firm socialist class standpoint and lived in principled harmony with the social collective because she had internalized its goals". The films of the recent period, however, "have discovered the individual which has led increasingly to a kind of presentation of women in which private concerns and problems that were previously regarded as peripheral have, to a large extent, been made central".¹¹ He mentions in particular problems of partnership, of everyday life, of childcare.

A similar, but more sharply defined process has also taken place in literature. The thematic concentration on daily life, which Dorothee Schmitz noted in the second half of the seventies, has been even more pronounced in the eighties. Detailed descriptions of the daily, sometimes hectic routine, the fantasies and dreams of women caught up in what appears to be an increasingly alienated and alienating society - concrete alienation: these are now the dominant concerns in a lot of women's writings.

This is a typical extract from Monika Helmecke's story 30 September: "I go out of the house to telephone. Try to reach the doctor. The older child's cough is gradually getting worse. Keeps us awake all night. No luck. Nobody answers. The way back. Into the grocers, need tomatoes. Second-hand shop. Bread. The chemist has been closed for three months. Tobacco-nist. Back home again. The armchair - how nice to rest one's head. My eyes are barely open. And still I see dust. Dust. Now? When else. The routine of the hours ahead is already established."¹²

There is no way out of this deadening routine. When she later sits to take a rest, tries to "conjure up her dreams", she feels guilty for being a cruel mother. She is "surrounded and hemmed in by the crying of her children".

The overall picture that is being created in these stories is one of increasing alienation of human relationships. The stories describe situations in which women are profoundly oppressed by social relations of which they are sometimes hardly aware. The optimism and reconciliation with society which still existed in *Trobadora Beatriz* is by and large absent.

The mood of "daily misery" is well captured in a piece which appeared in the youth magazine *Temperamente* in 1985: "A humid day in the summer. After work. Around that time when mothers fetch their kids from the nurseries and kindergartens. When, exhausted and irritable, they climb on the bus, travel five stops, wedged in between prams, cases and sweat. When they hurry to the

supermarket, half dragging the kids along, when they can see even before they go through the door that they're going to have to stand in a queue for the trolley. These women, whose irritability you are in no mood to tolerate because you're aggravated yourself. Who can be expected to make allowance for the fact that their patience is hanging by a thread?"¹³

A bleak picture of human alienation in a society driven by demands for ever greater efficiency is exemplified in a story by Maria Seidemann, *Sonntagskind* (1983). The story describes the experience of Beate, a single woman who is having a baby in a maternity clinic with the atmosphere of an overworked assembly line. Nervous, frightened, in need of support and comfort she is ignored as a person, abused, pushed around, treated as an object, with total lack of human or humane contact. The father, Robert (himself a married doctor) arrives after the birth but also ignores her and chats only with the doctor. Even the child is taken away from her. She isn't allowed to hold him and won't be able to see him for two days. At the end of the day she "lay alone in the quiet poorly lit hallway. Even the oppressive feeling of loneliness had gone, she felt no pain and she was gripped by an amazing indifference. Her tears were forgotten and she no longer knew whether she had wept from joy or mortification. She had no thoughts. The fact that she was now the mother of a son had found no place in her consciousness."¹⁴

The women portrayed in the stories of Brigitte Martin, Monika Helmecke and others are women "who are not successfully coping with the double burden of work and family, who are *überfordert*, exhausted, guilt-ridden and, above all, unsatisfied. Physical and mental illness, alcoholism, suicide are now basic themes in GDR women's writings.... Even Irntraud Morgner's Laura, confident and well-adjusted in *Trobadora Beatriz*, attempts suicide in Amanda."¹⁵

Some critics have complained about this concentration on daily misery: "Certainly we need the critical examination of everyday life, how it is experienced, and literature helps to make us aware of this.... But I would like to say that I prefer books that present contemporary problems as part of a process, that puts them into a larger framework, as was creatively and convincingly done in Brigitte Reimann's *Franziska Linkerhand*.... These books go beyond the mere detailing of daily life, go beyond the description of the monotonous routine of work, visiting relatives, the flats that are all the same, etc."¹⁶

This critic complains about the "obsession with detail" that characterizes recent literature. But the highlighting of the daily misery makes it clear that women have not been able to achieve what the official ideology and the literature of the

fifties and sixties optimistically expected of them - the harmonious combination of home and career, children and participation in public life.

