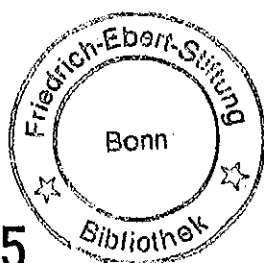




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CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE:

THE REVOLUTIONS OF 1989 AND THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT



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CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE: THE REVOLUTIONS OF 1989 AND THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid and largely peaceful collapse of authoritarian rule in most of Central and Eastern Europe is one of the most significant events of our time. For the people of these countries it means adopting a course of democratic pluralism and the market economy. For Europeans in general it means a reunited continent.

For FIET and EURO-FIET the changes mean that bridges are being opened for contacts and cooperation with new and reformed unions offering the possibility of burying post-war divisions. It is now imperative that FIET and its affiliates work with these new or reformed unions both to help consolidate the democratic changes and so that together we can confront the challenges facing us in all parts of Europe. Now democratic trade unions east and west have a converging programme in defending freedom but attacking the problems which result from the market system.

Most of the ITS's associated with the ICFTU have, like FIET, started extensive relations with new and reformed Central and Eastern European unions. A number of them have already admitted new affiliates from among them.

To be sure, with this time of such great promise come enormous problems for those concerned and, indirectly, for all of Europe.

The affirmation of pluralism, of freedom of association, the establishment of freedom of the press and other media, the construction, formally, of political democracy--though none of this is easy, it is being accomplished.

More problematical are the economic aspects. But it is on the success or failure of these that all else will depend. The transition from command to market economies is producing enormous hardships for many. Uncompetitive enterprises are closing by the thousands. Foreign capital is already homing in on most of the more profitable concerns. These trends have resulted in ever-increasing levels of unemployment or cutbacks in hours of paid employment. Social and cultural spending is being curtailed. The environment continues to deteriorate. In the absence of a social safety net, or the resources to create one, the people face great suffering.

So far, the infusion of new foreign investments (as opposed to buying up existing assets) which many expected to start the new market economies on the take-off stage have failed to materialise in the amounts hoped for. It is becoming evident that the building of these economies will require more time and hardship and will depend to a greater degree on local resources than some originally thought.

The success of the entire process, still very much in motion, depends in several countries to a very great extent on developments in the Soviet Union in the immediate future. The superpower is precisely one of the places where the future is least clear. But in spite of the uncertainty and hardships there is every indication that the overwhelming majority of the

people are firmly committed to the rejection of authoritarian rule and the basic changes are irreversible.

The revolutions of 1989 have brought about the collapse of the one party state and the emergence of new and reformed independent trade unions. With few exceptions, the old union leadership has been rejected and replaced. Leninist "transmission belt" trade unionism of the past has been routed. Throughout Central and Eastern Europe, workers are creating democratic unions which are either the old structures completely reformed or entirely new organisations.

The road is not easy. The absence of established democratic parties, for example, sometimes forces the trade unions into devoting an exceptional amount of attention to political issues. Further, the popular revulsion to state communism has left a climate of cynicism or outright opposition to programmes of social welfare or even the basic principle of trade unionism.

The unions must do all things at once, it seems. Added to all their other tasks they must take an active part in the process of defining new laws and regulations to govern labour relations which will have an incalculable impact on their futures. They are involved in efforts to see that at least the basic ILO rights, long theoretically endorsed by their countries, are established in practice. Also, it has meant reorientation in international contacts. The unions have largely turned their backs on the WFTU and are now looking to the ITS's and the ICFTU and ETUC for affiliation, cooperation and assistance. Polish Solidarnosc and Czech CS-KOS are already members of the ICFTU and others will certainly follow.

Beside representing immediate interests of workers everywhere and tackling such questions as unemployment, the unions are feeling pressure to act against new threats of private monopoly and social dumping.

One problem which has emerged seems rather curious for trade unionists in the Western European tradition. This is the need for the development of employers' organisations. Their absence hampers the establishment of collective bargaining now and postpones the emergence of social consensus-building for the future.

Immediate practical problems facing Central and Eastern European unions include developing new methods of organising and administration including, critically, how dues will be paid, establishing procedures for internal democracy and accountability and resolving the problem of assets of the former state-controlled unions. The latter is a particularly thorny issue which is absorbing a lot of energy of the new trade union leaders in several countries.

In spite of all these problems there is certain to be an important role for independent and democratic trade unionism in the future of Central and Eastern Europe. Prime Minister Jozef Antall of Hungary, for one, has said that the necessary transformations cannot be done without them. Western European trade unionists can look to these newly dynamic organisations as significant new allies in the creation of a better Europe for all.

The Secretariat has been inundated with requests for information on trade union developments in Central and Eastern Europe. It was therefore felt necessary to provide as much relevant information as possible to affiliates. The following is a country by country survey of the context and present status of trade unionism in the region. The information is based primarily on FIET's contacts in these countries so far, backed up by reports from other ITS's, the ICFTU, the ETUC and press coverage. The report does not seek to make recommendations or draw conclusions. It is intended for purposes of information for affiliates.

2. ALBANIA

Political

The first communist regime to establish itself in post-war Europe, Albania, was the last to commence a process of reform. It has long been a metaphor for self-inflicted isolation.

The country's long-time ruler, Enver Hoxha, died in 1985. He was succeeded by his protégé, Ramiz Alia.

Albania's first reaction to the wave of change last year in the east was to ignore it. But finally in the spring of 1990 the government lifted the ban on religious propaganda, abolished the death penalty for defectors and announced plans to grant passports to all Albanians who applied for them. But Alia's government insisted that their country would never abandon communism.

When asked if Albania would recognise political pluralism and have free elections, an Albanian official responded that there was no opposition in the country because everyone supports the government. In fact, all visible opposition through the years and up to the present has been ruthlessly suppressed.

Albania is now offering to adopt the 1975 Helsinki accords of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and it is resuming relations with more countries, including, possibly, the USSR and the USA, the two governments it has most avoided so far. The government has announced that it is acceding to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

Economically, Albania is a backward country. To modernise the economy would require opening up to the rest of Europe, which is still a difficult question as the legislation and traditions from the Hoxha period effectively hinder the development of foreign economic ties.

In early July a wave of Albanians took asylum in foreign embassies and subsequently were allowed to go into exile. These can now be expected to become a vociferous force calling for radical change.

Any trends toward democracy will probably increase pressures related to the complaints of the Albanian population, the overwhelming majority, in the neighbouring province of Kosovo, Yugoslavia, now dominated by Serbia. All but about 200,000 of Kosovo's 1.5 million inhabitants are Albanians. There is strong, potentially explosive, support on both sides for a Greater Albania.

Albania proper today has a population of some 3 million.

Trade Unions

No independent trade unionism exists in Albania. The Central Council of Albanian Trade Unions, claiming some 750,000 members, is dominated by the ruling party. However, in April 1990 2,000 textile workers went on strike for higher wages and in mid-July workers staged a sit-in at the big Stalin leather-processing factory in Tirana.

