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## Position and future of the subject nations of Central and Eastern Europe

### Report

Relations with European Non-Member Countries

Rapporteur: Mr Frans J. GOEDHART, Netherlands, Socialist Group

### 1. REPORT

1. Ever since the publication by the U.S. State Department of the sensational speech made by Khrushchev at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, large groups in the Western world seem to cherish the impression that an important and profound evolution is taking place in the attitude of the Soviet Union towards the satellite countries. As a consequence, all sorts of hopeful expectations are being aired as to developments in these countries. Also, the reconciliation between Tito and Moscow has given rise to hopes that Moscow is prepared to loosen its grip on the countries of Eastern Europe which, as a result of the second world war, have fallen under Soviet domination.

2. In this connection, the question may be asked whether these hopeful expectations are not simply wishful thinking. For a thorough analysis of Khrushchev's speech reveals that, while he criticises and condemns Stalin's draconian measures against his own Communist comrades and allies, the Stalinist reign of terror imposed on the peoples of the Soviet Union is not condemned at all, but, on the contrary, is wholly accepted and justified. Moreover, there is nothing in this speech indicating that Khrushchev and the others had any differences of opinion with Stalin about the barely camouflaged conquest, occupation, exploitation and prolonged oppression of the countries of Eastern Europe.

3. Nor can one say what consequences the reconciliation between Tito and Moscow will have for the captive nations. Though the acknowledgment by the Soviet Union that "different roads can lead towards socialism" is indeed a concession to Tito, it remains to be seen, and certainly one cannot predict at this moment, what practical consequences this will have, for example, for Bulgaria, Hungary or Poland. On the other hand, it is a fact that recently a somewhat freer discussion amongst Communists in the captive nations has been allowed. In this respect the development in the captive countries resembles to a large extent the present situation in the Soviet Union, where discussion amongst Communists likewise moves along less rigid lines. Nevertheless, the nature of the regime has not been changed by all this, either in the Soviet Union or in the satellite countries.

4. Characteristic of the Communist regime, before and after Stalin, is the political enslavement as well as the cruelly anti-social character of the Soviet version of State capitalism. Here, the swiftest accumulation in history of capital with enormous scope for investment, entailing an unparalleled rise in the potentials of the heavy and armament industry, still prevails. By means of a planned economy permanently in deficit, the population is deprived of 40 to 45 per cent of its productive achievements through a great variety of forced and drastic methods of compulsory saving. In the Soviet Union, as well as in the captive nations with Soviet-controlled Communist puppet Governments, wages and food prices have ceased to be part of a social policy. They have been transformed into "instruments of redistribution of the national income" with a view to the drastic limitation of consumption.



5. This State capitalist economy, devised by Stalin and imposed by terrorism, is not only being fully maintained, despite the present de-Stalinisation in political and police methods, but it is even being strengthened and made more oppressive by certain measures, such as the stress on heavy industry under the sixth five-year plan in the U.S.S.R., the second five-year plan in Czechoslovakia and Eastern Germany, the recent increase of 16 per cent in the Soviet turnover tax and the higher ceiling in the internal compulsory loan.

6. As for further proof that the peoples in the captive nations have never resigned themselves to the loss of their freedom and national independence, to the harshness of economic and political measures, to forcible collectivisation and terrorism, the recent revolt in Poznan, led by the industrial workers who are supposed to form the very pillar of the Communist regimes, has dramatically demonstrated how deeply rooted and widespread popular opposition is to Communist rule. The Poznan risings, which bear a close resemblance to the widespread East German risings in June 1953, show conclusively that the situation in the various captive nations hardly differs. The spontaneous risings in Poznan coincided with the date of the international trade fair when a large number of visitors from the West were in the town. The presence of foreign eye-witnesses prevented the Communist rulers from immediate deadly retaliation as well as from keeping the risings a secret. However, this revolt also showed clearly that local risings are bound to end in bloodshed and maintenance of Communist rule. The East German risings of June 1953 were on a much larger scale, but they, too, were suppressed after a few days. The question is what the Kremlin could do if a revolt broke out simultaneously in all satellite countries.

7. The events in Poland show that the oppressed peoples are certainly not interested in merely achieving some dubious degree of independence from Moscow or something along the lines of Tito's regime. These peoples want both independence from Moscow and freedom from Communist dictatorship at home.

8. The recent trip of Bulganin to Poland after the Poznan revolt, and his statements during this visit, revealed once again with all clarity that the Communist masters are taking all precautions to prevent the superficial liberalisation which seems to have started during the Twentieth Party Congress from getting out of hand. There can be no doubt that these so-called liberalisation measures in the captive countries stem from the confusion which resulted from the Congress. Most of them were decided with an eye to the internal situation in the Soviet empire—and as such, were, and are, carefully limited and controlled. The power-centres which really count as instruments of political control are and will remain intact and firmly in Communist hands, ready to arrest any liberation movement from below, should this be set in motion or encouraged by the limited "thaw" generated from above.

9. About the superficial changes which occurred in Central and Eastern Europe after the Twentieth Party Congress in February it must be stated that they varied from country to country. Poland is ahead of the others in that respect, with Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria following it. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have little to show, whereas nothing whatsoever has changed in Rumania and Albania.

### **1.1. POLAND**

The much publicised "thaw" in Poland did not introduce any essential changes into the system of Communist-dictatorship of that country, although it is clear that the Communist leadership has been shaken and has been forced to restore some elements of democratic legal procedure in the Poznan trials.