Should women give up their careers and return to the home? Christine, a successful career woman in Dorothee Kleine's *Jahre mit Christine* (1980) is interrogated by her traditional factory-worker husband: "Why do you never doubt yourself? Why don't you sew the zipper on your daughter's anorak? Why do you despise dreams? Why do you see life as a race in which you have to be number one? Why, two times in a row, did you give your husband the same book as a gift? Why are you familiar with your factory's plan figures but not with the grades on your daughter's school report?"¹⁷

Brigge Bem, a single mother in Brigitte Martin's *Der rote Ballon*, thinking back on her career efforts in the seventies and the effect on her children and home life, asks "Did I have the wrong goals?" Although a few writers may appear to be questioning the idea of emancipation (for instance, Elfriede Bruning and Dorothee Kleine), the literature doesn't in fact propose a return to traditional roles. It is the absence of any apparent solution which comes over most strongly in many of the stories.

In *Besuch im Dorf* (1983) by Christine Lambrecht, Liese, a successful career chemist in the city, has given up her career "for her husband's sake" and moved with him to the country where she now has two children and has a part-time job as dental assistant where she earns "half as much as her husband". One of the highlights of her life is the regular visit from her friend Gertrud, a successful married journalist in the city. Gertrud has a busy and exciting life which Liese envies. But as the women share their experiences it becomes clear that neither of them has found happiness. Liese's life has become monotonous, there is no longer any communication with her husband and the children get on her nerves. But Gertrud is sad because she is too busy to have children, her relationship with her husband has deteriorated because she is so seldom home and she is so tired that she can fall asleep in the middle of the day. "Liese also told Gertrud that her breasts, at the age of thirty and after two children, were no longer beautiful. Gertrud said that this happened anyway, even without children."¹⁸ Gertrud leaves and life goes on without any resolution of the problem.

Single Women

Another problem which features prominently in recent literature is the difficulties faced by single (unmarried, divorced or widowed) women in GDR society. In Dorothee Kleine's story, *Das schöne bisschen Leben* (1985), a single

woman of forty is in need of a heart operation. After the examination her doctor sends her home to discuss it with her family. "He was sure I had a family. I should have described my situation to him, I should have told him how it is. Why do I keep it hidden like a secret? Because being alone is not a normal life? I will never get used to being alone. Being alone is not normal.... The world is made up of couples. Families..."¹⁹

An article by Irene Runge in the GDR weekly magazine *Sonntag* in 1979 criticized official ideology for its acceptance and promotion of only one lifestyle - marriage and family. In the GDR, she wrote, "the value of being alone.... is a non-value (*Unwert*)". People look down on the unmarried: "In popular language they are often referred to as 'the ones left on the shelf' (*Sitzengebliebenen*) When they are women."²⁰

Sonja, in Beate Morgenstern's story, *Der Anruf*, marries again after two difficult divorces because "I simply have to be married. Otherwise I don't feel good." In another of her stories, *Im Sprechahn*, a young single woman on her way home late at night is waiting alone for the train when two of her colleagues see her: "She stood alone, and the space beside her was empty.... There was nobody standing there with whom she had spent the evening, nobody whom her colleagues could see and perhaps comment on in their own minds, at any rate, know that she wasn't alone. To be alone seemed to her not only unfortunate but a real defect."²¹