3. BULGARIA

Political

In November 1989, Todor Zhikov, one of Moscow's most loyal allies in eastern Europe, was ousted in a bloodless "palace coup." The Communist Party thereafter followed closely a course inspired by Gorbachev's perestroika. Like initially also in Hungary, liberals within the party were able to influence the course of events and thus retain its position. In April Petar Mladenov was appointed acting president and Andrei Lukanov became acting prime minister. Under Mladenov's and Lukanov's leadership the party renamed itself the Socialist Party and declared its intention to move "in the direction of a democratic European leftist party." They say they want to move to a market economy "in stages."

A major human rights problem in Bulgaria was a policy uncompromisingly carried out by Zhikov of forced integration of the large Turkish ethnic minority. The new government reversed this policy, over the protest of much of the Bulgarian majority and tension still exists between the ethnic groups.

While Bulgaria fared relatively better than most central and eastern European countries in growth during the 1980's, in 1989 the national income decreased 0.4%

On 7 December last year the bulk of the opposition, from social democrats to conservatives, formed an alliance called the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF). A major force, among a number of political parties and movements and smaller organisations, was the independent trade union organisation Podkrepa ("Support"). Operating in a near democratic institutional vacuum, Podkrepa has been forced to function both as a trade union and a political movement. It is not surprising that the organisation has evolved to resemble very much Solidarnosc in Poland.

The opposition sought to have elections in November 1990, permitting enough time for them to at least get their case before the public. The Mladenov government instead called them, in two stages, in June. Even though an unprecedented mass rally of 100,000 persons was organised by the opposition in Sofia before the elections, the UDF message never reached the country's rural areas, where the former communist village bosses still held the electorate under tight control through their influence on people's daily living conditions.

At issue were 400 seats in a single chamber parliament, which is also to draft a new constitution by 1992. Under the circumstances, the Bulgarian Socialist Party won 47% of the vote and 211 seats, thus joining the Romanian communists as the only ones to retain power after elections.

The UDF won 36% of the vote and 144 seats, gaining a strong majority in the capital Sofia. It also won in all the other larger cities. A farmers' party, the Agrarian Union, got 8% and the Movement for Rights and Freedom, a Turkish ethnic group, got 6%. Still smaller parties drew the remaining 3%.

The first round of elections was generally considered clean, but observers said the second round was marred by irregularities and poll intimidation which did not, however, significantly affect the overall outcome of the elections. More significant was that the Socialist Party could rely on the old communist machinery to secure a comfortable victory, especially in the large rural areas.

Protests followed the elections. The UDF turned down an offer by the Socialists to participate in a coalition government. Also, concerns were expressed about the government's continuing

restriction of newsprint supplies to the opposition and there were said to be threats against independent trade unionists.

Three days before the new government could take office, President Mladenov was forced to resign by the opposition's having discovered a video tape showing him apparently ordering troops to move against demonstrators. He was replaced by Zhelya Zhelev, the leader of the UDF, in a move by the Socialists presumably seeking more cooperation with the opposition. There are said to be serious internal divisions among the Socialists which may come into the open.

For the first time, polls taken in August showed that there was a majority support for the UDF whilst the Socialist Party was losing ground, even in its former stronghold rural areas.

The government is preparing an application to the Council of Europe and is negotiating for a trade and cooperation agreement with the EC.

Bulgaria is still a member of the Warsaw pact but has no foreign troops stationed there. Its population is about nine million.

Trade Unions

In February 1989 intellectuals in Sofia launched the first independent trade union in Bulgaria since the communist regime consolidated its power. This was Podkrepa, under the leadership of Konstantin Trenchev. In June 1989 Podkrepa held a demonstration in support of Turkish minority rights and its leaders were arrested. They were all free by the time of the fall of Zhikov.

The overthrow of the old regime left the official Central Council of Bulgarian Trade Unions (CCBTU) in deep crisis due to its long and intimate association with its discredited policies. In early 1990 it began a process of trying to revamp itself as an independent organisation, completely separate from the party. It renamed itself the Confederation of Independent Trade Unionists (CITU) and elected Krysko Petkov, a non-communist reformist, its new leader. It has called on the government to exclude all those compromised by the old regime from leadership. It seeks stronger laws protecting workers and threatens a national strike if its demands are not heard. It claims 1.8 million members in a workforce of 5 million. CITU has suspended its payments to WFTU and declares that it considers its affiliation to have been discontinued when the old trade union centre was dissolved.

Podkrepa has grown beyond an intellectual-based organisation to a movement with both a white-collar and a blue-collar base. It now claims 400,000 members, still predominantly white-collar. Podkrepa faces many problems. As long as the political situation in the country remains very fluid, it is forced to devote a major part of its resources to the struggle of the UDF and therefore remains very politically-oriented. The organisation's leadership is, however, aware of the need to develop also the more traditional trade union activities in order to be able to compete for members with the old "official" unions. By late August there were reports that Podkrepa was becoming more and more separate from UDF. Some union structures have already started to emerge within Podkrepa, even if they do not yet have an independent position.

To understand the competition between new independent trade unions such as Podkrepa and those organisations which are heirs to the old established unions, one must take into account the typical functions of unions as they were in communist countries. They allocated subsidised family vacations at trade union beach resorts or holidays for children at pioneer camps. The

local union secretary could be instrumental in securing a flat and his signature was often needed when buying scarce household machines. In countries with very low wage levels it was necessary to be a union member, which helps to explain the high organising levels, even if membership was voluntary.

In most of the former communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the unions which inherited the role of the old official ones still retain the old privileges for their membership. They continue to control the holiday facilities and other trade union assets, thus gaining a competitive edge over the new independent organisations. And at the shopfloor level, a close relationship between communist managers and old union secretaries still continues for mutual protection against the new order. Under these circumstances much courage and motivation is needed to leave the old union and join a new one.

For the time being it does not seem likely that the old and the new trade unions will come closer to each other. They will continue to function side by side, cooperating when necessary but competing for members and struggling over the inheritance from the old order.

Podkrepa continues to grow and is establishing itself as an internationally recognised free and democratic trade union movement. It decided at its congress to apply for membership both to the ICFTU and the WCL. Its commerce services sector, with a membership of some 10,000 in June 1990 and a good growth potential, has established contacts with FIET and indicated that it aims at affiliation as soon as possible.

4. CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Political

Czechoslovakia was tenth in the world in income per capita before World War Two. Today the situation is very different. But this country of 15.5 million people is still much stronger industrially than most of eastern Europe. Its industry is, however, highly energy-consuming. Pollution is serious, with environmental concerns having been totally neglected by the old regime, as in other communist countries of the region.

The spirit of 1968's Prague Spring never completely extinguished in Czechoslovakia. The Velvet Revolution of November 1989, with Vaclav Havel emerging as president on 29 December, came to pass with greater ease than some of the changes elsewhere. The communist party leadership in Czechoslovakia never abandoned its hardline positions and just lost out, making it easier for the new regime to effectuate a total and rapid change of policies.

Elections took place on 8-9 June for a two-year federal parliament. The lower house has 101 seats for the Czech republic and 49 for Slovakia. The upper house has an equal number of seats for the country's two republics. Together these two houses are to write a new constitution for 1992.

In the vote for the lower house Havel's party, Civic Forum, and its ally Public Against Violence, got 47% earning them 87 seats. Civic Forum is a broad coalition ranging from anti-communist neo-Marxists to neo-liberals. Public Against Violence is its Slovak equivalent. The former ruling Communists got 14% of the vote and 23 seats. The Christian Democrats and all other minority parties each drew a 12% vote and got 20 seats (40 seats total between them).

