

kommt; nur dessen Beiträge sollen in dieser Zeitschrift einzeln in den Blick genommen werden.

Der Philosoph Ton van den Beld (Utrecht), der durch seine Arbeiten über Masaryk international bekannt geworden ist, greift in seinem Beitrag, den er bei der Londoner Masaryk-Konferenz 1986 zur Diskussion gestellt hat, ein Thema der Moral aus dem Umfeld von Masaryks Habilitationsschrift auf und behandelt den „Unterschied zwischen Mord und struktureller Gewalt“, also dem nichtwillentlichen Töten; er spannt dabei den Bogen von einer Erwiderung Masaryks auf einen radikalen Artikel in „Nezávislé listy“ von 1904 bis zu Marcuse und Galtung.

Jaroslav Krejčí (Lancaster) hat „den Prager Frühling neu besehen“ und versucht, durch eine „soziologische Neubewertung“ Eigenarten der Reformbewegung von 1968, u. a. auch aus dem Vergleich mit Ungarn und Polen, herauszuarbeiten.

Einen klärenden Einblick in die Vielfalt von oppositionellen Organisationen und Aktionen zwischen dem Beginn der „Normalisierung“ und der Veröffentlichung der Charta '77 gibt die Übersicht von Hans Renner (Groningen) über „die tschechoslowakische Opposition 1969–1976“ anhand der Frage „Was der Charta 77 vorherging“.

Den Reigen der auf die Tschechoslowakei bezogenen Beiträge beschließt Zdeněk Suda (Pittsburgh) mit einer grundsätzlichen Untersuchung der „nature of Czech nationalism“, der manche interessante Deutung bringt, etwa über „die Geburt des Politischen aus dem Religiösen“, und in gewissem Sinne eine methodisch modernere Fortführung des Masarykschen Ansatzes darstellt.

Zdeněk Dittrich, der sich manchmal in seiner Notwendigkeit zur fachlichen Breite wie ein „Mädchen für alles in partibus infidelium“ fühlte, also zunächst nahezu der einzige Experte für Ostmitteleuropa in den Niederlanden, hat jetzt, das beweist dieser beachtliche Band, eine Reihe von Schülern, jüngeren Kollegen und Freunden auf seinem Gebiet um sich versammelt, die Dittrichs – in einem Schriftenverzeichnis am Ende des Bandes aufgelistetes und sicher noch keineswegs abgeschlossenes – Werk weiter tragen.

Marburg an der Lahn

Hans Lemberg

Gorbachov, Mikhail: Perestrojka: New Thinking for our Country and the World.

Harper & Row, New Nork 1987, 255 pp.

In this book¹, Mikhail Gorbachov draws a bold parallel with the history of the Western world. France, Britain, and Germany, he says, all needed several revolutions to consolidate their systems. Why should the Soviet Union not proceed likewise? Perestroika ist communism's second revolution.

There is some logic in this construct. Artefacts are indeed seldom manufactured in

¹ In German: Perestrojka: Die zweite russische Revolution. Eine neue Politik für Europa und die Welt. Droemer Knauer, München 1987.

perfect form at the first attempt. Societies have undergone revolutions and reforms since they began to exist. We should not deny Mikhail Gorbachov the right to a second bite at the cherry, especially since he has chosen to set in motion a system which has always presented itself as final and finite. Improvement, the system's practitioners have always been saying, may be needed, but not substantive change. Nevertheless, Gorbachov's outline of his reformist program causes some irritation to the Western observer because of what can only be perceived as a measure of dishonesty in the argument.

Question of Paternity. The Soviet leader clamorously rediscovers the wheels on which the rest of us have been moving forward for decades, and he does so with rectitude, as if to shame the devil in us. Virtually all that he proposes to do in order to improve his society originates in the West, from the market economy and technological progress to human rights and popular participation in the running of public affairs. And yet, not only does Gorbachov fail to acknowledge Western paternity, but he sermonizes about Lenin's heritage and the "hitherto unused potential of socialism" which will allow all of the allegedly "new" ideas to flourish.

Even if we in the West choose not to carp and cavil with the Soviet leader's commendable effort at restructuring, we need not refrain from citing reality back at him. No matter which quotes Gorbachov uses, Lenin is not one of the fathers of democracy, and the Soviet system has never engendered from within itself a pioneering quality other than applying force and imposing its ideology on others. In undertaking perestroika, the USSR does not really propose to pull itself up from the morass by its own boot straps. Much more, perestroika represents free-world-assisted reform except that, unlike Poland in the first half of the 1970s, it relies on the infusion of Western concepts, not money.

Which Socialism? Another jarring note resounds from the way in which Gorbachov speaks of "socialism" when he means "communism". For most Europeans, if not for Americans, socialism represents a legitimate socio-political tendency of which communism is but an aberration. When Marxist communism threatened to engulf the movement for political and social emancipation among the working classes, the first and substantial perestroika of the Marxist ideology took place toward the end of last century. It was then that democratic socialism and the social democratic parties were born. Eduard Bernstein, rather than Lenin or Gorbachov, is the father of revision and reform. The socially-conscious democratic state that the Soviet leader now presumes to bring about owes its existence to interaction between the social democratic movement and liberal capitalism. Through the Communist International and Moscow's extreme hostility to non-communist socialism, the Soviet system has destroyed the capacity of ruling communist parties to make the chemistry of non-confrontational social and liberal politics work. Democratic socialism as it has evolved and is understood in the West has no need to reform itself on this score; communism has.