This change in attitude towards the status of being a single woman has been noted by many critics. Margy Gerber comments that "In the writings of the seventies marriage is often presented as an outmoded institution; married women divorce their less progressive husbands; others bear children without binding themselves to the father.... The single mother, in the words of GDR critic Anneliese Löffler, is 'almost euphorically celebrated'. Women's writings of the late 1970s and 1980s is still populated with single women and single mothers but the euphoria has dissipated and been replaced by a more realistic portrayal of the lives of single women: the hectic nature of their lives is the predominant theme, as well as loneliness and the at times scarcely concealed yearning for *Geborgenheit* [security]."²²

In a study of social isolation and loneliness in the GDR, Katherine Belwe has shown how women, in spite of what has been achieved both materially and legally in the field of equal rights, have special difficulties in coping with the status of being single. "This status, lying outside the social norm of marriage, is resented in women much more so than in men. Women ... experience much greater difficulty in living alone."²³

The number of women who are

affected in this way is very large. According to a sociological study quoted by Belwe, around 20% of men and women in the GDR between the ages of twenty five and fifty are not married. The divorce rate is also very high: there are 140 000 marriages each year and 40 000 divorces.

In Monika Helmecke's story *Klopfzeichen* (1979) Gerda, a young woman, has an abortion because she couldn't cope with being a single mother. "I don't want a child without a husband. And this is a husband I don't want. She imagined the baby, how it would wake every morning at five. She saw it crying, like all the other children she saw on the tram every morning. Then all day in the nursery. Then she saw herself every evening: an irritable mother, running from one shop to another, then at home, getting the child to bed, the bed right next to her own, washing the nappies, no radio, then at most reading or knitting in a low light. That would be the future. And no law, no matter how well intended, could change anything in all that."²⁴

These literary attitudes are reflections of real life. In Gabriele Eckhart's collection of interviews published in West Germany in 1984, Svenja, a 35-year old single teacher, has a similar view: "I don't want to have a child on my own.... In my work in the school I see how the children of single mothers are handicapped."²⁵

I will return later to what might be an explanation for this clearly felt discrimination against single women in the GDR. The interview quoted above also raised another related problem, childcare.

Childcare

The GDR provides what, by European standards, is a very good infrastructure of nurseries and kindergartens. The socialization of household labour, seen by the socialist/communist tradition as an essential precondition or underpinning for female emancipation, takes the form in the GDR of the transfer of a number of these activities to the public/services sector.

For instance, most workers eat their main meal in the factory and all nursery/ kindergarten children as well as three quarters of all school students have their main meal provided by the school or nursery. In 1985 73 per cent of all GDR children up to three years attended nursery, 90 per cent of all children be-



tween the age of three and six attended kindergarten and about 75 per cent of all children in classes one to four used the afternoon day-care services provided by the state.²⁶

There are also a large number of social provisions aimed at co-ordinating women's productive and reproductive role, for instance, a two-hour reduction in the working day for mothers with two or more children, a free day each month for working mothers, the *Babyjahr* - a full year with pay and no loss of seniority for mothers having a baby, preferential treatment in housing for women/families with children, and so on.

Most women use these facilities. Indeed, most women have to. But in a number of women's writings of the eighties, one finds a growing concern for the quality of the relationship between parents and children and for the effects on the children of this kind of upbringing. In part one of this essay I quoted from Elfriede Bruning's *Regine Haberkorn* as an example of a novel which enthusiastically supported the official image of the successful career woman/wife/mother. In

1981 another work by Bruning appeared, *Partnerinnen*, a collection of stories. In this collection there are four women who tell their life stories. One of them, Johanna, feels that she was wrong to neglect the children in the interests of her career:

"I could only laugh later when I read about women who apparently were so easily able to manage everything: they were brilliant in their careers and evening courses, cared for their husbands and, just on the side, as if it were child's play, brought up their sons and daughters to be perfect socialists.... I don't trust them."²⁷ Johanna's daughter, Rita, reacting against her mother, decides not to work because she doesn't want to "put her career above her family", which she sees as the inevitable consequence of being a career woman. Another character, Renate, is more explicit in questioning the whole concept of state childcare: "Our state can build any number of nurseries and kindergartens.... a sensitive child is like a delicate plant which will only blossom in tranquil warmth and in the loving care of the same hand."^(p.80)

In Brigitte Martin's *Nach Freude Anstehen* (1982) a career woman's daughter ends up in psychiatric care as a result of her mother's neglect, irritability and stress-induced aggression. Similar problems are thematized in stories by

Karen Simon, Sibylle Muthesius, Charlotte Worgitzky, Christa Muller and Maria Seidemann. In some cases the authors are placing an ethical question mark over the activities of women who try to combine successful careers and motherhood: is the (selfish) pursuit of success, self-realization, doing damage to the children? Should the children come first?

