

EASTERN EUROPE'S MONITOR

MOSCOW'S GREATEST CHANCE

ADENAUER AND THE CAPTIVE NATIONS

THE BOLSHEVIST TRAVESTY OF LITERATURE

BENEŠ' TRIP TO MOSCOW

THE COMMUNIST VERSION OF SLOVAK AUTONOMY

THE POLITICAL ASPECTS OF YUGOSLAV ECONOMY

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EASTERN EUROPE'S MONITOR

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Moscow's Greatest Chance

(D. V.) It is not to be found in the armaments race with the West nor in the advantages of a forcibly directed planned economy nor even in that superiority which communism claims as an outlook on life and a political system. It has been determined above all by the tolerant attitude and despondency of Western politics in the face of Soviet aggressiveness since the end of the late war. The West's shirking to intervene against the enslavement of nations or for their liberation has encouraged Moscow's expansionist policies and endowed communism in the course of the postwar years with a semblance of political respectability and legality.

Readiness to yield, to compromise, love of peace at any cost, and the lack of unity on the part of the West have for an entire decade supplied Moscow with major trump cards which it has plaid so masterfully as to be able today to confront the whole world with a claim to superiority. To what an extent the West has been thrown into confusion was revealed once more in a frightening manner on the occasion of State Secretary John Foster Dulles' controversial interview with *Life* magazine when the greater part of the free world's public opinion by its reaction merely poured grist into Moscow's mills. The statement alone, made by the helmsman of U. S. foreign policy, that it had been necessary in the course of the last few years to threaten atomic retribution in order to stem communist world aggression—a revelation which should fill every one concerned in freedom with gratitude for the services rendered to liberty by responsible American politics—sufficed to unleash a storm of protests against Mr. Dulles' allegedly "inappropriate" policy of threats and warmongering. Blindness to the bolshevik world menace and condoning the aggressiveness of the communist world powers has in certain Western circles reached the point where the criminal is being shielded from the guardian of law and order.

How can this paradox state of affairs be explained? There can be little doubt that the aftermath of World War II has been singularly favourable to the success achieved by communist propaganda strategy. World communism exploited to the full the propitious postwar psychological atmosphere in order to fish in troubled waters and to benefit handsomely by wide-spread aversion in the West to dictatorship and war as well as by the longing for peace. By cynically turning upside-down or misrepresenting the basic categories of constitutional law and international politics—such as democracy, freedom, peace, sovereignty, non-intervention, etc.—Moscow has for long years been able to fool public opinion and to create and maintain rifts in the West on the plane of both domestic and foreign affairs. The slogan of so-called anti-fascism has been one of the major tricks with the help of which it could be

contrived to defame off hand every ripple of resistance in the free world to Soviet aggression or communist tyranny as "neo-fascism", "militarism", "warmongering" or even "imperialism".

Kremlin Counts on Lapse of Time

As already revealed at the 'summit' talks of the big four at Geneva, the Soviet Union is openly claiming the formal recognition of its actual sphere of influence, moreover brazenly on the ground that the peoples of Eastern Europe had "freely chosen" their governments and that their "socialist evolution" was already an "accomplished historical fact", no longer to be called in doubt by any one. The mere discussion of these facts is decried by Moscow as "interference with the domestic affairs of sovereign States"! Obviously the rulers of the Kremlin are of opinion that the ten years which have elapsed since the subjugation through bloody terror of these European nations are sufficient not only to obliterate that historic crime but to render it downright respectable as a "progressive achievement". No sooner had this interpretation remained unanswered by the West and the latter shown its willingness to consent to a relaxation of tensions and the termination of the cold war in return solely for the settlement of the German question, thus bringing into being cheaply enough the "spirit of Geneva", than the Soviet Union cast off its smiling mask at the second Geneva conference in order to heap new accusations—in the name of that very "spirit"—on Western policies or at least "certain imperialistic circles" and individual politicians.

Certainly not the least cause of Moscow's ability to pose today in the framework of a world-wide campaign as the champion of peace and friendship among the nations, nay, even to set itself up as the guardian of "non-intervention" and "respect for national sovereignty" is to be sought in the circumstances that in Geneva the Soviet Government was permitted to avail itself on the highest level of these misinterpretations of fact without encountering a rebuttal and that the West was lacking in the resolve needed for a firm policy of liberation. And, since the "argument" based on the lapse of time, for which negative prescription is the legal term, has proved water-tight at Geneva, Moscow and the other East European capitals subsequently had the effrontery to frown upon President Eisenhower's New Year's message to the captive nations as "strange" and to denounce his standing up for their freedom as a "relapse into the cold war". Simultaneously, the communist potentates, in their statements made on the threshold of the New Year, vied with one another in conjuring up the "Geneva spirit" which they said had proved a turning point in world politics by introducing the era of "peaceful coexistence". All those in the West who dare think otherwise and are not prepared to play the game are mere "imperialists", "monopoly capitalists" and "revanchists".

End the Misinterpretation of Basic Concepts

The toleration of this type of Soviet political slang on the diplomatic plane only serves to enhance Soviet propaganda and is having a devastating effect in the field of the psychological conditioning of the masses. The Soviet

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rulers, after having left Geneva unscathed and, in fact, received the accolade as partners in the relationship of peaceful coexistence, presented themselves to the Asiatic peoples, too, as the champions of liberty and national sovereignty and the saviors from destitution and colonialism. And if the Soviet Union is able in Asia to play the part of the benefactor also by virtue of generous grants of financial and economic aid, this is only possible because for years on end it has been allowed to overstrain ruthlessly the working capacity and economic potential of the captive nations. And, of course, so long as Russia may continue exploiting the enslaved East European countries in this manner she will be able to outbid the West and press on with her purposeful policy of expansion.

What is needed to deprive Moscow of its greatest chance in the cold war is to stop it at long last misrepresenting facts and basic concepts and revaluing all values. The way to achieve this, however, is possible only by the responsible policy-makers of the West talking cold turkey to the Soviet Union instead of, as has hitherto been done, countering it merely in the subdued tones of non-committal radio transmissions and debatable press statements. It is high time that the bolshevik encyclopaedia should be unmasked ruthlessly and its mendacity shown up to the world at large. For until Moscow's "struggle for peace" and refusal to tolerate "interference" with the internal affairs of the captive nations is not denounced for what it is—namely, a cynical claim to perpetuate communist tyranny—and rejected as impermissible Soviet colonialism, bolshevik aggression will retain its greatest chance. And the longer the West continues hesitating to shoulder resolutely the policy of liberation, the sooner will world communism be enabled to don even the garb of the "liberator".

Free Elections for All

The above postulate should become a basic maxim of Western policy and a *conditio sine qua non* of any further talks with Moscow. The free expression of the captive nations' will should also have the last word in all disputes between Moscow and the free world so as to clear up the confusion of such concepts as "people's democracy", "socialist achievements", "progress" or "reaction", etc. Surely that would not represent any "intervention in the affairs of sovereign States"; on the contrary, it is the only possible way to end peacefully that massive Soviet interference, which is still going on unabated, and to make valid those peoples' justified claim to national sovereignty. Besides, allowing the peoples' will to be freely expressed is a clear postulate of the United Nations Charter to which even the USSR is one of the signatories. If it is claimed to be true that the governments of the so-called people's democracies are enjoying the unlimited confidence and the mass support of their respective subjects, there could be no better means for Moscow to prove the validity of that claim than by letting free elections be carried out under international supervision.

