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HUNGARY: OUT OF 1956

The opposition in Hungary has grown both in size and diversity in the last four years. Several reasons are given for its sudden rise after years of relative dormancy: the changing fabric of Hungarian society resulting from a breakdown in the economy, which has forced many to work two or three jobs to make ends meet; the willingness of intellectuals to speak out in the underground press and to break out of the cocoon of official structures; the rise of a new generation of Hungarians who were born and grew up after 1956, in post-revolutionary Hungary, and are not as constrained as their elders by the lessons taught by Soviet tanks; and a growing realization by some Party members that reform is necessary, if only to maintain Party rule.

But the developments cannot be completely explained by social or political analyses without including individual actions: in our second issue, Gâbor Demszky, Hungary's chief underground publisher, explains how he was inspired by the Solidarity movement and decided that he wanted to promote independent Hungarian culture, going to Poland to learn how to do so. Just so with four engaging artists, who formed a group called Inconnu to pursue their art without constraints *(see p. 20).*

And in part, these developments may be ascribed to the uniqueness of Hungary, and the unique rule of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party under János Kádár.

There are no laws concerning either publication or associations, and a great deal of independent activity lies within the scope of the law; at the same time, because of the relationship between some intellectuals and Party figures, certain developments are in fact difficult to describe as being strictly part of the opposition.

This is the case with the Democratic Forum, which is not a formal organization but rather a series of open meetings between intellectuals, most of whom are associated with the Populist movement (which includes members of the Communist Party). The Populists are generally described as the "nationalist opposition," but they are not so easily classified. They are indeed motivated by national and even nationalist concerns, the principal one being the question of Hungarian minorities in Romania, and to a lesser extent Czechoslovakia — the subject of the Third Democratic Forum on March 6, 1988. They seek a government policy that will allow Hungarians from Transylvania fleeing Romania to apply for political asylum in Hungary. According to estimates there are as many as 50,000 refugees — most of them ethnic Hungarians, but also a few Romanians — who have no legal status; recently an independent committee has been set up to help them. The Populists also seek a determined policy for protecting the national rights of Hungarians in Transylvania (a long-disputed area); some openly seek territorial changes. The Populists, following a tradition from the thirties and forties, also write and speak about social questions, opposing, for example, government policy in favor of abortion. But the Populist movement is not necessarily in opposition, and in many ways it maintains an uneasy alliance with both the government — trying to gain reforms — and the opposition.

The Democratic Forum is open to all, and the meetings it has conducted — three so far — have reflected a diversity of opinion, and provided a forum for the "outcast opposition," that is those who are not in official institutions or structures. Through the Forum, the Populists convey a two-edged message: to the government, that they must be bargained with; and to the "outcast" or "democratic" opposition, that they are a more influential force in society.

This latter group is almost exclusively an intellectual phenomenon, and there is very little manifestation of open opposition among workers or other social groups. The principal opposition group is centered around a journal, Beszélő (The Speaker, *with the additional meaning of "prison visiting hours"), which has published since 1981 — without official authorization — a quarterly that addresses social, economic, and political concerns. (A legal publication must go through a process of authorization and review that usually requires an affiliation with an official institution, such as a university or research institute, and is thus approved by officers of that institution who usually censor the texts before submitting an issue to the Office of Publications.)*

Beszélő *has a circulation of two thousand copies, and a readership anywhere from three to five times that amount. It is best known now for its "Social Contract" program* *(see p. 5)* *— published in June 1987 — which seeks to mobilize the intellectual community around a program for radical reforms of the system, including constitutional restrictions on the power of the Communist Party, strengthening of the prerogatives of the Parliament, open elections, a free press, and economic reforms calling for a mixture of a social democratic welfare system and a market economy.*

Others in the opposition, mostly centered around journals or newspapers, are more militant in tone or conservative in outlook. The exception is Hírmondo (The Herald), *which does not reflect one particular point of view but rather seeks to blend journalism with a pluralism of opinions.* Demokrata (The Democrat), *a monthly, has the most strictly defined views: it*

opposes the idea of "reforming the system," and openly calls for a free market economy. Demokrata is also militant in its calls for the withdrawal of Soviet troops, the dismantling of the system, and the honoring of the martyrs of the 1956 Revolution. This is not to say that Beszélő is against such things; sometimes the differences are over strategy and tactics (see Beszélő's "Social Contract" program and the interviews with Miklós Haraszti and Tamás Miklós Gáspár for a full discussion). Also, a new publication, Magyar Zsidó (The Hungarian Jew), began last fall and is edited by Tamás Gado, whose aim is to rebuild Jewish secular life and to discuss the Jewish role in Hungarian society.

In addition to these journals there is the publishing of books. The largest underground publisher is AB, which has over 60 books in print, with a normal circulation of 2-3,000; its newest releases are Oni (Them), a series of interviews with old Polish Stalinist leaders by Teresa Torańska, Happy Days In Hell, by György Faludy, about the Hungarian Revolution, and Milan Kundera's The Unbearable Lightness Of Being. The books together with the journals are sold by their publisher Gábor Demsky at his home. This independent "boutique," founded by László Rajk, has its dangers: the police, in a series of house searches prior to the anniversary of the 1848 Revolution on March 15, detained Demszky and confiscated the books at his house. Over twenty people were detained and their books and journals were confiscated.

Another publishing house is Katalizator, which in the last three years has published a number of books, among them a collection of photographs of the cemeteries of the unknown victims of the 1956 Revolution, and of the mass repression in its aftermath.

Outside of this map fall a number of initiatives that are not easily described as oppositionist, yet form an important part of independent intellectual and social life in Hungary. Among these are the various political, environmental and social clubs, mainly centered in Budapest, but also in the provinces. The largest and most interesting is the Embankment Club, with a membership of 1,500. Originally housed at the headquarters of the P.P.F. (Popular People's Front), the Embankment Club's permission to meet there was withdrawn by the P.P.F.; later, it was housed at the TIT, a scientific association, but there too its position was rescinded. As mentioned above, there is no law prohibiting such associations, yet they are constricted nevertheless by the availability of meeting space, and at present the Embankment Club hopes to meet at the only independent theater in Budapest, the Yurta, which also houses the Democratic Forum, and which is engaged in a running battle with the Minister of Internal Affairs, István Horváth. A future worry for Club members is the initiative now in preparation for a new law on associations which, while it would most probably grant legal status to the Club, would also serve to restrict its activities.

There are also a variety of student and university clubs that have flourished in the last two years, which some veterans of 1956 have compared in spirit to the Petőfi Club movement that began a year prior to the 1956 Revolution.

Similarly, a number of journals have official sponsorship by institutions, and yet, in the words of several of their editors, "would cease publication if attempts were made at censorship." Perhaps the most daring of these is Századvég (End of the Century), published by the István Bibó College of Law; its most recent issue included Molotov's speech after the Soviet invasion of Poland on September 17, 1939, in which he stated that the "bastard of the Versailles Treaty" had just been destroyed.

In this diverse setting one can also find the Greens, a movement of environmental clubs, currently preoccupied with stopping the construction of the Gabčikovo-Nagymaros Dam on the Danube between Hungary and Czechoslovakia. There is also a loose network of conscientious objectors, some of whom are pacifists, others political opponents who won't serve in the Hungarian Army because of its alliance with the Soviet Union; these individuals, over twenty of whom are currently serving prison sentences, are the most harshly repressed in Hungary.

On March 15, 1988 these various groups assembled for an occasion that united all parties: the anniversary of the 1848 Revolution and the memory of Sándor Petőfi — the 19th century author of Nemzeti Dál, a poem calling Hungarians to rise against their oppressors — who is considered the embodiment of Hungarian patriotism. It turned out to be the largest demonstration in Hungary since the 1956 revolution. Again demonstrators were arrested for 48-hour periods, including Sándor Rácz (the leader of the Budapest Workers' Council in 1956), Miklós Haraszti, Gábor Demszky, Jenő Nagy, editor of Demokrata, and others. Still, over 10,000 people marched through Budapest for several hours, from the Petőfi to the Kossuth (leader of the 1848 uprising) statue, then to the Bem monument (the Polish general who came to Hungary's aid in 1848), and ended at the Batthyány monument (renamed Batthyány-Nagy monument by the opposition because of the parallel fate of the two Prime Ministers). There were several speakers, among them Rózsa Demszky, Gábor Demszky's wife, Tibor Pakh, a veteran of the 1956 revolution, János Kis, chief editor of Beszélő, who called for reform, and Gáspár Miklós Tamás, who called for the government to resign.

While repression is not as severe as in Czechoslovakia or the Soviet Union, it does exist, as the examples above demonstrate. The authorities maintain a careful watch over these initiatives, and make the lives of oppositionists difficult through job dismissals, detentions, house searches, confiscations of journals and equipment, and sometimes, imprisonment.

Nevertheless, there is a surprising degree of openness shown by opposition activists, who generally publish under their own names. How to act in such conditions and what to act for are important questions which have produced diverse answers, as the reader will see in the following pages. □

The following text was published in the Hungarian samizdat *journal* Demokrata, *No. 3 of this year, and also distributed in the form of a leaflet during the demonstration on March 15 (see Introduction p. 2). Unlike* Beszélő *(see p. 5),* Demokrata *does not present us here with a program or blueprint for action, but rather articulates its fundamental demands.*

WHAT DO WE WANT

I. Real freedom of the press, speech, conscience, education, and the freedom to associate and organize.

II. Popular representative democracy on every level of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government.

III. Negotiations on the conditions and timetable of the withdrawal of Soviet troops – taking into consideration the Soviet Union's legitimate security interests.

IV. Human and nationality rights for Hungarians living beyond our borders.

V. Friendly cooperation with the people of East-Central Europe in the hope of a subsequent federation.

VI. Hungary's social, economic, and cultural participation in the European community of nations.

VII. Equal and stable working conditions in private, cooperative and state enterprises.

VIII. Democratically functioning trade unions independent of the Party; organizations safeguarding the interests of the peasants, small manufacturers, small entrepreneurs, and tradesmen; unions for the academic and artistic communities.

IX. Humane and dignified living conditions and a guaranteed minimum income for the poor.

X. Institutional policies and social practices opposing the manifestation of national, racial and denominational hostility.

XI. Introduction of an alternative service in lieu of the obligatory military service; release of imprisoned conscientious objectors.

XII. Democratic discussions of a state environmental protection program; removal of obstacles barring the activity of autonomous environmental protection groups.

In the spirit of 1848, 1918, and 1956 we demand the cultivation of national democratic traditions and the pronouncement of March 15 and the October anniversaries as public holidays, as well as the drafting of a new coat of arms for the republic.

Budapest March 15, 1988 *DEMOKRATA*

CRISIS REQUIRES ACTION

Beszélő's Social Contract

Beszélő's special issue from 1987 offered a program to resolve Hungary's political crisis, the "Social Contract." The program states that Hungary currently faces a crisis following the breakdown of János Kádár's own "social contract," which operated according to the motto "those who are not against us are with us." It then spells out a series of demands for political change and economic reform within the bounds of the present system. The program has been praised as a means of mobilizing the intellectual opposition and others, but also criticized for its practical recognition of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party as the leading force in political life, thereby limiting the scope of opposition. Uncaptive Minds *reprints the introduction to "The Social Contract," together with interviews with Miklós Haraszti, a co-editor of* Beszélő, *and Gáspár Miklós Tamás, a philosopher and member of the Hungarian opposition.*

PART I

We are At a Turning Point

Consensus has come to an end. It has suddenly dawned on the country that the power structure is not going to fulfill its promises. The consequences of economic decline are beginning to affect even the blue-collar elite and the middle stratum of intellectuals. The public no longer believes that unending sacrifice make sense.

The leadership is wavering. It does not understand why it is unable to reverse the worsening trends. It does not have the faintest idea what to do about the sudden tide of dissatisfaction. It is loosing control over its own actions and is increasingly unable to conceal its internal divisions.

The Party and Government apparatus is uneasy. It senses society's mounting anger and finds that its customary techniques are not always sufficient to keep people in line. And they are missing their proven agents: prominent personalities outside the Party are withdrawing their support from official policy, and the Party's rank and file is becoming unruly.

The general dissatisfaction has fastened on its target. Just as earlier the country associated János Kádár with the successes of the consolidation period, it now associates him with the failures at the end of his reign. The General Secretary's popularity is declining even faster than the value of the forint. There is just one thing on which everyone, from blue-collar worker to party cadre, is in agreement: Kádár must go.

New Faces or New Policy?

János Kádár has been the symbol of the golden middle road in Hungary. He, in contrast to Mátyás Rákósi [General Secretary of the Hungarian Communist Party, in power from 1945 to 1953 and briefly again from 1955 to 1956], has not attempted to force on the people grandiose programs intended to transform society. And, unlike Imre Nagy [Hungarian Prime Minister who joined the 1956 revolution and was executed after the Soviet invasion], he has been unwilling to accept curbs on the Communist Party's rule. Holding a monopoly of power, he has prevented encroachment on his interests by any group capable of voicing discontent. And he has allowed everyone to find compensation for their losses, wherever possible.

Just as earlier the country associated János Kádár with the successes of the consolidation period, it now associates him with the failures at the end of his reign.

The country – wracked by Stalinism, cowed into submission when the '56 uprising was crushed, exsanguinated and wearied by the years of reprisal and longing for a secure and peaceful life – approved of Kádár's policy of consolidation. In exchange, it allowed the Party to rule in the name of the people, and the apparatus in the name of the Party's rank and file. This was the so-called consensus. But no one believes any longer that social conflicts can be avoided by deferring drastic decisions. Caution is seen as inability to act; secrecy as the concealment of failure; the monopoly of power as an obstacle to resolving the crisis. And all this is indeed true.

Kádár bears personal responsibility for the leadership's inertia. He was the one who announced in 1983 that there would be no second reform. In 1984, he was the one who insisted on

the seventh Five-Year Plan's irresponsible program for reviving the economy. In 1985, he orchestrated the Party program that simultaneously promised more investment, more consumption, improvement of our balance of payments, and a more moderate rate of inflation. He played a decisive role in concealing the magnitude of the problems from society, and the public was barred from the debates on finding a way to resolve them. There will be no meaningful change as long as it is the Minister of Finance and the Chairman of the National Planning Office, rather than Kádár, who are retired; as long as the line remains that "our policy" is sound, and that there are only mistakes in its implementation. But Kádár's departure itself would not solve anything. If his successors attempt to correct the "mistakes" of the past few years by reverting to the Party's policy – "proven over thirty years" – then the crisis will run its course. We will be left to vegetate amidst deteriorating living conditions. And in the background there will be the specter of catastrophe: the state could become insolvent within a few years, and there may come a period of power-cuts, endless lines, and declining real incomes.

An actual collapse does not even have to occur: the constant threat of collapse is in itself sufficient to make the situation untenable. We need a radical political change.

From Consensus to a Social Contract

There is no solution to the Hungarian economy's present problems. It is not enough to say, as it was said in 1953, something to the effect that if the excessive investment in heavy industry were stopped, there would immediately be more for the consumer. The abandonment of wasteful industrial policies would adversely affect the population in the short term. Even the best program of consolidation and growth would produce temporary unemployment and a decline in living standards, and would create tension between social strata, industries, and districts.

It is not enough to grumble about the consequences of a bad policy. You have to demand another policy.

What can the leadership do about these conflicts? One course of action would be to attempt to propitiate the populace with social, national, or racial demagoguery, or to launch a campaign of order-restoration, mobilization and centralization in combination with political hysteria. A sort of second Romania. But we see where that leads.

Another course of action would be to reinforce the requirements of a market economy and to suppress any manifestation of society's dissatisfaction with an iron hand: a combination of a police state with free competition, a Hungarian version of South Korea. The third and final course is to accept the breakdown of the tacit social consensus and to open negotiations: establishing a social contract, instead of a mobilizing or disarming dictatorship, which would work out compromises with the participation of those concerned.

Don't Just Grumble, Demand!

But a compromise requires partnership. During the past thirty years, this power structure has done everything possible to prevent any interest group or opinion-forming circle from becoming its partner. Now, in the hours of political uncertainty, the power structure does not have anybody to negotiate with, even if it wanted to. It cannot reach an agreement with the designated representatives of the people concerned, because society would not honor such an agreement. Only those below can demonstrate that they regard their spokesmen as their leaders by heeding them. But they must rouse themselves to do so.

The intellectuals have a politically active core – economists, social scientists, journalists and writers – that is pressing for a dialogue. On their own initiative, several experts have come out with comprehensive reform proposals. They are not satisfied with merely placing their ideas at the leadership's disposal. Their writings are circulated freely, and are being debated in research institutes, professional societies, clubs, universities, and private homes.

For the time being the principal audience and support of these experts are still only other intellectuals. Within wider circles of the population, which does not think in terms of alternatives nor in presenting demands, there is only growing dissatisfaction.

The key political question today is whether the termination of the tacit consensus will be followed by pressure for an explicit social contract.

It is not enough to grumble about the consequences of a bad policy. You have to demand another policy.

There are many things dissuading people from starting to advance demands. Pessimism is one: the feeling that the economy's downward slide cannot be halted. Reform has lost its credibility....

This pessimism can be halted so long as all hope is not extinguished. Getting rid of the old leadership might enable us to distinguish between reform and mere tinkering with reform. But what can be done to overcome the power structure's resistance?

Indeed, the system is designed to isolate, disarm and punish any demand from below. But note that this system does not function the same way in a crisis as it does under normal conditions. The wavering and divided leadership, and its uneasy apparatus, is unable to sweep aside every initiative.

Any forum where those below can have their say is acceptable. The briefing sessions that deputies of the National Assembly or council members hold for their constituents are

good for this purpose. Programs sponsored by the Patriotic People's Front or the T.I.T. [Society for the Dissemination of Scientific Knowledge], as well as the clubs, political seminars, and open Party meetings are all steps in the right direction. But best of all are the public forums at work: the production conference, the shop meeting, trade-union meetings, KISZ [Union of Communist Youth] and Party locals. Invite the country's leaders to the factories and institutions. Bombard the headquarters of the political and voluntary public organizations with resolutions put into writing. Respond to the announcements of the Central Committee, the SZOT, [National Council of Trade Unions], and the government. Demand that the materials of the reform debates be made available. Invite the authors. Adopt stances on their proposals. Elaborate concepts regarding the future of your workplace. And organize reform clubs at work.

We have our elected representatives, and it is their duty to represent us. If the trade-union secretary fails to stand up for the membership's interests, or if the KISZ or Party secretary comes into conflict with his constituents, he can be recalled. Let these elected officials feel that now they are more dependent on those below.

Note that the prospects for cooperation have improved. People cannot be intimidated or dissuaded as readily as before. And if conquest of the official framework fails, it can be exceeded. The scope for civil disobedience has expanded in recent years. Consider such examples as the mass protest against paying the TEHO [a controversial local tax]. Or the shop-level strikes that ended in a negotiated settlement. Or the fact that thousands have demonstrated on March 15 [See Introduction, p. 2] of every year in the 1980's.