In most cases, however, the author is pointing to and reflecting what is a very real problem in the lives of so many women as well as being a problem at the level of official ideology. One story by Monika Helmecke brings together a number of the themes we've looked at so far. In *Lauf Weg! Kehr Um!* Elizabeth, who still "lived in a time when people had given up some but not so many dreams", was a woman whose "whole day was taken up with housework and with the family". She was kind to everyone and loved by all. But in reality she was unhappy because she dreams of being able to compose and play music. By means of magic (a good fairy) she is able to live two lives

and hop from one to the other, from housewife/mother to pianist/composer, just by using the magic formula. Soon she is spending most of her time composing what is to be her great work, an opera. She wants to incorporate the laughter of children into the music of the opera but finds that she cannot. She has lost the ability even to hear children's laughter. She realizes the price of her freedom, which is too high, and like Goethe's *Faust* she is saved in the end and returns for good to her family.²⁸

Abortion

A similar questioning is evident in the case of abortion. As in the case of child-care, the change can be documented in the writings of a single author, in this case Irmtraud Morgner. As explained in Part One, her most famous and influential novel, *Trobadora Beatriz*, is a montage novel made up of extracts from diaries, memoirs, speeches, other books, etc. One of the extracts, demonstrating the author's attitude towards the new liberal abortion law introduced in 1972, is from a speech to the GDR parliament by the Minister of Health in which he justifies and defends the new abortion law. In the sequel, *Amanda* (1983), Laura remembers her earlier optimism and quotes verbatim from the earlier text: "Up to now men have determined women's fate. That's all over. However, it will take some time for women to learn to make use of the productive power of their sexuality. When added to all the existing women-friendly measures and laws, this new [abortion] law makes equality (*Gleichberechtigung*) a reality in our state."

But, observes the narrator, "this memory put Laura in a melancholy mood. For the naive belief in progress, contained in those words, had now been lost." Fear was gone, but so also was much of the pleasure. The oppression achieved once by traditional women's slavery in the home can be achieved today by "the pill and two children.... Can you call that equal rights? I call it exploitation. A new form of exploitation that we didn't consider then, with our naive faith in progress."

Probably one of the better known stories which presented the problem of abortion in a memorable and imaginative way is Helmecke's *Klopfzeichen*. As mentioned earlier, the young woman, Gerda, decided on an abortion because she couldn't face being a single mother. The four days in the hospital were difficult but what most upset her were the attempts by the other women in the ward to justify their abortions. Returning home to her flat, she becomes more and more mentally deranged. She begins to communicate with the (aborted) baby, who sends her signals (*klopfzeichen*) and

eventually talks with her. On 17 April, the day on which the baby would have been born, she turns up at the hospital and tells the nurse: "I'm having a baby. Here it is, here". The story ends with Gerda, deranged and screaming as she leaves the hospital: "I don't want to be alone any more, no, you can't take the baby away from me, no, no, no."³⁰

Significance

It is difficult to sum up the significance of these changes of emphasis and mood in a lot of recent GDR women's writing. Maybe the passage of time or some significant upheaval in GDR society such as is currently in progress in the Soviet Union will give us part of the necessary perspective in which to make some judgement. I don't want to suggest, with the examples that I have chosen, that GDR women's literature has been overtaken by a reactionary sentiment that wants to put women back in the homes, opposes abortion and public nurseries and holds up marriage as the only desirable state. In general, the literature by and about women, which has grown incredibly since the initial breakthrough of the early and mid-seventies, continues the pattern established at that time - socially aware, committed, reflecting the real lives and concerns of women, critical of official ideology and bitterly and sharply critical of what Margaret Vallance has described as, not double, but fivefold oppression of women in GDR society - as women, as workers, as citizens, as wives and as mothers.³¹