For no lapse of time can invalidate the claim to freedom. Communist rule of terror and supreme power usurped by the force of arms—both having so far been maintained exclusively by means of bloody repression—must not be recognized as accomplished "historic facts" only because the grass has grown

once more over millions of graves. There is no danger indeed of the "clock of history", about which the rulers of the Orient appear to be so concerned, being put back. In actual fact it is communist rule which today keeps the hands of that clock jammed at an all-time low of barbarism; to get them moving again would, far from being conducive to retrogression, represent an historic act in the service of progress and western culture.

For the free world to continue remaining inactive in the face of these facts would amount to moral capitulation, to be followed, sooner or later but inevitably, also by political and strategic defeat. If the West were to prove unsuccessful in wrenching from Soviet politics its arms first of all on the spiritual and political plane, the chances would be preserved for communism to make the world ripe for conquest in the long run—by means or short of war.

On the Track of Events

Ten Years of No Europe

Historical evolution and the discovery of new arms of mass destruction have caused the nations of the world to regroup themselves in two great blocs—on the one hand, the free West and, on the other hand, Asia, either communist or tending to adopt communism.

It is, therefore, up to the United States of America, Europe and Great Britain to determine the future of the West.

It is only too well-known a fact that the United Kingdom with its Commonwealth of oversea countries is largely concentrating its attention on its extra-European interests. As regards Europe and its 400 million inhabitants—of whom 100 million are, alas, already under the heel of the Asian invader—how is it represented in the councils of the "great"? After World War II, most Europeans had pinned their hopes on, and placed their trust in, France as the power to which should be rightfully assigned the mission of representing Europe as a whole by virtue of its historic functions, its ancient culture, the radiation of its civilisation. Unfortunately the disillusionment has been bitter. Today it is already possible to take the full measure of France's failure to fulfill her natural mission while being incapable even of solving her own problems, and a desperate Europe has no option but to invoke, apart from the assistance of Divine Providence, that of an honest and, fortunately, patient USA.

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Ten years of virtual absence from the councils of the great, a decade of weakness and abstention from participating in the determination of her own

destinies—Europe has had enough of that. Vigorous and productive nations, such as free West Germany and Italy, more highly populated than France, together with other, smaller but no less vital European peoples, filled with constructive ardour, claim the right to survive and to decide about their own fate. And since France has, together with the European Defence Community, rejected the idea of a United Europe; since that France of partisan political parties, supra-governmental economic interests and ephemeral, powerless governments, can no longer pretend to represent Europe by herself alone, why should not our Continent be represented at future international gatherings by an "European Commission" consisting of a member each of France, West Germany, and Italy, together with a fourth delegate jointly chosen by the other European nations? Surely, 300 million Europeans are a fair match to the population numbers of the USA and the British Commonwealth. Their voice ought to be heard. Also, can the free world afford to forget once and for all about the 100 million Europeans enslaved at the present time? Would not one delegate from among those who have chosen freedom be necessary to mark a tragic presence, to act as a cruel and permanent *memento mori*, even though that presence might disturb the complacent beatitude of a still free West—still free for how long?

*

This, then, is the summary conclusion to be derived from the sad balance sheet of a decade of Western politics. It is equally justifiable to speak of the "greatness" and the "decadence" of Europe; to try to estimate her chances; to desire her ultimate triumph; to hope that she will survive or to be anxious lest she succumb. The vigorous peoples of Europe are not prepared to accept annihilation, particularly if it were to be brought about by so-called "great protectors". They want to survive at all costs; they refuse to be dragged down into the deadly whirlpool created by sinking idols. They will do all in their power to ensure their unity and common defence. But of course they will have to solicit the aid and protection of that America which is their only sincere friend of yesterday as well as of today, the only power to uphold the sanctity of the word of honour about the significance of which the European West is beginning to forget.

Yes, the Americans and those "unimportant" Europeans could still save Europe and mankind from a final catastrophe.

EUROPUS

"To condone the permanent enslavement of a third of the world is not only immoral. By that act, we ourselves shall perish, and we shall deserve to perish."

Prof. Watson Kirkconnell, Ph.D.
President of Acadia University,
Wolfsville, Canada

Pathfinder for the East

Neither in the sphere of foreign affairs nor economics are India, Burma, Egypt or Abyssinia of the slightest interest to a country in Yugoslavia's position except in the most generalised sense of the term.

The question therefore arises as to whom Tito's recent peregrinations over vast expanses of Asia and Africa were in reality meant to serve? Up to a short time ago many important newspapers in the free West—in fact some of the most influential ones among them—were obviously expecting Tito to assume the role of benevolent mediator on behalf of the Western powers in the Middle East. This trend of thought had become especially manifest at the time of State Secretary Dulles' visit to Tito on the island of Brioni as well as Mr. Kardelj's trip to London.

The Western Press had undoubtedly given Marshal Tito a powerful build-up, particularly in the eyes of those Asiatic and African peoples he was busy visiting over the last eighteen months or so. It has been strongly plugged that Marshal Tito was by no means a mere stooge of Moscow but a man heading a truly independent—though communist—State and a statesman of independent thinking.

Yet after his recent state visit to Colonel Nasser, President Tito issued a communiqué in which he attacked the Western powers as the oppressors and exploiters of the former colonial peoples and turned with particular acerbity against the Baghdad Pact. Next day blood was shed in Amman and the old city of Jerusalem. On his return to Belgrade, when public opinion in the USA began airing its indignation at the vilifications uttered by Marshal Tito, the latter hastened to renew his charges and to add that whereas formerly he had known of the ill-deeds committed by the ex-colonial powers only from hearsay or reading he had now satisfied himself of their truth on the spot.

No wonder the NEW YORK TIMES, on January 9th last, wondered editorially if the West had not better query the sincerity of Tito's neutral status in view of his attacks on the Baghdad Pact. In our view the paper was quite correct in establishing the strange simultaneity of Tito's statements and the wave of demonstrations against the Baghdad Pact, all instigated, organised and led by communists in Jordan's major cities. Surely, many Americans will concur with the NEW YORK TIMES' editorial opinion that Tito's stand, so hostile to the Baghdad Pact, made it difficult for the friends of Yugoslavia in the USA to uphold the concept of the "neutrality" of that country, seeing that the detractors of the Baghdad Pact were plainly serving Moscow's interests only.

BORBA, Yugoslavia's leading communist newspaper begged the question in answering the NEW YORK TIMES with a mere play of words, saying that the Baghdad Pact had the "quality of an unqualifiable organisation" which could bring security to no one as it was based on discontent and, as such, might only sow the seeds of trouble.

This was clearly no answer to the Americans' only too justified misgivings. Nor had Tito's official Yugoslavia a better reply to British diplomatic protests against the Western powers and the Baghdad Pact being reviled from Belgrade.

Incidentally, Yugoslavia's attacks directed against the Northern Tier Alliance also cast a peculiar light on the value of her participation in the Balkan Pact since in the latter she is supposed to be linked, politically and strategically, with Turkey which happens to be a partner also in the much-reviled Baghdad Pact.

While Tito was sailing in Middle Eastern waters much happened to draw Yugoslavia closer to the Soviet Bloc. Visiting delegations from the Eastern satellites kept turning up in Belgrade and many an agreement was concluded on important matters concerning their mutual economic and other relations. For the first time since 1948, the New Year's messages issued from Moscow and also from most of the satellite capitals, strongly stressed the communist countries' solidarity with Yugoslavia, regarded as a dangerous heretic only a short while ago. The official Yugoslav news agency, TANJUG, in its review of the Soviet Press, emphasized its having reported at length and with warm appraisal on Tito's Middle Eastern tour, appreciating particularly the Yugoslav President's attacks on the Baghdad Pact.