Economic reform. . . must be based on a program of political change.

Publicize the initiatives from below. Instead of just submitting demands upward, send them also to the press and to organizations at related workplaces. Invite outsiders to your meetings. Hold joint consultations with the representatives of others in the same situation....

The authorities will enter into a dialogue only if they find that the intellectuals are not the only ones with whom they have to negotiate.

What to demand?

...Until the leadership admits its responsibility for the present situation and eliminates the causes of wasteful capital formation, it will be in the workers' interest to demand higher wages and benefits. Until then the only answer society will be able to give to the government's appeals for belt-tightening will be: "They cannot squander what we have already eaten."

But we must realize that higher wages and benefits will not help us in the long run. There is a price to be paid for the crisis, regardless of who is responsible for it. However, it does make a difference how we pay that price.

Either there will be a program to stabilize and reform the economy, and then it will be necessary to assume temporary losses for the sake of restoring market equilibrium. Or there will be no economic stabilization and reform, in which case we will have to bear the consequences of the decline.

Since we have to pay anyhow, it would be in our national interest to pay for the reform, rather than missing it. The reform will mean catching up with the world's economically developed regions. Sabotaging the reform would mean sinking to the level of the stagnating countries of the Third World.

What are the prerequisites for catching up?

- Equal rights for various forms of ownership in the economy. Legal assurances for establishing private businesses and for private investment. Uniform tax rules, credit conditions, business and foreign trade opportunities for every type of business organization and every enterprise.
- Restriction of demand through monetary control, rather than through the arbitrary, administrative withdrawal of income.
- Curtailment of official tinkering with wage and price mechanisms.
- Development of a capital market, and a substantial reduction in the proportion of centrally controlled investments.
- Dismantling of the proliferating monopolies, the breaking up of other enterprises too large to be economically justified, and the establishment of many small and medium-size enterprises.
- A flexible price policy in the interest of balance-of-trade equilibrium instead of policies to increase particular exports and restrict imports.
- Abandoning of the COMECON program of self-sufficiency, and opening up to the world economy. Within COMECON, the expansion of business relations between enterprises, and turning away from the economically disadvantageous cooperation brought about through political agreements.

Can such a reform program find wide support in Hungary? In our opinion, it can. When considered one by one most people find the program's points appealing.

But there are also numerous reservations. Resistance to reform is generated by various special interests (and not only those associated with power): it is not clear how much inflation, how much reduction of income or unemployment the reform would bring at its inception; certain industries, districts, trades and factories would be especially hard hit. Resistance is also in part

engendered by principled opposition, and not merely the principles professed by the power structure. It comes from a kind of ideal of egalitarianism that does not accept the idea of people receiving additional income in reward for entrepreneurial risk-taking and by a kind of ideal of economic security which cannot be reconciled with temporary unemployment or fluctuating real income.

We accept, we must accept as a given, one-party rule and certain executive prerogatives of the Party.

However, such misgivings will weaken:

- If the population sees that the state, before restricting consumption, has suspended all nonessential or questionable investment projects (e.g. development of the Yamburg gas deposits, the Gabčikovo-Nagymaros dam, and defense spending);
- If the economization drive also includes proportional cuts in the administrative apparatus, beginning with the Party apparatus;
- If once the legal guarantees for entrepreneurship are in place the private sector becomes one of the principal employers of the labor force.

However, the misgivings regarding economic reform cannot be dispelled entirely, because reform is not possible without painful economic consolidation and restructuring.

Even those who long to be back under the protection of the income-withdrawing and redistributing state agree that political changes are desirable. It is unnecessary to convince anyone outside the power structure that the following things must cease:

- Mendacity in the mass media.
- The practice of adopting decisions without consulting the people, and then making them pay for the wrong decisions.
- The trade unions representing the state against employees.
- Making a mockery of civil rights.

By relying on this consensus, it is also possible to gain support also for the cause of economic reform, whose program must be based on a program of political change.

Outlines of a Political Program

The 1956 revolution gave Hungary its last political program. The authors of this text share the opinion that history has not rendered obsolete the basic demands of October 1956:

- Political pluralism and representative democracy in government.
- Self-management in the workplace and localities.
- National self-determination and neutrality in foreign policy.

However, we are convinced that these demands cannot be placed on the agenda in the country's present political situation, which will probably not change significantly for a long time to come. On the other hand, conditions for a compromise solution, similar to that proposed by the remnants of the democratic parties and the workers' councils in November 1956, have improved.

After all, what we have today is not a defeated revolution fighting a rear-guard action against a restorational regime that is settling in. Political developments since the consolidation must also be recognized: the government has accepted mass consumption and tolerated certain elements of a market economy; several associations of Western orientation have been formed in the social sciences; the official ideology has been relaxed; specialized knowledge has gained in prestige; and the political differences between the new generation of Party cadres and the professional elite have narrowed. The external conditions have also improved: Hungary is more open to the West than thirty years ago; the threat of Soviet intervention has declined; and the Soviet Union's leaders are more tolerant.

Starting out from these premises, we have considered ways to shape the population's growing dissatisfaction with the present regime into specific political demands. We accept, we must accept as a given, one-party rule and certain executive prerogatives of the Party. Working within this framework, we are investigating how we could finally raise anew the basic political questions that have been deferred continually since the suppression of the 1956 revolution.

For it is time to raise them anew.

We are proposing compromise solutions that fall short by far of what people aspire to. But these compromises would produce appreciable changes in the relationship between the power structure and society. And their implementation would permit further orderly progress toward a democratic, autonomous and independent Hungary.

We propose the adoption of the following slogans:

- Constitutional checks on party rule, a sovereign National Assembly, and an accountable government.
- Freedom of the press guaranteed by law.
- Legal protection for employees, representation of interests, and freedom of association.
- Social security and an equitable social welfare policy.
- Civil rights. □

Beszélő, June 1987

Remarks on Beszélo's "Social Contract"

The following text appeared in the form of a letter in the samizdat *publication* Demokrata.

The authors of the *Beszélő* program have presented an at times well-drafted, attractive model. One small problem, however, casts a shadow over their work: their model is useless, for they forgot to clarify its fundamental principles before setting out to plan its construction.

The "social contract" proposed by *Beszélő* is essentially a compromise between opposing groups. But instead of a compromise, we find something else. It is not some kind of mutual reconciliation of interests, but rather a reheating of the *cuis regio, eius religio* principle. This by no means fresh idea may have been effective in the unorganized states of the Middle Ages where the individual provinces had significant autonomy. In present-day Hungary I see no chance, however, for this type of "territorial division." If I understand correctly, the authors differentiated between three regions: Yours, Ours, and What Lies In Between. Yours is the realm of foreign affairs, defense, and the institutions which guarantee allied loyalty. What Lies in Between encompasses internal affairs and the justice system whose functioning we will attempt to limit and influence. All the rest is Ours.

The division is pleasing and attractive to the eye. Key ministries will be left in the hands of the possessors – usurpers? – others will be completely renounced; those that remain will only be modified at best. Well now, can the whole thing truly work this way?

In my opinion, it can't. Only the most brutal forces could hold together governing principles and outlooks which are so opposed to one another.

Compromise, as far as I'm concerned, does not mean the division of problems – i.e. you solve one in your way, I solve one according to my ideas – for no problem can be delineated or handled differently from the rest. Compromise must be present in every respect, there must be agreement even in the smallest area; otherwise, there will be complete chaos and vehement fights, which will destroy the mutual advantages. The question is considered *ad absurdum*: There is only one freedom and it is indivisible. There cannot be such a thing as lesser or greater freedom without the threat of damage to total freedom.

It is wrong, though, to renounce a certain area while claiming supremacy over others for ourselves. Unfortunately, wherever we feel most at home, we cannot be independent from the influence of our opponents, i.e. our possible partners. It would mean a superfluous and unjustified concession for us to renounce this gain, which we don't even have as yet. Everything must be discussed, in all circumstances alternatives must be compared with the existing ideas. Otherwise, there is no compromise, just a temporary truce at most.

It is just here that *Beszélő*'s proposal goes astray. As a sign of the authors' willingness to compromise they renounce the primary condition of any possible compromise. They keep quiet about the most important question: the system's "pillar" and the possibility of its strengthening or transformation. You may refute this, but I think that the Party's power is based on the by now permanent presence of the Soviet army. It would be stupid to keep quiet about this, and we can't simply refer the question to the Party's absolute sphere of authority because this is not the Party's business, but our business. No matter how "untimely" or "political" it may appear, it is unavoidable that we should speak about this, that this be the subject of debate.

A large army, which enjoys full extra-territoriality – even at the highest levels of the Hungarian government there is no information about its position, its size, its armament, and its movements – is a permanent threat to all of us. The fear of military intervention could provoke unforeseen reactions in either partner to a social contract, but those in power would be particularly susceptible to a change of heart. The entire social contract is therefore a dubious undertaking, because its validity would be continually in question.

The proposal of the social contract must therefore be supplied with an opening chapter which establishes that it is the goal of the parties involved to protect the property of the Hungarian citizens in their homeland, to defend their sovereignty, and to ask for a withdrawal of the occupying troops. The bargaining point concerning this can only be its speed. □

With respect,

A Flower Lover

Demokrata, No. 7–8, 1987

THERE'S MORE TO POLITICS THAN HUMAN RIGHTS

An Interview with Gáspár Miklós Tamás

Gáspár Miklós Tamás is a writer and intellectual who emigrated from Romania to Hungary 10 years ago. He has written for the independent journals Beszélő, Hírmondo *and* Demokrata, *among others, and for numerous scholarly journals in the West. Mr. Tamás has been active in the defense of Hungarian minorities in his native Transylvania, and was among the featured speakers at the third meeting of the Democratic Forum (see Introduction above) in Budapest dedicated to the subject. He has gained wider renown for his critical reviews of "The Social Contract,"* Beszélő*'s program, [see p. 5], as he presents a political orientation that is both more conservative and radical.* Uncaptive Minds *interviewed him at his home in Budapest and discussed Hungary's political tradition, his differences with the "Social Contract," and his view that human rights do not consitute a sufficient program for opposition.*

Uncaptive Minds: Your views within the Hungarian opposition are not well-known in the West and do not seem to have a widespread following. Have you consciously chosen your isolation?

Gáspár Miklós Tamás: I am and am not alone, which is a very curious thing. Those people who agree with me in my main political attitudes, in my sympathy with the West, and in the conservatism of some of my views, are usually not very active politically, and are to be found in all sorts of places and thus are difficult to classify. Those people who are ready to take part in political action against the regime are usually to my left. Well, this is not unusual, and coming from the left myself I am not scandalized by it.

In what way do you come from the left?

Tamás: From a quite unusual left, actually. I was a libertarian leftist, and so today I am more or less a libertarian conservative. I am what Orwell called himself: "a Tory anarchist." But the intransigence of my views is quite exceptional for the politically active intelligentsia here.

And what are these differences? Is it that they don't openly agree with your case for anti-communism, as you put it in a recent exchange with George Schöpflin in the East European Reporter? *Is that what defines your conservatism?*

Tamás: Well, the others would privately say that they are of course anti-communists, but that the term is being compromised by cold-warriors, etc. I don't think that is the real reason, however, for their reluctance to openly profess this belief. Instinctively, people have discovered that in the West their appeal, especially in the media, lies on the left. People badly want allies and I can understand this very well. So, if you are intransigent and trenchant on this point, especially if you have opinions about what is going on in the West, it means the end of your popularity with your Western supporters. This is quite a loss, and I have experienced it personally as my former supporters discover that my views don't square with theirs. It is quite understandable, since of course people wish to endorse people who hold similar views to their own. I don't object; there is nothing immoral about it.

But is that the only reason for such isolation?

Tamás: It is one reason. Another reason for the isolation of the political program I am now proposing is that its tradition is a broken one. My views are similar to those professed by the Hungarian Christian Democrats in the thirties and forties. Well, this tradition has been completely uprooted here. Today, not even those who are Christians and are opposed to the regime know what this tradition means. It is a curious thing if you remember that the Christian Democratic Party was the biggest party in Hungary after the Second World War. The Left, that is the Communist Party, the Social Democratic Party, the Peasant Party and the Smallholders Party, was stronger only in coalition. The last of the four was initially the largest party because it served as an umbrella organization, but in the second elections, when the political differences were more clearly spelled out, the Democratic Popular Party, which was the Christian-Democratic movement, won the most votes. They didn't call themselves Christian Democrats because Cardinal Mindszenty disapproved of it and he was a rigid person who associated Christian Democracy with socialist-type activity. He was a very brave man, though not, unfortunately, politically bright. But the leaders around this party were an excellent group, people like Barankowics for example.

What happened to them?

Tamás: They were mostly imprisoned, emigrated, or simply left politics. The history of the Party as a party was very short, of course. Before that, the group existed as an intellectual center, and I am trying to unearth their writings. It is an interesting point of history that this group organized an *enquete* against anti-semitism in the late 1930.

Which is unusual for a Christian Democratic Party of that time.

Tamás: But not here. It was quite modernized and westernized. And this is very attractive to me too. Because the values and politics which were traditionally considered conservative in Hungary were those represented by the old landed interests, the conservative gentry, who were chauvinistic and boorish politicians. They were overtaken by the radicals of the thirties like the Falangists, who were close to the Nazis. The old-fashioned nationalism of the traditional conservative was no longer interesting and appealed only to 19th century figures, who are now considered rather harmless compared to the modern proponents of nationalism.

So, if you are intransigent and trenchant on this point, especially if you have opinions about what is going on in the West, it means the end of your popularity with your Western supporters.

Well, on this political spectrum, one must remember that the Christian Socialists, who sprang from Leo XIII's movement within the Church, were very statist. In Catholic political life after the First World War this movement split, when Bishop Prohászka led a group to the extreme right, and a leader of the Christian Socialists practically joined with the Communists.

The group of which I am speaking, those who can be called Christian Democrats, were of a classical liberal stripe, and not tied to the social doctrine of the Church which was feudal-socialist and anti-capitalist, or however you wish to characterize it. This group was close to, say, the views of Lord Acton. Thus they were not very popular with the clergy, because they were modern, Western-oriented, and, of course, firmly opposed to anti-semitism. In all of Eastern Europe, there was always the "Jewish question," and the clergy before the war – of course the war changed all this – was for the most part anti-semitic. But no one of importance from this movement survives today.

And whereas I – a Protestant – have discovered that I am not the only one who sympathizes with this tradition in Hungarian politics, others, for example, from the Lutheran tradition, who are sympathetic, are not very active in dissident politics.

Let me start at the beginning perhaps, after this description of the Christian Democrats of the thirties and forties and their role in Hungarian politics as the principle opposition to the Communists. In this tradition, what political ideas are you offering in today's situation that distinguish your program from others in the Hungarian opposition.

Tamás: Well, as you might gather from what I have been speaking about, what differentiates me from people here today is that my brand of conservatism is a Western one. I am not a nationalist, and I am not a populist. I am most emphatically a *zapadnik* and not a *narodnik*.* This is quite a rare combination.

But, not necessarily in Hungary, as you described above. Yet the Populists here would have nothing to do with a Christian Democratic movement as you have described it.

Tamás: Nothing at all. After all, the Populists were and still are a movement on the left, though, of course, they are strongly nationalistic. In the thirties and forties, it was unclear whether they would go to the extreme right or the extreme left, opposed as they were to Parliamentarism, a market economy, and capital. They wanted an authoritarian state in the service of the poor. Some of them became fascists, some of them became communists. And it is not an accident that Populism was the only current of ideas tolerated by the Communist regime even during the Stalinist period, and it survives because of the continuity of its links with the past.

In the opposition map we are drawing then, where do you fit in?

Tamás: Well, I should be with the *Demokrata* group and I agree with their principles, but I prefer to publish in *Beszélő*, even though I quarrel with them. But let me answer your question differently. Dissidents in Hungary – the "hard core," as our Party people call them – are largely former Marxists and perhaps can be called liberals in the Western democracies – something between socialists and liberals. One or two figures are different.

In this context, what am I offering? What I propose is fairly critical and negative on the one side, because I argue that we should break with the famous "third way," which is still very popular. This third way comes from the tradition of István Bibó, a great thinker of Hungarian democracy, who thought there was a third way for Eastern Europe. I don't think this is true. We can either revive our traditional spiritual and political connection with the West, or stay in the East. And the first choice of course means reviving our Christian tradition in which we lived for a thousand years. But in the history of

** Tamás is referring to the debate between Russian intellectuals in the 19th century, who were divided between those who favored Western culture, the "zapadniki," and those who believed in the superiority of Russian or national culture, the "narodniki."*

Hungary, there was always a second influence, from the East of course, and for every Hungarian there was always a choice between the East and the West. Well, I am choosing the West.

I have no illusions about the reformability of the system, and that is the main difference I hold with the *Beszélő* circle.

If people don't have to suffer for their views but nevertheless still have no real influence over what happens, the longer such a situation continues the greater the difference develops between words and deeds. We cannot develop a normal political life for the future on such a basis.

I prefer a reformed communism to an unreformed one. It is better, of course, that I am not in jail and my friends are not in jail, and that we can travel. This is important and all to the good. But in the end, this won't help us, and not only in the pragmatic sense.

I don't agree either with the complacency of most Western observers, especially now with the advent of Gorbachev, who would confine us within the limits of a mildly reformed communist system, where the power still lies with the Party, but where some other people can also shout a bit. Well, I don't think this is a morally acceptable situation, it even saps our morality. If people don't have to suffer for their views but nevertheless still have no real influence over what happens, the longer such a situation continues the greater the difference develops between words and deeds. We cannot develop a normal political life for the future on such a basis. "Gorbachevism" has its dangers and is creating a new sort of monstrous lie, the creation of an illusion of freedom, where people are really able to speak out. The degrees are different, of course, and in Hungary people can speak out quite a lot. But if people are speaking in one way, yet in their professional life are compelled to act otherwise, this will create a terrible political hypocrisy in our life. And the beginnings of this are already evident in Hungary.

In what form?

Tamás: Look at what happened at the Democratic Forum last Sunday on the minorities question. [The Democratic Forum is organized by intellectuals associated with the Populist movement, open to all the opposition, and tolerated by the authorities, see Introduction p. 1]. There are all these people who were shouting there. Do you think the people who spoke would give their texts for publication in *samizdat*? Never. They know that they can say things orally and they confine themselves only to what is permitted. So, in words they are radical, criticizing the authorities, but otherwise they confine themselves to the prescriptions of the Party. Only my paper will be published.

My friend János Kis summed it up: "They all say we want the Russians out and we don't like the system, but if you ask them to sign a petition for some poor guy arrested somewhere they refuse, saying that they will be fired from their job." This, of course, is profoundly immoral.