The criticism and rejection of official ideology continues. What is new is that much of the optimism of the earlier period is being questioned and the negative features of what were once viewed positively, such as child-care and single status, are now being given expression or even

emphasized. In some cases, emancipation itself, as a social or personal ideal, is being at least questioned.

A woman character in Dorothee Klein's novel, *Das schöne bisschen Leben* asks "How high is the price of emancipation?", the implication being that it is perhaps too high. In an article that was critical of many developments in recent women's writing, the critic Karin Hirdina wrote in 1983 that "emancipation seems to have become a burden".³²

In this essay my concern has been to look at women's literature in the GDR to see what it might tell us about the reality of emancipation in one of the countries of *realexistierender Sozialismus*. The GDR is an interesting society to look at in this respect because it is the most developed in the Eastern Bloc and it has a thriving women's literature, unfortunately not well known in the English-speaking world.

In West Germany in the seventies the term "women writers movement" (*Bewegung schreibender Frauen*) was used to describe the literary activities of women in the context of their fight for emancipation. In the words of one literary critic, these women saw their writing "as a means in the search for identity and as resistance activity".³³ I believe this is a very good description of GDR women's writing of the past few decades. The late sixties and early seventies saw a blossoming of women's literature that was formally innovative, imaginative, committed to the struggle for emancipation and critical of social reality, official ideology and male consciousness and behaviour. This has continued since the seventies with the emergence of a whole new generation of women writers. What I have tried to do in this present section is concentrate on certain new trends or shifts in emphasis that have occurred since the seventies because these tell us something about real difficulties in the lives of GDR women.

I have noted:

(a) a concentration on daily life (reflected in a preference for the shorter form - the story) and on the kind of detail which demonstrates, perhaps better than the traditional 'social novel', that the attempt to achieve some harmonious integration of public and private, of career and home, has not succeeded for a large number of GDR women;

(b) the special difficulties encountered by single women and single mothers, difficulties that have done a lot to undermine the earlier enthusiasm which looked to options other than traditional marriage;

(c) the evidence of a growing disillusionment with the liberating potential of measures (however necessary) such as nurseries, state-funded child-care, abortion, etc.



Explanations

Why, in spite of the proclaimed official commitment to women's emancipation on the part of the state, do the results seem so disappointing to many GDR women? Or, in the words of Brigitte Martin in *Nach Freude anstehen*, "why, for all the equality between men and women, are there more dissatisfied women than men?"

Certain explanations suggest themselves. Commenting on the centrality of the problems of daily life, describing it as the "basic theme" of recent women's literature, Karin Hirdina, in the article already mentioned, admits that "there is substance behind these literary statements. Women do most of the housework". The "scientific technological revolution", another core concept of state ideology, may have increased productivity, efficiency and achievement at work but in the home, where women still do 80 per cent of the work, housework still takes up thirty seven hours per week, according to official figures. The celebrated technological and social infrastructure, which was to have created so much free time, has succeeded in reducing women's labour in the home by only half an hour per week over the past twenty years.³⁴

This, combined with the strong pressure to achieve in the world of career work (*Leistungsdruck*), is the real material background to the stressful, alienating and sometimes hectic routine of everyday life which has featured so prominently in the recent literature.

Another element of the background to this thematic restriction, the reluctance to engage in broader social critique, is the repressive cultural policy of the regime. In the period between the expulsion of the songwriter Wolf Biermann in 1976 and 1981, Emmerich names twenty five prominent writers who were forced to emigrate to West Germany. (A letter condemning the expulsion was signed by over eighty literary figures, among them Christa Wolf, Sarah Kirsch and Helga Schütz. Sarah Kirsch was also later forced to emigrate. Anna Seghers defended the expulsion of Biermann.) Bans, house arrest, imprisonment, expulsion from the writers union, enforced emigration - these have been commonplace in the GDR since 1976.