The relations between the Soviet Union and the Polish "People's Republic" have not undergone any significant change. As before, the Soviet Union remains the paramount power and the Polish People's Republic its dependency. The speech made by the Soviet Prime Minister, Bulganin, in Warsaw on July 21st 1956, in the presence of the Polish Communist Government, constituted one long flagrant interference with the internal problems of the Polish nation. Well aware that the principle of free elections is continuously being denied to the Polish people by the Communist dictatorship, Bulganin said, nevertheless: "... the glorious path of socialist construction was chosen by the free will of the (Polish) people." He also stated that: "... People's Poland is an integral part of the socialist camp", and connected the future internal development of Poland with the decisions of the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Without waiting for the outcome of the trials of Polish citizens arrested by the Communist Government of Poland after the demonstrations of the Poznan workers, Bulganin decreed in his Warsaw speech that those demonstrations were staged by foreign, "Western", subversionists. In this respect the Soviet Premier overrode the opinion of the Polish Communist Government itself, since that Government had been compelled to admit, reluctantly, that the Poznan demonstrations were organised by the worker population of that Polish city as a protest against the economic misery and political oppression imposed on them by the Communist dictatorship.

On the other hand, the Polish United Workers' Party (Communist), which has the monopoly of power in Poland, has considered the present moment as an appropriate one to renew its pledges of submission to the Soviets. On July 28th 1956, the Central Committee of that Party ended its VIIIth Plenary Session and voted to send a telegram to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, in which it referred to a recent resolution of the latter body " on the Cult of the Individual and its Consequences " and stated that this resolution " ...constituted for our party an important stimulus in the struggle for the full and creative application of the Leninist principles of party and social life. "

That same VIIIth Plenary Session admitted in its political resolution that a profound economic crisis prevailed in the country and that there was also a wide-ranging crisis of confidence in the Government of the country. Nevertheless, instead of the allegedly highest political institution of the Polish People's Republic, that is, the Sejm, being convened, a meeting of the Central Committee of the ruling party took place which reiterated the determination of the Communists to maintain the dictatorship of a tightly organised minority over the exploited majority of the people. The permission of the Communist Government to have limited discussion of lesser matters in the Parliament (such as a Catholic's objection to the abortion bill) did not interfere with the official measures and gave the Communist rulers valuable publicity material. Thus, owing to the Communist dictatorship in Poland, the principle of political responsibility of the rulers toward the ruled—the principle that marks the highest achievement of European civilisation in the field of public law and for which many generations fought and struggled valiantly—does not apply now to the Polish people.

Some parts of the aforesaid political resolution induced several Western newspapers to infer that the Communist Party ruling in Poland was proclaiming the principle of noninterference of the Party with the affairs of the Government. This is completely false. What the Central Committee proclaimed in its resolution of July 28th 1956, was only the principle that Communists in the Party apparatus should not interfere with everyday activities of their Communist comrades in charge of the State apparatus. The State apparatus is to follow strictly the instructions and guidances of the Polish United Workers' Party. The adherence to this principle of a power-monopoly for the Communist Party has been guaranteed in Poland by the fact that only the members of that Party can hold Government posts. Out of the nine members of the Presidium of the Government (Premier and eight Vice-Premiers) six are members of the Political Bureau of the Party (the highest body of the Party) and three are members of the Central Committee of the Party (its second highest body). Out of the thirty-three departmental ministers, serving under the Presidium of the Government, thirty are members of the Communist Party, two of the United Peasant Party and one of the Democratic Party, the last two fictitious groups being closely allied with the Communist Party and subordinated to it.

The rehabilitation of Gomulka, the so-called Polish Tito, and of his associates, General Spychalski and Colonel Kliszko, does not impair this power-monopoly. Neither Gomulka, a faithful Communist, nor Spychalski has yet been given any specific post. Kliszko has been appointed Vice-Minister of Justice.

A close study of the economic resolution of this VIIIth Plenary Session reveals that the standard of living of the Polish people is deplorably low and often indeed at starvation level. The resolution itself says with regard to the Six-year Plan which ended on December 31st 1955 : " The situation of a considerable part of the working population was not improved, and the situation of some groups has even deteriorated. "

A certain relaxation of the terror atmosphere and a renewed emphasis on the mythical " Socialist legality " are destined to allay the popular hostility to the regime. Several officials of the secret police were sacrificed for that goal and were demoted. Also, in its frantic quest for popularity and bowing to the pressure of public opinion, the Communist rulers decreed that the members of the former Polish anti-Nazi Underground Home Army had been, until quite recently, mistakenly hounded and persecuted. But the apparatus of terror has not been dismantled and was used in Poznan.

Similarly, the much vaunted masshomecoming of the Poles deported to Siberia proved to be only a return of a sprinkling of deportees.

The true feelings of the Polish population found their expression in the Poznan demonstrations. The political resolution of the VIIIth Plenary Session states in this respect: " The Central Committee Plenum contends that the tragic events in Poznan, which caused a deep shock throughout the Party and throughout the working class and the nation, cast a new light upon the political and social situation of the country. It is a fact that demagogues and hostile elements succeeded in exploiting the particular dissatisfactions of the Zispo workers and of the workers of several other enterprises, caused by procrastination in dealing with their serious grievances and justified demands, thus bringing about strikes and street demonstrations. "

Any hope that the Polish workers would now be given a right to act about their " particular dissatisfactions ", was illusory. Klosiewicz, chief of the Polish " labour unions ", emphatically stated, on August 21st 1956, that Polish workers do not have the right to strike. He emphasized once again that the function of the labour

unions was to remove the conflicts between management and labour at the very outset. In plain language it means that the Polish "labour unions" will continue to act as tools and informers of the Communist management.

The economic situation in Poland is so bad that even the Communist rulers no longer conceal it. The highest Communist official of the country, the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Party, Ochab, said in his speech in Wloclawek, on July 29th 1956, with regard to the Five-Year Plan 1956-1960: "There will still be much hunger and want in 1960; there will still be the very acute housing problem, which today haunts like a nightmare hundreds of thousands of families in Poland and which is the object of the daily concern of our Government."