It would therefore appear that the fair promises made earlier by Tito on Brioni Island and by Kardelj in London were never meant to be kept; in fact, they could have been intended only to mislead the Western powers.

The only logical explanation of President Tito's politics is that he has undertaken the task of acting as a kind of political pathfinder for the aggressive plans of the Soviet Bloc, drawing the fire of the latter's potential enemies and lighting up whatever might be the next target area in Moscow's planning. Witness his exploratory journeys to India and Burma, preceding those so mischievously carried out by Messrs. Bulganin & Co. Witness his touring in the Middle East right now when it has just been clearly revealed that Moscow is making a major effort to stir up trouble in that part of the world.

One only wonders what's going to happen in Abyssinia next?

Adenauer and the Captive Nations

The free world's public opinion has paid ample and befitting tribute to Germany's great old statesman on the occasion of his eightieth birthday. The entire free press was unanimous in asserting that Konrad Adenauer was one of the most tenaciously consistent defenders of the Christian world and its achievements against an incessantly looming Red peril. He has been successful in, first, saving the German people out of the teeth of its worst defeat in history and, subsequently, to lead it back as an equal partner into the comity of free nations so that his nation may become a principal bulwark of European civilisation. It is only right, therefore, that Chancellor Adenauer should be celebrated today as an European statesman and one of the prime movers of the world's destinies in the broadest sense.

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From the very beginning of his career as a statesman, Chancellor Adenauer has clearly recognized the communist danger as being so great that it must relegate all other problems into the background and that only the united strength of all free peoples can ban and eventually overcome it. Communism threatens both the victors and the vanquished of the late war: it would be fatal for both to become divided. Only unity, only a united front inspired by a single idea can save the world. That idea has become Herr Adenauer's political credo.

As a rule, the politicians and statesmen of the non-communist world are arriving at that conclusion only through shattering experiences and usually when it is already too late. This is best known to the captive nations enslaved by communism and their former leaders who are today partly liquidated, partly living in exile. That is why Konrad Adenauer is at the present time held in high respect and esteem also by the nations beyond the Iron Curtain, amongst whom his popularity is possibly even greater than in the free West. This is all the more significant as the best part of those nations which are today languishing under the yoke of communist tyranny have suffered much from the Germans in the course of their history, particularly during World War II, and have partly fallen prey to communism as a consequence of Germany's wartime policies. It is above all due to Chancellor Adenauer's tenacious, wise and purposeful policies that those nations have not only changed their opinion but are, in fact, putting their trust and great hopes in Germany.

That is precisely why propaganda emanating from Moscow and the satellite government centers, including Yugoslavia, is trying so hard to denigrate contemporary Germany in the eyes of the captive nations and to fill their hearts with new fear by recalling the unhappy episodes of the past. However, such propaganda is not meeting with any success. Recently, the communists attempted also to denounce German rearmament and to conjure up the scare-crow of renascent German militarism and imperialism. Again, all these attempts have been in vain. On the contrary, the enslaved peoples are listening to and discussing the news about West Germany's rearming with rising hopes, for they believe that the new German Armed Forces would serve purely as a shield against communism and as an important link in the chain-armour protecting the free world. This fundamental change of heart amongst the captive nations—this psychological miracle—is, as we said before, chiefly the merit of the wise, old Federal Chancellor.

This circumstance is the best of proof of Konrad Adenauer having understood something that no leading German statesman had clearly seen before him. Having been placed by Providence in the very heart of our Continent, the German race has been assigned the noble task of pioneering for a truly healthy and free community of European nations, both big and small, and of remaining their impenetrable rampart against the aggressiveness of Eastern barbarism.

R. P.

The Bolshevik Travesty of Literature

by ALADÁR KOVÁCH

At the beginning of the twenties of our century, a new method of literary research was brought into being, the so-called "Comparative History of Literature", or, according to the original French term, *la littérature comparée*. Although its origins go back to earlier times and other countries, it was in France that the comparative study of literature has first been granted a university chair, held by the "beau Lorrain", M. Baldensperger of Alsace-Lorraine.

It is a fascinating study, this comparative history of literature. From the depths of distant centuries it brings to the surface relationships and analogies between works of art and literature although, in those remote days, the creators of works of art could not communicate with one another in the physical sense of the word. Somehow, somewhere, great spiritual or intellectual trends got started—Hellenic, Early Christian, Renaissance, Baroque, etc.—and, crossing the border-lines of geography, history and politics, within a brief lapse of time gave rise to similar outlooks on life.

Recent political history has, alas, shown us the seamy side of the picture. For if somebody cared to steep himself into a comparative study of the literature of the countries under Communist occupation he would soon find himself confronted with a tragicomic uniformity, a common veneer glossing over all differences of national genius or stages of evolution. The literary phenomena of the captive nations are today marching strangely in step; their ideas, even their phraseology are oddly identical.

In the realm of the Soviet mind the task of the *littérature comparée* has been greatly eased. There is no need any more to painstakingly collect and examine thousands of symptoms after their occurrence; common features and changes can be ascertained in advance for five-year periods by having recourse to those central planning offices where the blueprints for Soviet cultural output are being prepared.

I know it all sounds like a grotesque utopia, this Communist parody of the comparative study of literature, and yet, it is the plain truth distilled from the experiences of a tragic decade. Unfortunately we have learned to foretell the shape of things to come from the analysis and evaluation of these ten years of Soviet rule. The recent past of the Muscovite Communist empire has provided us with a whole set of identically cut keys to its cultural future.

The first thesis that can be derived from the study of Soviet culture is that *literature in the Soviet orbit has no life of its own.*

In its true sense, literature is one of the most exalted functions of the human mind. Take the *Bible*, for instance, the *Scriptures*. Here you have divine and human revelation entwined, the overture to humanity's unending symphony, to that historic process of man's discovering and getting to know himself which is literature. For thousands of years, man turning to himself—introverted man—has kept bringing forth crop upon crop of this self-scrutiny, the confessions of his recognizing himself. The art of writing has a life of its own;

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substance and form are born simultaneously. Literature is neither pastime nor entertainment: it is, as we said, the process of man discovering his own self.

But of this kind of literature the Soviet world has no need. Literature in the Soviet orbit is merely a medium of advertising the Party, a means of propaganda, the background music to communist planning, the concomitant feature of military and economic conquest. Soviet literature is but an agglomeration of empty pods, of words stripped of their contents, of formulae falsely applied—in one word, the travesty of literature.

Let us investigate some of its most characteristic symptoms.

The uniformity of phraseology to be found in Polish, Rumanian, Bulgarian, Slovak or Hungarian books of the 1945 vintage is truly amazing. The student of the comparative history of literature does not need going out of his way in order to find the common denominator. The latter had been determined by the dominant task set to writers in the Soviet sphere of influence in these words—"perpetuate the delightful moment of liberation". The Eastern peoples were called upon to "express their undying gratitude to the Soviet Union".

1945 had still been a year-at-arms.

The period between 1946 and 1948 became the cycle of pseudo-revolutions. Covered by the protective shield of Soviet arms, the Red Party penetrated the lives of the captive nations, destroying from within that which the Soviet forces had left intact by sheer chance. In terms of literature this was the era of "Soviet humanism", its main task being again to express "infinite gratitude to the leading country of socialism" as well as "the proletarians' enjoyment of free life".

The most ludicrous chapter of the comparative history of literature in the communist-subjugated countries was represented by the garland of celebrations wound wreath-like round Stalin's seventieth birthday. The odes and hymns composed in his honour by allegedly "individual authors" in the various East European languages read like one another's translations. Not as if the authors had read their mutual opposite numbers' masterpieces—o no, they simply copied, one and all, the patterns provided by Moscow.

