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ENCOUNTER

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Edited by STEPHEN SPENDER *and* IRVING KRISTOL

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This Month's *ENCOUNTER*:—

1985?

IT USED to be said (by Europeans of course) that when ideas grew old they went to America to be born again. Now it seems they go East. Just when the West had become utterly bored with anti-Communist propaganda; just when the feeling was widespread that even truth grows stale when it is uttered too often; just when everyone was resigning himself to the fact that there was no sense in banging one's head against a stone wall, that we had to co-exist with Communist totalitarianism and might as well make the best of it; just when references to the Moscow trials and slave labour camps and suppression of intellectual freedom were becoming distinctly *vieux jeux*—at that very point the whole business started echoing back at us from behind the Iron Curtain. No sooner did Mr. Arthur Koestler decide (understandably enough) that Cassandra had grown hoarse than Mr. Howard Fast miraculously found his voice. There we were, grudgingly reconciled to Big Brother and 1984, and without warning *they* showed signs of experiencing a new year.

It is all very exciting. But, oddly enough, the free world has refused to get excited. The almost automatic reaction, it would seem, is to raise a warning finger, put on a long face (if one isn't wearing it already), and explain with solemn gravity that we should not indulge in wishful thinking. The Communist rulers are still Communist; their régimes are still oppressive to their subjects and inimical to us; there have been previous "thaws" followed by extreme frost; the present relaxation might even, in the long run, make Communism more dangerous because less self-destructive; and so on and so forth. It is a useful sermon and true; and the revolt in Poznan has demonstrated how risky it is for a totalitarian régime to experiment with liberalisation—it is far easier to suppress people than to manipulate them. As we write this, it is not yet clear whether the process of dismantling Stalinist orthodoxy will be terminated or postponed or unaffected. But, whatever happens now, a return to the *status quo ante* is excluded as a possibility, and we ought not to underestimate the significance of what has already taken place. A myth has been destroyed; and with it a faith, and a nightmare. Terror is now simply terror—nothing more, nothing "higher." Whatever now happens in the Communist world will be events in a profane, not a sacred history; and we shall be spared that *mysterium tremendum* which Communism has hitherto excited in both its opponents and adherents.

Above all, concern for the future ought not to distract us from realising that this demythologisation, and its inevitable if still inscrutable consequences, is what we *wanted* to happen; and that this, moreover, is what we should have expected to happen, had we real confidence in our own ideals and ideas. Confidence, however, is not something that the free world has shown any surplus of in recent years. We preferred the pathos of a languid *Weltschmerz*, imagining ourselves with indecent foresight as the righteous and defeated. Now a new voice has disturbed our reverie:

> *Take them off me, these rags of dogma,*
> *give me a simple overcoat.*

So wrote the Polish poet, Adam Wazyk, on April 8th of this year. That simple overcoat, of course, is our everyday dress; we had lost the habit of regarding it with any special favour; and we are bound to feel uncomfortable and slightly ashamed when the dispossessed show how highly they prize it, and therefore how niggardly was our own appreciation of it. Possibly we too shall be affected by what is happening in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and even Russia. We think it revealing that two of our contributors to this issue, Miss Beloff and Mr. Jelenski, the one writing about Russia and the other about Poland, and each writing independently of the other, should conclude their articles by questioning the pessimistic vision that found expression in *1984* and *Darkness at Noon*.

WHAT is particularly interesting about the developments in Eastern Europe is the rôle that the intellectuals have played. The tumult and agitation there doubtless has deep causes and reflects a general discontent. But in all of these countries, to one extent or another, what we have been witnessing is a revolt of the intellectuals against the totalitarian system. Somehow, one didn't expect it. They were, after all, a highly privileged class, with a standard of luxury and a social status that many in the West found reason to envy. They were, presumably, converts to the New Faith, supple in accommodating themselves to the latest turn of doctrine, the most recent nuance of dogma. They were busy, self-confident, bold, and rather frightening, these New Soviet Men. And then, suddenly, there were none.