Without it being necessary to go into detail, it can be safely said that the available resources of Poland are such as to immediately ensure to the people freedom from want and misery. The recently announced incentives for small private enterprises confirm the bankruptcy of the Communist management, which hopes to have them regarded as a temporary "evil", like the N. E. P. (New Economic Policy) in Russia. Similarly, the talk of the Communist Government about slackening of pressure against "kulaks" in the interest of agricultural production has produced but one tangible measure as yet—cessation of compulsory milk deliveries for all farmers. Only the Communist system of economy, with its inefficient centralisation and its continued concentration on the development of heavy industry, on the one hand and the subordination of the Polish economy to the requirements of the Soviet Union and its expansionist policies, on the other, stand in the way of a speedy improvement of Poland's economic situation.

The so-called freedom of discussion in Communist-ruled Poland, which is widely advertised in the West, applies only to Communists—and even for them it is, in fact, restricted. It is true that the denunciation of Stalin has been more violent in Poland than in any other part of the Soviet empire. In the immediate confusions after "down-grading" of Stalin, some of the popular anti-Russian resentment managed to seep through into the Party Press. But the Party reacted immediately. The political resolution of the VIII Plenary Session states explicitly:

"The clash of opinions at Party meetings does not signify that the Party will agree to the propounding, within its own ranks, of views incompatible with the teachings of Marxism-Leninism, and with the general line of the Party. Statements and discussions in the Party Press should take place on the basis of the ideology of Marxism-Leninism and be in accord with the Party's general line."

In this respect the resolution followed the line proclaimed in Poland by Bulganin in his speech made in Warsaw on July 21st 1956. He said then:

"The facts show that hostile elements have made use of press organs of the socialist countries in order to sow their poisonous seeds."

Some responsible editors of these press organs have submitted to inimical influence, and have forgotten that the Party Press must, above all, be a loyal and consistent vehicle of dissemination of the ideas of Marxism-Leninism and a militant propagandist in the struggle for building socialism."

The Polish Communist regime started implementing Bulganin's directives by exerting pressure on the Press to conform even more strictly to the Party line. The notorious Communist acts of contrition were initiated. Thus, for example, *Tribuna Ludu* of August 9th reported that M. Majkowski, editor of the *Lodzki Express*, had confessed at a local Communist Party meeting that he had committed a profound mistake in criticising the regime while the "class enemy" was waiting to strike. Repressive action against Polish journalists, who have "transgressed" in a similar way, has already begun.

The Communist Court of Justice has now started the trial in Poznan of the workers who, because of a total lack of legal means to express their social and political wishes, resorted to violent manifestations. They asked for more food, clothing, higher wages and free elections. The Polish Communists reacted with tanks, artillery and a trial.

It is true that for the first time in the history of the Communist regime the defence has been given facilities hitherto denied. Although the prosecution tried to make out that the accused had committed thefts and crimes of violence, the Judge allowed the accused to explain that their motives had been economic and political, and the political slogans heard during the riots in the streets were repeated before the Court. Foreign journalists have been given facilities to attend the trial, and their despatches have been uncensored.

The President of the Assembly, acting on behalf of the Bureau, requested the Polish Government to admit a delegation of observers from the Assembly of the Council of Europe to the trial. The Polish Government refused.

## 1.2. HUNGARY

In Hungary, the long overdue ousting of the old Stalinist, Rakosi, on July 18th 1956, did not signify any change in the regime's absolute subservience to Moscow. It was an unavoidable move, in view of the fact that Rakosi was detested not only by the Hungarian people, but also by important members of the Communist Party. The demonstrations in the Writers' Assembly and in the Petoefi circle hastened Rakosi's exit.

Rakosi's successor to the rank of Secretary-General of the Communist Party, Gero, is the No. 2 of the Party. Like Rakosi he is a Soviet citizen and a high-ranking officer of the Russian Army. However, while Rakosi was Moscow's political satrap, Gero is rather an exponent of the Soviet military clique. He lays particular stress on the high priority of the heavy industry and, for the last decade, has organised Hungary's economic life so as to promote the strategic aims of the Soviet Union.

Three of the four new members of the P a r t y Presidium—Kiss, Revai and Kadar— are old-time Communists. Kiss, one of Rakosi's most faithful followers, previously was the head of t h e P a r t y ' s control commission. Revai, a Soviet citizen and an old Stalinist, is regarded as the main ideologist of the Party. Kadar, a former Minister of the Interior and architect of the Cardinal Mindszenty trial, was accused of Titoism in 1948, but is, in actual fact, one of the most fervent promoters of international Communism. The fourth member, Marosan, has been for many years a secret Communist agent in the Hungarian Social Democrat Party.

The Party Presidium, now calling itself " collective leadership ", is extremely cautious in proceeding with the " liberalisation policy" as prescribed by Moscow. It remains haunted by the fear t h a t a Poznan-type revolt could occur in Hungary. Its most important " liberalisation " moves up-to-date are :

(a) the release of several thousand political prisoners. Once set free, these people are at t h e complete mercy of t h e regime, since they have lost everything and are not able to reoccupy their apartments or find jobs.

(b) the release from prison of Archbishop Jozsef Groesz and nine other Roman Catholic dignitaries. However, Archbishop Groesz was virtually compelled to accept the role and duties of the Primate of Hungary, and he is free on the condition that the Church interests are " harmonised " with those of the State. (Cardinal Mindszenty had refused to be reinstated in his office under such terms and therefore remained confined—incomunicado—in his internment place). A good illustration of the regime's unchanged hostility to religion is the prompt prohibition on distributing the Apostolic Letter of Pope Pius X I I of June 29th 1956, which is addressed in particular to the silenced cardinals in Hungary, Poland, Yugoslavia as well as to all Catholics in the captive nations.

(c) cessation of t h e " police excesses ". At present no house searches or arrests can be undertaken by the police without a prior court decision. On the other hand, there are no structural or personnel changes in the security apparatus. Also, the Communist courts remain instruments of the regime, since judges are selected and nominated by the Communist Party.