However, one fine day the fact was realized that all that mass-production of print failed to have the slightest effect on the people. No matter how profusely the masses were being inundated with radio broadcasts, films, gramophone records, newspapers and books, there just was not any response.

The Soviet authorities in charge are fully aware that the real writers and poets remain silent. No attempt is being made to make them thaw up; they are the dangerous "ghosts" of the past who could only haunt the communist world with the images of reality and truth. The Soviet leaders are quite content to employ "ersatz" writers, pens for hire, who are not of the realm of the spirit and the intellect, the latter not being wanted anyway.

This literary "second eleven" is entirely subject to the party congresses' guidance. It is the party congress which determines the literary line, chooses the writers' themes for them and even suggests the appropriate modes of expression. It is the party congress's job to project the political program on to the literary plane. The commissioning of works of literature, the choice

and allocation of themes, is running parallel with the events of political life. Thus is born the socialist thriller, full of the suspense of the "people's criminality"—the unmasking of "enemy agents within the party".

Another popular theme is the extermination of the middle classes with the view of making it accepted by the public at large. We have on record, Hungarian, Yugoslav, Slovak, Bulgarian and Polish novels, all depicting the new life of former white-collar workers in the mines. The writer is given the task to demonstrate "how heavy physical work transforms the town-dweller's character".

Time and again the party congress issues instructions for the "the category of farming themes" to be plugged more vigorously in prose, the objective being of course the popularisation of collective farming.

These more monumental efforts are naturally interspersed with the never-ending sprinkle of odes and hymns, songs for the shock-workers' brigades, poems on the toilers' longing for peace and gratitude for the Soviet way of life. Even the production of humoristic works is recurringly decided upon—which is perhaps of all decisions the most difficult of achievement.

The Party is the brooder in which the replacement chicks of literature are being reared. It is the Party that provides opportunities for the young writer in its newspapers, periodicals and theatres—provided that the novice is able and prepared to renounce all individual inventiveness, all instinctive inspiration and creative vision springing truly from within. It is glass eyes, not eye-glasses, that the Party provides for its literary famuli. Of course the Party must never be criticised; to do so would be tantamount to "ideological treason". The Party, on the other hand, acting through the machine of the party congress, is not only entitled to criticise all and sundry: its criticisms have a "fertilizing effect" on the writers' minds.

Often the "excesses" committed by young poets are drawing the Party's fire. And what are those excesses? Perhaps semi-concealed efforts directed at conjuring up the banished national past or at preaching some political heresy? By no means. What the Party criticises most severely in young poets is their indulging in amorous emotions. Lyrics of love are "petty bourgeois remnants"; love is analogous with flippancy, it cannot provide the theme for literary works produced by upright communist poets or writers. If love he must, let the young poet fall in love with "the idea" or perhaps with the Party itself!

As the natural order of life is thus being upset, there cannot be any question of literary life either. The contemporary literary production in the Soviet satellite countries is neither more nor less than the amateurish or workmanlike imitation of old literary forms, the remote and faint echo of what had once been life and literature.

It is a very important symptom that the youngest writers, only just about to make their start, are sensing the frustrating quality of this situation just the same as the generation preceding them. The Party has not succeeded in "fertilizing" youth's mind; the young ones are confronting the intellectual system of Bolshevism without sympathy or understanding.

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Last summer, for the customary "Day of the Book" an anthology of short stories by 13 young writers was allowed to appear on the Hungarian market. It is hard to say whether the publication was permitted as the result of an oversight or because the Party wanted to exercise leniency in the hope of bringing the young writers round to its views in due course. Suffice the fact that the anthology of short stories was suddenly taken out of circulation and even withdrawn from the public libraries that had acquired it only three weeks after having been put on the market. Why?

The reasons as indicated by the Hungarian Communist Party's chief critic, László Bóka, are significant enough to be quoted at least in part. "It is our basic tenet", wrote Bóka in the official Party daily, *Szabad Nép*, on July 31, 1955, "that there is need of the writers' depicting the past; that the future must also be revealed but that the writer should above all provide the answers to the problems of the present. If we are reviewing the short stories written by those 13 young authors from this angle, we get a picture that is indeed worrying... The volume as a whole oozes out a negative, languid, depressing mood; taken together these short stories create an impression even worse than when read one by one. From a score or more of short stories produced by thirteen young writers there have disappeared the Party, the working class, all our audacious plans and projects, and what's left behind are merely a few acrid memories from the past, some unsolved problems of the present and maybe one or two episodes of a wan serenity."

But Bolshevism has a method, worked out to a fine art, with which to render somnolent the alertness of mind among the subjugated small nations. The national language and the basic elements of folkloristic art (popular songs and dances) are being left intact for the time being whilst all intellectual creative activity of a higher order, such as would really permit the national genius to deploy itself, is being suppressed. Transcendental vision, religion, traditions, the haunting magic of the past—they are banished one and all. True literature is a grave menace to Bolshevism's taking roots; therefore it must be eliminated in the first phase of the establishing of its overlordship. This is followed later by campaigns of linguistic russification directed at the final conquest. The ground having been prepared in advance, the proletarianized masses are sliding smoothly, almost without the slightest transition, into Russian intellectual grooves. As regards the Slavonic peoples, whose language is akin to Russian, these grooves are especially lubricated so that for them the danger of slipping into a complete loss of identity is greater than for the non-Slavonic nations.

It is remarkable also that Bolshevism's Russian steamroller is no longer working with the 19th-century dynamic slogans of panslavism: now the bait is the ideal of the neutralized, denationalized Soviet Man which serves as a temporary camouflage for the essentially Russian character of the conqueror.

The West is only just beginning to recognize the structural characteristics of this psychological monster.

Beneš' Trip to Moscow

Truth versus Propaganda

by DR. MICHAEL ZIBRIN

In his *Memoirs*, the late Dr. Eduard Beneš admits that Great Britain's Foreign Secretary, Mr. Anthony Eden, as he then was called, raised certain formal objections to Dr. Beneš' impending State visit to Moscow, planned late in 1943. The defunct President's posthumous propagandists, however, do not today admit even this fact: they pay tribute to Beneš' Moscow visit as to an act of statesmanship that greatly helped the Allies and to which Washington and London are said to have consented.

None of those who attended, or only just read the minutes of, the meetings of the Czechoslovak State Council in London, during the months of July, September and October, 1943, could in good faith concur with those views. In fact, it was the Communist State Councillor, Valo, who most aptly described the position in his speech in the Council when he declared that *Beneš must go to Moscow wheter the British liked it or not*. If they did not like it, he said, the Czechoslovak Government-in-Exile should leave England.

Bohumil Laušman (who has since defected to the communist side for a second time), and Mr. Uhlir too, both having just returned to London from Moscow, stressed the necessity of the President's visit to the Soviet Union. The State Council thereupon decided by a unanimous vote to ask Beneš to go to Moscow as soon as possible. Dr. Ripka submitted the Council's decision to Dr. Beneš and procured the means of conveyance for the President and his company.

The true background to Beneš' visit was highlighted by the Czechoslovak newspaper *Denni Hlasatel* in its issue of August 11, 1943, reporting the Moscow newspaper, *Pravda*, having written that "the President of the Czechoslovak Government, Dr. Beneš, was forced to postpone his long-planned trip to Mosxow because of the opposition of British circles." On October 4, 1943, *Denni Hlasatel* carried the following news item: "The Czechoslovak Government-in-Exile announced today that it wished to enter into a pact of mutual aid and defence with the Soviet Union *despite the demand made by Foreign Minister Eden and the Polish Government-in-Exile for the debate on the pact to be postponed*... Mr. Eden asked Dr. Beneš to postpone his trip to Moscow..."