But is this typical of the Hungarian opposition? Or are you saying that this is somehow similar to Beszélő*'s "Social Contract," which states the desire for a multi-party democracy but accepts, for the time being, the leading role of the Party?*

Tamás: Yes, and I criticized this very harshly in *Hírmondo*. I did so with the utmost respect for János Kis and *Beszélő*, which is an excellent journal. And in one point they are right. The "Social Contract" says it is immoral to voice demands that we don't expect to be realized and that we don't have the power to force upon the Party. With this I agree, and I have the utmost contempt for those who have radical programs but no actions to back them up. Nevertheless, I won't infer the same things from this point of view. I likened the *Beszélő* program with the 17th century movement in England to limit the prerogatives of the Crown. In paraphrasing Engels, I said that socialism develops from utopia into monarchy.

They make the same analogy.

Tamás: Well, yes, it became quite popular after my critique was published. But, the idea is internally flawed because one must look at the nature of absolute power – its nature remains the same even if it is weak. Here is the main political mistake and where my main differences stem from. They really think that the weakening of the dictatorial nature of the Party has changed the nature of the Party, but it hasn't and it cannot change it. Because the Party will go very far in making concessions, but it will never be prepared to give legal safeguards for the limitations of its power. This goes against the very nature of the communist party system. The *Beszélő* program states that the Party, being in a weakened state, will allow civil society

Because the Party will go very far in making concessions but it will never be prepared to give legal safeguards for the limitation of its powers.

to become a counter power. Well, we have seen in Poland that even the weakest communist party won't do that. Even if the communists want to they cannot, because of the nature of their power. Either they have absolute power or they will lose power.

Now, of course, this makes me rather the pessimist. Why has the *Beszélő* circle proposed such a program? Because in the end they want to propose something realizable, along the lines

of Michnik's *What do we want and what is it possible to get?* This is a noble idea but he wasn't proved right and the idea of the "self-limiting revolution" was defeated, which is the supreme proof in politics. I can understand that such ideas are repeated, and also that people say Hungary is different and the Party is a bit more rational. This is true; the rational and intellectual quality of our Party leaders is better than that of the Gierek and Kania types [Polish Communist Party First Secretaries, the first serving from 1970 to 1980, the second from 1980 to 1981], but so what if they are a sight better than other communists? This is very little.

The authors of the *Beszélő* program are not unintelligent. Quite the opposite. They realize that their program is only a blueprint for action, and the authors don't think that even their program is realizable, but rather forms the basis for realistic action. But if this program is not realizable either, if a law limiting the Party's prerogatives is also a dream, why not dream big? If it comes to dreams and aspirations, why not speak our minds freely? Practically, I agree that people are not radical enough and are not prepared to make sacrifices at this time, and we can only really make small steps. As I said earlier it is wrong to create such a disparity between words and deeds. But why not confess our real dreams, which are that we want Hungary to be a free country, an independent country, a Parliamentary democracy, to be part again of the Western community of nations. This is what we would like to see. Perhaps we won't ever see it. But this is our dream, and it is very important to say frankly what our dreams and aims really are, this could have a real political impact.

And you are proposing this in Beszélő?

Tamás: Yes, but my next article in *Beszélő* – which is perhaps related to our discussion – is called "Farewell to the Left," in which I speak of my disillusionment with the human rights idea, of which I was never an enthusiastic supporter. To a certain extent, I do believe in human rights as an extension of the principle of natural rights. But my point in the article is that we should think about – and we should not decline to think about – two things that are neglected in dissident politics by the restrictions imposed by the human rights idea everywhere except Poland. Those two important things are power and tradition.

We must begin to think in terms of legitimate power, which in the era of Hooker, Hobbes, and Spinoza was the main idea of the science of politics, and is still relevant today. We must redefine what we would regard as legitimate political power. Everyone is thinking nowadays that we want to limit power, that we want to take away from the power of the state as much as possible and give it back to humankind, or the nation, or whatever. That's all right, but everyone will acknowledge that, given human nature, some power will remain in someone's hands. But what are we prepared to acknowledge as legitimate power? What can be its source? It can be simply contractual, in the sense of Rousseau, or it can be something different.

And herein lies the question of tradition, which I regard as an important source of temporal power. In short, temporal power cannot be legitimate if morality does not endow it with a sacred or, if you prefer, godly basis. Not considering these matters has made our thinking very dry, barren, and querulous. Because what is the human rights politics of the dissidents in Eastern Europe? It is protesting, protesting, protesting all the time. It is a defensive politics and has nothing constructive in it. It is a morally necessary politics and I think we must continue to act in this manner. But it is not enough.

In your view, is legitimate power found in democracy or in some other system of government?

Tamás: I wouldn't say in democracy as such. Democracy is not a prerequisite for legitimate power, it is the result of legitimate power. In this, I am a liberal in the 19th century tradition. Majority rule is not in itself a source of legitimate power; it is a necessary evil. I would like a political system where the right decisions are taken, and there are no guarantees for such decisions where the majority rules. What makes us accept majority rule and what has been the cause of democracy? It is the simple idea of the imperfection of human nature. We don't trust rulers with their unchecked power, because human beings are fallible. We want checks and balances because of our scepticism about human nature. Blind faith in democracy falsifies its true origins, and we can't be true democrats if we think of democracy as a holy thing in itself. On the contrary. It is an unholy thing and a result of our belief that men are not always capable of wise judgment, and thus are required to avoid the concentration of power in one man.

So, I also don't believe in the democracy advocated by my friend György Konrád, who thinks that if people are left alone they will be perfect, genial, artistic, inventive, and will always tell good jokes and people will have cafés, workshops, and clubs, and they can forget about the big things like the state and everything becomes lovely. I don't believe in those things. There will always be power.

If it comes to dreams and aspirations, why not speak our minds freely?

Thus we must reflect on these matters more thoroughly. And this is where the questions of tradition and our essential heritage become important. Hungary has a great many political traditions, which makes it more difficult. For what is tradition if you can choose among different traditions? Tradition, by its nature, is not something that you acquire by choice. It is bequeathed as heritage. But because of the peculiarity of our

history, people have become conscious of the fact that Hungary has different heritages.

In a way, I am again at the beginning. It is urgent, however, that we have debates about fundamental issues. For two reasons: first, we have plenty of time to do so. There won't be such sweeping political changes that we will have our hands full of immediate practical political issues. We won't have our hands full with practical work because we won't be allowed to. So we have all the time in the world to deal with fundamental issues. The second reason is that without clarifying fundamental issues we won't be able to act effectively. We will strike dishonest alliances and make haphazard compromises. This is precisely what we don't need and what has destroyed us in the past. Why repeat the same ancient mistakes? You seem skeptical.

I am not expressing skepticism about your views, which reflect your philosophical training. But, in what you say, I am skeptical that the opposition in Hungary is willing to have a debate over these fundamental issues. Is this the time for such debates or is it better to coalesce around goals that everyone agrees to?

Tamás: Well, you are right, but there is some agreement that debate is needed and *Beszélő* has agreed to pursue it. For instance, they will discuss the paper I presented at the Democratic Forum on the minorities, which caused quite a strange impact.

I said some very tough things. I don't mean about Ceaucescu. Who in Hungary is not saying tough things about Ceaucescu? You know that I am a Transylvanian myself. So, what I said is that I want a redress of the wrongs against Hungarians in Transylvania, and I want the abuses of Hungarians to end, and that their rights not be trampled. This was *de rigeur*. But I asked the question whether I am sincere in all this. What is the dream behind my political actions on this issue? What is it that I would really like to see? What I would like is if my native town of Kolosvár [Kluj in Romanian], with the same old houses around the grand market place, were again populated with the same middle-class Hungarians who were there during my childhood; and I would like to teach at the Hungarian University of Kolosvár, and after classes to meet my friend György as he leaves his office at a Hungarian scholarly review. This is my dream.

In short, temporal power cannot be legitimate, if morality does not endow it with a sacred or, if you prefer, godly basis.

Do I have a human right to dream this? Of course not. Human rights won't tell you what a political will contains. If you stick to these abstract moral and legal considerations you will never be able to give content to the politics you are making. Let us face the fact that countries were born and they disappear. In history there are winners and losers. And let us admit that we want our people to win. I said emphatically that he who doesn't want his own nation to win in the contest of nations shouldn't occupy himself with politics. And I don't think there is anything immoral in this. And I don't want to inflict any injustices on Romanians or whomever, but of course I would like Hungarians in Transylvania to regain the social position that is now lost to them.

In the name of what do I demand all this? On the basis of tradition, simply. And I don't think I need to argue further. Any further argument is unnecessary if you accept the traditional basis for political demands. What one needs is the political will to implement it.

Someone asked me afterwards whether I thought that the Jews in Budapest, discovering that nowadays there are no Jews living in the neighborhood where I live, which used to be the location of the Jewish quarter and where all the Jews were killed, should feel not only revulsion that everyone was killed who lived there but also desire to live in this very same neighborhood again. My response is "Why not?" Why shouldn't groups want advantages for themselves if those advantages are fought for in a fair, straightforward and honest way. Why not? There is nothing immoral about it. Not to recognize the importance of symbols, places and groups is blindness and I don't like the doctrinaireness of dissidents everywhere when they say that all they want is strictly within the confines of human rights. It's simply not true. Nobody does. People aren't like that and don't act on that basis and it is wrong to ask them to base their actions simply on demands for human rights. I have a moral interest in recognizing the rich, living, complex and complicated fabric of historical tradition, and to discover the thread of what is fair and what is not. That's when politics becomes interesting.□

"IT IS NOT HOPELESS IF YOU DEMAND"

THE HUNGARIAN DILEMMA

An Interview with Miklós Haraszti

Miklós Haraszti is a prominent activist in the Hungarian opposition. He considers himself part of what he calls the "outcast opposition," as opposed to the so-called "loyal opposition" that works within state or Party organizations. He is the author of Workers in a Workers State, *an account of his experiences in a Hungarian factory after being expelled from university. Most recently, he wrote* The Velvet Prison, *published by Basic Books, which is a third-person account of the artist and intellectual in Hungary. The "velvet prison" is the self-imposed state of artists and intellectuals who accept state patronage and refrain, in their work, from going outside the state's limitations.*

Mr. Haraszti is co-editor of Beszélő, *the best-known of Hungary's independent publications, which in the years since the writing of* The Velvet Prison *has arisen as an alternative for intellectuals wishing to, in his words, "reinvent journalism" and avoid the constrictions of state patronage. He also writes for other independent publications and the Western press. He spoke with* Uncaptive Minds *during a recent visit to the United States.*

Uncaptive Minds: I was struck by your description in The Velvet Prison *of the methods by which the much-touted Hungarian model of socialism continues to exercise control over society, through the adoption of more subtle methods, which can be just as effective as the old ones. As a result you still call Hungary a "totalitarian socialist state."*

Miklós Haraszti: I have to tell you that the word "totalitarian" was not in the Hungarian text. I didn't use the term to describe the post-Stalinist regime. But, I think the discussion of whether Hungary is totalitarian or not is irrelevant. It is still distinctively communist, it is a directed culture, it is directed in the very communist sense. Here the decisive question is not how free an author may be to go outside a previously imposed censor's decision, but the direction of positive aesthetics, a positive message for the readers. This is distinctively communist, even totalitarian if you wish, for even if writers don't stick to the prescriptions [set by the state], they avoid the taboos, that which is not permitted. The distinctively post-Stalinist advantage is that there are fewer prescriptions, but the taboos remain. There is not, however, any means for writers to smuggle in their own, new, positive messages. The only consensus that can exist is around the post-Stalinist message, a new positive and common message.

By positive you mean. . .?

Haraszti: It is a characteristic message of communist dictatorships. It may not be so openly mobilizing as before, but the positive message is still centered around the concept of the common good, which is found in unity. Here, the writers, the artists, and the intellectuals who are allowed to speak publicly are still thought of as tutors of the nation, and tutors of that common good. They try to keep to this postulate; they don't want to lose their status as tutors.

Let's not call this system totalitarian if by this you mean that the state dictates in all areas of life. In this sense, we are in a post-totalitarian state. It is not post-communist in that actors in public life are still driven by the internalized ideology of the post-Stalinist state; and this can only come from a totalitarian past, which means that post-totalitarian states are reversible, and may go back to that past. In Third World dictatorships, the society is oppressed, but under the surface it is able to hold on to its own values. There is a very strong imposed will from above, but it is limited. Poland is an exception to this model of post-totalitarian states.

Then, you agree with those who say that communist ideology is dead, but that there is still a new, serviceable ideology.

Haraszti: *The Velvet Prison* was finished in 1981, at the moment when the dissolution of East European communism began. What you say is true for communist regimes that are in this "post-totalitarian," post-Stalinist phase I describe; the problem in Eastern Europe, and East-Central Europe, is that the regimes are not fully consolidated; they are in crisis. The Soviet Union or China might face a consolidated future, and the velvet prison would be a good description of their culture to come. A consolidated post-Stalinist communist regime means com-

munism not upheld merely by terror: it is already a civilization, in a sense the final and original aim of the founders of communism. From the point of view of a post-totalitarian and consolidated communist regime, Stalinism is anomalous. The very moment that officialdom begins to criticize the past because unnecessary terror was used, the post-totalitarian phase begins, and enlightened communist rule, if it is to be well consolidated, can become much more durable and long-lasting, and can see itself as the normal pattern for the communist world.

Do you see in Gorbachev's glasnost *and* perestroika *a move towards a more open and democratic Soviet Union, or rather a new consolidated, and as you say "enlightened" communist dictatorship?*

Haraszti: In absolute terms, it would obviously be a more open system, because its digestive powers are greater as well. The Soviets can accept more things from the West, can import more things from the West, because the system has become more elastic. The new rulers say, "Let us become a civilization." You know, a civilization is something that can reproduce itself. Stalinism can not reproduce itself, it must force itself on society all the time. To become a civilization requires that the rulers exercise more openness and regulate themselves, and no longer exercise terror against themselves. The ruling class in communism has a very exact way of measuring what is good and what is not. It is good when terror is no longer exercised on themselves. That is what post-Stalinism is offering.

... new generations have arisen for whom the decades of Kadarism means culture of lies and restrictions. This new generation does not compare Hungary with periods of Stalinism and terror.

In that sense, it is communism, and very much so. It seems liberal when compared with what came before. But the problem for the ruling class is how to prevent the landslide when you give up terror, because it seemed that communism could be upheld only by terror. But this was shown not to be an insurmountable problem in the case of Hungary, where society learned the lesson that central power is unbeatable and thus provided the disciplinary force which in the Soviet Union and China is provided by the very size of their empires, by the enormous power of their central structures. Poland is an exception of course, partly because of the unsuccessful efforts to Stalinize parts of Polish life, particularly agriculture and the Church, and therefore a large part of Polish society. In addition, the Poles never accepted total defeat in the way that the Russians, the Hungarians, the Chinese, and other beaten peoples have.

The Velvet Prison *describes artists under socialism and how "enlightened" communism is able to use the artist and the intellectual simply by paying him, by nationalizing intellectual life and forcing the artist into the pay of the state. Is this true of society as a whole over the last twenty years, given the economic ventures that Hungarian socialism has undertaken? Is it true of workers, of the entrepreneurs that have been able to start up?*

Haraszti: I don't think the intelligentsia was simply bought. That is only half of the "velvet prison." What I also stress is that this intelligentsia has a positive ethos of service, of serving the common good that is embodied in the state.

But this is not the case with the people, and the concept of the people is still a very important notion in all socialist countries, because the ruling class has been taught that they are shaping the people under them. If the people are not banging down the doors, and are quiet, it is the double effect of having been beaten down and bought. Not the latter alone. Both effects are needed in order to integrate people successfully and keep them quiet. But ordinary people have none of the ideological illusions that the post-Stalinist intellectual has.

But to answer your question, the level of economic reforms has never exceeded a limit of what I call "reforms to avoid reforms." The level of privatization was very carefully designed to keep the balance of family income and to avoid the development of a real, entrepreneurial middle class. And certainly it was designed to prevent significant private undertakings and the development of capital in the capitalist sense, where one is responsible for what one has and not just for what one gains. First of all, there are no private companies above a certain, low capital level. Here capitalism is horizontal and not vertical. Secondly, the independence of Hungarian companies is limited to designing products and, to a certain degree, setting prices. But they are not allowed to go bankrupt, nor can they sell the company to others, or buy other companies. There is no free flow of capital; they can not think of themselves as being private, or of possessing private property. Such reform would mean real structural change, the first irreversible blow to the rights and powers of the Party, because it would mean that the Party is fully irrelevant to the functioning of the economy.

Is that true of the new reforms introduced by the government, which many consider to go beyond anything before tried in a socialist country, such as introducing bankruptcy proceedings and establishing a stock market?

Haraszti: The government has not promised to undertake the real reform needed, which is continuously proposed by reform economists. Prime Minister Grosz's maximum position is to approach the radical reform proposals in a very gradual way, and there is no timetable. The bankruptcy law is not a real bankruptcy law: it allows for going out of business, but you do not have to go out of business if you are bankrupt. It is still a government decision, at the discretion of the state.

So, if a project is losing money, such as the Gabčikovo-Nagymaros dam being built in order to export hydroelectric power to Austria and Czechoslovakia, it doesn't apply?

Haraszti: Not at all. The economy is still very much directed by the state. And starting with the introduction of the new mechanisms of 1968, which have been criticized severely by the reform economists, the bargaining over plans has been replaced by bargaining over prices and tax exemptions, thus keeping the economy firmly under control.

In this general situation, what is the prospect for the opposition in Hungary, of the development of independent culture and organizations? Could you describe the opposition's present situation?

Haraszti: It has been changing quite rapidly over the last year. This is because Kadarism has entered a crisis stage.

That is, the so-called "social contract" that provides for the people's needs if the people won't oppose the government.

Haraszti: The crisis involves the whole way in which Kadarism has worked. This is not only because of the economic bankruptcy of the country. And it is not only because the relative liberty observed in Hungary has been overtaken by other countries in Eastern Europe, particularly Poland — that is, Hungary is no longer the centerpiece of socialist liberalism. But it is also because new generations have arisen for whom the decades of Kadarism mean a culture of lies and restrictions. This new generation does not compare Hungary with periods of Stalinism and terror.

Hungarian workers viewed Solidarność with great interest but also with great pessimism.

There is a revival of society, not in the Polish sense, but in an interesting and new way, even compared with Poland. Different layers of society are beginning to get together and demand their own rights and this is a positive development. They are the product of the opposition that preceded them. If there had been no *samizdat*, which was isolated for years, we would not see the current greening of associations and clubs in Hungary. Also, there is an emerging independent press and publishing. There is also a median state between officialdom and opposition, where clubs and associations within various contexts are freely publishing newspapers and journals and have some sort of official sanctioning.

On the one hand, this makes the old opposition obsolete. On the other, we are even more important. The old opposition is still the gathering point of all views that are not tolerated and cannot be expressed. And we are also the center for devising programs for action. Previously, there was the monitoring of human rights and independent thinking and language; now we are the gathering point for proposing new strategies. And this is the central area in the crisis of Kadarism, which has meant the absence of programmatic thinking, the absence of any other future than Kadarism.