What happened? What happened was that one of our clichés took on body and life. That free human spirit, whose praises we in the West dutifully mumbled, and whose inextinguishability we mechanically proclaimed, has in fact turned out to be something precious and inextinguishable. Our own fundamental values are being rediscovered for us, with a fear and trembling that recovers them from the conventional and academic and makes them once again real and vital.

> *I am not worthy of praise,*
> *Believe me, my friend, it chills my bones*
> *When you praise my courage.*
>
> *I am not a tiger; I am a human being,*
> *My worn heart is a nest of fears,*
> *Believe me: I am scared. I am scared.*
>
> (Zoltan Zelk in *Iroldalmi Ujsàg* [Hungary] May 5th, 1956)

NOTES ON OUR CONTRIBUTORS

WILLIAM H. WHYTE, Jr. is Assistant Managing Editor of *Fortune* magazine in New York. His article represents a revised version of two chapters from a forthcoming book, *The Organisation Man*, to be published shortly in New York by Simon & Schuster. . . . PATRICIA HUTCHINS' new book on James Joyce, *James Joyce's World*, is being published by Methuen at the end of the year. . . . K. A. JELENSKI, of Polish origin and now living in Paris, has contributed art and literary criticism to many French reviews. . . . NORA BELOFF is Paris correspondent for the *Observer*. . . . SEYMOUR M. LIPSET is Associate Professor of Sociology at Columbia University in New York. . . . C. A. R. CROSLAND was Member of Parliament (Labour) for Gloucestershire South, 1950–5. His article, ". . . About Equality," is the second of a three-part series which we are publishing. . . .

SEVERAL readers have written to us, calling attention to the fact that the quotation from Manuilsky, which appeared in Frank Moraes' contribution last month, is of spurious origin. This particular quotation has been widely used in the press, and Mr. Moraes can scarcely be blamed for assuming its authenticity. No one seems to be quite sure just when and where it first made its appearance; and it appears that Soviet scholars have not been able to prevent its widespread circulation. Perhaps this little note will contribute to that end.

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recently written poems on mystical and religious themes drawn from the New Testament: politically-minded students have visited his home to copy them out and manuscripts are circulating today inside the university premises.

Coming out of the building into the sunshine, I strolled with my friends round the artificial lake: this is part of the highly stylised university gardens, which the Soviet authorities, despite the desperate post-war housing shortage, found labour and money to build. Belonging as I did to a generation brought up on George Orwell, on *Animal Farm* and *1984*, and on the assumption that the human mind can be pounded like soggy dough into any shape or form, it seemed fantastic that a young generation of Russians, born and bred in the worst era of Stalin's tyranny, could conserve so much inquisitiveness, humour, and irreverence, and that its intellectual élite should remain at the end of it all so very unsubdued. It occurred to me Orwell may have been wrong.

The next day I had to leave. It was only during the long plane journey back, piecing the bits together, that I realised Orwell must have been wrong.

THE POLISH "EARTHQUAKE": *K. A. Jelenski*

THE revolt of the Poznan workers was indisputably due to disastrous economic conditions which, in the absence of free trade unions, could be protested against in no other way. Some Western observers called it an "act of despair." But recent events ought to have taught us to distinguish between events that mark the end of a historical trend and those that herald new beginnings. The impulse behind the Poznan revolt was hope, not despair. Economic conditions were no better three years ago, but such overt resistance would have been unthinkable. What made it thinkable now was that radical change in the Polish climate of opinion caused by the shattering revelations about the true nature of Stalin and Stalinism.

. . . *Stalin was a criminal, the political trials were merely a bloody farce, the prisons and camps of the Soviet Union and Poland are still full of innocent people, there is nothing to choose between the crimes of the Nazis and those of the Stalinists, the so-called "glorious dawn" turns out to have been rather a return to the "Dark Ages"; socialist realism was a weapon invented by Zhdanov in order to destroy art altogether, Polish literature during the past few years has been pitiable, painting has produced nothing but "murky canvases on hypocritical themes." And everyone knew this, and no one dared to protest.* . . . These are the sort of things one reads nowadays in the official, Communist-controlled Polish press, in *Przeglad Kulturalny*, *Nowa Kultura*, *Zycie Literackie*, and even in *Tybuna Ludu*, the Polish counterpart of *Pravda*.