It will be useful to remember that this news was issued in Great Britain by Dr. Hubert Ripka to both the news agencies and the Czechoslovak press while in the United States it was published by Dr. Papanek.

On October 14, 1943, *Denni Hlasatel* reprinted an abbreviated version of a news item carried by the *Christian Science Monitor* on the previous day. Retranslated into English the relevant passage reads as follows: "The postponement can probably be explained by official British action resulting from Mr. Eden's statement in Parliament of September 22nd last, in which Mr. Eden said that British intervention for Dr. Beneš' trip to be postponed had been the result of a discussion held with Mr. Molotov at the time of the latter's visit to London, in 1942... His Majesty's Government, said Mr. Eden, thought

that both governments were of opinion that it would be better for them at present not to conclude such a pact..."

How, then, can Dr. Ripka, in his book *Czechoslovakia Enslaved*, maintain that Dr. Beneš had gone to Moscow with the consent of the Allies? How can the members of the Council of Free Czechoslovakia pretend today that Dr. Beneš went to the Soviet Union to sign an alliance with the USSR, carrying the blessings of Washington and London? The truth is, of course, that Dr. Beneš went to Moscow at the request of that State Council some of whose members are today sitting on the Council of Free Czechoslovakia in Washington—and he went there against the will of the British Government which had been acting host to the Czechoslovak Government-in-Exile throughout the war.

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It is of interest to note that when, in October 1943, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the coming into being of the Czechoslovak Republic was celebrated in Washington and London, *Denni Hlasatel* as well as other Czechoslovak newspapers reprinted the texts of various proclamations issued, in 1918, by the Czechoslovak National Council in Paris, and also the text of the so-called Washington Declaration. On these documents there appeared i. a. the signature of General Dr. Milan Štefanik. At that time, however, General Štefanik was in Russia; therefore he was not able physically to sign any declarations in October, 1918, either in Washington or in Paris. According to the memoirs of the French General Janin, when Štefanik learned about those documents, he not only expressed disagreement with their contents but protested through General Janin's good offices against his signature being used without his knowledge and permission.

I am referring to that incident in order to show that the Czechoslovak politicians have not changed.

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On his visit to Moscow, in 1943, President Beneš promised Stalin Ruthenia which had never before in history formed part of the Russian Empire. Dr. Beneš' promise was eventually redeemed when on June 29, 1945, he formally ceded Ruthenia to the USSR by treaty without consulting the people of that unfortunate country and in flagrant violation of the Czechoslovak Constitution.

In fact, according to the official reports handled by the then chiefs of the Czechoslovak press agency bureaus in London and New York—Dr. Ripka and Dr. Papanek—Dr. Beneš, at a meeting in London, held with the Soviet Ambassador Maisky on September 19, 1939, when the question of a common boundary between Czechoslovakia and the USSR was discussed, assured Maisky that as far as Ruthenia was concerned he (Dr. Beneš) and Stalin would come to terms between the two of them. Beneš himself admits this fact on page 207 of his *Memoirs*.

Moreover, Jaromir Smutny, who accompanied Beneš to Moscow, writes in his book *The Case of Ruthenia* (published by the Beneš Institute in London) on page 34: "When Beneš talked about Ruthenia in Moscow he basically agreed that Czechoslovakia would and could not be against the annexation of Ruthenia by the USSR provided the local population also wished it." This

The Communist Version of Slovak "Autonomy"

by DR. CTIBOR POKORNÝ

It is generally known that the complete disintegration and the eventual downfall of the Czecho-Slovak Republic was caused mainly by the highly centralised régime of that State structure derived from the fictitious concept of a unitary "Czechoslovak" nation.

Political circles in the West expected therefore that the leading politicians of the Czecho-Slovak Republic, forcibly re-established after World War II by the Red Army, would draw the necessary conclusion from the mistakes of the past and would revise the constitutional position of Slovakia. To do so seemed advisable not only on account of the figment of a "Czechoslovak" nation having been abandoned but also because the existence of the Slovak nation, as a people having an individuality of its own, has been officially recognized. The representatives of the new, post-war régime repeatedly emphasized that Czechoslovakia ought to be converted into the joint State of two nations enjoying equal rights, namely, the Czechs and the Slovaks. It was thereupon anticipated far and wide that the Czechoslovak state structure would be re-moulded to become a federation on the Yugoslav pattern.

Under these conditions the Czech communists have been successful without any great difficulty in persuading the world at large that, by endowing with legal status the "Slovak national authorities", introduced *de facto* at an earlier stage as the allegedly highest representatives of legislative and executive power in Slovakia, the communist Constitution of May 9, 1948, ensured full political autonomy to the country of the Slovaks. The world has given credence to that assertion made by communist propaganda although it should have been generally known that in communist states there is only one source of power, the centralistically steered Communist Party, which has such exclusive control of the levers of power as to render completely illusory not only the constitutional division of powers but even the sovereignty, established in international law, of formerly independent states.

It should therefore be stated clearly that Slovakia today, far from being an equal partner of the Bohemian lands in the sense as the Soviet Socialist Republics of, say, Kazakhstan, Kirgisistan, Tadjikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, are partners of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic, does not even enjoy the legal status accorded *within* the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic to such so-called autonomous Soviet Republics as, for example, those of Bashkiria, Daghستان, Yakutia, etc.

This fact has been admitted i. a. by the Czech communist jurist, Eduard Kučera, in his study "On Some Questions of Autonomy and Slovakia's Position within the Framework of the Czechoslovak Republic" (*Acta Universitatis Carolinae, Prague, 1954*):

According to E. Kučera, the characteristics of political self-government in the sense established by the Constitution of the Soviet Union may be enumerated as follows:

1. The autonomous unit has its own Constitution, derived from the general principles laid down in the Constitution of the State and subject to the approval of the State legislature;

BENEŠ' TRIP TO MOSCOW

was confirmed to me by Dr. Zdenek Fierlinger, then Beneš' Ambassador in Moscow. Also Dr. Taborsky, Secretary to Dr. Beneš in 1941, states that, on August 28 of that year, President Beneš, conferring in London with Ambassador Maisky, said to the latter: "Ruthenia cannot remain with the Hungarians; the Poles must not have it; that province can only belong either to Czechoslovakia or Russia."

And yet, Beneš' propagandists of the day, particularly Dr. Papanek in Washington and Dr. Ripka in London, kept emphasizing that Stalin had recognized prewar Czechoslovakia within its original boundaries, Ruthenia included.

On December 1, 1944, when František Nemeč was acting as President Beneš' Representative in Ruthenia, he received from the Regional Convention of National Committees a communication according to which it had been decided that Ruthenia should no longer form part of Czechoslovakia, and that, the National Council of Ruthenia having been established, he—Nemeč—no longer represented Ruthenia. The communication was signed by Nemeč's adviser, Mr. Turjanec, who, together with the Communists Petruscak and Valo, had been assigned to Nemeč by Dr. Beneš himself.