After the vote Vaclav Havel was re-confirmed as president. Balancing the alliance, Marian Calfa of Public Against Violence was named prime minister.

Czechoslovakia has applied to the Council of Europe for membership. It is prepared to sign a trade and cooperation agreement with the EC. Havel has called for the country's exit from the Warsaw Pact. The USSR has agreed to remove all its troops (about 74,000) by May 1991.

The country, which has now been officially renamed the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic, to emphasise separate status of the Slovaks, has a population of over 16 million. Two thirds of these are in Bohemia and Moravia; the rest, Slovakia.

Trade Unions

Czechoslovakia presents the most successful case in Central and Eastern Europe of total transformation of the previous official union structure into independent and democratic organisations.

The official structure ROH (Revolutionary Trade Union Movement) went into a state of crisis as the wave of change reached Czechoslovakia. Its chairman, Miroslav Zavadil, was forced to resign on 26 November, to be replaced by Karel Henes. This happened just one day before the great strike was called by Civic Forum. The new leadership equivocated in face of demands for total independence from the party.

On 7 December the ROH dissolved its leadership again, replacing it with an Action Committee. However, this latter was also headed by Henes. It called for an extraordinary congress early in 1990.

In the meantime, on 1 January, KOC, Trade Union Co-ordinating Centre, was established by the strike committees which had emerged across the country with support from an expanding grass roots workers' movement demanding fundamental changes in society, with the aim of completing the renovation process within ROH. All the while, industrial sector unions were growing stronger at the expense of any national centre. By late January the Action Committee was recognising KOC's proposals, including the transfer of assets of the old structure.

A congress was held 2-3 March which declared the ROH replaced by the CS-KOS, the Czechoslovak Confederation of Trade Unions. By this point the leadership in most constituent industrial unions had already been replaced by strike committees working with Civic Forum.

The result has been that the old structure, including its assets, has shifted completely into the control of thorough-going reformists. The new organisation is based on industrial branches with proportional voting rights. When ROH officially dissolved, its membership in the WFTU was considered to have lapsed by the same action. The new CS-KOS has been accepted into affiliation by the ICFTU. It claims 6 million members, the same as the old centre, out of a workforce of 9.2 million. Czechoslovakia's new unions, fully renovated and unified, are likely to be a strong force in the European labour movement in the future.

Among the problems facing the CS-KOS is the fact that though more than 75% of the labour movement's officers have been replaced much of the old office staff remains. Even more problematical, many lower level managers and state administrative representatives from the old regime remain who find it difficult to adapt to the new situation.

CS-KOS complains that it is not yet being consulted as it should by the government. A new law on association, for instance, was adopted by parliament in March without contacting the unions,

which it was later realised was probably even contrary to the ILO Convention 87. In July parliament passed some amendments proposed by CS-KOS, bringing the law in line with ILO standards. The government has now agreed to formal consultation with CS-KOS on future labour legislation.

On the economic level, CS-KOS demands that improving the quality of production and competition in the country must not be achieved at the expense of wages or the environment.

Outside the CS-KOS, but equally reformed, is a 200,000 member Confederation of Arts and Culture (KUK). In its thinking KUK is close to the CS-KOS.

Several CS-KOS affiliates have already moved to join ITS's. For example, the ICEF has accepted the Federal Trade Union of Workers in the Chemical Industry, and IFJ has accepted the Journalists' Union. In FIET's case, two unions have expressed an interest in relations, the Commercial Workers (420,000 members) and the Financial and Banking Workers (45,000).

The events in Czechoslovakia have created serious problems for the Prague-based secretariat of the WFTU. A critical congress of the shrinking body is to be held in Moscow in November in an attempt to introduce enough reforms to stem the crisis of morale in the organisation. Decisions there will depend in turn on the results of the Soviet AUCCTU congress to be held the month before. Among other issues to be resolved includes where the headquarters will be moved now that the CS-KOS is asking them to vacate their building in Prague. (See the separate section on the WFTU at the end of this document).

5. GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

Political

As the EURO-FIET Conference takes place in Sorrento, the days of the GDR are literally numbered. The shock of transformation from the communist era to the new order is greatest in eastern Germany; the results will surely be the swiftest and most predictable as integration into the western market system will be the most literal, via the F.R. of Germany.

Up to the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November last year, the internal changes in the GDR had been the most tepid and the economic aspect was almost totally unaffected.

During the summer and autumn of 1989 tens of thousands of GDR citizens, overwhelmingly young and often skilled, left for the F.R. of Germany, many via Czechoslovakia. At the 40th anniversary celebration of the founding of the GDR Gorbachev himself appealed to GDR Socialist United Party (SED, the Communist Party) leader Erich Honecker to initiate reforms. Honecker's immobility gave the initiative to New Forum and other groups which were emerging. Weekly mass protests in Leipzig and elsewhere created a climate of great tension. On 12 October Honecker was replaced by Egon Krenz and a whirlwind of events ensued which left Krenz, the SED and even New Forum behind.

The rise to influence of eastern versions of the main F.R. of Germany parties confirmed which direction the wind was blowing: toward reunification.

In the elections of 18 March for a single chamber 400-seat parliament the Conservative Alliance (led by the Christian Democrats) won a sweeping victory. The Christian Democrats got 48% of

the vote, the Social Democrats 22% and the Democratic Socialists (the reformed SED) only 16%. The Liberals got another 5% and other small parties the remaining 9%.

A five-party non-communist coalition government led by the Christian Democrats with the Social Democrats as the major junior partner emerged. Christian Democrat Lothar de Maizière named a 25-member cabinet. (The Social Democrats withdrew in August in a disagreement over the timing and principles involved in unification.)

After opposing it for some time, Gorbachev accepted the notion in principle for reunited Germany to remain in NATO, removing the last major obstacle for reunification in the four plus two talks. However, the two Germanies had already effectively become one on 1 July with monetary union. On 25 September local elections will be held re-establishing five states in the east. On 3 October formal unification will take place. Then on 2 December elections for national parliament of unified Germany will be held. Adding the GDR's 16.5 million to the west's population will make a combined population of almost 80 million, by far the biggest nation in Europe outside the USSR.

The largest country will also have an even greater relative strength in the economic sphere. The GDR is the most industrialised of all the countries undergoing reform. Though its economy has gone into a tail-spin during the last year and will face much greater shocks as it adapts totally to the market economy, its eventual success is almost universally assumed.

The market in the eastern part of Germany will simply take the form of the rest of the country. This process is already very much under way. The biggest economic deals have already been made. For example, Allianz has swallowed the GDR's monopoly insurer. And Deutsche Bank has an agreement for taking over the main banking institution, Kreditbank. The remaining two of the West German "big three," Dresden Bank, founded in the nineteenth century and now "going home," and Commerzbank, are establishing extensive branch networks in the east.

However, the transition process still promises to be difficult. Large numbers of enterprises confronted with more efficient western competitors have been forced to close. By July unemployment had doubled its level of a few weeks early, to 270,000, with much greater numbers expected to lose their jobs soon. Three times the number of unemployed were working on short time.

The exact form in which the new political facts will be assimilated into NATO, a broader Conference on Security and Economic Cooperation (which includes the unravelling Soviet Bloc, or other structures remains to be worked out by Germany and the Allies. Some 380,000 Soviet troops, reflecting the high priority the USSR has long given to the question, remain on East German soil under the terms of the Warsaw Pact.