In 1979 a new law hit writers, which made it illegal to publish in the West any material which might be "harmful to the interests of the GDR". The writers' drain became a flood and the atmosphere for those remaining in the GDR was hardly one that encouraged bold social or political critiques, of whatever form.

But it is the difficulties faced by single women and single mothers which, perhaps more than anything else, points to a fundamental flaw in the GDR's ideology and official strategy for women's

emancipation. That whole strategy has been centred around the maintainance of the nuclear family as the basic unit of society and the only desirable or socially acceptable model. Even the abortion law speech, quoted by Morgner in 1973, justified the abortion law in terms of its effect on the family: "wanted children are the goal and purpose of every harmonious marriage in socialist society...The development of healthy, harmonious and happy marriages, the formation of stable families... are the principal concerns of socialist policy." (*Trobadora Beatriz* p. 510).

GDR ideology, in speeches, films, media and even election propaganda, promotes only one role-model for women - career wife/mother. A great deal of official effort, over many years, has been expended in promoting this role-model. One should not underestimate the effects of this on the consciousness of ordinary women.

If, to the many material difficulties experienced by single women/mothers, we add the psychological pressure of officially sanctioned social norms and expectations, then we can begin to understand the problem of the woman waiting for the train who felt "flawed" when society (her colleagues) classified her as "alone".

The number of women who experience this direct form of discrimination is quite large. In 1981 12.4 per cent of households in the GDR were single parent families with children; 31.2 per cent were childless couples and 56.4 per cent conformed to the traditional family model.³⁵

Another important aspect of official ideology is the fact that, although there has been a big effort to develop a new role-model for women, there has been no comparable effort to change the traditional male role-model. And this in a society which has always stressed the importance of changing consciousness, of creating the "socialist personality". I don't think it would be unduly cynical to suggest that many of the measures allegedly aimed at the emancipation of women (women in the factory, women with higher qualifications and careers, the *Babyjahr*, the nurseries...), although positive in themselves, had as their ultimate motive and limiting framework the economic needs of GDR society as perceived by its male-dominated hierarchy.

Hence the failure to confront the traditional male role-model and the enthrone-ment of the traditional nuclear family at the centre of "socialist policy". It remains to be seen how changes in economic requirements in the GDR and the rest of eastern Europe, resulting from economic reforms, increased technological efficiency, marketization etc. affect the ideology and practice as far as women are concerned.

In their article on women in the GDR and Hungary, Marilyn Rueschemeyer and Szonja Szelenyi show how Hungarian women in the expanding "second economy" are even more discriminated against and are being pushed back into their traditional role in the home.³⁶ Margy Gerber also suggests that the state's interests in the GDR (danger of unemployment resulting from new technologies, growing social problems of children and youth) are leading it to encourage and promote those writings which redirect women's attention to the home.³⁷

Whatever the explanation, I think one has every reason to remain optimistic. The rich experiences of the period since 1945, the strong awareness of oppression among GDR women and the crucial critical role of an expanding and vibrant women's literature, when placed in the overall context of the radical changes and social upheavals that are currently shaking the foundations of Stalinist monolithism in Eastern Europe, hold out a great deal of promise for the future.