When Ambassador Fierlinger, on behalf of his Government, raised objections in Moscow to what was happening in Ruthenia, Stalin wrote a personal letter to Dr. Beneš, dated January 23, 1945. I was at that time in Ambassador Fierlinger's office in Moscow. In his letter Stalin upbraided Dr. Beneš, saying: "You yourself told me in Moscow of your willingness to cede Ruthenia to the Soviet Union." (This quotation is taken from the official Czechoslovak embassy records.) *Dr. Fierlinger himself assured me that Stalin was right and that Dr. Beneš and his Government in London were merely play-acting because they were afraid of taking the consequences.*

When Dr. Beneš replied to Stalin, on February 1, 1945, he did not deny his earlier statements about Ruthenia and thus confirmed his previous talks with Maisky: "I have not changed my stand in this question from the moment I talked about it for the first time with your Ambassador I. Maisky in London, in September, 1939; nor will I change it in the future."

It is being clearly revealed from the preceding that Stalin was enabled to penetrate West of the Carpathians by virtue of an agreement concluded without the knowledge of the London and Washington governments. Those governments were informed to the contrary; namely, that "the USSR recognizes and leaves Czechoslovakia within its former boundaries and that Stalin does not have any territorial demands". So Beneš informed President Roosevelt, when visiting the latter in Washington, in 1943, and so he talked in the U.S.A. and Canada at that time. So also the present members of the Council of Free Czechoslovakia broadcast home over the wave-lengths of the BBC, in 1943 and 1944, praising President Beneš as a "liberator".

Yet the truth is that neither Washington nor London had ever consented to Beneš' trip to Moscow nor did they know anything about Beneš' promise to Stalin to cede Ruthenia to the Soviet Union. Nobody wanted these things to happen except Stalin, Beneš and their followers.

2. The autonomous unit is endowed with a legislature of its own, representing the highest authority of power within the autonomous area. The legislative activities of the latter are being supervised by the legislature of the State;

3. The autonomous unit is also endowed with supreme executive and administrative authorities of its own; namely, the autonomous Government and its several Departments. The Government of an autonomous unit is not subordinated to the State Government directly but only through the legislature of the autonomous area. This is, therefore, a kind of secondary subordination;

4. The local organs of executive and administrative power are subordinated to the leadership of the highest authority of the politically autonomous area to which they are also directly answerable for all their activities;

5. The border-lines of the autonomous area are determined by the legislature of the State and can be altered only with the assent of the legislature of the self-governing unit.

In Slovakia's case neither of these conditions has been fulfilled.

Within the communist political system, Slovakia has no Constitution of her own, the powers of the "Slovak national authorities" having been laid down solely in the Constitution (Articles 93—122) of the all-embracing roof-State.

Slovakia's legislature (the Slovak National Council), whose powers and competence are confined to a minimum of purely national and regional affairs, is subordinated to the Central Government, not the Parliament, in Prague.

Executive power in Slovakia is vested in the so-called "Council of Commissioners" which is, however, the executive organ not only of the Slovak National Council but also, and rather in the first place, that of the Central Government in Prague. It is the latter which appoints and dismisses the Council of Commissioners as a whole as well as its President and individual members. In order to be able to do so the Prague Government needs neither the assent nor the recommendation of the Slovak National Council, nor even is the Central Government under any obligation to inform the Slovak National Council of the measures it may intend to take.

The Council of Commissioners as well as its individual members are answerable in the first place to the Prague Central Government and its heads of Departments respectively. Each Minister of the Prague Cabinet is also entitled to exercise his functions directly in Slovakia without anybody's previous consent; all he has to do is to inform the competent Slovak National Commissioner.

It is thus clear that the Slovak Council of Commissioners is essentially but an executive organ of the Central Government and that the several Commissioners' Offices are but branches of the corresponding Ministries in Prague. Therefore the local authorities subordinated to the Council of Commissioners are also answerable to the Prague Central Government, not to the Slovak National Council.

All this clearly reveals that Slovakia's legislature has been endowed with powers grossly inferior to those exercised by the corresponding legislative organs of the Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics. Slovakia's constitutional status within the communist political system is in no respect equal to the status of an Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic although each one of the existing 12 Autonomous Republics has a lesser number of inhabitants than Slovakia.

Thus the newly settled "brotherly" relationship between the Czech and Slovak peoples does not afford the Slovaks even the status enjoyed by the Bashkirs, Tatars, Yakuts and other Sibirian peoples, regardless of the fact that the Slovak nation ranks with the culturally developed peoples of Europe and is dwelling not beyond the Arctic Circle but in the heart of our Continent.

The Political Aspects of the Evolution of Yugoslavia's Economy

by ZDENKO ANTIC

On the whole all the phases through which the Soviet revolution has proceeded find their reflection in Yugoslavia under communist rule. The Yugoslav communists, being ardent disciples of Lenin and Stalin, have been striving obstinately to pursue their own revolution along Soviet lines. Thus Yugoslavia, too, has had her "wartime communism". During the German occupation and under the guise of the fight against "the invader and his lackays", the Yugoslav communists achieved the liquidation of all potential political opposition. After the "liberation" that policy was continued by means of economic measures. The confiscation of private property, the land reform and the nationalisation of all means of production, hit by no means only the capitalists or the Churches but also the middle class, the peasantry and the workers.

Immediately upon the conclusion of hostilities in the late World War, the Yugoslav communists felt in a very strong position—sufficiently strong, at any rate, to make speed appear the highest priority in carrying through their revolutionary plans. It was under these, seemingly very propitious circumstances that they inaugurated their first five-year plan (1947—1951/52).

In conformity with the orthodox concept of the tasks incumbent upon the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Yugoslav communists, by means of their first five-year plan, intended to organise and strengthen the proletariat, to accentuate the fight against the middle classes and the peasantry, and to equip as powerfully as possible their revolutionary army. However, in their revolutionary zeal they failed to pay attention to two very important circumstances. As a communist State being part of the Soviet bloc, Yugoslavia ought to have organised its economic life not merely with a view to its own domestic political situation but to have related it to the political tasks of the Soviet bloc as a whole. Also, seeing that Yugoslavia, while economically weak, is situated in a strategically very important region, its communist masters could not indulge in excessive revolutionary experiments without securing for themselves the moral, political and economic support of the nations of the Soviet bloc.

It became in fact one of the major causes of discord between the Yugoslav communists and their comrades of the Cominform that the latter had found the first Yugoslav five-year plan to be far too ambitious. Thus, for example, the sum total of investments envisaged for 1951 was to surpass those of 1939 by no less than 348 per cent. An expert in the economic problems of the people's democracies wrote with justification that "one is astonished to find that the increase of national income is supposed to proceed at a higher rate than that of the national product" and that "investments are, therefore, expected to develop more speedily than the national income". (*La croissance économique des démocraties populaires* by J. Marczeffski. Les cours de droit. Paris. 1953—1954.)

Indeed, Yugoslavia's expulsion from the Cominform forced the Belgrade régime in due course to renounce the achievement of its first five-year plan; in no branch of industry have more than 55 per cent. of the targets set in the plan been attained.

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Deprived of the support of the Soviet bloc and losing heart rapidly in the face of mounting economic difficulties—above all the enormous deficit in Yugoslavia's balance of foreign trade which, in turn accentuated the passive resistance of the people—the Yugoslav communist leaders had no choice but to seek a *rapprochement* to the Western powers.

That turn of events marks the beginning of a more liberal economic policy (1950—1955). It became necessary to create, by a number of spectacular measures, the impression in Western circles that a process of gradual democratisation was in the making. On the other hand, the blatant failure of their plans and the fact that their forces were being frittered away compelled the Yugoslav communists to relax industrialisation in the urban areas and the enforced collectivisation on the land.

A number of economic measures—all very interesting from the theoretical point of view—characterize that period. Already in February, 1950, the decentralisation of economic life was being introduced. Still in the same year, the factories were "handed over" to the workers who were supposed to manage them through "workers' councils".