What is particularly worthy of note is that a number of problems which have *not* been dealt with in Moscow have, for the first time in ten years, been publicly aired in Poland—among them, the deportation of Poles from the territories occupied by the Soviet Union following the Ribbentrop–Molotov pact, the drama of the Warsaw Rising, and the persecution by the Communist régime of former Polish resistance workers who fought the Germans in the ranks of the "Home Army." Until now, these problems had been systematically eliminated from all public discussion, although they had continued to be a particularly sore point for the whole Polish people. Furthermore, with a freedom unknown in the Soviet Union, a discussion has started on some of the theoretical aspects of Marxism,

and their application to social and economic life. In spite of half-hearted attempts to represent this as a "spontaneous" debate, and the somewhat naïve protestations of certain writers that they "have not been in the least influenced" by the Twentieth Congress, all this would obviously be unthinkable without the "earthquake" referred to by Wladyslaw Machejek, a veteran Communist, in the April 8th issue of *Zycie Literackie*:

"I have just received the statement made by Comrade Khrushchev on 'The Cult of the Individual and its Consequences.' It lays bare the personality of Stalin from an angle I had never suspected. Here is a brutal Stalin, Stalin not even bothering to heed the advice of the Politbureau, Stalin riddled with sickly suspicions, Stalin forging the theory that the class struggle must become increasingly acute merely in order to consolidate his own autocratic sway. And then the purges, and Communists being thrown into concentration camps. Stalin failing to convene either the Central Committee or Congress, Stalin failing to prepare the Soviet Union for war, because he trusted in Hitler. Stalin heaping praises upon himself, lending his ear to flatterers and to the villainous Beria. Stalin swallowed up, towards the end of his life, by a paroxysm of megalomania, and endangering the unity of the socialist camp and the whole international revolutionary movement.

". . . I cannot today plead ignorance as to the existence of concentration camps in the U.S.S.R. I cannot exonerate myself by pretending that I knew nothing about the deportation of Poles from Eastern Poland to Siberia, for reasons which were nearly always entirely unconnected with the class struggle. What then were the real reasons for these deportations? Besides, it was not only a question of Poles. I cannot pretend that I believed in the faults of the Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party, whose members were assassinated in the U.S.S.R. I have often wondered why so few Soviet arms were dropped by parachute to our Communist partisans. It seems to me that the distance between Kharkov and the forests of Lublin was no greater in 1943 than the distance between Palermo and Lublin: and yet British aircraft dropped arms to the Home Army. I shivered to think that perhaps the real reason lay in ancient suspicions, that there was no confidence in the new Workers' Party (the P.P.R.), the successor to the Polish Communist Party which had been baselessly accused of unworthy provocation. . . ."

Mythology and Truth

IN HIS report to the Nineteenth Congress of Culture and the Arts, the writer Jan Kott gave a rather more abstract interpretation of the "earthquake":

"During the past fifteen years, the Marxist conception of the historical process has been supplanted by a pragmatic interpretation. As in the good old days, in the heyday of the bourgeoisie, we were all ready to agree with Pope that everything that is, is necessary. . . . We wanted . . . not to know reality, but to explain it. Explain it and justify it—at all costs! Even at the cost of truth! Thus, increasingly, and before our very eyes, contemporary history turned into a mythology. If facts themselves became awkward, it was decreed that they did not exist. The doctrine imposed upon us, according to which each stage of the revolution and the construction of the Socialist State always marks a step forward, inevitably led up to the divine infallibility of the man who stood for the leadership of the Party. When one brings God into history, one is obliged to bring the devil in as well. When the person of the leader was transferred into the realm of myth, it meant that our ideological struggle itself, and our adversaries, real or imaginary, were also transferred into a mythical sphere. The theory of the sharpening of the class struggle and the conception of 'enemies of the people' contributed to this process. The myth gave rise to an inquisition. Every political trial became a witch-hunt.