As new political groups emerge, there is a shadow pluralism developing. The *samizdat*, or democratic opposition as they call it, is no longer the only source of independent political thinking in the country.

There is a new opposition then, midway between the state and the "outcast opposition," as you have described it? Are there groups that exist within state institutions yet act independently?

Haraszti: It is a different third way. I am speaking of the Greens, and the Populists, who formed a coalition at a recent meeting. They are trying to find a distinct way between the state and the "outcast" opposition.

The Populist opposition, as I understand it, considers itself a nationalist grouping, that endeavors to defend Hungarian national interests within the current setting, for example by defending the Hungarian minority in Romania. And in this they will sometimes make common cause with the Government.

Haraszti: That is right. Their basic concern is the national minority question outside Hungary. It is the germ of a nationalist party, but not in the right-wing sense of the word. The basic difference with the "outcast opposition" is that the Populists would like to maintain a legal status and act in the light of that necessity, even as they seek to maintain their independent status. This comes from their political philosophy of national survival as the prime motivation for action. Any government that is ready to pursue some national aims — and a reforming communist regimes have been observed to do just this — is better for the national survival of Hungary. There has been a political continuity since the thirties. They are in a quasi-coalition with the opposition and a quasi-coalition with reformers in the government.

As a member of the "outcast opposition," what do you see as the developing groups today?

Haraszti: Within the "outcast opposition," there is now a flowering of views. Previously, human rights was the central unifying theme. Now, there are different philosophies expressed. *Beszélő* is what may be considered a left-liberal grouping, others are more conservative. But you won't yet find distinct groups. The opposition is still organized around different ventures, and publications.

How many journals and publications are there?

Haraszti: There are four main, political journals and a number of artistic, non-political journals. Of course, by being printed in *samizdat* they are ipso facto political, but there is no political focus. There are a number of Green journals, literary journals. And the most promising thing is that there may be more journals that I don't know about. Also, there are a number of student publications that have started recently. These are semi-official, and have recieved the stamp of approval, but they would cease publishing the moment censorship is applied.

I know of Beszélő *and* Demokrata*; what are some of the other titles?*

Haraszti: There is the Vox Humana group, young radicals, who publish *Égtájak Között.* There is *Hírmondo*, the journal of the AB publishing house. *Hírmondo* is nearer to the ideal of a news magazine.

What is the volume of these publications?

Haraszti: *Beszélő* has a print-run of two thousand copies, the others less. One can extrapolate five times that number of readers. They are circulated mostly among intellectuals, and less so among the workers. There is no journal for workers, and won't be until there is a change in the attitude of the working class. Under Kadarism, the workers refrain from politics, although they don't accept the politics of Kádár. There are always exceptions, and there are workers among our readers. But, compared to Poland, we are still in the pre-1976 phase.

So, Solidarity's experience has been irrelevant to Hungarian workers.

Haraszti: Hungarian workers viewed Solidarność with great interest but also with great pessimism. Their view, at the very moment the strike wave began in August '80, was that such an endeavor was a lost cause, and that Poles had not learned the lesson that Hungarians had. They thought that their pessimism was confirmed by Jaruzelski's *coup d'état* which reinforced the '56 mentality among Hungarian workers.

The problem of Hungary, of Hungarian political psychology, is that people are schizophrenic. They know exactly what's wrong but they don't dare to hope that it makes sense to demand anything.

What we see now is total schizophrenia, not only among workers but among all strata of Hungarian society. On the one hand, all the premises and concepts of Kadarism have collapsed. People speak very freely and openly about their feelings toward Kádár. They oppose the system. They hate the system, and they know what should and needs to be done. They know what the government fails to do, and they see how hypocritical the government is. But these attitudes have not been translated into public activism. With a few exceptions that I have mentioned. It will be interesting to see how this will go.

Let me ask you about Beszélő*, then, and how it hopes things will go. Its program, put out recently, reads to an outsider as part of this political uncertainty you describe; it almost sounds as if it represented a Party faction. For example, it premises its program and demands on the acceptance and recognition of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party and its leading role in Hungary, and that its executive prerogatives are supreme. [see page for the text of the Introduction to* Beszélő*'s Social Contract]. In that framework,* Beszélő *puts out a reform program to press the government.*

Haraszti: This is not an accurate reading of the text. The program itself is not designed for the government. It is designed for people who ask, "Is there anything we can demand?" The problem of Hungary, of Hungarian political psychology, is that people are schizophrenic. They know exactly what's wrong, but they don't dare to hope that it makes sense to demand anything. They are afraid of the government cracking down on society. And they also are afraid of themselves. They are afraid of succeeding to such a point where the Hungarian tragedy will be repeated. That is how the defeat of '56 manifested itself in the people.

We are attempting to reach those people by saying it is possible to make demands, to voice needs short of overthrowing the party-state. That it is possible to demand guarantees in social and political life. And it is on this premise that the program is based. What is possible is the exacting of guarantees, of the rule of law, in which the Party maintains its prerogatives but only where specified.

In this sense, we are at the stage of 1976 in Poland, and adopting the strategy of KOR [Workers' Defense Committee].

But KOR evolved through a strategy of creating institutions, a realm of social life, clandestinely organized, outside of the state, not of accepting the system in order to work within it. Here, by recognizing the leading role of the Party – which, by the way, was an issue of great conflict when the Polish Supreme Court registered Solidarity – the opposition appears to be loosing its identity as an opposition.

Haraszti: You are right in a sense about KOR and the concept of "new evolutionism." But it is an abstract distinction around which to organize or mobilize people; to work outside the system or make demands on the system is not that significant a debate then. *Beszélő's* program is not limiting, but expansive. It seeks a means of voicing demands: to say to the government that things cannot go on this way and that it is necessary to establish guarantees for social and political life, that is, to estab-

lish a constitutional party dictatorship to move from absolute monarchy, so to speak, to limited constitutionalism. In this, it may even be necessary to reach out to help the liberal, reform wing of the Party, in this way expanding the realm of guarantees.

The basic problem is that a strong society does not diminish the power of a strong party-state, as we witnessed in December '81. The situation created by Yalta has not changed as a result of Solidarność, nor of '56. We saw what happened with

... build an independent society, but take care to conquer every inch of legal and political life that it is possible to conquer.

the forces arrayed in Poland, with the party-state on one side and the strongly organized society on the other. This confrontational course led to '81, when the reality of state power became clear. It is impossible to conceive of a situation within the present limitations of Yalta where the party-state would cede its overall prerogatives.

Our strategy is not only to organize a strong society, but to whittle away, bit by bit, the strength of the party-state by demanding freedoms and requiring that those newly won freedoms be incorporated into the law, at least partially.

That is, demand exactly what you state is confrontational, that the Communist Party willingly cede its powers to such an extent....

Haraszti: Not willingly. The Party will never willingly give up power. Instead, we are proposing that the Party cede partial freedoms. And this is done through organizing a strong society. But let me be clear, we do not give up the goal of final freedom – we expressly state this in the program. The aim here is not to force the ultimate goal but to renounce "the velvet prison," where intellectuals say "I will be free by remaining silent." We are saying the opposite: to be free is to voice demands, to pressure the authorities.

But here, isn't the danger exactly what you describe in the Velvet Prison, *of falling into the trap set by the leadership of enlightened communism? The barbed wire may be extended to new boundaries, but you are still surrounded by barbed wire.*

Haraszti: The two are different. The inhabitants of the "velvet prison" do not have in their minds the idea of making demands, while those who accept the "social contract" do have that in their heart. Both realms here – the velvet prison and the social contract – recognize that it is not possible to change the system in the final sense; this is the product of Yalta. The big difference is that the second realm has as its goal to demand freedoms. Demanding partial freedom is not treason; it is treachery if the compromise is not clearly between equal partners.

The basic concept of the "new evolutionism" is that society make demands by organizing itself. The abstract question of organizing outside the system does not survive over time if that strongly organized society does not enter the legal system of the state.

You posed the analogy before of the absolute monarchy evolving into constitutional monarchy. Is that really applicable?

Haraszti: Yes, perhaps France is a good example. Actually England is a better paradigm.

But in England a violent revolution was needed to reach this stage.

Haraszti: And then the Restoration, and after that a growing social contract. It is a classic example. Even with four hundred years difference, it is very much applicable to what we have experienced in Eastern Europe.

Finally, let me turn to the differences of approach in the Hungarian opposition. For example, Demokrata *would not accept the necessity of recognizing the final prerogatives of the party.*

Haraszti: *Demokrata* has not put forth a program as such. I don't think there are significant differences in political outlook. But what we stressed is that there is a space in which one can move politically, even if you think – correctly – that the party-state cannot cede its final power at this stage in history. But *Demokrata* in its programmatic writings stressed the fundamental values of democracy. If you wish, it was nearer to the original view of new evolutionism, of building an independent society. Our program proposes that it is not enough to build a strong society; this is a prerequisite, and one must pursue all independent activities possible. But what we suggest is to do something more: build an independent society, but take care to conquer every inch of legal and political life that it is possible to conquer. Don't give up the concept of conquering such ground because you think it is, in that final sense of power, hopeless. It is not hopeless if you demand. □

INCONNU

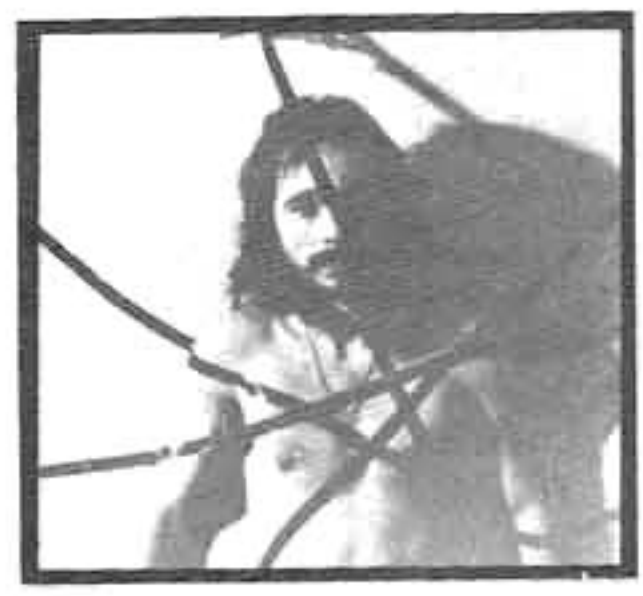
The Fighting Artists

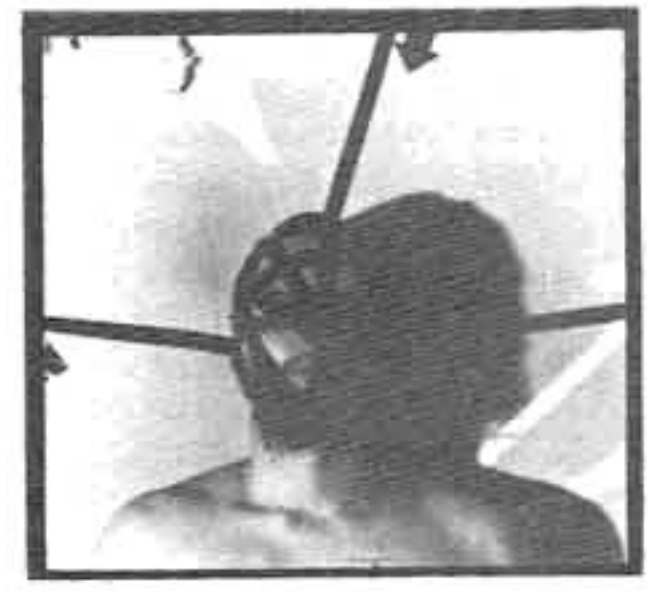
In the early 1980s, a group of young artists from different parts of Hungary decided to form Inconnu as a means of pursuing their avant-garde and political art without restrictions. While much of their early work could have been exhibited openly in galleries, they chose not to do so because they did not wish to have any level of control exercised over their work by the authorities (galleries are generally supervised by official institutions).

They quickly gained notoriety for their experimentation with body art – more specifically, for their use of red body paint to satirize the regime and the Communist Party. Inconnu's work is characterized by the use of traditional and non-traditional materials, and has steadily grown more political, yet retains a sense of humor. One of their most recent works shows the Mona Lisa in the uniform of the Hungarian police; another is a postcard for the rehabilitation of Imre Nagy, with the address of the former Prime Minister printed on the front; yet another represents a brain enmeshed in a red web.

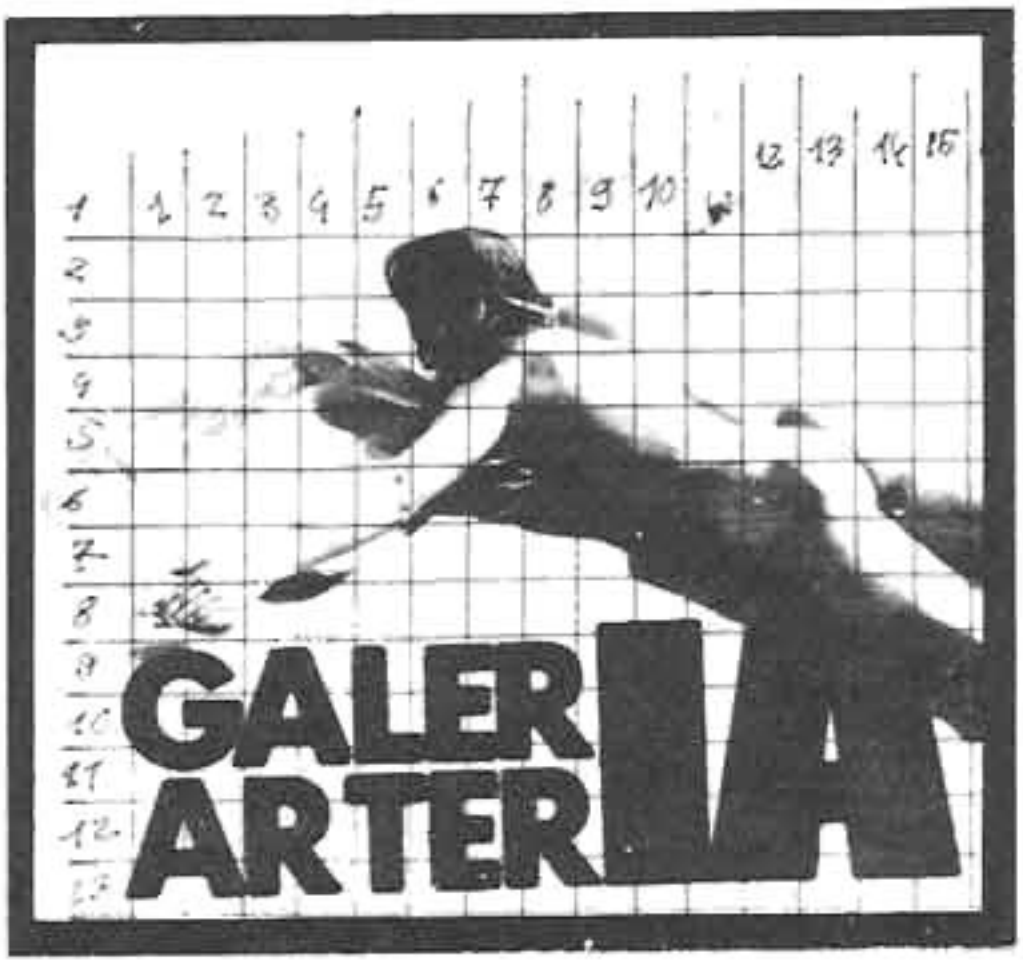
Inconnu's members do not live off their art and any profits from sales go toward various independent ventures.

Inconnu is often the target of official "displeasure" and police harassment. On August 14, 1986 Inconnu announced – both in Western and samizdat *publications – a competition in the fine arts with the theme of "The Fighting City." The exhibition and auction which followed were meant to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution. However, on January 28, 1987 the police confiscated all 39 exhibits – other entries had been "lost" en route from the United States and Canada. The artists decided to open the exhibition anyway and displayed the police receipts on the walls of the apartment. Several members were tried by a petty offenses court for "illegally raising money" – a "crime" they could not have committed since the planned auction never took*





place – as well as for "infringement of art regulations." They were fined five thousand forints each. Inconnu members continue to display their work in private apartments and elsewhere, and also serve as graphic artists for underground publications



and books. Last December they were able to travel to London, where an exhibition of their work was held (their passports were later confiscated); the exhibition is now being held in Stuttgart. Inconnu publishes a journal of their work, Retrospect, *and hopes to produce videos on a regular basis.*

Inconnu is not a political group, but it does have a political line: "militant civil disobedience." As a member artist explains: "We wanted to provoke both the authorities, who suppress the creative spirit, and also the bourgeois sentiments of the opposition. Our aim is to move them both, first through provocative art, and then through political art." Another said "We are not the victims, but the provokers; we don't ask to be accepted." □

Inconnu members, from left to right: Tibor Philipp, Tamás Molnár, Péter Bokros and Magdolna Serfózo

CZECHOSLOVAKIA: OUT OF 1968

Since the Soviet invasion in August 1968 put an end to the Prague Spring, Czechoslovakia has been ruled by an orthodox Party leadership, which maintains a highly centralized economy and a rigorous police apparatus that, until recently, has prevented any widespread dissent or opposition to its rule.

However, as the twentieth anniversary of the Soviet invasion approaches, and the fortieth anniversary of the communist takeover of February 1948 passes, a more visible opposition has emerged in Czechoslovakia, building on the foundation of the eleven-year long struggle of Charter 77 and VONS. The West is familiar with Charter 77, formed after the signing of the Helsinki Accords to demand compliance with the treaty's human rights provisions; VONS, or the Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Persecuted, is a companion organization that provides legal and financial assistance to political prisoners and others arrested and sentenced on fraudulent grounds.

On December 10, 1987, several thousand people demonstrated on International Human Rights Day in Prague, the first large protest demonstration since 1969. The demonstration was organized by word of mouth, since the Czechoslovakian security apparatus makes the distribution of large numbers of leaflets extremely difficult. Yet, participants came from all over the country. (See p. 23 for a description of the event and the efforts of the police to suppress it.)

Charter 77 — despite its now over 1,300 signatories — has been a relatively isolated social force because of the unremitting repression its members have suffered at the hands of the authorities. But there are signs that it is emerging from this enforced isolation. For example, one of the Charter's new spokesmen for 1988 (each year three are named), Stanislav Devátý, a worker, was arbitrarily dismissed from his job at the Slušovice enterprise when he was named a new spokesman. Every one of the over 90 workers from his department signed a protest letter demanding his reinstatement — the first such show of solidarity by a group of workers for a Charter 77 member. The police, however, forced nearly all of the workers to withdraw their signatures, and Devátý's dismissal stood. Currently he faces charges for "insulting a police officer."