Ambivalence. It is Gorbachov's right to believe in the ultimate success of his perestroika. Politicians do not launch major campaigns without professing confidence. Nevertheless, the Western mind is inquisitive, critical, and skeptical. We have every right to be so when a momentous message is directed at us from quarters not previously known for living up to expectations and promises. It appears that the Soviet leader believes in his system's ambidexterity, that is, the ability to handle skillfully both the

Western and the Soviet communist value components of perestroika. He tells us that "we have no ready-made formulas" but presents a whole series of them in the book. Lenin remains the fountainhead, collectivization was and is necessary, and the party stays the only holder of real power – to mention just three. "More socialism and more democracy," he says. We know that compromises are a legitimate way of tackling conflict, but we are also aware of their limitations when it comes to basic values.

What Gorbachov has in mind seems to be a shift of emphasis or a change in proportion rather than the removal of unworkable formulas from policy making. He speaks of "a new concept of democratic centralism" in which democracy and centralism will be "correctly balanced." It turns out, however, that his intention is merely to devolve *some* economic power from the planning bodies to enterprises while keeping massive control at the center. "All this will take place within the mainstream of socialist goals and principles of management," he says, indicating that the party will retain its supreme role in the economy.

One is left with the impression that Western values are only being borrowed in controllable doses, as a medicine to cure what the diagnostician perceives to be no more than a transient indisposition of an otherwise sound organism.

Default. A checklist of aspects of communist rule which are not mentioned or are only glossed over in Gorbachov's master plan would be very long. His sketch of Soviet history is woefully incomplete; relations with Eastern Europe are scantily treated; the religious issue is left out; and the role of private enterprise receives next to no consideration.

As an example of the inadequacies, the four pages devoted to the nationality issue in the American edition of Gorbachov's book are particularly disappointing. In the first place, they contain too much meaningless propaganda. Gorbachov says that against the background of national strife elsewhere in the world, "the USSR represents a truly unique example in the history of human civilization." In his opinion, being a multinational country is for the Soviet Union "a factor of might rather than weakness or disintegration." Even worse than the clichés is the reduction of problems to an anodyne level. Gorbachov holds that nationalism "sometimes happens" and that internationalism "does not always come easily." There is no self-criticism and no promise of remedy with regard to the Russification of national cultures and discrimination against the use of national languages.

It goes without saying that Gorbachov does not mention "Sovietization" as a form of supranational imposition. There is enough evidence that many nations in the USSR regard the Soviet communist regime as a curtailment of their right to self-determination because it is Soviet, not *only* because it is Russian-centered. This is surely also the case with a part of the Russian nation as well as with the nations of Eastern Europe.

As for solutions, Gorbachov offers a continuing process of *sblizhenie* or "growing-closer" through internationalist education, and greater tact in inter-ethnic relations. The idea of self-determination to the point of secession does not figure in his program, despite its embodiment in pre-revolutionary communist doctrine and the Soviet constitution. Only the section in the chapter of the book devoted to the Third World bears the title "Nations Have the Right to Choose their Own Way of Development." For the nations of the USSR and those under Soviet tutelage this evidently does not apply.

The Prague Spring. The book contains only one cryptic reference to the vexing issue of Czechoslovakia's suppressed reforms of 1968 and their relevance to current Soviet efforts. In virtually the only concrete example in the section on Eastern Europe he writes that people in Prague (which he visited in April 1987) approve of his reforms. He claims that a young man told him, "Say the truth, beware of the truth, and let others have their truth." Gorbachov does not mention if he knew that this was a paraphrase of John Hus, the fifteenth century religious reformer, and that it was one of the most frequently-cited mottos of the Prague Spring. He replied, perhaps unintentionally complementing the quotation, "and act in conformance with the truth". Gorbachov also apparently told the man, "Often one must retreat a step in order to move forward later. This is a painful process, to rethink, to analyze, and yet again to analyze; but one must not be afraid of doing it." This passage can be deciphered as a reference to the Prague Spring and to related action and attitudes that may need revision, but why must Gorbachov still hide behind such arcane language?

A View from the Bridge. Mikhail Gorbachov's book about perestroika can be read as a cultural message to the West. Despite the self-righteousness, ambivalence, and lacunae, it is essentially a moderate and benign signal that a process has started in the USSR whereby a small measure of Western values will be injected into communist political behaviour. It would be silly to expect that this process can begin with Gorbachov's rapid march across the East-West bridge to a democratic Canossa. The Soviet leader's feet remain planted on the communist ground and, while he has begun to look our way, his vision is still obscured by ideological obstinacy. There are still chinks in his shining reformist armour, and we need not refrain from pointing a finger at them. In doing so, we can be heartened by his own conclusion:

I am deeply convinced that the book is not yet finished, nor can it be finished. . . . What looks acceptable and sufficient today may be obsolete tomorrow. . . . In the course of restructuring we are expanding and clarifying our notions about the yesterday, today and tomorrow of socialism.

Amen, so be it. Perhaps it is best to regard this volume as no more than an introduction to a longer book. One hopes that the people who have to live under communism will contribute their own chapters to it.

Munich

Vladimir V. Kusin

Die österreichische Literatur. Eine Dokumentation ihrer literarhistorischen Entwicklung. In Zusammenarbeit mit dem Institut für Österreichische Kulturgeschichte und dem Ludwig Boltzmann-Institut für Österreichische Literaturforschung. Bd. I: Ihr Profil von den Anfängen im Mittelalter bis ins 18. Jahrhundert (1050-1750). Unter Mitwirkung von Fritz Peter Knapp (Mittelalter) hrsg. von Herbert Zeman.

Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, Graz 1986, zwei Teile, 1437 S.

Der Titel ist schwierig, wie man liest, und der Gegenstand auch. Sammelwerke haben das mitunter an sich. Die Geduld der Bibliothekare, die im Titel eines solchen Werkes gleich auch noch seine Entstehungsgeschichte festhalten müssen, wird man