(d) softening of the collectivisation measures. A recent resolution of the Hungarian Communist Party Central Committee states that force and penalties will not be allowed in organising " collectives " and that the peasants will be given " more freedom " in planning. According to Party orders, agitation and persuasion should be substituted for coercion. Still, the term " agitation " means too many things in Communist terminology, including compulsion. And the obligatory area to be planted with grain continues to be prescribed by the Party.

(e) the balancing of the build-up of heavy industry with increased production of consumer goods in the new Five-Year Plan, starting next January in order to improve the standard of living. However, even highranking Communist Party members are very sceptical with regard to this venture. At present, for example, a pair of poor quality shoes still costs an unskilled worker the equivalent of two weeks' pay, and a suit, that of two months' pay, as compared with the pre-war prices tantamount to two days' and two weeks' pay respectively.

(f) some freedom of discussion and criticism in the parliament, but strictly within the boundaries of t h e Communist dogma. Interpellations have been recently addressed to the Government with regard to rising prices of consumer goods, nightwork for teenagers, and even denial of religious teaching by a local authority. Although it is true that this was unimaginable under Rakosi, one should always remember the entire lack of spontaneity of these interpellations. They were addressed by " legislators " and " members of parliament" who are nominated by the regime and are totally subservient to it. The above interpellations were conspicuously planned by the regime to take place during the meeting of the World Council of Churches in Hungary. It is also safe to predict that any future manifestations of parliamentary freedom are dependent on their publicity value.

(g) so-called freedom of criticism in the Press. This, like the debate in the parliament, applies only to minor internal problems. Even this kind of criticism must be expressly authorised or ordered by the respective governmental or Party organs.

To sum it up, the Muscovite and totalitarian character of the regime has not changed in substance, despite the fact that the people feel somewhat freer psychologically. Meanwhile, the Soviet military forces stationed in Hungary and the Soviet-controlled security apparatus are ready to ensure that the "liberalisation" process does not exceed the limits prescribed by Moscow.

### 1.3. CZECHOSLOVAKIA

The decisions of the Twentieth Soviet Union Communist Party Congress in Moscow came as an unpleasant surprise to the Communist leaders in Czechoslovakia. Their response to the "liberalisation" directives of the Soviet masters was most cautious.

There was only one major demotion, that of Dr. Cepicka, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence, and member of the Politbureau, on April 19th 1956.

On the other hand, the ruling clique has failed to follow the rehabilitation moves of Hungary and Bulgaria and did not rehabilitate Slansky, Secretary-General of the Communist Party, hanged for alleged Titoism and espionage. The three surviving Slansky co-defendants, London, Hajdu and Loebel, and some persons implicated in this case, have been reprieved, but very little has been officially said on the subject.

The prestige of the Party has now reached a low ebb. The First Secretary of the Communist Party, Antonin Novotny, admitted at the June 11th - 15th 1956 Party Conference that quite a few party members were doubtful as to the correctness of the general line and that 35 basic Communist Party organisations had asked that an extraordinary Party Congress be convened. The Press also mentioned demands for a re-admission of Opposition parties, which were, of course, rejected, with due emphasis. The régime is all the time sticking to its guns: no criticism of the general line of the Party, of its leadership, of Marxism-Leninism, of the "people's democratic order" and no co-operation with those Socialists who are classified as reformists.

Several measures, it is true, were decided upon in the June Conference, destined to give an impression of "démocratisation". They were: decentralisation of State and economic administration; steps to increase the authority of the Slovak national organs; increase of the tasks of the national committees (organs of State administration at the regional, district and local levels); reorganisation of the Ministries and other central departments; strengthening of Socialist legality, etc. These new provisions may be qualified as eyewash, since they leave the overwhelming power wielded by the central organs in Prague virtually intact. And, in spite of the talk about promoting greater initiative of the legislative bodies, the recent sessions of the National Assembly and the Slovak National Council were nothing but the usual rubber-stamp exhibitions.

The promised changes in the codes of criminal law and criminal procedure have not materialised either. And even the proposed amendments are a far cry from the reinstatement of the old democratic rule of law. Only some of the most glaring abnormalities introduced in 1950 may be eliminated, but, basically, the substantive law and the court system will remain handmaidens of the Communist regime.

In the foreign policy field captive Czechoslovakia has become one of the main instruments of Moscow in the drive for "competitive co-existence", with special stress on the Near, Middle, and Far East as well as on South America. The relations with the Soviet Union have not undergone any changes: the U. S. S. R. remains the leading Power and the Soviet Communist Party the mother Party and the great example.

The decrease of the regime's prestige has made the rank-and-file citizens less afraid of the Party functionaries and security organs and somewhat confused the latter. There are also reports that the downgrading of Stalin as a military genius has created confusion in the officer corps, the members of which, particularly the younger ones, have been trained as loyal Stalinists.

Protests against the fetters of Party directives were voiced at the Czechoslovak Writers' Congress April 22nd-29th, 1956. The regime answered with a sharp criticism of men of letters and mobilised stalwart Communist authors against them—avoiding, however, any serious sanctions.

University students have been much more articulate. April and May of this year saw a succession of their stormy protest meetings, resolutions and demonstrations. The reaction of the régime has been more violent and some arrests were made. Minor concessions to the students were granted.

The discontent of industrial workers finds its expression in absenteeism and "fluctuation". Although in April and May of this year the Communist trade unions were lambasted by their own newspaper, *Prace*, for their failure to represent the workers' interests and for being solely instruments of the management, their functions were not changed. The criticism has disappeared since, and the emphasis has been again on higher labour productivity.

No change has occurred in the collectivisation campaign. 1600 new "collectives" are said to have been founded between June 1955 and June 1956. Numerous trials of "kulaks" were reported in March and April. This has somewhat abated recently, but at the Party Conference, the First Secretary, Novotny, still stressed the necessity of preventing the "mass penetration" of the kulaks.

The standard of living continues to be one of the regime's major preoccupations. Although the fifth price cut, on April 1st 1956, covered a few staple consumer goods, the practical impact was slight. *Rude Pravo* of 6th April 1956 stated that the cuts meant an annual saving of 150 kcs. per person—which is about 1 per cent of the estimated average income of an industrial worker.