Trade Unions

The formerly official FDGB (Freier Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund), trying to come to terms with the new situation, decided to keep its name but elected entirely new leadership. Its former leader, Harry Tisch, was one of the first to be dropped by the reformers from the SED politburo. He is now facing corruption charges. However, by mid-1990 the FDGB had ceased to exist as a policy-making body. It was headed by a three-person caretaker committee which was winding up its operations. It had to solve, among others, the problems connected with the distribution of assets. The centre was set to disband officially on 14 September.

The unification process has created an entirely different situation, as far as reform of the East German trade union movement goes, from anywhere else in Central and Eastern Europe. The

logical result will be the merger or expansion of unions from the west into the east. However, the unions in the Federal Republic were barred from organising directly in the GDR because of constitutional limits. So East Germans established counterparts to the western unions with help from the latter. The HBV in the GDR was founded on 24 June. The DAG formed structures in five different regions in the GDR which were in the process of being re-constituted as states which will join the Federal Republic.

The HBV has scheduled an extraordinary congress to establish a unified union for the whole of Germany on 29-30 October in Bonn. The DAG was to hold a delegates' conference for its GDR structure on 29 September to act on unification with the DAG of the west.

The process in the larger DGB is simpler still. It has 16 affiliates, organised by industrial sector. Each of these affiliates has been active in processes which are leading to their uniting with similar unions in the east. As new merged unions result, these are automatically a part of the DGB.

On 23 June IG Druck und Papier of the GDR decided to merge with the West German IG Medien, the first eastern union to do so officially. On 25 June it was announced that the GDR Civil Servants Association would carry out a similar merger with its western counterpart. On 30 September the GDR Journalists are to disband, and so forth.

By these means, FIET and other ITS's will soon have direct participation by former GDR unionists without necessarily affiliating any new organisations. Unlike in the rest of newly democratising Central and Eastern Europe, FIET has undertaken no missions to the GDR; West German affiliates have kept the secretariat fully informed of developments.

6. HUNGARY

Political

The reform process was already much further developed in Hungary than in any other communist country except Poland when the events of late 1989 broke. In fact, long before Solidarnosc's successes in Poland, Hungary had been experimenting with various economic reforms, impressing at one point a Russian diplomat there by the name of Gorbachev. What made Hungary different from most of the other Eastern and Central European countries was that much of the reform process was initiated within the communist party even if other forces finally took over.

So, though the economy was in disarray, like that of the rest of the region, there was considerable consensus as to what should be done about it: move more rapidly toward a market economy.

The two main political parties to emerge from the successful opposition are Democratic Forum and the Free Democrats, both of which can be characterised as being right-of-centre. The Democratic Forum seeks a more measured pace toward restoration of the market, while the Free Democrats want to move as quickly as possible and give the market forces broad freedoms.

Elections were held 25 March and 8 April for a single 386-seat parliament. Its term is four years and it is expected to make new rules for electing of the president and defining his powers.

The Democratic Forum edged out the Free Democrats 25% to 21% in the popular vote. This gave the former 165 seats and the latter 92. The Independent Smallholders (farmers) got 12% with 43 seats. The Socialists (reformed communists) came in fourth with 11% (33 seats) while their erstwhile comrades, the Hungarian Socialist Workers (hard-line communists), got 4%, too small to win any seats. The Young Democrats (centre-liberal) got 9% (21 seats). The Social Democrats made a poor showing with only 4%, after a lack-lustre campaign, thus failing to win any seats. Other parties gathered a total of 7% of the vote for 11 seats.

Democratic Forum and the Free Democrats joined together with the Smallholders and the Christian Democrats to form a coalition government with a very comfortable majority in parliament. The Free Democrats' Arpad Goncz has been named president and Democratic Forum's Jozsef Antall prime minister.

Hungary can be expected to move deliberately toward the market economy. With traditionally close ties to Austria and Germany, the country has concluded a trade and cooperation agreement with the EC and seeks the earliest possible consideration of an application for full membership. It has also applied to join the Council of Europe.

Withdrawal of all 60,000 remaining Soviet troops is sought by January 1991 with dissolution of all ties with the Warsaw Pact six months later. Hungary has a population of about 11 million.

Trade Unions

The official labour movement in Hungary, the Central Council of Trade Unions (SZOT), was already facing open challenges to its monopoly status as early as 1988, when the Democratic Trade Union of Scientific Workers (TDDSZ) was founded. Joined by the teachers, TDDSZ and other independent unions in December formed their own central organisation, the Democratic League of Independent Trade Unions (FSzDL).

Led by Pál Forgacs, the League was begun mainly by intellectuals and its first constituents were white-collar unions. From the first the organisation sought to act as a service organisation to encourage free trade unions in general and not just to create a separate centre but to promote reforms within the official unions. It won an early success in 1989 when it successfully campaigned for changes in the law more favourable to the workers regarding the right to strike.

The exact membership of the League is difficult to establish as it is constantly growing, as is the number of affiliated unions. In the summer of 1990, the League had some 60,000 members, in fourteen affiliated (mostly small) unions and two associated unions. It has followed a policy of openness and cooperation towards other new organisations even when they have not affiliated, having helped many of the 90 new independent unions formed since September 1989. The League is in conflict with the "recycled" official trade union centre over the office buildings, holiday homes, the daily trade union newspaper and other assets of the old communist trade unions. It underlines that these assets have been built up through the effort of all workers, including those who now have joined the League, and should therefore be controlled by all of them together. It has also demanded that the union membership situation should be re-established through asking all workers to file a new application to the union of their choice.

From the League's point of view, the present situation, with over 90 per cent of the workers in most industries still belonging to the old unions, does not reflect the real situation as the unions have just inherited their members from the old communist ones. The pressure at the workplace, where company managers and old union representatives still work closely together, is being felt strongly by those contemplating changing their affiliation to new trade unions.

In spite of many major differences, the Democratic League's position vis-a-vis the old structure is not so uncompromising as that of new unions in some of the other countries. The League does not really aim at creating a complete parallel union structure but tries to press the old unions or their heirs to radical change. It has also cooperated with the old unions when it comes to many of the economic and social challenges facing Hungarian workers as the economy is changing.

But also the established trade union movement has gone through many changes. In March of this year the central SZOT dissolved itself and at the same congress a new Confederation of Hungarian Trade Unions (MSzOSz) was announced. The president of the new organisation is a product of the old communist trade unions, Sandor Nagy, who became general secretary of the old SZOT when the reform process started in earnest. Nagy says that he wishes to restructure the movement in an image in line with Western European-type trade unionism.

The MSzOSz claims to still represent the some 4 million members which the SZOT had. It is, however, difficult to establish how closely the affiliated unions are linked with the centre. Many of them go to quite great lengths to underline their independence and probably remain in MSzOSz mainly because of their wish to hang onto the old trade union assets. There is also a wait-and-see attitude prevalent, with some unions wishing to give MSzOSz a chance to prove itself capable of protecting workers' interests in the Hungarian process of change. About one third of the industrial affiliates have assumed an autonomous position, waiting to act until the situation becomes clearer. Workers in general, for their part, are still having their dues checked-off by the followers of the old SZOT unions and are bound to them by social benefits tied to membership.