"A literature in which the mention of crimes was forbidden, a literature powerless to deal with the theme of these trials, which revolted our conscience yet which for many years had constituted our daily reality, a literature thus gagged had no course but to plunge ever more deeply into falsehood, and to create an ever more fictitious picture of reality. . . .

"Those were dark years for our conscience and our reason, and many among us were involved in a deep personal conflict. And now we must answer to our own conscience and to others for our attitude towards these problems. . . . We gave our moral support to injustice, we gave our moral support to crime."

But who are "we"? Jan Kott is a Communist who never bowed to the debasement of social realism in its most extreme phase, but who, from 1950 on, restricted himself to translations and scientific research. Nevertheless, he had played his part, between 1945 and 1950, in creating the atmosphere that finally he was to find unbreathable. Hence the reply of the art historian Karol Estreicher, who refuses, in the name of the majority of Polish intellectuals, to shoulder the responsibility referred to by Kott:

"'We wrote this, we did that, . . .'—to which I can only reply, personally, by a clear denial. We did not all do these things, only some of us. . . . I am not raising this point simply for personal reasons, but it must be borne in mind, for it is bound to have certain consequences. . . ."

Witold Wirpsza, a young Communist writer, asks how he and his friends were able to continue so long on "a daily diet of lies":

"Were we really so cut off as not to know anything about the crimes and perversions of the period that has just ended, as to be able to say, like the Germans after the entry of the allied armies: 'We didn't know Auschwitz existed until you told us'?"

Wirpsza lays the blame on the Leninist doctrine of "objectivity": everyone was perfectly well aware of the crimes and injustices that were being perpetrated, but people persuaded themselves that they were "objectively necessary."

"Oh, that little word, 'objective'! If Lenin could have foreseen what disasters were to be caused by its misuse, he would surely have banished it from his vocabulary."

But it was not only a question of "objective lies."

"Above all, we were afraid—it has to be admitted, for there was a real reign of terror—we were afraid that if we didn't swallow such lies, we would be swallowed up ourselves."

The Home Army

THE fate of former members of the Home Army, the A.K., who fought the Germans under the orders of the Polish Government in exile in London, is linked with the problem of the Warsaw Rising. After the war, the former members of the A.K. were steadily discriminated against. Those who were not actually imprisoned or deported were nevertheless unable to find employment, and thus came to be known as the "exiles within."

For all that, the heroism of the Home Army has proved a tenacious legend, and it was the younger generation of Polish Communists who first raised the question of their "rehabilitation" in the weekly youth paper *Po Prostu*.

On April 8th, *Nowa Kultura* published a long article by Edmund Osmanczyk, which forms a sort of dossier on the whole affair. Some time earlier, Osmanczyk had broadcast over Warsaw Radio on the Home Army and the need for its rehabilitation, and had concluded by saying:

"We must all of us actively co-operate in tracking down and combatting every unjust measure, great or small, perpetrated on those who, in reply to the personal enquiry addressed to them, admitted to having fought the Nazi invader in the ranks of the Home Army."

What is even more striking is the vast number of letters that Osmanczyk received after making his broadcast. For the first time, we find the Polish press conveying a genuine reflection of public opinion. *Nowa Kultura* states that a number of these letters were signed.

This gesture by the press seems, however, to have left the former members of the A.K. unconvinced. One wrote:

"Rehabilitation must be initiated by the official authorities, and not in the form of articles in the newspapers. . . . In the first place, freedom should be restored to all those who formerly fought against the Nazi occupation, who were unjustly sentenced, and who are now in various prisons and concentration camps. After that . . . the Party and the Government should raise the question of repatriating the former members of the Home Army who were deported to Russia."

Another correspondent takes an even more pessimistic view:

"All attempts at remedying this problem are already too late. . . . Let those whom you have entrusted with discussing the members of the A.K. finish the job. We fought, we shed our blood and later our tears, and we cannot now accept this 'magnanimity' which comes twelve years too late. You have no right to call for novels, films, and plays which would resurrect the members of the A.K. who have been slandered and trampled underfoot."