The shadow of Poznan hangs heavily over the Czechoslovak Communist regime. Its hesitance to apply the rigorous measures of the Stalin era notwithstanding, the Communist Minister of Justice, Dr. Skoda, sounded a solemn warning. In his report on the progress of the preparation of the amendments to the criminal code, he stated: "On the other hand, some provisions (of the code) are formulated more precisely and new ones are introduced against enemies who out of hatred of the people's democratic order commit criminal acts." In reporting on developments in Poland during recent weeks, the Czechoslovak regime Press eliminated passages containing admission of justified workers' grievances. This indicates how aware the Communist leadership is of its weakness and of the widespread discontent of the captive population.

#### **1.4. BULGARIA**

In Bulgaria, the condemnation of Stalin has profoundly shocked the members of the Communist Party. The population received the news partly with the usual apathy and partly with joy.

The terror was softened—on the surface. Some former Opposition leaders were released from prison, but only after they were broken physically and morally. They had to issue statements in favour of the Communist regime and against their past activity as well as against the "enemies" Petkov and G. M. Dimitrov, who—according to the recent prisoners—bore responsibility for all the sabotage and the insufficient agricultural production. Among those who made statements in order to be freed were the former ministers Pavlov, Athanassov, Derjanski and Bumbarov.

There were but meagre changes in the economic field. In accordance with the Soviet example the working hours were shortened from eight to six on Saturdays and on the days preceding public holidays. Unofficially, the workers are now allowed to change their jobs and places of residence, without being jailed, as still provided in the existing law.

In the cultural field, the so-called "writers' revolt" started before the Twentieth Party Congress in Moscow, but its impact is still very strongly felt. During the Congress of the Writers' Union in December of last year, the main Communist writers Belev, Rudnikov, Kiulavkov, Stoyanov, Penev and Vejinov asserted that there can be no worthy literary creation without freedom of expression. They also denounced the interference of the Communist Party. Prime Minister Chervenkov in the final speech of the Congress strongly attacked the statements of the above writers. He asserted that the Central Committee of the Communist Party has the right to direct the literary activity, and that the duty of the writers is to obey.

If the "liberalisation" brought little improvement to the people, the changes in the Communist Party and the Government were of more serious nature. In a plenary session of the Bulgarian Communist Party (April 2nd-6th 1956), Jivkov, the First Secretary of the Party, presented a report in which he severely condemned "the cult of the personality" of Stalin and Chervenkov, the head of the Bulgarian Government. The report also asserted that the cult of personality resulted in "violation of legality" and "unjust punishment" of innocents. Thus, Rostov, former Secretary-General of the Bulgarian Communist Party was said to have been sentenced on falsified charges.

The other moves followed in a logical sequence. A number of Rostov's friends were released from prison, including the former leading intellectuals and economists of the Communist Party, Professor Ivan Stefanov, former Minister of finance, and Professor Petko Kunin, former minister of Industry. Tsoniu Tsonchev, former director of the Bulgarian National Bank, as well as Ivan Maslarov and Dimitar Kochemidov, former members

of the Communist Party's Central Committee were also released. On April 14th the rehabilitation of Kostov was officially announced. Chervenkov resigned on April 16th. Yugov was unanimously appointed President of the Council and he appears to be the outstanding personality of the new collective leadership.

One of the reasons for this change of personnel seems to be the wish, clearly indicated by Moscow, to improve relations between Yugoslavia and the Soviet empire. In addition, this change aims mainly at giving a more national character to the new Communist leadership. Chervenkov was known as a blind executor of Soviets orders and had lived in the U. S. S. R. for twenty years, whereas Yugov spent the main part of his life as an underground conspirator in Bulgaria itself.

It would be wrong to exaggerate the significance of these changes which are primarily propagandist<sup>^</sup>. The persons at the helm of government have only shifted a few chairs. Their policy is exactly the same. In spite of a certain relaxation of terror, compulsive industrialisation and collectivisation are being pursued against the will of the population and to the detriment of the standard of living.

### **1.5. ESTHONIA, LATVIA, LITHUANIA**

Although the basic tenets of Esthonia's Latvia's and Lithuania's subjugation by the U. S. S. R. continue to be the same, some lesser changes have taken place.

In the frame of the decentralisation measures in the entire Soviet Union, some administrative functions which previously belonged to Moscow were returned to the three captive nations. Thus, the U. S. S. R. Ministry of Justice has been liquidated, and its functions transferred to the judiciary organs of the Republics; the administration of railways and waterways entrusted to the local organs; the management of some industries — meat, dairy, paper, fishing, forest, etc. — given over to the ministries of the respective Republics.

The abolition of the Ministry of Justice, however, does not mean any "démocratisation" of the law, since public prosecution and implementation of the laws still is a function of the unchanged Ministry of the Interior. Likewise, the enlargement of the functions of the local organs is counter-balanced by the fact that, with a few exceptions, all key-positions in the administration, party machinery, industry and agriculture are occupied by Russians. The flow of industrial and other products to Soviet Russia and other "fraternal Republics" continues under the same terms of Russian colonialism.

The decentralisation moves are frequently interpreted as part of the "liberalisation" campaign. However, simultaneous statements by Moscow expose their main purpose: achieving better results in the administration of a very large area. It is a public fact that overcentralisation during the Stalin era caused many economic losses. The determination of general policies remains unshakeably, as before, the prerogative of the central authorities.

Another change is in the atmosphere of fear. Some excesses of the Stalin era have been abolished, although the present regime is not loath to use whatever degree of terror is necessary to keep the population under tight control. The machinery of terror still exists, intact and ready for use. By refraining from employing Stalin's worst terror measures, the regime hopes to gain respectability on the international forum and to create internal psychological conditions conducive to bigger productivity.