The MSzOSz says its membership in the WFTU has lapsed and it now must re-consider its international relationships. Strong criticisms of the WFTU have been made and the Hungarian trade union movement is clearly looking towards Western Europe. However, MSzOSz officials are said to be involved in the preparations for the up-coming Moscow WFTU congress.

Beside the unions connected with the MSzOSz and the FSzDL, a Workers' Council movement has emerged. This owes something to the 1956 tradition when, during the abortive Hungarian Revolution, syndicalist-styled factory organisations were active. But the new structures are somewhere between unions and participatory bodies, having some characteristics of Western European works councils, and there is debate as to their future and whether or not they really trade unions. They have formed a co-ordinating organisation called the United Workers' Council. They have a close relationship with the Democratic Forum, the main coalition party in the government.

Still another organisation has emerged called the Forum for Cooperation which says it has some 500,000 members in the health services, cultural organisations, education, scientific workers and workers in public services. They say they see MSzOSz as too much a continuation of the old, while they criticise FSzDL for being "too political."

Also, there are some autonomous unions which are not affiliated with any group.

A number of Hungarian unions have already affiliated with ITS's. Beside the TDDSZ, which is already affiliated with FIET, the Union of Engineers and Technicians, an old union dissolved by the communist government in the late 1940's and now re-established as a member of the FSzDL, has expressed interest in joining FIET.

A number of MSzOSz unions which have already put through genuine reforms are also interested in joining ITS's. Five commercial workers' organisations have been established on the basis of the old Commercial, Services and Restaurant Workers' Trade Union, KPVDSz:

The Union of Internal Trade Workers, 120,000 members
The Union of Consumer Cooperative Workers, 170,000 members
The Union of Workers in the Capital Goods Trade, 20,000 members
The Union of Workers in Food Trade, 20,000 members
The Union of Workers in Foreign Trade, 25,000 members.

In addition, a Bank Workers' Union, 40,000 members, has been created, representing former members of the KPVDSz in the banking sector.

All of these unions work independently and there is no decision-making structure above them. They are affiliated to the reformed national centre MSzOSz, but strongly underline their independence from it. Whereas the old KPVDSz used to be a mainstay of the Prague-based Commerce TUI, the six new unions consider that their ties to this organisation have terminated with the dissolution of the old union. With close ties to a large number of our affiliates in Western Europe, they have now indicated that they will apply for affiliation in FIET.

7. POLAND

Political

With its brief but unprecedented experience of independent trade unionism in 1980, and its pioneering breakthrough to partially free elections in mid-1989, Solidarnosc was able to establish the first non-communist led government in Eastern Europe. With its 40 million people, its strategic geographical location and its exceptionally rapid march toward a market economy, Poland also showed the way for other countries in their struggle for self-determination and democracy.

In the general elections in 1989, resulting from the compromise round-table discussions held between General Jaruzelski's de facto government and Solidarnosc, the latter won every possible position it could. In the upper house of the new Sejm (parliament), which were completely free elections, it won 99 out of 100 seats. In the lower house it won all 35% of the 460 seats which it was free to contest.

This resulted in the founding of a Solidarnosc-led government under Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki, with Communist participation. General Wojciech Jaruzelski continued as president, with increasingly less power.

At the end of May 1990 Poland had, at the local government level, its first completely free elections. In poor voter turn-out (42%), Solidarnosc's Citizen's Committees took an overwhelming 41% of the council seats up for contest. The Peasants' Party came in second with 7%. No other party, including the reformed Communists, got as much as 2%.

By mid-1990, Solidarnosc was evolving into at least two tendencies. The Centre tendency, identified with Walesa himself, was calling on the government to move more quickly to complete the restructuring policy and criticising it for not taking enough into account the effects on the workers. The Democratic Alliance, known by its acronym ROAD and led by Zbigniew Bujak and Wladyslaw Frasyniuk, was more defensive of the Mazowiecki government. These, together with the Peasants' organisations, seemed to be the groups which would make up the Polish political scene for the foreseeable future.

As late as 1980 the Polish Communist Party had three million members. Today it is thought to have as little as 5,000, though it claims 50,000.

Poland is beleaguered by one of the worst economic situations in the region. Industrial production has been falling sharply as domestic consumption is down as a result of the government's austerity policies. Having lost its access to cheap Soviet energy, Poland - as well as the other new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe - will suffer heavily from rising oil prices. The industrial structure is antiquated and pollution is appalling, and the country requires extensive financing to modernise. Labour unrest remains endemic with especially the old trade union movement OPZZ taking a militant stand against the Mazowiecki government. Within Solidarnosc itself criticism towards the government's economic policies has been growing.

Poland has applied to join the Council of Europe and has a trade and cooperation agreement with the EC.

Trade Unions

Solidarnosc's political triumph has not translated into greatly expanded strength as a trade union movement. In 1980 Solidarnosc had 10 million members. In 1989, at the moment the old regime collapsed, it was down to 2 million and remains there today. This development has to be seen against the background of change in Polish society. During the communist era Solidarnosc was a resistance organisation uniting people from all walks of life, which is, of course, something quite different from being a trade union movement in a normal political situation.

At its Second Congress in Gdansk in April, to which FIET and many other ITS's and western unions were warmly welcomed, Solidarnosc failed to resolve the question of whether it would continue its regional structure or reorganise mainly by industrial branches. A plan put forward to restructure according to the 16 ITS's jurisdictions was defeated at the congress by 20 votes. There are presently 60 branch unions with varying degrees of cooperation with or overlapping in the geographical regions.

The ICFTU has long been active in Poland, in close cooperation with Solidarnosc. Solidarnosc was admitted to full ICFTU membership while it was still an outlawed organisation.

Government attempts at renovating the official union structure began in Poland already in 1981, after the imposition of emergency rule and the crack-down on Solidarnosc leaders. The objective was to undermine Solidarnosc through a face-lift of the old unions. The new official national centre OPZZ was given a certain amount of independence in order to give it credibility. At an OPZZ congress in June 1990, Alfred Miodowicz, the original leader of the organisation as established under the communists, was re-elected chairman.

On 17 July a Solidarnosc draft law went to parliament removing all controls on trade union membership as left over from previous law.

Today, with a Solidarnosc government forced to carry out draconian measures, OPZZ leaders find themselves in the unexpected position of being able to voice to some extent the frustrations of many workers. Also, they have the benefit of continuing with institutions and assets given to them by the fallen regime, including authority over benefits on which millions of workers are still dependent. The OPZZ today still claims 6 million members. It remains a WFTU affiliate.

Whatever the future relative strengths of Solidarnosc and OPZZ may be, parallel trade union organisations seem to be established as a permanent fixture in the new democracy of Poland.

Since January 1990, when the FIET President and Acting General Secretary visited Poland for discussions with Solidarnosc representations, several FIET missions have been undertaken to the country. In the middle of June, workshops were held in Warsaw with the Solidarnosc branch commissions for insurance and cooperative workers.

Both branch organisations are developing in the direction of becoming proper trade unions within the Solidarnosc structures. Both want to be fully integrated into FIET's work and are in discussions with Solidarnosc to find the right mechanism for affiliation.