Gradually the five-year plan was being replaced by annual plans of a much more elastic nature.

In the course of 1951—1952 the free market was inaugurated for all sorts of industrial and agricultural products excepting certain raw materials.

The decollectivisation of the peasant cooperatives was one of the most important measures. It reveals perhaps the greatest single defeat of Yugoslav communist planning. Within 12 months during the years 1953—1954 the number of cooperative farms slumped from 7,000 to 1,258. (See *Borba*, March 23, 1954.)

While not improving considerably the lot of the population these partial measures, chiefly devised to create a favourable impression in the West, threw into disorder the national economy. The Yugoslav Communist Party underwent its greatest crisis since the war, marked by the Dedijer-Djilas case. It

became obvious that there was not much future in extemporizing in that manner.

It was then that Stalin's death came to the rescue. The change of guards in the Soviet leadership and, above all, the new course of coexistence embarked upon by the Kremlin's new leaders, gave the Yugoslav communists a second chance. Once the policy of coexistence found acceptance in the West, it would become possible for the Yugoslav communist régime to bribe itself back into the Kremlin's favours without necessarily branding itself a political traitor to its Western friends.

Today, Tito is once more useful to the Soviet bloc. Accordingly, instead of being subjected to political and military pressures, he receives moral and economic aid from Moscow. The road is open once more for resuming the march of the revolution. The conditions have been assembled for a new economic course to be embarked upon.

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In the light of the Yugoslav communists' past record it should not be too difficult to anticipate the next stages along that new course.

There can be little doubt that the efforts directed at the strengthening of the socialist sector of agriculture have received a renewed impetus. By means of a revised credit system, adapted to the requirements of the day, all investments in agriculture as well as trading in farm products will be monopolised by the farming cooperatives or the great State farms. The independent peasant farmer will thus be plunged into servitude once more and deprived of the means of survival.

The centralisation of economy will be resumed in order to strengthen the Communist Party's position in the industrial and commercial enterprises. There will be a return to the methods practised while the first five-year plan was still in force. The workers' councils will be reduced to mere façades with the Communist Party becoming once more the sole distributor of the profits earned by certain flourishing State enterprises.

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In all this, the wellbeing of the masses, if taken into consideration at all, will be a very secondary objective. The principal aim is the strengthening of the discredited and badly shaken Communist Party in order to enable it to fulfill its "revolutionary mission". Nor is this phenomenon confined to Yugoslavia alone. In all the countries of the Soviet bloc economic policies are in the first place the tools of the revolution, in other words, the means of regimenting and oppressing the people—at least for the time being.

It is quite natural for economic life to have its political aspects. It is even natural that in politics economic means should occasionally be employed. It is wholly abnormal and criminal, however, that the entire machine of nationalised economy should be put at the service of a policy the aims of which are running counter to all natural order and whose application has entailed and continues entailing the abject misery of hundreds of millions of human beings.

Facts for Research

BULGARIA

Spellbound by Soviet Power—Party and Government newspapers closely followed for a full fortnight Bulganin's and Khrushchev's tour in India, Burma and Afghanistan. Full-page reports, richly illustrated, carried headlines, such as "*India the Soviet Union's Ally in the Struggle for Freedom*" or "*Asiatic Peoples Looking up to USSR as Saviour from Colonialism*", etc., in some cases taking up more than half the total space of the publication concerned. The speeches and declarations printed in full and surrounded by snapshots of the jubilant masses hailing the Soviet dignitaries, were intended to create the impression of enthusiastic adherence to Moscow and its policies, and to persuade the reader that the Soviet visit was but the external manifestation of the already accomplished fact of unity between Soviet Russia, India and the other Asiatic peoples. Obviously, it was the main objective of these publications to inspire the captive nations with a sense of the *abundance in power of the Soviet system* and prove the absurdity of all resistance against it.

Much Ado about Nothing—In its issue of December 9, 1955, "*Rabotnichesko Delo*", the official daily of the Bulgarian Communist Party, charged that in many State enterprises new targets and the introduction of measures of rationalisation had been announced with fanfares, only to remain empty words not followed by deeds. Usually this went on for two to three weeks, sometimes even a full month, but no sooner had the creative forces of the toilers been galvanised than the whole thing was becoming deflated once more. All that remained were the neatly compiled and printed resolutions adopted by the workers' meetings.

Courting Tito—The reconciliation brought about between Moscow and Belgrade has been reflected in a particularly characteristic manner in Bulgarian-Yugoslav relations. While after Tito's expulsion from the Kominform, his régime had been attacked with the most bitter hostility pre-

cisely from Bulgarian quarters, being reviled all the time as "that gang of highway robbers serving the Western capitalists and imperialists", Bulganin's and Khrushchev's visit to Belgrade has caused the Bulgarian pendulum to swing out to the opposite extreme. On Moscow's bidding the "traditional friendship and fraternity" of the two nations has blossomed out once more and is spreading its fragrance at countless mutual visits—initiated chiefly by Bulgaria—by groups of journalists, writers, artists, representatives of mass organisations, etc. Simultaneously, a number of agreements have been concluded in the spheres of trade, cultural exchanges, frontier defence and public health, to mention only a few. The highest significance, however, is to be attributed to the fact that all of a sudden the two nations have buried their hatchets swung for so long in their feud about Macedonia. Recently a group of dancers and singers from Skoplje—the capital city of Yugoslav Macedonia—went on a tour to Bulgaria. Whereas up to only a very short while ago the Communist Government in Sofia had kept denouncing the Serbianised "Macedonian language", introduced under Tito, as a measure aimed at denationalising Macedonia's Bulgarian population, the Macedonian troupe from Skoplje was now allowed to perform all over Bulgaria in precisely that officially decreed dialect. The incident just shows how keen Moscow is on enticing Tito back into the Eastern fold and keep him there.

Death Penalty for Crimes against Property—Criminal offences committed against the "people's property" have recently been on the increase in Bulgaria. The accused are exclusively recruited from among the official executives of collective farms, trading cooperatives and "people's stores", having either embezzled money or goods themselves or facilitated the commission of such crimes by "insufficiency of supervision". In the course of last December alone, the Sofia Military Court has sentenced a number of criminals of this type, inflicting upon the principal accused in cases of embezzlement from 200,000 down

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to 50,000 Leva the capital punishment while meting out to the others penal servitude up to 20 years.

HUNGARY

Trade with Egypt—while the world's press has been reverberating with the news of Czech arms shipments to Cairo, little attention was paid to the less spectacular but no less important intensification of trade relations between Egypt and the Soviet bloc. Thus according to the trade agreement concluded last summer, the Egyptian Government has ordered upwards from 100 railroad carriages and trucks from Hungary and commissioned the building of 8 bridges across the Nile to be erected within the next 18 months by Hungarian engineering enterprises. The entire bridge-building works at Győr, in Western Hungary, named after Wilhelm Pieck, has been geared to this job as seven of the eight bridges must be completed up to the end of 1956. Only the last bridge, which is to span the Nile near Cairo for rail and road traffic over a span of nearly 1,000 yards, will have to be finished as late as summer, 1957. All the pre-fabricated steel parts are to be shipped from Hungary to Egypt by sea; the assembly work will also be carried out exclusively by Hungarian engineers and technicians. Egypt is to sell Hungary wool and cotton in return. However, according to the latest news, these goods have already been promised by the Hungarian Communist Government to Soviet Russia, in accordance with the Russo-Hungarian trade agreement.