As a result, arrests and deportations have diminished. Instead, more subtle methods are used to recruit youth for "voluntary migration to Siberia or industrial districts of Soviet Russia. A number of political prisoners and deportees have been returned on the basis of "amnesties", because of sickness, or because their term of confinement had expired. Some carefully selected persons were allowed to visit foreign countries as tourists. Here again, the regime hopes to reap profits by having the "tourists" praise the life in the captive Baltic nations to their Western hosts.

There is still no improvement in living conditions, which permit only a hand-to-mouth existence to the general population. Nevertheless, several changes have been decided upon and it remains to be seen if, on the whole, they will improve the lot of the individual or permit even a more extensive exploitation of the economy of the Baltic States in favour of Soviet Russia. These changes are:

1. The collective farm workers are permitted now to adopt new by-laws in their kolkhozes concerning reduction of the area of privately cultivated land. They also have been promised loans and premiums as well as a voice in the planning of planting and harvesting. These moves are intended to stimulate agricultural production.
2. Higher pensions to the aged and disabled have been promised. The previous subsidies were far below subsistence levels even by Communist standards.

3. Working hours have been reduced from 8 to 6 hours for Saturdays and on the days before holidays. But, simultaneously, workers are being urged to complete the 8 hours' norms in 6 hours.

Although neither anti-religious dogma nor propaganda have changed in substance, the individual is less fearful to attend church services. Of course, in doing so he still takes a calculated risk of jeopardizing his career.

The extent of Soviet crimes in the Baltic States is indirectly confirmed by some Communist publications, issued in keeping with the new "more enlightened" line in Moscow. For example, an article in the magazine *Komounist* (issue No. 7) openly admits that there are now 2,700,000 inhabitants in Lithuania, or "200,000 less than in 1940." In view of the fact that tens of thousands of Russians have been imported into Lithuania, these figures show to which extent the Lithuanian, as well as the Latvian and Estonian, nations have suffered demographically from terror, deportations and other expedients of Soviet genocide.

Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians are only too well aware that, in spite of the so-called relaxation moves, the ultimate aim of Moscow remains the gradual annihilation of their national character and their dispersion in the grey Soviet mass.

### **1.6. ALBANIA**

The so-called liberalisation trend which followed the down-grading of Stalin has not brought any particular changes in the life of Soviet-dominated Albania. Enver Hoxha continues to be the First Secretary of the Workers' (Communist) Party while Shehu, the personification of terror in Albania, is still Premier of the puppet Government.

Strangely enough, both have been, at least in appearance, quite reluctant to join in the "down-grading" of Stalin. At the last Congress of the Workers' (Communist) Party held from May 25th to 29th, the delegates observed a minute of silence in honour of Stalin's memory, and in his report Enver Hoxha used relatively mild tones in condemning his former master and the cult of the individual.

They have also lagged behind their colleagues of the other puppet Governments in the field of posthumous rehabilitation. While admitting a number of mistakes by the leadership of the Party, Enver Hoxha failed to rehabilitate Koci Xoxe, the former Minister of the Interior and strong man hanged in 1949 as Titoist, and even declared that "the accusations against Koci Xoxe and his collaborators are true and his condemnation by the Party and Government is entirely justified." As the main accusation against Xoxe was that he was a mere tool of Tito's ambitions in Albania, this attitude has stirred up great dissatisfaction in Yugoslavia.

As regards police terror, despite a much-publicised amnesty law, aimed mainly at exiles, there is not the slightest indication that it has subsided or even relaxed. Quite to the contrary, in their speeches at the last Congress Shehu and Hoxha forcefully reiterated that every proposition will meet with the ruthless retaliation of the "people's Government".

There is no improvement in the economic situation. The standard of living of the Albanian people remains appallingly low, and yet no change has occurred in the collectivisation campaign which is mainly responsible for the situation.

There is wide speculation as to why the process of "de-Stalinisation" and "liberalisation" now in full swing in the captive nations, as well as in Soviet Russia itself, has not been extended to Albania. One interpretation is that the Kremlin is afraid to relax police terror in Albania because of the warlike character of its people and the fact that it is situated on the outskirts of the Soviet empire, with no common boundaries with the Soviet Union or the other captive countries. Others believe that "liberalisation" would necessarily bring about the downfall of Shehu and Hoxha, both former favourites of Stalin, and that the Soviet masters fear this may create difficulties, as there are no other living Communist leaders faithful enough or with enough stature to succeed them. Finally, there are some who believe that Shehu and Hoxha are resisting Soviet pressure, as change would bring a normalisation of relations with Tito whom they have cruelly offended in the past, and who thus might be tempted to take revenge.

### **1.7. RUMANIA**

The Communist rulers of Rumania are the most reluctant of all to take any steps toward liberalisation. There are no personnel changes in the Government or the Party. While, for instance, in Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia or even Bulgaria, some political prisoners, including leaders of the democratic parties, have been released from prison — the situation in Rumania is entirely different. Very few of the democratic leaders are known to be free. People who have been arrested overnight and since then detained without trial, or even

those whose sentence have since long expired, have not reappeared, and their families do not know anything of their whereabouts. On the contrary, even in such a prominent case as that of M. C. Titel-Petrescu, the leader of the Socialist Independent Party (whose release from prison was widely advertised by the Communist Government and who is reputed to have signed a letter of "recognition of past mistakes", published and broadcast by the Communists) neither his friends, nor, apparently, his wife have seen him yet.

The market is still deprived of the essential consumers' goods. Food and other goods are available in the black-market at prices which are prohibitive to the workers' salaries. The "intelligentsia", the "party apparatus" and the "bureaucracy" with higher salaries and various other sources of income, form the exclusive clientele for the more expensive goods found in the co-operative shops.