Workers and Privileged Classes

DURING the past two years, one had grown used to seeing a surprising freedom of expression on literary and artistic problems. What is new is to see this freedom extended to the economic and social spheres. Of course, there had been a certain amount of discussion in these spheres before now, on particular matters, but it had been designed to act either as a "safety valve" or merely to lead to increased production. For example, there had been talk of factories working badly, of workers' canteens being badly organised, or confusion in the construction of houses for the workers, but obviously no one dared express any doubts as to the basic principles on which economic and social life was organised. The Polish Communist weekly *Kronika* not long ago published an article on "Economic Inconsistencies," an article which was reprinted by *Zycie Literackie*. In this article, the economist Bohdan Drozdowski tries to explain why the myth of "socialist emulation" has been shattered. In doing so, he produces an argument which, until very recently, would have seemed the rankest heresy:

"One cannot increase production without ensuring that the workers get a larger share of the profits. No one wants to work long hours for little pay. I have a friend, a specialist, who has just been telling me how he finds it better to slow down his rate of work. Everyone knows that when various anniversaries come round—the First of May, or the anniversary of the October Revolution—one has to promise to produce more. If my friend continued to work all the year round at the maximum rate, how would he have anything in reserve to fulfil all these special demands? There is a further reason: as soon as the workers in a factory speed up their rate of work, the norms on which they are paid are increased, which means in effect that, while they receive no more pay, they are expected to work that much harder. It is high time that the workers were told: 'Comrades, we are no longer going to raise the norms as often as we have done in the past. We are going, instead, to establish fixed norms, for a period of, say, three years.' If such measures were taken, I am sure that the habit of working to rule would cease. But until only recently, no one dared to put forward such a measure, since it would have been regarded as counter-revolutionary."

The writer of this article also shows how the whole system of record production levels was built on fraud:

"It is well known that many of these heroes of labour were given the assistance of special teams, allotted to them by the factory management, who were only too proud to claim such champions among their personnel."

Drozdowski then goes on to compare the relative cost of production in a capitalist and a communist society:

"It is no secret that the older workers joke among themselves by saying that, if the former Polish factory owners—the Geyers, the Scheiblers, the Poznanskis—had managed only to reach present production levels, with all the additional burden of the present bureaucratic superstructure, they would have been ruined within a matter of days. The Geyers had no directors who specialised in questions of competitive output, and yet any old Polish workman will tell you that we still have much to learn from them."

Yet the most sensational aspect of this article is the conclusion which the writer reaches: for the first time in Poland, he is bold enough to discuss whether the trades unions should be independent:

"The first step is to do away with the whole bureaucracy of competitive labour. We must get rid of all the officials, and entrust the matter to the trades unions themselves: but that can only be done if the trades unions cease to be a purely fictitious and sham organisation, and once more become an active force in the workers' lives. Without the co-operation of the trades unions, which for their part should remain in close contact with the rank and file, it is hardly to be expected that we can raise the working norms."

"The Dark Ages"

"WE HAVE just emerged from the Dark Ages," declared the poet Antoni Slonimski, at the Nineteenth Congress of Culture and the Arts:

"There are few periods in the whole history of philosophy in which intolerance has been taken to such a pitch as during the past few years. The persecutions inflicted on free thought at the beginning of the Renaissance, or in the 17th and 18th centuries, seem like a golden age when compared with the period through which we have been passing, and which, we are happy to say, is now ending."

This is what Slonimski has to say about "socialist realism":

"The first scandalous deformation of the Marxist classics was the Soviet Writers' Congress of 1936. It was then that Zhdanov, basing himself on certain of Gorki's remarks and exploiting his prestige as a writer, fabricated the doctrine of socialist realism, and he then entrusted this precision instrument, designed to annihilate art altogether, to bureaucrats who for twenty years wielded their destructive power with a zeal and enthusiasm made only sharper by fear."