More significantly, Catholics (and some Protestants) have become vocal in demanding religious freedom. A petition listing 31 demands for the free functioning of the Catholic Church is being distributed and has already been signed by over 400,000 people, not all of whom are Catholic. (See p. 25 for the text of the petition.) The grievances are long-standing. The government has prevented the naming of bishops, has veto power over admission to the one seminary allowed to function, and severely restricts the activities of priests. Though the petition was initiated by lay activists, the 88-year-old Cardinal Tomášek — who for many years did not challenge the government's harsh terms for the Church but who recently has become more vocal — gave the petition his blessing, and thus it was freely distributed after mass. Though legally conducted, the petition's circulation has raised the ire of the Communist authorities; a series of articles in the Party daily Rudé Právo *have charged that secret "clerico-fascist" structures within the Church lay behind the petition, and strongly implies that Cardinal Tomášek has been conspiring with them. In defiance of the government smear campaign, the Cardinal announced a pilgrimage to Prague to honor the Blessed Anežka, initiating a ten-year period of spiritual renewal. On March 6, 1988 nearly 8,000 people came to mass at St. Vitus' Cathedral. A number of Charter 77 activists were detained for 48 hours prior to the pilgrimage, after the organization issued a document in support of the petition, personally presented to the Cardinal on March 3, 1988. (One of the petition's chief initiators, Augustin Navrátil, is a Charter 77 member, and faces charges of "disturbing the peace" and "slandering a public organization.")*

In Czechoslovakia, unlike Poland, there has been no large-scale independent publishing movement. The independent papers, journals and books are more appropriately called by the Russian term samizdat, *literally "self-publishing," material which is typed or even hand-copied. For example,* Informace o Charte, *the monthly publication put out by an independent editorial group of Charter 77 signatories, consists of just 300 copies per edition, hand-typed using carbon paper. However, several new initiatives indicate that this is changing.*

A new monthly, Lidové Noviny *(which borrows its name from a now-defunct liberal journal first published in 1892), was begun in December. Unlike the carbon-copied* Informace o Charte, Lidové Noviny *is actually printed, with an initial circulation of 1,000. Its editors, who in the spirit of the Charter publish their names, want to be registered and to function openly but without censorship; the Czech authorities, interestingly, invited the editor-in-chief, Jiří Ruml, for a meeting, at which they told him they were considering passage of a new law on publications that would allow such registration, and that Mr. Ruml himself should press for the law's passage. Even so, it is unlikely the journal will have a free hand under any new law.*

Some journals are mimeographed, some typed with carbons. Revolver Revue, *a cultural journal for youth of 300 or more pages, is partly photocopied and partly typed, with a much lower circulation. There are also twenty to thirty other journals, published in* samizdat *form, which seek to maintain the rich cultural and intellectual life of Czechoslovakia:* Vokno, *a cultural*

and countercultural journal; O Divadle, *a theater review;* Kritický Sbornik, *a literary quarterly;* Paraf, *a philosophical journal;* Střední Evropa, *a conservative review of central Europe;* Informace o Církví, *a newssheet on the Church and the first Czechoslovak publication to be mimeographed; and several others. Edice Petlice, a publishing house formed in 1973 by the noted Czech writer Ludvik Vaculik (his most recent book in English is* A Cup of Coffee with My Interrogator*), had put out 366 hard-bound editions as of February 1988, in samizdat form, which are distributed in 30-100 copies. Another journal, appearing legally until September 1986, was put out by the Jazz section of the Czech Musician's Union, and promoted independent Czech and Slovak popular culture; its readership was in the tens of thousands. After serving prison sentences on trumped up charges of tax evasion and embezzlement, several of the Section's leaders are seeking to publish legally once again. In the meantime, the vacuum is being admirably filled by the underground publication* Jazzstop. *Young people take an active interest in jazz and rock music, and there is great demand for periodicals in this field (see our second issue for an interview with the editors of* Vokno*).*

As noted above, the Czechoslovak opposition, for the most part united under the aegis of Charter 77, is perhaps the most diverse in Eastern Europe. Members of the Charter range from Eurocommunists to neoconservatives, secular humanists to lay Catholic activists, with various orientations in between. Many members of the Charter fear that in any liberalization, the Charter would split into various political tendencies (in fact several working groups have already arisen along those lines); others would welcome such a development as a sign of maturity, rejecting the idea that this would splinter the movement.

Indeed, there are those from both the left and the right who feel that such diversity often leads to disagreements that prevent the Charter from taking positions or making statements about a variety of issues. For example, no statement was issued concerning the 40th anniversary of the communist takeover, which some feel was a coup, and others a genuine revolution. While agreement on history is often difficult, the diversity of views also relates to the strategy of the opposition: whether to seek reform at the top, or demand change from below.

That an organized opposition exists, however, is a remarkable testimony to the relatively small number of people who persevere under harsh repression. Most opposition activists, at least the younger ones, are stokers (Prague's old apartment buildings are heated by coal), bricklayers, manual laborers, and less frequently, industrial workers (the Czech authorities prefer opposition activists to hold solitary jobs that offer few opportunities for social interaction). Numerous Charter 77 members and many others have been imprisoned and are subject to frequent detentions and house searches. Once released from jail, activists are often forced into a kind of internal exile, with their movements restricted and their residences watched (see the case of Pavel Wonka on p. 29).

Those who persevere under such conditions are determined to struggle for human rights and democracy. The spirit of their resistance is captured in the words of a former spokesman of the Charter: "We are not waiting for Gorbachev. He wants economic reform; but without democracy, even this is impossible. And if he allowed the real truth to be told about the system, it would collapse." □

The December 10 Demonstration for Human Rights

The demonstration on December 10, 1987, United Nations Day for Human Rights, was extradordinary in that, first, the police did not break it up — but rather picked out the more active members of the gathering, and, secondly, that so many people assembled on that day to demonstrate.

As reported earlier, the District National Council for Prague-1 forbade the organizing of a demonstration for the release of political prisoners, which had been properly announced for December 10, 1987 by the citizens initiative of Charter 77, together with VONS. Nevertheless, at 5 P.M., a crowd gathered in the Old Town Square determined to demonstrate in spite of the prohibition. The total number of participants is difficult to establish, as there were also passive onlookers, hundreds of uniformed and plain-clothes policemen, as well as journalists from abroad, diplomats and other foreigners. It is estimated that there were between 1000 to 2500 active participants. The gathering lasted at least two hours; slogans were chanted about liberty, democracy, Charter 77 and for the release of political prisoners.

The demonstrators formed a procession which marched around the monument of Jan Hus for about an hour. The protest was not dispersed by the police and the participants were not notified that the demonstration was prohibited by the Dis-

trict Council. Nevertheless, from the very start, the police violated the rights of free assembly and freedom of movement. Before the demonstration was underway, the police were checking pedestrians in adjoining streets, and detaining so-called undesirable persons according to a prepared list, then taking them to the local police station on Benediktská Street. They pulled down everyone who attempted to step up onto the pedestal of the monument of Jan Hus. They detained a girl who was laying flowers at the monument, as well as two signatories of Charter 77: Luboš Vydra from Prague and Peter Uher from Prievidza who, for a few seconds, unfurled signs with the slogans: "Release the Political Prisoners!" and "United Nations Day of Human Rights." The authorities also filmed the demonstrators from the balconies of the surrounding buildings, and played loud music to drown out any speeches. Towards the conclusion of the demonstration the police took more and more people out of the crowd for identification. They forced some to leave the square and detained others. In the course of the detentions they used undue force: for instance, they hurt Bohumír Hájek's hand. According to incomplete information at least 35 people were detained by the police and held for several hours, including Charter 77 signatories Jiří Gruntorád, Václav Žufan, Jaroslav Ondrák, Luboš Vydra, Peter Uher, Bohumir Hájek, Pavel Blatný, Jiří Kostúr, Vladimír Smečka, Luděk Marks and Jan Lis, as well as fifteen year-old Jakub Plichta, Gustav Skála, Václav Stankovič, Pavel Janský, Martin Cahák, Luboš Svoboda, Jaroslav Kolesa, Martin Bednář from Olomouc — who suffered a blow to the face which aggravated an eye injury for which he had recently undergone surgery, so that he had to be given medical care at the police station — Alois Nedvěd, Martin Vlasák and a private named Hrabě, led away by a military escort.

All of the detained, with the exception of Jiří Gruntorád, were, as far as we know, released before midnight of the same day. During this unlawful detention in the police stations on Benediktská and Bartolomějská Streets, the local and security police did not use violence. What is alarming, however, is the treatment of Jiří Gruntorád, who refused to submit to an illegal body search. The members of the security police searched him forcibly, took away his sign and a piece of paper on which he had recorded the name and service number of the policeman who had previously identified himself to him. Afterwards they left him for two hours in the station on Bartolomějská Street. At 2:30 A.M., two men and one woman, all in white coats, entered the room and ordered Jiří Gruntorád to stand up, and when he did not respond they knocked him down from the bench, stepped on his hands, slapped his face, poked fingers into his eyes and his ears, and choked him until he began to lose consciousness. This torture lasted from 15 to 20 minutes. Afterwards they strapped him to a stretcher and took him by a civilian ambulance to the psychiatric institution on Ke Karlovu Street, where he was placed in a locked ward. One of the men signed his name in the records of the institution as Dr. Šefrna. At 9:30 A.M. Jiří Gruntorád was released from the psychiatric institution. It should be noted that Jiří Gruntorád has never been under psychiatric care; the only reason for his transfer to the institution was his passive resistance to the unlawful and forcible body search. On December 12, 1987 he submitted a complaint to the District Prosecutor's Office for Prague 1.

Equally unlawful was the conduct of the security police against speakers and signatories of Charter 77, who were under strict police surveillance for the whole of December 10, some since the previous evening. They were forbidden to leave their homes or places of work; some were detained at police stations without cause, others were summoned for interrogation. Treated in this way were: Libuše Šilhánová, Josef Vohryzek, Václav Havel, Ladislav Lis, Anna Šabatová, Jan Ruml, Jiří Ruml, Rudolf Battěk, Václav Benda, Petr Uhl, Anna Marvanová, Jiří Dienstbier and Lenka Marečková. Jiří Wonka was detained in the afternoon in Prague, after a T-shirt with the slogan "Release Pavel Wonka" was taken away from him. After several hours of interrogation he was escorted to the train and forced to travel to his home in Vrchlabí, which, together with his mother's house, was under police surveillance.

Similar actions took place simultaneously all across Czechoslovakia.

Based on unconfirmed reports we are able to report at least the following facts: Dr. Ján Čarnogurský was under police surveillance since December 9; on December 10, Jan Šabata and Jaroslav Šabata were summoned to a police station and the home of Stanislav Pitaš was under watch. Friends of Charter 77 wanted to gather at a restaurant in Olomouc, but were prevented by the security police which also watched over or interrogated Mr. and Mrs. Hradílek, R. Bereza, Vít Pelikán and others. The tires of a car belonging to Mr. and Mrs. Šavrda were punctured. In Gottwaldov, Jan Kiš, Petr Holubář, and Stanislav Devátý were unlawfully harassed, the last being jailed for 25 hours. Ota Veverka, a signatory of Charter 77, was released on the evening of December 10 after spending 48 hours in a preliminary detention cell. He had been detained at the gathering on the anniversary of John Lennon's death where he gave a speech (see our communiqué No. 711).

The demonstration for the United Nations Human Rights Day was an indisputable success for the freedom-loving citizens of our country, who thus expressed their discontent with present conditions. The impetus for this new action in the struggle for human rights was the result of Charter 77's planning. We strongly protest the innumerable violations of the law as well as the inhuman treatment of Jiří Gruntorád by so-called medical personnel. □

Prague, December 12, 1987

VONS (Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Persecuted), Czechoslovak Human Rights League, a member of The International Federation for Human Rights.

VONS Communiqué, No. 715

THE 31 DEMANDS

Recommendations of Catholics for the Resolution of the Situation of Religious Citizens in Czechoslovakia

1. Our fundamental demand is the separation of Church and state, from which would follow that the state will not involve itself in the organization and activity of the Church. The majority of our other suggestions stem from this fundamental demand, though they should be followed as a matter of course even in the absence of a complete separation of Church and state.

2. Let the nomination of new bishops become the internal affair of the Church, with which the state should not interfere.

3. We demand that the state cease interfering in the nomination of parish priests and leave all organizational matters to the Church hierarchy.

4. We demand that the state not interfere with the admission of students to the theological faculties, nor determine enrollment; also, that they not interfere in the selection of instructors.

5. We demand the renewal of the Church Mission of the faculty of the divinity school in Olomouc.

6. We demand the establishment of a permanent deaconry, in keeping with Pope Paul VI's decision of June 18, 1967, titled "General Principles Regarding the Permanent Deaconry, Which Is to be Established in the Roman Catholic Church."

7. We demand that all existing male and female holy orders be allowed to function freely, which includes the right to accept new members, as is the case in neighboring East Germany and Poland.

8. We demand that the faithful be granted the right to create free lay religious associations — in accordance with the "Apostolicam Actuositatem" IV.18, the Vatican Council decree on lay members of the Church — which would be informal communities for all ages and social classes, and which would be led by a priest who would foster the spiritual growth of the members. Such associations have from time immemorial been taken for granted among evangelical Christians, and at the present time exist among Catholics in Western countries, as well as in East Germany, Poland and Hungary.

9. We demand that religious instruction take place outside state schools, on Church property, thereby transferring it to the Church's sphere of influence. Children's applications for religious instruction should be given to the parish office, and the extent of instruction, as well as the placement of children, should be the duty of the local ordained minister in consultation with his spiritual guide.

10. We demand that priests be permitted to visit prisons and hospitals when patients, prisoners, or their relatives request it, but also on the priest's own initiative; we demand that religious ceremonies be allowed in prisons and hospitals; that prisoners be permitted to wear crosses and other religious symbols; that they be allowed to have religious literature; and that they have the opportunity to confess to, and speak with, priests.

11. We demand permission to conduct spiritual exercises for laymen.

12. We demand that every congregation in our country be permitted to have a parish council — as is the case with other churches and in other countries — in which laymen would assist priests, so that the problems of the parish could be more easily resolved.

13. We demand the right to be in contact with other Christian organizations throughout the world.

14. We demand that religious citizens be permitted to organize and take part in pilgrimages, even abroad, whether privately or in groups.

15. We demand that the needs of the faithful for religious literature be fully provided for; that the founding of religious publishing houses under the direction of Church representatives be allowed; that permits be granted for the publication of religious journals of various orientations; and that public libraries and reading rooms with religious literature be allowed to open.

16. We demand that the copying and distribution of religious texts be regarded as lawful activity and not as a criminal act or misdemeanor.

17. We demand the right to subscribe to religious literature from abroad and demand that this literature not be confiscated by customs officers.

18. We demand the right to our own radio and television program, after consultation with the Union of the Ordained of Czechoslovakia and later with the chairman of the Conference of Bishops.

19. We demand that the government cease jamming Czech and Slovak broadcasts of Radio Vatican as well as Sunday mass

on Radio Free Europe.

20. We demand that not only atheist propaganda be permitted, but that public dissemination of Christian literature be permitted as well, both by spiritual leaders and laymen. Furthermore, we demand that just as Marxists and other atheists make full use of their right to critically evaluate religion and the Church, so should Christians and other citizens be permitted without restriction, orally and in print, to criticize the doctrine of Marxism-Leninism, without such activity being considered some form of criminal act.

21. We demand the return of confiscated Church buildings, which religious citizens built for themselves from their own resources, and which are needed for the activity of the Church. These include: buildings at the sites of pilgrimages, training houses, divinity schools, and the confiscated buildings of monastic orders, with all their facilities.

22. We demand that the construction of new churches be permitted, where they are needed.

23. We demand the cessation of the arbitrary removal of crosses, statues, chapels, and other religious and cultural monuments of our ancestors from villages, roads, towns, and other places.

24. We demand that the authority of Church secretaries be determined on the basis of the Marxist principle that "the Church must consist of free associations between citizens of like mind, independent of the state." In accordance with this precept, the authority to nominate, transfer and supervise priests should be the sole prerogative of Church secretaries, as is the custom in the majority of democratic countries.

25. We demand the complete rehabilitation, as soon as possible, of unlawfully convicted priests, monks, and active religious laymen.

26. We demand an end to discrimination against practicing Christians in workplaces, and above all, in academia.

27. We demand that religious citizens be allowed to express themselves regarding any problem which they are convinced it is their moral duty to air. We demand also that for such activity they not be accused of breaking the law, and that their petitions not be confiscated.

28. We demand that all legal strictures be canceled which unjustifiably criminalize a significant portion of religious activity by ordained and lay members of the Church.

29. We demand amendments to articles 16, 20, 24, 28 and 38 of our constitution, so that they would be in accordance with our proposals.

30. We also demand that all valid laws and binding legal strictures affecting directly or indirectly the sphere of religious life be made to harmonize with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

31. We demand that a mixed commission be formed — made up of both representatives of state organs and of the Catholic Church, including lay persons nominated by Cardinal Tomášek and representatives of the Catholic Church of Slovakia — which would consider our proposals and deal with them accordingly.

We hope that we shall find understanding for these ideas and proposals among the representatives of the nation, to whom we are turning directly as well as through the agency of our Church representatives....

Submitted on the first Sunday of Advent, 1987, which, by a joint pastoral letter of the bishops of the Czech and Moravian dioceses, marks the inauguration of the great spiritual renewal, to continue over the course of the next ten years, which we hereby actively join and fully support. □

A Letter from Cardinal Tomášek

Prague, January 4, 1988

It is no secret that I have not received any reply to the numerous requests, which I sent to the appropriate government authorities, concerning the main demands of the Church in our country.

Since the majority of the members of the Church are you, the laymen, it is a very important duty of your conscience to make your voice heard to the government. Your voice is: *Recommendations of Catholics for the Resolution of the Situation of Religious Citizens in Czechoslovakia*, which include 31 demands, suggesting a solution to the present problems between the Roman Catholic Church and the government.

The distribution and signing of the above petition is in agreement with the consitution and laws. The government and Party authorities have been informed of this initiative.

I strongly underline that cowardice and fear do not befit a true Christian.

I am with you in spirit and give you my blessings.