Two FIET-Solidarnosc seminars, concentrating on the effects of structural changes in the Polish economy on the situation of insurance and cooperative workers, were scheduled for early October this year. Trade union courses will also commence with both organisations before the end of 1990.

In addition to the insurance and cooperative branch organisations, contacts have been made with the branch organisation of health care workers as well as with a number of bank workers' representatives within Solidarnosc, who have not, however, reached the same level of organisational development through a branch organisation of their own.

8. ROMANIA

Political

On 22 December 1989 the Ceaucescu regime, one of the most repressive in Europe in recent time, fell to the National Salvation Front (NSF). The Front, some say led, others say hijacked, a popular uprising against the old order which was more confused and bloodier than any other yet to develop in the series of revolutions which have taken place in the region.

The Front, under the leadership of Ion Iliescu, a late opponent of Ceaucescu, is made up of ex-Communists, dissidents and military officers. It is true that the army openly took the side of the popular rebellion in December, but it is still led by old-line officers trained in Moscow and many doubt its sincerity.

Without consulting the wishes of the newly emerging reconstituted traditional parties, the Front called for relatively quick elections, on 20 May. The Front announced that it stood for moving to a market economy "to be carried out in quick steps" and for pluralism. The opposition claimed that the Front had made few steps toward the market so far, that their adherents were harassed and independent trade unionists were intimidated. A single independent opposition paper emerged, "Romania Libera."

At stake in the elections were 396 seats in the lower house and 190 seats in the upper house of a parliament elected for two years. Together they were to produce a new constitution by the end of 1991.

The Front won an overwhelming 66% of the vote with 233 seats in the lower house in elections which observers said were marred though they did not contest the Front's winning a majority. The Democratic Hungarian Union won 7%; the Liberals (centre-right), 6%; the Greens, 3%; the

Christian Democrats (formerly the Peasants' Party), 3%; and all others got 15%. None of the opposition got over 30 seats in the new lower house.

In separate elections Iliescu was confirmed as president by an 85% margin. Fellow Frontist Petre Roman was re-confirmed as prime minister.

It is evident that Iliescu personally had the strong support of the Romanian population and his election was therefore not contested by the opposition. The victory of the National Front in the parliamentary elections was, however, received differently. It was felt that the elections were held too early, thus giving the Front an undeserved advantage. Also, media was strictly controlled by the Iliescu government, which could also count on assistance from the old communist machinery, especially in Romania's large rural areas.

Student demonstrations against the influence still wielded by old Ceaucescu supporters, especially the Front's total control over Romanian television, became daily in the centre of Bucharest. In mid-June these turned violent. The government brought in miners who, apparently led by disguised security police, violently attacked the demonstrators, including hunger-striking students, and some opposition offices. The industrialised countries announced that they would not extend other than humanitarian aid to the severely economic stretched country as long as the regime's commitment to full democracy was in question. The EC has postponed further negotiations on a cooperation agreement.

Romania is officially a Warsaw Pact member, but no Soviet military are stationed there. Ceaucescu had long been at odds with Moscow on many issues. The country's population is about 23 million, including a large Hungarian minority in Transylvania in the northwest, which was savagely oppressed by the Ceaucescu regime and played an important role in the uprising against it.

Trade Unions

During and after the December uprising, numerous free trade unions formed at the factory level. The official General Trade Union Confederation (GTUC) was virtually wiped out at the enterprise level, but kept its upper level structure in tact. In effect, free trade unions have mostly started from scratch. Early in 1990 the GTUC declared itself dissolved and set up the Union of Free Trade Unions (UFTU). This organisation has established some authority over local unions formerly in the GTUC. Led by former GTUC officials and former Communist Party officials, it initially enjoyed considerable support from the ruling Front. It has joined the general rush and left the WFTU.

Meanwhile, on 26 December a new National Confederation of Free Trade Unions, Fratia (meaning "Brotherhood"), was set up, closely identified with the opposition. It was begun with the strong participation of technical workers, among others. Many of the new local independent unions are either joining Fratia or staying completely outside any national centre but cooperating with Fratia. The new centre says it already represents one million workers.

Fratia officials say that one of the reasons the Front government backed down in the conflict between opposition protesters and miners brought in by the government in June 1990 was the threat of Fratia supporters to enter the fray on the side of the opposition. Fratia leadership successfully urged its supporters to hold off while negotiations were going on.

The Front officially recognises the legitimacy of Fratia as well as that of the UFTU. In the face of the growing influence of Fratia, the government has committed itself to consulting the trade

unions on any future labour legislation and has asked for such consultations to be held in the Fratia premises. The first such meeting took place on 16 August.

Besides Fratia, an Inter Trade Alliance made up of free and independent unions has also emerged.

As in other Central and Eastern European countries, a struggle over the assets of the former official union movement has ensued. Fratia demands that part of these assets be used to set up an unemployment fund.

Fratia has applied for admission to the ICFTU. The ICFTU has opened an office in Romania.

In Transylvania, a new Hungarian "national" trade union movement has arisen. Parts of it are cooperating with the UFTU, parts with Fratia.

A FIET mission to Romania was carried out in the middle of June 1990. Discussions with the free and independent trade union organisation Fratia showed that there is a strong interest in FIET and its work among the Rumanian trade unionists. One of the leading affiliates of Fratia, the Federation of Design and Research Unions with 35,000 members, most of whom work in research and product development functions for industry, has applied for affiliation with FIET. Also other Fratia-affiliated or independent unions have expressed interest in working with FIET and a trade union education project is presently being planned.

9. USSR

Political

The major outlines of the political turmoil going on in the Soviet Union are known to all. Perestroika (re-structuring) and glasnost (openness) have shaken Soviet society to its core. Gorbachev is struggling to keep control between the conservative die-hards, still strong in the party, the army and the secret police KGB, and popularly supported radicals, such as Russian Federal President Boris N. Yeltsin. Also, the great national problems are now fully in the open among and within many of the 15 republics making up the Soviet Union - in the Baltics, Moldavia, the Caucasus, and Central Asia, and now even the Ukraine and Byelorussia. Indeed, eight of the republics had already in July 1990 rejected Gorbachev's proposal to form a new looser-knit Soviet federation and instead opted for independence or at least sovereignty.

The economic situation in the USSR is very difficult, with a shortage of many basic food products, especially outside the big cities. It has even deteriorated during the most recent period, adding considerably to the pressure on the central and republican governments to perform. Ethnic and religious unrest and outright fighting in the predominantly Moslem southeast, just barely kept under control by Moscow, has created an explosive situation where the population now pays dearly for the Stalinist mass relocations of peoples. With the situation changing from one day to the next, almost anything that could be said today may become completely irrelevant tomorrow.

Trade Unions

As with the Communist Party itself, the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions (AUCCTU) has lost its monopoly position. Many new independent unions have emerged. Some of these have been established because the old AUCCTU unions did not succeed in defending workers' interests against the government, such as in the case of the mineworkers. Others originate in the more political opposition against the communist regime. A growing number of independent unions are also being established in those republics which have started down the road toward independence from the USSR. Some of these continue to cooperate with the AUCCTU, while others have not retained or established any ties with the old trade union movement.

Since July 1990 the leader of the AUCCTU has been Vladimir Schcherbakov. He was officially chosen deputy chairman of that organisation the month before, when Guennady Yanaev was named chairman. However, Yanaev, who was named to the CPSU politburo and was serving as secretary of the party's central committee in charge of international affairs, was released of his duties in the union. This leadership confusion reflects the deep-seated problems of the AUCCTU, even as it is trying to reform itself.