For the first time, Slonimski also speaks in defence of the literature and art of pre-war Poland:

"We must remember that it was then that Kruczkowski wrote his Kordian and the Serf and that Broniewski published his best poems. We must remember that the magnificent theatrical achievement of a Léon Schiller took place during those twenty years. . . . We know, and we must acknowledge the fact without bitterness, that it was the People's Republic of Poland that destroyed Schiller. And here, I am deliberately restricting myself to Polish artists of the extreme Left, to members of the Communist Party. Our comrades Stande, Wandurski, Bruno Jasienski [Polish writers liquidated in the U.S.S.R.] *perished in prisons far from Polish soil."*

And this is how the painter Zbigniew Pronaszko defines social-realist art, until a short time ago the only "progressive" art:

"We know what that sort of realism meant . . . a tractor, a pile of bricks, and factories, and more factories. . . . The whole thing done with camera-like fidelity, and drowned in a sauce of greyish mud."

Such criticism is not in itself new. Up to the Nineteenth Congress of Culture and the Arts, however, it had seemed to be confined to a very limited group. Now we have the spectacle of writers outside this group acquiring the right to criticise: it is not surprising that they should demand explanations from critics officially pledged to the régime. The poet Arthur Sandauer put it best, when he declared that, in spite of the alleged "freedom of discussion," certain limits were still being tacitly observed. As to the nature of those limits, those best acquainted with totalitarian systems will not be surprised to learn that they concern personalities:

"There are always questions that no one talks about in public. I shall endeavour, in my speech, to go beyond that limitation.

"The sort of things that everyone knows about, yet no one must mention, are, first and foremost, personal questions. No one gets worked up if you say that our régime is worthless, but just try saying that our Comrade Brandys is a mere graphomaniac—and see the dust that's kicked up! . . . The Congress must come to certain practical conclusions as to how our artistic life is to be reorganised. For if we resign ourselves to the ideology of 'heroic opportunism,' according to which only those who have wrecked the machine have the right to mend it, we shall not get very far."

The Uses of "Leninism"

IT IS no easy task to analyse these developments, and for two reasons: it cannot be studied in isolation from the changes which have occurred in the U.S.S.R., and at the same time it contains a number of specifically Polish aspects.

Until only recently, we were accustomed to look upon the Soviet bloc as a monolithic structure. For one thing, it presented a unified conception of the world and of history,

an absurd conception, admittedly, but a perfectly integrated one. In the second place, that conception was imposed *en bloc* on every one of the satellite countries (and similarly on the Western Communist parties).

Within this conception (consisting of the totality of Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism and its application to the making of history and the interpretation of events, to politics, science, and ethics, to literature and art), the Communist — and the opportunist — could exist quite happily, shielded from "truth" by a smooth impregnable wall. They could even indulge in excursions outside the wall of their conceptions, arming themselves with "esoteric" interpretations, in order to survey with the lofty scorn of initiates the "truth" which they had no scruple in rejecting as "objectively harmful."

Because of this situation, many Western experts maintained that nothing could change in the U.S.S.R. without the total collapse of the régime. They would not accept the idea that the Soviet régime might be able to correct merely certain aspects of its history, and achieve a partial dismantling of its mythology. To such minds, it seemed that the gigantic lie must go on gathering weight like a snowball, that the régime must devise ever more elaborate fictions to account for its past crimes, and that fresh versions would continue to be forged always with the same mythological apparatus, ranging from bloody purges and false confessions to the elimination of pages from the encyclopædia. It seemed, in short, that the whole ridiculous structure would stand only so long as none of its elements was removed, including the genetics of Lysenko and the stultified conventionalism of its art.

But history, in the short-term view at least, has once more made mock of such "logical" arguments. The new collective dictators have abandoned certain myths, and have left other identical and parallel myths undisturbed. Hence all the contradictions and surprises that occur even in a debate as bold and free as that which has been taking place in Poland. The trial of Rajk was based on falsehood and injustice. But the trial of Slansky, which rested on the same basis and was conducted by the same methods, remains an expression of "popular justice." And while the people are told that the notion of the "enemy" has led to senseless abuses, Beria continues to be portrayed as its arch exemplar, the "enemy" incarnate.