Yours

Cardinal František Tomášek
Archbishop of Prague and Metropolitan of the Czech lands

Regarding the situation of the only Catholic seminary in Bohemia and Moravia

The majority of divinity students in the Litoměřice seminary agree with the 31 Demands of the Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia, backed by Cardinal Tomášek. They consider it necessary to expand on several of these points, which are of immediate concern to divinity students. The education of divinity students takes place in two separate institutions — in the seminary and at the faculty. The seminary is considered by the state administration to be a dormitory, which is subject to the supervision of the faculty, and hence of the state. The state interferes in the admissions process. After the submission of an application for study, the candidate is harassed by the police, called in for questioning, and pressured to become an informant. They warn him that his, his family's, and his friends' lives will be made very difficult if he persists in his decision, and he is urged to opt for a different course of studies. At his high school, he is told that he will not finish his studies. During admissions, less academically qualified students are preferred. Among those admitted are collaborators with the security police. The faculty is led by Dean František Vymětal, a deputy of the Federal Assembly and chairman of the pro-regime organization *Pacem in Terris*. The instructors are assigned by the state. Often they are people with an inadequately specialized pedagogical background, who lack a Catholic consciousness and lead objectionable lifestyles. The students are obliged to attend classes in "social sciences," which is in fact Marxist-Leninist ideology, taught by state-assigned specialists in Marxism. The students do not learn about any of the theological disciplines. They are deliberately isolated from the Church's activities in the world at large; they suffer from an absolute unavailability of basic literature; they cannot study abroad. The Faculty lacks departments in important disciplines. Instruction is hampered by needless police interference and questioning. After the second year schooling is interrupted by two years of compulsory military service. At the divinity faculty, one does not celebrate religious holidays; instead one celebrates communist anniversaries. As far as spiritual education is concerned, there are only two spiritual leaders at the seminary for every 260 students and their position depends on the state. The students are deliberately isolated from the spiritual life of the country. The education in the seminary warps the personality and personal authenticity. Cultural education does not exist. The students are not brought up to support the interests of the Church. The facilities at the seminary are unsatisfactory. There is a lack of service areas, and the existing areas are filthy. Service personnel do not exist; the divinity students themselves serve as doormen, janitors and librarians — to the detriment of their studies. Only two women, non-believers appointed by the state, are employed as manager and economist.

Even this description does not fully convey how deplorable conditions are at the seminary. For this reason the divinity students appeal to everyone. They beg: Please make the public aware of our situation. Help to create the essential conditions for us to prepare for the priestly calling. □

28/1/88 Signed: Divinity students of the Litoměřice Seminary

Another attack against *samizdat:* Ivan Polanský imprisoned

On November 5, 1987 a house search was conducted at the home and in the cottage of Ivan Polanský, born March 3, 1936, and an employee of ZTS (Heavy Machinery Works) in Nová Dubnica. He is the father of four adult children, and lives in Dubnica, Hviezdoslav Street 9/61, district of Považská Bystrica. The searches, ordered by the investigator of the county St.B. [security police] directorate of the SNB [uniformed police] in Banská Bystrica, were conducted by captain Július Ištván, Captain Dr. Jan Brieda, Lieutenant Ludovít Hrnko, Lieutentant Karol Smatana, Lieutentant Ján Hyže, Captain Ďurovsky and František Straka, and later also St.B. investigator Captain Ondrej Karvacka. They seized over a thousand items of *samizdat* literature, often in several copies or typed on stencils, a typewriter, a duplicating machine, etc. In terms of volume, the St.B. carried away a medium-sized truckload of printed materials. Ivan Polanský was taken into custody at the Ministry of Justice in Banská Bystrica and charged with the "criminal support and promotion of fascism" (Par. 260, section 1 and 2a of the Criminal Code), which carries a sentence of three to ten years imprisonment.

As revealed by the searches, Ivan Polanský was an enthusiastic publisher of *samizdat* literature. A major part of the literature is of a religious character, besides a large quantity of Charter 77 documents, various writings of Václav Havel, and

others. He also made copies of texts pertaining to Slovak history of the first half of this century, e.g., historical volumes about Hlinka and Tiso.

The indictment on charges of "support and propagation of fascism" is clearly based on these few *samizdat* items. The accusation itself is peculiar. The incriminating readings do not propagate fascism or racism, but in fact try to prove, convincingly or not, that fascist or racist inclinations were foreign to these Slovak politicians.

There is no doubt that Ivan Polanský is being prosecuted solely for the production of religious and secular *samizdat*. The charge that he supports fascism and racism is therefore just a pretense and provocation. We demand that he be set free immediately and that the criminal proceedings against him be stopped. We also demand that all the papers taken from him be returned.

[According to VONS, this is a common charge. Jiří Kubin, living at Hronov, Jiriskova 96, was similarly charged with supporting fascism, and released after three months. Vladimir Rans was sentenced to a three to four month suspended sentence on a similar charge.]

Prague, Nov. 27, 1987 □

VONS Communiqué No. 706.

The Situation of Political Prisoners

To the International Red Cross
Geneva, Switzerland

Dear Sirs:

As you may know, there are still many citizens jailed for political reasons in Czechoslovakia in spite of the government's vow to democratize public life. These people are jailed mainly for their critical attitudes toward certain negative phenomena in Czechoslovakia; also, for actively practicing their religion, etc. The Czechoslovak judiciary uses laws of considerable breadth against these people, namely paragraphs 100: incitement; 178: obstruction of the state surveillance of churches; 109: leaving the Republic without permission, etc. Citizens are receiving long prison sentences for espionage, even though the charges are often unfounded. Many prisoners of conscience spend years in harsh conditions in Czechoslovak prisons; they are forced to work at hard labor; many are sick and left with insufficient or entirely non-existent medical care.

Although Charter 77, together with the Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Persecuted [VONS], has pointed this out many times, our state institutions have not responded to the plight of our fellow citizens. They do not answer our letters which protest against unjust jailings and bad conditions in prisons. For this reason we recently contacted Helsinki Watch and asked for an American physician to be sent to Czechoslovakia to visit a few political prisoners and assess the state of their health.

We would also like to ask the International Red Cross to send several delegates to visit Czechoslovakia to examine the state of health of one or more prisoners. We also ask you to kindly send packages with food, vitamins and personal necessities to several prisoners. We attach a list of prisoners who, according to information available to us, need medical attention urgently. You can also obtain information about Czechoslovak political prisoners from the Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Prosecuted, Amnesty International, or the *Internationale Gesellschaft fur Menschenrechte* in Vienna. Your help is urgently needed by the following Czechoslovak prisoners:

Jiří Wolf, born 1952, jailed in Valdice near Jičín, has serious stomach and eye problems.

Walter Kania, born 1940, jailed in Valdice for the past 11 years, has suffered two heart attacks.

František Veis, born 1932, jailed for 7 years in Valdice, has internal ailments.

Josef Römer, born 1955, jailed for 11 years in Valdice (it is not known what health problems he has).

Pavel Wonka [see p. 29]

Petr Hauptman, born 1946, jailed in Minkovice for 10 years (it is not known what health problems he has).

Your positive answer to our request would be a significant and concrete help to Czechoslovakian political prisoners and a welcome contribution to the defense of human rights. □

Prague, December 3, 1987

Signed: Jan Litomiský, Libuše Šilhánová, Josef Vohryzek
Spokesmen for Charter 77

Charter 77 Document No. 73/87

The Case of Pavel Wonka

The following is a compilation of VONS documents describing the imprisonment and release of Pavel Wonka.

Pavel Wonka, born January 23, 1953, domiciled at Pražská 384, 543 01 Vrchlabí, mechanic; mother: Gerta Wonková, living at U. Nemocnice 869, 543 01 Vrchlabí. Taken into custody on May 26, 1986 with his brother Jiří. Sentenced by the district court of Prague on May 26, 1987 for "the criminal act of incitement" (par. 100/1) and the criminal act of attacking a public organization (par. 156/2); sentenced to 21 months and a subsequent three-year protective supervision, which was confirmed by the National Court of the Czech Republic. (His brother Jiří has completed his punishment of 12 months' imprisonment.)...

Another Punishment Threatens Pavel Wonka

On Sept. 28, 1987 a criminal case was discussed before the Jury of the District Court of Liberec, presided over by Dr. Černy, against Pavel Wonka, accused of the criminal act of interference in the performance of an official adjudication (par. 171, no. 1c of the criminal law, carrying a maximum sentence of five years' imprisonment). He was so charged because of his refusal to work during the execution of his sentence. The main trial was temporarily postponed, because Pavel Wonka challenged the jury as biased....Pavel Wonka was unjustly convicted...for the mere fact of attempting to run as an independent candidate for the office of representative in the Federal Assembly during the 1986 elections.

Since he continues to consider himself innocent, and since, according to his statement, he was beaten by his escort on the way to prison, was not provided with necessary medical attention, and his case was not properly investigated, he refused to start work on August 13. He was on this basis subjected to a series of punishments, and evidently to other unjustifiable abuse and cruelties; with unusual speed, after only six weeks, a criminal trial against him was staged, which may result in years of further imprisonment.

We have a whole series of documents to prove that the penitentiary at Minkovice, although nominally listed as a medium security correctional facility, is in fact one of the cruelest prisons in Czechoslovakia. We have no doubt that in the last several months Pavel Wonka experienced what cannot in any way be justified even in the context of the very harsh Czechoslovak laws about the application of punishment. The specific problem of P. Wonka, however, evidently involves something else besides the extreme conditions of the Minkovice penitentiary, i.e., whether it is possible that a citizen insisting on his innocence was put before the choice: to submit to an unjust punishment or to be broken by torture....

Independently of all of these legal and ethical considerations we assert that the physical and especially psychological condition of P. Wonka is, as a result of the above-mentioned facts, alarming. So for humanitarian reasons we ask for his swift release.

Prague, Oct. 5, 1987

VONS, Communique No.688

On February 26, 1988 Pavel Wonka, one of Czechoslovakia's prisoners of conscience, was released.... He was brought from the prison hospital and carried into his house, since he was not able to walk. Several days earlier close relatives of Pavel Wonka were invited to Liberec to a further court action against Pavel Wonka, this time charged with contravening the official decision against him for refusing to work when he felt seriously ill, and also for his having considered himself to be an unjustly convicted prisoner. When his mother and brother came to the district court in Liberec they were told that Pavel Wonka would not attend for reasons of health. It appears, then, that the persecution of Pavel Wonka has not yet ended, and will continue.

The case of Pavel Wonka and his almost two-year imprisonment in one of the worst Czechoslovak prisons makes a mockery of the slogans about democratization so often brandished by Czechoslovak politicians. While in other East European countries the possibility of electing multiple candidates is openly written about and discussed, in Czechoslovakia [such practices]...are punished. The case of Pavel Wonka was called to the attention of the public by VONS several times; Charter 77 wrote about the case of the Wonka brothers in document no. 50/87. Czechoslovak citizens and the foreign public have frequently expressed their interest in the fate of Pavel Wonka by, among other things, arranging a rotating hunger strike in protest. Despite all appeals, the conviction of Pavel Wonka was not rescinded. In August 1978 the Supreme Court confirmed the verdict of the Prague city court.

In the Minkovice prison near Liberec Pavel Wonka was constantly abused and tortured, in much the same way his brother Jiří Wonka was treated at a different location (his health has been impaired, probably permanently). Following a protest letter to President Hušak by a large group of Czechoslovak citizens, Pavel Wonka was moved from Minkovice to the Plzeň-Bory Prison, where the conditions of imprisonment were allegedly somewhat milder. When a leading American physician, Prof. Richard Lawrence, a member of the group Physicians for Human Rights, expressed an interest in the case of Pavel Wonka and of other Czechoslovak prisoners of conscience by asking to visit him in prison, Pavel Wonka was moved to the prison hospital.

Now Pavel Wonka is free — permanently, we hope. □

Appeal For Solidarity With The Romanian People

European governments, countless organizations and many private citizens are contemplating today the prospects for our continent, its peaceful future, the means of overcoming its division into political blocs, as well as the extent and kind of human rights enjoyed by the citizens of the various European countries. This is of course good and important.

What is not good is the fact that in well-heated and well-lit conference halls one forgets that there is a country in Europe whose people have neither light nor heat.

In Romanian homes and offices the temperature in winter rarely exceeds 10 degrees centigrade [50 degrees Fahrenheit]. Each home can have no more than two forty-watt light bulbs. In Romania, 43 years after the war, essential foodstuffs, such as flour, sugar and meat are either rationed or unavailable.

After 22 years in power the ruler of Romania offers his people only one thing: a compulsory cult of his own personality.

Nothing but sheer despair drove the Romanian workers to their demonstrations.

Romania is a peculiar country: not only does it deny its citizens elementary freedoms to an extent unequaled in any other country of the Soviet bloc, but it is in addition incapable of securing for them that by which communist regimes always try to legitimize their rule, and claim as their supreme achievement: namely, basic material and social security.

We ask all Europeans who express enthusiasm for Gorbachev's assertion that we live in one European house, to recognize that in this rich house lives also a nation which has to fear cold and hunger.

This is not simply a Romanian affair. Just as the peace and liberty of Europe are a common affair of all Europeans, so too is that which is taking place in Romania a matter that concerns all of us. As uncertain as is the freedom of the person who is indifferent to the lack of freedom of his neighbor or fellow-citizen, so too is the security of his heat and light if it is coupled with indifference to the cold and dark in which his less fortunate neighbors live.

We therefore appeal to the European public that it should not forget Romanians, and that it publicly display its solidarity with them. We propose to all Europeans that on February 1, 1988 they express their solidarity with the Romanian people. Let us try to live for at least a single day in an unheated and poorly-lit home. Let us try to live for at least one day without all those things which are necessary for our material well-being, and of which the Romanians are permanently deprived. Wherever possible, let us organize peaceful demonstrations of protest in front of Romanian offices. Let us appeal to our governments to help the Romanian people. Let us seek ways whereby each one of us personally can be of help to them.

We ask Europeans to join Charter 77 and on the first day of February 1988 to publicly express their solidarity with the suffering of Romanian society and their revulsion at the dictator who is responsible for this suffering.

We know that one day of solidarity will not solve the Romanian crisis. But we are convinced that it can contribute to its resolution. □

Prague, January 2, 1988

Signed: Stanislav Devátý, Miloš Hájek, Bohumír Janát
Spokesmen for Charter 77

Charter 77 Document No. 2/88

Repression Against the Expression of Solidarity with the Romanian People

On February 1, 1988 the spokesmen of Charter 77 wanted to hand document No. 2/88, asking for international solidarity with the people of Romania, to the Romanian Ambassador. Stanislav Devátý was unable to attend the event because he was being guarded by state security agents in Gottwaldov. Charter 77's other spokesmen, Miloš Hájek and Bohumír Janát, were detained by agents at 11:00 A.M. on their way to the Romanian embassy. Shortly thereafter other signatories and supporters of Charter 77 were detained near the embassy, namely Saša and Martina Vondra, Anna Šabatová, Veronika Rottrová and Marketa Fialková. They wanted to hand over to the embassy lists of Czechoslovak citizens who had joined in acts of solidarity with the Romanian people, and wanted to unfurl a banner in front of the embassy with the text: "Freedom for the Nationsof Romania." A little later, State Security agents detained Jazz Section members Ota Veverka and Jaroslav Tuček near the Embassy, as they were preparing to demonstrate with a three-meter-long banner with the words: "Light and Bread for the Romanian People." All those named above were taken to a section of the public security officeon Vlašska Street, where they were interrogated and held until evening. Jan Urban, a Charter 77 signatory who lives close to the Romanian Embassy, was also detained. The interrogators stated that the Romanian Embassy itself had requested additional security for its building. This, however, is irrelevant to the fact that state security officers violated the constitutional right of Czechoslovak citizens to freedom of speech. □

Prague, February 3, 1988

VONS Communiqué No. 724

The Forum of Charter 77

On Sunday, January 17, 1988 the third forum of Charter 77 convened in Prague. Sixty signatories and supporters of Charter 77 from Prague and other parts of Czechoslovakia attended [there are over 1,300 signatories]. The forum was called to discuss the political situation, the prospects for its amelioration, and the possible role of Charter 77 and other independent groups in this process. The state security force took extensive measures against this meeting. Charter 77 spokesman Stanislav Devátý, who lives in Gottwaldov, was held for 48 hours on Friday, January 15. Although he was released on Sunday at noon, he was unable to get to Prague in time. On Sunday morning the police detained Charter 77's other spokesmen, Miloš Hájek and Bohumír Janát, and other signatories, including Václav Benda, Václav Havel, Ladislav Lis, František Stárek, Jaroslav Šabata, Petr Uhl, Jan Urban, Josef Vohryzek and Luboš Vydra, whom they kept for the entire day in their offices. The police observed the apartments of Anna Marvanová, Libuše Šilhánová, Tomáš Hradílek and Jaromír Šavrda for the whole day. The forum of Charter 77 opened at approximately 2:15 P.M. Not long after, a large number of public and state security agents entered the restaurant where the forum was being held. The policemen asked all those present to show their identification cards, while they photographed and filmed people for about fifteen minutes. Then they detained about 20 of the forum's participants. The others were either released or taken to various parts of Prague. Those detained were interrogated about the abortive forum and also about the demonstration for the release of political prisoners that took place in Prague on December 10, 1987.

We consider this police action a crude invasion of privacy and a violation of the citizens' constitutional right to peaceful assembly. □

Prague, January 21, 1988

Signed: VONS (Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Persecuted), The Czechoslovak League for Human Rights, member of the International Federation for Human Rights.

VONS Communique No. 721

Independent Czechoslovak Publications: Paraf *and* Lidove Noviny

POLAND: THE NEXT STAGE

The readers of the Committee in Support of Solidarity Reports *are familiar with the opposition movement in Poland. The nearly eight-year struggle of the trade union Solidarity, together with numerous underground and now above-ground ventures in the fields of publishing, education, culture and politics, have created a mass-based opposition unique in Eastern Europe, with tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of activists.*

In the past year, various developments have complicated the situation even further. Still at the heart of Polish opposition is N.S.Z.Z. Solidarność, which now has one national leadership structure under the name of K.K.W. (National Executive Committee), replacing the previous underground and above-ground councils; at the same time, however, a number of members from the pre-martial law National Commission have met with the intention of reestablishing the Commission as the governing body of Solidarity – an act that has caused tension with the Chairman and the K.K.W.

Since the government released most political prisoners a year and a half ago – at present, there are still approximately 50 persons sentenced to prison terms, mostly for conscientious objection – a dilemma has arisen for Solidarity: whether to act openly or whether to remain organized primarily underground. Many Solidarity advisors have called for an anti-crisis "pact of national reconciliation" with the government (see next issue for an interview with Bronisław Geremek), by the terms of which the government would allow some form of legal trade union activity and a real voice in determining the shape of economic reform, in exchange for cooperation in carrying out the reform package. Some opposition activists have gone so far as to advocate abandoning underground activity entirely, in favor of strictly open activity.

Nevertheless, at many factories, the workers have preempted organized union strategy by engaging in a sophisticated dual-track strategy of maintaining underground activity while attempting to gain legal status. At dozens of factories, workers have collected signatures and applied for legal status through the courts under the terms of the present Law on Trade Unions, which allows for separate, factory-based unions. The courts have denied registration in all cases so far; nevertheless, the action has demonstrated the continuing adherence of many workers to the independent trade union.

There are many others – including a number of Solidarity leaders and advisors, publicists in the underground press, and such groups as Fighting Solidarity and KOS (Circles for Social Resistance), which have promoted non-violent resistance in the organization of the "underground" society – who do not believe the union should participate in a "pact" with the government at all, but instead should continue various underground activities, together with open initiatives. What those open activities should be is often contested, however.