In October 1989 the Supreme Soviet passed a liberalised strike law which has further encouraged the increase in worker militancy.

The AUCCTU is announcing that major changes will be adopted at its extraordinary congress to be held in October 1990. It still claims to have 140 million members (out of a total Soviet population of over 285 million).

In March 1990, AUCCTU unions in the Russian Federative Republic established their over federation of "independent trade unions." Of the 105 AUCCTU trade union organisations, some 70 claiming 50 million members, had joined the new federation by August 1990.

The Soviet trade unions are caught in a difficult situation with regard to their stand on Gorbachev's policies. On the one hand they support the liberalisation of Soviet society. But on the other hand they have to oppose many of the economic reforms presented by the government, which impact hard on the wage earners, putting them at times in the camp of communist party conservatives. And many of the staunch supporters of the old Brezhnevite order can surely be found in the lower echelons of union bureaucracy, fighting against any change.

Quite like the other state-controlled trade union movements in Central and Eastern Europe, the AUCCTU and its affiliated unions cannot count on much support from the rank and file. To regain at least some of its credibility, the trade union leaders know that major organisational changes are necessary. Thus, consideration is being given to breaking up the present large unions into much smaller entities, allowing for increased member influence and participation. The number of paid union staff will continue to go down and a more decentralised collective bargaining structure has to be created. These will surely be some of the reforms to be adopted at the up-coming congress.

Even with extensive reforms, one can question how well the AUCCTU will be able to ride through the crisis. The central organisation will surely be facing an increasing challenge both from within and from external forces. In the biggest break with tradition yet from within the official structure, the Miners' Union, representing millions of workers, in a congress in mid-June, declared itself independent of both the party and the government.

Meanwhile, many independent unions have been emerging at the level of factories, cities, and republics. On 30 April a number of these groups met at Novkuznetsk and called for the establishment of a new unofficial centre.

One example of such groups is the Union of Workers' Committees, which resulted from a strike in seven factories in Leningrad in October 1989. This union now claims 20,000 members in 30 companies.

SOTSPROF, the Union of USSR Socialist Trade Unions, led by Serguei Khramov, has more than 20,000 members and is probably the most established of any of the new groups.

In Moscow a new independent Union of Soviet Journalists has emerged. Its 500 members concentrate on freedom of speech issues and the organisation does not carry out collective bargaining.

In the Ukraine, Solidarity of Ukraine Workers (RUC) claims 6,000 members.

Independent unions have emerged in the Baltic republics of Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia, as part of broader independence movements there. The Estonian trade union centre, led by Siim Kallas, has disaffiliated from the AUCCTU and established close links with Nordic trade unions. In Latvia, the trade unions have suspended fee payments to Moscow and are establishing their independence. An alternative trade union centre, the Latvian Workers' Union, claims 7,000 members. In Lithuania, the former AUCCTU trade union centre is distancing itself from Moscow and has changed its name to the Confederation of Free Trade Unions in the Republic of Lithuania. An alternative organisation, the Lithuanian Workers' Union, is an integral part of the independence movement, Sajudis. Its chairman, Kazimieras Uoka, has been elected a member of the Lithuanian parliament.

FIET has been approached by independent organisations in Latvia for information on our work.

The AUCCTU is the prime organiser for the upcoming November congress of the WFTU in Moscow. The AUCCTU is pushing for a substantially reformed organisation taking into account the new realities.

10. YUGOSLAVIA

Political

Yugoslavia was the first communist country to assert, under Marshal Tito, its independence from Moscow. It is a federal republic made up of the six republics of Serbia, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Slovenia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, as well as the Serbian autonomous provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina. Today the country is experiencing profound divisions between regions and ethnic groups resulting, among other effects, in demands for still greater autonomy or even independence for the republics. There are also tensions within the republics.

Yugoslavia already under the overpowering leadership of Tito had a market economy of sorts, a form of workers' self-management in autonomous enterprises. In the 1960's this system showed significance successes. But it tended to break down in the 1970's and by the 1980's its residual aspects were being blamed as part of the reason for the country's failure to resume real growth. The debate has been greatly exacerbated by the inter-republic and ethnic tensions,

resulting in a tendency for those opposing Serbian leadership to favour more through-going reforms while the Serbians, as the largest group, tend to defend a greater degree of centralisation and fewer changes. There are strong supporters of reform and even liberalism in Serbia, too. But their proposals have a less separatist ring to them than those from the other republics.

At the national level economic reforms have been adopted which over time, if they continue as now in place, will result in a traditional market economy. The ruling party has renounced its political monopoly and pluralism in all areas of public life, including trade unionism, has been proclaimed.

The pan-Yugoslav party is virtually dissolved. It has changed its name from the League of Communists to the Socialist Party of Yugoslavia. But it is now mostly a Serbian Party. Attempts to hold another all Yugoslav congress of the party have failed for some time. Two important republics, Slovenia and Croatia, have already held their first post-war free elections. In June, 30,000 demonstrators in Belgrade demanded free elections in Serbia by the year's end, but the government seeks to postpone them at least a year longer.

In Slovenia, elections were held in April. The "Demos," the opposition alliance which had called for immediate secession, got 55% of the vote. The Socialists (former Communists) got 17% and the Liberal Party 16%. However, in a separate vote the republic's moderate and strongly reformist Socialist (that is to say, former Communist) leader, Milan Kucan, was elected president (with a 44% plurality) on a platform of a somewhat slower pace to separation.

Later, in Croatia the centre-right Croatian Democratic Union won overwhelmingly. The Union's leader, General Franjo Tudjman, is calling for full economic sovereignty, just short of immediate political dissolution.

In Serbia the Serbian Renewal Movement, led by Vuk Draskovic, is the main opposition challenge. Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic announced in June that the former Communists were merging with the Socialist Alliance, a communist front, to form the new Socialist Party which will contest the elections whenever they come. Milosevic is less liberal than Draskovic, though either would have to come to terms with strong trends toward reform. The two leaders are vying primarily over who can best keep Serbia's predominance in tact. Milosevic rose to prominence as an ultra-nationalist and his policies in Kosovo regarding the Albanian majority has brought that province to the verge of civil war.

The country's total population is around 25 million, of which the Serbian republic makes up about half. There are large Serbian minorities in some of the other republics.

Trade Unions

The Confederation of Trade Unions of Yugoslavia (CTUY) for many years maintained cordial relations with Western European trade unions and several ITS's. Questions remained about its true independence, but recent events, with the breakdown of single party rule, have overtaken this issue.

In June 1990 a congress of the CTUY transformed itself into the Confederation of Autonomous Trade Unions of Yugoslavia (CATUY). The new organisation declared itself independent of any political party and adopted a new programme and leadership.

Before this congress took place congresses also were called for each of the republic level organisations. They also reformed themselves, though not always in the same way. At least

symbolically going different routes, they even adopted different forms of names. Thus the Slovene organisation became the Council of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia (CFTUS); the Croatian, the Council of Independent Trade Unions of Croatia (CITUC); and the Serbian, the Confederation of Trade Unions of Serbia (CTUS).