Giant Chemical Plant near Rumanian Border—The Communist Government is making great efforts to develop the manufacture of chemicals, plastic materials and artificial threads which had been sadly lagging before the late war owing to the lack of raw materials and the monopolistic tendencies in the German chemical industry. Within the framework of the new five-year plan, the Government has now decided the building of a giant chemical

plant (a "kombinat" in Soviet parlance) at *Tiszapalkonya* near the Rumanian border. Already last spring the building operations for the electrical power station to supply the new plant have been begun and late in the fall of 1955 the foundation stones were laid to the chemical "kombinat", too. The principal raw materials of the plant will be natural gas, drilled in Rumanian soil and conducted to Tiszapalkonya through a pipeline. An agreement to this effect has already been concluded between the Budapest and Bucharest Governments; it also provides on a long-term basis for the supply of large quantities of Rumanian chalk and salt to be shipped to Hungary in barges on the Tisza river. The enormous "kombinat", to be erected in a hitherto sparsely populated farming region, will vie in magnitude with the steelworks at Sztalinváros and is to operate in three separate sections—one for the manufacture of plastic materials, the other for artificial threads and the third one for the production of artificial manure.

Arterial Road to Soviet Frontier—The Communist Government is incessantly trying to improve the communication lines linking Hungary to the USSR. Last year the railroad from Budapest to the frontier station at Záhony was rebuilt by shock-brigades, thus increasing the load-carrying capacity of that important line of communications by about 50%. Simultaneously, the groundwork has begun for the building of an "Autobahn" type arterial road between Budapest and Záhony which is to by-pass all the towns and villages in Eastern Hungary and is to be finished within the cycle of the present second five-year plan.

SLOVAKIA

No Interest in Party Life—The proportion of Party members among the population of Slovakia is notoriously small. However, even those few who have joined the Communist Party for varying reasons—chiefly opportunism—seem to be taking precious little interest in Party activities.

The leadership is of course worried and indignant about this phenomenon of utter indifference and compels the Communist Press to keep the unpleasant subject constantly on the agenda, exhorting the comrades to do their duty. Thus wrote on December 18, 1955, the leading daily newspaper of the Slovak Communist Party, *Pravda*: "There are still cases, particularly in the local village organisations, where only the Committee chairman, and maybe one other member are working for the Party. Although committee members do nominally share out the various sectors of party work between them—such as agitation, doctrinal schooling, supervision of the mass organisations—in actual fact they fail to fulfill their duties. They do not follow the day-to-day situation with attention and are, therefore, unable to keep the Committee properly informed which, in turn, is losing control of Party affairs."

The Miners No More—Similar is the situation among the miners. Witness another report reprinted as follows from *Pravda* of December 27, 1955: "The meeting (of a pit organisation) did not pass very pleasantly. Attendance was small and the quality of discussion poor. Comrade Fajdek, for example, remarked that, although he had something to discuss, it would be a waste of time to mention it since it was no use anyway. The Comrade uttered the opinion that it was better to be a non-party man for those were at least not compelled to attend meetings. Finally he left the meeting before it was concluded."

Membership Free of Charge—Since leaving the Party by formal notice involves taking rather dangerous risks, many are trying to get themselves struck off the membership lists by neglecting to pay their fees. But even this placidly ingenuous method is to be rendered more difficult in future. Let us quote the Bratislava newspaper, *Pravda*, once more: "The cases of non-payment of the membership fees for periods longer than permitted by the articles of association, as well as of indifference towards the Party, as revealed from the insufficient consciousness of certain Party Members and Candidates and from the general level of some Party cadres, are nowadays worrying the various

Committees of the Basic Organisations quite a lot. Some local Committees simply solve this problem quite mechanically by tabling motions that those who have not paid their membership fees for a longer period of time should be struck off the register... This is wrong! It is necessary to have a heart-to-heart talk with every Member and Candidate in order to win them over to a more active life in the Party."

YUGOSLAVIA

Similar Worries—Belgrade's leading Communist newspaper, *Borba*, writes in a similar vein: "At Stip, Macedonia, of a total of 4,630 workers there are only 280 Party members. The female membership is practically non-existent. Thus of the complement of the Stip cotton spinery, consisting of 1,200 workers, 70% are women. Yet the works organisation of the Party counts only 14 female members. Nor is the situation any more favourable in the township of Strumica where of a total of 2,060 industrial workers only 145 are Communist Party members... Even worse is the position, as regards female members, in the rural areas. There are many villages where no woman belongs to the Party at all. It is regrettable that a great number of women who used to be Party members have completely retired from Party life because of the conservative environment to which their menfolk, though still communists themselves, have become reconciled..."

Against the Free Western Press—the Communist régime's principal daily newspaper in Croatia, *Vjesnik*, has protested many a time against the importation of publications from the West "disseminating anti-communist propaganda". According to *Vjesnik* these publications are very much sought after and are the cause of the communist Press being increasingly neglected. The latest target of *Vjesnik's* attacks was the French version of *Reader's Digest*. This Paris publication was carrying an ever growing number of political and economic

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articles tending to "combat communism". *Vjesnik* was particularly deploring a report in *Reader's Digest* about the Krupp works in West Germany in which the fact is said to have been established that of the 40,000 workers of these plants only 4% were members of the Communist Party. Following this attack by *Vjesnik* even the last remaining copies of the French publication were feverishly bought up.

Hooliganism Rampant—among the younger age groups is a frequent and common complaint in all the communist-ruled countries. *Borba* of December 11, 1955, carries the following characteristic report: "The guard found one young man travelling on the train without a ticket. He refused either to pay his fare or show his identification card. When the guard finally forced him to buy his ticket, the young man threatened that he would take revenge. And indeed, at the end of the journey the guard found a number of leather window-straps in his carriage slashed with a knife, the toilet buckets thrown out of the window and one window broken; the youngster, however, had vanished into thin air..." In the same issue of *Borba* were listed a number of other cases of juvenile hooliganism, such as molesting females and burning their garments with cigarettes if they refused to comply with the young men's wishes; robbing female passengers of their miserable jewelry; pouring ink into poor peasant women's milk cans; stealing fellow passengers' footwear, etc. Similar acts of hooliganism are said to be frequent also in streetcars, movie theatres and other public places. The public rarely dare even protest for mostly it would turn out that the offenders are members of the youth organisation of the Communist Party and antagonising them may result in getting from the frying pan into the fire.

Bosnian Plums Wasted

There is a Danger that Great Quantities of Plums Will Be Wasted is the headline of another article in the Sarajevo daily newspaper "*Oslobodjenje*", part of which reads as follows:

"The lack of expert knowledge in the picking of plums, the faulty organisation of transport and packaging—there are no packaging materials—have caused great quantities of plums to rot away and to be lost. For this reason considerable consignments of plums should be allocated to the distilleries in order to be converted into plum brandy. But, unfortunately, here again we are up against the difficulties of lack in vats. Nobody has vats in sufficient numbers—neither the States Enterprises, nor the co-operatives nor the individual producers. The timber-processing enterprises, on the other hand, are not willing to provide raw materials of the required quality. For this reason hundreds of railroad truckloads of plums are perishing."

Criticism of No Avail

"*Borba*", the leading newspaper of the Yugoslav Communist Party, publishes a letter to the editor by an ordinary citizen who writes i. a.:

"From time to time our press draws public attention to certain unhealthy phenomena in commerce, but this is of little use. We, ordinary citizens, cannot understand the indifferent attitude with which certain merchants confront these criticisms. We cannot understand this, since it is our pockets that are at stake—our pockets which are being brazenly picked by the merchants in question."

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