There are a number of forums outside the union structures that allow greater freedom of assembly for workers and union activists, generally at churches and other available public spaces. Several workers' clubs have been formed, and the Episcopate has created a supervisory body to coordinate and observe their activities. Under this rubric belong various student initiatives, political clubs and parties. Most visible has been the effort of the N.Z.S. (Independent Association of University Students) to gain legal status, which revived when self-government councils for students were effectively ended by the Law on Higher Education in 1984. Demonstrations on March 8, the anniversary of the 1968 student protests (see p. 39), took place in Kraków, Wrocław, Poznań, Lublin and Warsaw. In the end, however, the student organization was denied legal status.

In the political arena, the Lech Bądkowski Club in Gdańsk — which was also refused registration — and similar groups seek to rediscover the political heritage of Poland's pre-war conservative parties. They favor an alliance with lay Church activists and the Church as an institution. Among the political parties are: The Confederation for an Independent Poland (KPN), led by Leszek Moczulski, which advocates a program of national independence with the view that at present the crises in the Soviet Union lend themselves to a radical alteration of the status quo in Eastern Europe; and now the PPS (Polish Socialist Party), formed in December, with Jan Józef Lipski as its chairman, which seeks to reestablish the tradition of its predecessor. The latter, however, underwent a split and it remains to be seen if the PPS will emerge unified. In addition to the KPN and PPS, the Liberal-Democratic Independence Party and the Peasants' Party hark back to pre-war Polish political traditions as well. In these various initiatives one can, however, discern a unifying goal: the attempt to create open forums for the reestablishment of political life and culture by drawing on historical roots and the experience of Poland's inter-war independence. □

BREAKING OUT INTO NORMALITY

An Interview with Władysław Frasyniuk

Władysław Frasyniuk (Photo: D. Olszewski)

Marek Bober: I'd like you to comment upon Polish society's reaction to the price increases. The insignificant level of protest and small number of demonstrations were both surprising and troubling to the opposition. Is this due primarily to Solidarity's decision to change tactics, i.e. "to come out into the open," a change signaled in the Mazowsze region's recent announcement? Before the price-hikes were announced, Lech Wałęsa advised protests in the factories, but not on a coordinated, nation-wide basis. Or is society's rather timid reaction better explained by widespread apathy and general fatigue resulting from the seemingly endless economic crisis?

Władysław Frasyniuk: I'll begin with the Mazowsze chapter's [of Solidarity] announcement. No one has the right to claim that with that recent announcement the Mazowsze chapter has formulated new tactics which are binding on the whole union. Why, that announcement hasn't even been well-received in Warsaw [the seat of the Mazowsze region].

Regarding the price increases, I must admit that – for somebody looking at it from the outside – there would seem to be something wrong with a society which doesn't react to price-hikes ranging from 40 to 200 percent. But the situation on the inside – here, in Poland – is more complicated than that. People still remember the 13th of December [1981, when martial law was declared], which was a show of strength meant to break society and pacify its members; they still remember how not only the police and their truncheons, but also tanks, armored cars and firehoses were used to scatter protesting workers in the very places they worked. Psychologically, this explains why people have held back from an act of desperation which could push them into a strike.

The situation is really quite tense, but no one is ready to strike yet. The authorities have learned a lot. They're much smarter, much more flexible in the way they handle the workplaces where Solidarity is active. Wherever Solidarity exists, the government has taken measures to quell even the slightest signs of unrest. Before the price-hikes went into effect it was announced that workers in these factories would receive wage increases over and above the 6,000 zł. compensation promised everybody. That's how it's been in the majority of Wrocław's plants and factories. In large factories, so-called "new pay regulations" are coming into effect, averaging three to eight thousand złotys per worker on top of the basic 6,000 zł. compensation. This has put – for the moment, anyway – a damper on anger and opposition. But this state of affairs certainly won't last long, since prices are climbing immeasurably faster than the compensations and wage increases. In a few months we will reach the point where it will be impossible, once again,

to make ends meet. And so you could say that the protest is only delayed for now.

At the same time the government manifested its strength, declaring a full mobilization; the scene in the vicinity of Wroclaw's factories was just like that of December 13, 1981. The security police posted men around the gates and on the shop floors; in fact, every worker had his own "guardian angel." Workers were required to notify their superiors before leaving the shop floor, even if they were only going to the cigarette machine. At some plants, on the other hand, if graffiti such as "Solidarity lives" or "Solidarity fights" was found, nobody painted it out, so as not to cause additional tension. However, wherever the workers tried to hold a meeting, they were immediately surrounded by the administration of the plant and the security police, who drove off those who had gathered. The authorities have given up fighting with symbols for a while, choosing instead to concentrate on living people, who might someday be at the forefront of a strike. I'd say the government's skillful handling of the situation has, for the time being, managed to keep a lid on the workers' dissatisfaction.

People are realizing just how chaotic the government can be when making a decision. The wage increases, on account of their differentiation, have caused a great deal of dissatisfaction within the plants themselves. With the exception of the 6,000 zł. basic compensation, the rest is granted at the discretion of the authorities – that is, one worker might receive 3,000 zł. and another, 5,000. This causes bad blood not only within the plant itself, but also between plants; it causes strife between various groups of people, misunderstandings, envy.

On the other hand, in places where people are not so well organized – for example, in the smaller factories – nothing is happening, for the most part. People are getting nothing above the basic compensation. There are in fact workplaces where even that has not yet been paid.

The situation is odd in that wages are not being raised uniformly, but according to the level of tension. No economic mechanisms are at work here. It seems that social tension regulates inflation.

But aren't the lack of protests connected with the tactic of, as you mentioned, "breaking out into the open," that is, abandoning more radical methods?

Frasyniuk: It is people who are working openly as Solidarity representatives who have initiated demands for pay increases wherever such demands have been advanced in a determined fashion. Just take the "Ursus" plant for example, where the Solidarity founding committee – the group of people which has petitioned the court to legally register the union at their workplace – called a meeting of plant employees, which resulted in higher wages. Same thing in Wrocław, where workers' self-management councils, represented by members of Solidarity, have played a similar role. The underground structures seem apprehensive about coming out into the open, as if doing so might touch off strikes. The fear of emerging from the underground frequently deflects the opposition from a more decisive path.

For every trade union, regardless of where it functions, in the United States or Poland, there is no other way but to operate above ground. Operating underground is not normal for any trade union. What Solidarity is trying to do now, is to break out into the open, or rather, break out into normality.

In Poland it has become obvious that, within the opposition as a whole, political groups have gained in importance at the expense of trade unions (although Solidarity isn't just a trade union); in other words, Solidarity and her offshoots no longer predominate within the opposition. The union's demands are now appearing side-by-side with purely political demands. At the same time, won't this enormous leap from underground to open activity result in reduced support from society at large? Will Solidarity continue to enjoy mass support, or will it be superseded by exclusively political groupings and parties?

Frasyniuk: The switch to above-ground activity is already paying off. Access to union representatives has been simplified, which has eased our situation in the workplaces. Founding committees are being formed, and the workers know that these committees are represented by members of Solidarity. One can report to them, ask about participating in the union or about where to pay dues. New life is blown into the structures and people are mobilized to action. Contact with Solidarity is simplified.

If somebody operates anonymously, he will abdicate responsibility for decisions. Open union activity, on the other hand, is accountable. In Wrocław, a regional executive commission has formed to which people come and ask about various matters.

To address another issue: I can honestly say, that I haven't observed an exodus of people from Solidarity to the political parties. In my opinion, it will be a long time before people take an interest in them. All the political parties – excepting perhaps the KPN [Confederation for an Independent Poland] or the PPS [Polish Socialist Party] – are small. The parties are forming a new, more political, way of thinking. I think this is a victory for Solidarity, which fought for political and ideological pluralism. A number of people, who didn't see a place for themselves in Solidarity, have left to join the parties or other political groupings. This has had a salutary effect on the union – it is becoming more self-sufficient, autonomous, independent and is trying to pull itself up by its bootstraps. I guarantee you, that Solidarity's position decides whether people will participate in elections or not. As a rule, when it comes to the most important matters of nation-wide concern, it is Solidarity's voice that is heard. □

Nowy Dziennik, New York, February 18, 1988.

STATEMENT BY THE WARSAW REGIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF SOLIDARITY (R.K.W. MAZOWSZE)

Today all of us in Solidarity realize at last that we have entered a new phase. We have found it out late and it has cost us dearly but now – six years after 1981 – we know for certain: martial law is over. The order of violent confrontation, imposed on Solidarity after December 13 [1981], has lost its justification. The authorities have been unable to prevail by force and, despite their claims, solved none of the problems of our country. The Polish crisis has turned out to be a systemic one, the inevitable crisis of this form of socialism.

The Polish referendum proves that the restructuring of the economy, of social ties and public life cannot be achieved against the wishes of a society which is deprived of its right to self-organization and representation. We have emerged from martial law strong in this knowledge but also weak and divided as to the direction of our activities. The Solidarity movement, which never bowed before violence, knows for sure that it has survived. Aided by its ties to the shop floor, it has saved its identity. However, this is not enough to regain its position and once again exert a real influence on public life.

Under martial law, Solidarity's primary concern was the defense of union ideals. Thus, it was gradually pushed into purely symbolic actions in which moral purity and uncompromising negation counted for more than the opportunity to regain social ground, get some breathing space, or establish contact with reality. Solidarity was slowly becoming a mere historical fact, a solemn memory, a ritual gesture. In the meantime it acted as the defender of workers' interests, co-originator of new agreements, and initiator of moves to fight the socio-economic crisis – a crisis which should unite all forces in society in an effort to safeguard the primary national interest which is fundamentally threatened.

The Communist authorities are internally divided and – with their monopoly of power endangered and their own interests in conflict with the historical necessity of reorganization – have reached a point where they are unable to govern the country without an organized society. We wish to, and can, look differently at our duties, our goals and our work. Solidarity has been guided by a conservative strategy in order to preserve its threatened identity. Now it is developing differentiated tactics toward those social groups which – true to the ethos of Solidarity – are ready to take real responsibility, no matter how small, for the future of the country. This demands a clear definition of the principles of action.

1. ...Our aim – as stated in the program adopted at the First National Congress of Solidarity – is to establish a new political and economic order but not to strive for state power. We exert pressure on the authorities. We are fighting for pluralism and society's right to self-organization and political representation.

2. In Poland today a new era is emerging in which people and groups are making their voices heard; in which trade unions are fighting for their rights, factory and territorial self-management, local associations and economic societies, political clubs and all kinds of civic activities.

Soon the shape of the "anti-crisis" pact will be determined. We are ready to enter such a pact for the common good, but on one condition: that our right to represent and express the public interest is respected.

3. In our struggle to regain union liberties we will not shirk our duty to participate in local government when the time for local elections comes. While demanding the constitutional right to free association, we are creating a network of local clubs and societies. Six years after December 1981 the courage to take political decisions has at last appeared in the movement. In the sphere of unionism we have restricted our activities to what is realistic, while expanding in other areas. This is enough to give our movement a new lease on life. □

December 13, 1987

PRICE INCREASES AHEAD OF US, PRICE INCREASES BEHIND US

A drastic increase in prices has been announced again. More are supposed to follow. We protest against this decision, which in its senselessness is a logical outcome of the policy initiated on December 13, 1981. This policy stands in the way of indispensable economic reform, increasing – contrary to the intentions of its designers – government outlays, worsening inflation, and heightening social tensions. It is obvious that, sooner or later, this policy will break down, because it is not a solution to the problems we face, nor does it offer society any meaningful prospects.

We demand the abrogation of the price increases, whose consequences have been harsh for every Polish family, and downright tragic for certain social groups. Failure to do so will result in the continued upward spiraling of wages and prices. Full compensation for the current price increases would amount to 12,000 zł. We, the members of Solidarity, cannot accept the unfair treatment of those groups which will be unable to make ends meet after the current round of price increases.

Solidarity rejects the argument put forth by the government, according to which lowering the standard of living is the solution to Polish problems. It has already been lowered.

Poland needs a fundamental restructuring of public life and a broadening of the sphere of civil liberties, among which must be included the right to free enterprise. This is the only way we can overcome the crisis – a crisis which degrades Poland and makes Poles miserable. □

Gdańsk, January 31st, 1988 National Executive Commission NSZZ Solidarność

THE LAUGHING OPPOSITIONISTS

"Major" Waldemar Frydrych and the Orange Alternative

the "Major" (Photo: DEMENTI)

The various forms of opposition activity – such as strikes, publishing newspapers, issuing declarations and leading demonstrations – are all well known and widely practiced in Poland. A new form, however, has arisen which defies easy categorization. It is called a *happening* (Poles use the English word) and was actually pioneered in the early 1970s by a Warsaw theater group. At that time, happenings were avant-garde, frequently humorous – though largely apolitical – street performances, which encouraged audience participation and allowed for spontaneous development. The idea was to jar members of the audience (passers-by usually unaware that a performance was taking place) from their settled, daily routine and force them to take a fresh look at the world around them.

A decade and a half later, a group called "The Orange Alternative" – also known as the Movement for New Culture – has resurrected the happening on the streets of Wrocław. While remaining true to their theatrical heritage, the new happenings have taken on a sarcastic edge and have passed into the realm of politics.

Just what is a happening like? The following is a description of the performance which took place on November 29, 1987, the date of the government referendum on economic reform.

invitation to a happening (Photo: DEMENTI)

Suddenly a man appeared with a toy trumpet. He began to play. People began to take notice and gather around him. Then I showed up, dressed as a woman, in a wig. I also had a tiny little trumpet, which I began to play. The police surrounded me, but I kept playing. They said, "We have to help this poor woman!" and they began to carry me to their car. At one point they were going to drop me in a puddle (I think they were beginning to improvise, too). It got awfully noisy around me. Children began to play trumpets and so did my adult friends. All of a sudden the athletes showed up. It was a whole team, ready for action. They ran around Świdnicka street [a major thoroughfare in downtown Wrocław] in single file, blowing whistles. People began to shout "referendum." The police became interested in the athletes. A little earlier they had arrested the cosmonauts. I guess they had to, because two of the cosmonauts broke through police lines in a hovercraft. The general racket grew louder and louder – by now the whole street was embroiled in the happening. Passers-by were curious and amused. In the meantime, home-made ballots mocking the referendum were distributed in the "Mercury" store. Each one had a sketch of dark sunglasses, and on the sides were little tabs like those found on ration tickets for meat, except these were for carrots and turnips. There were also people dressed as ballot boxes, who collected the ballots. At one point the boxes went out onto the street, but fearing a police attack, they began to run. It was difficult for the police to catch them, though, because they were giant cubes with nothing sticking out except heads on top – there just wasn't anything to grab on to.

So on one side of the street there was trumpeting, on the other side I was sprawled in a puddle (they decided to drop me there after all), behind us were the athletes, and further back were the human ballot boxes. Some people were shouting "two times YES" [a reference to the format of the official ballot] and "referendum," others were flashing open their coats and exposing signs that also declared "2 x YES." And in the middle of all this the police were completely disoriented, running back and forth, pushing people into buildings, shoving them back out again, and so forth...

The "woman in the wig" narrating is none other than "Major" Waldemar Maria Frydrych, the 34-year old leader of the Orange Alternative. A shy and paradoxical figure, the Major claims not to be interested in politics, yet is the force behind one of the most talked-about opposition movements in Poland today. He is an avowed pacifist who chose a "psychotherapeutic camp" over serving in the army, yet organizes happenings with military efficiency, is fond of such martial terms as "maneuvers," "battles" and "strategic objectives," and frequently has his charges dress in uniform. The sobriquet "Major" is a story in itself:

I went to a psychologist in order to avoid military service.... Once I showed up in dark sunglasses with my head shaved clean. The psychologist started shouting that I was to take them off, and that he was my superior officer. So I started calling him "Colonel," and referred to myself as "Major."

The Orange Alternative's first large-scale happening took place on June 1, 1987, the date of the communist "Children's Day" holiday. At the appointed hour, elves showed up in red elf hats, dancing about and handing out candies and hats to children and their parents as they walked by. There were shouts of "there is no freedom without elves!" Leaflets were distributed, which included a request for elf reinforcements and a salute to Sorbovit (a Polish soft drink). When the police showed up, they too were asked to join in the fun. At first they reacted in a rather confused manner, but in the end, they rounded up a number of participants for several hours of questioning at the police station. But the happening had been a success. For the first time, after several smaller and more conventionally political performances, the movement had gained the support and participation of the street.

A number of happenings have been staged since "Elves"(each one has a codename). "Who's Afraid of Toilet Paper?" – during which the precious commodity was distributed free of charge – took place on October 1, 1987. "Independent Policeman's Day," which fell on the official Policeman's Day, October 7, featured some 200 young people carrying a 15-foot blue-and-white flower dedicated to "The anonymous army of unknown policemen" and banners proclaiming "The youth of Wrocław thank the police for their smiles and good humor." On October 12 it was "Melon in Mayonnaise" – codename for maneuvers conducted on Polish People's Army Day. The group wanted to celebrate the Octo-

Wrocław's Mardi Gras "parade"

(Photo: DEMENTI)

ber Revolution, but since the anniversary fell on a Saturday, when downtown Wrocław would be empty, they had to settle for the day before, hence the name "The Eve of the Anniversary of the October Revolution" for the November 6 happening. The "Eve" was celebrated in grand style, with huge cardboard-and-canvas replicas of the "Potemkin" and the "Aurora," complete with cannons and flags, plus a cavalry regiment on toy horses. In the course of the happening, the cavalrymen charged police lines in a courageous attempt to rescue the two warships, which were surrounded by cops intent on dismantling them and arresting their crew members. Leaflets were distributed satirizing the rhetoric and esthetic of communist celebrations:

...Pravda [written in cyrillic] will set us free ... Comrades, its time to break through the passivity of the masses. Let us start celebrating the Eve of the Anniversary of the October Revolution.... Dress festively, in red, comrades. Wear red shoes, a red hat, a red scarf.... If for some reason you don't have a red banner, then paint your fingertips red. If you don't have anything at all that's red, then buy some ketchup. We reds (that is, the red-faced, red-haired, red-lipped) shall come together... Let us meet, comrades, at a rally to commemorate the Revolution! The ideas and the practice of Lenin and Trotsky will live forever!

THE COUNCIL OF PEOPLE'S COMMISSARS

A West German television crew was a bit too literal-minded when it reported that "the police broke up a meeting of Trotskyites in Wrocław."

On December 7 the holiday season was ushered in on Świdnicka street by a team of Santas and the Major dressed as the devil. The slogan of the day was "Santa – the hope of reform," but quickly changed to "let Santa go" when the police – in a scene that epitomizes what the Major calls Socialist Surrealism (i.e. reality in the Soviet Bloc) – began to shove the young Santas into waiting vans.