In the same period non-official centres at the republic level and unaffiliated unions also began to emerge. The interplay between these new elements and the old structures which have been or are in the process of being reformed to varying degrees has created a great deal of variety, not to say confusion, on the trade union scene throughout Yugoslavia. There are even questions as to how real is the continuing relationship between the Croatian and maybe some of the other new republic centres and the supposedly supreme national centre, the CATUY.

In Slovenia, in spite of the generally far-advanced reforms on the political scene and the fact that the republic is the area of Yugoslavia closest to the west in both geographical and most other terms, the CFTUS has remained in the hands of old-style leaders. This may be a cause or a result of the emergence of an especially strong unofficial labour movement there, the Alliance of Independent Slovene Trade Unions which was formed in March 1990 and includes, among others, the health care and other service workers, media and freelance journalists. Other groups are now completely autonomous, including, it is said, the bank workers.

Under the new set-up in Slovenia, workers were required to decide whether or not to rejoin their old (reformed) unions. The CFTUS claims more than half have done so. Others dispute this figure as being too high.

In Croatia CITUC went much farther in its reforms than its sister organisations within CATUY. Workers there, too, were asked to reaffiliate and as many as two-thirds stayed with CITUC unions. But there, too, a new centre emerged, the Confederation of Trade Unions of Croatia, formed in June 1990 under the leadership of the teachers. Some organisations are now outside any centre and others maintain affiliations with varying degrees of commitment. For instance, one group of rail workers have completely reformed themselves into a western-style organisation, the Independent Railway Engineers' Union, which remains nominally within the official CITUC but is strongly pushing for more change there and may leave it if its demands are not met.

Of the three most developed republics, the official trade union structure of Serbia has, as might be expected, changed the least. The CTUS, which has its headquarters in the CATUY's building, is not asking its members to voluntarily re-sign up. But they can opt out now, if they wish. They apparently are losing far fewer members than the CITUC or the CFTUS. This may also be because there is not (yet at least) an alternative trade union centre at the republic level in Serbia. However, some independent organisations, such as a new Truck Drivers' Union, have emerged outside.

In the "autonomous" province Kosovo an Independent Trade Union Federation of Kosovo was founded at a congress 30 June-1 July which already claims 90% of the workers there. Its leadership includes leaders of the former official sub-organisation of the Serbian republic-level centre. This special circumstance is explained by the Albanian national factor in the province. Once freedom of association was permitted, the Albanian workers and their leaders apparently walked out en masse. The CFTUS has created a new Kosovo provincial "commission" that is said to be led and mainly supported by the Serbian ethnic minority there.

11. OUTLOOK FOR THE WFTU

The events of the last year in Central and Eastern Europe have had, as was to be expected, a tremendous impact on the WFTU and its subordinate TUI's.

The changes have cut away large slices of the WFTU's traditional base and evoked such drastic reactions within many of the remaining affiliates that the nature of the organisation has already been shaken.

Great effort is being put into the organisation of a WFTU congress to be held this November in Moscow, the month following the equally important Soviet AUCCTU congress in the same place, to make enough changes in the appearance if not the nature of the international body to allow it to survive.

As early as 1985 the WFTU was being criticised by its own members, including its major affiliate and sponsor, the AUCCTU, for its "lack of new thinking." The proposed changes were not then to make it more independent but were aimed at rendering it more effective in propaganda, largely to cover over the reality of working life under existing state communist regimes. But even these changes were opposed by the organisation's entrenched bureaucracy.

Today, the AUCCTU, reflecting its own far from completed efforts to reform, is the major promoter of change within the WFTU.

Preparations for the November congress are largely in the hands of the AUCCTU. It has had the major role in drafting documents and issuing invitations, the latter often including an offer to pay travel and accommodation expenses.

The congress drafting committee is said to include a curious combination of old hard-line unions from the remaining communist countries (such as the CTC of Cuba) or the West (like the CGT of France), non-aligned unions (as the AITUC of India) and even non-affiliated non-aligned unions (like the ETUF of Egypt) plus a few East European unions in process of reform (including the MSzOSz of Hungary). Invitations are going out to both affiliates and non-affiliates, as is WFTU practice, with special effort to attract new independent unions from the East like Solidarnosc (Poland) and Podkrepa (Bulgaria).

As an ICFTU background paper on these actions puts it, the issue at this congress will not now simply be how to reform the WFTU but does the organisation still have any reason to exist at all. The AUCCTU apparently thinks so, if only, as the ICFTU paper says, to serve "as a bargaining tool in its long-standing campaign to create a world united trade union body."

The documents drawn up for the congress bear a strong resemblance to the basic documents of the last ICFTU congress held in Melbourne, Australia; in fact, whole paragraphs have been lifted from "The Challenge of Change," produced by the ICFTU. In addition, they admit mistakes made by the WFTU in the past. They declare that "official trade unions should no longer exist" and proclaim that pluralism is now a reality.

The issues emphasised in the documents for the November congress include: the external debt crisis, transnational companies, employment, the environment, old issues like peace and international security, and extraordinary new ones like human rights and trade union freedoms. The papers propose a structural transformation of the WFTU into an international co-ordinating centre and "a forum for dialogue."

To the extent that the new directions truly re-orient the WFTU the question becomes what further reason does it have to continue its existence at all? In that they do not propose radical

change or fail to bring it about, the question remains why should independent unions be associated with such an effort? The ICFTU has issued a circular to its affiliates reminding them of the policy adopted by its executive board in 1976 pointing out that participating in any initiatives by international organisations which do not share the ICFTU's principles, outside the defined framework of the ILO, could only weaken the free trade union movement. A meeting of the ICFTU executive in May of this year found no reason to change this policy. The ICFTU doubts that the changes in the WFTU will be significant, if the organisation survives at all.

As for the 11 TUI's (Trade Union Institutes) of the WFTU, their crisis seems even greater than that of the mother body. Unlike the autonomous ITS's associated with the ICFTU, the TUI's are directly dependent on the WFTU. This was a major issue in the breakup of the old WFTU and the formation of the ICFTU in 1949. Most of the TUI's were based in Central and Eastern Europe and staffed largely by personnel from affiliates in that region. Since practically all these affiliates have reformed themselves or have disappeared entirely and the countries they are based in have undergone the most thorough re-orientations, the TUI's are left largely stranded.

The new proposals in the WFTU say the TUI's should become more flexible and play a more autonomous role in the future. The implication is that they should work somehow jointly with ITS's. Several of the ITS's have been approached by TUI's seeking collaboration or outright merger. All have been rebuffed.

The WFTU and its TUI's face immediate problems of office locations. The CS-KOS of Czechoslovakia, now an ICFTU affiliate, is reclaiming the facilities its predecessor had made available in Prague to the WFTU. Two of the TUI's, including the one for commerce, were also based there. There is discussion that the WFTU will move to Paris. This is reinforced by the fact that CGT General Secretary Henri Krasuchi is the only known candidate so far for the post of WFTU president. Other options for the new WFTU offices mentioned are Brussels, Cairo and Moscow.

The TUI's in other Eastern European capitals are also considering moving. The Chemical Workers' TUI, based in Budapest, is considering Paris. The Transport TUI, also in Budapest, is seeking a new home. FISE, the WFTU Teachers International, has drastically reduced its staff in East Berlin and is now down to two employees there.

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