Footnotes

1. Dorothee Schmitz, *Weibliche Selbstentwürfe und männliche Bilder* (Frankfurt 1983), 320.
2. *Angst vor der Liebe* (Leipzig 1984). Some West German anthologies are Lutz-W Wolf ed., *Frauen in der DDR* (Munich 1976); H. Heidtmann ed., *Im Kreislauf der Windeln* (Basel 1982); *Die Heiratsschwinderin* (Darmstadt 1983); Chris Weedon ed., *Die Frau in der DDR* (Oxford 1988).
3. See, for instance, *The Fourth Dimension. Interviews With Christa Wolf*, published by Verso 1988.
4. For example, Christiane Hauptmann, "Zur sozialen Stellung alleinstehender Frauen und Mütter in der DDR" in *Information zur soziologischen Forschung in der DDR*, no.4 (1985); also Gisela Helwig ed., *Die DDR-Gesellschaft im Spiegel ihrer Literatur* (Cologne 1988).
5. Gabrielle Eckhart ed., *So sehe ich die Sache* (Cologne 1984).
6. D. Schmitz, op.cit. 333.
7. Monika Maron, *Flugasche* (Frankfurt 1981). Translated into English as *Flight of Ashes* (London 1986).
8. Monika Maron, *Die Überläuferin* (Frankfurt 1986). Translated into English as *The Defector* (London 1988).
9. Sarah Lennox, "Nun ja! Das nächste Leben geht aber heute an", in P. Hohendahl and P. Herminghouse, eds., *Literatur der DDR in den siebziger Jahren* (Frankfurt 1983) 248.
10. Marilyn Rueschemeyer and Szonja Szelenyi, "Socialist Transformation and Gender Inequality: Women in the GDR and Hungary", in D. Childs ed., *East Germany in Comparative Perspective* (London 1989).
11. Harry Blunk, "Emanzipation der Frau und Frauentag in der DDR Spielfilm", in *Deutsche Studien*, No. 1 (1987) 66.
12. Monika Helmecke, "30. September", in *Klopffzeichen* (Berlin 1979) 92.
13. Wilfried Linke, "Die Frau, das Kind, die andere Leute" in *Temperaments* no.4 (1985)
14. Martia Seidemann, "Sonntagskind", in *Nasenflöte* (Berlin 1983) 133.
15. Margy Gerber, "Wie hoch ist eigentlich der Preis der Emanzipation? Social Issues in Recent GDR Women's Writings", in *GDR Monitor* 87/88, 62.
16. Edith Wagner, "Der Alltag in der Prosaliteratur der DDR", in *The GDR Past and Present*, published by Ealing College School of Language Studies, 1986.
17. Dorothee Kleine, *Jahre mit Christine* (Rostock 1980) 42.
18. Christine Lambrecht, "Besuch im Dorf" in the anthology *Angst vor der Liebe*, 310-312.
19. Dorothee Kleine, *Das schöne bisschen Leben* (Rostock 1985) 15.
20. Quoted in Katherine Belwe, "Zur Situation alleinstehender Frauen mittleren Alters in der DDR" in

21. Beate Morgenstern, "Im Spreekahn", in *Jenseits der Allee* 2nd. edition, (Berlin 1981) 106.
22. M. Gerby, op.cit. 67.
23. K. Belwe, op.cit. 46.
24. Monika Helmecke, *Klopzeichen* 114.
25. Gabrielle Eckhart, op.cit. 203.
26. Rueschmeyrer and Szelenyi, op.cit. 84.
27. Elfriede Bruning, *Partnerinnen* (Leipzig 1981) 13.
28. *Klopzeichen* 86.
29. Irmtraud Morgner, *Amanda* (Berlin 1983) 223.
30. *Klopzeichen* 132.
31. Margaret Vallance, "Feminist Issues as Portrayed in

- Recent GDR Literature", in *The GDR Past and Present* op.cit. 66.
32. Text in Roger Woods, *Opposition in the GDR Under Honecker 1971-1985* (London 1986).
33. Wolfgang Emmerich, "Identität und Geschlechtertausch" in R. Grimm & J. Hermand, eds., *Basis 8* (Frankfurt 1978) 129.
34. Quoted in Belwe, op.cit.
35. Childs, ed. *East Germany in Comparative Perspective* 98.
36. op.cit. 102.
37. M. Gerber, op.cit. 72.

months. These include nine men and women charged for offences allegedly committed on 16 January, the 20th anniversary of the death of Jan Palach, the Prague student who immolated himself in protest against the continued Soviet military presence in Czechoslovakia after August 1968.