The next happening, "Hokus Pokus," in celebration of Mardi Gras (February 16) attracted a record 5,000 participants. Leaflets proclaimed, "Let's make Wrocław the Las Vegas of the communist world. Costumes are recommended. This time the police won't touch us. If they try, just say 'hokus pokus,' and either they'll disappear or they'll join the carnival." Next to "hokus pokus," one of the event's most popular cheers was "long live smurfs!"

On March 8, the group celebrated International Woman's Day, during which a stump speaker proved that "Karl Marx was a bearded woman." The Major, though, kept out of the limelight, limiting himself to the distribution of sanitary napkins (considered no less valuable than toilet paper in Poland). It proved to be his undoing, however, because the authorities – who, after a happening, customarily had him arrested and then released following several hours of questioning – decided that this was a genuine criminal offense. The next day, "Major" Waldemar Maria Frydrych was sentenced to two months in jail by a Wrocław petty offenses tribunal.

As of publication, the Major remains in jail – but not forgotten. A number of Polish artists and intellectuals are demanding his release, including the film director Andrzej Wajda. Nearly 300 youths were detained on March 21, when a gathering celebrating the advent of Spring in Wrocław turned into a demonstration demanding that the Major be set free. On the next day, women dressed in black and claiming to be "widows of the Major" marched in front of the building in Warsaw where government spokesman Jerzy Urban was holding his weekly press conference. □

By J. Kucio, based on a review of the independent Polish press.

VIOLENCE IN WORD AND DEED

Getting Aquainted With "Socialist Legality"

By Jakub Karpiński

The following article was published in an official Catholic monthly Powściągliwość i Praca (Moderation and Work).

The post-war history of Poland is marked by various anniversaries. One of these, commemorating events which occurred 20 years ago, falls this year. It is an anniversary celebrated with less fanfare than others.

Important anniversaries in the history of the Polish People's Republic denote the successive "errors and distortions" of government policy, which society cut short with anger and demonstrations. Initially, these protests were considered groundless, but later the authorities recognized, if only partially, that they were in fact justified, and even did some good.

Twenty years ago protests shook the world and in the West they took the form of a movement of "counter-culture" according to the precise definition of the word. Students in Paris wanted neither knowledge, lectures nor exams. Their American counterparts fought against unnecessary — in their opinion — democratic rules and procedures. Intellectuals in West Germany explained that tolerance is in fact repression. Spontaneity and creative disorganization were the watchwords of the day, and it was Castro's Cuba and Mao's China which harbored those values in the protesters' opinion.

In Poland, however, the protests began with the staging of Adam Mickiewicz's [Poland's most revered national poet] *Dziady [Forefathers' Eve]* at the National Theater in Warsaw. The production was an accurate and straight-forward presentation of the 19th-century national-religious drama, yet the lines declaimed on that stage described not only historical but also contemporary Polish experience. The audience noticed this, and soon the security police and other government officials were also to find out about the topical, and therefore subversive, nature of the play. *Dziady* ran during the 1967-68 season, but there were few performances. The Ministry of Culture and Art ordered the theater's administration to limit the number of showings as of January 1, then to cancel the play altogether by February 1. The final performance took place January 30, 1968.

The banning of *Dziady* was met with public indignation. The Warsaw branch of the Polish Writers' Union, as well as other artistic and academic groups, protested. Signatures were collected under a petition to the Sejm demanding that the decision to ban the play be overturned. If this had been a Western demonstration, there would have been such slogans as, "Down with the theater! We don't want a division between audience and actors! All of us are directors! Let's all go on stage!" Instead, a procession walked past Mickiewicz's statue in downtown Warsaw waving a placard with an altogether conservative proposal: "We want the performances to continue."

Anger, aggression, brutality — they were all there. But not on the part of the students. They were the object of aggression, as became apparent on March 8 at Warsaw University. When the Minister of Higher Education expelled two students and initiated disciplinary proceedings against several others, the university's more active students called a meeting during which a resolution was read aloud by a young woman from the Department of Philosophy. A hastily convened delegation mostly from the same department went to see the rector, finding the prorector instead. Other students waited outside the administration building for them, suddenly finding themselves surrounded by people who didn't seem to belong on campus. Somebody had assembled these men and brought them to the university in special vans. The strangers then proceeded to force the students into the vans, taking away their personal and university identification cards. They behaved like policemen on duty, but were dressed in civilian clothes. The appeals of the student delegation in the rector's office and the intervention of two professors, however, led to the students' release and the return of their identification cards. The strangers drove off.

Then, straight through the main gate and on to campus charged a police battalion in full riot gear, with orders — quite evidently — to break up the gathering and beat up students. Similar dispersals of students who had gathered peacefully and lawfully occurred shortly thereafter in the larger cities. For those who had been beaten, and most other students as well, it was an unfamiliar and shocking experience. Older students could remember the demonstrations against the delegalization of *Po Prostu* [a student publication which criticized Party policy] in 1957; riot police also broke up demonstrations in 1966 during celebrations of the Christian Millenium in Poland. In any case, the use of force seemed — ethical considerations aside — completely impractical and unnecessary. It was difficult to make any sense out of the whole affair.

The day after, a meeting was held in the main auditorium of the Warsaw Polytechnic Institute, and by March 11 the student movement had spread to a majority of the universities in Poland. No one had forseen such a rapid expansion, which was a sign of pent-up dissatisfaction. The movement declared its solidarity with the students of Warsaw University and demanded both the punishment of the policemen responsible for the bru-

tal attacks, as well as the release of the students they arrested.

By March 11, the national media had picked up on the events connected with the student movement. But nobody was concerned with describing what happened; rather, the media's aim was to unmask the dark forces which lay behind the students' actions. Commentators with access to confidential information described the movement — or more precisely, those dark forces — in a manner that seemed, to the academic community, quite unconnected with reality....

In the middle of March 1968 the Polish people were informed that their country was facing the grave danger of *Zionism*. The public, however, didn't exactly know what Zionism was and what sort of danger it posed. So it was necessary to explain the new threat, a task which *Trybuna Ludu* undertook on March 15. Before the 11th it had been difficult to find the word Zionism in the official press. Of course much was written about Israel and the Arab states (during the Six-Day War in June of 1967 in particular), but there were no articles about Zionism. The danger was uncovered suddenly: Zionism first appeared in a trickle of articles on March 11,

Former Party members of high standing were declared "bankrupt", and it was argued that students, at the behest of those who had gone "bankrupt", intended to bring Stalinism back to Poland.

received a flood of media attention for the rest of the month, then only slowly receded thereafter (even now its hard to say whether its dried up altogether)....

The press became bellicose all at once, as if on command. Many different ideas and lines of reasoning were tangled together: one could read that students and writers were wrong to demand further performances of Dziady at the National Theater, since it wouldn't be appropriate to show it for the time being, because audiences had been applauding it too enthusiastically. Or to read that there were two or three vice-ministers and directors with children at university who, recently — and justly — had been removed from their posts. And it wasn't just a matter of children dragging down their parents. If a student's parents held a mid-range Party position or a job in the propaganda department of the Party, his chances of appearing on a list of student activists, regardless of the degree to which he was actually involved, were much greater. Television viewers were informed that one Janusz Szpotański was deservedly sentenced to three years in prison for writing satirical essays (Gomułka himself mentioned this affair on March 19, and with good cause, since he was himself a target of Szpotański's pen). Newspapers ran articles about the activities of "anti-Polish forces," which included allegedly hostile sessions of the Israeli Parliament. In April the Sejm condemned enemies of "every stripe," including "cosmopolitans" [a euphemism for Jews]; it also called attention to Israeli scheming and censured the deputies from the Catholic organization "Znak." What was their transgression? Submitting an interpellation to the Premier asking how the government intended to reply to student questions concerning civil liberties and cultural policy, and demanding that police brutality be halted and those responsible for it be called to account.

The government, and the authorities in general, though, were too busy with other matters to pay much attention to the requests and demands of students and the "Znak" deputies. Their attention, and the media's, was preoccupied with a sudden revival of interest in politics. Numbers were cited: 270,000 communists from the Silesia and Zagłębie regions expressed their support for comrade Władysław Gomułka; in fact, every day thereafter he was supported in one or more provinces. It was difficult to ascertain whether Gomułka had lacked support until now, and then suddenly, for whatever reasons, huge crowds had come to the conclusion that it was necessary to support him, or whether he already had support and somebody hit upon the idea to let him know about it....

The press also carried articles on the plotting of "bankrupt politicians" who, supposedly, stood behind the students. They were also called "consummate political schemers" and "bankrupt political instigators." These labels were a warning: former politicians were now being declared "bankrupt," and the same thing could happen to those currently in power. Former Party members of high standing were declared "bankrupt," and it was argued that students, at the behest of those who had gone "bankrupt," intended to bring Stalinism back to Poland.

The mass media seemed intent on silencing the voice of the academic community. But the students strove to break through this attempt at silencing them, which would explain the numerous meetings and resolutions as well as, beginning in mid-March, the strikes which took place at the Universities of Warsaw and Wrocław. The strikes — in the form of sit-ins and course boycotts — were conceived of as a means of communication, a way to get through to somebody. Obviously there were students who still believed that the highest officials had not been properly informed and were unaware of what was going on, because factions operating outside the Party leadership's control were to blame for everything that had gone wrong. However, the institutions controlled by the Party (committees, boards, the security apparatus, editorial staffs) were clearly being directed from the top; also, Gomułka's speech on March 19 left no doubt that he was well aware of the situation. But through a number of declarations the student movement still sought to convey its grievances to the authorities, despite continued attempts to silence them. Students sang satirical songs which frequently expressed the thoughts and feelings of the day clearly and more directly than the language of officialdom, which they had already tried to use – unsuccessfully – in communicating with the authorities... □

WE GREW UP IN A HURRY

A Conversation with Jakub Karpiński

Uncaptive Minds: Why did the students' revolt of March 1968 happen precisely at that time?

Jakub Karpiński: To answer that question one has to look at the background of events: the dull, austere and sad years of Wladyslaw Gomułka's rule [the Communist leader at that time]. These were the late fifties and the sixties, a period without great terror, without much opposition, and without many perspectives. Gomułka came to power in 1956 for the second time [he had been the General Secretary of the Communist Party until 1948]. From the very beginning of his second term Gomułka and his associates limited freedom of the press and freedom of association. Some freedom, however, still existed in youth organizations such as the scouts in the mid fifties. Catholic clubs and workers' councils were created in 1956, but — with the exception of the Catholic clubs — such organizations were soon deprived of their independence. As this process went on in the sixties, the rulers decided to launch a propaganda campaign against the Catholic Church, among other things over the holding of celebrations for the country's millennium in 1966. Amidst all of that, universities were still relatively free. In the best of them non-Marxist voices could be heard in the social sciences and the humanities, and students had a chance to gain some knowledge without being over-burdened with ideology.

What triggered the events of March 1968 was the government's ban of Adam Mickiewicz's nineteenth-century drama, *Dziady [Forefathers' Eve]*. The public applauded passages denouncing Russian rule in Poland-Lithuania. Writers and students protested against the ban. Two students were expelled from Warsaw University, so others decided to call a meeting on March 8 to defend their colleagues. The police crushed the meeting with exceptional brutality and this action triggered student protests all over Poland, which continued for three weeks despite repression.

Was it really — as some suggest — a revisionist, socialist revolt of students who saw themselves as being within the system, who accepted socialism but wanted to reform it?

Karpiński: We perhaps have to explain what revisionism is. First of all, it is an internal qualification in the Communist Party. There are revisionist views, but they are relative to the Party position of the day; it is the Party which determines who is revisionist at any given time. It seems that one cannot be a revisionist without belonging to the Communist Party. Revisionists of the late fifties and the sixties described themselves as Marxists and wanted to improve the way the Party was ruling the country: to allow for more liberty and some democracy — which was intended to include, or even start from, so-called "intra-party democracy." They were critical of the Party's policies, but they were not revisionists as long as the Party did not label them as such. They became revisionists if the Party authorities discovered that they were going too far in their critique. Usually somebody called a revisionist was expelled from the Party and he was, therefore, a revisionist only for a short time.

In 1968 one could find revisionists among writers, journalists, and younger university professors, and, in fact, the Party was looking for them and finding them there. The majority of the university professors were, however, not Party members and not Marxists, and, therefore, they could not be revisionists. Some students were under the influence of the revisionists, others were not.

"Socialism" is another problem. In the forties, the official description of the new, Soviet-imposed system in Eastern Europe was "people's democracy." Later the word "socialism" began to be the obligatory description of what existed and what was "being built." Usually people did not like living "under socialism," but "socialism" may also have other, non-descriptive meanings — for instance, for some people it can be a system allowing freedom, democracy and justice. When in the late fifties and the early sixties students were asked by sociologists which countries are "socialist" in their sense of the term, the students usually listed Sweden or Switzerland, and not Poland or the Soviet Union.

Certainly, students in 1968 addressed many demands to the deaf ears of the authorities — and to anybody else who happened to read their motions and leaflets. They demanded the autonomy of the universities, freedom of culture, freedom of assembly and association, the simple right not to be beaten, the right to have a fair trial, and the right not to be persecuted for ideas and opinions. Are such demands "socialist"? Not in the descriptive sense of the word: they do not have very much in common with the existing practice. But in a "non-descriptive" sense? Well, there are many non-descriptive senses of the term, one can always coin or find a sense which will suit one's terminological and ideological needs. When the word appeared in the students' motions in 1968, it was used in a non-descriptive and very vague sense of "a good and just political system" or "a system in which citizens have influence over the economy."

The March 1968 movement in Poland was mostly a protest movement. But — in contrast to some Western protests at that time — the movement was non-violent, very law-abiding, and did not have any anti-cultural overtones.

How important and far-reaching was the officially unleashed campaign of anti-semitism?

Karpiński: The anti-semitism of 1968 hid behind the code-name of "anti-Zionism." In the early sixties some "anti-Zionist" purges were conducted in the army and in the police but it was an affair known only to the higher echelons of the Party, without much effect on the population at large.

The situation changed precisely on March 11, 1968 when, in the morning, a large press campaign began. At the same time the protests spread to universities — and even high schools — all over the country. If one looked from the university's perspective, the press campaign was very exotic and very unexpected. One wondered what it had in common with the protest movement and with everything else that was happening at that time. There was some connection, however. One can guess that one of the aims of the press campaign was to divert the public's attention from what was happening at the universities. The press was full of reports from officially organized meetings condemning writers, students, and "Zionists." The latter, on top of that, were accused of collaboration with the Federal Republic of Germany, which, at that time, was the number-one enemy of the People's Republic of Poland.

The official anti-semitism of 1968 was alien to most students and university staff and astonished them. The very concept of "the Jew" was quite exotic for young people in Poland. The government, however, could not explain what "Zionism" was without saying that people can be divided into Jews and non-Jews (the latter were officially referred to as "Poles"). The classification was based on the genealogical background of a given person and it was the police and the Party that were busy with the difficulties of the classification (what to do, for instance, in cases of mixed origin). The Jews (i.e. people of Jewish origin) were expelled from their posts and from the universities and they were encouraged to leave Poland as "Zionists" and as non-Polish citizens. Before leaving they had to ask to be stripped of their Polish citizenship. These procedures and principles of division were alien to many Poles, especially to those from the younger generation.

What were the lasting effects of March 1968?

Karpiński: Some simple but necessary and healthy ideas formulated in March 1968 endured long after. The student movement was a movement of solidarity, a word which was to make a career some dozen years later. People were publicly expressing their ideas without the authorities' permission and control. The March movement was independent, autonomous, self-governing, and tried to establish — or to rediscover — the rules of reaching agreements and taking decisions in diversified, pluralistic groups. March 1968 at the universities was a very much needed school of democracy, particularly important for the new generation, which was born and grew up in a communist-ruled country.

TO THE STUDENTS OF WROCLAW!!

You are not alone in your just struggle. The crew of the PAFAWAG plant expresses its solidarity with you. True workers, that is, the majority of our plant's employees, have nothing in common with the hired rabbel-rousers who have disrupted and condemned your meetings. We demand, just as you do, truthful information in the press, the punishment of those guilty of fomenting the violent confrontations in Warsaw, and that Forefathers' Eve be returned to the stage.

In addition, we demand:

- the appointment of qualified people to positions of responsibility (we condemn the practice of falsifying resumes for those who hold high government posts).

- the enforcement of laws guaranteeing constitutional rights (including the freedom of assembly).

- halting the slander of students (many of whom are our children) and the setting of workers and students against each other.

- a purge of informants among the public at large.

Students of Wroclaw, we support the rally you held on Thursday, and should the need arise, we shall support you actively.

The Workers of the PAFAWAG plant

There were repressions, too, and they also belong to the lasting effects of March 1968. People went to prison and became acquainted with "socialist legality." This experience encouraged them to take an interest in the role of law and to understand the functioning of the system as a whole.

Some political alliances or simply friendships — which became useful later — date back to 1968. People learned, not at once and not easily, that in public matters they could use an independent and unofficial language which allowed them to express ideas not polluted by the official ideology. The stereotype, often repeated, that in March 1968 the students were alone, is far from the truth. There was external support — also from factories — especially during the student strikes in Warsaw and Wrocław in March. Despite the official propaganda, the events of 1968 largely contributed to the understanding that in the later stages of the communist system — as it exists now in Eastern Europe — independent activities outside the system are possible even though they are usually repressed. And Poles are enlarging this independent domain even today. □

The Official Polish Press on the Events of March 1968

Who did it?

certain well-defined groups
small, irresponsible groups of young people
an insignificant reactionary group
a group of provokateurs
a few irresponsible firebrands
groups of dirty, long-haired firebrands
not our working-class children
the spoiled sons of parents holding high government posts
people who want to sneak on stage through the back door
centers of anti-communist diversion
continuers of the sort of imperialism that produced Hitler
International Zionism
enemies of People's Poland
revisionists and bankrupt Zionists

What Happened?

an insignificant reactionary group of writers attacked the Party's political line and was applauded by hostile, anti-Polish organizations abroad
groups of students blocked traffic
a provocation
youth allowed itself to be drawn into a dirty political power-play
students were cut off from their studies
Polish society was thrown into turmoil
on the healthy body of the working class a boil appeared which had to be removed

Society's response

disapproval
open indignation
the whole nation absolutely condemns the instigators of the wild excesses
workers tell the firebrands: NO
we stand by the Party
we're with you, Comrade Wiesław [Gomułka]
Warsaw protests against Israel's treacherous assault
the nation is engaged in the building of socialism

What is to be done?

it is necessary to separate the wheat from the chaff
we demand the punishment of the instigators
we demand the punishment of the parents
we condemn revisionists and reformers
children should be raised with more discipline
expell the Zionists from the Party
send the Zionists to Israel
we are determined to chop off every hand raised against our beloved Fatherland

– from Jakub Karpiński's *Mowa do Ludu (Speaking to the People)*, Puls, London 1984.