The regime tries to appease the peasants, by playing down the slogan of collectivisation. On the one hand, it calls it now co-operatisation; on the other, it allows peasants to join the "lower forms" of agricultural associations of the Soviet TOZ-type. The double and contradictory aim of these new tactic is to induce the peasants to enter, under any disguise, the "socialist sector" of agriculture and to help to increase the agricultural State production. On July 28th 1956 the Rumanian Workers' Party published a new "Resolution on the Socialist Transformation of Agriculture." It goes further in its attempts to compromise by enlarging the private property of the kolkhozniki (he can own his house and other buildings now) and by accepting "kulaks" into the socialist sector. But the resolution stresses the importance of sending to the villages the entire might of the "party-apparatus" and "bureaucracy".

Recently — that is to say after the Poznan events — the regime has also taken a few measures to alleviate the plight of the workers. They are aimed at permitting the workers to change their employment and their place of work, or to refuse to be switched from place to place without prior notice. But, even in the frame of the new measures, the worker is still entirely submitted to the plans and orders of the "manpower" organisations. The trade unions have no right to defend workers, individually or collectively. It must also be noted that the regime is constantly increasing the norms of production and reducing "nominal wages" so as to increase "real wages". That frustrates the great bulk of the workers even more.

As far as the intellectuals are concerned, occupied Rumania also lags much behind the other captive countries. A general Writers' Congress was held at the end of June. But, before that, the regime decided to have a sort of "full-dress rehearsal" by calling a regional meeting of the intellectuals and writers. It was attended by Gheorghiu Dej, Miron Constantinescu, Raut, and other high dignitaries of the Communist Party. One writer, Jar, tried to speak in favour of liberalising the intellectual life. He was expelled from the Party. As a result of this manoeuvre, at the main Writers' Congress nobody spoke for liberalisation but, on the contrary, the term was criticised by the main speakers as "decadent" and "reactionary".

In the general sphere of East-West contacts and exchanges, it must be pointed out that occupied Rumania is still the only "satellite" which has no permanent Western newspaper correspondent and which does not permit its citizens to receive medicine and drug parcels from abroad.

8. What strikes the eye in all these changes is their artificiality. Discussions on small issues are allowed in some "parliaments" when there are foreign visitors in the country; prisoners are released when their minds and health are broken; others are rehabilitated when dead; officials play their game of musical chairs in the Cabinets with solemn pomp and circumstance. These moves are not a result of an organic evolution of Communism as such or a benevolent sense of justice of the Soviet overlords, but are simply imposed and coordinated by Moscow wherever and to what extent it deems it convenient. That the so-called liberalisation is but an artifice is amply proven by the absence of it in Albania and Rumania or the purely nominal changes in Bulgaria, Esthonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Another distinctive trait of these changes is that they are taking place mainly within the Communist Party. The rehabilitation affects only the Communists, and most of the "liberalisation" moves are for them, it is a family affair — noisy, full of sound and fury and renegefulness, but little affecting the living conditions of the population. The importance of even these changes shrinks rapidly if they are analysed in the context of the ultimate Soviet goals of Communisation and Russification. And they cannot be important as long as the entire State apparatus is manipulated by the Communist Party; as long as no deviation from the sacred Communist dogma is allowed; as long as this huge artifice of "people's democracy" is saved from collapse by the presence of Russian armies and police units.

9. The causes of the "thaw" go back to the dynastic changes, the uncertainty and the struggle for power in Moscow. A certain confusion in the Communist puppet régimes in the Central and Eastern European countries inevitably resulted from that, precisely because these régimes were totally dependent upon Moscow.

A semblance of democratisation in Central and Eastern Europe was necessary for Moscow's new blueprint whereby a rejuvenated and cleansed Soviet Empire would forge ahead into uncommitted areas and infiltrate the Western nations through revived ties with the Left. Sensitive and insecure about the status of their occupied territories, the Soviets foresaw that a window-dressing "liberalisation" would enhance the prestige of the puppet régimes in the eyes of the world and stabilise them. They also realised that the previous rigidity might lead the economy of these countries to the point of collapse and the feelings of the populations to the point of eruption. (Poznan is a case in point).

There is another, a long-range and imaginative design in the carrot-in-place-of-the-stick moves of the Soviet rulers in the captive countries. They know that the safest solution for them is gradually to win over the populations of the Central and Eastern European nations and thus to create an obedient vassalage in what is now an area of unrest and hostility. They have not lost hopes for that. On the contrary, being Marxists, they believe in the transformatory power of environment, and, in spite of continuous set-backs, in their ultimate victory over the minds of the youth. Being psychologists, shrewd although limited, they count on human inability to endure endless resistance and sacrifice as well as on the human longing for security. They calculate that a large-scale disillusionment of the captive populations with the West would create a vacuum which would be filled with submission and reconciliation.

10. The developments in Central and Eastern Europe since the Twentieth Party Congress clearly show that Moscow is not prepared, and does not propose, to allow any genuine national Communism.

As a matter of fact, Tito's case is unique because of his war-time role, Yugoslavia's geographical position and the absence of Soviet troops of occupation in his country. It is not typical of other Communist-ruled countries.

Could not Tito's special position become very useful in the Soviet strategy? With the new slogan "To each his own way to Socialism", is not Tito's role to serve as the bridge between the Soviet empire and the fervently wooed Western Socialist parties not to speak of as the uncommitted areas?

The Government officials in the captive countries are neither able nor willing to enter any national Communist experiments. To picture them, as some Western observers did, as a group of important figures sincerely groping to better the lot of their peoples in the framework of socialism and to gain some independence from Moscow, is utterly false. It is even incorrect to call the nations ruled by them "satellites", since only the few people in power are such; colonies would be a better expression. These clusters of Moscow-trained and bred bureaucrats, managers and ideologues have no popular backing and no root in their populations; they are alien not only to the traditions of their countries, but enemies of the very tradition of humanism — which makes the cause of the captive countries universal.

11. Their sharpened self-criticism does not add any stature to them. A corruption which is described extensively in official newspapers is still a corruption. A regime which castigates itself in public about being a total failure — which, in the case of Poland, amounts to masochistic self-flagellation — is no less a total failure. In the West, such an admission would be followed by the resignation of the Government. The popular will in Central and Eastern Europe would have the same result if it could express itself.