But the tendency in Poland is to avoid what myths still remain. One even glimpses, through certain bold allusions, an indication that people are now able to force themselves to struggle against such myths, without actually attacking them openly. Thus, one found allusions to the baneful rôle of Vyshinsky, even before Moscow posthumously rebuked him. And the way in which Kott and others speak of "witch-hunts" leaves little doubt as to their attitude towards the trials of Kostov or Slansky.

In all this, Polish writers and journalists are obviously obliged to lean frequently for support on Lenin and "Leninism." It is interesting to note that, when the Poles refer to the Lenin period, what they lay stress on is its relative freedom. One strongly suspects that their devotion to Leninism may be more pragmatic than ideological. Leninist arguments are now being employed in Poland as a form of ideological insurance, as a means of trying to broaden, more or less consciously, the margin of freedom with the backing of an irrefutable authority. If a Polish painter praises to the skies the Soviet art of the Lenin period, it is because he wants Polish artists to be free to paint as they like. If a poet asserts that Zhdanov perverted the principles of Marxism-Leninism in literature, it is in order to strengthen still further the present reaction against the monotony, the insipidity, and the hypocrisy of "socialist realism." If an economist discusses the question of the increased productivity that could be achieved by a strict application of the precepts of Marxism-Leninism, it is because he wants to diminish the exploitation of the worker and the abuses of a hypertrophied bureaucracy. If a journalist lays the primary stress on the veteran Communists wrongfully imprisoned or deported, it is so that he can *also* denounce the deportation of Poles to Siberia, and the detention of former resistance workers and "non-Party" men. Here, then, in the case of Poland, is one of the most striking consequences of the "new line": for the first time it is possible to employ principles officially recognised by the highest authorities of the Party in the service of freedom, and in defence of the interests of an entire people.

The Polish Way

THERE is another watchword which would seem to be of particular significance for Poland. It is the phrase used by Khrushchev during the Soviet reconciliation with Tito, when he spoke of there being "different paths to socialism." Soviet policy obviously observes this principle of equality only in the case of Yugoslavia: there is no question, for the moment, of its being extended to the "people's democracies." But Poland is the only country in the Soviet bloc where one can find at least allusions to this principle. If a Polish journal (*Przeglad Kulturalny*) is able to assert that a truly independent Poland would be in the interests of the U.S.S.R., that implies an implicit recognition of the limitations of Poland's present "independence." The rehabilitation of Gomulka and Spychalski (which appears to have been brought about, at least in part, by mass pressure within the Party) seems to confirm these tendencies.

It was probably the peculiar position of the Polish Communist Party which helped to spare Poland from the reign of terror which was unleashed in the other satellite countries. The Polish Communists have never been able to forget the unjust and ignominious dissolution of their Party in 1938. Even the present leaders, although they bowed to every Soviet command and made themselves the docile instruments of Stalin's will, must have retained a bitter memory of the liquidation of their comrades in Soviet prisons. The same thing has happened with certain religious orders dissolved by the Catholic Church: they submit to its decrees, but a painful complex nevertheless persists. It was perhaps because of a similar complex that Gomulka and Spychalski were spared the fate of Rajik and Slansky. I was told recently of a veteran Polish woman Communist who, during a public meeting, suddenly broke off in the middle of her speech and burst into tears: it was a few days after the rehabilitation of the Polish Communist Party, and for the first time she was able to evoke the memory of her father, a Communist assassinated in the Soviet Union. One wonders what effect that fact must have had, buried in the depths of her memory during all those years. Just recently it was revealed for the first time that Bierut had received his Marxist education from Professor Hempel, a sort of Polish Lukacs, who also perished in a Soviet prison. After the rehabilitation of the Party, and not long before Bierut died, *Trybuno Ludu* published a photograph of the young Bierut together with an elderly gentleman. Thus Polish readers made the acquaintance of Hempel, "Bierut's mentor." The fact that Bierut's funeral (as Wanda Leopold tells us in *Przeglad Kulturalny*) was seized upon by the Poles as the occasion for an anti-Soviet demonstration (an obvious allusion to the rumours circulating in Poland about the suspect circumstances of Bierut's death in Moscow), shows that Poland is indeed taking its own new "path" within the Soviet bloc. The real question is not whether the path is indeed "new"; it is, rather, how far it will be permitted to extend.