Vaclav Havel, Charter 77 signatory and playwright, was sentenced on 21 February 1989 to nine months imprisonment for "instigation" and "obstructing a public official in the execution of his duty".

The following eight, who were arrested after trying to lay flowers at the statue of St. Wenceslas Square in Palach's memory, were charged with "disturbing the peace" and sentenced on 22 February.

Jana Petrova, NMS spokesperson and **Ota Veverka**, spokesperson of the John Lennon Peace Club (JLPC) - who both faced an additional charge of "grossly insulting a public official" - were sentenced to nine and twelve months (second penal category) imprisonment, respectively.

Jana Sternova, former Charter 77 spokesperson and Nazi concentration camp inmate, was given a suspended sentence. **David Nemeč**, Charter 77 signatory, **Sasa Vondra**, one of the current Charter 77 spokespersons, **Petr Placák**, spokesperson for the newly-formed Czech Children, and **Stanislav Penc**, spokesperson of the JLPC, were all given suspended sentences and/or heavy fines (if they are unable to pay they will go to prison for one month). Charter 77 spokesperson **Dana Nemcova** was too ill to face trial in February.

Other harassed activists include NMS member **John Bok**, who was arrested outside Havel's trial and faces up to two years imprisonment on charges of "disturbing the peace" and "obstructing a public official in the execution of his duty". Former Charter 77 spokesperson **Stanislav Devaty** is in prison on a charge of "disturbing public order", for which he faces up to six months imprisonment. He is on hunger strike.

Full details and latest information about these and other cases can be obtained from *Palach Press*, 71 Belmont Avenue, London N17 6AX, Tel. 01-889-1074.

Pat Hunt (END)

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

PRISON SENTENCES FOR PEACE ACTIVISTS

In our last issue, we reported on the arrests of peace and human rights activists in Czechoslovakia and on the international defence campaign for them coordinated by European Nuclear Disarmament (END) and supported by *Labour Focus*.

Tomas Tvaroch, of the independent Peace Association (NMS), was sentenced on 8 December 1988 to one month suspended for one year for "public order" offences; these related to his participation in the 28 October 1988 demonstration. He was then held in prison for five weeks over Christmas and the New Year until the prosecutor's appeal against his sentence (which failed) could be heard.

Hana Marvanova and **Tomas Dvorak**, also of the NMS, held in prison since October 1988, were tried on 16 March 1989 on charges of "incitement" and "preparation to incite" in connection with the independent demonstrations of 21 August and 28 October 1988. They were sentenced to ten months imprisonment suspended for three years, and finally released on 3 May after the prosecutor's appeal against the sentence failed.

Lubos Vydra, also of the NMS, has been released from detention but still awaits trial on charges of "preparation to incite".

The following five men were charged originally in connection with a petition which accused the authorities of responsibility for the death in prison in

Spring 1988 of human rights activist **Pavel Wonka**, demanded release of all political prisoners and reform of the criminal law.

Jiri Stencl, Charter 77 signatory and NMS member, still awaits trial. He is not in detention. The weakness of the evidence has forced the authorities to alter the charge against him from a criminal to a minor offence.

Dusan Skala, Charter 77 signatory and publisher of the samizdat cultural journal *Host* was sentenced on 24 March to 15 months in prison, suspended for four years.

Ivan Martin Jirous, Charter 77 signatory and former manager of the 1970s rock group Plastic People of the Universe, was tried on 9 March 1989 and sentenced to 16 months imprisonment to be served in the second (harsher) penal category.

Jiri Tichy was tried on the same day and sentenced to six months in prison.

Petr Cibulka, Charter 77 signatory, Jazz section activist, member of the Initiative for Social Defence, and signatory of the 1985 Prague Appeal, still awaits trial. In addition to the charges related to the Wonka petition he is charged with "economic crimes". He faces up to ten years in prison.

Many other human rights and peace activists have been persecuted in recent