Under present conditions the chances of the popular will of the captive nations regaining its voice or even a minimal influence on the decisions of the Government by a more representative parliament or by secret ballot to elect at least minor officials are illusory. The attitude of the ruling clique on that subject is best defined by a statement of the Secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, Koehler. He stated recently with regard to the proposed amendments to the party statute: The composition and condition of the Party make it impossible to comply with the proposal that the Party organs should be elected by secret ballot. A secret ballot could in many organisations be abused to enforce the election of such candidates to the Party Committees as would give no guarantee that they would work for the correct policy of the Party. "

## **1.8. CONCLUSIONS**

12. A fatalistic concept of finality of the status quo in Central and Eastern Europe, as cherished by some people in the West, is illogical if placed against a background of the record and the composition of these regimes. There is nothing final about corruption and exploitation imposed from outside and maintained by the presence of foreign troops. This concept, purporting to represent historic realism, takes no account of the history of the captive nations, which shows an unrelenting surge toward freedom. Besides being amoral, this concept, if accepted as a premise of Western policy, would prove disastrously impractical. The constant pressure of a consolidated Eastern bloc would mean grave difficulties for the remaining area of free nations in Europe.

There are possibilities of a creative policy for the West in the present situation in Central and Eastern Europe. The Communist world is experiencing confusion and dissension. The Western Powers have stated on several occasions in the past that there could be no lasting peace until the full independence of the Eastern countries was restored through free elections under international supervision. The time has now come for the West to insist on this vital demand in its dealings with the Russians. This policy would have the advantage of giving support to the subject peoples in their struggle for freedom and of putting the Soviets on the defensive.

13. The problem of East-West exchanges deserves special attention.

It is part of the Western tradition to encourage and foster every form of contact and exchange between peoples. The Iron Curtain was not the creation of the West—which has never had anything to fear from the dissemination of its ideas. We have, on the contrary, everything to gain, if information about our way of life, our form of government, our culture and our real intentions concerning world problems are allowed to reach the peoples of the East.

Another positive point about East-West exchange visits is that they give a chance from time to time to the oppressed peoples to demonstrate their adherence to the West, as witness the reception, amounting to a political demonstration, of touring French and American theatre companies.

On the other hand, we must recognise that such exchanges may suggest to the captive peoples that an accommodation is taking place. Knowing how important it is for them to be assured that they are not forgotten, and that the struggle for their liberty is going on, we cannot allow the Russians to arrange all these exchanges on their own terms. At present such exchanges are in fact being carried on on Soviet terms, contrary to the proposals made by the Western Powers at the Geneva Conference of Foreign Ministers. No wonder then that Khrushchev could recently brag in a speech made at Stalino in the Ukraine that "the country's growing authority abroad is reflected in the floods of delegations coming here". In the light of this admission, it is quite evident that, as carried out at present, the East-West contacts result in much larger benefits to the Communist side than to the West. To correct this situation the Geneva proposals on a genuinely free circulation of persons and a free flow of ideas and information should be insisted upon by the Western Powers.

14. The only solution for the West and for the captive nations still lies in peaceful liberation. The West must maintain its pressure until there is an end to the unnatural and dangerous division of Europe and must avail itself of all peaceful means to bring about the restoration of the essential unity of Europe. The West would thus follow a policy of wisdom and enlightened self-interest.

The present division of Europe defies any attempt of stabilisation. Western Europe must either succeed in restoring the unity of the Continent or run the risk of being eventually engulfed by the Soviet empire.

In accepting as genuine the so-called liberalisation of the regimes in Eastern Europe, and in placing its hopes in the gradual emancipation of these regimes from Soviet dependence, independent of any Western action, the West would not weaken but only strengthen the division of Europe. It would resign itself to inaction and thereby give time to the Soviets to consolidate their hold over the captive nations and to transform them into secure springboards for future expansive ventures.

A genuine liberalisation can only come through the combined pressure of the captive peoples themselves and the Western nations.

For popular pressure to become effective, the spirit of resistance of the captive peoples must be sustained. It cannot be sustained but would only be weakened through closer relations between the Western Governments and the satellite Governments, on the delusive assumption that liberalisation and independence vis-d-vis Moscow would thereby be furthered.

15. Because of a series of recent disappointments, ranging from the Geneva Conferences to the failure of the West to undertake any action in the United Nations or elsewhere following the events in Poznan, expressions of hope and sympathy, and even statements on peaceful liberation, have lost their effectiveness in sustaining the morale of the peoples behind the Iron Curtain. Words alone carry less and less weight, the more so as Communist propaganda designed for home-consumption is cleverly exploiting the increased East-West exchange visits to drive home the argument that the West has ceased to regard its relationship to the Communist world in terms of a struggle for freedom and has reconciled itself to coexistence.

Assurances to the effect that freedom and independence for the captive nations remain objectives of Western policy would have more authority if they were matched by some political action. The time for such action might well now be at hand. As shown by the events in Poland and other captive countries, the Soviets and their puppets are confronted at present with serious political and economic difficulties. They may be forced to accept substantial political concessions in the end.

16. The alternatives are not coexistence, which means resignation and passivity —•• the very negation of political action—and war, the failure of political action. It is precisely between these two extremes that lies the vast field of political initiative. Public opinion in the free world should be mobilised in support of a determined political offensive on behalf of peace through freedom. The Western Powers should avail themselves of all international conferences to press the issue of freedom and independence of all European nations and should make of the solution of this issue a condition for a settlement with the Soviet Union. We should bring up on every occasion in the United Nations the matter of Soviet aggressions, Soviet colonialism and Soviet violations of international agreements solemnly pledging freedom and independence to the captive nations. Such forces of freedom might then be set in motion inside and outside the Soviet empire that the Soviet rulers might end by yielding ground, for reasons of self-interest.