Rubashov and the "New Faith"

IN HIS *The Captive Mind*, Czeslaw Milosz put forward a subtle analysis of the psychic mechanism of those who accept the principles of the "New Faith." His conception did, indeed, seem to offer an explanation of the otherwise incomprehensible conversions. And, in the West, we tended to attribute to the intellectuals of the "people's democracies" all those manœuvres of conscience, interpretation, and adaptation that Milosz revealed. Yet the debate that is now going on in Poland seems to demonstrate that the Polish mind was never quite so "captive," after all.

In attributing the transformation of Polish

intellectuals into Communist heresiarchs to the fascination exerted over them by "History," by "the Revolution," and by "objective processes," Milosz shows us people who, under the spell of hypnosis, accept the worst crimes committed around them without a word of protest. In the theory advanced by Milosz, the weaknesses of individuals are to be attributed to the magnetic power of the system. And yet, the moment the ban on certain topics was raised in Poland, it became evident that nearly everyone was perfectly well aware of the underlying realities. One is therefore tempted to inquire whether fear and the secret police were not a more decisive factor than any "fascination exerted by History"; whether opportunism did not play a greater rôle than any interpretation of "objective processes"; and whether the attraction of the "New Faith" was not considerably less important than plain human weakness.

In the same way, we have recently witnessed the collapse of another interpretation of the Soviet world: the Rubashov myth of *Darkness at Noon*. At one time, the pact reached by Galkin and Rubashov seemed to offer the only key to the terrifying mystery of the Moscow trials. But now Alexander Werth, writing in *France-Observateur*, has revealed that the few survivors of those trials who were recently released have offered a much more simple explanation: their confessions were obtained by torture, by interminable interrogations, or by the promise of a new life under a false name in some remote corner of Russia. Those who are now dead were made to confess by the same methods. Even Khrushchev, in his famous speech, himself referred to the *dachas* (or country villas) they were promised, adding with somewhat macabre humour, "and the *dacha* happened to be under the ground." Thus, with the end of the Stalin myth, two myths created by anti-Stalinist analysis have also ended: the myth of the "New Faith" and the myth of Rubashov.

Koestler and Milosz painted a picture of Communist reality stripped of illusion. But each, in a different sphere, tried to explain how it was that, even in a police state which no longer retained the least connection with the Communist ideal, a certain belief in the revolutionary myth should still persist. Now, as more and more detailed information reaches us on the Soviet universe, we discover that the prestige of that myth stands a good deal lower than we had thought. The changes now in progress will continue for a long time yet to be justified by Marxist and Leninist phraseology. But their pragmatic character grows ever more clear.

It is in Poland, for a number of particular historical reasons—Poland's rôle in the last war, the traditional nationalism of the Poles, their tenacious (if superficial) attachment to the Catholic religion, the relatively small number of Polish Communists and their persecution in the past—that the new pragmatic approach has the best chance of developing. Recently, the Prime Minister, Cyrankiewicz, speaking before Parliament, quoted at length from an article by Juliusz Mieroszewski, which appeared in the April number of *Kultura*, a review published by Polish exiles in Paris, in which Mieroszewski stressed the fact that opinions far removed from Communism can now be expressed in Poland, as long as the present framework of the state is accepted. We have thus reached the paradoxical position in which the head of a totalitarian state is able to quote from a review published by exiles resolutely opposed to all forms of totalitarianism, presumably with the aim of gaining the support of public opinion. How long this position can be maintained—or pushed still further forward—is perhaps the key question in European politics today.